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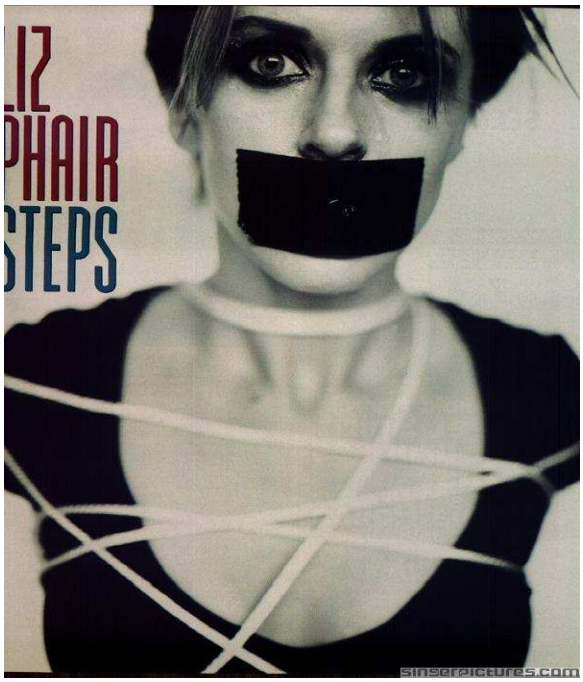
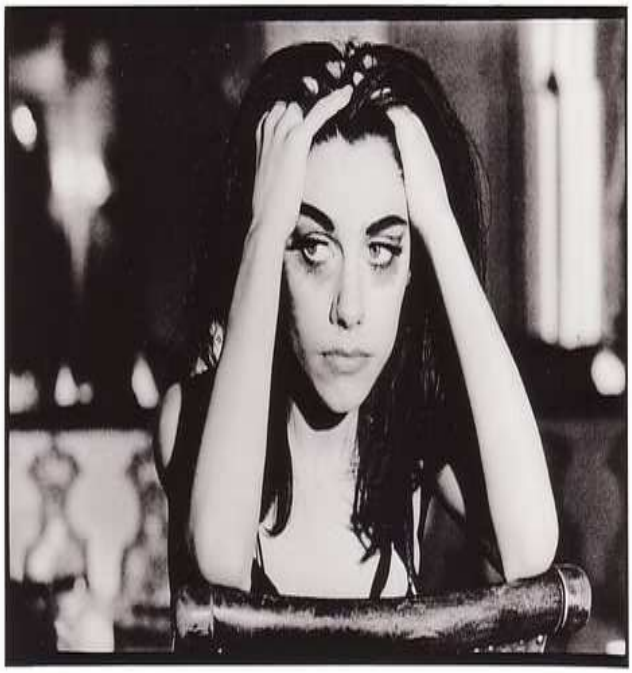
Subversive Desires: Exploring the sexuality enacted by the musical performances of Liz Phair & P.J Harvey









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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of a Master of the Arts in Community-Counselling Psychology

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Note: The artwork on the cover page is from the following sources:

http://www.last.fm/music/PJ+Harvey/+images/5962209

http://www.last.fm/music/PJ+Harvey/+images/2129190

http://www.last.fm/music/Liz+Phair/+images/75766

http://www.singerpictures.com/liz-phair-picture-25889.html

Declaration

I declare that this research is an original piece of writing that belongs to the writer and all the external and published work that has been used to aid this research has been appropriately referenced. It has been submitted for the degree, Master of Arts in Community-Counselling Psychology to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted previously for any other degree or examination at any other University.

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Dhersen Moodley Date

Abstract

The idea of a *subversive female sexual desire* is certainly controversial as it begs the question how we can know and at what point(s) does this desire become *subversive*. The work of two female musicians: Liz Phair and PJ Harvey, specifically through their albums 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' respectively, are the inspiration behind a *subversive female sexual desire*. These two musicians appear to communicate through the mentioned albums a desire that contrasts the way in which female musicians traditionally express matters pertaining to their sexual desire. What emerges then are arguments surrounding the epistemological and ontological structures that underpin a *female sexual desire*, especially as the notion of *subversion* speaks to a convention that such structures maintain that is perhaps more exclusive than one imagines it to be. Music as a medium in which a *female sexual desire* is enacted is perhaps a way for women to exercise matters pertaining to their sexual desire, especially when one imagines how *subversion* hints at expressions of such a desire being more exclusive than inclusive for women. Music then becomes a mode of expression for women allowing them creativity, space and reflection to explore their sexual desires in a manner that is endless. Music however is not without its own prejudices and restrictions in terms of neutrality it may accord women in exploring their desire with a sense of authenticity. Music especially as an industry is riddled with tensions and struggles regarding the commodification of music, the overriding influence of popular culture and how this compromises the extent to which artistic integrity and honesty is maintained. Against the idea put forth of a *subversive female sexual desire* and the extent to which Liz Phair and PJ Harvey represent this as well as the implications such *subversion* has for *a female sexual desire*, seven participants three male and four female, from all racial groupings, and above the ages of twenty-one have been interviewed using a semi-structured interview. The interview sought to explore participant's perceptions primarily on female musicians on matters pertaining to sexual desire using Liz Phair and PJ Harvey as models almost to explore the matter.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The idea of *subversion* is certainly controversial in that it denotes images, thoughts, actions or words that harkens instances – however subtle or overt – that resists what one may refer to as a general consensus of how one ought to do, be, think or feel. Controversial, because who defines what one considers an act of *subversion*? What spaces exist within which we not only identify acts of 'subversion', but from which we also act out varied forms of defences against convention? Talk of *subversion* as well as the primary contention of this research, presupposes that there is in fact a general consensus that pervades this norm of conventionality. Talk then of *subversion* means that the general consensus is not fluid enough to accommodate for the nuances within and between doing, being, thinking and feeling. This means that these nuances escape the general consensus. What then are the implications of not being included, not recognised, not taken into account, not given a voice etc.? Is *subversion* then one of these outcomes of not being included within the general consensus? And if so, what is the implication for acts of *subversion* and their relationship to the general consensus?

Certainly naming acts of *subversion* has the consequence of the latter occupying a particular relation to the general consensus – which means that it can only exist because of the peripheral relationship it occupies. Perhaps though, acts that are *subversive* – which are named through some rigorous justification – may become a way of informing us of the general consensus, as well as the implicit fallbacks. It may also importantly tell us – by exploring an act of *subversion* that speaks to a general consensus – why in fact we should speak of acts of *subversion*.

Perhaps 'acts of *subversion*' becomes clearer when one contextualises the act and naturally so for research purposes that demands specificity with regards to the vague treatment acts of *subversion* has been given thus far. Such an 'act' that this piece of writing is concerned with is a *female sexual desire* that has the appearance or rather resembles (once expressed) what this research has termed *subversive*. A *subversive*, *female sexual desire* is controversial in that it begs the question: how is it that one can know a *subversive female sexual desire*? How does it manifest itself? How different is a *subversive female sexual desire* from other forms of desire defined as *not subversive*?

What is important for now is the matter of *subversive female sexual desire* and how *subversion* introduces questions pertaining to 'knowing' and 'knowledge' that surround a *female sexual desire* that is *subversive* versus ones that are not. This speaks to matters that concern the epistemological and ontological structures that maintain a *female sexual desire*. What the matter of *subversion* does is that it takes a *female sexual desire* to its logical limit. *Subversion* challenges the logic of a *female sexual desire* i.e. calls into question its epistemological and ontological assumptions. Talk of *subversion* tells of a limit in fact to a *female sexual desire* but also a logic that underpins such a desire which echoes convention and that, has the appearance of a desire that is familiar and considered natural. The question then becomes: what can practices of *subversion* do for practices of *female sexual desire*?

The way in which this research has sought to measure so to speak a *subversive female sexual desire* is primarily through a sample generated from the broader population. This research presupposes that the sample represents the logic, is familiar with and considers natural the appearance of a *female sexual desire* especially when one does in fact talk of *subversive female sexual desire*. Not only then does it matter or not whether one presuppose that a sample from the broader population unquestionably accepts a *female sexual desire*, but it is talk of one that is *subversive* that comes to challenge the sample's idea's, thoughts and feelings regarding everything it is they have come to know about a *female sexual desire*. In other words, participants that this study has employed who represent this talk about a sample, provide a somewhat ideal setting in which one can test idea's, thoughts and feelings regarding a *female sexual desire* and the extent to which the notion of *subversion* is totally divorced or not from a *female sexual desire*.

Other than what the participants of this study come to represent in assisting to argue acts of *subversion*, is also and importantly so how it is through their responses of what is *subversive* versus what is not. Perhaps a reality may emerge – through participants responses – that shows if in fact there is *subversion*, then how does it thrives, how does it manifest itself, where are the spaces it emerges, do we even pay attention to how readily and pervasively it thrives, if we're not paying attention to how pervasive it is, what stops us from doing so? This begs the question then is there some instance or moment where a *female sexual desire* is *subversive*? In other words, this research aims to explore how it is participants negotiate acts deemed *subversive*, related specifically to the act of a *female sexual desire*. And in doing so, the extent to which participants

are capable of negotiating *subversive* acts related to a *female sexual desire* showing what are the difficulties if there are any at all and why is it so difficult if there are any at all?

The current study argues and presupposes that an example of such a *subversive* act related to a *female sexual desire* may be explored in the work of two female musicians: Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through their albums 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' respectively. It appears that what Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' are communicating is a style that embodies and relates to matters pertaining to a *female sexual desire* that has the appearance of *subversion* to it. This research is therefore also concerned with the 'unconventional' approach both Liz Phair and PJ Harvey adopt in their music when communicating matters pertaining to (female) sexual desire. This 'unconventional' approach both musicians adopt to communicating their desire is the inspiration and challenge behind the idea of a *female sexual desire* that the current research seeks to explore. It then becomes necessary to explore what these two musicians have been communicating through their music, as well as what has already been written in terms of literature about female sexuality and desire and, how and when it fact *subversion* emerges and becomes relevant or not.

It is important to mention that 'subversion' has been used provisionally to describe these two musicians because what they appear to communicate is deeply subjective accounts regarding their desires that retains an authenticity, creativity and sincerity. Based on the manner of how these musicians communicate their sexual desires, 'Subversive' has been used rather than 'Defiant', 'Rebellious' or 'Oppositional Desires' because what is expressed remains close to the personal. What gets expressed by these musicians is not an overt expression of politics regarding the subordination of women's desires, and neither is it confrontational or rebellious as characteristic of the 'Riot Grrl' movement. Rather what Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate is a sexual desire that is situated within realm of the personal and subjective. One wonders then about the realm of the personal and subjective encompassing a human experience that is neither conventional nor oppositional, but rather implicitly posing questions to what is considered conventional, hence the use of 'Subversive Desires'

Apart from what Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate that is of interest to this research is also the space in which they communicate their desire. This is music but how it comes to represent a space where ideas, thoughts or feelings are readily

expressed. Music just like writing, painting, sculpture etc. accords one the release of ideas, thoughts or feelings in a manner that is not always clear, concise, logical and rational. In other words, music as a medium for expression may importantly provide the means for one to express one's sexual desire just like Liz Phair and PJ Harvey does. However, music as a medium arguably so retains a field in which all reason that governs ones thoughts and feelings becomes suspended permitting for the juxtaposition of ideas, thoughts and feelings that would not ordinarily coexist.

Music can therefore become a way of challenging existing ideas especially as it provides a space in which one can creatively fashion an identity as it permits for reflection and meditation regarding matters pertaining to the self and cathartic expression. Music may serve as a medium for representation and expression which can be a useful tool as it allows for the free flowing or rather a stream of consciousness that is untainted by ideas especially about desire, which would thus allow it in the first place to be understood as *subversive*. Musical performance then becomes a space with the aid of interrogating ideas about a *female sexual desire* for those identities understood as *subversive* and the difficulties faced in integrating these identities into society.

The study commences with arguments that put forth ideas related to the matter of *subversion* and a *female sexual desire* in Chapter 2 that perhaps engages the reader further in debates regarding these two matters that go beyond the title of this research as well as what has been described thus far in this introduction. This chapter is important in that it offers literature that has spoken to matters around *subversion* and a *female sexual desire*. Chapter 2 commences with a brief discussion around the challenges to 'knowing' and 'knowledge' and how in fact this process has and continues to foreclose alternative ways to knowing and the implications thereof. The chapter then delves into how the foreclosure of knowledge claims relates to female identity, after which psychoanalytic literature is explored stimulating further debate into 'knowing' a female identity. The chapter then turns its attention to music and the possibilities and pitfalls music offers in the expression of a female identity that challenge 'knowing'. The music of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey follows as it is explored in detail which concludes Chapter 2.

What follows then is Chapter 3 which details the methodological steps and processes that this study has taken especially if it hopes to argue and justify claims it has already made at the start of this chapter. The chapter starts by introducing how the research

methods were executed from a conceptual point of view i.e. a framework in which research methods were thought of that informed the concrete steps taken. The chapter then goes on to describe the thought that went into generating a sample for this study as well as the sampling strategy that was employed. Thereafter the chapter documents briefly so the procedure of how the field work for the study was managed, after which the data collection is described as well as the analysis employed. The chapter ends by elaborating on what have been the ethical considerations and concerns for the study.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis and an interpretation of the data retrieved from the research methods that were employed, but does so in a manner where it makes sense of the data by putting them into themes. The data is organised into the following four themes which gets elaborated on in some length: **'Setting The Stage', 'The Chanteuse', 'Perils in the Pursuit of the Personal' and 'She's Got the Look'**. Chapter 5 expands on the four themes as it attempts to make sense theoretically of the data, but in manner that is vigilant of arguing the matter of *subversion* and a *female sexual desire* and the links between the two as well as the implications thereof. Finally the concluding Chapter 6 reflects briefly on what this study set out to do, but echoes again the findings only to emphasise concluding statements that sum up seemingly central issues regarding *subversion* and a *female sexual desire*.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

An Introduction

What follows is an exploration of literature which questions and engages the ontological structures that maintain a *female sexual identity*. The point of which is to examine the *sexual desire* two *female* musicians communicate that expresses a *sexuality* belonging to a *female sexual identity*. What is meant by ontological structures is the matter of how is it that one comes to know how it is they can 'know' in the first place? What are the processes which enable the "doer" or the subject (*female*) with 'knowing' the way in which they need to do what it is they will come to know – that is communicate a *female sexual desire*? If doing establishes knowing, then this has profound implications for the way in which one may unquestionably accept why it is one needs to do without investigating the reasons why one should know how it is they can do. In other words, *desiring sexually* without reflecting on how one has arrived at the point where one can know how one came to *desire sexually* as a *female* in the first place. This process is important as it foregrounds how one can be more reflective and receptive to how it is one desire's at present or in the first place. Reflection and reception accords one with a sense of assimilating what is beyond one's capacity to envision, feel and do. This opens up fresh, new and creative ways to think about how one desire's in a way that is not restrictive and oppressive.

If one thinks about gendered and sexual identities, especially in terms of how one appropriates such identities as almost a skin, then the following is an account of literature that grapples with the ways in which these skins are appropriated. 'Skin' is used an analogy as it denotes a covering, a surface area that shows more than it conceals, which speaks to how 'skins' subsumes individuals preventing further reflection on additional 'skins' that may be appropriated especially in terms of gendered and sexed identities. 'Skins' also indicate how accessible gendered and sexed identities become available to individuals through various mediums which are held onto or rather appropriated with much conviction.

For the purposes of this research, this skin is a *female sexual identity*, and the ways which this skin takes the form of self-ownership. And in taking ownership the various symbolisms that become attached to this skin and the prescribed material subjective

livelihoods that unfolds and follows from this skin. In addition to a *female sexual identity* is the role of music as a medium, whereby such an identity may emerge or surface in ways that are accorded more reflection, space and breadth. This is argued without one perhaps feeling too pressured or hastily committing oneself to an identity that is already too familiar yet removed from ones self. Therefore the music, specifically the music of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey provides a backdrop or rather contextualizes a *female sexual identity*. In the current chapter, literature surrounding Liz Phair and PJ Harvey will be discussed specifically their albums: 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' respectively. It is through a discussion of these two albums that a *female sexual identity* can be explored further especially with regards to how these two musicians communicate in these albums certain challenges to such an identity.

'Knowing', its Pitfalls & a Way Forward

Descartes introduced the notion, 'I think therefore I am', which operates on the logic that thinking depends on knowing and if one can know, therefore that individual can claim to be whatever she chooses (Minsky, 1998). By no means is this an attempt to reduce the depth and complexity of Descartes work to this infamous quote but rather to use this quote as a premise for the logic one deploys in making sense of their world. A rigid adherence to the logic in Descartes quote presupposes a kind of knowing, that determines ones conception of who they are, without really 'knowing' at all i.e. an epistemic fallacy (Collier, 1994). Therefore to combat this epistemic fallacy or ignorance towards knowing, we need to recognise that knowledge is a consequence of our ability to be in the world (Collier, 1994). And before we can know how it is that we can be, we need to look at how we interact with the world in such a way as to acquire knowledge of it (Collier, 1994).

What the above attempts to do is illustrate the implications that 'ways of knowing' i.e. knowledge, has for the ways in which *female sexuality* is conceptualised. However is it enough to 'know', without examining the ways in which one can know, where such an inquiry only unearths the limitations to 'knowing'? This research is concerned with finding creative and innovative ways of 'knowing' that would undermine 'knowing' itself whilst being flexible to new ways of 'knowing' continuously. In other words, how is 'knowing' organised into the ways one can 'know'? And are there alternative ways to 'knowing' through the established ways of 'knowing' already? The challenge thus becomes using established means of 'knowing' that are considered restrictive to perhaps developing emancipatory ways of 'knowing'.

The work of Lois McNay (2000) is perhaps useful at such a point as her work on 'reconfiguring the subject' echoes the concerns of this research endeavour. McNay (2000) is concerned with the way in which women's identity has been conceptualised, against ever-changing political, social and economic backdrops. Such changing political, economic and social landscapes have changed increasingly so the subjective livelihoods of women which has prompted a rethinking of women's roles in the workplace, household, relationships etc. Such societal changes reflect the terms i.e. woman, relatively instable and ambiguous nature especially as gender norms, roles and expectations shift and change. McNay argues (2000:2) that "the inherent instability of gender norms" presents opportunities for the subject to resist and therefore refashion one's identity in ways that are considered emancipatory. McNay (2000) is concerned with conceptualising gender identity in a manner that accords one space to find creative, innovative and flexible ways to fashion ones identity against seemingly deterministic and negativistic conceptions of gender.

What appears to be central to McNay's argument is reestablishing agency for women to fashion identities for themselves against seemingly deterministic accounts of womanhood that strip away their agency and sense of autonomy. This project of agency accorded to women is what this research is concerned with, which is Liz Phair and PJ Harvey relying on a space to communicate sexual desire that has the appearance to varying degrees of flexibility and fluidity. This space is music and how it functions firstly as a way in which one can explore with creativity ways to 'knowing' about oneself. Secondly how such music as a creative space exposes traditional ways of 'knowing' about oneself. And thirdly is how music as a medium specifically becomes an opportunity for the ways in which one can express sexual desire in a way that it does not conform to one's gender or in this case femininity.

'Knowing' & a Female Sexual Identity

In accordance with the above, 'knowing' or rather knowledge surrounding a feminine identity, specific to this research, has been pivotal for developing a feminist theory. Feminist theory has espoused to 'know' such an identity through a political endeavour that presupposes a unity, as well as stability around the meaning of what it means to be a woman (Nicholson, 1995 & Beasley, 2006). This political endeavour of uniting women is premised on long-standing histories across several cultural contexts that

speak of oppression women have and continued to suffer by the hands of men. One of the leading figures of the 2nd wave feminist movement, gynocentric feminist Dorothy Smith (1988), talks about such an oppression as she advocates for women to unite and develop a way of 'knowing' by women. Developing a way of 'knowing' by women for women would combat the vast amount of knowledge already produced by men that subjugate women in the first place, because it reflects the interests of men (Smith, 1988). This according to Smith would lead to and create practices where women are represented equally and fairly.

Smith's theorizing has not gone unchallenged as feminists drawing on Marxist theory, critical race theory and queer theory, argue that Smith ignores how gender intersects with other variables as class, race and sexual orientation (Seidman, 2004). These feminists have argued that a call for women in general to unite obscures deeper inequalities women endure along the lines of class, race and sexual orientation (Seidman, 2004). Much recent developments in feminist theory have argued that an endeavour for women to unite relies on a politics and representation that assumes an existing *female sexual identity* (Butler, 1990). This in essence is a form of knowledge and a way of 'knowing' that is steeped in politics and linguistics which unquestionably create the criterion for such an identity (Butler, 1990). This criterion requires further investigation before such political and linguistic endeavours can qualify such a subject (Butler, 1990). The latter domain i.e. the linguistic will come to have much relevance for the present inquisition into female sexuality, as its constructing properties will become crucial in maintaining such an ontological position.

Therefore the qualifications of the subject, in this case politics and representation, extend legitimacy and normativity towards the conception of a discrete, unitary and coherent identity such as a female sexuality which this research is concerned with. Such qualifications or rather constituent properties vary in the manner in which the very designation of one deploying identity is conceptualised. Therefore it is relevant that such conceptualisations around identity is discussed that has fuelled much debate around the epistemological, ontological and logical structures that define the very fabric of identity.

Traditionally and still very much pervasive currently, is the trend of essentialism operative in wielding power behind how identity is primarily made sense of (Nicholson, 1995). What is referred to as the essentialising tendency, is the claims made about the

universal and intrinsic nature of identity such as femininity and masculinity, and how there appears to be a God-given logic that unquestionably accepts the character of any identity as natural (Nicholson, 1995 and Scott,). However, the essentialising tendency when deployed in conceptualising identity has not gone unchallenged, in a manner that is similar to arguments made against claims by Dorothy Smith as discussed above. Such arguments maintain that the very character of identity unfolds within the realm that is regulated by social conventions that dictate the course in which identity is articulated and understood (Nicholson, 1995). This is the standpoint of anti-essentialists who emphasise the laws that govern society which enable the mechanisms of construction (Nicholson, 1995 and Shefer, 2004). In other words society embodies ideas about various subject positions that accord one the ability to affirm an identity.

There have also been theoretical accounts of identity that talk about the power identity itself wields in creating adherents that subscribe and affirm such identity categories (Foucault, 1980). This power is premised on a predetermined and pre-given discourse in the eyes of a supposed agent who continuously re-enacts the tools necessary for the identity the agent assumes (Foucault, 1980; Butler, 1990). Therefore identity is neither a fixed nor causal result of the interaction between the individual their material living conditions, rather it is an embodiment that is never total, fixed or complete, but instead identity is the result of an ongoing process of negotiation (Butler, 1990). Such negotiation involves the instability of identity and how the identity one espouses to shifts and varies according to the context in which it occurs thus revealing the inverse and cracks within the assumed pristine nature of any identity.

A Return to Psychoanalysis and Freud

This research represents and attempts if anything, however ambitious it may seem, and perhaps as a retreat from the above mentioned epistemological and ontological structures of identity such as female sexuality, whilst borrowing elements from the above, a rethinking of identity such as a female sexuality. Such rethinking pertains to sexual desire and how such a function represents the site at which one is able to understand an identity such as feminine or female sexuality.

The following pages will devote a considerable amount of time discussing the works of Freud, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous. The rationale, for which these several authors will be discussed, is that this collaborative discussion is reflective of the conviction put forth regarding ‘knowing’. This conviction is the

reliance on 'knowing' that is overarching, subsuming and totalising. Therefore, to combat the restrictive nature of an overarching way of 'knowing', several ways of knowing need to be engaged with to create a way of knowing that emerges as constantly shifting and accommodating. The work of these five theorists offers an exciting way of problematising the female subject whilst looking forward to a female subject that does not need to be referred to as subversive in the first place. What follows below is the beginning of the attempt to rethink this identity in a way that accords such an identity i.e. female sexual desire more flexibility.

For now though, the work of Freud promises a stimulating and enriching discussion towards an ontological position, as he challenges Descartes assertion and elaborates on the epistemic fallacy. Freud argues, how can anyone know what it is that they propose to know about themselves (Minsky, 1996 & 2000). In other words, what are the enabling functions that would allow anyone to know? Freud would answer that it is the state of consciousness that accords us such a metaphysical way of being. However, how is consciousness any different to what Descartes proposed? According to Freud, consciousness represents one part of a binary system of being, where the latter constituent is the unconscious. The unconscious undermines any obstinate way of knowing about ourselves, as knowledge itself "is always threatened by the potential subversion of our unconscious" (Minsky, 1996: 26).

Such an interpretation of Freud, or rather rereading of Freud's work, represents quite the inverse or rather a challenge to traditional or mainstream psychological knowledge on sexuality which is ironically steeped and has been fuelled by Freudian thought (Mitchell, 1974; Minsky, 1996 & 2000; Kiguwa, 2004 & Shefer, 2004). This rereading has unveiled a space in which the unconscious poses the threat of an elusive self to the subject, claiming a female sexual identity that they can never know (Parker, 2004). The following paragraphs up until now have aimed to provide certain ideas –however brief – around the rationale for the disruption of an ontological identity/subject/entity such as female sexuality. What follows now is an engagement with some key epistemological accounts that have contributed towards understanding the ontology of a female sexuality, in which the aim is to tease out such an identity in order to develop a comprehensive picture of it.

A good place to commence is where the argument was left, which was with Freud who profoundly influenced much thought on what female sexuality actually entailed

although his perspectives on this topic did change as manifest in his key texts 'Female Sexuality' (1931) and the *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* in 'Femininity' (1933) (Leader, 2000). According to Freud and particularly in his text 'Female Sexuality' (1977) it is the Oedipus complex that renders the child, in this case the little girl who becomes tenderly attached to the parent of the opposite sex, whilst the relationship the little girl maintains with the same sex parent i.e. her mother is a hostile one. Freud was concerned and bemused as to how the little girl finds her way to her father, as this represents her love object for which this has pivotal implications if the girl child is to grow up and represent a female sexuality defined within a heterosexual matrix (Freud, 1977; Mitchell, 1974 & Minsky, 1996). Some of the questions Freud asks are "How does she find her way to her father? How, when and why does she detach herself from her mother" (Freud, 1977: 371). These are crucial questions that have implications for the way in which he responds to them as it ultimately conveys the emergence of female sexuality. Although one needs to ask oneself, how are the questions that Freud asks understood in a way that conveys the emergence of female sexuality i.e. a 'sexuality' that is considered 'female'.

It is in Freud's paper entitled 'Femininity' that he makes some bold and radical arguments that enrich and expand on the last point. Freud (1973) argues firstly that we are men and women because we say we are and if we are trying to understand femininity/female sexuality or masculinity we then become the very problem of why such an inquisition is made in the first place. Freud appears to be theorising outside the Oedipal dynamic of the feminine/masculine only to expose it from within. He goes on to question the logic behind deploying connotations, symbolisms, metaphors and signifiers to sexual apparatuses i.e. sexual organs, which he argues is silly especially as the male sexual organ appears in the female body only through in an atrophied state and vice versa (Freud, 1973). Therefore, the point is how is it that the penis and vagina can signal, embody and live out a masculine/feminine cultural dichotomy that is placed upon so carefully yet rigidly whilst corresponding to the penis/vagina respectively (Freud, 1973).

Freud argues further that sexual acts characterise passive aims and active aims but how do such aims become a model for people to fall within such a dichotomy that becomes generalised to their living and the way they relate to others (Freud, 1973). Therefore, passive aims of women during sex come to define the entirety of their being and suppresses whatever aggressive instincts that are constituent of their being but become

predefined and predetermined for them through the sexual act (Freud, 1973). The riddle of femininity as Freud describes can only be explained for him through exploring the origins that established the differentiation of living organisms classified into two sexes thus the task of psychoanalysis is essentially to explore how a women comes into her being (Freud, 1973).

Amidst Freud acknowledging how sexual life prescribes, defines and constructs feminine behaviour, it would appear then how such a discourse would give rise to the Oedipal dynamic whilst also at the same time exposing it as a gate keeping mechanism that re-creates sexual life (Hook, 2006). Apart from what is implicit in Freud's (1973) account and rather what he actually says, is that it is anatomical sexual distinctions which extend far beyond mere biology or physicality. The anatomical sexual distinctions instead for Freud represent the cultural prescription of normativity i.e. the Oedipal dynamic, that produces and define the very fabric of consciousness against which unconsciousness merely becomes the supposed 'subversive' (Freud, 1973).

Lacan & Building on Freud

Whilst Freud understands and recognises the biological underpinnings of genitalia that he so strongly clings to in understanding female sexuality, he does so as genitalia takes on broader social and cultural meanings, however Freud referred to the anatomical sexual distinctions having psychical consequences which are laws (Freud, 1973 & Hook, 2006). Rather it was these 'laws' Freud spoke about which he acknowledged that was socio-cultural meanings although he did not explore the origins of these very laws which ultimately left him relying principally on genitalia that caused these laws which allowed for a female sexual identity (Hook, 2006). One also wonders about Freud's cause at the time to propagate psychology, to generate and establish a science regarding the intrapsychic, internal world and how this governs one's sense of identity. Freud's aim was to establish an overarching body of knowledge i.e. psychoanalysis, which can be argued as an inherent shortcoming to elaborating and enriching arguments on the nature of female sexuality. Although the work of Jacques Lacan proves very useful as his work enriches and expands on the work of Freud, as it was Lacan who pinpointed the details of these laws that govern sexuality which Freud had alluded to (Lacan, 2000).

Lacan was concerned with how is it that one can becomes sexually differentiated through an unconscious process which he attributed to the laws that govern sexuality

that Freud spoke of (Lacan, 2000). The difference this time around was that these laws were properties of the process of signification that comes to express an unknown space at the inception of a being capable of appropriating sexuality (Lacan, 2000). In other words, it is language that Lacan argues which structures the unconscious which in turn results in subject formation i.e. female sexuality (Saguaro, 2000). Lacan is able to arrive at the signifying power of language as he looks to Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory that broke down language into a synchronic structure of signs, as the value of each sign is determined by its relation to other signs (Campbell, 2004). In other words meaning is developed within language and therefore a single sign that language employs does not have inherent meaning but rather acquires meaning through the deployment of other signs from which it is differentiated (Hollway, 1996; Campbell, 2004 & Hook, 2006).

However, to complicate this science of meaning further Saussure understood the sign to be constitutive of two elements i.e. the signifier and the signified (Campbell, 2004). The former refers to the acoustics or syntax of words which can be understood as having the capacity of meaning whilst the latter is the meaning that is given (Campbell, 2004) Alternatively put the creating of meaning of social life (signifier) is able to represent concepts or images that the meaning is attached to (signified) (Hollway, 1996; Campbell, 2004; Shefer, 2004 & Hook, 2006). Therefore when signified and signifier are conflated, signification occurs resulting in meaning although the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary (Hook, 2006 & Shefer, 2004). This is due to several signifiers evoking the same signified, whilst simultaneously a single signifier can have multiple meanings attached to it (Hook, 2006 & Shefer, 2004).

The above has implications for a child's subsequent identity especially one that will be understood as female sexual desire as for Lacan it is the signifiers of language that will manage the process for the child of understanding 'her' world (Hook, 2006). Lacan argues that for one to deploy language, one need's to understand signifiers and one can only understand signifiers by understanding the inherent difference it creates within its own economy of signification that would enable it to capture the world (Lacan, 2000). Lacan argues (2000) that language desires much like the little girl to understand the great lack it experiences when confronted with the world. Therefore language takes the tedious and painstaking task to describe the world for itself, and whilst doing so Lacan describes that language kills the richness, plenitude and infiniteness of life precisely by signifying it (Lacan, 2000).

However in the case of the little girl, she becomes merely an adherent to the effects of signification as her continuous development compels her in desiring to consummate her being from the lack she experiences (Lacan, 2000). This is by virtue of not being proficient in speech to articulate her needs, however the very speech she relies on is what she is tricked into thinking what she wants (Lacan, 2000). Lacan called this speech, signification or language which will come to penetrate the imaginary world of the little girl as the symbolic world which is governed by the law of the father (Minsky, 1998). This is understood as literally the time when the bond the mother and infant share soon become breached by the awareness of the father thus introducing the Oedipal complex as Freud would argue, which Lacan would argue is a symptom of the symbolic order whilst also being a requirement for the order to thrive.

Therefore desire forever becomes summoned by and characterised in its relation to the law of the father, which for Lacan is the symbolic authority of the father whilst also emblematic of the patrilineal tradition in patriarchal societies (Hook, 2006). Therefore the implications this has for the little girl is that she forever forsakes her femininity for one which engages in masquerade as she fulfils the role of the symbolic and law of the father of what she is not that she expects to be desired and loved (Lacan, 2000).

Kristeva Reworks Lacan & the Semiotic

Julia Kristeva offers a perspective on or rather reworks Lacan's version of the imaginary i.e. the phase where the little girl is locked in her relationship with her mother and experiences the world with her mother as one without the presence of the father (Kristeva, 2000). Kristeva understand this site or realm to be a subversive space where the female subject/the little girl is able to express her desire in the purist form, undisrupted by the paternal law that underpins language (Rose, 1993). This realm she coins as the 'semiotic' which for her is the subject traversing terrain before her entrance into the proper order of language (Oliver, 1993), which is a period most pronounced for the female subject prior to her entry into the Oedipal complex or the symbolic order (Elliot, 2001).

Kristeva argues that this is important for the female subject, as the mother imposes a sense of regulation and order upon the child's psychic world, a maternal law as opposed to a paternal law i.e. 'the law before the law' (Elliot, 2001). This maternal sense of regulation allows for the 'semiotic' to thrive as it is a language according to Kristeva

that is poetic, as poetry signals tolerance and emancipation in society which is a direct contrast to language as it is of paternal law (Oliver, 1993). The 'semiotic' or poetic language for Kristeva shows how this realm undermines language itself thus exposing its oppressive structure upon that which is an expression of desire that is not desire itself but a purer, untainted form (Chanter, 1993).

Kristeva (2000) also importantly identifies the implications for what the semiotic is understood as when the pervasive and subsuming Oedipal/symbolic/law of the father inevitably looms. The semiotic as a site is understood as nonsensical, mad and hysterical as it is pre-sentence speech, and is forced to into a discourse of language and development (Kristeva, 2000). Such a discourse of the acquisition and grasp of linguistics locates such pre-sentence as primitive, and constructs this realm whilst exposing it as merely rhythms and intonations i.e. coos, babbling and repetition that need to be surmounted in order to live (Kristeva, 2000). Whatever regressive tendency there is, once in adulthood or phase outside of infancy that delves in the semiotic is understood as suffering from serious pathology (Kristeva, 2000). However the semiotic in return exposes the order of language as restrictive whilst strategically allows signification to limit the way and extent to which desire may be expressed (Kristeva, 2000).

Irigaray & a Woman's Pleasure

The work of Luce Irigaray (2000) begins to sharpen and hones in on the desire that governs and appears to be attached to female sexuality, as desire or pleasures for Irigaray is the effect that is desired from the symbolic functions genitalia serve in intercourse. Irigaray enquires into the autoeroticism of the penis and the vagina and argues that for the former to touch himself, he needs an instrument such as his hand, a woman's body and language (Irigaray, 1996 & 2000). The women however "touches herself in and of herself without the need for any mediation, and before there is any way to distinguish activity from passivity" (Irigaray, 2000: 261). What Irigaray means by this is that a woman 'touches herself' constantly as her genitals take the formation of two lips in continuous contact, thereby maintaining that she is 'within herself' (Irigaray, 2000).

However the very sexual aims that denote activity and passivity are established when this autoeroticism is interrupted as it experiences a parting of the lips, "a violent break-in" that is witnessed by the violation of the penis (Irigaray, 2000). The pleasure of a

woman that she can accord to herself from her self-caressing is taken away from her as her pleasure is dissolved into sexual relations where the vagina takes over the little boy's hand and transcends his autoeroticism into hetero-eroticism in intercourse (Irigaray, 2000). What Irigaray is saying is that if this is what sexuality and sexual relations is premised upon then how does a woman manage her autoeroticism within this field which points to the purpose of woman (Irigaray, 2000).

Therefore the pleasures or desires of a woman remain out of touch and unknown to her as the notion of sexuality and sexual relations "offers nothing but imperatives dictated by male rivalry: the 'strongest' being the one who has the best 'hard-on', the longest, the stiffest penis or even the one who 'pees the furthest'" (Irigaray, 2000: 262). This is according to Irigaray what one who adheres to a female sexuality is offered as a woman's desire is not her own, she can not take ownership of it as she exists only for mans pleasure where she is prostituted through her being in the world (Irigaray, 1996).

A woman's desire remains in hibernation due to the all summery effects of language that allows men to articulate the very pleasure and desire by virtue of sexuality and sexual relations. It is within this smokescreen that women maintain their passive aim where she waits to be penetrated (Irigaray, 2000). It is the very idea of sex, sexuality, sexual relations and more importantly sexual difference is what obfuscates the pleasure and desire of a woman (Irigaray, 2000). The question then becomes and also at such a junction a point of convergence for Irigaray's work with Lacan's, how is a woman to discover her desire, whilst trapped in a symbolic realm that is phallocentric and that defines this very desire, making it still not her own ?

Cixous & Women Writing Her Pleasure

This question is what concerns whilst also speaks to the work of Helene Cixous as she argues in quite a utopian fashion for a female desire that is 'her' own as Cixous seeks refuge in literary work and academia. "Women must write herself" argues Cixous as it is a woman's writing which represents a response to the fact that she has been driven away from her body (Cixous, 1981:245). Cixous (2000) understands all that language represents/signifies/symbolizes to be a method that profoundly and powerfully captures reality itself. The very fact that we can experience and understand our experience according to Cixous is the effect of a cultural discourse understood to be natural (Robinson, 2001). This cultural discourse in return is ordered around hierarchal binary's that embody the man/woman dichotomy which corresponds to the positions of

activity and passivity respectively which is designated by the law of the father (Cixous, 2000). In other words social life and culture requires language to speak its practice although this very tongue or language is phallocentric, masculine and a patriarchal way of being that fundamentally represents the interests of men (Cixous 1981 & 2000).

However the deployment of language for the purposes of adherence to practices is what Cixous situates and links to the logic of the ability to desire within the psychoanalytic tradition only to subvert it (Conley, 1991). It is the Oedipal complex that enables the function of desire as castration complex reminds the boy of his privileged function and position i.e. by virtue of his penis, whilst penis envy reminds the girl of her eternal lack (Cixous, 2000). Therefore the lack the girl experiences becomes what she desires, and what she desires is a man to consummate her being as woman, in other words she needs a man to make her feel like a woman (Cixous, 2000). However Cixous (2000) argues that to say a woman lacks means that she does not need lack in the first place, and if she does so desperately lacks then how is it that she comes to know this lack in the first place? It is man who makes a woman to be vigilant and conscious of her lack, by telling her what she must be in relation to him as his word becomes law i.e. the law of the father, and law becomes being which in this case is a woman who awaits to be penetrated (Cixous, 2000).

Therefore, to truly revive the desire of woman as not inescapable from the law of the father or what Cixous calls the realm of the proper, Cixous argues that such revival can only take place at the level of language and semantics that flows continuously almost like a libidinal or instinctual energy (Cixous, 2000). This is an important point that Cixous makes as it qualifies the notion of the unconscious i.e. the realm understood as operational once language and culture has penetrated the female subject. It is also the unconscious which is what makes desire possible, particularly sexual desire at the Realm of the proper/Law of the father/Oedipal complex and how desiring another sexually becomes bound to whilst reliant and determined on these symbolic realms that are phallocentric (Cixous, 1981; 2000 & Conley, 1991). Cixous argues (1981) that it is the capacity to desire sexually that becomes the principal site of subversion as the symbolic phallocentric order which designates desiring can be overthrown at the level of semantics.

However this level of semantics which Cixous argues is the act of writing, the ‘text’ that should be driven by the unconscious if it is to subvert the symbolic order, where

writing becomes driven not by meaning but by feeling (Cixous, 1981). The only way a woman can live authentically is to break away from the symbolic and write herself where such writing is fuelled her instinctual impulses, an overflow of which cannot be captured by the symbolic but rather requires a writing that defies this symbolic order (Cixous, 1981). Cixous is demanding that the feminine or a female sexual desire be located in the unconscious as this catapults the body into art as a way of bringing chaos to the restrictive phallocentric control of language (Chadwick, 2001).

The Promise of Music

Music is one such profound and powerful form of art that infiltrates modern life helping people define who they are, especially its reflection of existing gender differences and the ways in which these are constructed (Whiteley, 1997 & Bayton, 1998). Young men and women acquire a sense of how to be feminine and masculine and heterosexual through listening to music by observing clothing, bodily gestures and the overall performance of the musician as they themselves simultaneously perform gender, sexuality and music (Whiteley, 1997 & Bayton, 1998).

However, female creativity and artistic production are obscured by music itself, as music represents a space that is circulated by variables such as class, gender, race and sexuality that embody a cultural way of knowing ordered by language (hooks, 1995). The work of Ariel Levy in *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture* (2005) echoes the obfuscation of a medium such as music – particularly at the level of gender and sexuality – as well as other mediums which propagate popular culture. Levy (2005) demonstrates how music, an agent of popular culture, creates a discourse around the idea of liberation. What this discourse of liberation does is that it grabs hold of any parochial and austere idea of gendered and sexual identity that restricts the flow of dialogue (Levy, 2005).

Therefore ‘so-called’ female musical expression considered art needs to critically interrogate female creativity and artistic production by locating a space. This space can be defined as “the awesome task of just lingering, spending time with [her] thoughts, dreams, and intense yearnings, often the kind that, like unrequited love, go unfulfilled” (hooks, 1995: 125). The participation of women in music situates them within such a realm of possibility that hooks speaks of that is capable of articulating multiple patterns of desire (McClary, 1991).

However there are barriers to female creativity and artistic production within music that prevent the possibility of articulating multiple patterns of desire. One of the biggest barriers to creativity, artistic integrity and a sense of authenticity accompanying expression within music are pressures from the music industry, specifically recording labels who are concerned with music sales (Gauntlett, 2002 & Whiteley, 2005). This has fuelled continuous debates regarding the production of music influenced by pressures within the industry where music is crafted and tailored with commercial success in mind (Nava, 1997; Gauntlett, 2002 & Whiteley, 2005). The sense one gets and argued by many is the overriding influence of album sales compromising artistic integrity and the extent to which music produced by an artist is heartfelt, original, authentic and creative (Nava, 1997; Gauntlett, 2002 & Whiteley, 2005).

Music is therefore and most certainly not a space that one can unquestionably embrace capable of articulating multiple patterns of a female sexual desire. The music industry is fraught with tensions and struggles over the idea of expression and competing popular discourses that are fundamentally phallocentric that subsume and obscure female musicians' mode of expression (Levy, 2005). Expression, specifically sexual desire as articulated by female musicians has been considered especially controversial. Either a female musician articulating matters pertaining to sexual desire through her music have been deemed whorish by conservative members and officials of society and has subsequently become uncharted territory and censored (Taylor & Laing, 2000). Or patriarchal discourses promoting 'freedom of expression' have exploited to licentious extents female musicians articulating matters pertaining to their sexual desire that are equally repressive as the previous point stipulates (Taylor & Laing, 2000). This has been the recent influx of women especially within popular music reflecting firstly capitalist interests and marketability with regards to women scantily clad and sexualized gratuitously so (Levy, 2005). Secondly is that this increased sexualisation of women in music reflects the interests of men by objectifying them further (Levy, 2005). Thirdly, this places increased pressure on young girls or young women as it prioritises beauty, fashion above other qualities but also discriminates against women who do not conform to such ideals (Levy, 2005).

Karlene Faith in her book entitled *Madonna, Bawdy and Soul* (1997) argues that American musician Madonna has represented an archetype for the sexually charged and provocative woman who is assertive in articulating her desire. Faith argues (1997) that Madonna has walked a fine line between invoking traditional sexual representations of

women that popular music capitalizes on earning her commercial success, but she has simultaneously invoked these popular constructs with a sense of irony and parody reflecting a sense of authenticity and artistic integrity. Madonna's immense commercial success and longevity has raised questions related to the extent to which she adopts a sincere, original and authentic approach to music making (Dark, 2005 and Grizzutti Harrison, 2007). However Madonna's performances through videos, images, and lyrical content related specifically to sexual desire whilst relying on popular representations of gender appears to upset whilst conforming to such representations through irony, hyperbole and parody (Paglia, 2007).

Madonna's performance (performance denoting the use of characters, costuming, make-up, lighting and choreography that compliments and enhances whilst in addition to lyrical content, vocals and sound that culminates in what comes to be a leitmotif that is being expressed) is an example of the pressures the industry places upon the artist in terms of being more commercially viable, but this does not necessarily mean that the music loses its sense of authenticity and artistic integrity. There are spaces and instances within music that – for the purposes of this research – women can articulate multiple patterns of sexual desire. At the same time though one needs to be vigilant that music as a space for women to speak and write their desires against existing repressive desires is not without its own barriers and obstacles to achieving this.

The Work of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey

For now the work of two female musicians Liz Phair and P.J Harvey will be explored as they have challenged traditional representations of femininity. The challenge Liz Phair and PJ Harvey put forth to femininity differs from the emergence of the 'Riot Grrl' act in that the latter was concerned specifically with fashioning a politics for women through music (Brackett, 2005) The former is concerned more with communicating subjective experience rather than politics that spoke of an abrupt and frank sexuality, where there is a reliance on the traditional allures of femininity conflated with a sense of rebelliousness and aggressiveness that contrasts femininity (Brackett, 2005). Liz Phair and PJ Harvey along with other artists – Tori Amos, Bjork and Courtney Love – who emerged during this time which was around the early nineties received a large amount of critical acclaim for the alternative style they adopted that differed from the gender politics of the 'Riot Grrl' act as well as popular styles of music (France, 2007).

Both these musicians work is steeped in the singer-songwriter tradition reminiscent of the Joni Mitchell confessional style of songwriting, and is revered for its authenticity as they provide specific insights into the relationship between subjective experience and the meaning of women's lived reality (Whiteley, 2000). Phair, whose album 'Exile in Guyville' received countless members' critical acclaim, as the record was described as shattering every repression women had, be it musical, sexual or canonical (Whiteley, 2000). The record was described as a "godsend to female fans because it communicated so explicitly the ambivalent knot of feelings that coexist with sexual desire. That this cleaned-scrubbed college graduate from Winnetka could think as dirty as any man floored a lot of people" (France, 2007: 300).

Harvey's album 'Ride of Me', contained songs characterised by a sense of ambiguity as the lyrics of the sex/gender of you are never specified, coupled with Harvey's idiosyncratic speech-based singing style (Whiteley, 2000). Songs of 'Exile in Guyville' like 'fuck and run' and the title song 'Rid of Me' which demanded 'lick my legs I'm on fire, lick my lips of desire', have been observed as perfecting "a kind of self-exposure, in lyrics and self-representation, that uniquely combines seduction and threat, intimacy and estrangement…dramatising the conflicts of possessing a body, of desiring and being desired, in a way that's sexually charged but not exactly sexy" (Whiteley, 2000: 210).

It is also important to note that whilst Liz Phair and PJ Harvey are similar in the alternative style they adopt in communicating a pattern of sexually loaded themes, the style both musicians embody in terms of writing, singing and the content of this 'sexual' is very different to each other. For the purposes of elaborating on the differences between the way in which Liz Phair and PJ Harvey articulate their sexual desires, as well as for purposes permitting for literature engaging the aims of this research, separate discussions will be undertaken for each musician. These discussions whilst exploring the musician's subject matter will highlight five songs from each musician from their albums 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me', which this research is concerned with.

'Exile in Guyville'

'Exile in Guyville' is Liz Phair's first studio album released in 1993, and the majority of the songs on the record Phair recorded on a tape in her bedroom, and subsequently presented to her then recorded company (France, 2007). The album contains eighteen

songs and the content that characterises each and every track from start to finish, is emblematic of a teenage girl whose sexual efflorescence, and the tensions surrounding its need to be unearthed whilst its preservation is socially prized, is articulated within her diary-like scribbling. This scribbling articulates convention, but defies convention only to acknowledge that there is a price to pay in defying convention which is hurt and pain that Phair speaks about. Convention in this light refers to the sexual relations that play themselves out in gendered relations that filter through all eighteen songs. Phair sounds and feels as though she has been born into a world that feels like living in exile. This world is 'Guyville', she expresses the alienation she experiences from herself whilst having to conform and navigate her way through 'Guyville'.

In 'Help Me Mary' track number two, she sings about the role she has to enact as a woman: "I lock my door at night/I keep my mouth shut tight/I practice all my moves/I memorize their stupid rules/I make myself their friend/I show them just how far I can bend". "Their" in the song refers to men who see her and see her as only good for one thing, and she plays up to the role that she is expected to enact. One gets a sense in 'Help Me Mary' that men in her life almost bulldoze their way through, exercising what it is they want, need and desire, and that there is almost little or no room for women to exercise what it is she wants, needs and desires. And Phair's appeal to 'Mary' reminds us of Mother Mary and religious connotations, simultaneously creates the very restriction of women behaving a certain way but relying upon this maternal figure that is supposed to comfort, nurture and provide guidance.

Phair's appeal for 'Mary' to 'help her' reflects the tensions she experiences with being caught between representing a sexual object or nothing at all to men, where either option leaves her feeling somewhat alienated and vulnerable. What she does is that she comes to represent what it is she knows these men want from her, which differs to plainly representing the sexual object in that she exercises control in fashioning what men want her to be. The result appears to be a win-win situation where she and these men derive pleasure. She appears however to make men look stupid and silly in that they are easily fooled in thinking women are passive recipients of sex and desire, and that men can be easily manipulated when enticed by women as an object of sex.

In 'Glory' (track #3) which is lyrically sparse and opaque, Phair appears to be singing about a sexual encounter with a man where she compares the experience with him to "Shining some glory on me". This track is much more direct than 'Help Me Mary' but

oddly conceals more than it talks about in terms of the content relating to a sexual experience. One gets a sense that the sexual act is all that matters and nothing else. Phair also very interestingly in 'Glory' begins the song by boasting almost: "He's got a really big tongue". She proceeds from this with vague and obscure descriptions about what he does with his tongue, to her presumably so. The function of this again is what he can do for her, and not what she can do for him. In other words he is there to pleasure her.

In track #4 'Dance of the Seven Veils' she wails to her lover fulfilling her position to him whilst overwhelming him at the same time: "Johnny my love/Get out the business/It makes me wanna rough you up so badly… I only ask because I'm a real cunt in spring/You can rent me by the hour". This song sees Phair elaborating on the theme of exercising her sexual desire especially as she names quite explicitly what it is she wants from Johnny but also what Johnny representing the world of men reduce women to in the sexual act i.e. just a 'cunt'. However, in Phair exercising her desires, she also communicates feelings of frustration and vulnerability as she reels from what appears to be Johnny withholding sex from her. But one gets a sense from this of her ferocious sexual appetite which contradicts the manner in which women are represented sexually. She appears to want sex more than 'Johnny' does which is quite the inverse in especially in terms of the preoccupation men are supposed to have with sex.

In 'Fuck and Run' (track #10) Phair realizes what she has given herself to as she tells of another night with another guy and the morning after that's left lingering in her head and the pattern she can not seem to get out of: "I can feel it in my bones/I'm gonna spend another year alone/Its fuck and run/Fuck and run/Even when I was seventeen/Fuck and run/Even when I was twelve." The song importantly marks how she has become a product of 'Guyville' even though she played into the role derisively she still becomes marked and feels the pervasive, overwhelming pressure to confirm to the very structure that feels like exile as she sings in 'Fuck and Run': "Whatever happened to a boyfriend/The kind of guy who tries to win you over and/Whatever happened to a boyfriend/The kind of guy who makes love cause he's in it and/I want a boyfriend".

Phair's ultimate request in the song is sad and it reaches a climax in a song entitled 'Shatter': "I know that I don't always realize/How sleazy it is/Messing with these guys/But something about just being with you/Slapped me right in the face/Nearly

broke me in two/It's a mark/I've taken hard/And I know that I'll carry with me for a long, long time." Phair tries to shatter the oppressive desire that characterises 'Guyville' but it only shatters her back in the process and her only task now is to keeping on writing her desire through her songs that will connect her with other women enduring the same circumstances.

Phair follows 'Shatter' with a track called 'Flower' which is perhaps the most sexually explicit track on the album. Phrases such as "I want to fuck you like a dog", "I'll fuck you and your minions too", "Your lips a perfect suck me size", "I want to be your blowjob queen" and "I'll fuck you 'til your dick is blue", whilst quite humorous-sounding also has an angry tone. Such anger is perhaps an expression of the sadness and loneliness Phair feels in 'Guyville'. This is manifest in the song as it feels like a violent attack on the man on what he must do because she will 'fuck you' and 'make you like it'. It comes across as an imperative and quite a role reversal in terms of gender roles and active and passive positions men and women occupy when speaking about sex.

'Rid Of Me'

The work of Harvey particularly on her album 'Rid Of Me' which was released in 1993 the same year as 'Exile in Guyville' is perhaps less remorseful and forgiving as Phair's album. 'Rid Of Me' along with its fourteen tracks unfold as a whirlwind of sexual desire accompanied by ambiguities and contradictions that accompany such a desire. Scaruffi (1999: http://www.scaruffi.com/vol6/harveypj.html), describes 'Rid Of Me' as ripping apart very personal and often delicately controversial passionate expressions of grief as "Harvey's soul struggle[s] between pain and pleasure, affection and libido, frustration and desire, and ultimately expose a psyche that [is] metaphorically nymphomaniac".

As the title of the album 'Rid Of Me' suggests, signals Harvey's tension and ambiguity surrounding 'Me'/her/Harvey and, who is in fact to be rid of her, is this another or is this very person she wishes to be rid of 'herself'. Harvey is already introducing a part of her being and experiencing that is not in accordance and congruent with the 'Me' who is supposed to be a woman thus wanting to rid this part of herself or someone else wanting to be ride of her, which introduces so much tension she articulates throughout her album.

The title track of the album which is also the opening track, Harvey delves into a dependency that is strangely odd and peculiar that very quickly turns into possessiveness to the point of dominating her lover as she calmingly states: “Tie yourself to me/No one else no/You’re not rid of me/Night and day/I breathe oh/ You’re not rid of me/I beg you my darling/Don’t leave me/I’m hurting”. However her domination and possessiveness over him are thereafter exposed as she submits and shows her vulnerability and desperate plea as she begs her lover to stay because it hurts her so badly when he is gone. And as an attempt to entice her lover she responds: “Lick my legs I’m on fire/Lick my legs of desire”, an indication of what she desires but more so what he desires that she knows is enough to fulfill what is beyond desiring for her. This ‘beyond desiring’ of Harvey comes to fruition as she fools her lover only to reveal her principle aim: “Yeah you’re not rid of me/I’ll make you lick my injuries/I’m gonna twist your head of, say/‘Till you say don’t you wish you never, never met her/Don’t you, don’t you wish you never met her”.

This aim appears to be a destructive one whereby her desire is only able to articulate itself by her lover wanting to be rid of her of which she gains so much pleasure, almost a revenge linked to the part of her she wishes to be rid of that only her lover can do but at his discomfort. Therefore Harvey can only derive pleasure from a desire that a man gives her to which she destroys this very desire at the cost of her lover, as he initiates desire in the first place.

In ‘Legs’ which is the third track Harvey sings about love that quickly turns into violence and mutilation. According to Harvey the song derives inspiration from loving someone so much that one’s legs will be cut off if they decide to leave the person who is in love with the one leaving (Blandford, 2004). In a similar vein to ‘Rid of Me’, ‘Legs’ speaks about possessiveness and a dependence that is dramatized to a pathological extent in so far as physically disabling someone so they will not leave. Once again Harvey’s desire communicates a sense of vulnerability that is compensated by threatening and violent actions which ultimately mask the vulnerability inherent in desire. This is quite peculiar in that one usually suspects this to be a characteristic of men who are considered possessive and sadistic lovers.

Harvey goes on to further upset characteristics pertaining to men and women in ‘50ft Queenie’. Harvey creates the character of ‘Queenie’ who is riddled with ambiguities surrounding his/her gender. ‘Queenie’ immediately denotes a woman or either a man

who is a drag queen. However this is obscured as the character of 'Queenie' is revealed as cocky, forceful, arrogant, loud, and sexual, which bears more resemblances to a man than a woman. One gets the sense however that Harvey uses the term 'Queenie' to almost make fun of and mock the idea of femininity and masculinity especially as she appears to conflate both positions with idea of a 'Queenie' and exaggerating both positions.

Harvey shows the implications of her desire not being rid of and thus allows the 'man' to wield/take control of desire in track thirteen 'Snake' that embodies her Tantalus torture i.e. a desire that is frustrated, never satisfied always tortured: "You snake/You crawled/Between my legs…Just take my hand/You'll be my bride/Just take that fruit put it inside…I've burned my hands I'm in the fire/My heart it aches I'm in the fire/You snake I ate a true belief/Your rotten fruit inside of me/Oh Adam please you must believe/That snake put it in front of me". This song embodies and expands on the biblical metaphor of the snake that tempts Eve, however Harvey exposes this snake as a phallic marker of a world for which she serves one purpose only which is to allow herself to be tempted and penetrated. Such a (phallic) snake keeps alive the flame, the fire of desire that Harvey is embedded in however she is burnt, scarred, tortured and forever marked by this flame.

Harvey also reveals a comical side to her writing as she parodies the mans/her lovers sexual behaviour which becomes so routine, complacent and naturalized in 'Man Size': "I'm coming up man-size/Skinned alive/I want to fit/I'll have to get/Man-size/I'm coming on/Handsome/Got my girl/'N she's a wow/I've cast my iron knickers down/No need no need to shout/Can you hear/Can you hear me now/Man-size". Harvey is clearly ridiculing the sexual behaviour of men and at the same time upsets the pattern of their sexual behaviour as serious, cool and unmoved only to expose it as amusing, vain and unnaturally rigid.

Kristeva would concur with Phair and Harvey, as expression and writing remains the only means necessary whilst powerfully so, reveals awareness and knowledge about and sometimes the truth about a repressed, underbelly and secretive unconscious universe (Kristeva, 1996). It marks a space of fantasy and pleasure that frustrates the order of social signs and the process of phallocentric signification and it circulates a more free discourse that names "the enigmas of the body, the dreams, secret joys, shames, hatreds of the second sex" (Kristeva, 1996: 28).

To Conclude

The point after a lengthy endeavour in exploring the work of various theorists thus far in terms of the 'space' this research wishes to tease out so as to accommodate a subversive female sexual desire, so that one does not in fact have to speak about subversion, is the promise of the unconscious and language. The theoretical paradigms that correspond with the last two mentioned concepts i.e. psychoanalytic and post-structural theory respectively that the mentioned theorists have implicitly stated, is the anchorage so to speak for which this research will endeavour to make sense of a subversive female sexual desire.

The coalescing of these two realms is understood and from what can be extrapolated thus far from the literature is the unconscious remaining as close as possible to the sensate, instinctual urges and experiencing that is able to use language to communicate its experience only to subvert language in the process. Because the unconscious requires language for its articulation and language requires the unconsciousness to challenge its phallocentric premise, the both realms need to work in a way that they do not overwhelm each other. Rather the experience of a female sexual desire needs to be expressed in a way that is accorded the tools for speaking i.e. language, but also and equally important is that bodily functioning is kept as close as possible to experiencing almost at a spontaneous, instinctual and unconscious level.

Chapter 3

Methodology

As a prelude to elaborating the methodological approach adopted in the current study, it is useful to reiterate the research questions that form the backdrop to the literature review in Chapter two as well as the study in general. The first question: how do adults perceive and interpret the sexuality enacted by the musical performances of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through their albums 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' respectively? Secondly, what are the functions that enable the very manner in which P.J Harvey and Liz Phair enact sexuality through their musical performances? Lastly, what are the traces or points of subversion if any, manifest in participants responses to songs from 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' as well as images of these musicians from the same time period the albums under investigation were released? These questions address themselves to a *female sexual desire* and the extent to which or not one can argue manifestations of such a desire that are *subversive*. But also how *subversion* invites enquiry into the epistemological and ontological structures that maintain a *female sexual desire*.

Research Design

Methodology

The primary methodology that has informed all the steps and processes in carrying out this study has been qualitative in nature. When one thinks about the questions that have been mentioned above that this study is concerned with investigating, such questions engage arguments pertaining to the epistemology and ontology of gender and sexuality. In accordance with questions that engage the epistemological and ontological structures of the variables this research is concerned with i.e. gender and sexuality, it appears then that qualitative research methodologies would be most appropriate. The reason for this is that through exploring gender and sexuality as variables, this study has sought to gain access so to speak by exploring participants 'interpretations' and 'perceptions'. This speaks to participants lived realities which are highly subjective and can not be compartmentalised and put into categories, but whose responses are rich and fluid, and should be examined that way (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Such an approach echoes a qualitative way of making sense of one's data, but in a way that is open-ended and inductive that treats participants responses as highly subjective accounts of how they experience the world and in process the personal meaning making participants attribute in what comes to constitute 'their worlds' (Flick, 2006).

Such an approach which this study has employed when handling participants responses has been vigilant of their 'interpretations' and 'perceptions' of questions that pertain to the gender and sexuality as variables that underlie a *female sexual desire*. In doing so, the manner in which participants responses to these variables have been approached is once again in accordance with how the research questions have been framed and what it is they aim to explore i.e. epistemology and ontology regarding gender and sexuality. Therefore the type of theoretical approach that this study has employed which has informed qualitatively engaging with participants responses to a *female sexual desire* has been a critical research that is concerned with how the idea of *subversion* poses challenges to a *female sexual desire*. A critical research adopts the stance of *how* it is one comes to know a *female sexual desire*, but through questions that tell of the manifestations of a *subversive* form, which assists in unpacking the very notion or idea of a *female sexual desire*. Especially how such a desire can be more exclusive than it is inclusive in terms of the appearance it takes, and even how a *female sexual desire* may have semblance to the idea of *subversion* more than one thinks, which eradicates the idea of *subversion* altogether

Schools of Thought

This sub-section was included perhaps to elaborate a little bit more on what may appear in the above paragraph as the vague treatment a critical research has been given which this study argues it has employed. With regards to how this research has been executed from a critical point of view, once again key terms that informed how this research was operationalised was 'interpretations' and 'perceptions' from the first research question. It is important to note before going on any further that the term 'perceptions' has been used in the way that demonstrates the discursive and symbolic means participants employed in making sense of a *female sexual desire*, and not in the cognitive sense of the word i.e. cognitive processes. An additional term that informed how the study was carried out was 'functions that enable' from the second question in the above paragraph. These key terms carry the weight of and are influenced by theoretical paradigms that have already been mentioned in the literature review that have assisted if anything in making sense of the participants responses. These paradigms have been helpful in providing some scope for addressing questions of *subversion* and a *female sexual desire*. These two theoretical paradigms are the psychoanalytic and post-structural schools of thought. Therefore in accordance with the principles of these two paradigms, the study has aimed to explore participant's subjective accounts of their

experiences, as both the theoretical paradigms mentioned endorses openness to meanings (Neuman, 1994 & Jarviluoma, Moisala & Vilkko, 2003). In addition to having examined participant's responses to the two musicians this research is concerned with, participants responses to the musicians have also been looked at and engaged briefly with from the perspective of the discourses that have operated in shaping and constructing their responses to Liz Phair and PJ Harvey.

The manner in which the field work of the research has been managed is by conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The instruments that have guided these interviews comprised of a self-developed questionnaire that was also piloted with a small group prior to data collection. The interview consisted of three core thematic areas of exploration: The first section of the interview commenced by eliciting responses from participants that were quite closed ended in nature, especially as such questions it was anticipated could be answered relatively easily and quickly. These types of questions were purposeful in that it endeavoured to create a sense of comfort for the participants that served to reduce any tension or anxiety participants may have anticipated from the interview. It was also hoped that such questions would ultimately equip participants with a sense of confidence to answer questions. This was important especially as the questions asked as they interview progressed gradually but increasingly became more open-ended. Most important of all though is that the first section of the interview attempted to flesh out participants musical preferences, which would tell the extent to which participants would have a difficult time or nor digesting so to speak the performances of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey.

The second and third sections of the interview dealt more with the performances of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. These two sections demanded more input from participants as they were presented with vignettes and were asked mostly open-ended questions that required them to comment on the vignettes. The second section focused on lyrical content of five songs from both Liz Phair and PJ Harvey, specifically from their albums 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' respectively. Participants were asked a series of questions depending on their level of engagement and insight regarding their thoughts and feelings regarding these ten songs. Furthermore, the third and final section of the interview focused on images of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. Once again participants were asked to comment on Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's images which were photographed from the same time period the albums 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' were released i.e. 1993. The point of these two sections of the interview was to familiarize participants

with Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's material that would help facilitate arguments regarding the extent to which these musicians are *subversive* or not.

However, it is important to mention a major shortcoming of this research, which is the vignettes described above that were used to elicit responses from participants. Particularly how the vignettes neglected to arouse participants auditory senses which would have completely changed how participants interpreted Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's music. This is important especially when one thinks about how the 'sound' of music (a defining property) when conflated with words and images enhances and alters quite dramatically the meaning of the song.

Participants

Participants were selected from the greater Johannesburg area and varied in the position they occupied due to the sampling strategy that was employed. However participants were mostly individuals that have just graduated from university and had entered the job market, whilst some participants were still at university. One again this was affected by the sample strategy used to locate participants which happened to constitute individuals who have been or currently are at university, which was not planned but panned out this way. Secondly, participants were above the ages of twenty-one as the subject matter of what the interview required of participants focused primarily on issues and matters pertaining to sexual representations and sexuality. Such issues and matters required participants to reflect on some of their personal experiences that center on sexual desire which informed the way it is they came to understand the sexual desire of female musicians which is of interest to this research. However it is important to mention that in such instances questions have not inquired into participant's sexual history at any point of all interviews conducted. Rather questions concerning the desire of female musicians under investigation evoked a sense of the participants experience around this that enabled them if anything to respond to such questions. It is the sexual nature of the questions during the interview that imposed the restriction that all participants had to be over the ages of twenty-one. Furthermore, this criteria was necessary for purposes of informed consent. Perhaps another issue regarding the age of participants of this study is the argument that musical tastes differ significantly arguably so within different age ranges and therefore specifying an age range may compromise or bias how the 'traces of *subversion*' manifest in PJ Harvey and Liz Phair's music might be understood. Therefore the study has not limited participation of

subjects to an age range but rather welcomed all ages but only asked that they be over the age of twenty-one.

With regards to the criterion that has been discussed above that participants were selected within and the perhaps arbitrary manner in which this was done is a limitation of the study. The limitation concerns the lack of specificity with regards to parameters that participants were chosen within. This specificity concerns music listeners and the categories they fall in, particularly the general approach the study adopted in selecting participants who did not represent a specific music listener group. It would have been beneficial to the study if participants had been chosen with specific musical tastes whilst commenting on Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's music rather than selecting participants randomly based on their musical preference and taste.

It was initially anticipated that a total of eight participants would be interviewed for the study. This emerged largely from concerns that the research sought as many perceptions and interpretations of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's music. Despite the number of participants being a priority for reasons such as convergences and contradictions amongst and between responses emerging to argue points regarding *subversion,* what was crucial was 'what participants said' rather than 'how many said'. Eight participants therefore became a number that permitted for comparing and contrasting participant's responses of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey, but at the same time employing an in-depth and critical analysis of their responses. However, once the interviewing process commenced and a total of seven interviews had been conducted just shy of one more interview as initially planned. The researcher together with the supervisor decided that based on the transcripts from the seven interviews, that this was a sufficient amount of information based on the qualitative measures employed to make sense of the data. The qualitative methods that were employed when the seven transcripts had been viewed as anticipated would have made extensive use of extracting as much information as possible from the interviews, which would permit for arguments engaging 'subversion'.

Therefore a total of seven participants were interviewed, and the duration of interviews ranged from as short as an hour to as lengthy as an hour and a half going on two hours. Despite strivings made towards maintaining a gender balance, due to the odd number of interviews conducted, four females and three males were interviewed between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-seven. With regards to the sample strategy that was employed,

a snowball strategy was employed which involved participants recommending other relevant people for inclusion in the study.

Procedure

With regards to the procedural matters of how the field work of this study was managed, firstly a network correspondent was established and consulted with, who in return disclosed the contact details and the names of potential candidates for the study. Before these consultations took place however, the correspondent was notified and cautioned as to the specific criteria that individuals needed to meet before they could gain entrance into the study i.e. residence, age and gender. The correspondent, upon meeting with potential candidates they felt would be suitable for the research were told briefly what the study entailed whilst also handing them a participant information sheet which further explained to the individual exactly what the study entailed. The correspondent then subsequently made contact with the candidate a day or two later to confirm if they would in fact be interested in participating. Individuals who were keen to participate in the study were then told that their contact details would be forwarded to the researcher who would conduct the interview once the correspondent was consulted with. Thereafter the candidates were contacted telephonically and thanked for their participation whilst also a convenient place and time for the interview to take place was established.

Most of the interviews were conducted at participant's residence although provision was made for one participant who was unable to do so, but arrangements were made for the interview to take place at a venue that was most convenient for the participant. The idea generally in establishing a place to interview participants was informed by the study wanting participants to feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible whilst eliminating as much anxiety provoking variables as possible. This it was hoped would promote a positive influence on maximizing and enhancing participant's responses to questions, especially with regards to participants not being forthcoming with their thoughts and feelings.

When the time had come for the interview to commence the researcher acquainted himself with participants, and they were thanked once again for lending their time and patience with regards to establishing the interview as well as the actual interview process. Thereafter, participants were informed once again about the nature of the interview, especially about confidentiality and anonymity, and the fact that it would be

audio-tape recorded. Thirdly and in conjunction with the confidentiality, anonymity and audio-taping is that participants were told that they had to read and sign two consent forms that pertained to giving their consent to be interviewed as well as consenting to be audio-taped. Lastly is that the participants were asked if they had any questions regarding the interview that had not been raised or spoken to and if there was anything they needed clarification on before the interview commenced. Participants were also informed that if at any point during the interview they felt uncomfortable they could request to stop the interview or choose to withdraw completely from the study, and that they did not have to answer questions that made them feel awkward, anxious or uncomfortable.

Data Collection & Analysis

In terms of analysing the data that was obtained from the seven interviews that were conducted, the analysis that was employed was a critical thematic content analysis (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). This type of analysis is twofold: Firstly, the data that was obtained from the interviews was thoroughly reviewed with the aim of searching for recurrent and dominant themes that emerged within a single participants' data, but then looking for how such recurrent themes converged with other participant's responses as well. Secondly, was that once dominant and pertinent themes were identified, the data was then subject to critical evaluation. This critical investigation involved going beyond describing the dominant themes but looked at discourses that were operative whilst informed participant's responses which converged and permitted for overriding and overlapping themes.

Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999), provide a useful framework for data analysis that served as a guideline for interpreting the data of this research. The authors propose five steps for interpreting data, however their five steps were not always strictly adhered to but were rather helpful in that it provided a framework for approaching and working with participant's responses in an interpretive way. Step one involves one familiarising and immersing oneself in the data so that one gets to know their data well enough (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Step two was concerned with the inducing of themes which referred to the organising principles that underlay the data (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Step three was related to the process of coding which involved one breaking up participant's responses into relevant sections that were differentiated from one another so that one was able to make more sense of their data (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Step four entailed elaboration which allowed for one to expand on what

was broken up into analytical sections by exploring the depth of these sections by looking at the nuances that constitute the codes and themes themselves (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). The fifth and last step, interpretation and checking involved one relaying the results and discussing them with others, in this case the supervisor of this research assisted in this process (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). This step also allowed for objectivity especially as this tends to lack at times when one works so closely with the data.

In terms of the concrete steps that were taken to identify recurrent, overlapping and dominant themes, the seven transcriptions that were obtained from participants were examined firstly on an individual basis. Thereafter each of the transcripts were scoured for one by one for repeated phrases or sentences that appeared to be scattered throughout the pages of participant's transcribed responses. This process as anticipated eventually lead to several pages, one from each participant that contained what had appeared to be precursors to themes that had been identified by this research. Thereafter the seven summarised and 'prioritised' idea's identified by each participant were then be compared and contrasted against each other in what had eventually culminated into themes that resembled the ones that will be argued in the next two chapters. It was expected and naturally so what emerged at this stage was several themes that were subject to a process of prioritising ones that were most pertinent and valuable to this research whilst eliminating ones considered redundant and in such cases will be absorbed into and subsumed by broader themes. This had lead to the creating of sub themes that emerged from major themes. What also occurred was that ones that were not considered important were discarded altogether.

The second step of this research which was not to merely pay lip service to what is referred to as a 'critical' thematic content analysis, was the idea of the thought process that constitutes traditional discourse analytic forms of enquiry (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Although a discourse analysis was not employed, the critical reflection and interrogation of participants' talk partially informed the way responses were interpreted. Such a process was certainly important given arguments this research has made regarding the epistemological and ontological assumptions that maintain how it is one knows a *female sexual desire*. Especially when one thinks about the extent to which musicians like Liz Phair and PJ Harvey may or may not challenge the metaphysics behind such a desire deeming it *subversive* or not. 'Critically' engaging with participants responses to the sexual desire by Liz Phair and PJ Harvey in the manner

that resembles the steps in which a discourse analysis uncovers existing ideas around a *female sexual desire* that becomes so natural and routine that it becomes clearer to identify what is *subversion* and what is not.

It is perhaps useful then to elaborate on the type of discourse analysis that has informed critically engaging with participant's responses the way this research has gone about doing so. This analysis asks how the sexual desire Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate come to be the received knowledge against what it is that informs how participants feel towards conceptions of sexual desire that are thought of as more acceptable, natural and familiar that (Henning, 2004; Taylor, 2001). What kinds of rhetorical resources do participants draw on in their constructs, and in what specific discursive contexts do these constructs flourish? Discourse analysis is concerned with how a history of the production of knowledge comes to define "accepted ways of capturing practices in language" (Henning, 2004: 46). In other words, the question of how the sexuality that will emerge out of what the musicians articulate against participants responses and ideas of sexuality will be informed by entrenched systems of knowledge that reveal patterns of gendered inequality, will allow the researcher a critical engagement with responses from participants.

The practical implications of 'critically' engaging with participants responses means that whilst the dominant and/or sub-themes will be identified, the task at hand involved thereafter is examining briefly the rhetorical strategies employed by participants, which enables them to make sense of the way in which Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate matters pertaining to *female sexual desire* (Horton-Salway, 2001). This process will involve the developing of many questions that inquire into the 'how?' participants are able to arrive at the ideas around a *female sexual desire* that gets enacted by Liz Phair and PJ Harvey, whereby existing knowledge produced will be investigated, researched and understood as discourse that could in fact explain the 'how?' Therefore the analysis this research is concerned with aims to identify patterns or themes whilst critically engaging these patterns that underlie the sexuality that is communicated by P.J Harvey and Liz Phair and the manner in which participants make sense of this. Especially the extent to which it gets understood as *subversive* or not.

The use of a critical thematic content analysis of participant's responses to the music of Harvey and Phair, is so that one is able to understand the level of engagement and interaction that both parties create and the meaning that emerges from this. The both

parties refer to the participants and the musicians, and the point of convergence between the two that is able to fuel, perpetuate, encourage and reinforce the idea of a *subversive* female sexuality.

Ethical Considerations

One of the concerns regarding ethics is the subject matter that has been investigated which is a female musician's sexuality. Therefore the methods that have been employed in facilitating this process i.e. questions and visuals of the female musicians such as album covers, photographs (not pornographic), as well as lyrical material, that aided to elicit responses from participants has been explicit in terms of diction and sexual innuendo. Participants were informed about the nature of the material that they were confronted with and asked to provide responses to through a subject information sheet that was distributed to them, and it was anticipated that some participants may drop out of the study due to the nature of the subject matter. Nevertheless, it was imperative to obtain the full consent of participants to ensure that they felt comfortable enough to comment on such material. For this reason participants were required to fill out consent forms that gave the researcher permission to interview the subject as well as a consent form that informed the participant that the interview was to be audio taped.

Reasons as to why age restrictions have been put on participants gaining entry into the study, is that it would be unethical for individuals below the age of twenty-one to give their consent as they would most likely need the consent of their parents. Especially when one considers that even an age restriction of eighteen may still be unethical especially when thinks about strong attachments an eighteen year old may still maintain with parents which may upset parents that their child is being exposed to such material. The rationale then for an age restriction of twenty-one years and arguably so is that the individual may maintain more of a sense of autonomy and independence with regards to making decisions for themselves.

Another ethical concern is that participants needed to be protected from what and how they responded to questions and visual materials, as this would have been a hindrance and major obstacle in terms of obtaining valuable information. It is the explicit content of the material that would have inhibited the responses of participants, therefore participants were guaranteed confidentiality as only the researcher (as well as the supervisor) were privy to the content in the interview. Confidentiality differs from anonymity in that the exchange of information that occurs between the researcher and

the participant stays within the research framework and is not to be discussed outside this framework for reasons that do not pertain to this research. Anonymity however, is understood as and has been assured to participants as the names and other personal aspects of their identity were not revealed but only their responses i.e. to the researcher and the supervisor. Participants were also cautioned that they might be directly quoted in the final write-up based on some of their responses if need be, although they were informed that a coding system was going to be used (e.g. participant one) in instances when they have been quoted.

Participants were also granted the right to withdraw from the study at any point that they may have felt uncomfortable or felt that they were being placed in a compromising situation with regards to questions asked. Lastly is that on the completion of this research endeavour, participants have been informed that the written report will be made available to them only if they request to review the report as well as the raw data of the interview such as the audio-taping although such material which they were told will be destroyed.

Chapter 4
Analysis & Interpretation

In developing research aims which justify the title of this endeavour as well as expanding on these aims in terms of literature that provides breadth for inquiring further into these aims, the following attempts to consolidate the proposed aims of this research. This step is pivotal in terms of utilising the sample in question to generate responses that can be codified thus permitting for arguments that provide some leverage for teasing out to what extent Liz Phair and PJ Harvey are considered to be subversive. To reiterate, this step is crucial as 'subversion'/ 'subversive' is at the heart or rather the proponent of what this research endeavour is concerned with. This step is the developing of themes from participant's responses that argue for a subversive female sexual desire as communicated by Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through their music. This step is controversial in that it describes the criteria for which one can know a subversive female sexual desire. This is premised upon the instable and relative nature of what one deems subversive or not, and particularly for the purposes of this research, a 'subversive' female sexual desire. Therefore what follows is the manner in which participants of this research have been able to discern the stimuli presented to them. Specifically though, this section deals with codifying participants discernments into themes that attempt to cope with how the notion of a 'subversive' female sexual desire has perhaps been deployed to hastily or not.

Theme 1

'Setting the Stage'

The following theme represents a framework or rather the backdrop for which Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's performances have been understood by participants. One may also refer to it as the musical palette of participants upon which they have processed and assimilated Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's performances. Whilst this theme may detract from the actual performances of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey which is what this endeavour is concerned with, it serve's to 'set the stage' as it were to orient the reader to manner in which participants have made sense of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey amidst their repertoire of music in it's entirety. In other words what are the existing structures or rather the frame of reference of participants in terms of the musical journey they have taken thus far i.e. the bits and pieces of music they have been privy to. This is a pre-emptive measure in that the musical schematic representations that participants have acquired

creates an impression of the extent to which Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's performances are permissible into participants existing musical schemas. This is especially important when the performances of PJ Harvey and Liz Phair have been deemed subversive by this research. 'Setting the Stage' begins the process of fleshing out to what extent are Liz Phair and PJ Harvey considered to be subversive by participants? Are they completely subversive? And if so, how is it that they are subversive? Or are there elements of PJ Harvey and Liz Phair that are subversive? If so, what are these elements? Or why are Liz Phair and PJ Harvey not considered as subversive as this research presupposes? And if so, how are they not considered subversive? This theme commences that process.

'Setting the Stage' includes participants preferences for the kinds of music that should be played, who should play this music and the manner in which this music should be played. These preferences have been organised along the following themes that have been identified. Here is the 'set-list' so to speak for 'Setting the Stage' i.e. sub-themes:

(I) 'Popular Tunes'
(II) 'Resolute Rock'
(III) 'Sass, Soul and Vocal'

(I) 'Popular Tunes'

Whilst not an overwhelming majority but four out of the seven participants interviewed mentioned a preference for artists that one would consider 'Top 40 Radio' calibre. One can not denounce the power of cotton candy and its fizzling effects or rather bubblegum and its piercing sweetness that soon dissolves leaving one's palette dry and yearning for more. In other words a silly analogy for the sweet seduction of popular music and its obvious influence over the music industry fuelling perpetual debates which will not be entered into now. But one of the biggest debates whilst also relevant for now is music produced as 'artistic integrity' versus a 'commodity'. The latter of this debate has been a concern for many in terms of the way in which it curtails performance to the wiles of 'Top 40' criteria which deem it a hit or miss. Here are some of the musicians that participants 'name-dropped' indicating their preferences.

> "Black Eye Peas or Britney Spears" Participant #2

> "Britney Spears…Lady Gaga…Leona Lewis…Beyonce" Participant #5

"Britney Spears…Beyonce…Leona Lewis" Participant #6

"Black Eye Peas" Participant #7

It is the understanding that the above indicates participant's preferences for musicians which in some cases have been deliberately taken out of context. The point of which is to illustrate 'name-dropping' similar to the way in which popular music propagates itself. What needs to be emphasised is that they reflect participants expressing a liking for these musicians. To the matter at hand, the musicians that have been named above are currently riding the airwaves of radio play and as a result have been dominating the charts as indicated by monstrous album and single sales that have been certified multi-platinum. The implications of this are that due to their immense popularity, be it for their music or their sometimes scandalous, turbulent or extravagant lifestyles they have a profound influence on popular culture. However, what is relevant for now is that part of the appeal that these musicians have, besides the infectious melodies they put out, is an increased, heightened and sophisticated stylized persona which in essence becomes a brand.

Fact: whilst Liz Phair and PJ Harvey represent contemporary music, their music which has been selected for this research is not considered popular music i.e. sing-along-songs designed to make one feel good. For purposes of transparency and fairness, from now on Liz Phair will become synonymous with 'Exile in Guyville' and PJ Harvey will be 'Rid of Me' and therefore they will be used interchangeably The reason for this is that this research is concerned with these two specific albums that these musicians have released. It would be unfair to refer to Liz Phair and PJ Harvey generally as they have had subsequent albums where their style, sound and image have evolved and changed. Referring to them generally would contradict whatever point is being made at some points especially with matters pertaining to style, sound, image and lyrical content. Another fact: 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' does not embody the stylistic flair and neither can they match the single and album sales of these 'popular' musicians participants expressed a preference for. This amounts to the influence they are able to exert on popular culture as compared to the influence that the musician's participants have mentioned. Another interesting detail is that four of the five musicians mentioned above by participants are all female. The odd one in fact is the group Black Eye Peas that consist of four members, three male and one female, Fergie who is gratuitously sexualised (as well as Beyonce, Britney Spears, Lady Gaga and Leona Lewis). One can argue that all five mentioned musicians embody a 'popularised' and accepted form of

female sexuality. In addition to this all four participants who mentioned these musicians are female. One gets a sense of the idea of 'femininity' conscious or unconscious that is being recycled and circulated between performer and listener, between performers, and between listeners. The idea of femininity will be elaborated in themes to come. For now 'Popular Tunes' in its entirety which is difficult to divorce from it's constituent details like femininity and many others without mentioning these details, represents powerfully what becomes 'constructed' as popular versus unpopular, mainstream versus underground, conformist versus non-conformist, included versus excluded etc. It seems like 'Popular Tunes' equips participants musically so (lyrically, melodically and visually) for the way it is that they will come to discern the performances of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. One starts to see that 'Popular Tunes' becomes the template for which other musicians are processed and assimilated into participants schematic representations of music in it's entirety and, specifically, female sexuality.

(II) 'Resolute Rock'

Three out of the seven participants expressed a preference for music and musicians generally that emerge out of what can be described broadly as 'rock'. 'Rock' to the disliking of critics and musicians subsumes nuances of rock that speak to what many consider primary genres that help to create the birth of 'rock 'n roll'. These primary genres are blues and country music, which has lead to a variation of rock that many commonly recognise as 'alternative'. Alternative differs from rock in that it accentuates sounds that are recognised as country and blues music. Alternative has lead to many spin-offs namely punk, metal, indie, folk-rock etc., but all are generally recognised as rock music.

Fact: and the relevance for briefly dipping into a feeble history of the sound of rock music is that 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' are albums that can be defined strictly as alternative sounding music. However 'Rid of Me' has a punk, thrash sound to it whilst 'Exile in Guyville' has an indie and folk-rock flavour to it, but nonetheless are classified as rock albums. With this in mind the three participants who expressed a preference should then have no difficulty enjoying the music from 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me'. Here is what participants had to say:

> "I like a whole wide variety of stuff, mainly sort of rock. I like quite a lot of South African music at the moment like the Dirty Skirts and umm Cassette, umm Reverend Giraffe. And then umm and like a lot of sort of international similar sort of bands, Snow Patrol, umm the Killers, that sort of stuff, ja! " Participant #1

> "Creed, Linken Park, I like rock" Participant #4

> "Umm err at the moment I'm liking some rock or something like that. John Mayor! I love! Umm umm Kings Of Leon at the moment I'm really enjoying. Umm and the older ones Cold Play." Participant #7

What is interesting about participants responses is that all three have named rock bands and another detail worth mentioning is that these bands are 100% male dominated. Here's what participant 1 and 7 in particular had to say in response to a question inquiring into whether they listen to mostly male or female musicians which helps to elucidate the point:

> "Err I prefer more male music because of the sort of most like sort of singers who sing the genre (rock music) I like of are male. So if there is a female song that I like you know it doesn't, it's not gonna change my opinion on it." Participant #1

> "I'm just trying to think, in terms of bands like so many tend to be male dominated! So probably overall then and including individual it would be more male. (The last point affirming that the participant listens to more male than female musicians) Participant #7

These responses reveal a good deal of insight from participant 1 and 7 where they are able to reflect on the way it is rock music appears to restrict the number of female musicians they listen to especially when most of the music they listen to is rock. Participant #1 goes as far to say that he would listen to female musicians only if rock music would become more flexible in allowing for the smooth entrance of female musicians which according to participant 1 and 7 appears easier for men. If one thought that **'Popular Tunes'** discriminated against the music of 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid Of Me', one would then imagine that rock music as a beacon of defiance and frustration against conventional ways of 'being' would anticipate the fall backs of **'Popular Tunes'** and welcome the shortcomings of pop music.

However rock music merely becomes a **'Resolute Rock'** that operates as a subsidiary to **'Popular Tunes'** in excluding the music of artists such as Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. It appears that the exclusionary criteria that '**Popular Tunes'** employs for its desired affects are similar to criterion that rock music employs. This criterion concerns the representations of women in music that are not as inclusive as they are exclusive. Hence rock music operates as a **'Resolute Rock'** that pays lip service to the idea of frustration expressed towards restricted ways of being and doing. But through gendered

identities such as femininity it appears that **'Resolute Rock'** excludes the participation of women, which avails them to the more accepted means of musical expression i.e. **'Popular Tunes'.** It then becomes twice as hard i.e. within the parameters of 2 different genres for participants to imagine artists like Liz Phair and PJ Harvey and, process and assimilate them into their schematic represents of women communicating feelings of desire in music.

(III) 'Sass, Soul and Vocal'

The lumping so to speak of **'Sass, Soul and Vocal'** is deliberate in that it conveys and culminates in a sense of style particular to female musicians which was a preference expressed by two participants. Here are some of the comments participants made which illustrate this point:

> "Umm I like sort of I guess soul-type stuff. Umm old style swing I like especially when newly interpreted, umm I like music that is tuneful umm. Umm the kind of stuff that Streisand would sing for example umm but that's just her interpretation of a certain kind of song. I find that those, that kind of music is reinterpreted but by different kinds of people they all sound good doing it umm even though they do it in a different way. Umm I like Nina Simone-type stuff because it carries a lot of emotional weight. Umm that's the kind of stuff I like. I always used to like musicians based on the quality of their voice umm and I think that's what attracted me to Streisand initially. I was 8 when I was first exposed to her. Umm and that's been a recurring theme for me that the quality of the voice must be of a certain quality otherwise I don't necessarily like it!" Participant #3

Participant #3 goes on to deduce from his above comments but also goes on to make links between his musical preferences and attributes these to female musicians.

> "I listen to female musicians more but I think the reason for that is the quality of the voice which in female musicians tend to be better umm than male musicians depending on the kind of music they do." Participant #3

Here are some comments another participant made similar to participant #3:

> "Umm I like vocal singers… I like Beyonce, the powerhouse… I know that appearance says a lot but I feel the voice says more. Okay so you can dress up the person but you can't really dress up the voice. Especially an artist like Fiona Apple. No matter how she dresses! She dresses like a waif! Like a bag-lady you know! But her voice is definitely, you can feel the emotion in her voice." Participant #5

Similarly, participant #5 goes on to attribute her preference for musicians where the emphasis she feels should be their vocals but mainly to female musicians.

> "…as I'm growing up its more female. Now it's more female. It's easier to relate to a woman cause I am a woman. They know, they talk about 'woman' things, 'woman' feelings, 'woman' emotions and I, nobody can illustrate how a woman feels besides a woman so the pain they feel and the things they go through and the way they express it, it touches me somehow! If a man does it! He won't understand it that much. It's not as powerful." Participant #5

She goes on to add an additional stylistic quality or rather an attribute that female artists should embody.

> "Well I like vivaciousness, feistiness, like cheeky-ness. I love that!" Participant #5

What these participant's comments illustrate is that whilst they understand the kind of music a musician performs effects their overall aesthetic, they express an expectation personal to them for a preference for the voices of female musicians to be of a certain calibre. The picture one gets of this calibre is in the musicians participants have mentioned a liking for, such as Barbara Streisand, Nina Simone and Beyonce. Those who are and who are not familiar with these artists will know or not that they are highly revered for the quality of their voice, particularly their range, pitch and timbre which is unparalleled by many female musicians. Accompanying the quality of these musicians voices is the appeal it generates as acutely identified by participants. This appeal is the "emotional weight"/ "emotions" that the voice creates that propel the person who is singing further into a frame, an identity, a style, a quality that becomes a preference for participants. Although the "emotional weight"/ "emotions" participants speak of is steeped in a feminine energy as expressed in their preference for female musicians precisely because of the quality of vocal, but what is this feminine energy that participants and many others idealise? There appears to be some clues in participant's responses that give character to this feminine energy. The first clue is existing ideas and stereotyping regarding Barbara Streisand, Nina Simone and Beyonce whereby their vocal quality can be described as a traditional feminine sound. The other clue is notions of "soul-type stuff" and "vivaciousness, feistiness, like cheeky-ness" that offer projections or obfuscations of the fashioning of a mental image powered by boisterous, commanding vocals, draped in sexiness (as loose or vague as the word should be) and a smouldering sound driven by instruments. The intention of which is not to blur the eccentricities of these three musicians by branding them similar because they are very

different, but the intention is to illustrate how vocals become a slave to other devices such as female/feminine, 'soul-sounding', 'vivaciousness' etc. And how this creates a musical preference as identified by participants and codified as **'Sass, Soul and Vocal'**.

Fact: and the relevance this has for 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' is that both albums are crafted as anything but **'Sass, Soul and Vocal'**. Through these albums Liz Phair and PJ Harvey respectively rely on vocal styles characterised by mumbling, talking, moaning, howls, screams, whimpering and whispering. Suffice to say, a far cry from the vocal capacities of Barbara Streisand, Nina Simone and Beyonce. Fact: the vocal style coupled with the emotional weight it produces in 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' is not typically feminine sounding especially as it is steeped within the rock tradition which is personified as masculine. What one begins to see is that in addition to **'Popular Tunes'** and **'Resolute Rock'** operating as barriers almost to a musical spectrum that inadvertently propagates false notion's around 'expression', **'Sass, Soul and Vocal'** becomes a further barrier in subordinating 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me'.

In conclusion to what has been discussed thus far in terms of what encapsulates as well as the rationale for the theme of 'Setting The Stage', it is important to mention that the theme's constituent parts represent participant's musical preferences which appear to be shortcomings in allowing for the assimilation of 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me'. The shortcomings of this assimilation is by no means premised on claims that there may be pure denial expressed by participants, rather that there may be some resistance or difficulty expressed in assimilation in the form of defence mechanisms such as repression, intellectualisation, splitting, rationalisation etc. It is also important to mention that the themes that have been discussed have all been taken from questions participants answered before they were exposed to stimuli pertaining to 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me'. The function of this is that it does to some extent give flavour to participant's musical preferences and perhaps privileged forms of musical expression. The function of this is important for this research especially when the instable and relative nature of subversion is employed to describe musical expression and the point of which is to argue if they are subversive or not. Perhaps based on what has been discussed thus far one begins to see how 'Exile in Guyille' and 'Rid of Me' may go against the grain of participants musical preferences hinting at traces or aspects considered subversive or oppositional.

Theme 2

'The Chanteuse'

This theme attempts to deal quite simply with the matter of femininity, specifically the matter of female musicians i.e. **'The Chanteuse'**. Similarly to the previous theme **'The Chanteuse'** is a pre-emptive measure in that its aim is to illustrate participant's expectations, preferences, anxieties and conflicts of **'The Chanteuse'**. This is important as it gives one a sense yet again of pre-discursive ideas of **'The Chanteuse'**. This has implications for the way in which participants come to assimilate Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's performances through 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' respectively. The difference though between the last theme and this one, is that the former dealt with musicality, music as a variable in its entirety and its shortcomings and privileged forms of expression. **'The Chanteuse'** differs in that it foregrounds whilst contextualises within the variable of music an identity considered female or feminine. It is this variable or rather identity that becomes a second step in teasing out subversion so to speak. To determine how far removed or close to 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' are from the participants preferences, expectations, anxieties and conflicts of female musicians. Participant's responses have been organised into the following sub-themes:

(I) 'Stereotypical Femininity'

(II) 'Avoidance and Guilt'

(III) 'Admiration'

(I) 'Stereotypical Femininity'

This theme refers to six out of the seven participants questioned about their thoughts regarding women who perform music, 'thoughts' being the operative word. 'Thoughts' are critical in that it illustrates the extent to which participants have introjected and emblazoned on their schema's representations of women in music. Here are participant's introjections:

> "Okay, I'm actually just picturing a woman performing music! Like it doesn't change, like, I don't know. I think it's because you said the question may be vague (laughs). But no umm, it's just an image of sort of like a, Beyonce**,** ja!" Participant #1

> "Oh! Oh! I don't know! I look up to them… And then someone else like Beyonce will make all this effort blah, blah, blah! So I commend them…" Participant #2

> "Umm I always think of, there's a scene that I saw umm somebody perform in a very long sheath dress with a microphone in front of her and she's in the spotlight but just an image… she looked quite feminine umm tall, and the dress was full length umm light coloured umm and the rest of the stage was dark… Umm it's, it's an elegant image, that attracts me!" Participant #3

> "Yeah I like it (reluctant reply). It's nice! ... But there's some of them that just go to the extreme, so basically sell their bodies. They sell their bodies basically in order to sell their music… Its eye candy for me, so I don't mind it, but if I think further… I can only name one or two. There's Beyonce…" Participant #4

> "Definitely Beyonce! She is a very strong performer cause when she performs a song she will sing them even though it's not what the radio edits are. She will sing it, she will push her voice, she'll push her limit, she will act anyhow and like will not care when someone can really like, you see their emotion in their body language. And you get a lot of artists like choreograph and you get people who really sing their songs, perform it to you in their own way when there's no choreography where they set the atmosphere. Now I love atmosphere! If there's an atmosphere, like I don't enjoy watching Britney Spears performing so much live because it's all planned, it's like scripted! Like she's been told to do it but when you see someone like Beyonce perform, she, you can feel what she's feeling you know unless she's a really good actress." Participant #5

> "I said the beat, the lyrics, and… they must be good looking hey! I don't wanna be looking at some ugly… Like err like even if I don't look at a lot of music video's there are some times where I come across music video's and If I see some weird woman singing there ahh! I'll switch, I'll switch to the… I think I have mentioned Beyonce, she's very beautiful…" Participant #6

The above responses from participants indicate the mental work of participants, specifically how the associations made when questioned about women who perform music produces a distinct image. This image was the reliance of the majority of participants articulating Beyonce as an archetype (in contemporary times) for a woman who performs music. Despite participants expressing a disliking or liking for the music Beyonce makes, the point is that her image has been introjected enough by participants to equip them with the mental work necessary in response to demands made upon them such as questions pertaining to women and music. What is also important is that the implications of an archetype such as Beyonce produced by participants represent challenges to participants as to the extent to which they may or not be receptive to Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. Beyonce's image creates problems in that her image is what many would consider a stereotypically feminine representation of the self. Participant #3 was the only exception to the other five participants as he did not mention Beyonce,

although he described a particular dress sense that was what one would consider stereotypically feminine. Interestingly enough the dress sense he described is a perfect description of the dress sense that characterises Beyonce's performance. As hinted at before the image of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through their respected works 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' are not considered stereotypically feminine or rather 'traditional' notions of what it means to be feminine. One wonders to what extent stereotypical notions of femininity will represent shortcomings for participants making sense of 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me'.

(II) 'Avoidance and Guilt'

'The Chanteuse' is a step closer to this research unveiling the image of a silhouette so to speak that the **'Setting The Stage'** theme creates. The image that this silhouette takes is envisioned by participants as the image of the singer Beyonce. This is quite a stereotypically/traditionally feminine image and is what the previous theme attempted to account for. In developing this picture further what was particularly striking was how many participants were tentative and had reservations about answering questions pertaining to how they felt just generally about women performing music. These reservations indicate defences employed by participants to avoid answering the questions. Here are some of the participant's reservations:

> "Err how do you mean what I think… I like it, there's nothing wrong with it! I mean do you sort of get answers that, or do you expect to get answers to say like women shouldn't be performing music!?" Participant #1

> "What do I think about? I don't know! I think about it like they're doing they're job, that's the first thing comes to mind, and then… What do you mean 'how'?" Participant #2

> "…the question makes me think that I should think about what I think about women who perform. Umm and as a consequence I, the more you explore the, the, the umm the idea of a woman who performs the more you think about what does it say about women and what does it say about what I think about women. Umm in general I have always respected women, umm I've always liked working with people like that so when I think of somebody who has that kind of ability to stand up and then do something like that under thousands of people umm I think there's a , there's a, a, a, an admiration." Participant #3

> "What do you mean? What do I think of women? An artist is an artist, if its good its good. I don't think…" Participant #6

> "I don't feel (starts laughing), I'm just trying to think why women!? Umm like what, how do I feel about women or men performing music!? I'm very pleased that there are women performing music! (Laughs)" Participant #7

These responses are interesting in that they showcase participant's reluctance as well as defensive strategies employed that are key in revealing insights into how participants feel about women who perform music. Before delving into an analysis of this, it is important to clarify that part of participant's reluctance to answer questions pertaining to women performing music was in part due to the question being perhaps vague and broad. However participant's responses to these questions can not be completely attributed by the vagueness and openness of the question. Especially as this was reflected back to participants during the interview and they were encouraged to comment briefly on it even though the question appeared vague. Closer inspection into participant's responses may perhaps reveal deeper insights.

Participant's responses involve an avoidance of the question where instead of providing an opinion that comments on the nature of women performing music they answer the question without actually answering it. Participant #1 replies "there's nothing wrong with it" which indicates guilt on his part appealing to his sense of what's right and wrong which in return summons discourses around a sense of equality between men and women. Participant #2 rationalises the question in a humorous way where she minimises or rather dismisses the importance of the question. This almost deflects her capacity to reflect on her own sense of femininity and perhaps how women in music have an impact on her and the manner in which she internalises their performances. Participant #3 whilst seemingly expresses admiration also does not really answer the question as he intellectualises the question commenting on his relationship with women and how he has respect for them. Once again he demonstrates a response premised on notions of guilt that invokes a sense of what is the right and wrong thing to do. Participant #6 avoids the question as she relies on what is good and bad, perhaps relating to the 'self' and the effect this may have on the 'self' i.e. good experiences versus bad experiences. The fact that labelling something good means that it is good for the self whilst bad reflects a 'self' that is bad. Participant #7 rationalises and intellectualises the notion of the 'performer' and asks 'why should it matter if it's a man or woman', thus obscuring the different realities men and women face in the music industry. This also detracts from the participant reflecting on her own sense of femininity and to what extent this femininity is reflective of women performing music.

In the psychoanalytic sense, the above attempts to briefly comment on defence mechanisms employed by participants, the point of which is to illustrate stimuli that is threatening to the self. Defence mechanisms are normal and adaptive but are also useful indicators of what is threatening to the self and why it is so. In this case, the subject is **'The Chanteuse'**. It appears then when matters pertaining to **'The Chanteuse'** that are vague and unspecific are posed to participants there is some degree of anxiety and conflict that a woman performing music invokes in participants which appears to be threatening to the 'self'. This is manifest in participant's responses where their responses summon discourses around women. 'Woman' almost becomes an attribute that is a site of conflict, and everything representing what is considered 'womanly' is reflected in the manner in which participants respond to stimuli concerning woman. It also importantly shows how participants come to internalise all things associated with femininity. The unspecific and vague treatment given to **'The Chanteuse'** reveals participants anxieties. One wonders whether 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' produces the ease, comfort and confidence 'Beyonce' generates as **'The Chanteuse'** for participants or will it maintain anxieties or heighten them.

(III) 'Admiration'

This theme examines participants expressing admiration in response to questions pertaining to women performing music: Here are some comments:

> "I look up to them to being to, to perform in front of a camera or large groups of people so I commend them on being so brave to do what they need to do… I admire them! I mean, just to draw a parallel, like I'll sit in my car and If I really like a song, and if I'm in a really, really good mood then I'm gonna sit and dance and dance and dance, and if I see someone looking at me I'm gonna stop. Or I'm gonna become self conscious, and then I won't feel like doing it anymore, but, so from that aspect I'm imagine that this one individual if front of all these other people is willing to say look at me I'm worth looking at." Participant #2

> "Umm there's also a certain level of solitary, standing alone and, and expressing yourself umm which potentially be because one could then say umm standing up for yourself to a certain degree umm because she would then be expressing herself in a way that umm in past times was probably not intended for women. Women weren't allowed to do that so there's a certain strength there that I appreciate." Participant #3

> "I think they are very brave because I feel being in the music especially not mainstream music, especially people who write their own material. Those kinds of artists, they brave for putting their feelings and their talents out there because, off course they in a world, so it's very brave! Especially in terms of sexuality and in terms of real like pain, like when

> people sing about things like death or rape! They're very brave to come out and make themselves open to the public like that, Especially sexuality and women, it's a very sensitive topic. I find that you can't be open with things like that so when you hear a song that somebody sings about stuff like that you think 'Wow!' Someone is out there, there is someone out there for me. I can relate to something! I'm not alone! You know so you really admire these women for putting their stuff out there cause I wouldn't do something like that. That's definitely empowering for a woman, to see other woman do it, to know woman are capable of doing that." Participant #5

> "What I was thinking about right now was actually somehow I was thinking of Britney Spears, and that, and that song "Gimme gimme" (Starts to laugh)… the first thing is because I like that song and the fact that she came from such a, you remember, that image, such a wholesome image. Then suddenly she went through a crisis in her life and then she comes out, and she's in a strip pole and she's singing "Gimme, gimme" I like the song! I like the video! I think it shows that you know umm people, people have different sides to them… That's what I like the fact that she's expressing the way she feels. I like her music right now, I didn't like her music five years ago. Because I thought that's shit" Participant #6

What is common between these responses is participant's appreciation for **'The Chanteuse's'** ability to express herself. It also appears that expression is appreciated for these participants against a backdrop characterised by some disadvantage by virtue of being a woman or generally situations where one finds it difficult for personal reasons to express oneself. As a result it seems that the appearance of an obstacle, be it personal, political or social, and how this effects one's capacity to express oneself is something that participants admire. However one wonders about participants admiration for female musicians ability to express themselves perhaps merely being a reflection of their own personal anxieties i.e. a projection of their own insecurities onto female musicians who represent the inverse of this. This may be the case especially when one thinks about the idea of 'exhibition' or 'exhibitionist' being an intrinsic part to performance especially as a musician. One wonders then to what extent expression and admiration for it merely pays lip service to female musicians performing music disguised in the form of personal anxieties that perhaps cannot adequately deal with the complexities of women performing in music. This may become clearer when the next two themes attempt to deal with how participants react directly with the material of Liz Phair's 'Exile in Guyville' and PJ Harvey's 'Rid of Me'.

To conclude this theme and to clarify the rationale for it if that was not expressed clearly enough at the outset, what has just been discussed is an illustration of how **'The**

Chanteuse' is not as clear cut as it appears to be and that it is rich, complex, and nuanced. This was reflected in participants responses to **'The Chanteuse'** where there appears to be the external demand made upon the participant and the internal pressures located within the self to make sense of **'The Chanteuse'**. In other words, responses, words, ideas, thoughts etc. available to the self that are employed in ways where they appear to match or rather converge with the defensive strategies employed by participants. Put simply, the discursive constructs around **'The Chanteuse'** but additionally manoeuvres that the self employs to assimilate these constructs. These manoeuvres for this research and arguably so have been identified as defence mechanisms. Defence mechanisms because they provide insight into the self tapping into the unconscious of participants. The function of which is to unearth the anxieties of the self through participant's responses together with discursive constructs of **'The Chanteuse'** and how the residual effects unscramble what is deemed a subversive female sexual desire through music. It is also a step closer to discovering to what extent 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' are the residual effects of participants anxieties coupled with discursive constructs around **'The Chanteuse'**.

Theme 3

'Perils in the Pursuit of the Personal'

This theme is concerned with the implications of communicating specifically through 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' deep-seated subjective feelings that would come to represent what one considers (arguably so) as 'personal'. These 'personal' and deep-seated subjective feelings Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate through the five songs chosen from 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' that have been presented to participants are accounts of what can be described as the nuances, ramifications and manifestations of 'desire'.

Up until now and what may be problematic for this research's aims and subsequent discussions permitting for causality almost is the matter of how little 'desire' has been spoken about. Perhaps and briefly so one needs to clarify 'desire' in a way that almost creates a discourse around how one can know they are speaking about and around a particular topic. Therefore for the purposes of this research desire relates to discussions around sex, sexuality, feelings of love etc. The lack of the inclusion of desire in this discussion thus far and matters pertaining to it is perhaps a reflection of what participants have mentioned thus far. And the themes that have been discussed thus far

have been organised around questions that have dealt with preferences for music as well as preferences for women performing music.

At no point only up until now will discussions be made around participants directly engaging with the material of Liz Phair's 'Exile in Guyille' and PJ Harvey's 'Rid of Me'. This is mentioned because it was anticipated that matters pertaining to desire would come up strongly so especially in response to questions pertaining generally to women in music. Only one participant mentioned 'sex' in response to these questions which was specifically around the pitfalls of the gratuitous nature of it by women in music. It was surprising then that matters pertaining to desire were not mentioned as much by participants as this research anticipated, especially as it is so pervasive in popular music which participants did express a liking for as previously discussed. Nevertheless this theme forces almost a discussion around matters pertaining to desire as fore-grounded by Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through the five songs selected from each album and presented to participants.

Turning more to the theme at hand as well as the relevance the above paragraphs have at present is participant's responses to the five songs each from 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me'. Particularly how these responses even when confronted by material that speaks to matters pertaining to desire, are not engaged in a way that speaks directly to desire. Matters pertaining to desire are rather spoken about by participants in a way that constructs Liz Phair and PJ Harvey in relation to a particular reality. This reality will be discussed. Therefore the **'Perils in the Pursuit of the Personal'** attempts to deal with the desire articulated by Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through their songs, and the dangers of the manner in which the 'personal' has been understood by participants. The danger being that the 'personal' may become lost, which defeats the task of communicating subjective, deep-seated feelings, frustrations, anxieties etc. The danger also indicates the extent to which the 'personal' of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey is receptive and how receptivity renders a particular value to the narrative of the 'personal'. This is based on what participants had to say in response to 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me'. Responses have been organised along the following sub-themes which deal with 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' separately. These two themes represent 'the reality' that emerges from the 'pursuit of the personal' and the perilous reality associated with it.

(I) 'Liz Phair as Flinching and Forgiving'

(II) 'PJ Harvey as Unflinching and Unforgiving'

(I) 'Liz Phair as Flinching and Forgiving'

What follows are seemingly somewhat different viewpoints from participants to having been exposed to five songs by Liz Phair from her album 'Exile in Guyville'. Seemingly different viewpoints that interestingly paint shared experiences of Liz Phair. Shared experiences in the sense that Liz Phair's songs impact participants thoughts and feelings in a manner that mirrors Liz Phair's thoughts and feelings as communicated through her music, which is illustrative of a particular reality. This reality is what gets communicated through Liz Phair's songs which has been termed 'Flinching and Forgiving'. However participant's responses reflect a tension or rather a conflict similar to the way in which Liz Phair experiences inner conflict through her songs. Each participant's conflict will be discussed individually and the way in which it mirror's or rather reflects Liz Phair's conflicts as expressed through her songs.

Participant # 1's initial response to Liz Phair's songs was the following:

> "It's pretty hectic to see some of this stuff written down or if you think about someone who's singing it. Like it's quite, like I don't wanna say brave but like… I don't wanna say brave, cause I like almost like, what's the word I'm looking for! It's weird that someone would actually sing that in front of people (laughs) and like record it, like it's quite out there! Umm I think brave almost like, braves got a positive connotation and I don't think like, like I say cause of my upbringing being quite conservative like I'd sort of, like I just I don't, I don't wanna give it a positive connotation onto it cause I don't necessarily see it as like stuff that should be sung about. But I think it's quite interesting that she would sing about this stuff, whether it's attention seeking or actual real feelings I don't know." Participant #1

From the above one can see that participant #1 feels reluctant to embrace what Liz Phair is communicating where there appears to be a part of him that is not quite sure about what to make of the feelings Liz Phair appears to be communicating. One gets a sense that the participant appears to be somewhat torn between positive and negative commentary regarding Liz Phair. If one looks at some additional comments of participant #1, his sense of feeling torn may become clearer.

> "Based on the first one ('Help Me Mary') I, it definitely sounds like a woman… it sounds like a girl who's living with a bunch of guys who like treat her quite badly and she feels like quite err… what's the word I'm looking for, almost violated but umm. Err I used to coach girls so I know a lot of them react to err things that guys might think are nothing or stupid yet some girls find it very uncomfortable. Umm there's a guy at work

> often tells girls how umm 'wow you look so nice today!' But they say it makes them uncomfortable so he does it all the time and he makes so much of it now. Personally I just think he's a nice guy and I think if he's was good looking they might umm not have a problem with it but he's an overweight guy and like really greasy hair. Like I think that, that err that makes it, makes it uncomfortable. Where if it was a good-looking guy maybe it would be different and that's just how as a guy I see that and I think they all over-reacting to something and that's sort of the feeling err I get here. Obviously she's talking a big bigger but she feels uncomfortable by these guys that she lives with." Participant #1

Participant #1 to some extent makes sense of Liz Phair's songs especially 'Help Me Mary' by remarking that she must have been violated or the victim of some injustice which explains the inspiration behind writing such songs. Participant goes on further to say:

> "Umm but, but the first song did and then this 'Fuck and Run' song did umm I didn't get the second song umm and the 'Flower' song. I don't know again, it might be just my upbringing. It seems to me like a girl doesn't always necessarily wanna say that kind of stuff… Like err I think it's sort of dirtying a lot of things that shouldn't be and using a lot of horrible words (laughs) and that's were I think there's a shock factor to it and that's why I say she's attention seeking… Like that 'I want a boyfriend' song was, I think it was this one!? I though it was quite sort of, what's the word I'm looking for! Like quite sincere! For a lot of it! And then I suppose it is, but then she threw in that shock factor again and was using a, quite a lot of bad words like 'fuck and run' (laughs), 'when I was 17', 'when I was 12' I think you know she could have of found another word cause I felt the first sort of bits or two like say was quite sincere and like umm then she got a little hectic at the end" Participant #1

What one begins to see is that emerging from the context where Liz Phair is a victim of abuse which explains why she has written the kind of lyrics she has according to participant #1, he feels that out of such hurt one needs to censor the manner in which one expresses such hurt. However, he also makes the assumption that these are not things girls necessarily want to say. Participant #1 appears to be communicating his conflict with regards expression. Whilst he appreciates expression that is sincere, at the same time the sincerity Liz Phair is communicating in 'Fuck and Run' according to him is somehow confusing and problematical. The implications of this are that there appears to be then conditions to the extent one can be sincere.

More importantly though is that Liz Phair's capacity to express herself 'sincerely' creates tensions within participant #1. Her songs appear to split him, where he is torn between two opposing feelings, admiration/respect and disappointment/unnecessary.

Though her songs capacity to split him reflects more so her own struggles and conflicts especially expressed through a song like 'Fuck and Run' which is what participant #1 focused on the most. The conflict for Liz Phair in 'Fuck and Run' is around briefly so wanting to conform to a reality or rather the desire to but a resistance to it, a frustration with conformity. This conflict for Liz Phair is first and foremost an interpersonal angst but is also a social angst she is expressing through 'Fuck and Run'. It is this conflict of Liz Phair's that mirrors participant #1's conflict thus splitting and troubling him. A reality expressed by Liz Phair that she is frustrated with but 'flinches' so to speak and is 'forgiving' to it's structures that frustrate her as expressed in her want. This resonates within participant #1 as he approves and respects it as he deems it sincere but is disdainful at her frustration.

In somewhat of a similar fashion to participant #1 here is what participant #2 had to say in response to Liz Phair's songs:

> "Wow! What a whole load of different things! And it started with this "Help me Mary" I was like, I got bored after the first, what do you call this? Stanza! I was very, very bored, I was thinking this person is just so self-pitiful, now I must feel sorry for them blah, blah! Then this one went on ("Dance of the 7 veils"), and then it was like okay not only is she, this woman, obviously, not only is she self-pitiful but she's got issues. Then this one ("Fuck and Run") came! And then I just felt sad for myself, I was like aghh! Just look at this she's singing your story! Then "Flower" came! And then I was like okay! And then this one came ("Glory") I don't really understand what this one was all about, the last one, "Glory". I'm not too sure. I don't have an opinion on it. It sounds like there are some things that she feels she could make right, some, some revenge that could be sought, it sounds… it does sound like she's got a bit of a raw end somewhere and now she wants to give someone else the raw end so she can feel okay about herself, that's what it sounds like… But it also kind of feels like she wants to be a little bit shocking on purpose, to grab your attention… I think there is a little bit of attention seeking going on here!" Participant #2

Similarly to participant #1, participant #2 also feels that the impetus to write the kind of subject matter Liz Phair has written comes out of the experience of being a victim of some abuse or wrongdoing. One wonders to what extent the discourse around being a victim of abuse perhaps creates limits around understanding the desire that Liz Phair is communicating through her songs. However additional information that participant #2 offers is that she identifies with Liz Phair especially on 'Fuck and Run' but she feels split with regards to how Liz Phair has chosen to express herself as she goes onto express her identification:

> "And then, this, this one 'Fuck and Run' I felt like I could identify with it hey! Just because like I'm in a strange relationship myself, I felt like I could identify with that, but, but this now, if I listen to this song before I see a certain person I will be angry with that person even if I started of happy, even if I just spoke to them about going out to lunch with them by the time this song is finished playing hey hey! I 'm gonna look for a fight, I'm gonna be upset with them… I felt angry and sad… Just reading these words, just reading! No… Just reading these words again, I can, I can honestly, its like, I feel like, I can say this to someone right now and I'll be genuine. I'll mean it. I'll be like 'Here's your story!'" Participant #2

Participant #2's identification is based on strong feelings of anger, sadness and admiration for Liz Phair's honesty but at the same time she is irritated, bored and frustrated with the manner in which Liz Phair has chosen to express herself. One gets the sense that the participant almost feels frustrated with the way in which Liz Phair has selected to cope with a similar situation and similar feelings that she has been through. What appears to be different for the participant is the mentality that she feels Liz Phair has adopted which is that of a victim, feeling self-pitiful etc. Once again Liz Phair appears to split the participant where she appreciates Liz Phair's honesty through 'Fuck and Run' but is bored, irritated and frustrated with the manner in which Liz Phair expresses herself.

Liz Phair also appears to arouse strong feelings of sadness, anger and irritation within the participant and one can not help but feel that these are perhaps similar feelings Liz Phair experiences. Liz Phair's capacity to once again to create spilt feelings that are quite contrasting within the participant are perhaps a reflection once again of a reality within which Liz Phair writes. This reality is that there are certain parameters within which one is expected to articulate and write about desire. When desire is communicated in the manner that Liz Phair does the parameters define it and it appears that one's conflicts, anxieties etc. are an indication of feelings representing an authenticity and sincerity regarding one's desire. The participant even though she respects Liz Phair's candidness appears to be simultaneously angry with Liz Phair for evoking such feelings within her. One could say that the participant's anger and irritation coupled with respect and admiration for Liz Phair reflects idea's around purging oneself in almost a way and manner that is like confessional. No matter how horrifying the confessional act and how much it evokes anger, irritation, boredom as expressed by the participant, it represents on Liz Phair's part an attitude that is 'forgiving' of the parameters of desire which provoke such actions. And with a result a

need to conform to the parameters as reflected when she says in 'Fuck and Run' "I want a boyfriend/I want all the stupid old shit/Like letters and sodas"

Participant #3 differs to participant #1 and 2 in terms of how he reacts to Liz Phair's five songs. Here is what he had to say:

> "I like it a lot! It's funny, it's witty, it contains pathos and umm very little of it is cheap. Umm I like that she's not scared to say what she thinks and what she feels which is a rarity because a lot of people are often scared to express themselves in ways that might be umm construed as not how good people behave or not how good people think or not how good people express themselves and this is what I like about this. It is very straightforward umm there's some thought to it as well, when you read the lyrics it's not umm common, it's not cheap kind of lyrics, the kind of lyric that you are used to in pop music so I like that for that reason!" Participant #3

What appears to be interesting is that Liz Phair splits participant #3's responses from previous participants but does not split his thoughts and feelings regarding her. He appears to laud what he considers Liz Phair's authenticity and honesty. He also appears to appreciate what Liz Phair is communicating by juxtaposing it with the type of lyrical content that has popularising quality that pop music wields. He goes to say:

> "Umm and then when you read it for the first time there's a sense of umm, I got a sense that she's quite scared , I got a sense that she's, she's umm, it's, a call for help in many cases. Umm there's umm she is almost umm tempering herself because she is umm frightened by what has happened, by what has been done either to her or what she has agreed to or what has, she might have been a willing participant of or whatever the case may be but at the same time she acknowledges the damages that it's done to her which was striking err then when I read further umm she goes through something that like 'Fuck and Run' umm is something that many people go through something that you, you umm experience a certain something and then it in this self-destructive urge you, you go over the top. That as well is almost a sense of 'can someone please help me!' She say's there's something coming through around she's vulnerable and she's scared and she's doing stuff that she's not in control of and so she goes one step further to how far she can push it umm that's the kind of feeling that I got!" Participant #3

However in a similar fashion to participant 1 and 2 he also alludes to the narrative/discourse around being victimised or rather taken advantage of or used but in a way that is slightly different to participant 1 and 2. Participant #3's responses differ whereby it reflects a shared and understood feeling of what Liz Phair is communicating where he appreciates and admires her and values consistently so throughout all five

songs what she sings about. This speaks to his sense and idea of femininity and what can and can not be said. However in much the same way his appreciation and admiration allude to the restrictions and omissions of femininity it also serves to obscure the actual restrictions and omissions of femininity. One wonders about the participant neglecting to mention Liz Phair's gender throughout the five songs. He chooses rather to talk about Liz Phair in a narrative or discourse that is devoid of the perspective of a woman but rather from a perspective or discourse that centers around relationships in general, honesty and the pitfalls around this. One wonder's that if gender or femininity was thought about would this change his view slightly on her or rather would it confuse and problematise the discourse he employed around authenticity and honesty. In other words he would not idealize her so much and this was perhaps reflected when he was questioned about this. This is what he had to say in response to question that commented on the fact that Liz Phair's gender or rather her femininity was absent from his reflections:

> "If I was to be honest, I doubt that a man could have written this and I doubt that a man could have sung this. Because there's too much of vulnerability here, umm a man doesn't allow that kind of vulnerability to come out, umm to this level. If her, you can often see that the male, you can contrast male and female poetry, male poetry will be a lot more, it shows the dominance of a man where a man thinks as his birth right whereas a woman would be more interpretive and umm would try and find reason umm for, I already knew this was a woman writing, it so, there's no contextual, there's no effort required to find context umm around sex, but at the same time umm this could only have been written by a woman or a gay man who is umm in touch enough with who and what he is and that's a rarity in any case with gay men umm especially youthful ones. Umm I can't read this and umm not help but identify some of the emotions there but I don't know whether I would express myself in this way." Participant #3

From the above the participant talks about men and women in a way where he devalues masculinity and idealises femininity. One wonders about how the work of Liz Phair creates or rather exposes a split in him regarding the idealising of femininity and devaluing of masculinity. From his response to the neglecting of femininity he does not appear to engage in a discussion that demonstrates the interplay between men and women and how this can create difficulties, rather he conflates men and women as polar opposites. This indicates the extent to which how much he has understood and made sense of what Liz Phair is communicating through her songs. However the discourse he uses around the characteristics of what distinguishes men from women is useful in that to some extent it does reflect the themes that are central to what she is communicating. What is also interesting is that his idealising of femininity through her

work reflects and opposes Liz Phair's struggles that she has to incur by virtue of being a woman. The sense one gets is the idea of the pleasure one experiences or rather the aesthetic quality that is derived through another, usually an artists struggle and pain.

The conflict surrounding the devaluing of masculinity and idealising of femininity that the participant experiences as invoked by Liz Phair mirrors her conflict around how men and women relate to each other sexually. This pertains specifically to how Liz Phair through her songs has reflected upon her experiences as a women, how she is experienced by others especially men and how she experiences men. In doing so she comes full circle in understanding what makes men and women so different from each other in a similar fashion that participant 3 does. Once again the reality is confirmed by virtue of what men and women are and how different they are to each other. One gets a sense that the participant #3's split feelings regarding men and women are what Liz Phair has accepted which is perhaps reflective of the sadness, frustration and pain she communicates through her songs.

Participant #4 differs from participant #3 especially when one thinks about the fact that both are male, but his remarks show points of convergence with participant #1, 2 and 3. This is what he had to say:

> "Sounds like a lonely girl. Sounds like she's umm she's talking or singing about her experiences that maybe she went through. Not good at all. I think that err she got mixed up with the wrong guys at a really young age. And I think she's got all this hatred that she's trying to get out of her… Because I don't think she was happy at this moment or if she had someone she wouldn't have made music like this. She would've… maybe… maybe, probably she is making music about mistakes that she made when she was younger, found the right one now and speaking of love… She got mixed up with the wrong men! Maybe they used her, lied to her, err umm and yeah… she's scarred now!" Participant #4

Participant #4 makes sense of Liz Phair's work by stating that she could only write this material like this because she was lied to, cheated on and used by men. Once again the discourse around a victim of some kind of relationship abuse is invoked that serves as the rationale for why Liz Phair would express herself in such a manner. Thus far participant's responses to Liz Phair have largely been interpreted as a splitting of their feelings and thoughts into positive and negative responses to her work. Participant #4's response to Liz Phair is classic in terms of his feelings and thoughts towards her songs representing a split or divide between two contrasting responses especially with regards

to ‘Fuck and Run’ and ‘Flower’. Here is what he had to say in response to ‘Fuck and Run’:

> “Okay the one where it’s happening to me again, I never thought it will happen again, Slept with the same guy, maybe wanted love or she thought it was love. Afterwards she found out realised this guy wasn’t what she expects, and she never thought it would happen again. I’ll tell you that happens with a lot of girls! I know and I’ve seen! They think its love but the guy is only using them… Like I don’t know if its directly like the same, previously I had a lot of girls or I met a lot of girls and umm I was interested in them but not to date them and they understood that but they, they, they almost used sex, they thought that if they have sex with me or, or with other guys as well then maybe their guys will feel close to them, and maybe they will appreciate them more and maybe date them… Ja for the girls I felt sad, cause you know how many times I spoke to the girls telling them that, that err umm and this is my, from only coloured girls now I’m talking about, that you don’t need sex, you don’t need to have sex with a guy in order for a guy to like you or to love you. That all takes time, rather wait but now because they see all this umm stuff on TV regarding sex and err umm how happy these girls are when they see that happiness that is what they want but its not actually what happens… I could understand why she’s, why she’s, I don’t know, I would have liked to have listened to the song but err umm the words…” Participant #4

Through discussing ‘Fuck and Run’ which stood out for the participant his response presupposes a clinginess and a neediness that women have on men, and ultimately how men have control over women. He also goes on to say that women are easily seduced with notions surrounding love which is what they go looking for. He goes on to say that men withhold love from women because men can manipulate love but woman can not, they can not see past the wiles of love. It is this quality he sees in Liz Phair that endears her to him where he feels sorry for her and he goes to some lengths to empathise with her by speaking about his past experiences with girls. This indicates to some extent the participant’s understanding of how most women or girls are, and that based on this he is willing to accept them. However his response appears to change with regards to ‘Flower’.

> “The two ones, the other songs sound sad but this ‘Flower’ song… This one sounds like she likes it, she wants it! Like she wants to, to, to… she wants sex, she wants the, the, the you to now really… Okay this one, the other one she sounds like a sad girl going through a bad time. But this one, ‘Flower’ girl changes my perception a little bit, I’ll have to listen to this song so I can, but the ‘Flower’ song now… She’s scarred! I’d maybe, if I see maybe how I could help her, cause everyone makes mistakes. And she was very scarred, got involved with the wrong guys then I would maybe, in the beginning I’ll feel sad for her, I’ll try to help her and I don’t know maybe love her and then afterwards

> maybe. But this other one the 'Flower' song, you telling me she wants all this stuff, no! It sounds slutty! This 'Flower' song! Maybe that's why I won't date that girl but that, the other songs that she sang where she sounds sad maybe like I said scarred" Participant #4

From the above and in contrast to how the participant feels towards Liz Phair in 'Fuck and Run', through 'Flower' the participant appears to express a disliking or devaluing of Liz Phair. This is especially when he realises that she may not be submissive and fooled by love as he imagined most girls and that she may want sex and only sex just like a guy. One kind of gets a sense that the table begins to turn when the participant is able to tell that 'she' can discern between love and sex and that sometimes 'she' is not only the one who is hurting from love that 'she' expected but 'she' can enjoy and derive pleasure from sex alone.

It appears that 'Fuck and Run' and 'Flower' present difficulties for the participant as he splits Liz Phair into the good woman who is a victim easily manipulated by men who promise her love. And the other part which is the bad woman capable of manipulating men only for sex without the promise of love. It appears that it is difficult for the participant to reconcile sex with love and how a woman can want both separately sometimes. The split appears to be good/love and bad/sex. More importantly though is that the participant's split feelings towards Liz Phair once again mirrors her conflict with regards to wanting sex and only sex but at the same time wanting love. The latter appears to signal her 'forgiveness' and ability to 'flinch' in the face of the parameters of desire that create restrictions where she wants to be able to fit into the parameters of desire.

Participant # 5 begins her interpretation of Liz Phair before reading her lyrics in response to a question inquiring into whether she is familiar with Liz Phair and if so what does she know about Liz Phair. This is what she had to say:

> "Liz Phair is sexually frustrated!" Participant #5

One can see that she sums up Liz Phair quite humorously but in a way that dismisses what Liz Phair is communicating. It implies somehow that sex is being withheld from Liz Phair. It is unclear whether she is denying herself sex or if it is being denied from her. But what seems to underlie all her actions, thoughts and feelings that one would consider rational is the desperate need for sex, which is why it appears to be a theme

that is recurrent and littered throughout her songs, which the participant appears to be aware of. However what appears to dominate much of participant #5's response to Liz Phair is around the following:

> "What I didn't like is her, sometimes she overdoes it! I'm not someone who uses profanity in my life and she uses a lot of it and it's a bit of a discomfort but not really a big discomfort… Sometimes there is no other way to say and you have to use profanity. What I also don't like is that I frustrated when I don't understand a song so songs that I didn't get of hers umm it frustrated me. Its like her songs are made for herself and nobody else you see. That's her piece of art that she understands so whether you get it or not she doesn't really care. She is expressing herself in her own way. Well everyone in their art business, if they want to express themselves, they mainly in it for themselves, to release what they are feeling and to express themselves if it makes them happy. Of course you get people who want to reach out and I don't think Liz Phair is one of them. I feel that she needs to vent. Yes, she's not really worried about who relates to her music. I think it's selfish for good reasons! Because the mainstream people obviously want to reach out to other people, they want public attention! Someone like her, she's not really mainstream. She's in it for herself! I just wanna say women, they are supposed to not be selfish, they supposed to be motherly, to give, give, give all the time! It's very good that's why I'm not ratting on her that she's being selfish. I'm happy that she's selfish! Because women are always expected to give, give, give, share, share, share!" Participant #5

This is very interesting as it indicates that the participant experiences some conflict with regards to 'expression' and the manner in which it is accessible to the reader. It appears as though the participant feels frustrated or rather there is tension expressed between the capacity of Liz Phair to communicate a visceral experience but at the risk of it not being understood, alienating audiences or coming across as offensive. However the participant is able to reconcile her frustration with not understanding as she talks about selfishness regarding one's feelings and thoughts and how this can be good and bad. Her appreciation for selfishness is premised upon the discourse around mainstream music versus 'underground' music and how the latter lends itself more to art whilst the former thrives on popularisation. She also is able to make 'good' out of being selfish by summoning the discourse around the notion of women having to be selfless and forsaking their needs for others especially as the title of mother appears to be inherent to women. Even though the participant is able to reflect on how selfish can be good and bad and it creates frustrations for her and it nevertheless represents a split i.e. two opposing feelings.

The participants frustrations similarly reflects Liz Phair's conflict perhaps around communicating experiences like the need for sex considered to be hedonistic and selfish, but also the need to connect emotionally in a way that is beyond sexual and more loving which is considered as the antithesis of hedonism as it involves compromise.

Participant #6 was also split in terms of her feelings and thoughts towards Liz Phair as it created some conflict for her regarding 'Fuck and Run' and 'Flower'. Here is what she had to say regarding 'Fuck and Run':

> "Its very weird lyrics… It's something people won't usually sing about or say, it's something they'll think about or maybe say it in umm the comfort you know of of… okay but not sing about you know. I think it's a lot of life stories also, or maybe her life story, you know. Especially that, what song is it? 'Fuck and Run'! It seems like, I don't know! She says that she wants a boyfriend, but all she, but all she, but all she ever, seems like all these one night stands with people that just go in and out of her life but all she wants is something that's gonna last forever, but she's not getting that. Even when she was 12! And I'm thinking like oh my God! When you were 12, where you fucking and running? What the hell, you know! … it just made me feel a little bit uncomfortable." Participant #6

Whilst the participant acknowledges that Liz Phair is communicating something that is very private indicating that it is personal and reflects a sense of honesty, she appears to be conflicted about the honesty Liz Phair appears to be communicating. The participant feels somewhat shocked, horrified and appears to not understand how Liz Phair can want love but then simultaneously find herself in countless situations where she has 'one night stands'. This makes sense as the latter contradicts the logic of the former which is what the participant relies on to make sense which she ends up remarking that expressing oneself in such a way is weird. This indicates that she does not understand such an approach or logic to finding love. Conversely, here is how the participant felt with regards to 'Flower':

> "But I like that other song, "Flower". It's crazy! She's just being so… so, so like real, and so like, everything is stripped out, and this is what Im thinking off and to hell with you and whoever, this is what I wanna do. We all feel like that at some point, we wanna say these things and we like "No!" Hit yourself (hits herself on the wrist) and say "No! I will be a good girl" (Laughs)… she's being very brave… I think umm that she's honest. She's honest! She's honest, saying I don't know who I am, ok this is who I am, I don't know "who" I am though… Obviously singing about these things are not easy, most people want the "gimme gimme" songs and to dance and move your ass but

> when you start being honest with yourself, people are like ahh! You're just forcing me to be honest about me, people are not ready for that." Participant #6

The participant's response to 'Flower' indicates a split between or rather a conflict about the honesty with which Liz Phair appears to be communicating. In other words to what extent should one be honest about their feelings. This appeared to make the participant feel uncomfortable more in response to 'Fuck and Run' than 'Flower'. Whilst the participant recognises the fear and bravery in communicating such personal feelings like she mentions in 'Flower' which she appreciates she is uncertain about the yearning for love expressed in 'Fuck and Run'. Specifically how the search for love presents with it a sexual need and through attempts made to find love one ventures into sex or rather how one can want love but try and find it through sex. It appears that whilst the participant appreciates the sexually charged lyrics of 'Flower', the search for love and the pitfalls of it expressed through 'Fuck and Run' appears to create problems for the participant.

It appears that the need plainly for sex is clear cut and understood by the participant but the search love when conflated with sex appears to be problematic and somewhat of a conflict for the participant. She is split internally by 'Flower' and 'Fuck and Run'. Her sense of feeling split is brought on by the conflict Liz Phair experiences between the need for sex but also the pursuit for love which involves compromise and its parameters ultimately frustrate her desire i.e. her sexual needs. Nevertheless she is forgiving to the compromise of love and the extent to which it frustrates her desire as she yearns for love, for a boyfriend and "all the stupid old shit".

Participant #7 differed from most of the other participants but did bare some semblance to participant #5 with regards to humour and the manner in which Liz Phair expressed herself. Here is what she had to say when questioned about what was striking to her just after she had read all five songs:

> "God I'm going to sound like a real psychologist now. Sex and aggression! (Laughs) That to me felt like the overriding theme. Umm that the songs that you chose seem to be like umm those areas! ... Some of the parts I suppose I felt quite like I found myself like a lost every now and again." Participant #7

The participant feels lost every now and again and she is trying to make sense or make meaning out of what Liz Phair is saying. But from the bits and pieces that she is able to discern and the overriding theme that emerges for her through the songs she jokingly

sums up Liz Phair's songs as "sex and aggression". "Sex and aggression" become a way for the participant to cope or make sense of Liz Phair's songs in a way that is humorous. The function of which one imagines is that it defends against the seriousness of what gets communicated in a way that is not threatening to the self. The participant's humour is similar to the humour that she feels Liz Phair uses in her songs that she identifies and subsequently goes on to talk about.

> "I suppose that I quite like the just putting stuff out there! Like almost like umm I suppose imagery is used to describe feelings so directly that it's just kind of not sensitive which I quite like. Umm but some parts I found almost humorous! Umm but just because of the directness and, and maybe because sometimes some of the things are quite controversial sounding like they wouldn't be expected or they would be umm shocking! Umm maybe I'm like in my mind because I've had very limited exposure but I do know a little bit about it. I was sort of anticipating shocking lyrics! Umm so it didn't feel like such a shock but perhaps it would have been. Ja if I wasn't expecting it!"

From the above as well as what is known from what Liz Phair appears to be communicating in her songs perhaps humour is important here both for the participant and Liz Phair. Humour almost becomes a way of defending against the seriousness of what is being felt and what is being communicated. Despite the participant using humour she does go on to make sense of Liz Phair's songs, not only the content but she tries to make sense of the manner in which the messages get communicated through the songs. The participant more than any other participant in this study goes to great lengths to understand Liz Phair as she delves deep beneath the humour and grapples to find meaning. In the participant grappling to make meaning she is able to reflect on this process and states the following:

> "I'm just trying to think if there was anything that I specifically didn't like, that didn't sit with me. Oh but this is more I suppose a, err personal thing. I sometimes struggled specifically with the ambiguity so like I kind of think should I take these lines directly or is it, is there something else behind them, is there something personal about the artists life, or is this something that's open to interpretation like when she says "Even when I was seventeen/Even when I was twelve" And then it kind of sort of leads to a whole lot of other things but I don't know what I should be thinking. And then if its my own well, so that ambiguity is sometimes frustrating but not necessarily bad as I was saying I quite like a twist, and that it's not fixed and simple! Umm in this last one ('Glory') I found that quite ambiguous looking and looking over and over to get a, a better picture even the metaphors to get it to work for me and I struggled to fixed that metaphor into umm…" Participant #7

The above reflects the participant's need to make sense in order to make meaning out of Liz Phair's songs, which is what appears to be somewhat anxiety provoking for her although she says that the ambiguity is not a bad thing. The participant's honesty regarding her frustration around the ambiguity of Liz Phair's songs is perhaps once again reflective of Liz Phair's mental state and attempt to convey what she feels through these songs. Perhaps ambiguity is a good word to describe Liz Phair's mental state as expressed through these songs. Especially the ambiguous nature of relationships which is what Liz Phair is trying to communicate and this ambiguity is reflected in her style of writing. Also ambiguity around the reality for Liz Phair of relationships at how matters pertaining to sex and love trouble, confuse and expose the boundaries of relationships and the parameters of desire within the relationship.

After a lengthy and perhaps tiresome account of the manner in which participants of this study have made sense of Liz Phair a conclusion is perhaps necessary and helpful in tying lose ends and a reminder of why participant's responses towards Liz Phair have been discussed this way. What may have appeared as confusing and various accounts of Liz Phair that were lumped together for thematic purposes, is in fact the work of Liz Phair as **'The Chanteuse'** provoking certain anxieties, conflicts and frustrations within participants.

What matters is not that the anxieties, conflicts and frustrations of participants differed but that their differences converge into problems encountered with 'The Chanteuse' i.e. Liz Phair which speaks to the manner in which Liz Phair is perceived. Participant's varying accounts also reveal what appears to be problematic for Liz Phair. Specifically the context that permits for participant's anxieties, conflicts and frustrations representing a reality that is troublesome for Liz Phair. This reality is around the limits of one's desire and the manifestations it takes on through love and sex and how these manifestations appear to be troublesome for participants to varying degrees. But also the reality through which participants are communicating is the same one that troubles Liz Phair as well as the participants.

More importantly though is the seemingly split feelings and thoughts for each participant i.e. they like her, feel sorry for her, want to help her, admire her but also get irritated with her, angry with her, are horrified by her, bored with her, confused by her etc. These split thoughts and feelings of participants are a reflection of Liz Phair's dilemma with regards to her own desire and how there is a sense of pressure she feels to

be forgiving and feel guilty about her desire perceived as whorish or unnatural. There is pressure she feels to conform and tame her desire to what is expected of her as a woman. In other words she 'flinches with regards to her very personal, instinctual desires and is forgiving to the structures that deem her desire unacceptable hence she expresses conformity through her songs. Put simply she is compromised and has to reconcile personal and private feelings regarding her desire with what is expected. This gets expressed in participant's spilt feelings regarding Liz Phair.

(II) 'PJ Harvey as Unflinching and Unforgiving'

Liz Phair's songs proved to be rather complex for participants to digest especially as it created a split within them regarding contrasting feelings and thoughts and the difficulties reconciling this. This split was reflected in Liz Phair herself and her tensions with regards to conforming to the laws of desire versus reconciling this with her own very private, idiosyncratic and personal desire. In other words both participant's responses to Liz Phair as well as her songs were not straightforward and this was reflected in the analysis which was rather lengthy and reflected participant's individual anxieties and conflicts. PJ Harvey on the other hand was rather straightforward in terms of how participants interpreted her five songs and the split feelings Liz Phair elicited in participants, PJ Harvey did not seem to evoke. Hence 'PJ Harvey's work or desire communicated titled is 'unflinching and unforgiving'. This will become clearer as once again participant's responses to her songs will be analysed individually.

Participant #1 had the following to say in response to questions pertaining to what were his impressions of PJ Harvey's songs:

> "A lot more subtle! Than the first one (Liz Phair) ja! Umm subtle to the point where I'm not exactly sure what I was reading. If I was reading what I think I was, then it's quite hectic!… like a lot of it I literally couldn't make sense of but I think the general undertone of what they writing to me is, it is taboo so you do shy a little bit away from this and you almost think like surely someone isn't writing about that in this way. You almost justify it I think in your own mind… it's got a sexual connotation… It seems blatant but like I say at the same time quite subtle umm and, and, and that's the, the sort of the sexual part that I'm sort of struggling with. You could listen to this I think and apart from the first song where she says "lick my legs" which sounds pretty hectic and "lick my injuries" like I think most of it if it was in a song, if Beyonce was singing it in a pop song you wouldn't really think twice about it. Umm where if Beyonce had to say 'fuck me hard' or whatever the hell that other chick (Liz Phair) was saying, I'd be like 'what the…!?'. I found myself actually a few times going back that's why I was

> reading so slowly. I was going back in like, to sort of work out what she is saying. Like I say, this is for me, this is that poetry that I don't understand. I like the way she writes (Liz Phair), I don't like the way she writes (PJ Harvey)! Umm I'll almost say I didn't mind this one ('Rid Of Me') it wasn't bad but I found that I was quite indifferent to most of them." Participant #1

Before unpacking the above it is important to mention that what matters is not how the participant has interpreted PJ Harvey's songs as there can be a multitude of interpretations especially as they are all deeply subjective and are equally valid. What matters at least for this research is how participant's feel with respect to what they are exposed to. From the above one can already see how the participant starts expressing how he feels towards PJ Harvey by comparing her songs to Liz Phair. He appears to find what PJ Harvey is communicating vague, confusing and ambiguous, although he is able discern that much of what he read was quite "sexual" and "hectic". An interesting word the participant uses is "subtle" to describe PJ Harvey's songs as compared to Liz Phair. It appears that the subtlety the participant remarked which for him was characterised by the lyrics being confusing, vague and ambiguous made it easy for him to distance himself from the lyrical content as compared to Liz Phair. His emotional distancing from PJ Harvey was clear when he mentioned that he felt indifferent to most of what PJ Harvey wrote. It appears then that PJ Harvey did not trouble him as much as Liz Phair did emotionally especially as the 'subtle', 'confusing', 'vague' and 'ambiguous' nature of what she wrote made it safe and easy for him to navigate.

Participant #1 also compares what PJ Harvey says to instances he imagines that the singer Beyonce would say the same things PJ Harvey says. This is interesting in that the participant says that somehow he feels that if Beyonce had to say it, it would be okay. What appears to be an important point participant #1 makes is that he is reflecting and aware of the context in which a song is sung or written. PJ Harvey and Beyonce come from two very different musical contexts, the former is a context considered alternative, underground and unconventional whilst the latter is popular, stereotypical and traditional. Participant #1 appears to be implicitly saying that one who sings from a popular context is privileged somehow in that 'popular music' has the quality of leverage especially in terms of things that can not be said like the ones PJ Harvey says. Specifically how through 'popularising' one can disguise and hide messages like the one's PJ Harvey articulates by conflating it with established popular elements for example the beat or sound of a song.

Participant #2's reaction differed from participant #1 in that his appeared to be polite and respectful so not as to offend especially when one compares his to participant #2's response which was more pronounced. Here is what she had to say regarding PJ Harvey:

> "I really didn't like reading any of that! I didn't like any of it! This person, I don't know what's going on. It sounds like they either have got a secret wish to kill someone, or kill themselves, and some, some, person's, sounds like some man with all this reference to things crawling between her legs blah, blah, blah! Like someone really hurt her! No seriously! Like she had no control after a while! There's a lot of fire! There's a lot of blood! There's a lot of (giggles) haai! Things between legs! I really don't know what's going on here. "Douse my hair with, Douse hair with gasoline" "That fruit inside of me" What kind of fruit! Talking about a guava! What's going here! There's something very strange going on here! Ja! … They're like nowhere! These songs go nowhere! They're just like huh! I'm like what! I promise you, if I heard this song like this, the only thing that would keep me listening to this would be a good beat, or something! But the words themselves! She sounds depraved! And all over the place! With that, with that feeling, sounds like she doesn't know how to process her feelings, if I must be honest. It sounds like she gets very fixated on certain things. No! I'm being serious now! I'm being serious! This person is a very intense person. This is a person if I chirped them about a dress they were wearing one time they'll never, never, never, never forget I said! They'll hold a grudge against me for that! ... I was feeling like, first of all I thought to myself people, people make a living out of writing things like this, this is the first thing I thought! And the second thing I thought of, what is this person trying to say! I don't know! It makes me confused. And the third thing I thought was this person has got very, not sadistic but very negative, its like they wanna do negative things to themselves and the world… I don't like anything about these songs! " Participant #2

Participant #2 is certainly not coy about her feelings regarding PJ Harvey especially in comparison to the previous participant where 'subtlety' insulated and protected him from expressing how he felt, 'negative' and malevolent was the manner in which participant #2 made sense of the desire PJ Harvey was communicating. Participant #2 was less forgiving to PJ Harvey than she was to Liz Phair, where she expressed an extreme disliking to PJ Harvey. Participant #1 and 2 are similar in that both do not express a liking for PJ Harvey, where with Liz Phair one got the feeling that they were forgiving towards her. Unforgiving of the manner in which PJ Harvey has chosen to communicate feelings of her desire is perhaps a reflection of her own uncompromising attitude towards expressing private and personal feelings. This makes PJ Harvey somewhat different to Liz Phair based on participant's responses where desire is

somehow compromised in the latter but not in the former. Participant's responses are crucial in that they indicate a reality, a structure or a parameter in music where there appears to restrictions in terms of the manner in which women are allowed to communicate feelings of desire.

In a similar fashion to participant #2 expressing disliking for PJ Harvey but for different reasons this time around here is what participant #3 had to say:

> "… she sings a lot about sexual liberation and then what she does is she tries to turn herself into a man in much of it because she then says a lot of stuff about denying her, her sex and her sexuality which is very interesting for me because it, it umm it's as if there's stuff that she's trying to run away from… Umm I have to admit that the lyrics here do not strike me as strongly as the Liz Phair ones did… Well whenever I think of somebody who denies something that is so intrinsic to them umm I think that, that is quite sad. I, I umm think of people who go through sex change operations, umm I think of people who are umm violently opposed to, to certain aspects of their person that they would do something as drastic as a sex change operation to change it. That's quite sad! Here's she's doing the same thing! Not physically cutting herself, physically changing herself but she's angry at her sexuality and she's angry at potentially even the role that society has placed on her. Umm and she's trying to gain power by umm denying those things and thinking that the masculine is, is the correct way to achieve it. Umm I think that's flawed but that's you, I'm not her!" Participant #3

Participant #3 more than participants #1 and 2 is able to substantiate why he does not like PJ Harvey compared to Liz Phair. He is able to demonstrate insightfully so that he has tried to make sense of what PJ Harvey is communicating and he feels as though what she is communicating appears to go against what appears to be certain convictions or beliefs he maintains about one's self. And whilst he attempts to empathise through understanding PJ Harvey he maintains that what she is expressing does not resonate with him and therefore does not like what she is communicating. Another interesting detail is that despite PJ Harvey communicating her feelings of desire through the five songs it appears as though her desire gets lost almost. This is especially so when participant #3 construes what she is saying as a denial of ones self due to a relationship where one was used or taken advantage of. Another reason for the appeal of Liz Phair over PJ Harvey for participant #3 is for the most case, even when aspects of PJ Harvey's music have been bought to his attention which he has reflected upon insightfully so, is the quality of the style of writing. One then has to think about the structures of language and writing and how this creates and enables one a mode of expression and understanding. And perhaps how there exists privileged structures of

writing over others. This is manifest in the participants comments regarding Liz Phair's writing which he states is "specific", "better", "more humorous", "subtle" which when compared to PJ Harvey's structure he describes as "not specific", "raw", "lacking subtlety", "blunt", "visceral" and "in your face".

Interestingly is that the style with which PJ Harvey writes when reflected upon or rather discussed further with participant #3 during the interview appeared to be deliberate in that what the style did was that it served to foreground the singer's emotions. This is what participant #3 had to say as well as revealing the implications of such a project:

> "Also there's, there's here there's are err, err something which was not in Liz Phair's. There's, there's lyrically phrases that get repeated often which is not the case in Liz Phair's and, and the things that get repeated here are the, the, the most umm emotional phrases. Umm the one's like 'You're no rid of me' or 'don't you wish you never met her' or those kinds of things are, are, are and it's very clear that umm… She's trying to say something that's very painful to say! I think Liz Phair is more accessible because it's less blunt… I think that the quality of the writing umm in Liz Phair's case means also that she doesn't come out and say something. She says it in a certain way, very specific way which is lacking here umm in umm… Lacked subtlety! In err umm**,** umm in, in this one's case the, the imagery is very visceral, umm in your face. Umm purposefully I believe but umm… Umm, but it's, it's, there's almost a feeling that err umm she's trying very hard to elicit a, a, an emotional response in whoever it is, is listening or reading. Sometimes almost a bit too much! A bad thing! Because now you're starting to wonder about her motives behind telling you this… she's trying to communicate something umm and it's as if the best thing she knows how is to umm ram something down your throat in as umm unambiguous way as possible! And that's slightly off putting because she's, she's, it's, it's as if she's trying, she's just simply trying too hard!" Participant #3

The above is important in that it highlights the manner in which PJ Harvey communicates her desire specifically the literary style she uses in conveying what appears to be the way she feels in a manner that is quite visceral. This is picked up by participant #3 where he feels that the manner in which she expressed her desire is quite provoking in a way where she tries to elicit a response from the reader. One gets the sense that the desire PJ Harvey is trying to communicate is manifest in emotions she sings about that appears to be unprocessed, irrational, immediate, direct etc. One imagines that this may be too threatening for participants, or too raw and perhaps not disguised enough where it can be processed safely by participants. Alternatively Liz Phair's feelings in her songs where often disguised in humour she used which

participants appeared to relate to and enjoy. One got the sense that this made her more accessible to participants as a human being with feelings and thoughts they could relate to. PJ Harvey's songs on the other hand appear to be more difficult terrain for participants to navigate. Participant #3's insight into PJ Harvey's feelings regarding her desire being too intense, direct, unprocessed and infantile almost is perhaps one of the reasons why participant's struggled to process her desire. Looking ahead to the remaining participants responses of this study may also provide clarity regarding her desire being so troublesome for them.

Participant #4's comments are interesting in that for the first time thus far what may have appeared to be previous participants hinting that PJ Harvey may be damaged somehow internally, participant #4's comments make it very clear.

> "This sounds like a crazy guy! I don't know what's wrong with this guy! It does, it sounds like a guy he's singing about, and then afterwards maybe I thought it's a guy that's gay who's singing about queen here the whole time. So I don't know! Weird guy! Is it a guy or a girl? It sounds like a guy! Is she a lesbian!? Straight! Ja but this is what guys would say! 'Lick me', this is not normal hey! This is not characteristic of what a girl would say, it's more like a guy, it's sounds like a guy, a crazy guy! It's normally a guy! And now that it's a girl its even crazier!" Participant #4

The 'vague', 'blunt', 'ambiguous', 'random', 'hectic' etc. approach to communicating one's desire that PJ Harvey has chosen as identified by previous participants has been interpreted by participant #4 as 'crazy' and 'not normal'. He appears to be relying on discourses around what appears to not make sense, presumably mental illness that ails one which can only be the most plausible reason for why someone would want to communicate feelings of desire in such a manner. Interestingly is that what appears to drive the participant to make such comments is the 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality' of the person who is writing the song which appears to be on the one hand obvious to him but on the other hand confusing. The manner in which PJ Harvey communicates her desire according to participant #4 appears to be the way a man would communicate his desires. The quality participant #4 detected in PJ Harvey's songs which ironically helped him but also confused and introduced questions around PJ Harvey's gender was the quality that pertained to 'possessiveness'. It appears that discourses around the stereotypes concerning men and women appear to help participant #4 make sense of PJ Harvey but at the same time troubled him.

Due to this assistance and confusion regarding gender identity it instead did not make participant #4 appreciate the desire PJ Harvey was communicating as it was obscure, not normal and crazy. Her desire appeared for participant #4 to confuse the logical structures of gender as well as the sexuality that is supposed to be and flow from its binary structure. Participant #4's confusion regarding the ambiguity of the way in which PJ Harvey's desire gets communicated across within the field of gender and sexuality, is perhaps a reflection of confusion regarding her own desire. Confusion in the sense where PJ Harvey may have difficulty in reconciling her desires with the parameters that structure desire as identified by participant #4. As a consequence of this PJ Harvey 'subverts' the parameters of desire to communicate what she feels rather than ideas of what she should feel to which she appears to be hostile towards or rather dislike. This hostility and disliking is what gets reflected in participant #4 and other participant's responses where they in return dislike that she has disrespected the parameters of desire. Both parties i.e. participants and PJ Harvey appear to be unflinching and unforgiving to the way which in which desire is communicated.

Participant #5 follows a similar path of previous participants in that she expresses dislike for PJ Harvey stating that she appears to come across as too extreme and one-sided almost. Here is some of what she had to say:

> "I think she definitely hates men! And really tries to show how chauvinistic and arrogant they are! And umm obviously she doesn't feel more loving than she sees them as more dominant and overpowering, almost overbearing! Sounds like a very hurt woman! I feel that she used sex to illustrate the power of the man over her, and it's interesting that she used it because it's lots of ideas that women are just there to bear fruit as she would say. And umm you know to carry on with the human race. That women nowadays are just there to give them pleasure, they want them to provide and they will! Just use you and abuse you like you do to them but ja she's being very old fashioned and maybe trying to say the old fashioned men's belief of how a woman should just sit there and take it so… It's very heavy! It's very intense! She's saying, making everything like a painful male dominating experience! Why is she doing that!? All the things, it's not supposed to be like that! Why is she doing that!? It was so negative! It's like why, she's angry and letting, she's letting herself be overpowered by, I can't relate to her at all!" Participant #5

Participant #5 expresses dislike for PJ Harvey construing that the only plausible reason why one would communicate desire in such a way is because one would have to have been through painful experiences where one was abused by a man. Participant #5 struggles to understand why PJ Harvey would adopt such an unflinching and

unforgiving attitude towards men which is interesting in how it creates within her an unflinching and unforgiving towards PJ Harvey. This is apparent when she declares that she simply can not identify with PJ Harvey as a woman. Another interesting observation is how PJ Harvey's frustration with the parameters of desire or logic of desire as mapped onto the gendered binary system as mentioned by participant #4, reflects her confusion regarding such a logic especially when juxtaposed with her own private desires.

Similarly, participant #6 echoes what participants #2, 3, 4 and 5 have which is the disbelief almost with why PJ Harvey communicates her desire in such a way.

> "Very weird! Very, very weird. I wouldn't listen to it, I wouldn't buy it. Liz Phair is weird acceptable. This weird crazy, weird unacceptable, weird I don't wanna be with you! I don't wanna see you! This person is crazy! She's not lost! Eish! Does she know?! Does she know who she is?! Or he is?! There's a lot of confusion there, I don't even think that person also knows! (Laughs)… I can't explain it. I can't… its just weird lyrics. I can't… I don't understand what she's talking about number 1… And shame! Shame! Feel sorry, shame! Going through your life with so much confusion not even one you know clear thought. She doesn't have a clear thought." Participant #6

Participant #6 is not sure what to make of PJ Harvey except for all that she can say is 'weird'. As with previous participants she makes use of discourses pertaining to mental health, gender and one's ability to write clearly which all culminates in a way that interestingly construes PJ Harvey's desire as 'weird', 'unacceptable', 'crazy' etc. She also draws comparisons between Liz Phair and PJ Harvey claiming that the former is acceptable whilst the latter is unacceptable. This is indicative of Liz Phair's desire which is forgiving and flinches towards the parameters/logic of desire and this is reflected in participant's attitude towards her. Conversely PJ Harvey's desire is unforgiving and unflinching towards the parameters/logic of desire and this is reflected in participant's being unforgiving and unflinching with regards to what she is saying.

Participant #7 differed from all the other participants but resembled perhaps participant #3 in that she commented not on the way PJ Harvey communicated her desire but on what PJ Harvey was saying and how it made her feel.

> "Umm the feelings I felt, I think initially before like while I was still trying to make sense of this, initially the second and third one, the 'Man-Size' and '50ft Queenie', umm ja I found my initial assumption almost err, err a competing one that made me

> feel a little bit aggravated. In a way although the initial reaction from me was like why the confusion!? That irritates me a little, umm the ambiguity at the same time tones down that frustration in me cause I think well maybe it is supposed to be a play on guy/girl, him/her, me/her, it/him, and that for me is quite nice I like the idea that maybe it is all ambiguous that maybe there isn't something definite, that there aren't these definite boundaries that can say whose the speaker and I think that's just my social assumption about who expect it to be in each case." Participant #7

Once again participant #7 is able to reflect on how she feels towards PJ Harvey and in doing so is able to comment on reasons as to why PJ Harvey may be saying the things that she is. What this does is that it makes the participant aware of the response PJ Harvey is eliciting within her which is 'confusion', 'aggravation', 'irritation' etc. However, being aware of her feelings towards PJ Harvey did not appear to frustrate her as much as it did to other participant's where they devalued PJ Harvey. What appears to be important is the frustration participant #7 mentioned that she experienced when reading PJ Harvey. Her frustration is a reflection of the frustration PJ Harvey experiences with regards to her desire and the ways available to her that she can communicate her desire.

To conclude this sub-theme as well as the umbrella theme for this, is perhaps the seemingly different responses from participants and the manner in which this was dealt with. Sometimes converging responses but varied one's from participant's permitting for smaller but several themes as opposed to few themes subsuming participant's responses. The reason for pursuing the latter method was to cope with what appeared to be several nuances in participant's responses that corrupted and distorted the very approach to codifying and developing themes. Admittedly so, a fundamental weakness to the method of interpretation employed here but weaknesses there are to every other method of interpretation. Coping with the nuances riddled in participant's responses upon deeper investigating and codifying revealed that their responses were more about the musicians that are being researched. Particularly the effect Liz Phair and PJ Harvey had i.e. the feelings and thoughts aroused in participants. What emerged was that the nuances within and between participant's responses spoke to similarities with regards to feelings in particular i.e. a kind of vibe or attitude within participants.

These strikingly convergence of feelings amongst participants told of a similar or shared experience amongst participant's that became available for analysis. This similar and shared experience emerged because of the impact Liz Phair and PJ Harvey had on participants. Participant's experience of these musicians as well as what these

musicians were communicating told of a reality that exists around which one can speak about their desire that is specific to women within music but at the same time reflecting trends in society. Therefore by discussing participants varied and sometimes similar responses individually, it allowed for the manner in which their feelings and thoughts appeared to converge in response to both Liz Phair and PJ Harvey.

What was more important for this theme was to illustrate, besides technicalities regarding interpretation, was how the convergence of participant's feelings communicated a reality around the possibilities of communicating one's desire. Liz Phair created a split within participants reflecting her desire which border's on the personal but also expectations regarding her desire. This importantly illustrates tensions she experiences with regards to her desire which ultimately 'forgives' and 'flinches' towards the expectations hence the reason that participants are able to simultaneously dislike her but also forgive, respect and like her. PJ Harvey on the hand did not split participants rather she confused, angered, shocked and humoured participants which were all related to participants disliking her. PJ Harvey's desire by virtue of the style with which it is written which is ambiguous, dense and fragmented, by the repetition of particular phrases, the invoking of particular metaphors and the erratic and unstable use of pronouns, reflects her own 'unforgiving' and 'unflinching' attitude to the ways desire should be communicated. This is reflected in the way that participants are 'unforgiving' and 'unflinching' towards her songs. This is on the basis that there appears to be some normative and shared understood way as expressed by participants of how one should communicate their desire.

In essence both Liz Phair and PJ Harvey have communicated feelings of desire that have been met with some resistance by participants. It is this resistance reflected in participant's feelings in response to a set of ideas both musicians are communicating that provides insight into the nature of a desire that is subversive. The residual effects of what is accepted through participants responses of the structures of music ('Setting The Stage'), the idea of a female musician ('The Chanteuse') and up until now specific ideas as communicated through two musicians ('Perils in the Pursuit of the Personal') has accentuated or rather magnified these residual effects. The shape such effects have taken appear to be one's that make participants feel uncomfortable, awkward, create tensions, rationalisations, intellectualisations etc. Such effects speak to what is within i.e. internal to participants reflecting uncertainties about the external (in this Liz Phair and PJ Harvey) in a way that troubles the internal, but reinforces the internal and

troubles the external and reinforces the internal. This uncertainty has been deemed perhaps incorrectly so but nevertheless with specific reference to ideas pertaining to a desire communicated by women within music, as 'subversive'.

Theme 4

'She's got the Look'

The final theme in a series of arguments for purposes of responding to aims put forth by this research is perhaps the last step in attempting to flesh out a female desire deemed 'subversive'. **'She's got the Look'** is concerned with participant's response to images of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey from the same time period the songs participants were exposed from 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' which was released between 1992 to 1993. This theme is straightforward in that it explores the extent to which the images of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey are congruent or not with the mental images generated by participant's when they were reading the musicians lyrics. This is especially the case as participants were exposed first to the musician's lyrics and afterwards they were expected to peruse images of the musicians and comment on them. Participant's responses have organised along the following two sub-themes:

(I) 'Liz Phair as Incongruent'

(II) 'PJ Harvey as Congruent'

(I) 'Liz Phair as Incongruent'

A majority of the participant's of this study responded to images of Liz Phair saying that what they had anticipated from reading her lyrics and the mental picture they had envisioned of her was not reflected in what they saw. Suffice to say the image of **'Liz Phair as Incongruent'**. Here is some the comments participants made:

> "Err Liz Phair is not what I expected at all. I expected a bit of a messed up looking chick… She looks almost a bit homely. She doesn't seem like the girl who wrote that stuff or sung that stuff… Err she's quite attractive!" Participant #1

> "Okay, firstly, first impression is that, that she's a lot more feminine umm she's also sexualised, many of the pictures are of a sexual nature. Umm and she is using her femininity here… What's not congruent for me is here she seems like a very wholesome young woman who's, who has no, no mental illness whatsoever and umm she's, she's completely comfortable with her sexuality and with her place in the world." Participant #3

> "Okay Liz Phair first of all, she looks like a beautiful girl okay and I could see why the guys wanted to have sex with her." Participant #4

> "Surprisingly very ordinary looking!" Participant #6

> "Umm but it doesn't feel congruent. I don't know if it's what I expected… maybe what's not is the, the like almost umm girly-slivery-strappy sort of think! That looks like it doesn't fit yet the contrast is good! The quite toned arms umm the contrast is quite nice. That there is a, there's not a sort of a needing to be butch is the only word I can think of… What word do we use for that!? Like nowadays that doesn't mean anything else! Okay lets call it stereotypical femininity!" Participant #7

What appears to be striking in the comments above expressed by participants is the unconventional juxtaposition of Liz Phair's lyrical content communicating struggles and tensions she experience with a somewhat serene, feminine, beautiful and sexual external. This unlikely juxtaposition is interesting as notions of 'beautiful' coupled and adding weight to 'feminine' that the image invokes appears to preclude the deep-seated internal struggles with regards to desire that a woman experiences. Femininity, but only 'beautiful' and 'sexual', then becomes the basis for what appears to be the discrimination of a 'desire' that rightfully so should belong to a 'woman'.

(II) 'PJ Harvey as Congruent'

The majority of participant's responses more so than Liz Phair's image appeared to concur in that the image of her they anticipated when reading her songs were congruent with the images they eventually saw of her. Here are some brief comments they made with regards to her images:

> "I expected a bit of a messed up looking chick like a little bit what PJ Harvey looks like… To me that's the , like this one is quite messed up (PJ Harvey's picture) and like trying to make a statement and umm like, like the reason like people irritate me is because they trying very hard not to conform umm and by trying so hard they conform in every other way." Participant #1

> "I expected someone to look like this. I really did! I got no surprises when I saw her photo's. I was like obvious!... I think she's just trying too hard to look goth and depraved. This is, this is what it looks like to me, it really looks like she's trying very hard to, to stand out in the crowd." Participant #2

> "Umm what's not congruent for me is almost a more difficult question to answer than what is congruent, what is congruent is that she, from her lyrics she disassociates

> herself from her sexuality. She is umm trying to not be sexual , that's clear in ever image… PJ Harvey is, she is not sexual at all! She's asexual…" Participant #3
>
> "But this PJ Harvey chick she just looks crazy! I wouldn't wanna stick with a girl like this as well. She seems, I don't know! She's strange! She doesn't look right. She looks like one of those strange girls, you know those gothic girls! Just the eyes as well! Just look at her!? She doesn't look right hey!? Just look at this picture!?" Participant #4
>
> "PJ Harvey looks weird… She looks like, her face is pale, like she put white powder on her face and like her eyes are just over done, you know. And this one here, her hair is weird, this one she has writing over her and she's wearing doc Martins whoo! (Laughs) and this one here looks like she had a bad night and like she's wearing guys things. And here, ja! I don't know, too much make-up." Participant #6

The comments made above appear to only accentuate extrapolations around the idea of 'femininity', 'sexuality', and 'beauty' made when interpreting Liz Phair, which correlates to a 'desire' that a 'woman' needs to take ownership of. If not, she will end up looking and sounding like PJ Harvey who is the inverse of 'femininity', 'beautiful' and 'sexiness', hence the reinforcing on a visual level as well as symbolic, why her desire is 'unnatural', 'weird', 'blunt', 'raw', 'hectic' etc. In other words everything that is not what a woman should be because she must be 'feminine', 'beautiful', 'sexy' etc.

What the final theme illustrates and to conclude is that the idea around femininity that is acceptable whilst correlating to idea's around beauty and matters pertaining to the sexual become clearer visually but also reinforce these ideas communicated symbolically. Liz Phair appears to embrace these ideas visually but compromises symbolically whilst PJ Harvey does not embrace these ideas both visually and symbolically. This is based purely on what participants have expressed in response to their images as well as their songs. Through the images of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey one also begins to see how at a visual level idea's around femininity, beauty and sexuality reflects what is thought about in terms of desire into what becomes a mental picture. The mental picture is powerful in terms of how it becomes representational and a template for ideas around desire pertaining to women, but more so reveals how 'femininity' in this case, 'beauty' and 'sexiness' are tools for which one can discriminate a desire that is subversive versus one's that are not.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In light of what has been a somewhat exhausting analysis of participant's responses as part of an attempt to argue the manifestations of a subversive female sexual desire through the music of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey, what follows is literature that engages and enriches arguments around such manifestations. In accordance with the themes in 'Chapter 4' that sought step by step to map out the variables (music, gender and sexual desire) that characterise Liz Phair and PJ Harvey and the extent to which these variables are subversive, this chapter offers theory procedurally to the themes extrapolated from participant's responses. In other words literature steeped in arguments contrary to 'established' discourses around the way music, gender and sexual desire are articulated will be employed to further make sense of participant's responses. What is meant by 'established' discourses are conventional music genres as well as traditional, mainstream views of gender and sexual desire, and how both music, and gender and sexual desire interact.

Beyond the deployment of literature for academic purposes are the epistemological and subsequent ontological assumptions that underpin such literature. To what extent then does one use existing knowledge to create new knowledge in a way that is open ended? This is argued because this research has called into question the very processes research claims require for publication which constitutes the process of knowledge production. It is these very processes that have defined a female sexual desire available to women through the medium of music that appears to be limited in terms of how this desire is expressed. Therefore the approach deployed in this chapter is sensitive to the process of reflexivity as well as the epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin a female sexual desire.

The task is not to repeat and reinforce particular knowledge claims that are fixed around creating certain categories such as female sexuality, but rather to bring such knowledge claims into question. In addition to this reiterating the epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin knowledge claims is central to this research especially as conceptualisation can be problematic in that it fixes meaning too readily whilst lacking fluidity. This has been done however against participants responses and how they have made sense of the performances of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through discourses of female sexuality and desire.

Setting the Stage

The first theme i.e. **'Setting the Stage'** emphasises a space or rather a context in which Liz Phair and PJ Harvey perform music. This space is crucial in that it served to demonstrate the ways in which participants have appropriated *meanings* from the space/context in which music is created, which in turn helps them make sense of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey as artists. The *meanings* appropriated by participants are reflected through their musical preferences. The point of which is to unearth *meanings* generated from this space and how they shape preferences and perceptions (of participants) towards the various *musical identities* that emerge. In other words, what *meanings* around gender, generated through music, in turn shape audience perceptions towards future *meanings?* Furthermore, in what ways do these generated meanings appear to contradict and challenge conventional *meanings* that emerge from music. This becomes important as one begins to see musicians emerging from these spaces that are accorded appreciation, respect, admiration etc. more than other musicians who are deemed to not fit a specific convention. What then is this **'Stage'**, what does it consist of and what are the implications of it?

The work of Keith Negus in *Music Genres And Corporate Cultures* (1999) is helpful in elaborating on the space in which music exists and the consequences thereof. Negus argues that the space in which music exists is one where "corporations shape the conditions within which particular practices can be realised and contested as 'creative' while also containing genre categories that might otherwise be far more unstable and dynamic" (1999:24). What is already hinted at in the above quote is the appearance of a set of principles pertaining to musical production involving an 'industry' in the name of producing identifiable products and commodities (Negus, 1999; Bennett, 2000; Bennett, 2001; Hull, 2004 & Fairchild, 2008).

The point Negus makes is that the seemingly omnipotent influence corporations have in crafting music as an industry often renders music as consumer product questionable with regards to authenticity. But there are spaces within the edifice of the industry that permit for creativity not completely tainted by demands of the industry. Negus's work is also helpful in that it begins to define the **'Stage'** and the struggles experienced by musicians to varying degrees of commerce versus creativity shaping their music. Participant's musical preferences therefore reflect the tensions over commerce versus creativity culminating in the product/art participants engage with. Therefore **'Setting**

the Stage' echoes not only participant's musical preferences but also the factors such as artistic integrity, the industry and commodification influencing such preferences.

One gets a sense that the factors influencing participant's musical preferences are matters pertaining to the extent to which an artist and the piece of music that they create is credible or not. Negus fleshes out what appears to be pivotal in terms of the *messages* and *meanings* music creates and the source of these that participants come to *identify* with or not. The source of these *messages* and *meanings* argues Negus is the continuous debates over commerce versus creativity shaping musical *messages* and *meanings*, especially ones related to representations of women. This last point is important for the first sub-theme of **'Setting The Stage'** which represents a musical preference expressed by participants that have implications for the music of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey.

The first sub-theme **'Popular Tunes'** is the first musical preference expressed by participants and is premised precisely on music that one would consider popular or top 40 music. Roy Shuker in *Understanding Popular Music* (1994) is concerned with the nature of popular culture and the impact it has on 'popularising' music. Shuker (1994) identifies three dimensions to the manner in which popular culture interacts with music: 1. individuals within a social context who consume popular cultures, 2. texts/narratives and the symbolic forms they take which are consumed within a culture that enriches the social fabric an individual inhabits and 3. corporations or economic institutions and the accompanying technological processes that produce texts. Shuker (1994) goes on to argue that these three dimensions interact in a way that raises a series of complex issues which importantly speaks to difficulties popular music creates for music produced by artists who fall outside of the mainstream such as Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. One such issue is "the ideological role of popular culture in perpetuating dominant values, and the possibilities for subverting and opposing such preferred readings" (Shuker, 1994:14).

'The ideological role of popular music' as described by Shuker is crucial especially with regards to how receptive participants are to the desire Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate in their music which has been deemed subversive by this research. 'The ideological role' of **'Popular Tunes'** and its implication in 'subversive female desires' speaks to issues around the recycling and reinforcing of dominant values and ideas around representations of gender that are specific to women. In *Popular Music: The Key Concepts* also by Roy Shuker (2003) we see a documentation of concepts in

popular music that become a way of categorising musicians that reflect dominant ideas and constructions that exist in society around gender and sexuality.

Shuker argues (2003) that within popular music female musicians adopt a style that is typically the vocal sound of a woman as a nurturer and soft, emphasis placed on the qualities of appearance which reflect the sexual objectification of women as well as warm and the relaxed use of vocal chords. No where is this reflected in the choice of musicians participants expressed a preference for. These preferred musicians in addition to being exorbitantly popular are also importantly all female musicians. These preferred popular female musicians are emblems for all that comes to be sexually objectified. No where is this true in these preferred musicians lyrical content, video's and images where they are gratuitously sexualised. Though these female musicians rely heavily on sex, which is considered controversial amongst more conservative members of society, through their popularity according to Shuker they rely on mechanisms of popular culture that safeguards against dominant represents of women from being subverted. Such mechanisms cement ideals of how women should be represented which become a feminine ideal that is sought after by women. This ideal representation of women erases a reality and possibility of alternative or rather fluid/multiple/intersecting representations of women.

Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through their lyrical content, sound, vocal capacity and images represent the inverse of what is considered dominant representations of woman which are ones that popular music mirrors. One can see how **'Popular Tunes'** as a preference expressed by participants thrives on traditional representations of all things associated with women, especially communicating feelings of desire and how this can exclude the desire of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey.

However, the idea of traditional representations of women especially with regards to their desire influencing popular culture and vice versa, and how this spills into the music industry has not gone unchallenged. This is an important point as it coalesces with a second musical preference expressed by participants and introduces the second sub-theme **i.e. 'Resolute Rock'**. This has been an observation made by Norma Coates in her paper entitled *(R)evolution Now?: Rock and the political potential of gender* (1997). Coates argues (1997) that the recent influx of 'women in rock', particularly during the early nineties who have challenged traditional representations of femininity are still left feeling alienated.

Reasons for this sense of alienation experienced amongst women in rock music challenging traditional representations of womanhood and femininity are perhaps the dominating presence of men in rock music as expressed by participants themselves. This idea is picked up by Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie in an article entitled *On the Expression of Sexuality* (2000). Frith and McRobbie (2000) point out that the adolescent boy constitutes the bulk of the rock audience and they develop an interest in rock music hoping to become hi-fi experts, musicians, technicians, rock critics and writers or music businessmen. It is this adolescent-boy-rock 'listenership' that translates into how the rock industry becomes defined and gendered.

However, beyond boys constituting the majority of the rock audience fuelling the industry as masculine, Frith and McRobbie argue (2000) that it is also the allure rock music generates which resonates so strongly from so early on in a man's life. This allure is what Frith and McRobbie (2000) refer to as 'cock rock' which appears to be a marker for a masculine sexuality.

Marion Leonard in *Gender in the Music Industry: Rock, Discourse and Girl Power* (2007) elaborates on 'cock rock'. Leonard argues that performers within this genre "are defined as aggressive, dominating and boastful … women in their eyes, are either sexually aggressive and therefore are doomed and unhappy, or else sexually repressed and therefore in need of male servicing" (2007: 24-25). The point of using adolescent boy audience of rock music and 'cock rock' is that it illustrates an almost phallic structure to rock music which represents a barrier towards women's entrance into this genre. Participants also express a preference for rock music and all of the rock bands they expressed a liking for are male-dominated.

One wonders then as Coates points out about the promise the revolution of rock music offers especially in terms of destabilising traditional representations of femininity and whilst it does offer women this opportunity their voices still remain alienated. One wonders again about the structure of rock music and the sub-genres that get played within it which are the ones Liz Phair and PJ Harvey are situated in and how this is an inherently masculine world. But more so how this masculine world constructs women's voices within its structure as always oppositional and counter to what women are expected to embody. Hence the 'promise of rock' in revolutionising traditional representations of femininity, operates as a **'Resolute Rock'** that pays lip service to the

fall backs of 'the ideological role of popular culture' that fuels **'Popular Tunes',** which promotes traditional representations of femininity.

Therefore rock music offers women the chance to represent their femininity in ways that are not so rigidly and traditionally based on dominant representations of femininity but a chance to represent themselves counter to dominant representations. This importantly positions musicians like Liz Phair and PJ Harvey in ways that are always on the margins and is peripheral to what is expected of women. But based on the responses of participants, they imagine rock music as exclusive to men as expressed in their preference for rock bands that are exclusively male. The idea one gets is that whilst artists like Liz Phair and PJ Harvey may have space within music to articulate their specific form of femininity, which manifests itself in the desire they communicate, they have little room to manoeuvre the way in which their desire is accepted and appreciated by audiences at large.

This is due to the responses of participants whose preferences for music are **'Popular Tunes'** and **'Resolute Rock'**. The former thriving on 'the ideological role of popular culture' informed by traditional representations of femininity, and the latter's phallic structure positioning women within it as always deviant and resisting traditional representations. One begins to see a gendered character that embodies both **'Popular Tunes'** and **'Resolute Rock'** that has implications for the manner in which it constructs the femininity Liz Phair and PJ Harvey portray, which impacts on audiences like the participants of this research.

The last sub-theme of **'Setting The Stage'** which also reflects the final musical preference expressed by participants is **'Sass, Soul and Vocal'**. This musical preference and theme reflects a sound and vocal that culminates in an image that embodies a 'feminine energy'. This 'feminine energy' is tied to an 'emotional weight' primarily based on a sound generated by certain female artists that participants expressed a liking for. This 'sound' that carries 'emotional weight' thus embodying a 'feminine energy' is what participants specifically expressed a liking for precisely because they are *feminine*. This last point has been argued further in a paper by Elizabeth Wood entitled *On the Sapphonic Voice* (2000).

Wood argues (2000) that a women's singing voice is traditionally characterised by vocal styles such as soprano, mezzo, contralto as well as nuances between these three

registers. Wood (2000) identifies female musicians in opera music as well as other genres whose vocal style transcends or is rather a 'border-crossing voice' that is neither male nor female. The point that Wood makes is that tied to the voice and upon its musical interpretation is that the voice is immediately recognisable in terms of one's sex. Though beyond the sex of the voice there is the gender that corresponds to the sex, which inscribes cultural/social manifestations of sex which are recognisable as *feminine* and *masculine*. This dichotomy fuels and requires particular expectations, roles, values etc.

Whilst one's voice and the singing quality it adopts is something equally impervious to the physiological consequences of sex, but is also learned by aspiring singers from one's who serve as role models, there is a discernable 'femininity' argues Wood. One gets a sense from the last point that there appears to be a 'negativistic' determinism for the voices of female musicians that perhaps unfairly dismisses them as *feminine* but at the same time should be celebrated because they are in fact *feminine*. The truth about the 'femininity' of a voice does hold up to some extent especially when participants expressed a liking for the voices of female musicians precisely because they boasted a 'feminine energy' carrying 'emotional weight'. The issue of 'emotional weight' is precisely what Wood refers to when she talks about the *feminine* voice and the implications and expectations such a characteristic holds certainly for all female musicians.

One begins to see then that whilst **'Sass, Soul and Vocal'** appears to be more explicitly gendered than **'Popular Tunes'** and **'Resolute Rock'**, this theme becomes an additional factor and barrier in terms of the appeal 'femininity' appears to carry. 'Appeal' in the sense that these 3 themes and preferences as expressed by participants appear to capture manifestations of the manner in which 'femininity' is represented. These representations however appear to work against musicians like Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. Especially how a theme like **'Sass, Soul and Vocal'** appears to discriminate against Liz Phair and PJ Harvey based solely on their vocal delivery, which can be characterised as voices that are not traditionally *feminine* but are avant-garde.

The Chanteuse

This is a good point for what appears to be the trouble with 'femininity' and 'music' coinciding with **Theme 2** i.e. **'The Chanteuse'**, which also features in this theme whilst also furthers theoretical arguments. **'The Chanteuse'** is an umbrella theme for

nuances (sub-themes) that engage participant's expectations, preferences, anxieties and conflicts regarding women and their role in music specifically the way in which the *feminine* gets enacted. And once again what are the implications of women's function in music and the *feminine* as according to participants for the music of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. The usage of the term **'The Chanteuse'** as deployed here is purely for purposes of the archetypal image the term conjures up. The role of **'The Chanteuse'** is what this study sees as synonymous with the function of women in music, specifically occupying a role where they make use of their voice as a musical instrument.

'The Chanteuse' is primarily concerned with the *feminine* that emerges from a woman's role within music and the extent to which for participants of this study this *feminine* may become problematic. In an essay entitled *Introduction: "Bright Cecilia"* (1994), Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou provide insight into why the *feminine* may become problematic especially as it has its roots during pivotal moments in music history in shaping and constructing the *feminine*. Cook and Tsou argue (1994) that since the late 15th century an early Christian martyr named Cecilia was honoured as the patron saint of music. Cecilia symbolised a kind of female identification associated with musical practice and the Cecilian symbolism came to be influential and inspirational for many women in music though they found out the source of this symbol was stereotypical and patriarchal (Cook and Tsou, 1994). Cook and Tsou argue that "Cecilia was in many ways the patronized saint of music, limited by her sex, to a passive role of idealised, even swooning, muse or performer, but not as an active creator… Cecilia presented cultural notions of acceptable female practice" (1994:1).

A paper entitled *Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women's Performance Traditions* (1994) by Jennifer C. Post, she elaborates on the manifestations of the *feminine* in music. Post (1994) documents a multitude of cultures from all over the world and demonstrates similarities across these cultures in terms musical activity reflecting gendered divisions of labour. Post argues (1994) that because men were more publicly oriented this resulted in musical freedom, musical domination and integration in musical performance. Women conversely were more privately oriented (restricted to the household) resulting in musical restriction, musical subordination and separation in music along sexual lines (Post, 1994). The point of both articles is that whilst there has been a shift in music especially in terms of the increment of women in music over the twentieth century and rising rapidly, women continue to

retain the quality of the *feminine*, which can be traced historically and linked to processes of gender inequality.

The first sub-theme and nuance of **'The Chanteuse'** i.e. **'Stereotypical Femininity'**, is the first in the *feminine* reflecting changes in women's pronounced role in music, but represents an aspect of the *feminine* that appears to be strikingly familiar to participants and what it is that participants come to expect of women in music. This is crucial in that it has implications for the type of *feminine* that is generalised to all women in music like Liz Phair and PJ Harvey who are judged by participants and audiences alike based on such a *feminine*. What is already explicit in this *feminine* is the 'stereotypical' and has its roots in the ones described above by Cook and Tsou (1994), and Post (1994).

In accordance with the *feminine* the majority of participants expressed a preference for or expectations of, is representations of women in music which this research has dubbed **'Stereotypical Femininity'**. Author Nicola Dibben comments on this kind of *feminine* in *Gender Identity and Music* (2002) where she argues that within Western culture the mind-body split is mapped onto identities that assume masculine and feminine roles respectively. Dibben argues that "music's appeal to the body predisposes it to be assigned to the feminine" (2000: 121). Whilst such an argument is debatable it is certainly reflective of a particular musician that has consistently emerged in participants responses of the *feminine* they envision in music. This musician is Beyonce who has been the inspiration behind the theme **'Stereotypical Femininity'**

Beyonce represents what Dibben's (2000) refers to as a representation of femininity that encourages the listener to adopt a particular subject position. This subject position is the representation of femininity premised on the construction of a masculine gaze that controls the female image (Dibben, 2000). Such a representation of femininity is a '**Stereotypical Femininity'** where the focus is drawn to the physical attributes of the female performer i.e. her beauty. This idea is extended by Joanne Gottlieb and Gayle Wald in *Smells Like Teen Spirit: Riot Grrls, Revolution and Women in Independent Rock* (1994) as they argue that female performers experience a struggle and negotiation in succumbing to the type of *feminine* in **'Stereotypical Femininity'** as expressed by participants. Gottlieb and Wald argue the following:

> "Women performers go through complicated contortions as they both appropriate and repudiate a traditional masculine rock performance position which is itself premised on

> the repression of femininity, while they simultaneously contend with a feminine performance position defined primarily as the erotic object-to-be-looked-at" (1994:260).

The idea expressed by Gottlieb and Wald proves useful at such a point as it reflects the struggle and tension experienced in articulating the *feminine* through music. Even though one might imagine that **'Stereotypical Femininity'** is a far cry from this tension and struggle, Beyonce's performances tell another story. Whilst her performances are steeped within 'popular music' it contains a power and force of vocals and movement of the body that rivals what is considered performances in 'rock n' roll' which are performed mostly by men. What differentiates her performance is the manner in which she gestures her body and also the focus of the camera on her body. Her performance even though it is considered *feminine* which is **'Stereotypical Femininity'**, embodies a struggle and tension that is reflected in participants responses to women who perform music. This becomes important for the next sub-theme and nuances of **'The Chanteuse'** reflected in participants responses. It is also important before moving on to remind the reader that Beyonce's *feminine* has implications for the *feminine* Liz Phair and PJ Harvey articulate.

The idea of tensions and struggles experienced by female musicians in articulating their sexuality and desire which constitutes the *feminine* is an important point. Especially as the *feminine* comes to be reflected in participants tensions, struggles and contradictions over the manner in which the *feminine* is expressed. This is evident in the second sub-theme of **'The Chanteuse'** which is **'Avoidance and Guilt'**. Rosalind Minsky in *Culture and Psychoanalysis* (1998) argues that the defensive structures such as avoidance employed by participants of this study in response to femininity as articulated through music, reflects loopholes in the Oedipal complex that participants are expected to resolve in accordance with cultural demands. Obscure as the mention of the Oedipal complex sounds, the logic follows that defence mechanisms which appear as avoidance represents the ego's of participant's experiencing tension between the demand of the instinctual id and the command of the super-ego's reality (Freud, 1950 & 1953).

It is important to flag that the tension/conflict participant's ego's experience is in response to the *feminine*. The *feminine* represents gender positions which participants come to know psychically by resolving their Oedipal complex which differentiates masculinity from femininity especially with regards to identification. What also accompanies this gendered awareness by virtue of the father's presence is the

cementing of participants super-ego's which is what culture deems as appropriate. Minsky (1998) argues that gender positions which emerge from participants Oedipal complex provide the best defence participants have against painful and inhibiting neurotic symptoms stemming from the id, because traditionally assumed gendered positions like the *feminine* fit with the requirements of culture i.e. the super-ego.

What Minsky is saying and the relevance it has here is that participant's avoidance of the *feminine* is based on nuances and fluidities the Oedipal complex presents in terms gender i.e. active mothers, passive fathers, girls masculine identification with her father and her desire for the mother, boys feminine identification with the mother and desire for the father etc. However, these fluid identities in the Oedipal complex argues Minsky – through Freud's theory on bisexuality – equips everyone for a capacity to be both masculine and feminine, but the cultural imperative of gender along with the authority of the super-ego impose restrictions on this fluidness. Therefore, the expression of the *feminine* in music reflects a heightened sense of the expression of gendered identities which participants avoid. This avoidance speaks to participant's sense of internalised femininity – both male and female participants – and how this may contradict, confuse, expose their gendered identity and the axis along which it must adhere to so strictly.

There is though, despite participant's avoidance of **'The Chanteuse',** the matter of participants feeling guilty with regards to feeling compelled to be 'okay' with the expression of the *feminine* in as diverse forms as possible to avoid discrimination. Using Freud and Minksy again to make sense of what is going on inside participants psychically is the function of the super-ego. Despite the super-ego functioning as a cultural authority it also serves as a marker for what is considered right and wrong (Freud, 1950). Tied very closely to what is right and wrong, which the super-ego promotes, is the adherence and fulfilment of the criteria for what is right.

If one thinks about the developmental pattern the Oedipal complex follows it is the anal stage of development. This stage commences the process of the formation of the super-ego and also links very closely to participant's self-esteem and sense of becoming independent, autonomous, productive members of society (Cameron and Rychlak, 1985). Therefore when the sense of right or rather the expectation is not adhered to as set by the cultural authority/parental dyad, guilt is one of the principal feelings that emerges as the self is feels it has disappointed the authority figure (Lasky, 1993). It is

important for the child at this stage to feel that he or she is good-enough through conformity of parental and cultural expectations.

Participants feelings of guilt is reflective of a self that echoes the goals of the anal stage of psychosexual stage of development which is to please so that the self is not devalued but seen in a good light. More importantly though is that the *feminine* as communicated through music even by popular musicians such as Beyonce appears to trouble participants as their reservations characterised by defence mechanisms reveals **'Avoidance and Guilt'**. It is only through participant's avoidance and feelings of guilt to questions that enquire generally into their thoughts of women performing music, which evokes popular artists such as Beyonce for them that still renders participants awkward and uncomfortable to such a question.

One wonders then about how the *feminine* and matters pertaining to it such as desire and sexuality present difficulties for participants especially around feeling awkward, defensive, reserved and guilty. Once again this has implications for the *feminine* Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate which is not considered popular and how this places an additional strain on the manner in which participants are receptive to them. One wonders if participant's awkwardness, avoidance or feelings of guilt pertaining to the *feminine* (that they are familiar with and can imagine such as Beyonce) is a reflection of their awareness that Beyonce is in fact a popular musician and that they may feel embarrassed or guilty that they indulge in such a *feminine*. Especially against a question that requires participants to comment on women performing music, which has the effect of 'formalising' and giving serious treatment to pop musicians, which participants may considered fun and perhaps not something that demands 'serious' reflection.

One gets a sense then that similar feelings around avoidance and guilt may arise for participants on commenting about Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. What becomes pivotal however is that if participants guilt and avoidance arises out of the question they are asked about women performing music because it 'takes the fun' out of music, then women who perform music is not a site of reflection and enquiry for participants. This is crucial then, as the *musical messages* especially one's pertaining to the *feminine* and *sexual desire*, which this research is concerned with is not a matter of importance for participants. Therefore artists such as Liz Phair and PJ Harvey and the focus of *femininity* and *sexual desire* in their music will not be important to participants as the

their messages will become lost. It appears then that participant's guilt, avoidance and the defence mechanisms they employ are linked to issues with their sense of selves that treat matters pertaining to the *feminine* (particularly how they have internalised this) lightly and not as seriously as this research may have put it across to them. This certainly has implications for a particular type of *feminine* that is internalised by participants and unquestioned, but is reflected in performances by musicians such as Beyonce. This means that the *feminine* Liz Phair and PJ Harvey enact are likely to be rejected or resisted in some ways. This is problematic especially when one envisions a *feminine* that is fluid. Participant's **'Avoidance and Guilt'** validate the lack of fluidity one would expect the *feminine* to carry.

The last theme and nuance representing participants thoughts and feelings regarding the **'The Chanteuse'** is **'Admiration'**. The theme of **'Admiration'** can be thought of as bound somewhat with **'Avoidance and Guilt'** especially the latter i.e. guilt. **'Admiration'** is what appears to be a reflection of participants paying lip service to the idea of expression and female musician's freedom to express themselves. One gets the sense that participants **'Admiration'** for female musicians ability to express themselves tie in out of a sense of guilt as described in the above paragraphs. This is especially the case where participants are aware of the constraints women face in various sectors of society and to discourses that promote equality and fair representation of women. Participant's appreciation for female musicians also appears to be based more so on the genre or taste of the music that has the characteristics of popular sounding music.

Participant's appreciation and admiration for female musician's ability to express themselves – bearing in mind their acute awareness and acceptance of **'Stereotypical Femininity'** as well as their reservations on commenting directly on female musicians in **'Avoidance and Guilt' –** echoes the notion of 'Girl Power', which has commonly been deployed by different artists for different reasons. Articles such as "*Riot Grrrl Is…": Contestation over meaning in a music scene* (2004) by Kristin Schilt as well as *If I Had a Dick: Queers, Punks and Alternative Acts* (1998) by Cynthia Fuchs, comment on the term 'Girl Power'. Specifically how it originated out of feminist messages promoted by riot grrrl acts who advocated female empowerment and resisting constricting gender roles through music (Fuchs, 1998 & Schilt, 2004). Such messages and musical acts were born out of the perceived dominance of men in the music industry shaping every aspect of female musicians from image, lyrics, production,

marketing, sound, composing etc. (Fuchs, 1998; Schilt, 2004 & Leonard, 2007). The riot grrl act was therefore attempts by women to reclaim their power in the music industry through a politics against the subordination and objectification of women as well as challenging images of women in the public (Whitely, 1998).

However Judy Davies in the aptly titled "*It's Like Feminism But You Don't Have to Burn Your Bra": Girl Power and the Spice Girls Breakthrough 1996-7* (1999) examines the massive cultural appeal and explosion of the Spice Girls during the mid 90's and their 'borrowing' of the term 'Girl Power'. Davies (1999) demonstrates how 'Girl Power' was used by the Spice Girls as a marketing tool that obscured the feminist politics the message was originally intended for. Davies (1999) argues that the message the Spice Girls promoted of empowerment was controversial in that it promoted a female assertiveness steeped in traditional feminine interests such as make-up and clothing. The function of which was fuelled by a heterosexual and masculine discourse of how women should be which inherently maintains the ideological privilege of men over women (Davies, 1999). However, Sheila Whitely in *Artifice and the imperatives of commercial success: From Brit Pop to the Spice Girls* (2000), provides a counter-argument saying that the Spice Girls played a important role in presenting a message of popular feminism to young fans that was accessible and fun.

An article entitled *Venus Of The Radio Waves* (2005) by Camille Paglia, speaks to nuanced and grey areas around the topic of 'Girl Power' and the extent to which it is truly feminist or not as reflected and arguably so by 'Riot Grrl' acts versus the Spice Girls and others. Paglia (2005) comments on the matter by arguing that Madonna is an exception to the seemingly obstinate dichotomy that distinguishes musical messages that are feminist versus ones that merely ape feminist messages. Paglia (2005) argues that whilst Madonna invokes heterosexual and masculine discourses of how women should be represented she does so in a manner that ridicules and exaggerates women as sexual objects. The point of this is that it upsets the notion of women as passive recipients of matters pertaining to sex who need a man to take charge and help them discover their desires (2005). Paglia (2005) argues that Madonna shows that a woman can be in control of her desires and sex whilst simultaneously relying on traditional masculine and heterosexual discourses on how a woman should fashion their sexuality and desire.

The point of the above arguments is that it serves to foreground the idea of expression by female musicians and how this was an attribute that participants appreciated about female musicians. But how the idea of expression may be used by participants as a way of merely paying lip-service to the idea of female musicians' ability to express themselves without really expressing themselves at all. Like the Spice Girls who may not have anticipated the weight and politics the term 'Girl Power' was originally intended for, participants appear to loosely embrace the idea of 'expression' whilst perhaps not completely grasping the weight and baggage the term carries especially when it pertains to sexuality and desire. This merely reinforces dominant notions of femininity especially through music that participants express a preference for such has **'Popular Tunes', 'Resolute Rock'** and **'Sass, Soul and Vocal'**. All of which maintains the idea of exclusion of women such as Liz Phair and PJ Harvey articulating particular notions of femininity that do not fit within these categories.

Additionally the theme of **'Admiration'** also foregrounds the controversial and contested nature of the idea of the female musician i.e. **'The Chanteuse'**. Particularly how once again participants appear to be engaging with the idea of women in music on a superficial level that only reflects their insecurities regarding femininity as in **'Avoidance and Guilt'**. Also what appears to be a **'Stereotypical Femininity'** that is emblazoned on their schematic representations of women in music which informs many of the decisions participants appear to make when commenting on the women in music. One gets the idea that **'Stereotypical Femininity'** as a derivative of popular culture for the sake of consumption is all that it is, and that this marks women in music as commodities that should not be taken seriously as reflected in participants responses in the themes of '**Avoidance and Guilt'** and **'Admiration'**. One wonders then about artists like Liz Phair and PJ Harvey and matters pertaining to a *feminine* desire and sexuality and the extent to which participants and audiences are receptive, accepting and appreciative of their desires.

'Perils in the Pursuit of the Personal'

Whilst participant's responses have differed towards Liz Phair and PJ Harvey as evident in the **'Perils in the Pursuit of the Personal'** i.e. **Theme 3**, one would imagine that would permit for separate discussions on the two musicians. However, both musicians communicate feelings of desire that appear to upset the categorical ways that a female should do so and this is reflected in participant's responses. Participants responses reflect discomfort, awkwardness, frustration, confusion, ambiguity, shock,

etc. that they experienced with regards to these two musicians. In other words, a conflict, tension or sense of anxiety is what participants experienced with regards to Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. A paper written by Marie Maguire (2001) entitled 'Women's sexuality in the new millennium' is useful to note here. Maguire provides reasons as to why participants of this study may have to responded to Liz Phair and PJ Harvey they way they did.

Maguire argues (2001), despite the 21st century having recourse to a history detailing the limited 'agency' women have had over their own lives and the lives of others in society, the subsequent promise and appearance of a more gender neutral space has not translated into the lives of women. A specific space not gender neutral that Maguire is concerned with is women's sexuality. Maguire argues that "cultural imagery continues to depict women gaining pleasure from being attractive rather than from exercising their own desires" (Maguire, 2001:104). Liz Phair and PJ Harvey represent the inverse of the cultural imagery Maguire speaks about where in different ways to each other they 'exercise their own desires'. Maguire's argument however is reflective of the participants of this study whose anxiety regarding such 'desires' confirms the backlash of why cultural imagery does not depict women exercising their own desires.

One gets a sense that Maguire envisions a dichotomy. This is especially when she talks about pleasure a woman derives that is (conventionally) from being attractive versus (unconventionally) exercising her own desire (Maguire, 2001). This dichotomy becomes more pronounced as she goes on to map being attractive (receptive) and exercising ones desire (directive) onto passive and active sexual/desired aims in the way that Freud argues (Maguire, 2001). Maguire (2001) goes on to add that these passive and active aims reflect expectations regarding gender in society, which corresponds to femininity and masculinity respectively. However her mention of 'passive' and 'active' in the way that Freud understands these terms indicates a desire responding to societal expectations but also responding to something that is internal. In other words, a women's desire is pressured not only from the outside (societal expectations) but also from the inside (psychical).

The above paragraph is important as it discerns a dichotomy hinted at in Maguire's argument regarding a woman's desire derived from being attractive rather than exercising her desire. In addition to this, the dichotomy becomes clearer as Maguire maps it onto Freud's ideas regarding passive versus active sexual/desired aims, and

how this corresponds to femininity and masculinity respectively. This point is important as it adds depth to the way in which one understands the desire that Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate as merely 'exercising their own desires'.

If one looks at how Freud in his 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (1905), talks about 'activity' and 'passivity', for the purposes of understanding the desire that Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate, he does so in a way where both can be expressed in forms considered pathological and normal. These forms are namely 'sadism' and 'masochism' which correspond to 'active' and 'passive' forms respectively (Freud, 1905). The desire that Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicate according to Freud can become perverse or remain normal, but the root of which especially if the appearance of the desire is normal will exhibit qualities that are sadistic and masochistic (Freud, 1905). In other words, what matters is not whether the desire is normal or pathological but rather the sadistic and masochistic forms that characterise one's desire and the implications they have for Liz Phair and PJ Harvey.

Thus far Liz Phair and PJ Harvey appear to be 'exercising their own desires', which according to participants as theorised by Maguire is considered to be contrary to the way women are expected to do so. What appears then to characterise Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's desire is an active aim which has the characteristics of sadism according to Freud. Freud then defines sadism as a root or defining characteristic of (1905: 301) "The sexuality of most male human beings… an element of *aggressiveness* – a desire to subjugate; the biological significance of it seems to lie in the need for overcoming the resistance of the sexual object by means other than the process of wooing".

The above serves not to pigeonhole what Freud is saying as he argues further that sadism and masochism are not exclusive to men or women but both coexist in everyone. What also appears to be absent from Freud's definition and deliberately so is the abnormal nature or perverse quality that marks sadism in its pathological form. The function of which is to illustrate how normal sadism can be and appear in one. What Freud's above definition also does is that it offers an additional quality to sadism which is 'aggressiveness' and how this is thought to be characteristic of 'male' human beings. Therefore the seemingly perverse quality that marks sadism, which is what appears to characterise the desire that Liz Phair and PJ Harvey communicates is what seems to be problematic for participants when engaging with these musicians. The reason it is

problematic is precisely because a sadistic desire is quite simply characteristic of aggressiveness which is pronounced more in males than females.

In Liz Phair and PJ Harvey **pursuing the personal** through 'exercising their desires' they risk the **perilous** task of their desires conceptualised and understood as sadistic. Sadistic is 'subversive' to the way in which women are expected to 'exercise their desire'. However such a task is only deemed **perilous** because it reflects the manner in which participants responded to Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's desire which appears to be somewhat threatening and unsettling to them. The **pursuit of** Liz Phair and PJ Harvey 'exercising their own desires' is more so **perilous** as it becomes lost in a discourse that renders it sadistic and subsequently 'subversive'.

However, there is still the matter of making sense of the different ways that participants have responded to the way in which Liz Phair and PJ Harvey have communicated feelings pertaining to sexual desire. Even though their desires were understood broadly as sadistic and therefore deeming it subversive, the path that each musician has taken in communicating their desire is very different and this is reflected in the nuanced ways that participants respond to their music. At such a point one needs to ask oneself how it is that each of these musicians comes to articulate their desire in the manner that they did.

In a paper entitled "Writing as a Woman" by Luce Irigaray (1987), she echoes what Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's writing represents, that their writings are 'sexed'. In other words Irigaray argues that their sexuality is not restricted to their sex and neither is it to the sexual act, through their writing they are communicating their experiences which are ones that are 'sexed' (Irigaray, 1987). This point is important as it emphasises the circumstances around which the writing of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's desire emerges out of which is a 'female sexuality'. What then becomes problematic is how does one account for the desire Liz Phair and PJ Harvey are communicating. Problematic because this has been articulated by Freud in the 'Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' (1977) where he argues that the increasing awareness of sensate experiences of one's genitals marks the phallic phase i.e. an early sexual period that succumbs to repression. The phallic phase coincides with the Oedipal drama where the little girl's desire marked by this phase must suffer the disappointment of becoming an 'object of desire' like her mother who will one day find a man like her father rather than a 'subject of desire' like her father (Freud, 1977 & 2005). For Freud this moment is pivotal in the little girl's sex

taking on a passive aim as an object of desire as it is what characterises a 'feminine' position (Freud, 1977 & 2005).

Therefore how does a woman as Irigaray suggests communicate her sex through her writing without this writing of their sex being reduced to the reality that reflects what Freud says constitutes female sexuality, which is crucially reflected in the responses of participants of this study. In other words how does a woman 'come' to represent her sex, sexuality and desire in a way that is simply not termed sadistic in the way participants of this study have made sense of the musicians under study. Again participant's responses reflect Freud's 'Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' i.e. a reality. What becomes more important is how one conceptualises the desire Liz Phair and PJ Harvey are communicating.

Perhaps what maybe helpful as a starting point is distinguishing the 'writing of one's sex/sexuality/desire' versus the 'lived reality of one's sex/sexuality/desire'. This distinction echoes the work of Jacques Lacan's elusive paper on 'Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire' (1977). Lacan argues (1977) that one can only desire because the symbolic world i.e. language as a system of signification, permits for one's desire to be signified/communicated. Desire is not only a consequence of the dissolution one's Oedipus complex but also the system of signification i.e. language, and the acquisition of it coincides with the onset of the phallic phase which introduces the Oedipal Complex (Lacan, 1977). Importantly is that Lacan (1977) states that within language (and having differentiated oneself sexually by resolving ones Oedipal complex) there are moments when the signifying properties of language are capable of confusing the laws of desire so to speak that emerge from the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. In other words there are devices in language that come close to one's unconscious before the laws of desire are imprinted, which communicate unconscious feelings that confuse the laws of desire.

This appears to make sense especially when Liz Phair and PJ Harvey use the medium of language but by writing which differs from speaking in that the former allows for space and reflection whilst the latter is much more immediate. Therefore their language through writing is a concentrated task which wields language to communicate a desire that overthrows the laws of desire as established by the same language they are using. Then there should be no surprises then as to why participants are frustrated, conflicted, unsettled, confused etc. by Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's desire.

Again, one needs to ask how Liz Phair and PJ Harvey come to articulate their desire in such a way where participants respond in the manner that they do. On the one hand both musicians use language as a medium to communicate their desire, but the *space* in which each writes that is characterised as sadistic and dominating desires. This contradicts the outcomes of how the passive female sexual aim should emerge from the Oedipus complex, the aim of which frames women in a particular relation to men. This *space* from which such desires emerge has been taken up by several writers in an attempt to account for such 'deviant' female desires. This *space* has been what many writers referred to as the preoedipal world, the world where the little girl exists in an intimate bond with her mother without awareness and presence of the father (Whitford, 1989). This world also marks period before the signification of language occurs together with the bond between mother and daughter provides insight into the role and impact of the mother on the daughter.

Amidst numerous writers fascinated by this *space* as a break from the constricting nature of the Oedipus complex and the system of signification, the work of two writers Janine Chasseguet –Smirgel and Jessica Benjamin will be used to discuss the desire of Liz Phair and its effects on participants. **Liz Phair's** desire is **forgiving and flinches** towards the parameters of desire in society as emblematic in the positions that men and women are expected to assume upon resolving their Oedipal complex. Especially as Liz Phair's desire represents the tensions she experiences in taking ownership of what she desires but the realisation that what she desires is what constructs her as dependent especially as a woman. In other words, she experiences a need to be independent but her desire as an expression of her independence is characterised as passive and as dependent on a man. Liz Phair's tension is certainly reflected in participants feeling split between liking and not liking her because of her desire.

Chasseguet-Smirgel (1970) argues that the space in which Liz Phair writes is a reflection that her desire does not emerge because of the lack she experiences which she sees in her mother and the symbol of the penis which is what her father has which is powerful. Rather Liz Phair's desire emerges from the freedom the father represents away from the dependency on an imago held by the girl of a powerful and controlling mother during early infancy (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1970). In other words the father's penis is not only the symbol of desire but becomes the little girl's pathway to individuation. Chasseguet-Smirgel refers to this as the girls desire emerging not out of

the wish for a penis but to 'beat back the maternal power' because of a powerful mother (Benjamin, 1990)

The space of the power accorded to the mother is important as it permits for active (sadistic) aims rather than passive (masochistic) aims. This is especially important argues Jessica Benjamin (1990) as it becomes a step whereby the powerful, active and sadistic mother serves as a figure the little girl can identify with and envision a femininity not characterised by lack but one that is also powerful and active. In other words femininity is not born out of the penis envy that requires the girl/woman to submit but one where she can dictate her desire especially if she is equipped with an identification and a sexual aim that is active and not constrained by passivity. Such an explanation helps explain Liz Phair's drive towards autonomy and independence as an expression of an unconscious anger towards separation from a powerful mother who becomes at the same time a figure for which Liz Phair can identify with. At the same time though her drive for autonomy through exercising her desires is met with what the father represents i.e. the phallus, which becomes another barrier that frustrates her desire. Especially as the father's desire characterised by an acceptable active sexual aim may not be tolerant of Liz Phair's active sexual aim. Her aim disturbs 'gender' and what men and women are supposed to mean to each other within a heterosexual matrix.

By conceptualising Liz Phair as 'exercising her desires' as emerging from a space between mother and daughter that permits for femininity as active, powerful and possibly sadistic at times we can understand how this is appropriate for women. But also how it can become a struggle especially when exercised with respect to men and what men are expected to represent. Also how a women such as Liz Phair exercising her desire becomes a compromise as expressed in her songs where she is **forgiving and flinches** with respect to her own desire and the limits of it given the role of men. The expectation of gender roles - as mapped onto psychical ways of what the mother and father represent as identity figures for femininity and masculinity as well as the formation of desire - emerge as possible reasons for participants split reactions toward Liz Phair. Put differently, the binary system of gender corresponds to participants split feelings precisely because the logic of the binary is not upheld when Liz Phair 'exercises her desire'.

Despite the way Liz Phair's desire has been conceptualised in the above paragraphs, the way in which she communicates her desire is through writing and music. The last point

needs to be qualified as the way in which PJ Harvey's desire will be conceptualised will be based on the manner in which her desire is written. The reason for this is because participants appeared to respond to the style in which she wrote which irritated, confused and angered them. Participants appeared to engage less with the content of PJ Harvey's desire than they did with Liz Phair where her writing style was clearer and permitted for comments aimed at the content. Therefore, Liz Phair's desire was conceptualised in a way where it reflects how participant's comments were aimed primarily at the content because they could make sense of what she was saying. PJ Harvey's style on the other hand became an obstacle for participants to comment on her desire. Her desire and the manner in which in was written was **unflinching and unforgiving** towards conventional styles of writing ones desire, and therefore demands a conceptualisation aimed at this obstacle for participants.

The work of Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984) and *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1980) as well as Elizabeth Grosz's reading on Kristeva's work will be used to unpack PJ Harvey's desire. Kristeva's concept of 'the semiotic' is pivotal and in many ways mirrors the style that PJ Harvey's communicates her desire and the effects this has on participants. Kristeva (1984) defines 'the semiotic' as a *signifying modality* that differs to the 'the symbolic' in that the former is almost a residual effect of the latter. 'The semiotic' contains traces of the signifying process of language that constitute 'the symbolic' (Kristeva, 1984). In other words 'the semiotic' is a language that is fragmentary and characterised as "Indifferent to language, enigmatic… [The] space underlying the written is rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation" (Kristeva, 1984: 29). 'The semiotic' argues Kristeva (1984) is a quality that is manifest in the works of poets, musicians, literature and to avoid romanticising 'the semiotic' is also characteristic of the reality of psychosis.

Perhaps adding weight to the term 'semiotic' in terms of clarity as well as increasing the relevance it has for desire and femininity, is the semiotic as a signifying modality that has its origins and corresponds to the pre-Oedipal phase (Kristeva, 1984). This makes sense especially if one thinks about the acquisition of language and at what period in the infants life it emerges. 'The semiotic' then is that period in transitioning from incoherent speech to speech that becomes increasing clear. What makes 'the semiotic' more compelling though is the context in which it arises i.e. the pre-Oedipal phase. What then happens is that language approximates closely to the *primary*

processes of the infant i.e. bodily, sensate experiences and drives that demand satisfaction through signification (Kristeva, 1984).

'The semiotic' as a signifying modality of the pre-Oedipal phase is also that time where mother and daughter are locked in an intimate bond uninterrupted by the Other (Kristeva, 1984 & Grosz, 1990). It is this space for Kristeva i.e. 'the semiotic' that becomes a site in which, like PJ Harvey's desire does not belong to her in the symbolic but can be found, reclaimed, written and articulated through a language that betrays the symbolic (Kristeva, 1980). PJ Harvey's style of communicating her desire is rooted in 'the semiotic' and is the reason why participants have struggled to make sense of her desire deeming it as mad, weird, irrational, ambiguous, horrifying etc. PJ Harvey's desire through writing approximates very closely to her drives and sensate, bodily experiences that echoes the pre-Oedipal phase. It communicates an experience that is feminine in that it remains as close to the body without the laws of language abstracting emotion and felt awareness into reason and logic.

'She's got the Look'

Theme 4's 'She's got the Look' and it's two constituent themes '**Liz Phair as Incongruent'** and **'PJ Harvey as Congruent'** is broadly concerned around images considered 'feminine'. Specifically how an image considered 'feminine looking' becomes an additional factor not only to a woman speaking and writing her desire, but also to her wearing her desire so to speak, that discriminates feminine from not feminine. One gets a sense from participant's responses that not only do they have emblazoned schematic representations of how feminine sexuality and desire should be 'worn', but also ideas that are subversive towards the visual depiction of a woman's desire and sexuality. Participant's responses towards Liz Phair and PJ Harvey told of how 'visually' these two musicians communicate ideas around sex and desire that do not coalesce with images supposed to be feminine.

In other words, femininity embodies a set of principles that inform participants about the 'gaps'/'loopholes' especially with regards to 'looking' feminine in accordance with ideas pertaining to sexual desire. Liz Phair and PJ Harvey 'look' very different in terms of how they fashion images for themselves and this is reflected in the different ways participants responded to them. However, for participants what 'troubles' the desire these two musicians communicate is how the musicians' visual representation of themselves appears to upset the idea of femininity. This becomes especially important

when music is intended, controversially so, as a form of cathartic expression and an art is undermined by ideas of femininity not fluid enough to anticipate variance of visual representations amongst female musicians communicating their desires. How is it that visual representations of women and the promise of music as an art form discriminate against women's sexual desires and how she should look?

The work of Christine Battersby in *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* is perhaps able to provide clarity on the dilemma experienced by participants as expressed above. Battersby (1989) argues that the several manifestations of 'creativity' and 'genius' which are characteristic features of art reflect the 'male lust of artists'. During the 19th century up until the 2nd world war the very qualities of 'creativity' and 'genius' that constitute art were defined and sharpened, and emerged out of a Romantic aestheticism (Battersby, 1989). Battersby argues (1989) that 'creativity' and 'genius' contained instinct, emotion, sensibility, intuition, imagination and madness. But where these qualities not strangely familiar stereotypical 'feminine' characteristics, a rhetoric established in the 18th century (Battersby, 1989 & Jordanova, 1980). Battersby goes on to argue the following:

> "The psychology of woman was used as a foil to genius: to show what merely mimics genius. Biological femaleness mimics the psychological femininity of the true genius. Romanticism, which started out by opening a window of opportunity for creative women, developed a phraseology of cultural apartheid… with women amongst the categories counted as not-fully-human. The genius was male – full of virile energy – who transcended his biology: if the male genius was 'feminine' this merely proved his cultural superiority. Creativity was displaced male procreativity: male sexuality made sublime. Females, however, were represented either as lacking sexual drive, or as incapable of resisting their sexuality" (Battersby, 1989:3)

What is important from the above quote, besides the implications of the 'gendered character' that embodies 'creativity' that inherently excludes women, is the idea of 'feminine' as an elusive category that serves to imprison 'women'. 'Feminine' then appears to be problematic according to Battersby as it simultaneously binds women but also divorces them from themselves. 'Feminine' comes to embody a set of criteria like the ones which participants come to know and rely on when commenting on Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's images. It appears then that participants expect Liz Phair and PJ Harvey to embody a sense of femininity in representing themselves visually. The images Liz Phair and PJ Harvey fashion for themselves supplement the sexual desire written and spoken in their music comprise their artistry in its entirety. Liz Phair and PJ

Harvey then wield a creativity that fuels their artistry, which speaks about their sexual desire, and the link between this and their images embody ‘femininity’ makes demands on participants to make sense it. But this ‘creativity’ both musicians maintain is precisely the restriction that comes to be reflected in participants responses that echoes the artistry and genius of men rather than women. Participant’s responses to Liz Phair and PJ Harvey’s images reflect the ‘double bind’ of the term ‘femininity’ that remains opaque to the sexual desires of women.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The preceding chapters have sought step by step to map a terrain in which *subversion* as an effect of a *female sexual desire* (not always, as some were quite conventional) is not only detected (however subtle or unambiguous) but also the ways that participants negotiate these forms of subversion. What has been proposed from the start of this research has been a process that has provided literature that engaged and stimulated the proposed ideas and aims, whilst methodologically uncovered somewhat new evidence that converges with what has been proposed.

Several issues however become evident: To what extent has the fundamental issue of subversion been addressed? How do we want to be engaging with a critical exploration of this concept and notion? Can we emphasize the responses of participants as either assisting to answer the questions proposed by this research or not answering questions? It could be argued that the responses explored in the study offer us a useful avenue to begin to understand subjective negotiations of a *subversive female sexual desire*.

Participant's responses therefore to Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's music (lyrical content from their albums 'Exile in Guyville' and 'Rid of Me' respectively, as well as images of both musicians from the same time their albums was released) thus did not reflect a fixed and fast rule regarding links between *subversion* and a *female sexual desire*. However what surfaced however was a sense of participants feeling conflicted, internally split, frustrated, anxious, confused, horrified, sad and humoured with regards to what it is Liz Phair and PJ Harvey were communicating. These feelings told of the role of women in music, her desire and her sexuality, and how this is a space that is riddled with tensions, struggles and contradictions over conventional forms of communication of female sexual desire by female artists. What emerged from the interviews was the manifestation of acceptable forms of *female sexual desire* modelled particularly through 'pop(ular) music' but also reinforced by other genres of music that differentiate themselves from popular music. What is fascinating however is that participants appeared to be uncertain and somewhat awkward as to why they enjoyed forms of *female sexual desire* that they deemed acceptable in the first place and not others (such as those communicated by Liz Phair and PJ Harvey).

Liz Phair and PJ Harvey (especially the latter) through their music represented, according to participants, what may be defined as unacceptable forms of *female sexual desire.* But the initial uncertainty and awkwardness participants felt with regards to the acceptable forms of *female sexual desire* appeared to be an additional strain that would tax participants even further when they were asked to comment on lyrics and images of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey. What differentiated Liz Phair and PJ Harvey from female musician's participants had a preference for is that the sexual desire the former two musicians were communicating implicitly and explicitly commented on gendered/ sexed configurations within relationships and how sexual desire emerges. But importantly so is how sexual desire becomes a site of frustration and tension because of pressure or expectations gendered/sexed configurations place on relationships. The sexual desire the latter group of female musicians i.e. participant's preferences were communicating appeared to be more about having fun, being sexy for sake of sexiness or just gratuitously sexual.

The difference between what participants deemed acceptable forms of *female sexual desire* versus ones that are not was that the formers appeal stimulated participants visual and auditory senses, whilst the latter repelled participant's demanding that they engage more at a symbolic level as opposed to arousing their sense. Especially as participants had to engage with the lyrical content of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey, but even though participants also engaged visually with Liz Phair and PJ Harvey through looking at their images it did not appear to generate appeal but rather confused, shocked, humoured, saddened and frustrated participants. It is also important to mention a major shortcoming of the vignettes that were used of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey to elicit responses from participants. Particularly how the vignettes neglected to arouse participants auditory senses which would have completely changed how participants interpreted Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's music. This is important especially when one thinks about how the 'sound' of music is its defining property but when conflated with words and images enhances and alters quite dramatically the meaning of the song.

The trouble however is that even though Liz Phair and PJ Harvey were communicating what this research has termed a *subversive female sexual desire*, which failed to resonate with participants, the preferred female musicians when questioned about the sexuality of these musicians it appeared to arouse discomfort and anxiety in participants. What this says is that *subversion* manifest in the *sexual desire* of Liz Phair

and PJ Harvey that repels participants becomes a further barrier to what appears to be generally a *female sexual desire* that is treated with frivolity by participants. Frivolity in the sense that participants experienced difficulty reflecting and thinking about *female sexual desire*, but preferred to treat it as playful, fun and became defensive and dismissive when asked to comment of the sexual desire of musicians they preferred as well as Liz Phair and PJ Harvey.

The pursuit of *subversion* it appears then is not as exclusive as one would imagine. Rather, it becomes more about inclusion and poses some profound questions in this case to a *female sexual desire* and the metaphysics behind it. Participant's responses indicate barriers almost in exploring a *female sexual desire* further, whilst foreclosing all dialogue on any matter hinting to epistemology and ontology on gender and sex, as well as the imposition that such constructs impose on desire, and perhaps vice versa. One wonders then about the fuel Liz Phair and PJ Harvey provide in tempting the thought of a *subversive female sexual desire* that exposes such a desire even in its *non-subversive* form. Participants' accounts in this instance become useful to such an exploration.

The idea of participant's incapacity or rather difficulty in reflecting or commenting on a *female sexual desire* whether *subversive* or not is very compelling. It speaks to an idea (which one may argue is this research's Achilles heal) of reflecting on something that one is (sense of identity or physicality) or has a relation to i.e. specifically a female, woman, femininity etc. This reflection speaks to matters pertaining to the internalisation of an identity characterised as female, woman or feminine. Internalisation in the true sense of the psychoanalytic weight the term carries steers a middle course between gendered/sexed identities argued as a biological disposition versus arguments that these identities are learned behaviours.

Internalisation maintains however the realm of the psychical i.e. conscious and unconscious processes. This constitutes a unique space where one internalises their biological sex but it coalesces with impressions that the gender of the parents/caregivers leave on the child which has a myriad of effects in terms of gendered/sexed identity. This echoes the outcome of the Oedipus complex which equips one with a sense masculinity and femininity as imprinted by one's sex but is influenced further by the extent to which the parent despite their sex has equal propensity for masculinity and femininity especially contexts where either trait is more

pronounced than the other. The parent/caregiver's sense of masculinity or femininity becomes a way of either corresponding or not to the child's sex as well as nuances between which have several ways in which such a process impacts psychically on one's sense of femininity and masculinity despite one's sex. The Oedipus complex is therefore useful because it describes how psychically one can be both feminine and masculine.

The difficulty then participants experience reflecting on femininity despite their (participants) sex says much about how it is they have internalised femininity be it from the mother or father or both who serve as a template. But more importantly the psychical barriers and obstacles of participants that prevent them from reflecting on a trait that according to the Oedipal complex they have a propensity for. This is despite how far removed they may feel they are from femininity (especially male participants) or how similar they are to femininity. The point is that either proximity to femininity is of no concern especially when one has the psychically propensity for it, but as this research has demonstrated participants have been very defensive with regards to answering questions on femininity and sexual desire. This is problematic in that it says much about femininity that matters then pertaining to *subversion* only trouble further what is already so troubling about femininity and sexual desire.

It appears then that participant's conflicting and defensive feelings represent a reality in which femininity exists but how psychically the very barriers to reflecting on femininity that has been internalised by all at some point in their developmental life indicates an area of being and doing that appears to threaten very seriously how man and women ought to be. This is especially so when thinks about the reasons perhaps that make Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's sexual desire *subversive* and threatening, which is the sadistic character their desire takes, which is what the desires of men are supposed to embody. But as this chapter and previous chapters have already highlighted it is not only Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's femininity and sexual desire (*subversive*) that threatens and unsettles participants, but it is musicians they expressed a preference for whose femininity and sexual desire that is seemingly 'conventional' still produces the same feeling in participants.

It is then the contention of this research that whilst most matters pertaining to the feminine has been exhausted yet inspired by feminist politics, matters pertaining to the feminine and sexual desire i.e. *a female sexual desire*, appears to be an area of

expression that poses serious challenges to the fundamental positions men and women are expected to assume. Sexual desire appears to unearth these positions and exposes perhaps how restricted they are especially when they correspond so rigidly to gender roles and expectations. This process however of exposing is made possible by the *subversion* manifest in the sexual desire Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's communicate in their music. One begins to see that a *female sexual desire*, when thought about psychically especially as participants have been so defensive and unsettled by it, becomes a way of confusing and troubling as it calls into question the epistemological and ontological structures that underpin such an identity. It challenges profoundly so the value of a women's sexuality and how it occupies a particular relationship in that it is not taken seriously but seen as a site of frivolity, fun and objectification. This has profound implications in that it maintains how women ought to fashion their sexuality, and any deviation from this may likely be dismissed or resigned to a space that this research has termed *subversive*.

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Appendix A

Interview Schedule

a.) What are some of the music groups and singers that you enjoy listening to?

b.) What are the types/kinds/genres/styles of music that you listen to?

c.) Could you tell me roughly, the amount of time that you spend listening to music?

d.) Where are the places that you find yourself listening to music?

e.) What are the specific things about music that you enjoy? i.e. the beat, lyrics, videos, images, the style of the artist etc.

f.) Do you find yourself listening to male or female musicians?

g.) Do your friends and family share the same taste in music as you do?

h.) How often do you buy music?

i.) What do you think about women who perform music?

j.) Please describe to me some of the qualities that female artists have that make you enjoy listening to them?

k.) Tell me about some of the female artists that you enjoy listening to?

l.) Describe the qualities that stand out about this artist that make you enjoy them, and can you name these qualities?

m.) I would like you to identify some female musicians that you dislike?

n.) Are you familiar with either P.J Harvey or Liz Phair, if tell me what you do know about either artist?

NB This part of the interview would make use of the vignettes that will be categorized into three sections that are specific to the performances of P.J Harvey and Liz Phair. The first section will include lyrics of some of the songs these musicians have put out. The second section would include images of both these artists, however these images are not in any way pornographic. The third and last section will entail participants watching videos or onstage performances of P.J Harvey and Liz Phair. The following questions will help to elicit information from participants about the musicians although these questions will not be strictly adhered to but will leave for a discussion that is unstructured:

o.)Would you like to comment on what you have just read/seen?

p.)What was most striking for you when you read their lyrics/ saw their pictures/ saw their performance?

q.) Can you describe some of the feelings you experienced with regard to what you just read/saw?

r.) Was there anything that you particularly liked or disliked about what you just read/saw? Why did you like or dislike it?

s.) How do you understand or make sense of what you just read/saw?

t.) Can you tell me the specific qualities you think describe what you read/saw?

u.) Could you discuss similarities and differences between the lyrics/ images/ performances of P.J Harvey and Liz Phair?

v.) After seeing the music of P.J Harvey and Liz Phair i.e. their lyrical content, imagery, onstage persona's, How would you describe each one in other words, what are the qualities that you fell each one embodies or is portraying to others such as yourself?

u.) Do you think that most people would share your feelings or thoughts on these musicians or that most people are likely not share your sentiments? If yes or no, how come, tell me more about the parts that people will like, or the parts that people will not like.

Appendix B

Subject Information Sheet (Qualitative/Interview Based Research)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Africa

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South

Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 018lucy@muse.wits.ac.za

My name is Dhersen Moodley, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a masters in Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research is concerned with exploring how women express their sexuality in a way that enables them to communicate with others their feelings of love, desire and matters concerning sex. I aim to do this by using the music created specifically by two musicians, P.J Harvey and Liz Phair and the way these artists have expressed their sexuality through the lyrical content of their songs and the images of themselves. It is not important that you should be familiar with these two musicians as details of their music such as lyrics and images will be given to you and you will be asked some questions on these visual materials. My primary concern is individual's perceptions of these female musicians' sexuality and how one makes sense of these musicians. I hope to achieve an understanding of the extent to which people understand the sexual identities available to women in music. Based on this, I welcome your participation in this study.

Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by myself, at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will last for approximately an hour and a half. With your permission this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The responses that you provide in the interview might be quoted directly or indirectly in the final written report whereby a coding system will be employed to refer to your identity and responses so that anonymity is maintained. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person involved with this research at any time, and will only be processed by myself and my supervisor, Peace Kiguwa (011-717-4537/ kiguwap@umthombo.wits.ac.za) The audio tapes will be kept in a secure location in the department of psychology. The interview contains questions that will inquire about your musical preferences i.e. your likes and dislikes of certain types of music, but specifically pertaining to sex and sexuality and will require you to reflect of your own ideas, thoughts or fantasies about sex, desire and sexuality. It is anticipated that the material you will be presented with during may be distressing and therefore debriefing will follow the interview or alternatively free counselling services will be made available. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point. If you choose to participate in the study please contact me or alternatively leave me a message, and I will contact you within a day or so in order to discuss your participation. My contact details are 073 159 0404 or via e-mail at dalemoodley@hotmail.com.

The data retrieved from the interview will be written up in a final report and will be made available to participants on request. Your participation would be greatly appreciated as this research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on perceptions of why female sexuality may be limited.

Kind Regards
Dhersen Moodley

Appendix C
Consent form to Interview

I _____ consent to being interviewed by Dhersen Moodley for his study on Subversive Desires: Exploring the sexuality enacted by the musical performances of P.J. Harvey and Liz Phair. I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- There are associated risks regarding the content of the interview which may be discomforting.
- The benefit of participating in this study is that it will contribute to a wealth of knowledge on sexuality
- I also give permission for whatever I may say during the interview to be quoted directly in the research write-up.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix D

Consent Form for Audio Taping

Consent and Terms of the Interview:

I, _____ hereby acknowledge and understand that the following interview conducted by Dhersen Moodley will be tape recorded and that I have given my consent for this recording. I understand that the recorded material will be used only for the purpose of the research being carried out. The tapes will be kept in a secure place and locked if necessary and will be destroyed when the research is completed. I have however been assured that whatever I may say during the course of the interview that I will be protected from as I have been promised confidentiality.

_____

Date

_____

Signature

Appendix E

Lyrics for Liz Phair

"Help Me Mary"

Help me, Mary, please
I've lost my home to thieves
They bully the stereo and drink
They leave suspicious stains in the sink

They make rude remarks about me
They wonder just how wild I would be
As they egg me on and keep me mad
They play me like a pit bull in a basement, and for that...

I lock my door at night
I keep my mouth shut tight
I practice all my moves
I memorize their stupid rules

I make myself their friend
I'll show them just how far I can bend
As they egg me on and keep me mad
They play me like a pit bull in a basement, and for that...

I'm asking you, Mary, please
Temper my hatred with peace
Weave my disgust into fame
And watch how fast they run to the flame

"Glory"

He's got a really big tongue
It rolls way out
Snaking around in the club
It slicks you down
Scratching his face like a bum
He pulls you back
Circa nineteen-eighty-one
He pulls you back

You are, you are shining some glory
You are, you are shining some glory
On me, on me
You are, you are shining some glory
You are, you are shining some glory on me

"Dance Of The Seven Veils"

Johnny, my love, get out of the business
It makes me wanna rough you up so badly
Makes me wanna roll you up in plastic
Toss you up and pump you full of lead

Johnny, my love, get out of the business
The odds are getting fatter by the minute
That I have got a bright and shiny platter
And I am gonna get your heavy head

I only ask because I'm a real cunt in spring
You can rent me by the hour
I know all about the ugly pilgrim thing
Entertainers bring May flowers

So Johnny, my love, we got us a witness
Now all we gotta do is get a preacher
He can probably skip the "until death" part
'Cause Johnny, my love, you're already dead

I only ask because I'm a real cunt in spring
You can rent me by the hour
I know all about the ugly pilgrim thing
Entertainers bring May flowers
May flowers
May flowers
To you

"Fuck And Run"

I woke up alarmed
I didn't know where I was at first
Just that I woke up in your arms
And almost immediately I felt sorry
'Cause I didn't think this would happen again
No matter what I could do or say
Just that I didn't think this would happen again
With or without my best intentions

And whatever happened to a boyfriend
The kind of guy who tries to win you over?
And whatever happened to a boyfriend
The kind of guy who makes love 'cause he's in it?

And I want a boyfriend
I want a boyfriend
I want all that stupid old shit
Like letters and sodas
Letters and sodas

You got up out of bed
You said you had a lot of work to do
But I heard the rest in your head
And almost immediately I felt sorry
'Cause I didn't think this would happen again
No matter what I could do or say
Just that I didn't think this would happen again
With or without my best intentions

And I want a boyfriend
I want a boyfriend
I want all that stupid old shit
Like letters and sodas
Letters and sodas

I can feel it in my bones
I'm gonna spend another year alone
It's fuck and run, fuck and run
Even when I was seventeen
Fuck and run, fuck and run

Even when I was twelve

You almost felt bad
You said that I should call you up
But I knew much better than that
And almost immediately I felt sorry
'Cause I didn't think this would happen again
No matter what I could do or say
Just that I didn't think this would happen again
With or without my best intentions

And I can feel it in my bones
I'm gonna spend my whole life alone
It's fuck and run, fuck and run
Even when I was seventeen
Fuck and run, fuck and run
Even when I was twelve

"Flower"

Every time I see your face
I get all wet between my legs
Every time you pass me by
I heave a sigh of pain

Every time I see your face
I think of things unpure unchaste
I want to fuck you like a dog
I'll take you home and make you like it

Everything you ever wanted
Everything you ever thought of is
Everything I'll do to you
I'll fuck you and your minions too

Your face reminds me of a flower
Kind of like you're underwater
Hair's too long and in your eyes
Your lips a perfect suck me size

You act like you're fourteen years old
Everything you say is so
Obnoxious, funny, true and mean
I want to be your blowjob queen

You're probably shy and introspective
That's not part of my objective
I just want your fresh young jimmy
Cramming slamming ramming in me

Every time I see your face
I think of things unpure unchaste
I want to fuck you like a dog
I'll take you home and make you like it

Everything you ever wanted
Everything you ever thought of is
Everything I'll do to you
I'll fuck you 'til your dick is blue

All songs written by Liz Phair

Taken from the Album 'Exile in Guyville' (1993)
Released by Capital Records.

Appendix F

Lyrics for PJ Harvey

"Rid Of Me"

Tie yourself to me
No one else
No, you're not rid of me
Hmm you're not rid of me

Night and day I breathe
Ah hah ay
Hey, you're not rid of me
Yeah, you're not rid of me
Yeah, you're not rid of me
Yeah, you're not rid of me

I beg you, my darling
Don't leave me, I'm hurting

Lick my legs I'm on fire
Lick my legs of desire

I'll tie your legs
Keep you against my chest
Oh, you're not rid of me
Yeah, you're not rid of me
I'll make you lick my injuries
I'm gonna twist your head off, see

Till you say don't you wish you never never met her?
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her?
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her?
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her?

I beg you my darling
Don't leave me, I'm hurting
Big lonely above everything
Above everyday, I'm hurting

Lick my legs, I'm on fire
Lick my legs of desire
Lick my legs, I'm on fire
Lick my legs of desire

Yeah, you're not rid of me
Yeah, you're not rid of me
I'll make you lick my injuries
I'm gonna twist your head off, see

Till you say don't you wish you never never met her
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her

Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
(Lick my legs I'm on fire)
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
(Lick my legs of desire)
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her

(Lick my legs I'm on fire)
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
(Lick my legs of desire)
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
(Lick my legs I'm on fire)
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
(Lick my legs of desire)
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
(Lick my legs I'm on fire)
Don't you don't you wish you never never met her
(Lick my legs of desire)

Lick my legs I'm on fire
Lick my legs of desire
Lick my legs I'm on fire
Lick my legs of desire

"Legs"

Oh you're divine
Oh you're divine
Oh Oh Oh did I tell you you're divine
Oh Oh Oh Oh did I ever when you were alive

Did it hurt when you bled?
Did it, oh lover boy, oh fever head?
I'll bet you never thought I'd try
Your mouth, my love, was open wide

Singing oh you were going to be my life
Dammit!
Oh Oh Oh Oh you were going to be my life

Did you sing "Oh happy day"?
Singing it
Sing it that time I went away?
Got to ease my aching head
Do you know
No other way cut off your legs oh
Hey oh

Did you ever wish me dead
Oh lover boy, oh fever head?
No you must, no you must not go away
How will you ever walk again?
And I, I might as well be dead
But I could kill you instead...

"50 Foot Queenie"

Hey I'm one big queen
No one can stop me
Red light red green
Sat back and watching
I'm your new one
Second to no one
No sweat I'm clean
Nothing can touch me

Tell you my name
F U and C K
50ft queenie

Force ten hurricane
Biggest woman
I could have ten sons
Ten gods ten queens
Ten foot and rising

Hey I'm the king of the world
You oughta hear my song
You come on and measure me
I'm twenty inches long

Glory, glory
Lay it all on me
50ft queenie
50 and rising
You bend over
Casanova
No sweat I'm clean
Nothing can touch me

Hey I'm the king of the world
You oughta hear my song
You come on and measure me
I'm twenty inches long

Hey I'm king of the world
You oughta hear my song
You come on and measure me
I'm thirty inches long

Hey I'm king of the world
You oughta hear my song
You come on and measure me
I'm forty inches long

Hey I'm king of the world
You oughta hear my song
You come on and measure me
I'm fifty inches long

50ft queenie

"Man-Size"

I'm coming up man-sized
Skinned alive
I want to fit
I've got to get
Man-sized
I'm heading on
Handsome
Got my leather boots on

Got my girl and she's a wow
I cast my iron knickers down
Man-sized no need to shout
Can you hear, can you hear me now?

I'm man-sized
Man-sized

I'll measure time

I'll measure height
I'll calculate
My birthrite
Good Lord I'm big
I'm heading on
Man-size
Got my leather boots on

Got my girl and she's a wow
I cast my iron knickers down
Man-sized no need to shout
Can you hear, can you hear me now?

My babe looking cool and neat
I'm pretty sure good enough to eat
Man-size no need to shout
Let it all, let it all hang out

I'm man-size
Man-size

Silence my lady head
Get girl out of my head
Douse hair with gasoline
Set it light and set it free

Silence my lady head
Get girl out of my head
Douse hair with gasoline
Set it light and set it free

"Snake"

You snake
You crawled
Between
My legs
Said "Want
It all?
It's yours
You bet
I'll make
You queen
Of everything
No need
For God
No need
For him
Just take
My hand
You'll be
My bride
Just take
That fruit
Put it
Inside"
You snake
You dog
You fake
You liar
I've burned
my hands

I'm in
the fire

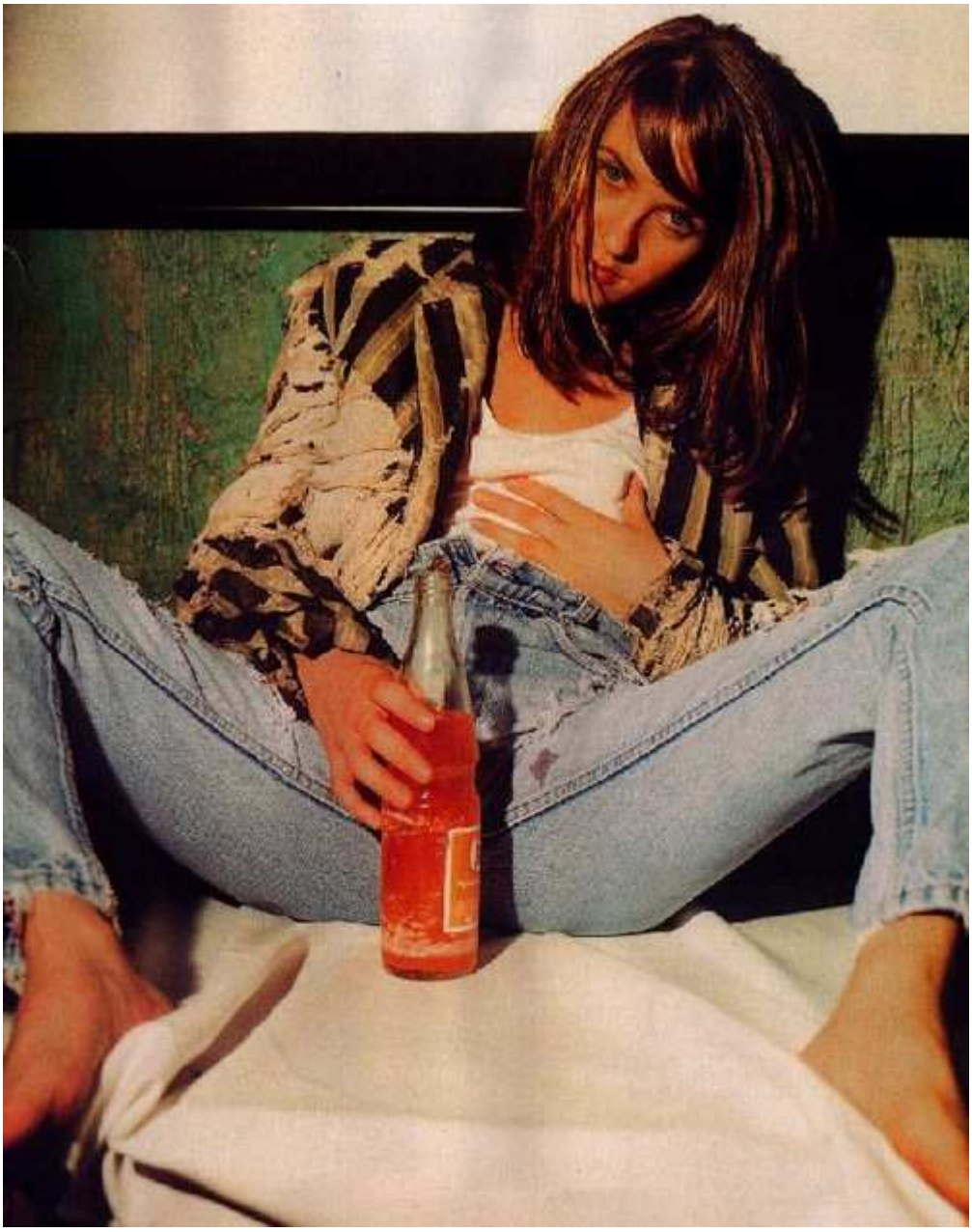
Awooooooh....ooooooooohhhh

You salty dog
You filthy liar
My heart
It aches
I'm in
The fire
You snake (You snake)
I ate (I ate)
A true (A true)
Belief (Belief)
Good Lord (Good Lord)
That fruit's (That's fruit's)
Inside (Inside)
Of me (Of me)
Oh Adam (Oh Ad-)
Please (-am please)
You must (You must)
Believe (Believe)
That snake (That snake)
Put it (Put it)
In front (In front)
Of me (Of me)
That snake
Put it
In front
Of me
In front
Of me

All songs written by PJ Harvey
Taken from the Album 'Rid of Me' (1993)
Released by Island Records

Appendix G
Images of Liz Phair

Image A



Taken from: http://userserve-ak.last.fm/serve/500/10113187/Liz+Phair+bottle.jpg

Image B

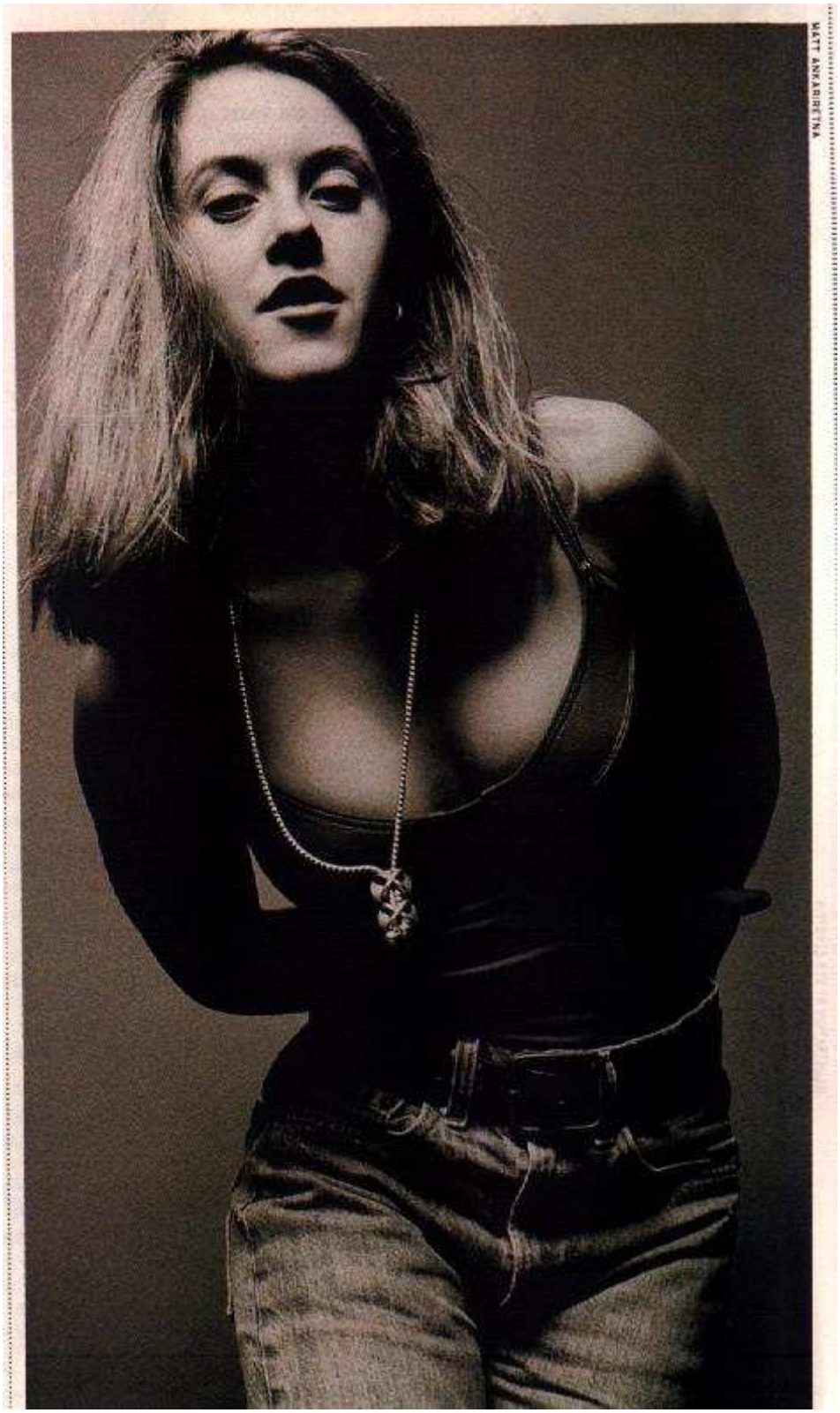


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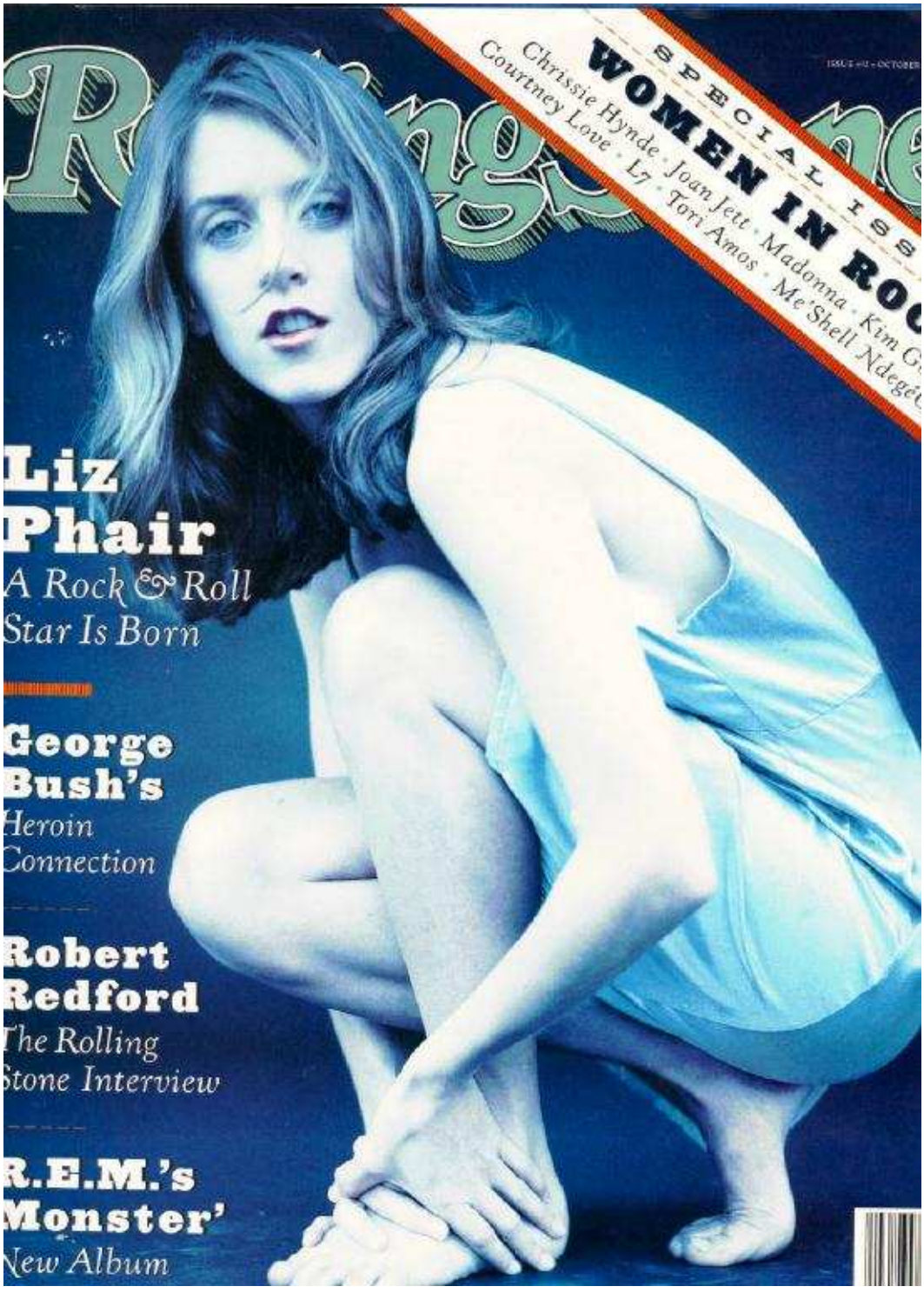
Image C



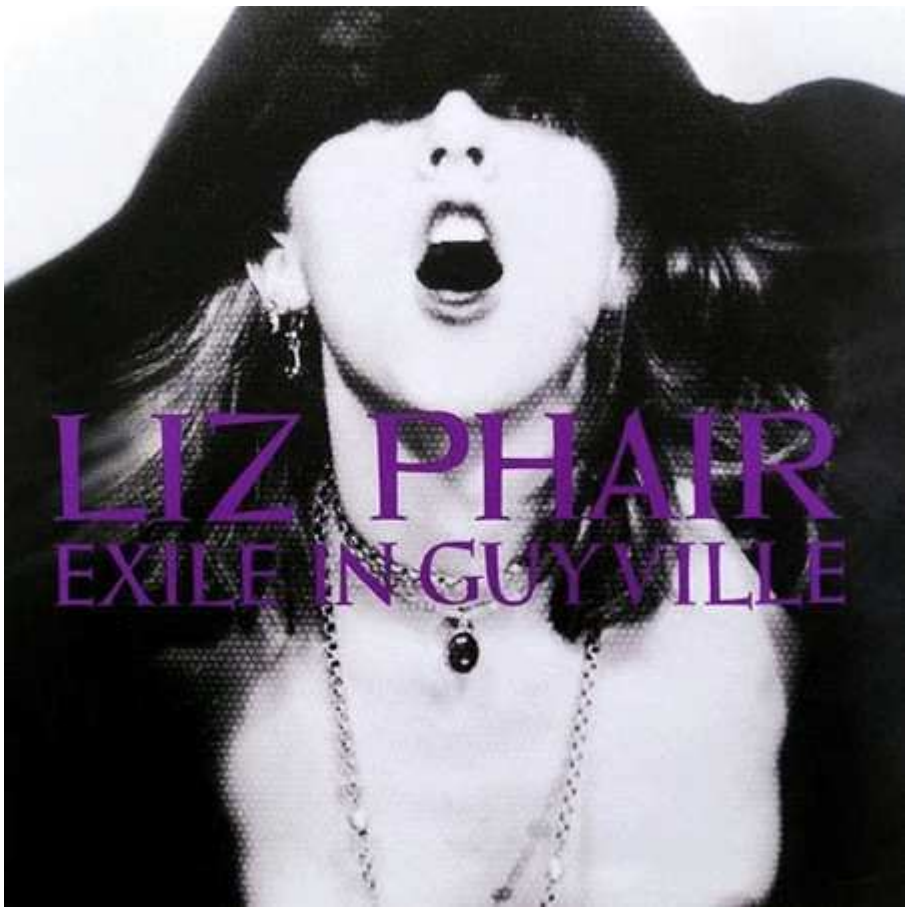
Taken from: http://imagecache2.allposters.com/IMAGES/RSPOD/RS692.jpg

Image D



Taken from: http://userserve-ak.last.fm/serve_/3053999/Liz+Phair+Liz.jpg

Image E



Taken from: The album cover ‘Exile in Guyville’ (1993)

Appendix H

Images of PJ Harvey

Image A



Taken from: http://userserve-ak.last.fm/serve/_/2998497/PJ+Harvey+146703.jpg

Image B



Taken from: http://userserve-ak.last.fm/serve/_/11279439/PJ+Harvey+63180_pj28.jpg

Image C



Taken from: http://userserve-ak.last.fm/serve/_/2817220/PJ+Harvey++early+shot.jpg

Image D



Taken from:

http://photo.sing365.com/music/Image.nsf/PicUnid/AD8CB852AC63090F48256BA3

Image E



Taken from: http://images.starpulse.com/Photos/pv/PJ%20Harvey-6.JPG

Image F



Taken from: The album cover ‘Rid of Me’ (1993)

Appendix I
Transcripts

Transcript for participant #1

What are some of the music groups and singers that you find yourself listening to?
I like a whole wide variety of stuff, mainly sort of rock umm but ja a very wide variety.
Could you be a little bit more specific for me with regards to musicians that you listen to?
Well at the moment there's, there's a lot, like a, I like quite a lot of South African music at the moment like the Dirty Skirts and umm Cassette, umm Reverend Giraffe.
Are those the main one's now you're listening to?
Ja, I like that stuff! And then umm and like a lot of sort of international similar sort of bands, Snow Patrol, umm the Killers, that sort of stuff, ja!
Alright, this may be repetitive umm but what are the kinds, types, genres or styles of music that you listen to?
Ja like I say mainly rock umm ja!
Could you tell me roughly the amount of time that you spend listening to music? Maybe you could quantify it, a day, a week!?
Not, not that much her! Umm I have the radio on at work through the day so I suppose that's where most of my radio, my music listening comes in. Umm and then I suppose in the car but I don't.
So it's quite a lot hey in a day!?
Quite a lot but not necessarily listening, more having it in the background.
Where are some of the places that you find yourself listening to music?
Umm mainly at work and in my car.
What are the specific things about music that you enjoy i.e. is it the beat, the lyrics, the video's, the images, the style of the artist. And it may be all of those things, and if it is all maybe you can prioritise them, tell me what comes first for you.
Oh I'd say sort of the beat and the lyrics mainly. Umm ja well pretty much! Like I don't really think about umm the artist too much at all. Like that's why when you say what sort of bands I listen to I struggle to answer that. I don't know then I think I get a little bit weird! (Laughs)

So the image is not so important for you hey!?

No! Just the sound!

So depending on how an artist looks that won't necessarily define whether or not you will listen to them or nor!?

No! No!

If they look really weird or strange, it doesn't mean you won't listen to them!?

No!

You probably will still listen to them!?

Ja! Like I mean, heard this funny story about Reverend Giraffe yesterday. Someone knows one of the umm I think it's the keyboard player or guitarist and I think he was going out with a friend of theirs. Umm they say he's like such a weird oke! He umm, like the second, like you'll talk to him and he'll be a part of the conversation and the second sports come up, I mean for most people I know like we're all sort of jocks. Sports comes up and he'll just literally will be, he'll say 'ah that's my cue to leave!' Like I think he didn't even watch the world cup final rugby. Like almost he makes a point of not, like he's very different from me.

He's inflexible hey!?

Ja! He, he makes no difference to my life whether I like the song.

So he's a bit arrogant as well!?

Oh I don't know him! I don't know if he's arrogant but just the, he seems like he's a bit 'emo'. And umm that to me is a bit of a, and most 'emo' people irritate me but it's not gonna stop me from listening to their music.

So you would listen to 'emo' music but you wouldn't necessarily find yourself interacting with people that are 'emo' or who consider themselves 'emo'!?

Umm, you're putting words in my mouth! (Laughs)

Well you tell me!?

No, no! Not that umm…

Is that what you're saying or not necessarily!?

What I'm saying is that, the sort of, what the person portrays doesn't like distinguish what type of music I listen to. Like…

Image is not important to you!?

No! If I like the sound that they make I'll still listen to it.

Okay!

Ja!

So ja, oka lets leave it at that! Anything else you want to add?

No! I'm fine.

You're fine!?

I'm fine with that!

Do you find yourself listening to male musicians more or female musicians?

Err probably more male.

More male musicians! Do you find you friends and family share the same taste in music as you do?

Ja!

How so?

Umm well…

Very much, not that much, maybe lets talk about family!?

Family-wise I mean, my brother and I have very similar taste in music, we live together. My sister also has similar taste. And my folks obviously like sort of older stuff but err.

And you like that older stuff!?

Ja, ja stuff that's sort of I suppose I grew up listening to as well so you, you tend to like it a lot. So I like a lot of, I'm not saying classical, older bands like the Bee Gee's and Barry Manilow (laughs)

(Laughs) My dad likes that as well! Umm…

You like it as well!?

(Laughs) Umm, how often do you buy music?

Not, not very often! My younger brother buys a lot! So umm if I wanna listen to a CD I'll more get it from him cause he constantly buys them.

What would motivate you to buy a CD? Would you have to really, really like that musician?

Umm like I went to Coke Fest and umm I really enjoyed umm The Dirty Skirts and I didn't really know then that well so umm I bought their CD because I like it. I thought it was such a great sound, and I'm listening to it in my car at the moment. Something like that but ja I'm not a big music buyer, I mean I tend to kill songs quickly so (laughs). Like I say I get a lot of my, and I guess it defines my taste in music, from my brother.

Alright, this maybe a vague question okay umm but tell me what's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear it alright? What do you think about women who perform music?

That is a very vague question! Umm…

What's the first thing that comes to your mind when I ask you that. What's the image that you get when I ask you what do you think about women who perform music?

Okay, I'm actually just picturing a woman performing music! Like it doesn't change, like, I don't know. I think it's because you said the question may be vague (laughs). But no umm, it's just an image of sort of like a, Beyonce**,** ja!

And what do you think about that image that you just got of Beyonce in your head?

Umm fine! Like it doesn't umm…

Fine in what way, tell me?

Err I prefer more male music because of the sort of most like sort of singers who sing the genre I like of are male. So if there is a female song that I like you know it doesn't, it's not gonna change my opinion on it. Like I dislike Beyonce intensely but I like her, that one song she had umm now. 'Halo'! Like that's a cool song. I like it. Umm but ja I mean it's got no…

Would you say that you're indifferent to women performing music or you just feel like whatever? It sounds like what you're saying is well women perform music and that's okay!?

Ja! I mean if that's , if I like the sound, I like the sound and I'll listen to it but it's err…

But you're also saying you do lean more towards men who perform music and not so much women who perform but if there is a woman who performs like you wouldn't turn away you'd listen to it, you'd engage with!?

Ja, ja! Of course! But umm ja it's like I say thee sort of genre I listen to, men perform more regularly but if there is a song by a woman and I like the sound I'm gonna listen to it. It doesn't like impact me that a woman's doing it or a man's doing it.

Well, lets contextualise it, What do you think of women who perform music now, well not, what do you think of women who perform music currently?

Err how do you mean what I think?

What do you think about, err do you like it, do you not like it?

Ja!

Do you think it's okay?

Ja! I like it, there's nothing wrong with it!

There's nothing with it!?

No! I mean do you sort of get answers that, or do you expect to get answers to say like women shouldn't be performing music!?

Is that how you feel!?

No! Not at all!

Are you expecting to get that kind of answer!?

No! Not at all! I'm just err ja, I think it's cool. You know it's a, if they sing a nice song and I like it then I'm gonna listen to it. Like I say I've got no problem with it coming from a man or woman. If it's good then like…

It sounds like what you're saying is that when I phrase that question that way it sounds like you feel like maybe I, maybe this, the question has some sort of agenda with women performing music currently!?

It sounds like you got an agenda ja!

Okay, I wonder if you could describe to me some of the qualities that female artists have that make you enjoy listening to them. What would be some of the qualities that a female musician would have to have for you to sort of enjoy their music? If you think overall about the way they fashion themselves, their vocal style, their image, what they're singing about, err the way they present themselves, what are some of the things, what are the qualities that you find in female artists that you enjoy?

Umm that's a tough one!

I'll give you some time to think about it, that's fine!

This is not like a very educated answer I'm gonna give but I'm sort of thinking like, if it's really irritating, if it sounds, I get very annoyed, like Beyonce, like that stupid song of hers that's been on, 'Diva'! And, and 'Single Ladies' Those two songs are horrific. And like, yet then she sings 'Halo' and that's like sort of the sound I think is really good. Umm…

What's irritating about 'Diva' and 'Single Ladies'? Is it what she's singing about or the way she's singing it that irritates you?

It's the way she sings it. It's got a, it's a whiny sound to it and it's repetitive and it feels like someone's drilling in my head! If I'm at work and that songs on the radio I get like annoyed and I can't wait for it to end. I share an office with a girl and if that song comes on we both get a little bit tense I think! But umm ja obviously the beat does play a role but not highly.

What sticks out for you when you see a woman performer perform, is it the voice that you pay attention to, the way she looks or umm what she's singing about?

I'd probably say the sound and, and the looks, like I think when it comes to males I don't have any preference no matter how they portray themselves but when it comes to females umm it's something I do obviously notice! Like on Idols now, like I wanted Sasha-Lee to do well because she was quite attractive. Like when it was that fat chick

on I didn't want her to do so well. Like I must be honest, but people wanted her to do well because of her life story and she was a great singer but honestly I prefer Sasha-Lee to her. So looks do play a role especially for a female artist ja.

Umm anything else you wanna add or are you okay with that?

No! I'm fine!

Tell me about some of the female artists that you enjoy listening to. Ones that you find yourself consistently going back to, you think like 'wow she puts out stuff that I like' or even ones now at the moment.

I'm so bad with names of a, of a, male singers and female singers. Umm err…

You can take your time.

(Laughs) No I can't literally think of any! Kelly Hilson or something like that! I think it's something along those lines. I think that she's got a really nice voice!

The new chick that's out! She's got a song with Timbaland called 'The Way I Are'!?

Ja, ja! And she's got good songs since then. I think she's really good.

Her name is Keri Hilson!

Keri Hilson!

Okay, so Keri Hilson!?

Umm I'm really bad with names!

That's okay!

Umm ja like I said I like Sasha-Lee. I think she's good! Her single I think is good. Umm I don't know hey! (Laughs) I really don't know!

That's fine!

There's also a South African chick, quite dark hair, I can picture some faces but I can't get their names. Umm maybe that says something about my perspective on female artists (Laughs).

But that's fine! Umm okay, you said Sasha-Lee and you mentioned Keri Hilson, what are the qualities that stand out about them that makes you enjoy listening to them? And this maybe repetitive cause I think you've answered this.

Ja I have, I think good sound and, and they look good!

Okay, I'd like you to identify some female musicians that you don't like, that you dislike?

Some female musicians I dislike!? Like I said to you she put a good song now but I dislike Beyonce. I think there's like a lot of irritating songs that she sings (laughs). She just jumps out at me umm apart from her there's no one like, I like, Mariah Carey I suppose irritates me. Some of her stuff I like but most of it I don't like.

Mariah Carey and Beyonce hey!?

Ja! (Laughs)

Alright, are you familiar with either PJ Harvey or Liz Phair?

No!

Would you like to comment on what you just read? (Liz Phair's lyrics)

It's pretty hectic to see some of this stuff written down or if you think about someone who's singing it. Like it's quite, like I don't wanna say brave but like…

Okay, that's an interesting word!?

But like, I don't wanna say brave, cause I like almost like, what's the word I'm looking for! It's weird that someone would actually sing that in front of people (laughs) and like record it, like it's quite out there!

Alright, okay, you used the word brave hectic, what do you mean by hectic, could you elaborate on that. Like you were saying she's singing about something that's maybe quite, maybe disturbing!?

Not necessarily disturbing! Just I'm quite a, a like a conservative guy so sort of from my upbringing this is sort of the stuff that like barely gets said full stop, like never mind like in front of people and, and sung out loud.

Alright, so it sounds like, you used the word brave and then you said 'I don't wanna use the word 'brave'' why?

Umm I think brave almost like, braves got a positive connotation and I don't think like, like I say cause of my upbringing being quite conservative like I'd sort of, like I just I don't, I don't wanna give it a positive connotation onto it cause I don't necessarily see it as like stuff that should be sung about. But I think it's quite interesting that she would sing about this stuff, whether it's attention seeking or actual real feelings I don't know.

It sounds like there's this part of you that's quite torn, you wanna admire her, you wanna respect her but there's a part of you that feels like umm okayI wasn't ready, I wasn't brought up in a household that encourages this kind of speech, this kind of talk!?

Well I don't know anyone who's brought up in a household that encourages this kind of talk (laughs). Umm I mean this is like very hectic stuff that she says. Ja!

Do you wanna point, okay what's really, really hectic for you?

Umm she uses the 'c' word over here, that's pretty hectic. Umm for me the most hectic one was the fourth one.

'Flower'!?

Ja 'Flower'! This was a hectic one for me. Err.

Which part was hectic for you?

Well pretty much all of it hey! (Laughs)

Okay!?

'Fuck you 'til your dick is blue'! That's quite hectic stuff!

So you're saying she shouldn't be saying stuff like this!?

Umm…

Well there's a part of you that feels like she shouldn't!?

But if she feels that there's something that she needs to be singing about, I mean I'm not gonna stand up and protest it like. I think you know, you know anyone has got a right in my opinion to say what they want I mean but I'm not, not trying to be, I'm not trying to look down on it at all, umm like I say, like you say, it's quite brave for her to sing about this.

And you used the word attention seeking as well hey!?

Ja, a little bit. And I think it's, ja I just err, for me like I was brought up thinking little girls shouldn't talk this way!

So this is a bit of a different picture and perhaps I can ask you when you read this, did it feel like, did it feel like a woman wrote this, did it feel like, did it feel like a woman wrote this, I mean of course it does when she uses a word like that and then the, she 'Flower', but, but does it feel like a woman?

Err it does ja! But umm whether…

But you can't really base that on just reading this hey!?

Based on the first one I, it definitely sounds like a woman.

Which part!? Or was it just the whole thing in generally!?

I might have misunderstood it completely but it sounds like a girl who's living with a bunch of guys who like treat her quite badly and she feels like quite err.

Maybe isolated, alienated a bit like!?

Ja, a bit like, what's the word I'm looking for, almost violated but umm. Err I used to coach girls so I know a lot of them react to err things that guys might think are nothing or stupid yet some girls find it very uncomfortable. Umm there's a guy at work often tells girls how umm 'wow you look so nice today!' But they say it makes them uncomfortable so he does it all the time and he makes so much of it now. Personally I just think he's a nice guy and I think if he's was good looking they might umm not have a problem with it but he's an overweight guy and like really greasy hair. Like I think that, that err that makes it, makes it uncomfortable. Where if it was a good-looking guy maybe it would be different and that's just how as a guy I see that and I think they all over-reacting to something and that's sort of the feeling err I get here. Obviously she's talking a big bigger but she feels uncomfortable by these guys that she

lives with. That's what I think but I could be completely wrong (laughs). From that and because you told me it was one person the whole female connotation ran through the whole thing.

So does it feel that through the entire, through these 5 songs it maybe feels like a woman who's been treated unfairly and violated a little bit by men!?

Ja! I think so!

It felt like that!?

Not every song!

Okay!?

Umm but, but the first song did and then this 'Fuck and Run' song did umm I didn't get the second song umm and the 'Flower' song.

So, so maybe it felt a little bit like she was a victim in 'Help Me Mary' and it felt like she was a victim in 'Fuck and Run'

Ja! And almost in 'Flower' as well!

'Flower' as well!?

I don't know again, it might be just my upbringing. It seems to me like a girl doesn't always necessarily wanna say that kind of stuff.

And what do you think about that? I know you said that you not against that but your upbringing maybe teaches you that girls are not supposed to these things, you personally, do you think…

Well personally I don't think guys or girls should really say a lot of this stuff. Like err I think it's sort of dirtying a lot of things that shouldn't be and using a lot of horrible words (laughs) and that's were I think there's a shock factor to it and that's why I say she's attention seeking. She might be.

Do you think she's doing that deliberately?

She might be!

Okay!?

I don't know! It seems like she actually could be like when she says the 'c' word there (laughs). It just comes out of the blue! You weren't expecting it at all. Umm so maybe it is a little bit of attention seeking and deliberately so.

Alright I think that's cool, this may be a repetitive question as well but I'm just trying to tease out what it is, how it is you feel or how you're trying to make sense of it for yourself. What was most striking for you when you read her like, these 5 songs, what stood out the most?

Err ja I think it is a little bit repetitive cause I think it is, I think I said like just that she's a, firstly it does seem like she's attention seeking. And you made me think a little bit

more now maybe, like it is deliberate. Like I don't know whether it is or isn't but just you saying that makes me think perhaps you know she is doing it deliberately but like sort of feels like a little bit victimised and like there's almost singing about that, like with that as the undertone in her songs or writing about that. That is the undertone. Ja! That's the, the outline thing for this is that it's quite out there and ja!

And you're not used to that personally, for yourself, I mean you can understand like people can say these kinds of things but err maybe it's not my cup of tea kind of thing!?

Ja! Ja! Exactly!

Umm, okay I want you to describe maybe some of the feelings you experienced with regards to what you just read? How did you feel when you read this?

Surprised!

Surprised!? Okay!?

Like she comes out of left field like the first little bit I actually thought you know maybe it was a like she says 'Mary' and you immediately put a religious connotation. And umm then it sort of goes on sort of a bit, but you still sort of think maybe it's like I said almost religious. I was trying to cause I didn't know what sort of music this was like I kind of put a tune to it in my own head and the tune from the first song was like completely different when you said that was indie for the first and second song, like it's just err ja weird (laughs). Like…

She shocked you a little bit!?

Ja! She did!

Okay how did you feel towards 'Help Me Mary', you didn't really feel anything, you were like 'okay I'm just reading another bunch of words'!? You felt sorry for her!?

I felt sorry for her! But umm you know like sort of like this half way between feeling like where like I say I think guys are so different to girls that certain things upset them and umm I got the feeling from the first song almost like these guys are saying and doing certain things, now she never at one point says things like umm abused by these guys but you sort of get a feeling that they abusive and she takes it in that way but being a guy like I wouldn't be surprised if they weren't really and she was almost over-reacting. Umm but, but I also got the feeling through these songs that she had been like err maybe not abused but something like that to in parts of her life and a…

It seems like you were a little bit split on the first one, you were like you felt concerned, you felt sorry for her but you also felt a little bit irritated!?

A little bit ja! Just because what I felt from my personal life. Just with approaching girls was, is, there were times where for a whole weekend I was in a house with 18 girls, by my, only guy! And you feel a lot of weird situations and like err you, you tend to learn a lot about girls in those situations. And that's why I think from my own personal experience a little bit of irritation comes through but more concern for her than anything else. Like because it looks like she is in not a great situation. Ja!

Okay, cool, any other feelings you felt for the other songs or maybe just generally the same feeling, you felt shocked, surprised!?

Shocked and surprised ja!

Any other feelings maybe!?

Like that 'I want a boyfriend' song was, I think it was this one!?

Yes, that's the one! What did you think of that one?

I though it was quite sort of, what's the word I'm looking for! Like quite sincere! For a lot of it! And then I suppose it is, but then she threw in that shock factor again and was using a, quite a lot of bad words like 'fuck and run' (laughs), 'when I was 17', 'when I was 12'

Did you maybe think at that point she was communicating a reality maybe?

I did think, I did think she was! And think that you know that sincerity probably carried through…

But you maybe felt like it got lost a little bit when she got to that part!? Maybe there was a part of you that felt she was trying to shock again!?

Ja! Ja! I think so! I think you know she could have of found another word cause I felt the first sort of bits or two like say was quite sincere and like umm then she got a little hectic at the end (laughs).

So it sounds like maybe she could have found a much more sincere or maybe softer way of saying that part there!?

Definitely! That's what I think but.

So sometimes it's not good to call a spade a spade, is that what you're saying!?

Umm like I said there's this undertone to her where she does try to shock a little bit and that comes through very strongly in this song for me. Umm and ja I mean, I suppose like this does come from the way I was brought up but the first two verses I thought were very nice and sincere. And then it, it gets really like sort of ja, shock! And err you know it probably is sincere and her way of putting it through umm but I like the first half of it, I don't like the second half. It's that simple.

Okay, that's fine! Was there anything else that you particularly liked or disliked? Tell me what you liked and what you didn't like about what you just read.

I think, you know I said to you before I've never been very good with poetry and stuff and words like this. I like err if I'm reading, sort of, I believe words are very strong and you can get a hell of a lot out of them but and I do, I'm a huge fan of inspirational work. I'm not huge inspirational but I like quite nice sounding inspirational stuff and I think a lot her stuff is written, she writes very well because I understood a lot of it. It was simple but also quite good. That I thought was very good. But again like it's almost like she writes as someone who can write quite nicely but someone who is quite vulgar to get her point across.

And you didn't like that, the vulgarity!?

Ja! Like I mean it's obviously part of her music but it's like for me sometimes music can be a little bit, if you write them, it can be a little bit smarter about the way you feel and sometimes in my opinion guys try to be too smart. I suppose I'll never be a writer or poet and this is my stupid opinion (laughs) like sometimes I find they tend to get too smart and I lose myself in what they're saying, I think they've trying to be too symbolic and I just don't follow. Like I'm quite, I simplify things in my mind and for me that's overcomplicating things umm and I don't mind that she does that but then I think she does sort of go from really nice writing and she can afford to be more subtle to them like putting you know shock factor. And I think it is part of her style but not a part that I like. Ja!

So you were a bit split hey!? You liked some stuff and you didn't like others!?

Ja!

Umm, would you date a girl like this?

No!

No!? Would you be friends with a girl like this, could you imagine yourself having a girl like this in your life as a friend or would she irritate you? Or is that difficult to answer based on this?

It's impossible to answer a question like that just based on reading her stuff. She might like this yet umm you know only to say, but ja I think her style of writing maybe very different to the person she is.

So would you like to comment on what you just read (PJ Harvey's lyrics)

Umm…

The first thing that comes to your mind!?

A lot more subtle!

Than the first one!?

Than the first one ja! Umm subtle to the point where I'm not sexactly sure what I was reading. If I was reading what I think I was, then it's quite hectic! But err only because

of what you told me like umm maybe I'm dumb, umm maybe I'm common but err the way that you err the topic of your thesis like…

It helped you make sense of that!?

Ja! Umm and that's why I think it was a bit hectic but obviously a lot more subtle. I f I had to hear this in a song umm apart from maybe one song I'd probably like wouldn't really think she was saying, you wouldn't think he was singing this stuff. It does seem quite hectic what he or she was singing about but a lot more subtle.

The sense I get when you say that is almost like, you can see something staring at you in the face umm but you're trying to sooth yourself with the fact that 'no! it's not that obvious!' because you can see it staring at you but somehow it feels like you're turning away from it. I get that from!? I don't know!?

Ja probably! Probably right! Umm…

Why is that? Sorry maybe not why is that but umm maybe tell me a little about that?

(Chuckles) Tell me a little bit more about that (laughs)! Umm ja I think again I quite err conservative and that's always going to playa role in the way that I look at things. And what it seems like they writing about err is again stuff that's quite hectic to write about. And like a lot of it I literally couldn't make sense of but I think the general undertone of what they writing to me is, it is taboo so you do shy a little bit away from this and you almost think like surely someone isn't writing about that in this way. You almost justify it I think in your own mind.

Okay lets move on. What was most striking for you when you read this, what stood out the most? Was it mainly confusion, like just vague, like quite dense umm or was there maybe a theme that you could pinpoint that really stood out for you. I think I'm quite interested in the part where you said it's taboo and you could see what she was trying to say but you're trying to comfort yourself with the fact that no. I'd like to know perhaps what's the taboo part, or what's the obvious part that, that you're sort of getting from here? Because it seems like that's what stood out, that's what was striking for you.

I think it was more the third song.

'Man-Size'!?

Ja!

Ja!?

Ja like err…

Ja!?

"Cast my iron knickers down" err like this first verse for me "I'll measure time/I'll measure height/ I'll calculate/ My birth right/ Good Lord I'm big/I'm heading on" Like I think that starts to get me thinking a little bit, and a little bit 'Snake' and then umm "Lick my legs" To me that's just like stuff that sticks out.

And can you put a word to that? Or maybe like a, like umm, like a title or topic, topic of discussion to that or I mean like what is that. Is that umm ja mean like umm what is that to you except for the fact that it's taboo, is there another word you can think of? Maybe if you could be more specific for me please, if you could elaborate on that for me.

No well, obviously it's got, to me it seems, it's got a sexual connotation.

Okay!?

And umm…

So what is it about that sexual connotation that you're getting from that?

What is it!?

What is it about that sexual connotation that you're getting from this? Specifically about that!?

I don't understand the question!

Okay umm, specifically, okay ja sexual umm maybe if you could tell me specifically what is it about, what kind of sexual is that? If that makes sense. Or is sexual just sexual?

It seems blatant but like I say at the same time quite subtle umm and, and, and that's the, the sort of the sexual part that I'm sort of struggling with.

Okay!

What do you mean you said it'd a she and it sounds like she's talking about another woman, is that what you're talking about!?

Is that what you think she's talking about!?

I don't know! I told you I'm struggling to understand a lot of this! Like it's a little bit err vague for me.

But does it feel like a woman talking about another woman!? And that it sounds like she's gay!?

It does sound a little like that and the only reason I was saying to you that err it's a he or she and you said she so now I'm thinking it is a girl and umm and like the first one where she's talking about umm 'don't you wish you never, never, never met her' like that made me think that it was a girl writing but then she's talking about having sex with another girl it sounds like.

Okay so maybe it sounds like the pronouns she is using in her songs are very, very confusing cause there's times when she talks about he, she, it, her and you're not quite sure where she's operating from. Is she saying I or is she saying you, her, me or it!? So that's confusing maybe!?

Ja! Don't you know quite a bit about these songs?

Ja I do! Of course because I'm such an intellectual and not a layperson (says jokingly and laughs)

(Laughs)

But she does it sound like she's messed up, like she's got issues, like she's got problems?

Not like the first one no!

Really!?

Ja!

Okay!?

Err, I think the first one sounds like she's got problems, this one…

Doesn't sound like she's got problems!?

Not as much as the first one.

So why doesn't she seem like she's messed up then like the first one?

Maybe because the first one didn't write as subtly. You keep on making me think like this one isn't subtle.

Well I'm making sense of what you're giving me and I'm giving it back to you.

Well I think you know more because I'm telling you something and then you look surprised.

Really!?

You're giving me that Dale-surprised look!

Okay! But does it maybe feel like you're not interpreting this in the right way?

Ja I think so! Like when you said like does it not seem like she's messed up, obviously then she's more messed up than the other one (laughs).

Sorry! I do apologise for that.

Err so I think that err that now I think she's more messed up but I think she puts it a lot more subtly. You could listen to this I think and apart from the first song where she says "lick my legs" which sounds pretty hectic and "lick my injuries" like I think most of it if it was in a song, if Beyonce was singing it in a pop song you wouldn't really think twice about it. Umm where if Beyonce had to say 'fuck me hard' or whatever the hell that chick was saying, I'd be like 'what the!?' So…

So in that way this is more subtle than that!?

Just in the language she uses.

I hear you, I hear you. I guess I'm quite struck and I'm quite interested when you say that you can see something staring at you but it's almost disguised maybe by metaphors or the language and I'm quite interested in the stuff that's the obvious stuff and how it sticks out by, like you said, you said that it sounds taboo, it sounds sexual, it sounds like maybe she's singing about another woman err that she's attracted to, but you're not quite sure.

She might like you said be singing about her stuff because the first song it sounds like she's singing about a guy, the second one is like you know now that I read it maybe she's singing about it from somebody else's perspective of her, and then like you said messed up and I was just thinking about it, sorry, whether or not I might.

I think it's important for you to go with how it is you feel about it or what you're thinking about it.

The 'Snake' one obviously does make you think like the fact that she says here, one thing that struck me when I read it umm "No need for God/No need for him" like err you know she is singing about somebody talking about her and that perspective that person has of her then that's quite hectic. Maybe she's been raped or something like that and that's something I don't understand. Umm it definitely sounds like there's like very obvious sexual undertone. I don't know it, that's only obvious because of what you, what the topic of your research is.

So she doesn't sound like she is a victim compared to Liz Phair, Liz Phair sounds more like a victim hey!?

Ja!

But there's also a sexual undertone to what she's singing!?

She sounds more of a victim in the first one like, like she's been broken up with and is trying to get the guy back, and there's something sexual to it and then she throws in "I'm gonna twist you head off" which I don't get at all! Umm like it just seems like a line that didn't fit in the song at all! But err she ja! It was only in the first one that she seemed like a victim to me.

How did you feel when you read this?

Quite confused! I found myself actually a few times going back that's why I was reading so slowly. I was going back in like, to sort of work out what she is saying. Like I say, this is for me, this is that poetry that I don't understand. Maybe I'm just a horrible person but I didn't like that she was so blatant there. I like the way she writes, I don't like the way she writes!

Umm was there anything that you liked or disliked?

Like I say, I didn't like that she was, I find it vague.

Very ambiguous!?

Ja, ja, better word than vague. Umm I didn't like that.

I guess it meant, 'what is this, I can't get it, what is going on here, I can't make sense of this'!?

Exactly! I'm a, my job is market research, I'm a numbers guy! I look at numbers and I tell clients what's happening in the market and err I'm good at taking complex stats and simplifying it, like to it's most basic point where and this is quite err…

Maybe artsy and convoluted!?

Ja!

It's a bit of a mess hey!?

Ja! (Laughs)

What did you like and you didn't have to have liked anything or was it just a general dislike?

Umm I'll almost say I didn't mind this one ('Rid Of Me') it wasn't bad but I found that I was quite indifferent to most of them.

What do you think was similar between Liz Phair and PJ Harvey? Were there similarities and differences for you?

Because I read the topic or I know the topic.

So that's similar for you!?

Ja the fact that they both aren't afraid to sort of say taboo things err that's a similarity, but they write quite differently.

Would you and this maybe a silly question, would you date someone like this, a woman who wrote this?

Well I've got a lot of questions about her. I'm quite interested in her biography but err she sounds, she sounds interesting but she sounds like a lesbian to me. But err…

But it sounds like you feel a bit indifferent towards her, you don't really have much to say!?

No! Not so much on this.

It feels a bit weird hey, a bit strange!?

Not necessarily strange I just don't get it! Like maybe if it goes along with nice music I might sing it like in my car with the Killers (a band) and I don't understand the lyrics at all, it's like that with this. The song doesn't necessarily make you think about the words.

Did it feel like when you were reading this it was not coherent, like it was not rational?

It didn't feel coherent at all! This one did ('Rid Of Me'), I quite like that one.

The 'Rid Of Me' one!?

Ja! Umm the rest of it didn't feel at all, it didn't feel like it was flowing. Sounds like she was jumping around a little.

So a bit jarring and irrational!?

Ja!

Okay would you like to comment on what you just saw?

Err Liz Phair is not what I expected at all.

What did you expect?

I expected a bit of a messed up looking chick like a little bit what PJ Harvey looks like.

Okay, so you expected to find someone who looked like PJ Harvey!?

I almost expected a picture like , err Liz Phair looks quite a, she looks like a, like a…

Like an ordinary chick!?

Ja! A 'common' chick (laughs)

Common guys like common chicks (laughs)

Ja!

I'm kidding! Go on!

She does, she looks like a…

Quite ordinary hey!?

She looks almost a bit homely. She doesn't seem like the girl who wrote that stuff or sung that stuff, ja.

It sounds like when you read her lyrics, the image of what you had in your head is not congruent to what you saw!?

Ja!

And PJ Harvey!? Her image? What did you think about what you saw?

I expected…

Okay when you read her lyrics, what kind of image where you creating in your head?

Err (long pause) I don't know! I thought, I thought like I said she was, I thought she might be a black chick to be honest, the second one. Umm but I…

Okay that's interesting, can you tell me why?

I don't know, I don't know why I did. Umm might have been the waitress who just walked pass when I was reading or something stupid like that but err that was sort of the idea I had in my head. But you know if you had to show me two pictures of them, okay not this picture, this isn't a bad picture, umm show me this picture and this picture together.

Okay, the one where she's got writing on her face (PJ Harvey) and the one with Liz Phair with the silver thing on!?

Ja! I would say that she wrote the second song, second set of music and she wrote the first set of music. To me that's the , like this one is quite messed up (PJ Harvey's picture) and like trying to make a statement and umm like, like the reason like people irritate me is because they trying very hard not to conform umm and by trying so hard they conform in every other way.

They stick out!?

No, no, no! They don't stick out, I find like in this drive to not conform they are conforming to like not, the fact that there's so many of them they are conforming. And, and that sort of person who's like 'look at me, I'm so loud and look at the way I'm dressing' struck me as the first person, the one who is writing lyrics to almost get that shock factor. And that's what she looks like to me (PJ Harvey) where she (Liz Phair) looks like, like almost homely umm like, and a little bit more subtle and like she would maybe…

Does that maybe make her more interesting (Liz Phair)? Looking at her image but it's different to what she's writing, maybe she's like more interesting or compelling to you or just I don't know…

It does, it did find her, I did say a lot more on her lyrics like maybe because it was such a shock factor. I think I had more to say about her, an opinion about her where I was quite indifferent to about…

PJ Harvey!?

Ja!

How did you feel? How did you feel when you saw these pictures? Well you were quite surprised for Liz Phair!? Is that right?

Ja!

PJ Harvey you felt indifferent!?

Ja! Umm like I say, she's again trying to make a statement umm and that's fine. I'm not saying that there's anything wrong about it but it does irritate me.

How do you make sense of Liz Phair, that it's so err different, how do you make sense of the fact that her lyrics are so maybe, they irritate you but when you look at her pictures, her pictures like 'wow! I could actually go out with someone like this, she's actually quite attractive'!? How do you make sense of that? Would you still go out with her?

Hey!?

I said would you still go out with her?

Err she's quite attractive! Umm I got no idea what she's like. It sounds like she's got a lot of issues, so probably not. Like I would give her a second look where I would, I, when I would find about her issues at the age of 12 would change my mind. That's how I think about her.

Umm would you think that maybe, that based on what you just saw that, that maybe appearances are of course not that, there's more underneath the way someone looks!?

Ja! Of course!

So someone could appear very normal but underneath that they could be quite messed up, quite strange or quite weird!?

Ja! Of course!

How do you feel about that, is that okay for you or is that not okay?

No that's okay! Everybody's got their own issues that they've gone through and nobody's err, nobody's got like that err perfect sort of, like from personal experiences and umm like it doesn't surprise me.

And how do you feel about that? Do you like that or do you not like that? O r maybe trying to say like or not like is unfair!?

Ja! I mean it is unfair, like it's more…

Well for you personally, maybe you can tell me…

No I think it's just that, it does irritate me a little bit.

And that's okay. Maybe we all like to think that what we see is what we're gonna get you know but, but sometimes what we see is not necessarily what we're gonna get.

Mmm ja!

You like to think that what you see is what you're going to get, sometimes it's not like that!?

No, I don't think it's ever like that, like, like, I say everybody got some sort of err experience in life that it has been through and umm stuff that we go through, and some hurt more others and I mean that's a part of, a part of human nature but she, ja. I don't think it's a fairness thing or a like or a dislike thing, like I just think that err I suppose there are things that are a bit crappy but everybody has a different issue so.

I suppose what you're also saying is that most people like to box things, they like to label things err they like to feel like well what they see is what they gonna get because that's how they make sense of it and when they get something else maybe it upsets the fact that err that's how they've made sense of it!?

Err I don't think that, like I think I was pleasantly surprised that the appearance of her, I'm like reading her stuff I think that it's a really messed up chick and she's got quite a lot going for her. She was on the cover of Rolling Stone, she's got this album, she's attractive, like for me I think the biggest thing, the biggest surprise about her is that she looks quite nice. There's a picture, one of them, this picture is a bit porno, and in this picture she's dressed normally, in this picture she's dressed normally, like err in there she's not at all like sort of sluttish or anything. I wasn't really expecting the first person who wrote that thing to be like that.

To be slutty!?

Not slutty!

Someone like what PJ Harvey is, with writing on her face and wearing weird costumes!?

Ja, ja! Like a Bjork type! Like I was pleasantly surprised and it's not necessarily that I've boxed, that I'm boxing things and expecting one thing err like I'm happy when I get that. It's just err, 'oh wow!' The reality is that, like I say I'm quite indifferent about this sort of stuff like ja! You know if she sings nicely I'll listen to it and if it does, it will also help in mind if she's attractive. Like I probably wouldn't like PJ Harvey as much as, cause she writes on her face, and her lyrics are quite confusing but this chick has quite cool pictures. I like the way she writes. I think that the shock factor is a bit maybe unnecessary but in way she puts herself across not like the same person who wrote these songs and no the person I was expecting to have written these songs but there isn't like a box I've put her in that makes me happy.

It sounds like you feel like people should be able to say what they wanna say but sometimes maybe you feel like there's something's that people shouldn't say because it's quite maybe vulgar, quite rude maybe unnecessary.

Unnecessary ja! Umm and, and like American's are quite vulgar and err and I think use sort of nasty words when you said like err like she almost does it, she's trying to shock and I don't think it was necessary. I think the lyrics are quite nice, it's understandable, it was simple and yet quite decent and then you get that shocking thing and you sort of like get a bit annoyed with that. I don't think it was necessary. Umm ja!

Like you said you make sense of that because maybe your background, you grew up in quite a conservative home and that's shaped how you feel about stuff like that.

Ja but I know people who didn't grow up in conservative homes and would also find that quite shocking. Umm…

Is it maybe a universal kind of opinion or consensus among people that err this is acceptable and that's not acceptable!?

Ja!

Is it that?

Ja! When I coach school boys umm there is certain things that I can say and there is certain things I can't say. Like swearing is not something I should really do. Now if I start to swear at school boys, you know it's sort of disrespectful to them. Umm is it disrespectful to use words like that, like that shock factor, if she uses them in her like own life then that's fine. Umm but I just feel maybe she err on the platform that she's got and I'm not saying that she, she isn't allowed to and like, like we said she's almost brave to say a lot of the stuff but ja it's just unnecessary I think.

Maybe if I can challenge you, umm if you think about someone being oppressed because of, they've been given a particular title, maybe it may not be the, something, but if you think about black people. They've been called 'niggers' and stuff and thy use the word 'nigger' to kind of subvert the negative connotations attached to it but when you hear the word like, when you hear the 'c' word, I also don't like saying it, it sounds really horrible. How do you feel about using those strong , negative words to vilify you against the people who actually oppress you? How do you feel about that? Do you not feel like maybe that's an avenue to kind of push your agenda?

Possibly! Possibly! Ja! I err, ja I'm not in the music industry so I don't know exactly how people work there but to me she's got like sort of this platform to do what she wants to do. The Rolling Stones said she was the next best thing, a star is born or whatever yet I never heard of her before so obviously well maybe she never did a hell of a lot more or I don't know if she did or didn't. Umm and maybe it's because she was the way, was, now was she trying to fight like some battle in the music, like against somebody specifically I don't know is she was or wasn't err it sounds like was based on what she said but, you know I would do something that's you know sort of for me it would be a nice thing, music is a…

Music is an enjoyable thing!?

Ja! And I don't…

Maybe you think music as a kind of sort of political tool is maybe not all that good sometimes, is that what you're saying?

Ja! But I disagree with the last statement. I like think there's a lot of examples where there's that one song that was banned in South Africa during apartheid and if you listened to the background of it you can hear 'Nkosi-Tsikeleli' like through the whole

song. But there you know I think it's fantastic and I think musicians like have done a lot to, to fight for the political wars, but with her I don't think it's necessarily a political one it's a personal one but by the same sort of note a lot of people were saying like love songs offer feelings. I think maybe it's the way she's done it that I don't like.

Do you not maybe think the personal is political!?

Sorry!?

Do you not think the personal is political!? Maybe you can comment on something that's political or social, but you don't necessarily have to restrict it to talking about what society thinks but you could actually talk about something from your personal experience and that could speak so loud in terms of it being political and social.

Ja! Okay! A fair point! I think that's good point ja! Sorry, I've got nothing to say to that except that that's a good point. I never thought of it like that. But I still come back to the point of I just think that you know in the song that was banned in South Africa I forget the name but it was very subtle in a way they fought apartheid in that song so subtle that I never notice until my brother showed it to me. And I was like ' wow! That's brilliant!' Umm and for me she was a lot sort of, she's gone from being a really good art form where I think subtly is quite important to err maybe overstepping the boundaries. So like you say you can fight err political wars in a personal way into your own personal experiences like I think she did for the first song where she was quite subtle umm to then just going too far I think. Almost for me it's turning away from an art form in a, to like a 'how can I shock people now'

And if I can say again, it sounds like you're making a personal point of view, ot sounds like you're saying private personal experiences sometimes should be kept private and maybe you're speaking from your own personal maybe point of view cause maybe you are a personal and a private person!?

I am quite a private person! So ja!

And maybe that's, that's something that influences the way you feel about this, and I think that's a fair point because it is subjective.

And at the same time I felt quite indifferent to PJ Harvey but I didn't have an issue with what she was writing even though it was quite hectic but I didn't, I didn't have personal issues but with her (Liz Phair) because of the wording she portrayed, that I thought was unnecessary.

Okay, cause you wouldn't use those words yourself!?

No and I think that the words PJ Harvey uses is good even tough I always didn't understand it err but the blatant-ness of Liz Phair was too, a but much. And it is like

you said I am a bit of a personal person but I, I don't know a lot of people that wouldn't take exception to that. Umm there's a lot of like err, what's his name Marshal Mathers or Slim Shady or whatever his name is. Like a lot of lyrics he used were also over the top like and I just didn't believe it was necessary that he used those lyrics. Cause you know when kids hear that and talk like that it's not, I just don't think that's way people should talk.

Okay, so you're thinking about implications, implications these somngs have for society, like for little girls to hear this, And I think that's okay, that's okay! I suppose what you're saying is that you wouldn't want your daughter listening to Liz Phair and I think that's okay, because maybe it would be sending out an inappropriate message to her.

Ja! Err not just my daughter, I, I wouldn't necessarily want to listen to those kinds of lyrics. There's a reason that they like 'bleep' out when you listen to the radio. And why you can't say certain things on the radio umm and I think that there's, I think she could have achieved what she wanted to achieve by being subtle like I don't, subtle like in the first song where I thought she wrote, I felt she wrote really well! And in the next song it was a bit much for me ja!

Okay, that's fine, we'll leave it as that. Anything else you wanna add or you wanna say err about what your read, what you saw, err what we spoke about, maybe you feel like there's something you wanna add and you didn't get a chance to say it, you wanna say it now? Are you okay?

No! I'm alright!

You feel comfortable with what you've said right!?

Ja!

Just one more question, a short question. Err do you think most people would share your feelings and thoughts on these musicians or that most people would not share your feelings?

I think if you had to do a, like a census, even though I'm conservative I'm quite liberal and I think most people would have issues with Liz Phair umm and might sort of be partial about it but I don't think I'm too harsh on her. Umm but at the same time I think the general consensus would be a lot that is inappropriate. Some of the stuff doesn't need to be said (laughs), like it, it can be said subtly, not using those words she used umm…

And I think that's maybe when you say when you're conservative you are liberal, so it sounds like what you're saying, you can talk to someone like this err but you can accept but you may not necessarily agree with what they're saying or doing. It

doesn't mean you're going to kick them out or be like 'I don't wanna speak to you, I don't wanna see you'. You're still going to interact with them, you'll engage them, you'll give them time, you're not gonna have an extreme hostile reaction to them.

Ja! Exactly!

Cool!

Transcript for participant #2

Alright, cool, you ready, okay umm, so what are some of the music groups and singers that you enjoy listening?

Britney Spears, Gangster Rap, it depends on my mood! If I'm feeling angry, I wanna listen to angry music, if I'm feeling sad I wanna listen to Norah Jones. I don't know… I can't decide on it very well.

Okay so you're flexible when it comes to music?

I'm pretty flexible! Yeah!

What are the kinds, types, styles, genres of music that you listen to?

Like I said, I'm really flexible! The only thing that I will definitely not listen to is, umm R&B. You know this music that's at Mabaleng! (Referring to a Pub down the road from where she stays) That is it! Otherwise I'll listen to anything.

Alright, could you tell me roughly the amount of time you spend listening to music a day, or maybe a week, quantify it?

A day? Its in the traffic, so its probably three hours a day. There's a lot of traffic hey! (Laughs). That's like fifteen hours a week if you wanna be more precise.

Shoo! And do you have a say in this music, or do you just let the radio run?

No, most of the time I'll chose what I play. It's very rare that I'll just listen to the radio.

And maybe do you have specific things that you play, that you find that you consistently do?

Ja! Like I said it depends on my mood. If I'm in a happy mood I will probably play something happy like Black Eye Peas or Britney Spears, upbeat you know.

And if you're in a sad mood?

I'll play some, some, The Fray, Emo music. Something to slit my wrists kind of music (Laughs). That's what I'll do when I'm sad.

Okay, where are the places that you find yourself listening to music?

In the car, that's the biggest place, that's actually the only place. Occasionally if I'm like angry in my room.

What are the specific things about music that you enjoy i.e. is it the beat, the lyrics, the videos, the images or the style of the artist? It can be all of those, but maybe you'd like to prioritise them. So what would you put first?

I can't really say, cause I don't really see, don't really watch music a lot, so it will have to be the beat and the lyrics and the way it makes me feel.

So would you prioritise those two?

Those three yes!

Those three! How much would you say image counts?

To me it counts…

Or the style of the artist?

What do you mean style of the artist? Like the visual style?

The visual style, just the way they portray themselves, the way they dress themselves and just the kinds err of images that they fashion? Is that big for you?

Images! Err no, its about a quarter of the, of the why, the, what's the word, the thing that will encourage me to listen to them.

So if you had to hear a song on the radio, and you saw the way the person looked afterwards, would that change your view on liking the song if you did like it in the first place?

No! I don't think it would. If I like it to begin with? No it wouldn't

You wouldn't, ok cool. Do you find yourself listening to male or female musicians?

I have to say 50/50 hey.

So its equal!?

It is!

Do your friends and family share the same taste in music as you do?

No not really, there's commonalities, but it's not like "Definitely ja!" we have the same CD collection.

So sometimes, sometimes not?!

Ja!

Alright, umm, how often do you buy music?

Not often hey! Actually go and buy a CD! Maybe twice or three times a year all in all.

Ok, and when is it that you do buy, is it because you really like a musician or you just buy it randomly?

No! I really have to like someone, I really, really, really have to be so infatuated with some song that I just wanna hear it all the time. Then I'll go and buy it, but that only two or three times a year (Laughs).

This maybe a broad question for now, but we can refine it, but what do you think about women who perform music?

What do I think about? I don't know! I think about it like they're doing they're job, that's the first thing comes to mind, and then…

And how do you think they are doing their job?

What do you mean "how"?

You said that you think about it like they're doing their job, how do you think they are doing their job? Do you think they're doing a good job? Do you think they are doing a bad job?

Oh! Oh! I don't know! I look up to them to being to, to perform in front of a camera or large groups of people so I commend them on being so brave to do what they need to do and like, like Amy Winehouse will get up on stage with that fucking hair of hers and she'll just do what she wants to do. And then someone else like Beyonce will make all this effort blah, blah, blah! So I commend them on the fact that they, they, care but they don't care. I don't know…

So it sounds like you really have respect for them or admire them for putting themselves out there?

Ja, I do! I admire them!

So it sounds like what you're saying is that with performance, there is like um sincereness about it?

Yes, there is, yes, yes there actually is, its something about… I mean, just to draw a parallel, like I'll sit in my car and If I really like a song, and if I'm in a really, really good mood then I'm gonna sit and dance and dance and dance, and if I see someone looking at me I'm gonna stop. Or I'm gonna become self conscious, and then I won't feel like doing it anymore, but, so from that aspect I'm imagine that this one individual if front of all these other people is willing to say look at me "I'm worth looking at". So its like ok.

Anything else you wanna add to that or are you ok?

I'm good.

Alright, cool. Could you describe to me some of the qualities that female artists have that make you enjoy listening to them?

They entertaining!

Could you be more specific about what would be the qualities that would "entertain" you of a female artist?

Umm, I don't know! Let me think, if someone can… a female artist now? What would entertain me?

Or what would be a quality that you would look for that would attract you to a female artist, like ones that you would be attracted to versus ones that you would not be attracted to?

When you say attracted to, are you saying that now I'm looking at a someone performing on T.V and I think "Oh this is a nice song because the way the are moving or…

It could be whether you are hearing them or just seeing them. Or it could be both.

I don't know how to answer that! I'm sorry! So you're asking me what attracts me to… I don't know, it's the message that they portray!

Alright!

That's what it is! That is what… yes! That's what it…

Tell me a little bit more about the message?

Ok, can I give you examples maybe?

Please!

So that it makes it easier!

Please!

Ok, so you know that Ciara song "Like a boy", so she's portraying a message of, which is you know a little bit half-baked, probably some guy pissed her off. But she's portraying a message of "Ja, ja, ja! You guys think you're so cool, I can be just as cool as you" Do you see what I'm saying. And then I'm gonna come with a stupid example, no! they not stupid, and then another one is lets just say "Womaniser" ok (Laughs). Ok, now you've got Britney Spears, I mean I saw that video once only, but I quite like that song barring the fact I really like Britney. But It always seems like I like songs where the woman is showing how strong and courageous they are above all else. Yes! Actually I'm seeing a common thread here, yes!

So you would say that umm you're attracted to female musicians who, who are quite strong, strong independent women?

Yes, who portray that through their music, even if I know that in reality, well I don't know, but even if I can perceive them, like someone like Britney Spears, she hasn't even, losing custody of her children, even though I think that's weak, but when she comes out with that womaniser song its like hey, hey, hey! Ja.

What do you think she's saying in that song? Well, well I mean according to you?

What do I think she's saying?

Hmm, you're perception of it

I think she's trying to say… my perception (mumbling). My perception (giggling) is that she is saying in that song that…

Remember it's subjective, so I mean there's no right or wrong answer.

I know I'm just trying to put it nicely together (giggling). I think what she's trying to get at, or maybe this is what I want to get from it, is that even if a man is an asshole you can get over it. That's what I think she's trying to portray.

Okay, alright, okay, cool…

Okay, alright, alright, okay (mimicking and giggles)

Tell me about some of the female artists that you enjoy listening to? Maybe you can name me a few.

Christina (Aguilera), Christina, she's got such a beautiful voice, umm…

Anything else about her that you like before you tell me another singer, so you like her voice?

Also like what she sings about, she like varies it a little bit. She sings about the good times but she can also sing about her pain, and it sounds, it "sounds" like its coming from a genuine place, like she's genuinely just trying to get it out, go over it. Umm who else can I think of, I'm trying to think of which CD's are in my car. Umm I must say Gwen Stefani but like in her No Doubt days. This new stuff of hers I don't know. That No Doubt, it was like so powerful, and she was so deep, it was just so, it was like nothing, like seriously I'm walking through spider webs (a lyric of No Doubt's). What the hell does that even mean? Ja, I can't think of others!

But it was fun!?

You know what! When I was small I used to love Whitney Houston, like you don't understand how I used to "love" her.

And what's changed? Has there been anything that's changed?

No! I still like her songs, it just belongs to a different place you know. It reminds of when I was small, and hanging out with my mom, do you see what I'm saying?

So you're saying as you grow up it changes?!

It changes! It changes! I think I very often use music to remember things or I use to categorise events in my life. You know 50 Cent "In the Club", that reminds me of the first day I went back to RAU after I had given birth to Cameron. It was my first day back, and I remember hearing this hip-hop song and it was like so hir, hir, hir! And I remember feeling so unhip-hop at that stage, cause I mean I had just given birth, I was like, you know post-natal, I had my own issues, ja!

So you're most likely… it sounds like at a specific time in your life or at various points in your life that it dictates the kinds of music you listen to?!

Yes.

Or in this case the kinds of female musicians you listen to?

Yes, I suppose you can say that, but only by default of the fact that I will use music to define a moment in my life. Not specifically that its female focused.

Okay so maybe at the moment, which female singers are you listening to? Maybe it may not be your favourite but that you're listening to now? And that you've enjoyed their music, you like them.

That Adele, is it Adele? "Cold Shoulder", Adele, Madonna, I have to say Britney (Spears) all the time.

That's cool.

Umm… yes!

You wanna add anything or are you cool with that?

I'm good.

Alright, umm I'd like you to identify some female musicians that you dislike?

I'm not a fan of Beyonce! She just comes to mind. I don't know why, I don't know! There's something about her! I don't like her legs for one thing! And some of her songs, I mean she's got, she's very talented, and, and I've seen her perform and she's very entertaining. As far as me going out and buying her music and listening to it over and over, no! I don't know why, there's just something irritating about her. Her voice, I don't know what it is. But she…

You can't really pinpoint it but it's a feeling that you have.

Ja! You know, like, ja, its funny. You know that song of her's "If I were a boy" blah, blah, blah! That song just grates me! But then Ciara's got that other one, and it just somehow… You know why, her's (referring to Beyonce) that sounds whiny and pathetic, you know like huh, huh, huh **(**indicating how whiny the song is) all the time, do you know what I'm saying!

Ok, maybe I could ask you this, do you not think Beyonce is a strong and independent woman?

I do agree that she is a strong and independent woman but then her song does not portray that! That, or that version, or maybe its just that one song I don't like

Any other female musicians that you have a strong disliking to or that you stay away from?

Extreme disliking!? No! It would have to be Beyonce.

Are you familiar with either PJ Harvey or Liz Phair?

Not at all!

Okay, so would you like to comment on what you've just read (Liz Phair''s lyrics)?

Wow! What a whole load of different things! And it started with this "Help me Mary" I was like, I got bored after the first, what do you call this?

Stanza or verse?

Stanza! I was very, very bored, I was thinking this person is just so self-pitiful, now I must feel sorry for them blah, blah!

Okay.

Then this one went on ("Dance of the 7 veils"), and then it was like okay not only is she, this woman, obviously, not only is she self-pitiful but she's got issues. Then this one ("Fuck and Run") came! And then I just felt sad for myself, I was like aghh! Just look at this she's singing your story! Then "Flower" came! And then I was like okay! And then this one came ("Glory") I don't really understand what this one was all about, the last one, "Glory". I'm not too sure. I don't have an opinion on it.

Okay cool, so it sounds like umm, what was striking to me when heard you talk about these songs was that you said that "she's got issues!"

It sounds…

So it sounds like she's got issues?!

It sounds like there are some things that she feels she could make right, some, some revenge that could be sought, it sounds.

So she sounds like she is vengeful?!

Yes, it does sound like she's got a bit of a raw end somewhere and now she wants to give someone else the raw end so she can feel okay about herself, that's what it sounds like.

Sounds like she's been hurt, and now she wants to hurt the people who have hurt her?!

It sounds like that! I'm scared of… I'm just gonna… there's no wrong answer, no right answer!

Totally you go for it! What was most striking for you when you read her lyrics? What stood out for you the most? So what was most striking for you? And you can refer to specific songs.

The fact that she was just so raw! And so umm not sugar coated. The fact that it was just like, it actually… ja! It felt like whatever she was thinking at that moment and she was writing these songs that was exactly what she said, she didn't try and find nice way of saying it. But it also kind of feels like she wants to be a little bit shocking on purpose, to grab your attention.

Okay, so there's a bit of shock tactics here!?

Yes, I think there is a little bit of attention seeking going on here!

Okay, interesting! Can you describe some of the feelings you experienced with regards to what you just read?

Like I said this first song "Help me Mary" I was feeling very bored! I was, I was not enjoying reading that one (Dance of the 7 veils)

I remember you saying you felt a bit irritated. You were like "oh self-pitiful!"

Yes, it was like "oh… look now, look now, put egg on my face blah, blah, blah, whatever!"

So to start you were feeling a bit irritated and a bit bored?!

Yes, I didn't feel like looking at someone feeling sorry for themselves, and then this one here, this one here I don't even understand this song, but, it just, it just seems like she is hating here, this "Dance of the 7 veils" just hating. And then, this, this one "Fuck and Run"…

How did you feel towards "Fuck and Run"?

I don't know! I felt like I could identify with it hey! Just because like I'm in a strange relationship myself, I felt like I could identify with that, but, but this now, if I listen to this song before I see a certain person I will be angry with that person even if I started of happy, even if I just spoke to them about going out to lunch with them by the time this song is finished playing hey hey! I 'm gonna look for a fight, I'm gonna be upset with them.

So you were a bit angry when you read that?!

It did make me angry, yes!

Okay

And then "Flower", "Flower" was just like okay (laughs and giggles) "Flower" was kinda funny, it's a funny song!

It was funny?!

Its funny things to…

Were you shocked or disgusted?! No?

No! I wasn't shocked and I wasn't disgusted. I found it funny, its not like I'll put the radio on and I'll hear it, you know this is not the type of song you'd expect to hear. But it did not shock me, as such. "Glory" I don't know what's going on there. My feelings died there! That was just words. I don't know…

Did you feel sad?

Like I felt for this one here!

Fuck and Run?

That would make me sad because it's not… it makes me sad because… probably if I were… I don't even know…

Its interesting you talk about your feelings of sadness and anger for that song because it sound like to me may be you can identify with her, cause it sounds like she's been hurt and it made her sad and now she gets angry and she's attacking.

Exactly! Exactly! That's the thing! Just reading these words, just reading! No… Just reading these words again, I can, I can honestly, its like, I feel like, I can say this to someone right now and I'll be genuine. I'll mean it. I'll be like "Here's your story!"

So you also felt a little angry!?

I felt angry and sad.

Anything else you want to add?

No.

Was there anything that you particularly liked or disliked of what you just read?

I think throughout the whole thing there's a common thread, like I said earlier of just like that raw honesty, this is the way it is!

You liked that!?

I liked that yes! I do! The fact that she's will to put this stuff out there.

Would you listen to music like this?

I'd, I'd be quite interested to listen to the music just to hear how it goes.

Would you be friends with a woman like this?

I can't base that on this! I need to, I really, ja! I can't, I can't base that on something I read. And my friendships are not that fragile. You should know!

Alright, so would you like to comment on what you just read?

I really didn't like reading any of that! I didn't like any of it! This person, I don't know what's going on. It sounds like they either have got a secret wish to kill someone, or kill themselves, and some, some, person's, sounds like some man with all this reference to things crawling between her legs blah, blah, blah! Like someone really hurt her! No seriously! Like she had no control after a while!

Does it sound like a man or woman who wrote that?

Sounds like a woman wrote it. Your snake between my legs, you call that, that, all of that! That's the imagery I get. And then setting my head on fire! I don't know I imagine some red head. I don't understand! These songs just make me… Can I start again. (Giggles)

Go for it!

There's a lot of fire! There's a lot of blood! There's a lot of (giggles) haai! Things between legs! I really don't know what's going on here. "Douse my hair with, Douse hair with gasoline" "That fruit inside of me" What kind of fruit! Talking about a guava! What's going here! There's something very strange going on here! Ja!

It sounds like from response you're a bit confused!?

I'm not confused!

Maybe it sounds like you didn't know how to make sense of it!?

No, no. I don't feel confused, I feel sorry for this person! I feel sorry for them. I'm like "Shame man!" Hey! Such a… I don't know what to call it. What a bad deck of cards you got dealt. Seriously! "This fruit inside me!" Haai! There's snake! There's fruit! There's fire! What does that even mean! (Laughing)

I'd like to know what you think is underlying the snake, the fruit and the fire? What do you think she's referring to?

I really don't know! I really don't know! I'm like shame man! I don't know Dale! This poor person! But anyway!

What was most striking for you, what do you think stood out the most for you? Was it the fruit… (Laughing)

I just told you! (Laughs). No, it was just the, it just sounded weird. They're like nowhere! These songs go nowhere!

So somehow they sound like they don't make sense!?

It's just…

Sounds like they're nonsensical almost!?

They're just like huh! I'm like what! I promise you, if I heard this song like this, the only thing that would keep me listening to this would be a good beat, or something! But the words themselves!

Is it almost like random stuff!?

Its random! I was just about to say it reminds me of No Doubt (a rock band), like "Spider webs" (A No Doubt song), no, that makes sense of those songs. But this uh, uh! I don't know…

What do you think she's trying to achieve by writing stuff like this?

I don't know if she knows what she's trying, no seriously! I don't know…

So she sounds confused a little bit!?

No! She sounds upset!

She sounds upset?! Okay.

She sounds depraved!

Depraved!?

Depraved! And all over the place! With that, with that feeling, sounds like she doesn't know how to process her feelings, if I must be honest. It sounds like she gets very fixated on certain things. No! I'm being serious now! I'm being serious! This person is a very intense person. This is a person if I chirped them about a dress they were wearing one time they'll never, never, never, never forget I said! They'll hold a grudge against me for that!

Sounds like you're saying this is a person who takes themselves way too seriously?!

Way and everything else for that matter! You know things like, this is just a person who holds onto to shit.

Its interesting, cause it sounds like you feel like she had something to say but she doesn't quite know how to say it or put it out?

It just sounds like she has things to say about something that went wrong somewhere, she's not feeling so impressed about things. And then there's this other thing, this "Legs!" I don't understand what she's saying here! I don't understand whats going on here. I don't understand! On the one side "I want to cut you legs off" or something like that, it sounds like, it starts of so nice, the song, the song sounds like its gonna be a positive and then all of a sudden wishing people dead! What's going on?! I don't know!

Umm, can you describe how you felt when you read this?

I was feeling like, first of all I thought to myself people, people make a living out of writing things like this, this is the first thing I thought! And the second thing I thought of, what is this person trying to say! I don't know! It makes me confused. And the third thing I thought was this person has got very, not sadistic but very negative, its like they wanna do negative things to themselves and the world…

They're a bit malevolent like!?

Yes! Yes, yes, yes yes, yes! That was my feeling.

It's interesting cause you, when I asked you the first time, your comments you, my sense was that you made a little bit of sense of what she was trying to say but then you said now you don't think she knows what she wants to say?

No! No! She sounds like an angry person who wants to say angry things! That's all! Why! I don't know, I don't know!

So she saying things but not really saying anything at all, is that what you're saying?

No! just… No! I'm not saying that! I think, I think, I think this person is just, is just unhappy but the way that they going about that, that's in an all over, kind of…

Scattered?!

Yes! Yes! I wouldn't actually enjoy something like this because I can't identify with it. I really, it makes no sense to me! I don't understand! If you can say…

Uh huh?!

…I don't know! I don't know! It just seems like! I don't know! If you wanna be angry about something, just pick something and be angry about that thing, and just stick with

it, and let's go with that thing! But now you keep… I don't know! It's just the same random stuff! I don't know!

So its repetitive?!

There is something repetitive in all of this…

There's a lot of angry, bitterness and all of that hey?!

There is yes! But at the same time there's also a lot of "huh!" What! What! What! Like the things that she uses to describe how she's feeling I can't make a connection necessarily but I'm getting this, this common thread of this angry woman.

Okay, was there anything that you particularly liked or dislikes about what you just read?

I don't like anything about these songs! No! There was just so much repetition somewhere here, it was repetitional and some random crap!

Can I ask you something, would you say that what you've just read of hers its almost incoherent, and it's not logical maybe?

Yes! It's not logical, maybe if I was stoned and I read it, it would make sense but seriously in a sober state I don't know! Shame!

So it's a bit incoherent?

Yes!

Okay, that's fine. I'm gonna ask you another question and it may irritate you, but how do you, cause I'm just trying to tease out like what it is you're saying, how do you make sense of what it is you just read? That may seem like a vague question.

No, no! It's not a vague question! This is now, this is now if I'm must take all these things I'm reading here, all of these things about snake, and all of these things about fire, and I know this is going to sound stupid, and fruit and all of that, I'm taking this to sound like someone, I don't know! Someone did something sexually to her. This is what I'm feeling! And now because this is now such a hurtful thing for her this is how she gets it out. This is, this is how I make sense of it. Sounds like a, sounds like sexually loaded songs!

Sexually loaded songs?!

Yes, they do!

Okay, alright I'm gonna ask you to discuss some similarities and differences between P.J Harvey and Liz Phair. What do you think was similar and different between the both of them?

I think the similarities about the both of them, about the fact that they, this, whose this?

P.J Harvey!

Okay, despite the fact that P.J Harvey, that it was all just, seemed like a mess of words. There was also a just kind of like a "this is what I'm thinking right now, this is what I'm gonna say right now!"

Cause there was a rawness to both of them?

There was a rawness to both of them, but I think with Liz she was more organised and it was more like songy like something I would want to listen to as opposed to this. This one sounds like reading someone's diary, or just, this is just too intimate for my liking, this is, this is too, too, too deep, that one is still like "Ja! Ja! Ja! Fuck and run" that's fine.

So you can relate to that one but not that one (referring to PJ Harvey)

Hmm, there's something dirty about this (referring to PJ Harvey) that makes me feel like dirty. I didn't feel dirty, I was still okay with the other one.

So it's a little bit disgusting, this one (referring to PJ Harvey)?

I don't wanna say disgusting, but ja if I said dirty then I must say disgusting. So yes, there is something…

And that's okay1 Eapecially when she uses things like snake, and…

Fruit! (giggles)

… (laughing) and fire!

That was just a little too much! (Laughs)

Okay, umm, umm, ja I think err, is there anything else you wanna add to that?

No! I just wanna reiterate just how much I don't like, I didn't like reading the second one!

So, off course it sounds like you like Liz Phair more than you like P.J Harvey?!

Yes! That one seems like there is a little bit of balance going on (referring to Liz Phair) you know, you can take the good with the bad! But this one! Everything is just nonsense, it sounds like, even if something is good, she'll somehow make it bad. It just, everything has to end up being bad and negative and dark!

That's very interesting! So what did you think of the images of Liz Phair?

They are…

What's the first thing you think at the top of your head?

There is, there is a sexuality in them, that's the first thing I think of.

So there's some sort of sex that comes from this?!

Yes! I don't think she shouts to use her body to get attention but she's also playing it up a little bit. She's trying to create a certain image. This is what I think.

And what kind of image is that?

I think she's trying to create an image to match the rawness of her songs but it's a little bit, it looks manufactured to me! It looks like she wrote this song, she was feeling this and now must have a look, I mean now come on now! Look at this! What is that bottle of Fanta doing there? (rhetorical question) and that stain? Who does shit like that?! Whatever!

So you think it's staged?!

I think, I think it's staged yes! Yes!

So do you think the lyrics of her songs are congruent to the pictures of her?

I do think so yes! I think that's because she's made an effort to ensure that. You know like, if I can compare it like Madonna once I, when she was doing that whole Evita thing, she was playing it back, wearing suits and then she did some other thing, you see what I'm saying. But that's entertainment and that's fine!

Are you saying that it would be more interesting if her images were a bit more different to the lyrics? Is that what you're saying?

No! I don't think it would be interesting. It would be disappointing. It would disappoint me very much if this had to be some frumpy woman wearing a petticoat. It would be like "Haai! This is what she's offering!" It would be ja!

Because I just get a sense that your frustration was about the manufacturing thing, tell me more about that?

It's not frustration its just that when I read her music like I kept on saying it just felt so raw and so real and then I see this picture, this very elaborate pose with no bra and this shiny, little, silver thing and, I'm trying to remember also the fashion at that stage. But, kind of, I don't know, this doesn't feel like a raw picture. It doesn't! It feels like she's in a studio and they blew wind on her hair, do you see what I'm saying?!

So what you're saying is that there is limitations to taking pictures in fact, and the photographer who takes the pictures because they try and put you in a certain light or they make you stand…

Ja but you chose to be in a certain light, you chose to pose like this, she choose to pose like this, she could of said "No! I don't want to! Take me like this!" You know, like, like with Amy Winehouse video's, they weren't very done up which is what I expected because her songs just sound very "Dah! Dah! Dah! Dah! Dah!" I don't know how to describe it and you see the video and she's walking in the street and you're kind of like "what does this have to do with somebody leaving you?" Now you're sitting in a blue hotel room! What's going on? What's up? Do you know what I'm saying? So I think, I think, that from at first glance what, what I see here doesn't differ very much from what I expected from her music but it is disappointing because it does look very staged! Ja!

Okay, lets talk a little about PJ Harvey, what do think about her pictures?

I think she's just trying too hard to look goth and depraved. This is, this is what it looks like to me, it really looks like she's trying very hard to, to stand out in the crowd. I don't know! This picture looks real! (The one with the flower in her pocket) This is the only one that looks like a real person. These other ones she just looks like someone who wants attention.

So again a bit staged hery?!

It looks staged, sorry, but this goes with her songs.

So it is congruent to what you just read?

Yes, yes I also think this one is! It's just, it's just like I said it disappoints me that this…

What did you expect, the images in your head when you read Liz Phair?

I expected someone who looked a little bit mature, with, with, she's got dark hair or blonde hair? She's got dark hair. I don't know. I expected someone more mature looking, same body type, umm…

But not to pose like this?!

No!

And to stage themselves like this!?

Ja! I don't know.

Interesting, what about PJ Harvey? Did you expect her to look like this?

I expected someone to look like this. I really did!

You expected it!?

Ja! I got no surprises when I saw her photo's. I was like obvious!

Any last things you wanna add about what you read, what you saw or any questions that you have?

No, but this is a nice exercise to think about things. And no I really don't like this woman! And I don't know if her lyrics has made me predisposed to in a negative way but I really don't like her! I would definitely not try to talk to her if I saw her! But I could talk to this one (referring to Liz Phair).

I suppose this is not the kind of music you want your kids listening to!?

No! I not like that! Cameron (respondents daughter) can listen to what she wants to listen to, but me personally no!

This is not happy music!?

No it's not, I don't know, it's not. It's too negative for me, even in my deepest, darkest angriest moment putting this on would somehow make me angry, somehow!

Okay, cool.

Transcript for participant #3

Okay, are you ready?

Yes!

Alright, umm what are some of the singers and music groups that you enjoy listening to?

Umm there's a variety. I like, I actually quite like Queen, I like umm Streisand, Diana Krall, umm Nina Simone, umm groups like U2 but more older stuff, umm 'Viva La Vida' I can't remember who did it!

Cold Play!?

There we go!

Okay!

Cold Play!

You enjoy Cold Play as well!?

Uh huh, umm…

So these maybe, broadly speaking, some of the musicians that stick out for you, that you enjoy?

Ja!

Alright, umm what are the types, kinds, genres or styles of music that you listen to?

Umm I like sort of I guess soul-type stuff. Umm old style swing I like especially when newly interpreted, umm I like music that is tuneful umm…

Can you be specific, can you just elaborate on tuneful? What do you mean by that?

Umm the kind of stuff that Streisand would sing for example umm but that's just her interpretation of a certain kind of song. I find that those, that kind of music is reinterpreted but by different kinds of people they all sound good doing it umm even though they do it in a different way. Umm I like Nina Simone-type stuff because it carries a lot of emotional weight. Umm that's the kind of stuff I like.

It sounds like you like very sort of melodic music!?

Yes, there you go!

Okay, alright and you mentioned Nina Simone and you mentioned Barbara Streisand!? So those would be some of the kinds of musicians you like in terms of, when you mention tuneful!?

Mmm! I always used to like musicians based on the quality of their voice umm and I think that's what attracted me to Streisand initially. I was 8 when I was first exposed to

her. Umm and that's been a recurring theme for me that the quality of the voice must be of a certain quality otherwise I don't necessarily like it!

Okay, alright! Umm anything else you wanna add or are you fine?

No!

Could you tell me roughly the amount of time you spend listening to music?

A day, a week, a month!?

You could quantify it, umm per day or per week!?

I would say I'm exposed to music about 2 to 3 hours a day. That includes time spent in my car.

Alright and I think leading or building on that question umm where are some of the places you find yourself listening to music?

Umm mostly in my car and in my home.

What are the specific things about music that you enjoy i.e. the beat, the lyrics, the video, the image, the style of the artist and perhaps umm you could like all of those things and maybe if you do like all of them you could prioritise the things that you like more to the things you like less.

Can you say them again? The music, the what!?

The beat, the lyrics, umm the video, the image, the style of the artist and maybe I should have included here vocals but I suppose vocal could be beat but vocals ja, beat, vocals, lyrics, images, video's, style of artist!?

It's, it's, it's the music itself, umm and in other words not necessarily the beat.

Then what would that be then?

It would be if I think of…

You're talking about vocal abilities!?

It's vocal ability but, but umm think of blues, there isn't necessarily a driving beat. Umm it's not as overriding as you would find in rock or r&b or anything like that. Umm.

When I talk about beat, I suppose that's the incorrect word for me to use here but when I speak beat I'm speaking about the melody, or the tune, or umm sort of what the instruments are doing.

Cool! Because that's more or less it for me!

So that's important for you, the melody!?

Umm the style of music I particularly like is classical and opera umm and as a consequence you can't say that there's not a beat, of course there would be beat because there would be metre and a rhythm umm in the music umm but it would be how the instruments are put together and what kind of emphasis it plays on what kind

of instrument at any particular point in time and what the music is trying to tell you. Umm how you emotionally engage with what the music is trying to tell you.

So it sounds like you quite enjoy that, just the instruments kind of coming together and creating a sound!?

Ja! Exactly!

Maybe any other things that you enjoy, maybe the lyrics…

Lyrics definitely make a, form a, is an important part of it unless it's opera sung in Italian and then you don't know what they singing anyway, then you just appreciate the music just for the quality of the music as well as the voice singing. Whatever they singing about necessarily but I mean that's like M.I.A (an Indian British female musician) where most of what she sings is Gibberish because of her accent or whatever umm but you can still appreciate the sound. Umm image not so much umm I don't watch television so I'm not really exposed to a lot of music video's umm…

Style of the artist!?

Style of the artist depends!

How so, tell me a little about that!

Umm okay if you think about somebody like Barbara Streisand started out in the sixties umm and she had a very distinct style at that point in time which made her very, very famous.

And what style was that?

It was a very stylised sixties umm hairstyle, make-up and clothing umm she became very famous for her manicured nails and the way that she did her eye make-up and her hair and the profile of the big nose with the eyes done in a niffitity type style and umm later on she became a blond bimbette umm but the quality of the music never changed! Which is the interesting thing! And umm she became even more famous for it, you can compare that to Madonna who I really don't like but I appreciate her style and the ability that she has to incorporate style into her music which has also made her extremely popular. I don't think she would be popular at all if all that she had to base that all upon was her music which quite frankly was crap especially in the 80's. Umm who else Nina Simone has a very earthy kind of feel to her umm some of the other guys that I like umm Diana Krall for example is this tall blonde, blonde-haired woman with voice like she's a black woman, She has that kind of quality to her music. So if you never knew who she was and you only heard her music, you wouldn't believe that she is a blonde girl umm.

So it sounds like you're saying that umm the style of artists can also enhance their music.

Yes! I'm not sure it enhances their music as opposed to marketability though.

And for you how important is that cause you just mentioned Barbara Streisand and I'm just wondering, it sounds like if I'm hearing you correctly that maybe something was lost in her music or something was added to the music when she changed her style from the sixties, well post 60's!?

Umm…

It sounds like you're saying either something was gained or lost!?

Well, lets face the kind of stuff that she was performing changed over time umm in the 80's it became a lot more pop umm and there was a reason for that because that was what was popular at the time. Umm in the 60's however she was more experimental and she was allowed to be more experimental because she was tremendously successful at what she did. Umm ja lets leave it at that I think!

Okay, we'll leave it at that but it sounds like what you're saying is that mainly for you the melody is really important as well as lyrics and umm the style of the artist does play a role for you sometimes!? Somehow!?

Ja!

Alright, anything else you wanna add or are you fine?

I'm fine!

Do you find yourself listening to male or female musicians more?

I listen to female musicians more but I think the reason for that is the quality of the voice which in female musicians tend to be better umm than male musicians depending on the kind of music they do. Umm in opera I like both.

Okay, do your friends and family share the same taste in music as you do?

No! The don't!

Is it completely different or are there some sort of umm points of convergence or is it completely different?

Umm there are points of convergence for all of them umm but they don't like all of the stuff I like umm…

Are you referring to both your family and friends or just family?

Just family!

Okay, just family!?

Mmm.

So your family tends to like the music you listen to!?

Umm well no my parents for example like opera and classical music a lot but my middle sister likes jazzy, soul-type stuff like Nina Simone's and sort of things. Umm and then the eldest sister got, she was the one that exposed me to Streisand in the

beginning and they also like a lot of classical music so there's, there's various places where there's convergence from various people.

So it sounds like the influences there perhaps maybe that's what influenced umm your preference or your taste in music but it sounds like maybe the music that you listen to now umm maybe in the same genre but maybe different to what they listen to!?

Yes!

Okay, and what about friends?

Umm…

Differences, or some differences or some the same?

Umm vastly different! Normally my friends tend to umm laugh at my Streisand collection. Umm very few of the people I know like classical music as much as I do umm although there seems to be quite an appreciation of it, Diana Krall, Nina Simone, umm Gadeau, Melody Gardeau, and all those people. Umm but I don't conform to that, to the more typically obvious musicians umm like the Madonna's and those sorts of, that's very popular at the moment. Umm I, it just never really appealed to me.

It also sounds like what you're saying umm is that, if I can ask you this question as well, umm do you feel that the music you listen to is a lot different to what most people listen to?

I don't know about most people! But I know about those I mingle with and I guess…

Okay, and it appears to be different!?

Yes! Ja, ja!

Alright anything else you wanna add or are you okay with that?

No! That's fine!

How often do you buy music?

Umm I, it's, comes and goes to be honest. I've, I've…

How so?

Because I'll discover something that I like and I will go and I will buy one or two CD's or even three CD's of one person. I'm trying to discover what's, I'm trying to get more deeper into this music umm and then I'll stop and I'll leave it for a while and then one day I'll look through my CD's and then there'll be not a single thing there that excites me and I need something else. Then I'll go out and I'll try to find it.

And how frequent is that? Is that once a month, once every six months, twice a year, once a year?

Two or three times a month!

Okay so that's, so that's relatively quite frequently!?

Yeah! The thing is that , that will happen and then it will skip two or three months because I don't have the time to go and find.

And do you find that you intentionally go out and buy music or you just happen to be at a store looking and you chance upon a CD and you end up buying it. Is it like that?

Sometimes that happened, sometimes that happens. It doesn't happen often but what does happen is I will experience something somewhere that I think okay I'm looking for that and I will then go and I will try and find it. Umm unfortunately to my frustration most of the stuff that I've been trying to find recently I have not been able to find.

So there's a sense that you, you do feel motivated to go and buy music hey!? To go and explore different kinds of music!?

Mmm!

This maybe a vague question but I'd like you at the top of your head to tell me what comes to mind when you hear this alright. And it maybe vague and that's okay umm but what do you think about women who perform music? What's the first thing that comes into your head, to mind?

Umm I always think of, there's a scene that I saw umm somebody perform in a very long sheath dress with a microphone in front of her and she's in the spotlight but just an image.

And what was she wearing? Tell me again!

It's a sheaths dress, a sheaths dress!

It's a sheaths dress! Okay! Did she look very feminine in it or did she look just ordinary looking or umm…

No, she looked quite feminine umm tall, and the dress was full length umm light coloured umm and the rest of the stage was dark.

And how did you feel when you saw that?

I don't know! Umm it's, it's an elegant image, that attracts me! Because of the image, yes, because of the quality of the image. Umm there's also a certain level of solitary, standing alone and, and expressing yourself umm which potentially be because one could then say umm standing up for yourself to a certain degree umm because she would then be expressing herself in a way that umm in past times was probably not intended for women. Women weren't to do that so there's a certain strength there that I appreciate. Umm there's also the emergence of, of, of the image, the particular image, and the particular kind of dress and particular quality of umm the setting that appeals to me.

Okay, so it sounds like you've , there's a sense that I get when you say, it sounds like that there is a strength that you admire about sort of female musicians or female performers!? And there's also something that's quite elegant that you like about women performers or female performers sort of, maybe elegant is…

Umm just for that one particular image.

Sorry I'm generalising!

Have you seen Janis Joplin performing, or, or a video of her performing way back when, she was hardly elegant! Umm so it depends on the performer. Umm in this case, there's, it almost any chanteuse that you can think of that's known for singing that kind of song umm and has the vocal ability to pull it of, umm comes of as being elegant. Umm whereas in a rock setting or something similar you won't get that! Umm whose that woman who performs with Will I Am (a male musician)!? In that band! Black Eye Peas!?

Fergie!?

Ja! There we go! There's absolutely fuck all that's elegant about her. I mean she comes across as being as common as muck quite frankly! Umm as wealthy as she might be umm and I've seen her perform and no thank!

And it sounds like and maybe you can correct me if I'm wrong, it sounds like when, when, when you think about women performing music what strikes you or what you enjoy is the strength that comes through as a woman and sort of expressing herself a woman I think!?

Yeah!

You quite enjoy that!?

Yes!

Okay, anything else you wanna add cause I understand that question is a bit vague if you think about women who perform music? Umm just anything else you wanna say or anything you wanna add with response to that? So you're okay!? Are you comfortable with that?

I am comfortable with that but umm the question makes me think that I should think about what I think about women who perform. Umm and as a consequence I, the more you explore the, the, the umm the idea of a woman who performs the more you think about what does it say about women and what does it say about what I think about women. Umm in general I have always respected women, umm I've always liked working with people like that so when I think of somebody who has that kind of ability to stand up and then do something like that under thousands of people umm I think there's a , there's a, a, a, an admiration. Umm…

So you respect them hey!?

Ja I don't know if I necessarily respect them but I definitely admire what they do! Ja!

Alright, what do you think about women who perform contemporary music?

Contemporary!?

Ja, well what do you think about women who perform music currently? How, how, how do you feel about that? Just to contextualise the question.

I'm not sure I understand the question umm because at artists specific umm I like what women are capable of doing mow umm for themselves umm and are you asking me what do I think of performers at the moment?

Musicians, female musicians performing currently at the moment!? I think I'm using the word performers quite loosely.

Hmm! Umm like what do I think about their style?

Generally!

Of the quality of their music at the moment!?

Lyrically? Just across the board, the performance itself?

So the quality of their performance and what they do!?

Mmm!

Okay, umm…

Currently! Just to make it, just to contextualise that question a little bit because maybe it might be a bit vague but I think you have answered it umm but I think for my sake perhaps just to get more out of it umm ja maybe what do you think about women who perform music currently versus twenty years ago, maybe fifteen years ago?

Umm fifteen years ago bubblegum pop was the, the going thing. I hated it! Umm I found it vapid and stupid! Umm I found, I find that at the moment the, the, the r&b thing seems to be on the rise umm and I find equally irritating! Umm cause I don't wanna, I don't wanna listen to some black woman singing about how he ate her pussy or whatever! Umm that means nothing to me! Umm I'd much rather listen to Nina Simone whose dead now umm sing something that's much more soulful and that she recorded 30 years ago.

So it sounds like maybe currently there's a sense of you feeling that the woman performing or the woman who are…

Look it's very hard to generalise around women! That's such a wide range of, of musical styles umm I would say that the women are popular at the moment I don't particularly like! Umm the, but there are hidden treasures there, that you find, that umm speak to me a lot more.

Okay, alright that's fine! Umm I may be repeating myself here but just for me to flesh out I think some of your responses, I just want to tease out what it is you're saying a little bit more. Umm if you could describe some of the qualities that female musicians have that make you enjoy listening to them? I think you already have.

Mmm, I think I have! It's voice! I appreciate people that are intelligent and I appreciate umm an intelligent interpretation of something being, that they singing. Something that makes me feel like they feeling what they saying as opposed to somebody whose umm singing something because it's some background song that's some, that performer has been groomed to sing in the American Idol kind of way.

Tell me about some of the female musicians you enjoy listening to?

You know what I like! I like music that's performed with a certain whimsy! Umm where there is a sense of humour umm and there is several. I've recently discovered umm old-time swing umm and heard it reinterpreted by a variety of different people umm and that's been quite interesting and, and I like that contemporary people are rediscovering older, older things and reinterpreting it for a new audience. That's quite cool!

I would like you to identify some female musicians you dislike? Maybe you can name me a few that you really don't like?

Rhianna!

Okay Rhianna!?

Dolly Parton!

Okay!?

Although I like her as a person I don't like her music much. Umm…

Okay maybe just one more, three? So you said Rhianna, Dolly Parton and?

Give me a moment, I thinking! Hmm I think there's somebody called Tiffany and Brand, there's a whole range of people who their names end in 'y' and it's like, its' like a, it feels as if they were when they write their own name, they put a little heart on the 'y' you know! That kind of thing! Ja! Most of them I don't like!

Why is it that you don't like these musicians?

Because they vapid and they plastic and I think the music that they perform has been written for them with a certain specific market in purpose. Not that they like the music or that they feel they are engaged artistically in the music. There's no depth, there's no soul. There's no umm belief in what they trying to say. They trying to sell a record! Umm so that kind of vapidity does not appeal to me at all!

So artistic integrity in music is very important to you!?

Umm yes!

And that's okay!

I think so! I think so!

Alright are you familiar with either PJ Harvey or Liz Phair?

Umm I remember seeing PJ Harvey on TV and that was years ago, a decade or more ago, umm…

And tell me your impression of her at the time? What you know about her?

Well I, I always at the back of my head told myself I want to explore PJ Harvey a bit more. The reason for that is her music umm was familiar and the reason why it was familiar I think was, was, was specific lyrics which almost sounded like umm some of the poets that I've read like Sylvia Plath's type of 'band my head against the wall!', 'oh woe is me!', 'the world is so terrible!' kind of stuff. Umm but I never did and Liz Phair I've never heard of!

Okay!

So would you like to comment on what you just read?

I like it a lot! It's funny, it's witty, it contains pathos and umm very little of it is cheap. Umm I like that she's not scared to say what she thinks and what she feels which is a rarity because a lot of people are often scared to express themselves in ways that might be umm construed as not how good people behave or not how good people think or not how good people express themselves and this is what I like about this. It is very straightforward umm there's some thought to it as well, when you read the lyrics it's not umm common, it's not cheap kind of lyrics, the kind of lyric that you are used to in pop music so I like that for that reason!

Okay it's interesting to hear you say that cause it sounds like umm there's err kind of, maybe an honesty and a sincerity that you see in what she's writing!?

Yes! Umm some of it obviously is gratuitous umm but even when it's gratuitous it's not umm it's not cheap and by popularisation, it's not trying to achieve popularisation. I say that but I don't know the music, so I'm assuming.

What are your thoughts about the gratuitous kind of nature or maybe some of the stuff that you read, some of the songs, do you think it's maybe relevant or irrelevant?

Oh I think it's very relevant! I think these songs are the things that everybody thinks about but are too scared to umm express!

So it sounds like you're saying it's gratuitous for , for good reason!?

Ja! Definitely! I mean there, there's stuff here that, that umm one person will very rarely ever say to another umm but it is stuff that we think. Umm for that I have to

applaud that she's willing to express it umm in ways that are unambiguous, umm she's definitely not shy (smiles and laughs) which is cool! Err umm but there's the bits of it that has pathos on it. For example the, the 'Fuck and Run' one, when she talks about what is was like to be 12. That is an experience that many people have at 12. That is something that many people go through and never is acknowledged umm it is something that we shy away from when we are at, when people are confronted with real emotion they tend to shy away from it. Unless it can be cheap and can be popularised, in a 'desperate housewives' sort of way.

I think it's interesting, you used the word, the word, such as 'pathos' err to describe 'Fuck and Run' and maybe some of the other songs, cause pathos's speaks to a kind of strong feeling that kind of literature or something that's written kind of evokes in someone. Umm and perhaps this is leading towards one of the questions that I will ask but what are some of the feelings it umm evoked in you?

Umm…

And you can refer to all of them generally or you can refer specific one's like you did 'Fuck and Run'

I will! Umm I rather refer to all of them cause all of them bring out certain things. Umm there's moments of sadness umm because there's an experience of what it's like to be used umm for little more than what you are particularly. Err and there is then, there's something that I always think of when I read stuff like this and that's what it's like for somebody in that kind of situation, when it's alone time at 01:00 in the morning and you're alone in bed after you've experienced certain things, what is it like for you to, to lie down and refuse to be sick or if you're just wallowing in emotions, this is the kind of stuff that you think, tat you feel, you might not think it in so many words but it's definitely the kind of stuff that you feel. Umm…

Okay so you said maybe you felt sorry for her, you felt a bit sad reading some of what she wrote!?

Definitely! Umm…

Maybe what was some of the other feelings that it evoked in you?

Well definitely amusement cause she has a very interesting tone of phrase. Umm I like that she, she is flippant umm about some things as I said, there's a sense of whimsy, there's pathos as I said. There's also a strength umm because she's acknowledging the person that she is and she's not scared to, to express it. And that I appreciate as well because she's upfront and she's open and umm unafraid, despite the fact that there are

things that she is reminiscing about and some of these that are umm unpleasant and scary, umm she takes them on, head on which I like!

So it sounds like maybe there's some competing emotions, there's sadness but there's also like an amusement, there's a sense of humour to it despite the fact that there's maybe and I maybe putting my own words, maybe the fact that there's some profound sadness to it, to some of them the fact that there's still maybe some flippancy and some amusement umm is what makes it umm maybe competing or contradictory in some way.

I don't think it's contradictory at all, umm I think the ability to laugh at yourself and wit yourself is a very, very vital part of being human. Umm in my opinion and that she can do that, that she can take something that is wholly unpleasant and umm turn it into something that, that has a wry sort of dry humour is umm laudable.

Its sounds like you're quite appreciate of, of umm, of umm of feelings that maybe that one would consider contradictory umm but umm maybe are perhaps normal to the human condition or to the human experience!?

Hmm! Hmm! Exactly!

Alright this maybe a repetitive question but just again to flesh out how it is you feel or how is it you make sense of what it is you read, umm what was most striking for you?

That is a difficult question to answer umm because there was many things, there were many things they, that I found striking. Umm I liked her word play and I liked that she umm brought a story umm it's not, there are no stupid lyrics here! There might be some repetition with a purpose and when I read the quality of the poetry umm is reminiscent of many other poetry, much other poetry that I've read over the years. Umm there's anger, and there's, there's sadness and there's joy and there's reality and all of these things together makes it approachable and human. Umm ja I think that's it!

Okay, alright! Umm was there anything that you particularly liked or disliked about things you read? And maybe you can talk separately about things you liked and things you liked and things you disliked.

There's almost nothing that I disliked, some it is, is umm it's interesting because it touches on emotions that one experiences as you age umm things that you go through that I feel umm comes up around relationships and this despair around something that isn't right, I think that you went through that, you can sit back afterwards and think 'shit I really shouldn't have done that but fuck it was fun at the time!' type thing. Umm and then when you read it for the first time there's a sense of umm, I got a sense that she's quite scared , I got a sense that she's, she's umm, it's, a call for help in many

cases. Umm there's umm she is almost umm tempering herself because she is umm frightened by what has happened, by what has been done either to her or what she has agreed to or what has, she might have been a willing participant of or whatever the case may be but at the same time she acknowledges the damages that it's done to her which was striking err then when I read further umm she goes through something that like 'Fuck and Run' umm is something that many people go through something that you, you umm experience a certain something and then it in this self-destructive urge you, you go over the top. That as well is almost a sense of 'can someone please help me!' She say's there's something coming through around she's vulnerable and she's scared and she's doing stuff that she's not in control of and so she goes one step further to how far she can push it umm that's the kind of feeling that I got!

Okay!

Ja! So as for disliking anything, there isn't anything that I disliked umm there's too much honesty here to, to, to umm disregard what she says. Umm you can't just throw this away!

So there's something authentic about what she's saying!?

Hmm!

It makes it genuine and heartfelt!?

There's references here to things I don't know that I don't understand that maybe if I knew more about popular culture I might but I don't!

Fair enough!

But umm and it's doesn't necessarily distract it or detract from it, it means that I umm and maybe I'm not catching all the nuance.

And perhaps maybe she's coming from a different cultural context where those things that she's using has more significance for her!?

Exactly! Umm as is to everybody, there are things that mean certain things to some people and sometimes you don't understand.

And I suppose one will use those metaphors in whatever it is they're writing or whatever it is they're talking about!?

Ja!

Okay! Umm I think what was quite striking for me when I think hearing you talk about this was that you also mentioned something around umm if I'm not mistaken I think you used the word 'brave' or you used, you said that she's quite 'brave' or quite 'courageous' I think especially with regards to things she was saying. Umm in saying that I think its, I think I was quite struck by the fact that umm, I was quite struck by the fact that umm by how you didn't maybe rely so

much on the fact that this was coming from a woman. Umm not that that's a bad thing umm but I was quite struck by the fact that you didn't umm that the fact this was a woman singing this kind of stuff was not what dominated a lot of what you said . I f you know what I mean, which is very interesting for me.

If I was to be honest, I doubt that a man could have written this and I doubt that a man could have sung this.

Okay tell me a little bit more about that? Why, why you think that's so?

Because there's too much of vulnerability here, umm a man doesn't allow that kind of vulnerability to come out, umm to this level. If her, you can often see that the male, you can contrast male and female poetry, male poetry will be a lot more, it shows the dominance of a man where a man thinks as his birth right whereas a woman would be more interpretive and umm would try and find reason umm for, I already knew this was a woman writing, it so, there's no contextual, there's no effort required to find context umm around sex, but at the same time umm this could only have been written by a woman or a gay man who is umm in touch enough with who and what he is and that's a rarity in any case with gay men umm especially youthful ones. Umm I can't read this and umm not help but identify some of the emotions there but I don't know whether I would express myself in this way.

Perhaps which is the reason why you said she's quite brave and she's quite courageous and the sense I get is that you're saying you admire her!?

Definitely! Umm that's why we spoke about honesty as well, this is not the kind of thing that, that somebody who isn't honest will speak about themselves will write. This is not something that umm somebody who is shy and unwilling to, to, confront with who they are will write. Umm that is a rarity in and of itself whether gay, straight, man, woman. Umm but the way it's written, the way it's phrased, the phraseology, and the, the subject matter tells me that it's a woman.

So I suppose that's what's quite striking but also quite obvious which is the subject matter.

Hmm! Hmm!

Alright, would you like to comment, you just read PJ Harvey's umm, you've read lyrics to five of her songs, would you like to comment on what you just read.

The first thing that struck me is that, is umm there's a lyric here, let me just find it quickly where she says she wants to cast of her metal underwear or something. I'm not actually sure…

Iron-knickers down!?

Yes! There we go! Iron knickers I think refers to umm the chastity belts of past time. Umm and I found that interesting because she sings a lot about sexual liberation and then what she does is she tries to turn herself into a man in much of it because she then says a lot of stuff about denying her, her sex and her sexuality which is very interesting for me because it, it umm it's as if there's stuff that she's trying to run away from. Umm the very first song deals with loss umm and the pain of loss and then from there on she sings a lot about sex umm. But for example this one, she's turning herself into a man, she's building up a man. Umm and…

'50ft Queenie'!?

Ja! Because she sings about how umm she's a queen and then she sings she's a king! And she keeps on swapping between the two and the, and the king part gets bigger and bigger and bigger. Grows from 20 inches to 30 inches to 40 inches to 50 inches or something. Umm and then 'Man-Size' she's taking that even further and she's building herself into something that she isn't apparently. It's as if she's, she's taken a look at who she is and she doesn't like it and she wants to become more masculine, a more maybe because she wants to be more stronger or forceful or one of those things is what I associated with manhood I guess. Umm then it swaps to something that's completely different. Umm because here she's talking about how she was used.

In 'Snake'!?

Ja!

Okay!?

Umm and her anger at it! Umm now I don't know if there's a particular significance of the sequence songs but I, I found…

There's no particular sequence!

I found that quite interesting in, in comparison to the others where she's a stronger person and here she's much weaker. She's, she's weak and she's, she is weakened because something has happened that has umm weakened who she is.

And she's become angry now that she's been weakened!?

Ja! Well she's angry in, there isn't a song here that isn't angry.

Okay, so, so you kinda get the sense that there's a, that there's an anger throughout all five songs!?

Ja! Ja she err, not a happy cookie this one! Not a happy cookie!

Hmm!

Umm I have to admit that the lyrics here do not strike me as strongly as the Liz Phair one's did.

Alright!?

Err those were better written!

Okay!?

In my opinion! This is, the, potentially the music, I don't know. Umm…

But I think that's interesting that comes to mind, umm you're reminded of Liz Phair when you read this and I suppose like you said umm you prefer the Liz Phair lyric more than you do this one here!?

Mmm! Mmm!

Okay!?

Umm ja very, very angry! Very, very sad! And very umm, a lot of confusion too.

Confusion with regards to and you can correct me if I'm wrong but umm it sounds like the confusion, maybe the confusion that you're picking up on is umm the confusion umm maybe that she feels with regards to her sexuality!? Is that the confusion you're referring to?

Yes umm but also confusion because of, she goes through a range of emotions here. Umm emotions that deal with love and loss and, and the feeling that somebody used you and then moved on and that creates confusion! Umm and that maybe one of the reasons why she's denying, she's trying to get to a point where she can deny her sexuality because it's, it's been damaging to her.

Okay!?

Potentially! I don't know!

And I think that's quite interesting that you mention as well and you mention, and you mention that, and that stands out for me umm you said that it sounds like she's trying to deny her sexuality, her femininity almost. Does it feel like that for you?

Ja! Ja that's, there's a, there's lots here where she, where she builds her femininity up. This 'Rid Of Me' one umm she talks a lot about her legs and, and, and the, the, the feminine err umm aspect of her but at the same time she is very derogatory about it. She, she, she illustrates how she used her sexuality and then also how it was also used against her, umm hence the anger I think.

Alright, how do you feel about that, about the fact that she's umm, that she's uncomfortable if II can put it that way, how do you feel about her feeling uncomfortable about her femininity and maybe trying to be more masculine?

I think it's quite sad! I think umm…

How sad? Tell me a little bit about that?

Well whenever I think of somebody who denies something that is so intrinsic to them umm I think that, that is quite sad. I, I umm think of people who go through sex change

operations, umm I think of people who are umm violently opposed to, to certain aspects of their person that they would do something as drastic as a sex change operation to change it. That's quite sad! Here's she's doing the same thing! Not physically cutting herself, physically changing herself but she's angry at her sexuality and she's angry at potentially even the role that society has placed on her. Umm and she's trying to gain power by umm denying those things and thinking that the masculine is, is the correct way to achieve it. Umm I think that's flawed but that's you, I'm not her!

It also sounds like what you're saying is maybe for you personally what she's saying doesn't sit well with you!?

Definitely not! I think, look, it's not that it turns me off or anything umm…

You understand that she's a performer and she's allowed to say these things!?

She can say whatever it is, if she was Madonna and she had cone-shaped boobies on a, on a stage and she was sucking err priest on a cross etc, etc. Umm, umm but as an artist she's allowed to express herself and she's found a way that expresses how umm she feels that the word is for her and that's okay.

But for you personally it saddens you that she, that she maybe feels so hostile towards her femininity!?

Through her own self! The hostility she's experiencing is against herself umm…

And that's quite sad hey!?

Mmm! Mmm!

Okay, alright! Umm okay and I think this repetitive cause I think you have answered it and you can tell me if you have or you'd like to build on. Umm but I guess these questions are more to kind of elicit more information and to get a deeper sense of what you're feeling and what you're thinking. Umm what was most striking for you err when you read her lyrics?

I think I've already answered that! It's the anger that she's feeling, it's the fact that she's trying to turn herself into something that's umm more masculine in the hopes that being more masculine would mean that she has more defences and is more powerful and stronger which is not necessarily the case and that I think is a sad thing. Umm and yet she's denying herself and that is sad but she's idealised something to the point that she believes that if she did this she would be better of. Umm which in my opinion is fundamentally flawed.

This may seem like maybe a silly question and maybe you'd feel like I'd have to know her to answer this but maybe you could just hypothesise. Umm what do you think would make her want to umm, umm to sort of devalue this feminine side and idealise this masculine umm side or this masculine sort of persona and want to

pursue it so strongly? Like what would you think would make her want to do that or is there something that would make her want to do that?

I suspect I've already answered that too because I think that as I said she's, she's probably been hurt because that comes through in the lyrics…

Hurt in what way? Tell me!

Well repeatedly, somebody used her or repeatedly she's been used for her sex umm and she's from the sound of it feels weakened by it that she feels as if she's umm because she's a woman she can be taken advantage of and I think that's, that's what comes through the most is that she's, she's been used and, and umm yes she is used at times but when she does that, when she says that there are, there are places that indicate that she felt tenderness towards the person that used her and that, that had been used against her. Umm hypothesising of course!

If I'm hearing you correctly it also sounds like you're saying that it's sad that umm, it's sad that her perception or her idea of what it means to be a woman is that women maybe are victimised so that women are hurt or maybe that women are in a position where they don't have much power!? It sounds like that!?

Yes! Yes! Umm and although that is true umm women are very often umm the victims of, of a variety of things umm there's also a lot to be said about the emancipated woman and for the woman who's capable of thinking, who's a capable, thinking rational person. Umm those people tend to do quite well umm women who, who find themselves in situations where they can not escape from a, from whatever reason umm from my experience are people who start doubting themselves and start devaluing their own humanity.

And I guess it's, that's what I'm hearing you say as well is that umm it sounds like you're saying that it would be nice if she could write about that and see that there, that they're other reasons to appreciate being a woman. Umm not necessarily the fact that women are oppressed or maybe that women are powerless or weak maybe, maybe for whatever reason that she does feel this way umm in that community or that context or whatever but it saddens you that it almost seems so one dimensional and that it doesn't seem more broader for her…

Mmm! Mmm!

…where she can appreciate her feminine side!?

Exactly!

Umm I wonder if you can describe umm how it is you felt when, when you read her work? Was it one feeling, did the feeling change umm and that's in response to certain songs of if you can just tell me how you felt generally?

Umm I felt a sense of sadness because she's gone through from the sound of it is terrible and unfortunately umm I've known people who've had to go through similar situations. I think she's, some of it to be honest I found a bit amusing because there, the imagery is amusing umm and she has err, err, err tone of phrase which is, which is really interesting umm I like that she umm she can express her emotion quite succinctly. Umm which in some of Liz Phair's stuff I, I, I thought she was buried some of the stuff that she was feeling and here it's just very much being held up to view. Umm…

Umm maybe one of the differences between this and Liz Phair is that Liz Phair's maybe had a sense of humour in it although you could sense the sadness and the hurt but the humour was more pronounced and maybe you're saying if I'm hearing you correctly is that the humour was defending against the sadness of the hurt where as with PJ Harvey you get a sense that err, there's some hurt here but you also get a playful side, a humorous side but it's not so pronounced as Liz Phair!?

Mmm! Mmm! And PJ Harvey sounds, seems angrier!

Okay!?

Err maybe the hurt went deeper I don't know but the, the, the…

So that's another difference for you!?

Ja!

So there's more anger in this one!?

Ja!

As opposed to!?

Ja! Also there's, there's here there's are err, err something which was not in Liz Phair's. There's, there's lyrically phrases that get repeated often which is not the case in Liz Phair's and, and the things that get repeated here are the, the, the most umm emotional phrases. Umm the one's like 'You're no rid of me' or 'don't you wish you never met her' or those kinds of things are, are, are and it's very clear that umm…

She's trying to say something!?

She's trying to say something that's very painful to say!

Okay, alright! Okay I think…

Let me rephrase that, she's saying what is, she's not trying to say, she is saying!

Right! Umm and I think you've quite nicely I think introduced that by, by, by starting to compare this to Liz Phair and that's one of my next questions is umm and I think you've answered a little bit of it now umm well you have mentioned.

But I wonder if you could tell me umm what makes, what makes Liz Phair's more appealing than PJ Harvey's, not so much than Liz Phair's personally?

What makes Liz Phair's more, more, more appealing than PJ Harvey's!?

Mmm!

Umm it's better written, better poetry, it's as simple as that!

Why?

Because you'll find that the repetition of a lyric in music makes the, the, the sound better. In this case umm the repetition, reading it as is doesn't really work that way. I found Liz Phair's better written.

Alright, okay! That's interesting! I wonder if I could ask you then if you could think about the content of what they wrote, is Liz Phair's still more appealing or does it still hold for you more than PJ Harvey's?

Yes! Yes!

And why is that? Tell me! What makes Liz Phair's content err more appealing to you than PJ Harvey's?

I can't remember all of it but umm because it was better written it, I received it better umm…

I wonder, I think you mentioned something very interesting and I wonder it this maybe the reason why you're reacting this way. Umm you said that PJ Harvey feels a little bit more raw as opposed to Liz Phair. Liz Phair's maybe seems to be more disguised in humour and I wonder if maybe if that's not all but maybe for most people reading this kind of stuff umm dealing with that sort of raw emotion is not so easy and not, it's not pleasant when, when, when you're dealing with someone's raw emotion like that. It doesn't go down quite well, it doesn't go down quite easy. So I suppose maybe Liz Phair is more easier because the humour sort of err naturalises it and makes it a bit more err 'oh well you've got issues, you've got problems but you know you're dealing with it, you're sort of managing it' and one gets the sense that PJ Harvey's the emotion is just too raw you know, it's just too much at the surface and 'no! I don't wanna deal with it! You deal with it! You can come back and talk to me when you've dealt with it' almost kind of thing. Maybe, is one of the reasons that you can think of maybe that makes err Liz Phair more appealing than PJ Harvey's or are there other reasons?

(Smiles, almost laughs) I don't know! Umm I, I think Liz Phair is more accessible because it's less blunt. Umm I think she umm, do you know whether they wrote the lyrics? Did…

(Nodding my head)

Okay, umm I think…

All of them have been written by just them, they didn't co-write anything.

Okay umm I think that the quality of the writing umm in Liz Phair's case means also that she doesn't come out and say something. She says it in a certain way, very specific way which is lacking here umm in umm…

So this one lacks err umm…

Lacked subtlety! In err umm**,** umm in, in this one's case the, the imagery is very visceral, umm in your face. Umm purposefully I believe but umm…

Does this one also feel a little bit vague?

No!

It doesn't feel vague!?

No! Umm it's very, very clear in what she's trying to say! Umm…

Does it feel incoherent, the way it's written, the style in which it's written, a bit jarring?

Well things are very different from place to place! Umm and I suspect that's purposeful too because this is illustrative of her emotional state.

Right!?

Umm…

And again the, the sense is that, that's a highly individual kind of err action or feeling, if you're communicating something across to someone else it's gonna be difficult for that person to receive it because…

Yes!

Because it's so visceral and because it is so idiosyncratic or whatever! Umm and maybe umm that maybe a reason as to why this may be difficult to sort of digest almost!?

Mmm! I don't consider this difficult to digest! Really it's umm…

Okay!?

Umm, but it's, it's, there's almost a feeling that err umm she's trying very hard to elicit a, a, an emotional response in whoever it is, is listening or reading.

Is that the sense that you get?

Ja! Sometimes almost a bit too much!

Okay

Umm…

And I suppose that makes you wonder what's her emotional status like!?

Mmm!

If you're trying so hard to elicit this kind of feeling in someone, what are you like on the inside!?

Mmm!

What's going on inside and maybe that's worrying, that's quite concerning!?

Mmm! Umm well it is something that you then become aware of. Umm…

Is that a good or bad thing?

A bad thing! Because now you're starting to wonder about her motives behind telling you this.

Okay!?

Umm and umm…

When she's trying so hard to make you feel a certain way, it almost feels like maybe she's provoking her, her reader or listener or audience in some way!?

Mmm! Mmm! Exactly, exactly!

Okay so maybe she's trying to taunt, trying to tease, to anger maybe!?

I'm not so sure anger but maybe she's, she's trying to communicate something umm and it's as if the best thing she knows how is to umm ram something down your throat in as umm unambiguous way as possible! And that's slightly off putting because she's, she's, it's, it's as if she's trying, she's just simply trying too hard!

And that doesn't sit well with you!?

No! I'm, I suspect that umm subtlety would get somebody further with me than, than, than…

In your face, kind of…!?

Ja!

Umm anything else you wanna add?

Mmm! No I think I've covered more or less everything.

Okay maybe quickly you could tell me briefly what you liked and what you disliked.

Off!?

PJ Harvey!

Umm a lot of the emotion is honest but at the same time it's overdone and, and, and umm that makes me question her motives.

So you appreciate her honesty and the fact that she's trying to be sincere err but maybe it becomes a bit overbearing!?

Mmm!

And you don't like that!?

Mmm!

Okay, you wanna add anything else?

(Nods to indicate no)

Alright so you've seen images of PJ Harvey and Liz Phair, would you like to comment briefly on err, just comment generally on err, on Liz Phair's pictures first.

Okay, firstly, first impression is that, that she's a lot more feminine umm she's also sexualised, many of the pictures are of a sexual nature. Umm and she is using her femininity here. The comparison I would then draw to umm PJ Harvey is, she is not sexual at all! She's asexual that, that one for example…

The one with the sunflower!?

Ja! Even, even this one, where she, and that ties in with what I said about her lyrics.

Okay, umm would you say that PJ Harvey, would say that Liz Phair's pictures are congruent with what you just read? Did you expect to get this sort of, this image?

I'm trying to remember what I read. I can't remember her lyrics very well but from what I could remember from the imagery yes and no! There's more…

What's congruent and what's not congruent?

What's not congruent for me is here she seems like a very wholesome young woman who's, who has no, no mental illness whatsoever and umm she's, she's completely comfortable with her sexuality and with her place in the world. Umm what's congruent with PJ Harvey's photo is umm…

Well what's congruent with Liz Phair cause you said there's some and there's some not? So you've told me what's not congruent, what is congruent if you think about, if you can remember?

I can't!

Okay, well lets go to PJ Harvey, what's congruent and what's not congruent with what you read?

Umm what's not congruent for me is almost a more difficult question to answer than what is congruent, what is congruent is that she, from her lyrics she disassociates herself from her sexuality. She is umm trying to not be sexual , that's clear in ever image. Umm her, what, I'm trying to think of what's not congruent, there's well, there's for example this is not a picture of an angry woman umm this is a picture of somebody who's maybe asexual but not angry. All the others are of somebody who is quite angry. Umm ja she's not happy anywhere! Umm…

Okay so that's also what's congruent, there's not one picture where you can sense or feel that this is a happy woman!?

Hmm mmm! Here she's vaguely content but umm one would say that if you looked at the picture and you hadn't read any of her lyrics umm, I don't know maybe this was in the early stages of the, the relationship that she's been singing about. You never know!

Okay! Umm anything else you wanna add about what you saw, what struck you umm what was particularly striking or not?

She has very old eye's and a lot of sadness (referring to PJ Harvey)

Okay!?

Umm (long pause, thinking) and here she's almost, the immediate that I came up with…

In the leopard bathing suit with the stop sign behind her!?

Ja!

Ja!?

Is 'I'm over here! Come use me!' Umm and I don't know if she's wearing a diaper or not but she looks almost as if she is. Umm and everything is, is very negative!

Alright! That's an interesting word. So too negative hey!?

Ja, I, I err I would ask myself what is she being negative about umm and from reading the lyrics I know what she's being negative about. Umm but everywhere her she's breaking herself down, which is, it's quite sad actually. Umm the Liz Phair one's umm okay that's a very interesting picture umm and you can see it in her eyes. She's teasing you. Umm in fact that's what she does! She teases! Umm because each one of them is, is a teasing picture and she knows what she's doing. It's almost as if in the PJ Harvey one, she's out of control and doesn't have control that this one (Liz Phair) has. Either that or this one (Liz Phair) has learnt how to control, umm manipulate because she's manipulating the camera in each one of these! In the one her boobs are popping out, in the other one she's umm suggestively holding a bottle here she's posing for the camera in a, in a pose that almost tells me that umm 'take me seriously! I'm an artist!' and in this one she's again sexualising the image, she's trying to entice. Umm ja very different women!

Very different women!?

Mmm!

So not similar hey!?

Hmm mmm!

Ws their pictures, this may be a silly question but would you be able to say that you like PJ Harvey's pictures more or Liz Phair's pictures more or, or maybe even it's not even a question of that, but I don't know!?

I think these are, that, PJ Harvey's is disquiet because she is umm, there's a lot depth in what she, in what she's trying to display. And she's displaying a lot of umm not anger even, fear! Maybe caused by anger. Umm interestingly enough for me though Liz Phair's I think display more fear! Because she's, she's learnt how to manipulate, and people only manipulate when they are scared, when they feel there is something to be scared of. Umm in PJ Harvey's maybe it's gone beyond that by now and she reached a stage where it's umm she's been used, she's been trodden upon, she's now umm reached a point where she's disassociating from her body and from her sexuality and as a consequence she is, is umm publishing images like these. In Liz Phair's case she hasn't gone to that level yet. I say yet because she might. Umm…

So maybe there's a different maturity with these women as well!?

Hmm mmm!

Maybe…

Maybe! Maybe!

One maybe more mature than the other!?

It depends on how you define maturity!

Mmm! That's right! That's right! Okay! Anything else you wanna add or are you okay with that?

I'm okay with that.

Alright cool!

Transcript for participant #4

What are some of the music groups and singers that you enjoy listening to?

Creed, Linken Park, I like rock, any kind of music, besides umm… I don't listen to classical.

Why is it that you enjoy listening to these musicians?

Umm I like different genres of music, you know. I think so. I don't like Beyonce. She screams too much.

What are the types/kinds/genres/styles of music that you listen to?

I like Rap, some type of Soul as well. With Rap there's a lot of meaning, compared to these other rappers who rap about their cars, girlfriends and all that. So ja, Rap I like. Also Bob Marley, I'm not quite sure what you refer to it… reggae music! That's also nice.

Could you tell me roughly the amount of time you spend listening to music?

I only listen to music when I go to work, or when I'm at work. Very little, normally at night cause you think a lot if you don't listen to any music, compared to when you're driving and listening to music the whole day, so sometimes at night, but not during the day.

So how many hours would you say you spend listening to music day?

Hour!

Where are the places that you find yourself listening to music?

Clubs! And umm my girlfriends car.

What are the specific things about music that you enjoy i.e. the beat, lyrics, videos, images, the style of the artist etc?

It used to be beats, but err then this new, in the last ten years or so music videos, where you enjoy the sexy female singers in the videos as well, and the lyrics, Rap specifically, the lyrics and the beat.

So it sounds like you enjoy many things about music, you like the beat, and the lyrics.

And in the last couple of years the girls in the music videos.

So the images as well hey!

Yeah.

Do you find yourself listening to male or female musicians?

Umm, soul female, but Rap male. The groups, I like Creed and Linken Park, so boy groups or guys, men so, but female groups no.

So it sounds like your taste lies more with male musicians but you do listen to female musicians.

Yeah I do.

Do your friends and family share the same taste in music as you do?

My parents are into the old stuff, Percy Sledge and that type of music, and my friends as well, about the same music.

So do you like the music they listen to?

Ja, ja, we listen to the same music. Ja

How often do you buy music?

I only started buying music when I met my girlfriend Anansa, otherwise I download it, or get it from friends as well.

Do you find that if you really like a singer that you will buy their music?

No, normally I like one or two songs, so I won't, I think it's a waste to buy a CD, so I may as well download the song.

What do you think about women who perform music?

Yeah I like it (reluctantly reply). It's nice. But there's some of them that just go to the extreme, so basically sell their bodies. They sell their bodies basically in order to sell their music. Especially with the music we listen to, there's no, there's no talent. They're using… sex! You can put it, they use sex to sell umm music. That's why I tend to listen more to the men. Because we can't use that, sex, very little. Because you have to have talent in order to sell the music. Because another guy, you see like when they buy music

So you have in music that women have increasingly relying on sex to sell their music?

Yes!

And it sounds like sometimes it upsets you?

It doesn't upset me. It's cheap. You wanna… they try…that's why they don't last long. They last a couple of months until a better looking girl comes along, and start listening to her again.

So with women who perform music it becomes more about sex than it becomes about making music?

Yeah. That's right, that's why they're music doesn't last long, people only listen to it for a couple of months, and forget about them.

Tell me, what do you think about women who make their music about sex?

Its just cheap because… I don't know. They won't, don't realise it now but when they get older then they will start realising it, when they've got children and how their children see what kind of music or what they did in order to sell their… then they will start effecting them. It doesn't affect me in any way. Yeah. Just… it doesn't affect me.

So it sounds like you're thinking about the message these women are sending out… (Interrupted)

You see, it's also the younger girls, they see that it's the way to go, so they also starting to do it. In previous years they never used to do that, it was all about soul and talent, your Whitney Houston and those type of people, now you getting all these other crappy girls singing, and all the young girls as well as, they follow them, thinking it's the right way. But they don't last long at all.

So you're also saying that women who rely on sex in their music don't really last long in the music industry?

No, no they don't last long. I can't name anyone one about five years ago, I can only name one or two. There's Beyonce…

Maybe you can tell me why women have increasingly started to use sex in their music or started relying so heavily on sex in their music?

Because men are gullible (giggles), we buy it, we go for it because that's what we like it, besides that our girlfriends also listen to that shit, so now if our girlfriends like it and we listen to it, we tend to buy it for them cause they like. Cause guys also like it cause they see all the bodies… friends are also listening to it so you will also listen to it. Its just an ongoing thing.

Its almost like that becomes the way to sell your music, to make it about sex because (interrupted)

You see, a lot of girls, they, they envy all these artists.

You mean girls in the public?

Ja, in the public, start envying or imitating these artists. So now they start listening to the music, buying the stuff, dressing the way they do, that's why you can see the way girls dress these days. It never used to be like this, say ten years ago. Young girls dressing almost naked, because they trying to imitate what, because they think its cool, because Beyonce and all these other girls are doing it, so now they are doing it. Because they think its acceptable in society.

What do you think of it? Do you feel like… um you mentioned something very interesting which I've umm… which struck me, you said that "it doesn't really affect me" What do you mean by that? When you say that does it mean that you accept it, you don't accept it?

It doesn't affect me personally me because I really don't care about what other people do, but it can affect us as a race. Not in the future, it's actually affecting us now, in the way our children are brought up. And it's only going to affect them negatively because they think… they all going the wrong way.

Why do you think it doesn't affect you now? Do you think because of your age perhaps it doesn't affect you, cause you're still young?

Ja, Its eye candy for me, so I don't mind it, but if I think further…

Do you think your opinion would be different if maybe you had a family, if you had a daughter?

Ja, if I had a son thy he must also like watching it, but the daughter… The thing is if I had a girl I would have felt different because I wouldn't buy her the music but umm, if her friends start listening to it then she is also going to start listening it, the she also wants to wear the type of clothes. It's just going to get worse, that's why you get these young girls, 12, 11, 10, 13, having children because they, because wearing this type of clothes boys get stimulated, because they see girls moes naked, and that's when it starts. They get pregnant, and it starts from there.

So you almost feel like it's a cycle that keeps on repeating itself?

Ja, and its not only music, it's a lot of other things as well. One of the big contributors is T.V, music videos, because with music, look it all depends what music it is, the lyrics. But err a lot of the artists you can just hear what they are singing about sex, just sex, everything is about sex. And with the music videos as well girls see that, and they think that's the way to get guys. To make guys want you, that's when they start imitating these people.

That's quite interesting cause I asked you what you think about women who perform music and you said what you've noticed is that women who perform music rely very heavily on sex (interrupted)

Yeah. That's not all of them, but the majority. This groups, and young, new girls coming out now. There's very few of the artists that keep on their clothes! That perform, but the majority of them they, they, they, you see what they are wearing and what they are singing about its just…

So it's not so much about the music but more about the sex.

Ja.

Could you maybe describe to me the qualities that female artists have that make you enjoy listening to them? What would make you enjoy listening to a female artist? Maybe list some of the qualities?

Its in the voice, they must have…

Tell me a little about that.

Its not all about the image, its also about what they are singing about, its also the voice that attracts you to want to listen to them. Besides the beat, the voice umm what's umm Sade, I don't know if you heard about her, she's got a different voice compared to Mariah Carey, Beyonce and that type of people, just something different.

So an artist like Sade appeals to you?

Ja because of the voice and the way she sings. And Whitney Houston also has a beautiful voice, but when you start listening to all these other artists they all sound the same.

Are there any other qualities of female artists that make you enjoy listening to them like you mentioned Sade, are there any other reasons why you like Sade besides her voice?

Cause its nice mellow music. But I also like Creed and Linkin Park but that's now men groups, but the voice is different compared to this N*Sync and Backstreet Boys.

So you like something that sounds distinct?

Ja, something that's just a little bit raw you know! Something that's stands out.

I would like you to identify some female musicians you dislike.

Beyonce number one, Pussycat Dolls, they, just watch their music, they just sell sex. Umm Lil' Kim. She's a rapper, there's a lot hey!

Why don't you like these musicians?

They, they just sell their music with sex. Especially that Pussycat Dolls. You must just see them. They sing/rap about how they can get men, using their bodies, and how they can seduce men you know, and the way they dress as well in their music videos.

When you see them on T.V do you find them attractive?

Those type of girls I don't find attractive. Most of the time when I see them on the T.V channel I change the channel.

So you feel put off from these musicians?

Ja, its not nice, and most of my friends like watching it, because they find them sexy but for me… its… I don't like that type of girls, I swear them off. See I like these other quiet girls that tend, rather to keep on their clothes.

You mentioned something interesting as well, you said these, or rather musicians like that who kind of use their bodies almost to seduce men, or you mentioned similar to that. So they actually, maybe using men, or something like that to further their career.

Ja, men are gullible, if there's a beautiful girl we see. The men are so... they watch this music video, and besides listening to what they are singing about, it's just the bodies and everything, and then they start to like it, because they associate it, the good looks to good music. They associate sex and good looks with, and you must listen to the crap they sing about.

This maybe a personal question, and you don't have to answer it umm have you had an experience were you went through something were maybe you were with a pretty girl or you found yourself in a situation were maybe some that was really beautiful took advantage of you because of her beauty, or maybe you were found yourself blinded by it.

I had a beautiful girlfriend before Anansa umm she used to like, what's this… I think it was Jennifer Lopez. She always used to get all of the attraction when she used to go to a club or wherever, all of the attention. She always got everything. But now she had this image of, she always wanted to be like Jennifer Lopez. She was never, how can I put it, she always thought she was better than other girls, cause she had the looks, because she… She was same like Jennifer Lopez cause she had the looks and she had the advantage above the other girls, and that's where she used to get all the attention from the guys. She thought that's were real beauty lies but that's not true. Its not there. And we broke up after wards, but I don't think that's influenced the way I feel.

Its just that maybe you can see how some men can be so foolish over a girl who is beautiful.

Beautiful ja.

Especially when she's not saying much and she is just using her body.

Ja they don't last long, cause the body can only be young for so long, about 20 years and then…

Are you familiar with either P.J Harvey or Liz Phair?

No.

That's alright. I have some pages that have some of the lyrics to the songs by PJ Harvey and Liz Phair, five lyrics each. I would like you to read them and we can discuss them further.

Cool.

Would you like to comment on what you have just read?

Sounds like a lonely girl. Sounds like she's umm she's talking or singing about her experiences that maybe she went through. Not good at all. I think that err she got mixed up with the wrong guys at a really young age. And I think she's got all this hatred that she's trying to get out of her.

I think it's interesting that you said "sounds like a lonely girl"

Ja.

Okay

Because I don't think she was happy at this moment or if she had someone she wouldn't have made music like this. She would've… maybe… maybe, probably she is making music about mistakes that she made when she was younger, found the right one now and speaking of love.

So what you've read speaks about someone who's been through something difficult with men.

Ja, in the beginning. She got mixed up with the wrong men! Maybe they used her, lied to her, err umm and yeah… she's scarred now!

Scarred!?

Ja, sounds like someone who is scarred.

What was most striking for you when you read her lyrics?

Okay the one where it's happening to me again, I never thought it will happen again, Slept with the same guy, maybe wanted love or she thought it was love. Afterwards she found out realised this guy wasn't what she expects, and she never thought it would happen again. I'll tell you that happens with a lot of girls! I know and I've seen! They think its love but the guy is only using them.

Okay so it sounds like you can understand maybe why she says that!?

Ja!

Okay! Alright, that's interesting, umm maybe can you describe for me some of the feelings you experienced with regards to what you just read or what it, maybe if you can think back now, if you can maybe just think back to what was it you were feeling when you were reading this, when you were reading her lyrics?

Like I don't know if its directly like the same, previously I had a lot of girls or I met a lot of girls and umm I was interested in them but not to date them and they understood that but they, they, they almost used sex, they though that if they have sex with me or, or with other guys as well then maybe their guys will feel close to them, and maybe they will appreciate them more and maybe date them. But it never used to happen, the guys will have to make it clear to her 'I wasn't into dating' and they understood. If they had sex maybe two weeks or three weeks down the line then they start talking about relationships and other things. So I think they use sex in order to, they think it helps, if you have sex with a guy it will make the bond stronger or ja you would want them more. But that doesn't happen, it doesn't happen a lot.

Okay, so, so it sounds like you felt sad when you read this a little bit hey!?

Ja for the girls I felt sad, cause you know how many times I spoke to the girls telling them that, that err umm and this is my, from only coloured girls now I'm talking about, that you don't need sex, you don't need to have sex with a guy in order for a guy to like you or to love you. That all takes time, rather wait but now because they see all this umm stuff on TV regarding sex and err umm how happy these girls are when they see that happiness that is what they want but its not actually what happens.

Did you find yourself maybe feeling other things like maybe disgust or anger or, or was it just mainly feeling sadness for you?

No! I could understand why she's, why she's, I don't know, I would have liked to have listened to the song but err umm the words…

You think that would change…

…Ja, no maybe the way she sings about it, maybe if she likes this type of stuff, in the words she starts to sound like a sad girl but maybe when she sings she likes this stuff I guess, you know. Maybe she likes it, and maybe that would turn my perception off.

But when read these off the page they communicate to you a girl who is sad!?

Ja sad, a girl who went through a difficult time and when she was younger.

And so it makes you feel sad as well!?

Ja! (Says this in almost a reluctant way)

Cause you can see what she's writing about hey!?

Same things now its happening to a lot of girls but they not realising it because they think they are smart and they know it all. It happens everyday, I see it happen. So I can, I can understand why she is the way she is.

Okay, does it feel like when you read this…

The think with this is now the first or this other two songs…

You can comment on specific ones if you want!

The two ones, the other songs sound sad but this 'Flower' song…

Yeah, tell me about the 'Flower' song"

This one sounds like she likes it, she wants it!

Okay!

Like she wants to, to, to…

She wants to feel loved!?

Ja! I don't know about love, she wants sex, she wants the, the, the you to now really…

What feelings do you get from her when, when…

Okay this one, the other one she sounds like a sad girl going through a bad time. But this one, 'Flower' girl changes my perception a little bit, I'll have to listen to this song so I can, but the 'Flower' song now…

Makes you think that maybe she likes it!?

Ja, the lyrics in this one, so I don't know!

Was there anything that you particularly liked or disliked about what you just read or basically what did you like and what did you dislike about what you read? You can either start with the like or dislike.

It doesn't effect me in a way so. This music doesn't effect my life personally so there's nothing I like or don't like. I felt sad for her in the first couple of songs umm but there's nothing that maybe turns you on about what I read because I'm used to most of this stuff that she's talking about here.

How do you understand or make I apologise if some of these questions are repetitive or maybe if they feel like I'm repeating but just to get more of a sense of your response to this okay. Err how do you understand or make sense, how do you make sense of what you just read no?

Like I said err a sad girl! Bad past…

Its interesting as well because you told me that, that when you read this you thought of about all the girls you've spoken to maybe in your community or your area or whatever and it made you think about them hey!?

Ja they ja…

So that's how you made sense of it!?

They, that's why they, and that's why I feel, that's why I think I'm, the first girlfriend I've loved is Anansa my own girlfriend because she was totally the opposite of all of them or how they were. And maybe that's, that's the reason why I was attracted to her because she didn't, you see these girls they, they think sex is the answer to everything as soon as they have sex everything will get better, you'll love them or that's what solves their problems is sex. And it's not! And that's not the case with Anansa, and I think that's why I loved her because she's more open minded, she, she maybe sees the world for what it really is, because these other girls. And don't know if this girl is educated but this tends to happen to these girls more, so they've got the money.

The girl writing this music, just based on what you've read, on what she's written and, and what you're reading what she's, just based on that without even hearing her music or looking at her, would you date a girl like this?

Err no! Scarred! She's scarred! I'd maybe, if I see maybe how I could help her, cause everyone makes mistakes. And she was very scarred, got involved with the wrong guys then I would maybe, in the beginning I'll feel sad for her, I'll try to help her and I don't know maybe love her and then afterwards maybe. But this other one the 'Flower' song, you telling me she wants all this stuff, no! It sounds slutty! This 'Flower' song! Maybe that's why I won't date that girl but that, the other songs that she sang where she sounds sad maybe like I said scarred, wrong guys, maybe she is a nice girl, just through. Met the wrong guy!

Umm again this question maybe be repetitive but can you tell me some specific qualities you think describe what you just read?

What do you mean specific qualities now?

Specific qualities of what you just read now, of the musician of what you just read.

Specific qualities!

Hmm mmm! What qualities would a person have to have to write stuff like this?

Oh ja! You can see she's, she's young, she's got a lot of hatred, a lot of hatred!

Okay so she's angry!?

Sounds angry and this other guys most probably, she doesn't like speaking about it to other people but this is a way of bringing out the pain by writing it down, the music. But she sounds like a very sad that…

Angry, sad, hurt, lonely hey!?

Lonely is one of them!

Okay that's fine! Okay cool.

Would you like to comment on what you just read here from PJ Harvey.

This sounds like a crazy guy! I don't know what's wrong with this guy! Something…

It sounds like a guy!?

It does, it sounds like a guy he's singing about, and then afterwards maybe I thought it's a guy that's gay who's singing about queen here the whole time. So I don't know! Weird guy! Is it a guy or a girl?

No it's a female singing, her name is PJ Harvey, Polly Jean Harvey.

It sounds like a guy!

Okay, so the way she writes…

Is she a lesbian!?

She's straight!

Straight!

Okay so it sounds, very interesting…

Ja but this is what guys would say!

Why?

'Lick me', this is not normal hey!

Okay why do you say it sounds like a guy wrote this and not a girl?

This looks like a, the first one looks like a…

Okay so the 'Rid of Me' one!?

Ja umm that I read was sounded like err a guy that didn't wanna let his girl go.

Okay!?

Maybe…

But why a guy though and not a girl?

I don't know!

The feeling that you get is that it's a guy!?

Ja! This is not characteristic of what a girl would say, it's more like a guy, it's sounds like a guy, a crazy guy!

A crazy guy!?

Ja!

And tell me more about this crazy guy, like would he be err like possessive…

Ja! Possessive ja! Type of guy that maybe umm got hurt with a girl and now maybe this is his second girl that he's got now, now his trying to…

He doesn't want to let go of her!?

Ja! You said it's a girl, now a female singer so it sounds like a guy who would rather kill the girl than let her go. Ja!

Okay so it sounds like what you've just read is very confusing!?

Ja! (Laughs)

Because it sounds like in your head you, you've understood that this is maybe a guy who wrote this but when you're told that it's a girl and she's straight it maybe makes things more difficult for you to understand what you've just read. You wonder about her, you wonder maybe if she's really crazy!?

She doesn't sound normal! Normal at all!

She doesn't sound normal at all! What was most striking for you when you read PJ Harvey's lyrics?

I don't know! It's a lot of, of, this last thing umm 'I'll rather…' where's it (Looking for lyric)

Yes!? Legs!?

'…I might as well be dead but I could kill you instead' (Laughs a bit)

Okay tell me about that?

Ja so I'm like why, 'I'll rather, I'll rather die than be err without you!' 'I'll rather die than let you go!'

I'd rather kill you than let you go with someone!?

Ja! I'd rather kill you than let you go with someone!

It doesn't sound like a woman would write that hey!?

Ja! It's normally a guy! And now that it's a girl its even crazier!

It sounds like a crazy girl!? Okay! Can you describe how you felt when you, when, when you read PJ Harvey's lyrics?

This isn't…

What were you feeling inside when you were reading these lyrics?

Ja I was confused!

You were confused!?

Ja!

So that's okay!?

I didn't know…

Were you angry or a bit shocked?

Like I said in the beginning sounds like a guy that, a possessive guy, so then I don't know. She's all confusing cause this is not the type of music I would listen to.

Okay so this is not the kind of music that you would listen to!?

Ja! I don't know. I don't know what to make of this lyrics.

So you don't know what to make of it!?

I don't!

Especially when you hear that it's a woman, and she's a straight woman hey!?

A straight woman, yeah! (Laughs)

So maybe what you're trying to tell me is you could sort of picture a guy in your head who would write this but you can't picture a girl and the qualities she would have to have to write this, maybe you're thinking that if a girl wrote this she must be mentally ill!?

Yeah, I don't know! Maybe I need to read it again to understand it better.

Ja you can! You can do that.

Okay so maybe again you can comment on what you just read?

Okay, when I read it now for the second time it sounds like maybe this girl, this guy lied to her. Slept with her, used her, promised her the world and then he dumped her and now maybe the girl is trying to get back at him or something. Compared to the other artist she doesn't feel hatred.

So this is someone who is very angry!?

She feels angry and she's not gonna let it go. The other artist it was, she felt sorry, this one feels like she's gonna get this guy back.

Okay, so she sounds dangerous!?

Ja! (Agreeing very strongly)

She, she sounds like she's holding a grudge!?

Ja! She's not gonna let this guy go!

So she's gonna hurt him back!?

Ja! Well that's what it sounds like.

What was most striking for you when read PJ Harvey's lyric's?

Like she's mixing it up. Like a mix between a boy and a girl.

What do you think of that? Do you think it's creativity or its madness?

It is, she is creative but ja doesn't sound all there as well! Umm I don't know if she really went through this stuff that she's writing. It sounds like she's going to kill this rather than letting him get away with it. But she feels betrayed! Especially in this other one, in this snake song.

Okay she feels betrayed!?

Ja! Crawl between my legs and all this umm, promise her, he must have promised her a lot of stuff and he didn't deliver, but ja she's not gonna let it go just like that.

So it sounds like, like you said she's been promised something or she's, or, or the guy told her this is what I'm gonna give you and he didn't give her!?

Ja! He must have promised her or told her that I love you and…

So he lied to her!?

Ja! Or lied to her. It sounds like he's speaking lies.

And she believed him!?

Ja! Promised her the world, told her that he loves her and promised her the world but after he had sex with, after he used her, he though he could just kick her to the side and get with the other girl.

It sounds like maybe he messed with the wrong girl hey!?

Ja it sounds like it! (Laughs) I don't wanna be that guy! Sounds like a crazy girl that!

Can you describe maybe some of your feelings when you read this, what were you feeling inside? Were you shocked, disgusted, were you angry?

No! (Reluctantly) I can also understand, but from a guys point of view this is, this is a girl that you're really afraid of. Because you get that crazy girls!

So you were scared when you actually read this!?

Yes! (Reluctantly)

From a guys point of view!?

Ja from a guys point of view because these girls they umm maybe I can tell them I like you but they can perceive it different ways when it meant more than what you really said. And now maybe afterwards she gets the wrong idea when you have sex and after a while say a week or so you think now this was casual sex and this girl starts stalking you and calling you., wanting to come and see me and then she's, this type of a girl.

So you would be scared of dating a girl like this!?

Ja no most definitely! Because I don't think this guy dated her, I think he slept with her and err she took it all wrong, or maybe he promised her, I don't know! But with this type of girl it all depends on what he said, he might have said, she might have said, taken it the wrong way. Because I had err not a girl, a friend umm that had this type of girl. He slept with her but it was just casual sex and afterwards this girl called and started threatening him. Telling him that ja if he doesn't umm get her that she might lay a charge on him for rape and all this. You see! They turn out really crazy! And with the law most of the time they assume the guy is wrong, but this type girl could be crazy! Ja I really don't wanna be this guy!

Was there anything that you particularly liked or disliked about PJ Harvey? What things do you like, and what things do you not like?

Actually it's nothing that effects me so, its same like the other songs its not the type of music I listen to. Normally when I hear something I don't like I change the channel. I don't listen to songs and try to make sense of it and then.

But, but its different for you now cause you're not listening you're reading!?

Ja, from what I've read ja! Maybe this guy deserves what's coming to him so…

You feel like this is a woman who wants revenge!?

Ja it sounds like it is. This guy lied to her. You get a lot of guys who do lie and do bullshit and maybe he deserves what's coming to him! I don't feel, I'm just happy its not me! Relieved that its not me! But ja there's nothing that I feel, I don't feel…

Like you particularly like or disliked anything!?

Ja I don't feel. Nothing that…

So you didn't get a strong reaction of liking or disliking this and even the other one!?

Ja! Exactly!

It didn't affect you personally!?

No!

Alright err umm okay then this might be repetitive question but how do you make sense of what you just read now?

I don't know huh!

Did you make sense of it by what you've said, you said that it's a girl who's been hurt, you know who…

The other one (Liz Phair) sounds like a girl who, the previous song, artist, that girl got hurt but this one (PJ Harvey) she feels betrayed! Not hurt! I think she feels betrayed because the guy bullshitted her and she's not gonna let it go. The other one (Liz Phair) feels hurt but this one, there's difference between being hurt and feeling betrayed. And this is not much about, it doesn't sound much about love this one (PJ Harvey) It sounds more about, she's upset about the guy lied to her err umm and now she wants revenge. So I would say this one, this artist (PJ Harvey) she feels betrayed! Now she wants to get this guy back!

Okay so it's interesting that you said, you starting comparing the two because this is what my next question is, can you discuss some similarities or differences between PJ Harvey and Liz Phair? Lets start with similarities, are there any similarities that you personally can identify between PJ Harvey and Liz Phair?

Umm like I say the Liz sounds hurt.

So it sounds like they both went through something that was difficult!?

Ja but the second one I think, I don't think what the second one is feeling has anything to do with love.

What do you think this one is about?

Betrayed! The guy betrayed, I don't know! Maybe in her previous relationships as well guys lied to her, used her for sex or and now she wants to get them back, this girl sounds like she's more…

So PJ Harvey is more angry and Liz Phair is more sad!?

Ja she got hurt!

She was hurt!?

Ja! This one (PJ Harvey) I think betrayed! Umm because there was nothing in her thing that said she loved the guy, where she had any feelings for the guy! That one (Liz Phair) there was still some feelings.

I almost get the sense of what you're saying is what makes these two different is she feels umm maybe guilty for what she does but she doesn't feel guilty for what she does!?

This one sounds like she's, like I don't know what! But this girl she's sad, she was really hurt, taken advantage of and both maybe were taken advantage of but she feels it in a different way, she maybe wanted love but not this one she doesn't sound…

So what did she want? What do you think she wanted?

I don't know! This one honesty maybe!

She wanted honesty!?

Sounds like it! Because it feels betrayed because it, the guy lied to her, she wanted the guy to be honest with her. So that didn't happen as far as I can read here. Anything thing else!?

No that's fine umm…

Alright, so that's okay, so what do you think about these pictures of PJ Harvey and Liz Phair?

Okay Liz Phair first of all, she looks like a beautiful girl okay and I could see why the guys wanted to have sex with her.

And why is that?

Because she's beautiful! But this PJ Harvey chick she just looks crazy! I wouldn't wanna stick with a girl like this as well. She seems, I don't know! She's strange!

What's striking for you about this picture of PJ Harvey?

Her hair, her eyes, just the way she looks, she looks like…

Looks like!?

She doesn't look right. She looks like one of those strange girls, you know those gothic girls!

Okay!

Just the eyes as well! Just look at her!? She doesn't look right hey!? Just look at this picture!? If I had to chose between the girls I'd chose Liz.

Okay, you would definitely chose Liz Phair, okay so what's striking for you about Liz Phair's picture? Or is there anything striking? Or you can't really see that much hey!?

Ja! What is this here? (pointing to PJ Harvey's album cover of 'Rid Of Me') Is this water!? Is she in the shower!?

Uh huh, yeah she's in a bathroom. There's tiles behind her.

Is this the girl that's got all the tattoos on her!?

You mean Amy Winehouse!?

Okay that's different!

Okay, do you think that most people would share your feelings or thoughts on these musicians or that most people are likely not to share the way you maybe felt about these musicians?

I think, I don't know, most of the people they'll think PJ Harvey is a strange person I think. And the one I think most of them will be sad, or, or could relate to, most of the young girls, would be able to relate to Liz. But this other one PJ, she sounds like a really weird girl, strange girl!

Difficult to relate to hey!?

Ja! But I think young girls that went through this stuff they will be able to relate to Liz. Her first three songs, I don't know about the last songs where she talks about sex and all that.

The 'Flower' song!?

Ja! But this other one, I don't know what to make of this Harvey girl!

Okay cool, anything else you wanna add?

No!

You alright!

Ja!

Transcript for participant #5

What are some of the music groups and singer that you enjoy listening to?

Umm I like vocal singers.

Okay so name me a couple that you like?

Umm, they can be male or female!? I like Beyonce, the powerhouse! I like umm Leona Lewis who is actually like…

Okay so you said Beyonce and Leona Lewis. Are there any other singers or music groups?

Fiona Apple, Darren Hayes, Britney Spears, they all vocal! I like that!

What are the types, kinds, genres or styles of music that you listen to?

As I said mainly vocal! And it's nice if its accompanied by soothing music.

So and, have you noticed like a maybe a particular genre that, that those vocal singers come from?

Well if you take Beyonce, you'll take Leona Lewis and you'll take Darren Hayes, they are all different! Well they can go under pop but they are all vocal and they can make a song their own! They don't, there's no like stuck genre. Even if you bring Kelly Clarkson, she's like more country or rock! And you get Beyonce whose more R&B, and Britney to me who's more pop. So as long as they're voice sounds good the it sounds good to me! Cause I can feel that power in a song.

So you don't really listen to a specific genre, as long as the vocals sound good you'll listen to that particular genre.

Yes!

Okay! Err but it also sounds like umm maybe when you like more vocal singers then, maybe you can correct me if I'm wrong, but it sounds like maybe also you like music umm you like a lot of songs that are ballads as well!? Would that be true?

That's because I feel that ballads bring out the vocal! You see when the music is too distracting people pay more attention to the music than the vocal or the music, the video than the vocal! So ballads bring out the vocal more and also the video's for ballads are not that distracting you see.

Alright! Could you tell me roughly the amount of time that you spend listening to music?

On a daily basis!?

It could be, maybe you could quantify daily or weekly or whatever is convenient for you.

I definitely listen to music everyday!

And how long would that be?

I don't have that much time to myself! But I would say hours!

Hours daily, so maybe 1 to 2 hours, 2 to 3 hours daily!?

Okay if I listen to it, just listen to it, then about one hour! Cause I can't go more than that but if I'm watching it I can go more that that..

Okay, interesting! Where are the places that you find yourself listening to music?

In my space! In my room!

Okay in your room!?

Yes! I like to be by myself even when I'm watching TV to be by myself!

So it's almost like for you music is a solitary activity!?

Yes! I don't do it with other people!

So maybe when you're with other people it makes it more distracting to listen to the music and you don't really pay attention…

Ja!

… you're paying attention to that person!?

Cause the artist I listen to I believe require that kind of attention! Well, they take my attention!

Okay, they grab your attention!?

They grab my attention!

Okay, so it sounds like what you're trying to say is that you can't pay attention to the music if other people are around. You can only pay attention to the music yourself!?

Even if I'm at a party and they play a song I like I'd like tell everybody to shut up and not talk!

Okay, alright! Umm what are the specific things about music that you enjoy i.e. is it the beat, the lyrics, the video's, is it the images or the style of the artist?

'Style' meaning vocal style or personal style!?

'Style as in personal style, the image that they kind of fashion for themselves.

Okay!

So maybe you can maybe prioritise those things for me in terms of what you listen to first or do you listen to only 2 things from that for example.

Okay! In terms, well vocals is one of those things! Vocals will be first for me, beat will be second, beats, melodies and all that! I think last would actually be the appearance and I know that appearance says a lot but I feel the voice says more. Okay so you can dress up the person but you can't really dress up the voice. Especially a artist like Fiona

Apple. No matter how she dresses! She dresses like a waif! Like a bag-lady! You know but her voice is definitely, you can feel the emotion in her voice. Its not very visual for me! Its not very visual!

So the image of the artist doesn't effect whether you listen to him or her!?

No!

So the vocals dominate and the beat dominate more than the image, but the image does count sometimes hey!? To what extent does the image count for you? Tell me!

In terms of image it's like Beyonce will sing a song that like 'Diva' (a song by Beyonce) and you expect, you can't expect her to dress like err I don't know, a pop princess! She will dress in a dominant, powerful way!

It fits!?

It fits and it goes like that. So they dress up in their music video's and in real life they probably don't really dress up.

Maybe it sounds like you're saying that the image only enhances the vocal, it gives it more voom!

I feel that the image only exists for advertising purposes! When they take all that make-up and dress and costume away they still have their voices. So that's really important and the, the, the dress is made up, the voice isn't!

So sometimes the image matters especially if they singing about…

Its about the message a song wants to give! That's when dressing will come into play.

Will maybe have to compliment the voice!?

They can dress like a damsel, they can dress like a villain, all of that!

Alright! You comfortable with that or you wanna add anything more?

Yes I wanna talk about all of, the 'Womaniser' video (a song by Britney Spears), all of the different kind of women that Britney Spears portrays. I think that's extremely relevant!

Okay, in what way, tell me more about that!

Well in the video you can see that you know he's womanising other women but she's actually she's everyone of those women in disguise.

You're talking about a specific video!?

Yes, well in general I'm just saying how, how costumes plays a role in all of that, that's important.

Especially in Britney Spears video's or in her video's you're referring to?

Yes!

So you're saying that in terms of some women in their video's umm the costume of the kind of character that they playing umm means something. Is that what you're saying?

Yes! Definitely means something.

And what does that do for it, does it make it more better, does it make it more striking!?

It makes it more understanding and the message becomes more clear.

The message becomes more clear!?

Yes! And messages are very important in terms of music!

Okay so the image can be very important sometimes!?

Yes!

Umm do you find yourself listening to male or female musicians more?

As I've been growing, well when I was young it was more male but as I'm growing up its more female. Now its more female.

More female musicians hey!?

Ja!

Any idea why?

Its easier to relate to a woman cause I am a woman. They know, they talk about 'woman' things, 'woman' feelings, 'woman' emotions and I, nobody can illustrate how a woman feels besides a woman so the pain they feel and the things they go through and the way they express it, it touches me somehow! If a man does it! He won't understand it that much. It's not as powerful.

Umm, do your friends and family share the same taste in music as you do?

Umm we share certain, we like some type of music like the old school music but the, my friends no! My friends listen to very mainstream music, very commercial. So whatever is pop they like it. My family they like good beats more than anything else.

So you're saying sometimes you share similarities with your friends and family but not all the time!?

I would say my friends are more commercial and my family is more with the beat of the music not the words, just the beat! They like the beat.

They like the beat!?

Yes!

Okay, and how much of that do you share?

I'm more with vocals.

So it does differ to your family!?

Yes!

How often do you buy music?

I haven't bought music in a while! Only if I see something that really reaches out to me, that really, I really want it then I will buy it.

Okay so you don't randomly buy music!?

No!

You only buy it if you only like it!?

Ja! Music is therapeutic for me so I won't just buy anything.

It has to speak to you!? Maybe is that what you're saying?

It has to comfort me and I have to be touched! Like I adore Lady Gaga! But I won't go and buy her album! Because it doesn't touch me!

Okay!

I like it! I like how it sounds! I like that she's fresh! I love her! If she comes here I'll pay to go see her! But I won't buy her album!

Okay so it sounds like what you're saying there is that when you listen to music umm sometimes you listen to different things, like you listen to music for the sake of the beat or for the sake of the way it sounds or the way it looks but at the same time it doesn't necessarily mean that umm that's all you like. You like different things about music, that's what you're saying!?

I like the different things it does for me.

Okay, alright! Umm this maybe a vague question right but just at the top of your head, what comes to your mind when I ask you this question, just tell me that right but it maybe vague. So just tell me the first thing that comes to your mind. Umm what do you think about women who perform music?

Like live performance!?

Any kind of performance, if it's live, through a CD, through a video, anything! But it's interesting that you thought about live, is that what sticks out for you?

Cause that's where the audience is there and you can actually see the expression and stuff. I find, I think they are very brave because I feel being in the music especially not mainstream music, especially people who write their own material. Those kinds of artists, they brave for putting their feelings and their talents out there because, off course they in a world, so it's very brave! Especially in terms of sexuality and in terms of real like pain, like when people sing about things like death or rape! They're very brave to come out and make themselves open to the public like that, Especially sexuality and women, it's a very sensitive topic. Especially with our, like with Indians, they don't talk about that so.

So you admire women who perform, especially with…

Especially with my friends and with my family. I find that you can't be open with things like that so when you hear a song that somebody sings about stuff like that you think 'Wow!' Someone is out there, there is someone out there for me. I can relate to something! I'm not alone! You know so you really admire these women for putting their stuff out there cause I wouldn't do something like that.

I wonder if you could please maybe describe to me some of the qualities that female artists have that make you enjoy listening to them?

Off course they're brave and…

So courage and confidence, a sense of…

Courage and confidence! That's definitely empowering for a woman, to see other woman do it, to know woman are capable of doing that.

So you like a strong female performer!?

Yes!

How would you know a strong female performer? Like what would she have to be putting out for you to see 'ok I can see she is a strong female performer' Like how would you know a strong female performer?

Definitely Beyonce! She is a very strong performer cause when she performs a song she will sing them even though it's not what the radio edits are. She will sing it, she will push her voice, she'll push a her limit, she will act anyhow and like will not care when someone can really like, you see their emotion in their body language. And you get a lot of artists like choreograph and you get people who really sing their songs, perform it to you in their own way when there's no choreography where they set the atmosphere. Now I love stmosphere! If there's an atmosphere, like I don't enjoy watching Britney Spears performing so much live because it's all planned, it's like scripted! Like she's been told to do it but when you see someone like Beyonce perform, she, you can feel what she's feeling you know unless she's a really good actress.

So there's a natural-ness to the performer somehow, it speaks to a strength that they have or for being able to bring out that natural side of their performance, that kind of…

Yes! The emotion in their song. I like when they show that side, emotion! You've gotta sing a song with emotion!

What other qualities do you like?

Well I like vivaciousness, feistiness, like cheekyness. I love that! And I actually love that about Lady Gaga. You know 'in your face', daring! That kind of stuff! Go where no woman has gone! Talk about things that no woman talks about! Do things that now woman, I'll use Madonna! She's pushed boundaries and she succeeded and she stayed

true to herself. Them staying true to themselves is so important, especially with the industry telling you how to be! What to do! And yet Fiona Apple as well is true to herself. Madonna! Changes but she's still true to herself! And that's definitely the number one quality!

Okay, so a sense of honesty!? About yourself!?

Yes! Because with females it's very hard!

It's very hard to!?

There's this whole like umm 'be honest about who you are one!' and 'be yourself around people!' because you read female magazines like Cosmo and stuff and thhey'll talk about 'faking it 'til you make it!', 'faking confidence 'til you make it', 'faking you love, sex moves until you make it!', 'faking everything 'til you make!' And some people never make it they just so used to faking it. They forget who they are sometimes.

So it sounds like you're saying women are told to be and told what to do so many times that they lose how it is they should act or feel!?

Yes! And I know my peers, young women that's just entering their twenties! They are the most lost! And they are just so moulded by society, so when you see an artists song, a woman come up and just be herself and famous, it's amazing.

Anything else you wanna add or are you good?

I'm good!

Alright, umm tell me about some of the female artists you enjoy listening to?

Err okay I like Beyonce, I like Lady Gaga, I like Leona Lewis, I like Fiona Apple, umm I like Britney Spears, I love Natalie Imbruglia! I'm listening to her a lot lately and umm ja those are my favourites. Those are people I really take time to listen to. If I hear their I'll stop and I'll listen to it. Most of the others will be 'oh ja! I know this song!'

Is there something similar about these artists that you can find that you like, or is there a common thread between those artists that you like or can identify?

They are all oozing with confidence! They all brake boundaries! Umm, so umm, and they all have powerful voices! I can't say that they all sing about the same thing but they are definitely, I feel the songs are honest. Okay Lady Gaga's sound sexual and I don't mind that about her because she pushed a boundary. Beyonce's songs are empowering! Leona Lewis's are emotional! Fiona Apple's are honest and so plain, she doesn't even care if it rhymes, she just wants to get it out. And Britney is fun! You know happy! Fun!

There's a sense I get when you talk about them, there's a sense of daringness, cause you mentioned that they push the boundary, you know they, they, they go somewhere were someone doesn't go. So there's a sense that they daring!

Yes, all of them!

And you mentioned the word feisty before, there's a feistiness and there's a daring-ness, and a truthfulness that you feel to their performances!?

Ja!

Can we move on?

Ja!

I would like you to identify some female musicians that you dislike?

That I dislike!? I hate Avril Lavigne! I find her music immature! And trying to be something she's not because she puts on this punk look and then you see her in 'Glamour' magazine with her wedding dress and trying to be 'Oh I'm like all pretty and woman-like! Please don't look at me this way now!' How come you don't look at her this way when she portrays herself.

She contradicts herself!?

Yes! And then you get people like Paris Hilton, can I call her an artist!? (says mockingly) I can't even call her an artist! She's just famous for being Paris Hilton! You know, so these people have no real talent but they in it for the fame! And I hate things like that.

Okay, hmm, okay, just those two artists!? Anyone else?

Very strong disliking to those two particular artists! Like Avril Lavigne tries to, she gives wrong ideas of confidence, she's more, she's more arrogant than arrogant than confident! I don't like arrogance! Are these just female artists I'm supposed to say?

Mmm!

Oh okay! Ja! I think those two. I also don't like Lily Allen cause she acts like she's on the same page, she writes clever words, she writes clever words but she's also more arrogant than confident. I feel like she's just trying to be famous, she's trying to be like 'Oh well I want to be daring and insult people!' You know like how Emenim insults people and he's famous for it and people think it's funny, that's what she's trying to do too. And she she's like catty for nothing, I mean why must she pick on Elton John and Katy Perry!? They did nothing wrong to her! She just wants to be famous! I don't think she deserves to be, she doesn't have the voice, her lyrics are a bit, they stupid!

It sounds like these performers you don't like, there's something about…

Childish!

…Okay, there's something childish about them and you fell like they're sending out confusing messages to people hey!? They say one thing but then they do another especially with Avril Lavigne and Lily Allen!?

You see I respect a woman, I say speak your mind! But they just put a whole different tone to it!

So they're not honest!?

You don't speak your mind to hurt or pick on other people. That makes you a very small person. You speak your mind to empower yourself and you know to take a stand, take a stand for what you are! That kind of 'speak you mind!' They are a joke! And to see grown woman behave like children is extremely unpleasant. I hate it! Because I feel their childish way, I feel women handle their experiences differently, they're supposed to come out stronger, not like that!

Are you familiar with either PJ Harvey and Liz Phair?

Mmm hmm, yes I am!

Okay, umm what, just briefly what do you know about either artist? Just at the top of your mind, what do you know about them?

PJ Harvey, she's dark and disturbed! And Liz Phair is sexually frustrated!

Okay!

Alright, would you like to comment on what you just read? You read Liz Phair's lyrics, would you like to umm comment on what you just read? Just at the top of your head?

Okay, at the top of my head I read Liz Phair's lyrics and to most it might be disturbing but to me being a young woman its refreshing! It's so nice to hear that someone has the audacity, not really courage the courage but the audacity to put this into other people's faces! And even though she, you can feel her frustration, you can understand her frustration, you can understand her horny-ness, you can understand her pleas, you can understand her needs so I'm really glad she put it out there.

What was most striking for you when you read her lyrics?

The simplicity yet the powerfulness of them. She uses simple words yet they are powerful words, words that I don't, so it's refreshing to say it out loud. But her lyrics are very simple, she doesn't use high words stuff like that, of course there's metaphors but umm…

Can you describe how you felt when you read her lyrics?

I felt refreshed! (Says this with a little uncertainty and humour as well) It was refreshing! I, I, I, reading it you have a smile on your face that she would say things

like this and you think 'wow!' I feel like that but I wouldn't say it out loud so it's refreshing and comforting.

Refreshing and comforting to maybe know she feels that, that, that women can share sort of the same experience, that she shares a similar feeling you had or you have perhaps!?

Yes and also at the same time you can feel for her because stuff that she is lacking, you know how it feels.

Okay! Was there anything that you particularly liked or disliked about what you just read?

So let's start with what you liked!

What I liked!? Okay, what I liked is she is refreshing and she puts a lot of, she always puts like a lot of character in her songs and can, and her lyrics gives the listener or the reader an understanding of this male character, a woman's understanding of this male character which is very good cause I feel a guy will not say things, well interpret himself like that, like how she interprets these certain characters especially in the 'Fuck and Run' but they'll be like 'its not like that! Of course I care about you!' Its not like that! You know it's a woman's point of view. I like that she brought it out in such a raw and unadulterated way and she didn't make it complicated. There's nothing complicated about her songs. What I didn't like is her, sometimes she overdoes it! I'm not someone who uses profanity in my life and she uses a lot of it and it's a bit of a discomfort but not really a big discomfort.

Okay, so the profanity is what you disliked!?

Yes!

Was there a specific song that you disliked? Or generally all the songs she uses profanity?

Not really! Sometimes there is no other way to say and you have to use profanity. What I also don't like is that I frustrated when I don't understand a song so songs that I didn't get of hers umm it frustrated me.

Also the not getting part frustrated you!?

Yes, it frustrated me!

Okay, so her messages are a bit unclear for you!?

Ja! Its like her songs are made for herself and nobody else you see. That's her piece of art that she understands so whether you get it or not she doesn't really care. She is expressing herself in her own way.

It's interesting, it sounds, the way you said that now sounds like it's a little bit of a selfishness almost, like its you can't relate to it cause of the fact that it's her's and it's not other people's!?

Well everyone in their art business, if they want to express themselves, they mainly in it for themselves, to release what they are feeling and to express themselves if it makes them happy. Of course you get people who want to reach out and I don't think Liz Phair is one of them. I feel that she needs to vent. Yes, she's not really worried about who relates to her music.

And that's almost like, even though it's an admirable task its also kind of a selfish task!?

Yes I think it's selfish for good reasons! Because the mainstream people obviously want to reach out to other people, they want public attention! Someone like her, she's not really mainstream. She's in it for herself!

This maybe a vague question but just umm I'm just asking it just to sort of tease out…

Can I add on the selfish thing?

Hey!?

Can I add on the selfish thing a bit?

Ja! What about it? Yes! Yes!

I just wanna say women, they are supposed to not be selfish, they supposed to be motherly, to give, give, give all the time! It's very good that's why I'm not ratting on her that she's being selfish. I'm happy that she's selfish! Because women are always expected to give, give, give, share, share, share!

Although it did frustrate you that for some reason you couldn't get what she was saying and that on some level maybe it was just so personal, it felt like it was almost for her!?

Its frustrating that I didn't get it but I'm, I don't know…

But at the same time it sounds like you didn't get it because you couldn't relate to her!? It sounds like that!?

Probably!

Cause maybe if you could relate to her then you would have got it!?

Probably!

Okay! How do you make sense of or understand what you just read?

How do I make sense of it!? Well I feel there's a similar message in all of the songs so. Okay, ja all the songs I feel are sexually related somehow so that's how, the songs that I did understand, it' like they all are attached to each other somehow. I don't know if

they are all from the same album but they are all definitely attached to each other. So there's some kind of emotion running through them.

So there's a similar theme running through all of them!?

That's how I relate to it emotionally! On an intellectual level I'm probably not on the same level as her cause she's more familiar with that kind of language. But emotion wise that's how I understand it!

Okay so what do you think of PJ Harvey's lyrics, you've just read them?

I think she definitely hates men! And really tries to show how chauvinistic and arrogant they are! And umm obviously she doesn't feel more loving than she sees them as more dominant and overpowering, almost overbearing! Sounds like a very hurt woman!

Okay, what was most striking for you when you read her lyrics, what stood out for you the most? This may be repetitive but just to elaborate…

I feel that she used sex to illustrate the power of the man over her, and it's interesting that she used it because it's lots of ideas that women are just there to bear fruit as she would say. And umm you know to carry on with the human race. That women nowadays are just there to give them pleasure, they want them to provide and they will! Just use you and abuse you like you do to them but ja she's being very old fashioned and maybe trying to say the old fashioned men's belief of how a woman should just sit there and take it so…

Can you describe how you felt when read these lyrics?

It's very heavy! It's very intense!

Did it feel uncomfortable?

Not uncomfortable! But umm okay ja! A bit uncomfortable I would definitely say because of she and her weird lyrics.

You can't relate to her!?

She's saying, making everything like a painful male dominating experience ! Why is she doing that!? All the things, it's not supposed to be like that! Why is she doing that!?

Its was very negative hey!?

It was so negative! It's like why, she's angry and letting, she's letting herself be overpowered by, I can't relate to her at all!

Okay! Alright! What did you like about what you read? Or was there nothing that you liked!?

I liked again, I like women who express themselves, who are brave enough to get stuff like this out because it's really personal, it's very personal to me! And umm I admire her for her courage and to just bring it out. And she didn't do it like in an audacious way like Liz Phair did, she did it in a more personal, more painful, more negative, more

dark, she's that way! So I appreciate that from her. What I didn't like is her whole out look on this thing. I feel women are not overpowered by men and I don't know why she's always putting it…

It so negatively!?

Yes! Not all men are chauvinists and she's making, she's like giving them a label, saying this is what a man is like because there's not just one song like that it's a couple!

Okay! What do you think, okay maybe you could discuss similarities and differences between Liz Phair and PJ Harvey? What was similar in terms of what you just read?

Similar is the whole sexual frustration thing. The whole umm well on similarities they both express themselves but in a totally different way! Because Liz Phair talks about more the pleasure she gets from it where PJ Harvey talks about what he's getting from it and how he sees it.

It's interesting you're saying 'he'!?

Yes! 'He'! There's obviously a 'he' that he, she is talking about.

Okay!

Okay! There's definitely a masculine reference there you see! So Liz Phair's more playful with her words not that intense.

And PJ Harvey's more intense!?

She's more intense, she's more dark, obviously there's more emotion in her songs than Liz Phair's. Liz Phair, she just seems sexually frustrated but also at the same time I can understand her frustration in her music, you know the whole 'Fuck and Run' song! She needs a 'boyfriend'! With PJ Harvey, she's just too intense, too sad!

Do you like PJ Harvey or Liz Phair better? Or don't you like either of them?

It's not that I don't like either of them umm they, I don't know, like I'm quite neutral to both of them because I respect them for putting their feelings out there. They are not albums I would buy! Because I don't feel that they are empowering! So then, that's definitely not something I would spend my money on but I'm very glad that I had an opportunity to listen to them. To know that there's STUFF like this out there! So ja!

Okay, alright, so you've just seen some images of Liz Phair and PJ Harvey, would you like to comment on maybe Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's pictures. You can do it together, you can do it separately.

Okay, I think I'll do it separately. Okay first I have to go to PJ Harvey looking at her pictures. You can never match her face, or her voice with her lyrics! Looking at her pictures she seems stable, she seems calm! She doesn't, looking at her pictures, not one of them indicates that she has a kind of painfulness! There's actually a picture of her in

a leopard bathing suit and that's like so feminine and girly and! Its supposed to you know, leopard skin is kind of empowering on a woman you! And her lyrics and her music speak so differently. Its not like that at all! So umm that's a definitely a shock for me! I didn't expect her to look like this!

So you're saying that her images, the pictures that you're seeing of her are not congruent to her music and what she's writing!?

No!

You would never say she's writing these things!?

That's why in the beginning I told you the voice shows through, the image is a different thing! I mean at home she's probably, is more grungy cause I expected her to be more grungy, to be more Courtney Love!

So she didn't come across like that in her pictures!?

No! Not at all! It's, she looks like she's a country singer here where you see her playing her guitar on stage, on these promo shots with the leopard and stuff you think she's like probably a 50's actress, like a Marilyn Monroe kind of person! A big personality. Her pictures show a big personality but her music speaks otherwise which is why…

So there's a big discrepancy between what you just read from her lyrics and her pictures, the way she presents herself!?

Yes! Even her album cover, I feel is so calm, it's so serene! It doesn't prepare you for what's inside! You know, so that's why I say when it comes to visual umm stuff, its last for me because it doesn't say a lot about the artist. With Liz Phair on the other hand, she's also, you look at her pictures and I feel she's more open, she's more revealing in her pictures as to who she is you know. She, like I would say ja sure you can match , match her music to her pictures, to her style , her posing, the clothes that she wears, it's, it's she's not talking any sexual pictures but the attitude is there.

There is a sexual attitude!?

Yes! There definitely is in her posing, in her casualness, it's very casual and her music is also very casual. It's not personal, it's not intense, it's casual, it's like I'm getting my feelings out there but I'm not I don't really want you to see. PJ Harvey on the other hand is very heavy.

Her pictures and her music!? Or both!?

Her music! Her pictures are totally different to her music.

What are her pictures like?

Like I said, very, the way she portrays herself okay I can, this two first pictures are very masculine, she's dressed very boyishly okay! And the last two pictures are very glamorous! You'll never put PJ Harvey and glamorous in the same place!

So it's a bit contradictory hey!?

It's very contradictory! You'll actually think she's singing I don't know something else!

Okay, alright, are you okay with that?

Yes!

Transcript for participant #6

Okay so what are some of the music groups and singers that you enjoy listening to?

I listen to mostly gospel music umm a lot of house music.

Specifically could you give me singers or music groups, like a name?

Okay the music groups are usually Joy Celebration and with house music it's very different to know like which singer it is cause you just get sounds from…

Like mostly D.J's?

Ja, ja. So no specific singer.

So this may be a repetitive question, I think you have answered it, but the next question is what are the types/kinds/genres/styles of music that you listen to?

With gospel I like American and also traditional South African, and with house anything that sounds good.

Okay, so it sounds like you listen to just gospel and house music, are there any other genres of music you listen to?

Obviously when I listen to the radio I get exposed to, to other types of music. R&B also is my favourite and ja.

So broadly gospel music, house and R&B?

Hmm. I don't do, I don't like that much kwaito music.

Could you tell me roughly the amount of time you spend listening to music in maybe a day?

In a day probably two and half hours, because I'm in the car, that's like forty-five minutes in the morning, forty-five minutes in the evening, and ja so…

So on average per day you spend…

About two hours. And if I'm travelling anywhere obviously I gonna have my radio on.

Okay, where are some of the places that you find yourself listening to music?

In my car (laughs), in my car, at church and parties.

Okay, what are the specific things about music that you enjoy, so is it the beat, the lyrics, the videos, the images or the style of the artist? So specific things about music…

So specifically, can't I just say all of that!

You can say all of that, but maybe there is an order, is there a priority, where you prioritise…

It's, it's the beat.

Is it first the beat?

Ja! Then it's the lyrics, that's important. And what where the others?

Video's, images and style.

I don't get much time watch video's so you know…

So mostly it's just the sound and the words?

Ja.

Okay, do you find yourself listening to male or female musicians?

It's a range.

So it's both?

Ja, both.

You lean more towards males or females?

No, no!

You don't?

No.

Do your friends and family share the same taste in music as you do?

Umm my family, my mother obviously the gospel, with my siblings it's the house and with my friends it's also the house music and R&B.

Okay, so it sounds like your family and friends do share the taste in music as you?

Ja, ja.

How often do you buy music?

Buy!? Buy! Like you mean buy? (Laughs out aloud). Not very often (Continues to laugh out loudly).

And why is that?

Because I'm poor (Laughs out loud).

That's fine (Laughs as well). Do you want to add anything else to that question. So you don't buy music very often?

No not very often. No! Its either I get C.D's from people, or I take C.D's and don't return them from (laughs). So ja. And the gospel I usually get from my mother and my boyfriend (Laughs).

So is it not a matter of maybe umm if there's a singer that you really really like you'll go and buy their C.D?

I would!

You would?

I would!

Have there been times where you really liked a singer and you went out and bought the C.D?

Yes! I bought… and ja, ja!

And how often does that happen for you?

Maybe once a year! (Laughs out aloud)

Okay, what do you think about women who perform music?

Mmm (thinking deeply). What do you mean? What do I think of women? An artist is an artist, if its good its good. I don't think…

Well, what were you thinking along the lines of when I asked you that question?

What I was thinking about right now was actually somehow I was thinking of Britney Spears, and that, and that song "Gimme gimme" (Starts to laugh)

Okay, so you were saying that you were thinking of umm…

Britney Spears!

Okay, so that was the first thing that popped into your mind?

Hmm!

Why is that?

I don't know (Whispers this, silence follows)

Is there something about Britney Spears performing that song that reminds you of women performing music?

Yes! Number one, the first thing is because I like that song and the fact that she came from such a… you remember… that image, such a wholesome image. Then suddenly she went through a crisis in her life and then she comes out, and she's in a strip… pole… and she's singing "Gimme, gimme"

Okay

So I was like okay! So that was just a thought, ja!

So did you enjoy that or did you not like that?

I like the song! I like the video! I think it shows that you know umm people, people have different sides to them.

Hmm?

Maybe you can get certain things that happen in your life and other sides come out you know! So like we can't put a person in a box.

If I'm hearing you correctly, it sounds like you're saying that umm that maybe she was being more of herself now than she was before?

I'm saying is that there are different characteristics that she, that she has.

Okay.

I'm not saying that this is who she is like now I'm saying…

Maybe she's being more true to herself maybe?

No! she's just expressing herself at this particular point in time, so maybe she's, so maybe she's being more true to herself, maybe five years ago she was being true to

herself right then you know. And maybe in another five years she's gonna be true to herself at that point! Do you understand what I'm saying?

Okay, so it sounds like you like the fact that she's expressing the way she feels…

That's what I like the fact that she's expressing the way she feels. I like her music right now, I didn't like her music five years ago. Because I though that's shit.

Okay, so is it that you like her music now and not back then. What's changed for you?

Somehow I like the dirtiness!

Okay, alright, so it speaks to you?

So you saying I'm dirty!? (Laughs out aloud).

Umm does it feel like I was trying to say that you were dirty?

No, no, no I was just kidding.

But I think I'm quite interested umm when I asked you what do you think about women who perform music, I very interested in why you came up with that response. Why you came up with Britney Spears, that song "Gimme more"? I just wondering why it is you thought about that when I asked you what do you think about women who perform music? So it sounds like and maybe you can correct me if I'm wrong, it sounds like what you're saying is you like the fact that women can maybe express themselves sexually in music? You enjoy that part!?

Yes! (and laughs).

Really!? Okay so you agree with me!

Yes.

So, umm are there any other thoughts you have about women who perform music at the moment?

When you say thoughts, do you know what comes to my mind, different women who perform music!

Okay, tell me more about that?

Like Beyonce, she's also a two sided person. On stage she's Ms. Sasha Fierce! And in real life she's like this street girl who like shakes her ass and does all that shit. So it shows that you know she's actually, as I said before you can't put people in a box… you know.

So it sounds like you like the fact that women can (interrupted)

Can express themselves!

Okay.

You know, a platform where they can express themselves.

All sides and all parts of themselves!?

Yes, not to say she's weird or she's a freak but when I think of Shania Twain then I'm like "That's so boring!" (and laughs).

Okay.

You know!

Alright.

She's boring!

Okay.

Hmm!

So it sounds like what you're saying is that you enjoy that in today's kind of times, in the music industry, women have more of a platform to say or sing whatever it is they want to sing about?

Obviously I can only umm give comment about today's times because I'm living in today's times. I don't know what happened ten or fifteen years ago.

Okay, is there anything else you wanna add there or can we move on?

We can move on.

Okay, alright umm please describe to me some of the qualities that female artists have that makes you enjoy listening to them? So what would make you enjoy listening to a female artist? Like what would some of the qualities that attract you to want to make listen to that female artists?

Number one, obviously the beat must appeal to me like I described in my previous answer and the lyrics.

What kind of lyrics?

Obviously…

What about the lyrics?

Lyrics that speak to me personally… at a specific time. I wouldn't wanna listen to a love song if I'm feeling like umm whatever. I won't wanna be listening to a very sexy song if I'm on pms and I feel like crap. You know, different times I feel a bit sexy, so I'm gonna put on some Beyonce, some…

So it would have to be meaningful?

Yes.

But then you're saying that you feel different things at different times, so different things would be meaningful to you at different times?

Yes.

At one time one thing might be boring to you but at another it may be good to you.

Hmm.

Okay, can you think of some other qualities that female artists would have to have for you to like them?

I said the beat, the lyrics, and… they must be good looking hey! I don't wanna be looking at some ugly…

Tell me more about good looking, like what good looking? Like maybe you can tell me a few artists that you feel are good looking?

Umm I don't think Tracy Chapman is beautiful (giggles). Like err like even if I don't look at a lot of music video's there are some times where I come across music video's and If I see some weird woman singing there ahh! I'll switch, I'll switch to the…

What would weird be to you? Would it be in the way they look or in the way they sing?

No, the way they look!

And tell me about the way they would have to look for you to like them, and the way they would have to look for you not to like them? Maybe you can just clarify.

I can't, I can't obviously describe in words how they need to… I can't say they must have blonde hair, blue eyes or they must be you know…

Okay, name me some artists that you think are good, good, some female musicians that you think are good looking?

Number one, I think I have mentioned Beyonce, she's very beautiful umm who was I…

Maybe you can name me two other artists?

Umm what's, what's, what's the other… she has a weird nose, Leona Lewis. She has a weird nose but she looks, she looks okay. Umm I don't know, I don't know the other artist hey. But her name! But her name! And she mustn't be fat! No they can't be fat. Okay maybe gospel music its acceptable for people to be fat but you know…

Cause maybe in gospel music the image is not so important, its more about the lyrics.

Yes, yes!

Do you want to add anything else?

No that's okay.

Alright, umm describe the qualities that stand out…

Like I think Ciara is beautiful, and she can dance, very well. I wanna dance like her.

What are the things, what are the qualities about Beyonce, and Ciara, and umm…

Leona Lewis!

... Leona Lewis ja, that makes you like them?

Umm, as I say they look good, they look good on the outside. They always made up, the clothes that they wear and with Beyonce and Ciara they can dance, Leona Lewis just walks and looks pretty in all of her video's.

Alright umm I'd like you to identify some female musicians that you dislike?

Dislike!

Yeah! That you don't like.

Yoh! Dislike! No!

And they can be for whatever reason. They can be for the way they look, their lyrics…

No, I can't, dislike is a very strong word.

Okay, how would you describe dislike?

Like I said, I don't listen to Tracy Chapman…

How would dislike be different to hate? Cause I would think hate is a more stronger word for dislike, and I would say dislike is more of a preference.

You think so!

Uh huh!

No I don't, I don't…

Okay, err maybe you can name me or you can identify some female musicians that you don't identify with so strongly?

I don't identify with Tracy Chapman!

And some other ones, you can, if you can identify some others?

Ja, ja, what's that, what's that white girl?

Shania Twain?

Shania Twain! Hey country music, no!

You don't like that!?

I don't identify with that, riding horses and… like what does that have to do with…

Okay, okay, are you familiar with Liz Phair or PJ Harvey?

No!

So you've just read some of the lyrics for Liz Phair alright, I'd just like you briefly first to comment on what you just read?

Its very weird lyrics. It's very… I can't say deep cause there's nothing deep. It's it's a person expressing themselves. It's something people won't usually sing about or say, it's something they'll think about or maybe say it in umm the comfort you know of of… okay but not sing about you know. I think it's a lot of life stories also, or maybe her life story, you know.

That's interesting?! So you think she's talking about stuff that she's been through?

Ja! Especially that, what song is it? "Fuck and Run"!

Ok, tell me about that?

It seems like, I don't know! She says that she wants a boyfriend, but all she, but all she, but all she ever, seems like all these one night stands with people that just go in and out of her life but all she wants is something that's gonna last forever, but she's not getting that. Even when she was 12! And I'm thinking like oh my God! When you were 12, where you fucking and running? What the hell, you know!

So what does that tell you about her?

Lost!

Okay, Lost!? So she sounds lost? Sometimes, a little bit, would you say she sounds lost through this, or sometimes?

Umm , its weird like…

Okay, its weird!?

Cause in this, in this "Help Me Mary" song…

Yeah, tell me about "Help Me Mary"?

She, she talks about people that she doesn't like. I think, talking about people that she doesn't like.

Do you think she's talking about specific people, like a specific group of people?

I think maybe just she's just making… I don't know. It's either she's making a generalisation or she's talking about a specific group of people. I don't think it's a specific group of people, I think maybe it's a generalisation of most people that she's coming across, but then she says "Oh! I make myself their friend!" Like what the hell! You also pretending like how you don't like them to pretend to you. So what's happening there.

Okay, do you're saying that she's hanging out with people that she knows are not genuine but then she's not being genuine herself.

Hmm.

Alright.

But I like that other song, "Flower".

Tell me about "Flower"?

Its crazy!

What do you like about it? Cause you said you like it.

Ja! She's just being so… so, so like real, and so like, everything is stripped out, and this is what Im thinking off and to hell with you and whoever, this is what I wanna do. We

all feel like that at some point, we wanna say these things and we like "No!" Hit yourself (hits herself on the wrist) and say "No! I will be a good girl" (Laughs)

So its sounds like she's being quite brave, she's exposing herself?

Yeah, she's being very brave.

Anything else you wanna add?

No, nothing, nothing.

What was most striking for you when you just read some of her lyrics? What stood out the most?

I think umm that she's honest. She's honest! She's honest, saying I don't know who I am, ok this is who I am, I don't know "who" I am though.

I hear you.

It's a bit weird but that's how she's saying this is where I find myself, or this is where I found myself, and I'm just singing about it.

Can you describe some of the feelings you experienced with regards to what you just read.

Sadness.

So you felt sorry for her?

Hmm. And I felt like you know she's, she's looking, she's looking for something, she's searching for… whether she'll find it or not I don't know…

Was that the dominant feeling, or were there other feelings you felt?

It was sadness, and that she is, and that she is looking… and also she's brave you know.

Sounds like you admire her, there's a bit of respect you have for her.

Hmm. Obviously singing about these things are not easy, most people want the "gimme gimme" songs and to dance and move your ass but when you start being honest with yourself, people are like ahh! You're just forcing me to be honest about me, people are not ready for that.

Were there any other feelings, like anger or disgust, or shock or surprise?

Disgust! You know what, there's no disgust because as I said these are thoughts that people have, these are things that people do but nobody says anything about them and they all kept under, under wraps. So there's no disgust.

Was there anything that you particularly, okay so you told what you liked right, was there anything that you particularly disliked about what you just read?

Not disliked, it just made me feel a little bit uncomfortable.

What were some of the things that made you feel uncomfortable?

Like, not specifically the things, its just that she's putting herself out there

The openness?

Ja, it's the openness, she's just putting everything out there.

You mentioned a word earlier, you mentioned "raw", the fact the she's being raw…

Raw!

… that maybe is a bit discomforting?

Hmm.

Would you also like to reiterate things maybe that you liked, were there other things you liked that you wanna talk about or do you think you've mentioned everything.

I've , mentioned everything.

Okay, umm okay these questions may be repetitive but I just wanna get through them maybe just to flesh out more about how you feel. How do you understand or make sense of what you have just read?

Umm, I don't understand the question. How do I understand?

How, how did you make sense of what you just read? Or how did you make sense of it in your head?

Just someone whose trying to find themselves, whose going through you know the ups and downs of life.

Alright, Do you, did you feel like it was a woman who wrote this or a man who wrote this?

A woman.

So when you read it, its obvious and apparent that it's a woman?

It's a woman, uh huh.

Would you listen to music like this?

Umm no!

How come? Especially when you expressed a lot of positive things and that's okay, I think you can but I'm also trying to make sense of you express positive things but why won't you listen tot the music?

It's, it's, it's too raw! It's, it's… ja no, no. I don't wanna deal with somebody's issues, like can I deal with my own issues please you know.

Okay, so you've just read some the lyrics for PJ Harvey. Would you like to comment on what you just read?

Very weird! Very, very weird. I wouldn't listen to it, I wouldn't buy it.

Okay, you said weird for Liz Phair as well, in what way is this weird, is it the same weird or a different weird?

Liz Phair is weird acceptable. This weird crazy, weird unacceptable, weird I don't wanna be with you! I don't wanna see you!

How come? Tell me more, why?

This person is crazy! She's not lost!

Does it sound like it's a man or sound like its a woman?

Eish! Does she know?! Does she know who she is?! Or he is?! There's a lot of confusion there, I don't even think that person also knows! (Laughs)

Okay, you're saying that PJ Harvey is very confusing?

Yes! (Laughs)

And she doesn't know who she is?

Yes! (Laughs)

And its funny and amusing cause her music is confusing?

Yes!

What was most striking for you when read this?

The weirdness of it.

What was the weirdness of it? You need to be a little bit more specific for me?

I can't… She's just… I'm saying she but I can't say "it" cause that's unacceptable.

So it feels like it's a creature?

Ja… this… (Humming in a way that expresses confusion and disagreement).

What does it feel like?

Oh! I can't explain it. I can't… its just weird lyrics. I can't… I don't understand what she's talking about number 1.

Okay, so you don't understand what she's talking about?

Ja! She's just weird!

So it's like nonsense?

Its not nonsense! Maybe to her or "it" it's real you know. But maybe me (Laughs), to me no! It's like she lives in her own world.

It's almost like you can't relate with this?

At all, at all!

You can't get a sense of what she is trying to say?

Or maybe if I like she see who she is, where she grew up, what happened to her in her life, where she is right now, then maybe I'll understand these lyrics. Maybe if there was more background to who she is.

So right now you're thinking how can she write stuff like this, or why would she write stuff like this? Is that what you're saying?

Hmm, what took her to this point.

Okay.

What happened to her, why, can I help you! You know! (laughs)

So it sounds like something very traumatic happened to her?

Very!

Can you describe some of your feelings when you read this?

I know I'm using weird very much, it felt uncomfo… uncomfo… not uncomfortable like what's her name… Liz Phair but uncomfortable like my skin is…

So you felt shocked, you were a bit surprised?

Uh huh! And shame! Shame! Feel sorry, shame! Going through your life with so much confusion not even one you know clear thought. She doesn't have a clear thought.

Okay, that's very interesting.

She's confused, maybe she's always high also. Who knows?

It's interesting, when you… (interrupted)

And I can see her, she probably has a lot of make up, long black hair. Very "don't look at me. I don't want you to see who I am. I don't want you to see who I am inside" So I'm gonna distract you with all of this.

So she's hiding something?

Hmm.

Was there anything that you disliked?

Everything! (laughs)

Okay, was there anything that you liked?

No, nothing, zero!

Would you listen to her music?

Never! Never!

How do you make sense of what you just read now?

That there is no sense!

It doesn't make sense to you?

(Shakes head to indicate no)

So you can't relate to this person?

Nothing!

I want you to discuss what was similar between, were there similarities or differences between Liz Phair and PJ Harvey? Were there similarities?

There were, there's mainly similarities. She's (Liz Phair) much nicer, but she says what she… I think they probably going through the same struggles but hers is on a lesser level, and on a much more acceptable level. This is like fuck the world (referring to PJ Harvey). I'm in this alone and I don't care.

What kind of struggles do you think they're going through? Cause I was very struck when you used that, that they going through the same struggles.

I think, you remember when I said I think this person is a homosexual (referring to PJ Harvey)

Uh huh!

What's her name?

PJ Harvey

Maybe that's the same struggles that they both.

So maybe they're struggling with sexuality.

Very, very much so!

So that's the similarity with PJ Harvey and Liz Phair?

Hmm. But I could see that this one has been with men (referring to Liz Phair). Cause she has a "Johnny" song there and "I wanna fuck you til your dick is blue", and this one doesn't make sense to me. But she talks about queenie, and snake! Oh my word! It seems like she's anti-God actually. Yeah, she's anti-God!

Do you think that most people would share your feelings and thoughts on these musicians or are most people not likely to share your feelings and thoughts?

Most people!

Would share, or would not share?

Would share. Most people would. Except the weird few… (laughs)

Okay, so would you like to comment on PJ Harvey and Liz Phair's pictures?

PJ Harvey looks weird, but in one photo she looks actually normal like I would pass her in the street and would not think that she's the one who wrote those weird lyrics in this photo, this one particular photo, but then the others ah no! She looks weird!

Like what kind of weird?

Like look at that whole make-up.

Ja

Ja, like she looks terrible.

Like how does she look there?

She looks like, her face is pale, like she put white powder on her face and like her eyes are just over done, you know. And this one here, her hair is weird, this one she has writing over her and she's wearing doc Martins whoo! (Laughs) and this one here looks like she had a bad night and like she's wearing guys things. And here, ja! I don't know, too much make-up.

So she looks really weird?

Ja, except for the one where she looks normal.

And Liz Phair?

Surprisingly very ordinary looking!

Surprisingly very ordinary?

Hmm, that's very ordinary!

So compared to PJ Harvey she's not that weird?

Hmm.

Looking at the pictures of PJ Harvey, would this be someone that you'd be friends with?

Maybe, no!

What about Liz Phair, looking at her pictures could she be someone that you'd be friends with?

Umm no! I don't know, I don't know! But I don't think so.

Okay, what maybe more striking for you about Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's pictures?

Nothing that I haven't already said.

Again, this may be repetitive, but can you tell me some of your feelings when you look at PJ Harvey's pictures how you felt?

The CD cover one was a bit of a shocker. I was actually shocked at how ordinary she looks here. So the shock was that she was just ordinary! (Laughs)

So based on her lyrics, you expected her to look weird?

Like how she looks here, like how she looks in this CD cover. I expected her to look weird.

And Liz Phair, some of the feelings you had?

No, nothing, just ordinary. Hmm.

Anything that you liked or disliked about Liz Phair and PJ Harvey's pictures?

No, I don't dislike anything, they just expressing themselves. So you know, its just that this one makes me feel uncomfortable.

The PJ Harvey CD cover picture?

Ja! She looks like you know…

Do you think looking at their images there are similarities between PJ Harvey and Liz Phair? But forgetting about their lyrics now but just concentrating on their pictures, do you think there is anything similar about them?

They both white females, they both into music, they both got guitars in their hands, umm…

Can I just mention something, I think its interesting that you mentioned that a similarity they shared was that they were white female. Does that make it because they're white female a bit difficult for you to relate to them?

Hmm.

Would they have been more identifiable if they were black female maybe?

Probably!

What about differences?

I said she looks weird, she looks more normal, Liz Phair. PJ Harvey looks more weird than Liz Phair. Liz Phair doesn't look weird at all, you know.

So Liz Phair looks like she is more a part of society and PJ Harvey does not look like she is a part of society?

Ja, an outcast!

Anything else you wanna add?

No.

Transcript for participant #7

So what are some of the music groups and singers that you enjoy listening to?

Umm err at the moment I'm liking some pop, some rock or something like that.

Can you give me specific singer's maybe?

John Mayor! I love! Umm umm Kings Of Leon at the moment I'm really enjoying. Umm and the older ones Cold Play, umm and some nerdy ones err country western! Umm ja! I can't really think of any!

Okay! Alright, what are some, this maybe, maybe I'm repeating myself but what are types, kinds, genres, or styles of music that you listen to, that you enjoy listening to?

Ja I suppose its what I just said.

So kind of rock music, like soft rock, acoustic rock and also some country music as well!?

Ja! (Giggles) When I say country I'm thinking like…

Give me some examples?

Not Dolly Parton!

Okay!?

I thinking err umm Sheryl Crow, sort of that.

Okay so alternative country or rock country!? Can you tell me roughly the amount of time that you spend listening to music?

Not a lot! Well depends on how much I'm driving. I listen in the car. So…

Maybe you could quantify it for me in a day or in a week, how many hours?

Let me think! Umm it would probably end up being about, ja it depends but it's usually about an hour or two a day.

And like you said, well the next question says where are the places that you find yourself listening to music? And you mentioned your car!?

Ja! Mainly in my car!

Any other places you can think of.

Umm sometimes if I'm just messing about in my room but if I'm doing work in my room then I can't listen to music at the same time, that would be and then ja just otherwise social but mostly in my car.

And when you're in the car do you find that you have the radio on or are you running your own CD's there?

Both!

Both!?

Ja! I umm I kinda get a bit annoyed sometimes with the radio unless I'm listening to talk shows umm so then I'll usually switch to CD's.

Okay cool! What are the specific things about music that you enjoy i.e. the beat, the lyrics, the video's, the images, or the style of the artist etc.?

Definitely lyrics!

Okay!?

Ja!

Is, is there a priority in terms of those things that I just mentioned that maybe you listen to the lyrics first, maybe you can prioritise it or is there just one thing that you focus on when you listen to music?

Umm…

How important are the other things like beat or image or style of the artist, you, you, you mentioned that you rely quite heavily on well the lyrics of the musician. What other things, do you like other things about the music that you listen to?

Umm what are the other things you said?

Umm things like the beat, umm the video, the image, the style of the artist, not really!?

What do you mean style of the artist?

Just the way they fashion themselves!

Oh no! Not really!

Okay!?

Its kind of, that whys I tend to like a lot of diverse stuff cause even if theres someone who's maybe image or what I know of it I don't usually like I can still enjoy a song that they come out with.

So you're saying that…

It'll be lyrics, it'll be the overall umm I don't know if it would be beat or the tune or what, ja!

So you're saying that…

And voice actually! I quite like voice! It doesn't have to be err extremely classically good voice but it's just interesting…

Maybe you can tell me about that voice? What kind of voice do you like?

Umm there's not one kind but like if it expresses what's being said nicely then I think that's pretty cool.

Okay!

Umm I'm just thinking, Bob Dylan! Voice wise I would of said that's someone 'Oh what a beautiful voice' but if its what he saying that's expressing it nicely then I usually like that.

Okay! And you're also saying that the image of the artist doesn't necessarily affect whether you would listen to them or not? They could have an image that you actually think 'wow this is terrible!' but you would still listen to their music!?

Hmm!

Okay!

Ja!

Cool! Anything else?

Ja! No, no, no, that's fine!

Okay, umm do you find yourself listening to male or female musicians more?

I'm trying to think what, both really!

Okay!?

Ja!

So you don't lean more towards male or more towards female musicians you say it's kind of in between!?

Ja! I'm just trying to think, in terms of bands like so many tend to be male dominated!

In terms of music groups hey!?

Ja! So probably overall then and including individual it would be more male.

And I would imagine maybe more male dominated because of, you mentioned you listen to rock music and rock music there's a lot or err umm male sort of groups out there!?

Ja!

Okay, umm do your friends and family share the same taste in music as you do?

(Laughs) Umm no! It's very different umm some do some don't, okay in terms of family, my family umm well they enjoy music but they aren't into it a lot. Umm we're not like a big musical family. Umm no I wouldn't say so, umm friends I would say some very similar others very different.

Okay!?

Ja! One of my closest friends loves umm like Celine Dion and certain singers and I'm trying to think and others tend to, or they in to the more mainstream music cause they know all the cool people (says jokingly and laughs).

Okay, umm how often do you buy music?

Not often! Umm I tend to get given CD's a lot! Umm probably only about maybe three or four CD's a year.

You'd, you'd purchase!?

I'd purchase!

And would you purchase because you really, really like that singer or that group or!?

More because if there is a track and I'm like, or like I'll hear a song and I'll think wow that's an amazing album.

So you wouldn't just buy the album for one song, just for one song that you hear or would you buy it based on the band, that you trust the band and that you'd know that the album would be good, so you'd buy the album!?

Probably not! I'd probably wanna listen, like check it out.

Alright, this maybe a vague question but what do you think about women who perform music, just generally at the top of your head, what you do think about women who perform music?

Umm I'm not sure I understand the question!

Maybe to contextualise it, what do you think about women who perform music currently?

Umm oh sorry, I don't really know, sorry Daley I'm just trying…

No that's fine!

Umm what do I think about what about them?

How you do you feel about women performing music?

I don't feel (starts laughing), I'm just trying to think why women!? Umm like what, how do I feel about women or men performing music!? I'm very pleased that there are women performing music! (Laughs)

Alright! Okay so why should it be a question of 'what do you think of women performing music' it should be about maybe 'what do you think about music in general?' maybe as opposed to 'what do you think about men or women performing music?'

Ja!

Okay that's cool, I wonder if you could describe to me some of the qualities that female artists have that make you enjoy listening to them?

Okay say the question again!

If you could describe to me some of the qualities that female musicians would have to have that would make you enjoy listening to them?

Okay probably not have to have but some of the things that I do like or have a tendency to like would probably be umm again I suppose it's going back to the things I enjoy about songs. I like musicians that, that write their own stuff and I don't know just to me

it feels like there's something more invested from them. And then umm so I suppose something about of some kind of personal insight into the song. Umm I enjoy although it's not always necessarily like I think but I do enjoy a nice voice or a voice that really fits with the type of music they are sing. Umm in terms of image…

Umm sorry before you on, can you describe their voice, would they have to have a particular kind of voice for you?

Oh no!

It just maybe has to be heartfelt!?

Ja!

Sorry you were telling me about the image.

Umm in terms of image I think I like just my personal tastes tend to be for umm women singers that appear to be umm what I'm I thinking of, to have like some kind of umm a strength I suppose. That's the best that I can think of, although that's so general. Umm but something about them that's quite strong and it's not necessarily in one thing whether it be in an independence or in a err certain umm self-assurity or a not necessarily the image maybe that they portray but sometimes it, it's seems like it's not so umm socially pleasing or rather, it might be socially pleasing but that's not the aim!

Okay!?

Ja!

That its more maybe natural rather than it is maybe contrived or put together maybe!?

Ja!

Okay! Umm tell me about some of the female artists you enjoy listening to. Maybe you can name about three and you can elaborate on those three!?

Okay! Umm I enjoy like I was saying Sheryl Crow, umm Sarah McLachlan, umm I thinking of songs right now and I can't think of the names of the artists which is terrible err…

Think about someone who's consistent for you, **that maybe always sort of features in your, always kind of find yourself going back to them.**

Okay those two would be there, umm who else, Alanis Morissette! I absolutely enjoy as well! Ja I think those three.

Maybe you can just elaborate briefly on the three of those musicians as to what is it that pulls you towards them, that makes you sort of enjoy listening to their music?

Umm I'm just trying to think, and I suppose it doesn't have to be consistent about all three of them hey, to me, let me take one at a time. Umm I suppose I like the like I was

saying before the, it's the music is about the pleasing and I think about Alanis Morissette. With Alanis Morissette I often really enjoy her music specifically I find the lyrics quite strong, it feels like all her albums are quite different, like its quite umm…

It's sort of an evolution like!?

Ja! Exactly! Umm and I like that she doesn't have to sound pretty or feminine, some of her songs can very gentle and feminine sounding and peaceful sounding and others can be very angry sounding umm so its quite real to me! Quite I wanna say its quite raw (says jokingly). Umm Sheryl Crow I suppose similar in that regard actually umm I like I also find some of Sheryl Crow's stuff quite sad but not, not, not like you slit your wrists, its thought provoking stuff and it feels simple umm but really effective without necessarily trying to hard. And Sarah McLachlan she's such a poet! And I really, really love that! Umm then I even like when I'm, with her I'm thinking the image that she portrays is though not often intended, feels often very umm sort of gentle but not necessarily what she's saying is necessarily gentle umm which is, I quite like that contrast that she doesn't have to one thing or the another. Umm and, and that's more natural perhaps with she presents her music really.

Cool! I think what's interesting when you mentioned those three musicians, its sounds like umm there's some degree of control that these three women have over their music and what they put that you enjoy!?

How do you mean!?

Control in terms of umm…

Sorry did I just ask you a question!?

No, no, no that's fine, umm they, they have a, they have control in terms of how they put out their music umm they like things a specific way and they like it, there's a certain amount of, I think if one thinks about musicians now err one gets a sense that maybe musicians are kind of producer puppets and all that stuff and it sounds like what you admire and I go back to I think what you mentioned in the first place where you admire female musicians who quite you know, quite strong and are quite sort of maybe autonomous and seems like when you where taking about these three women now that they maintain like some degree of control and autonomy over their music!?

Oh yeah! Ja!

Does it feel like that?

Ja!

So Imagine it speaks to what you said when you, said you admire women who are quite strong, who, who, who exhibit some sort of strength through their music!?
Ja!
Is there anything else you wanna add or are you fine with that?
No I'm good!
Umm I think you've answered this question can you describe the qualities that stand out about the musicians that you just mentioned that makes you enjoy them? So I think you've mentioned that hey!?
Ja!
Is there anything else you wanna talk about or are you okay, you okay!?
I'm okay!
You've spoken about it!? I would like you to identify some female musicians that you dislike.
Okay! Who do I dislike! Oh Anastasia! Oh my God! (Laughs) She drives me insane!
Me too!
(Laughs) Umm who else do I really dislike! See a lot of them I just dislike for the time and they have put some stuff that I enjoyed.
Who do you consistently dislike? Just you're preference doesn't lie there!
Anastasia! I'm trying to think of other, oh Fergie! I actually like, I enjoyed some of the Black Eye Peas stuff but hers oh no! (Laughs) Umm I'm trying to think who else.
Maybe give me just one more. So Fergie, Anastasia…
I'm sorry I'm trying to think. Umm I can't think of any of hand. I'll come back to it.
Okay that's cool. Alright are you familiar with either PJ Harvey or Liz Phair?
No! Except through you.
Okay!
(Laughs)
Would like to comment on what you've just read? And in commenting err you can refer to specific songs or you can just comment sort of generally on what you've just read, if there is an overriding theme that you see across these songs.
Umm overriding theme!?
Something in the songs that really struck you!
God I'm going to sound like a real psychologist now.
Cool! Go on!
Sex and aggression!
Okay!?
(Laughs)

(Laughs) Tell me more!

That to me felt like the overriding theme.

Okay! Alright (laughs)

Ja!

What about sex and aggression?

Umm that the songs that you chose seem to be like umm those areas! Are you gonna be more specific in terms of questions later?

Ja well maybe! Umm what was most striking for you umm with regards to what you just read. What stood out for you apart from the sex and aggression? Umm what kind of sort of imagery in your head did you get out of this woman's writing?

Of the woman writing the song!?

Ja!

Mmm…

What kind of person does she sound like?

Umm she sounds very assertive but I'm not sure if that with or without being self-assured. Umm angry at times but not necessarily that its always about angry, there is also a vulnerability in some parts. So I suppose it depends on which song, which parts come out. Umm…

Which songs do you think the anger was most pronounced?

Not, not, sad-angry here with the first one! Umm I don't even know if angry is the right word, maybe it is though! Here it's quite, a lot of violent imagery ('Dance of the Seven Veils'). This one was quite sad sounding ('Fuck and Run'), and angry but more self directed.

I guess it sounds like what you're trying to say is the, maybe not angry but there's an aggression that's coming out!?

Ja!

Okay!?

I think so! And this one I don't know! ('Glory')

Was that one a little bit vague!?

Ja!

Okay!?

I struggled with that one!

Okay that's fine!?

Ja!

Can you describe how you felt when you read these songs, what was some of the feelings you experienced when read these songs?

Umm…

And you can refer to specific songs where you felt differently towards certain ones.

Some of the parts I suppose I felt quite like I found myself like a lost every now and again. I suppose that I quite like the just putting stuff out there! Like almost like umm I suppose imagery is used to describe feelings so directly that it's just kind of not sensitive which I quite like. Umm but some parts I found almost humorous! Umm but just because of the directness and, and maybe because sometimes some of the things are quite controversial sounding like they wouldn't be expected or they would be umm shocking! Umm maybe I'm like in my mind because I've had very limited exposure but I do know a little bit about it. I was sort of anticipating shocking lyrics! Umm so it didn't feel like such a shock but perhaps it would have been. Ja if I wasn't expecting it!

Its interesting you said you felt a little humorous at parts, do you think she was being humorous when she wrote that?

Maybe! But I, I don't think that, maybe I, I don't know. Umm almost like not even taking the piss but err, err bit like umm maybe I must find a part. Like I like this one! "I'm asking, will you, Mary, please/Temper my hatred with peace/Weave my disgust into fame/And watch how fast they run to the flame" Like that almost, it almost like ja humour doesn't sound like the right word now. But it is, it's quite a…

Sounds like mocking, like she's making fun of!?

Exactly! Which, which to me I suppose I did feel quite humorous. Umm by turning it around a bit, umm so ja!

Was there any time where you felt uncomfortable at parts? Maybe feeling sad for her, do you feel sorry for her?

Anyone in specific or in general!?

Ja! Specific feelings! Where there times that you felt uncomfortable, maybe shocked, disgust, umm or maybe just feeling sorry for her?

The, this part, not even like, this part almost, not clichéd but I think the cliché was used instead of, but the chorus here which goes "I want a boyfriend/I want a boyfriend/I want all that old stupid shit/ Like letters and sodas/Letters and sodas" There like I felt a bit sorry, not sorry that, that the whole Fuck and Run thing but sorry that she, like, like, like she wanted it and didn't want to want it and she's sounded more frustrated with herself like that's more what I felt sad for. Umm sorry for her self-frustration.

That she can't have it!?

No, no, no, not even like she can't have it but she does have the want.

Okay, alright!?

But she wishes she didn't have the want almost! 'Fuck why do I want this! I know this is, no! I shouldn't want this!'

Okay!?

That's more the part that I felt sorry for her, umm with her frustration with herself. Umm this one ('Flower') is quite a switch to I suppose what you almost anticipated in society and she's turned it around beautifully in terms of gender I mean. Umm this one ('Glory') I don't know! I struggled with a little. I'm not really putting a picture to mind. Some of it felt sexual but some of it felt maybe double meaning. And ja so I didn't really know.

Okay!

The last one!

Was there anything that you particularly liked or disliked about what you just read?

Umm err…

Maybe you can start with what you liked and then what you disliked!?

I like things that are unexpected, I like that I like when there's almost a twist, when things get set up and then there's a twist and that makes it interesting, and I found that with the first one. I quite liked it. Umm I don't know if its so much a like or dislike, I enjoyed it. I found it interesting, thought provoking and that is something that I happen to like. Umm the…

So on the whole you quite liked it rather than not liking it!?

Ja! I'm just trying to think if there was anything that I specifically didn't like, that didn't sit with me. Oh but this is more I suppose a, err personal thing. I sometimes struggled specifically with the ambiguity so like I kind of think should I take these lines directly or is it, is there something else behind them, is there something personal about the artists life, or is this something that's open to interpretation like when she says "Even when I was seventeen/Even when I was twelve" And then it kind of sort of leads to a whole lot of other things but I don't know what I should be thinking. And then if its my own well, so that ambiguity is sometimes frustrating but not necessarily bad as I was saying I quite like a twist, and that it's not fixed and simple! Umm in this last one I found that quite ambiguous looking and looking over and over to get a, a better picture even the metaphors to get it to work for me and I struggle to fixed that metaphor into umm…

Okay, alright! Umm again another vague question, how do you kind of, and it maybe repetitive but I'm just trying to make or tease out how it is you interpret

these songs and how you feel. So umm how do you understand or make sense of what you just read?

What do mean 'how'!? What sense do I make of it or how do I go about making sense of it!?

How do you make sense of it for yourself, like how is it that you're able to kind of sit with this and interpret this and sort of come to the point where you understand it in a particular kind of way? How do you get to the point where you, how, how have you been able to understand what she's been trying to say through these songs?

Okay!

Is that, does that make sense!?

How I've tried to and I'm not sure if I've always (laughs) umm done it! Umm I suppose it's trying to like she does use quite a lot of metaphors and I sometimes wonder about religious connotations as well which maybe helps me and my background to link some of those.

Okay!?

Umm and I don't know if I've done that correctly or not especially for the 'Dance of the Seven Veils' Umm but I suppose for me it's sort of trying to see how they fit together, what, what is the meaning behind it. I think I, I automatically and I don't know if this is always right but automatically assume that there's gonna be just by the way she writes like there's gonna be umm an indirect meaning but I kind of tend to look for that which maybe isn't always helpful. Umm…

Very interesting, you've identified with maybe religion maybe being a conflict perhaps for her, some sort of resistance that she may err, some sort of thing that she's struggling with which she's kind of echoed briefly in her song.

Ja! I err, err must admit I just noticed some of the religious and I don't know it is actually or if it's just my, that's my own umm…

Interpretation!?

Sort of interpretation exactly! Umm And to be honest I don't know if it's a conflict or a, err, or a or her umm ja I don't, I can't really tell that. It's just interesting to me that she uses it.

Okay! Why do you think she's using it?

I, I don't know

Well if she is, what maybe plausible or possible reason would you think she is using it like in the 'Help Me Mary'? Do you think that 'Mary' would be…

Oh the 'Mary' one!?

Do you think that when she says 'Help Me Mary' the Mary she's referring to is 'Mother Mary'?

I don't know!

Okay!?

If it is (long silence), ja I wasn't really thinking about it that much at first and then the last one let me think when she says 'Mary please temper my hatred with peace/Weave my disgust into fame/And watch how fast they run to it' See I don't know! If she is I don't know! There's a, err play on what a good woman is and then that's a where Mary would be the, a Christian or specifically catholic icon of a perfect woman. Umm and then 'Dance of the Seven Veils' and this is really reading in to it so (Laughs to indicate uncertainty but trying never the less)…

Okay!? That's fine!

I don't know if there is religious stuff but just where she talks about 'Johnny' and then umm there's a bit of violent stuff 'roll in plastic/pump full of lead'. Ja and then she says 'I've got a bright and shiny platter/And I'm gonna get your heavy head' So there I'm thinking of the biblical connotations where it's the head on the platter thing. Umm so and I, its like err reading into it completely (Laughs again indicating uncertainty with regards to interpretation) just those two links for me and I'll probably wouldn't have even thought of it if they hadn't been put together. Umm ja…

Okay, alright, are you comfortable with that or you wanna add anything else?

I'm okay! Is there anymore you wanted to ask?

Let me just see, no that's fine I think you've kind of covered everything. Okay cool!

Alright so again would like to comment on what you just read?

Umm no ask questions first and then I'll as we go along…

Okay, what was most striking for you when you read her lyrics, what stood out the most? Where there specific songs that kinda stood out for you that you'd like to comment about?

Umm…

Or what seemed to be the kind of, the most maybe dominant or like prominent theme, that overall…

I suppose some similar but a bit different from the last one! Umm the sexual imagery that, that I don't think it was always about sex so much. Umm about especially the whole '50ft Queenie' and 'Man-Size' umm felt quite like about masculine identity, that was quite strong and about I don't know it felt quite competitive. Not, not I mean I know some of the, the words, the lyrics are actually directly competitive but it didn't

feel like that was, it was more almost like another, I couldn't tell if it was again almost a mockery and maybe it would be interesting then to actually hear how it's sung. Umm or if it was like umm a personal, a personal word. Again quite a bit of religious imagery, umm coming through and I quite enjoyed snake. I though it was quite interesting.

Tell me more about that!

Umm…

What made it interesting for you?

It's just the content, the story, the whole Adam and Eve thing. Umm that was quite, I don't know it felt really simple but it was almost angry, desperate, umm a bit of err, err different take on it, like. Umm I suppose what it did for was it almost seemed like it was a questioning, not blame, questioning of responsibility and I don't know if that was because Adam and Eve are so representative of gender I don't know if it was a questioning of gender and even the use of snake umm it, to me it almost felt circular in terms of snake and maybe this is psychology completely coming through, but with snake and that associated with genital often. So that felt quite circular the coming back to the snake and then Eve says 'but no Adam! Don't blame me' sort of 'it was the snake!' So I quite like that circularity umm ja! 'Legs' I think I missed something like I'd have to read it a million times, I'm sure you saw me going over and over! Umm just little things that made it felt just religious again as well umm and this is where I suppose I a lot of just the words to me feel like they can be in so many places like 'divine' with religiosity or 'divine' umm associated with pleasure with umm and idealising of person or with sex and that comes with sexual pleasure. Umm and then umm ja but I feel like I missed so much of it ja!

So again a religion, sex and umm or did you say violence or aggression now!?

No not violence and aggression so much but there is umm like a competitive…

Okay, there's some sense of masculinity coming out here!?

Ja!

You mentioned that!? Okay but elaborate on that you said there's some sense of competition, just maybe elaborate on that a little bit for me.

Umm this is when I say like I don't know how to interpret it umm or, or, or, what the actual comment is if there is even a comment!? But when she's doing the whole '50ft Queenie' thing umm and I don't know if 'Queen' is supposed to be a play on umm a gay male or if its supposed to be like err, err contradiction where it's like a woman as a male but taking on the sort of, the masculine role. Umm and the 'I'm not susceptible to anything!' the 'I'm above it! I'm all powerful nothings gonna touch me!' umm I

suppose the competition thing is with the 'measure' thing came in. Err so ja I don't know if it's err a woman…

Do you think she's competing with something?

Well I don't know that's the, that's what I was struggling with.

Maybe it feels like…

It almost felt like is this woman competing against man, or woman sort of challenging the whole idea of competing against man by taking on umm…

The masculine role!?

The stereotypical masculine 'I immune to anything'! Umm and even then calling it a 'Queen' which just is quite interesting idea that her in masculine with a man in a way! Umm so it's like, it just felt like a whole lot of possibilities, and I don't know to interpret it but I did get a feeling of a power play almost there that didn't necessarily feel like err, err masculine security but that's why I say I'm not sure err, err mocking and the same with the 'Man-Size' one. Umm ja but the imagery there was very (laughs) 'leather boots and cowboy' (laughs) umm don't you know what it made me think of, what's that song!? "These boots are made for walkin'" (Sings and laughs) that's what it made me think of which was quite funny! Cause that was sort of err 'I don't need you!' so that was interesting! Umm and then here at the end, kinda takes a bit of a turn.

At which one?

Umm sorry 'Man-size' Is it, this comes after this? (Querying about the order of the lyrics on the pages)

Yes! Ja that's right!

Which umm I wasn't really sure about! Umm and I wasn't sure if is…

Oh no, no, no! Sorry umm. That is 'an-Size'!

Is this part of 'Man-Size!?

Yes! Ja!

"Man-Size, man-size!/Silence my lady head"?

Yes, that's the one!

And I wasn't sure if 'My lady head'…

So tell me you said that it takes a turn at that point!?

Ja!

For you!? Okay, how so?

Like I wasn't sure, this "My lady head" was in 'me' and "My lady head" or "My lady head" so as in bottom-down "lady head" or up-top 'lady head' long hair which is associated with femininity or if it was talking about like a 'his' 'lady head', 'her' 'lady head' umm where it says "Got my girl/And she is a wow!" so then I'm not sure if it is

‘my girl’ is ‘my lady head’ So that for me is quite confusing and makes a million in one possible interpretations there. Its says “Silence my lady head/Get girl out of my head” which is also interesting where it’s like umm here its “Got my girl/And she’s a wow!” so I don’t know if it’s that girl or if it’s girlhood, womanhood or, or whether there specifically uses girl instead of woman as in girl umm made it out to be more vulnerable I suppose. Umm ja so it feels like something needing to be or wanting to be or supposed to be or is being killed off there and that for me is ja, I suppose it changes a bit there. It doesn’t change what it is but as an additive and I don’t know if that was a strategy for this one.

Hmm mmm!

Ja!?

I was going to ask you something and I can’t remember. Is there anything else you wanna say or are you cool with that?

I’m okay with that!

Right, umm how did you feel? Did it feel like when you were reading this that it didn’t, that it seemed very confusing, very like not coherent at times err trying to piece things together, very ambiguous, like did it feel like didn’t really flow, it was like this jarring of information, very ambiguous, like did it feel like that?

Ja!

Compared to Liz Phair!? Did it feel very…

More so than Liz Phair! I mean except for the last one of Liz Phair (‘Glory’). Umm but I struggled to, I think ambiguity is, is quite a, the best word and I don’t k now if that was intentional or not! It didn’t bug me so much like as I thought maybe there are different avenues to look at and sometimes I think maybe it’s a, its, its clever play on that, that there’s so many different ways to look. Umm so but I ja, I did. ‘Legs’ I struggled with, that one ja! And I think like I said for some of them it felt like there could be this could mean that or that or her talking about, so that for me I struggled! Where there’s a lot of the word is pronouns ‘my’, ‘his’, ‘her’, ‘him’ and those…

That made it confusing!? Like lumping it all together!?

Ja like whose is ‘my’ now, and who is ‘his’ now, and who is ‘her’ now, who is ‘girl’ now, who is ‘man’ now, who is ‘queen’ now!

Which makes it…

That…

Which creates a struggle I imagine cause you’re trying to sort of err sort of decipher for yourself well who is this now that she’s talking about or who’s speaking now!? ‘I don’t know who’s speaking!”!?

Yes!

Are you speaking, are you speaking for someone else, is someone else talking now!?

Ja!

So that was confusing!?

Ja!

Okay! Alright cool, umm alright how did you feel when you read these lyrics? What was some of the feelings you had when you read this?

Umm the feelings I felt, I think initially before like while I was still trying to make sense of this, initially the second and third one, the 'Man-Size' and '50ft Queenie', umm ja I found my initial assumption almost err, err a competing one that made me feel a little bit aggravated.

Okay!?

Umm and then, and then I wasn't actually sure if I was interpreting it right but that didn't even sit for long either. Umm this one 'Rid Of Me' that was quite umm like I quite enjoyed it but at the same time I felt a little bit like the feeling that it evoked within me was feelings of umm what s the word I'm thinking of!? Almost err, err umm uncomfortable-ness in terms of what talking about this stuff like a, like an addiction, sort of err a feel of it is what I got. I t made me feel like anxious and that way umm where she says "Oh I beg you/Don't leave me/ I'm hurting" Umm then the "You're not rid of me!" Umm then the "Lick my injuries!/I'm gonna twist your head of!" Almost like an unhealthy relationship kind of a feel where there's that 'you can't leave! You have to stay!' Umm and that to me it didn't really feel very gender oriented though! I don't know maybe the "Lick my legs!/I'm on fire/ Lick my legs of desire!" But it didn't need to be the way, like it didn't feel like it needed to say anything about gender roles. It more felt like err, err relationship that felt quite stuck, quite dangerous!

So you're saying that it didn't matter that it came from a woman!?

Ja!

Okay! Cool!

Whereas the others sound a lot more gender oriented it's just I'm not sure about 'Legs' again.

Okay! Did it feel like a woman wrote all of these songs? Or did it feel like it wasn't a woman, it was just someone?

Ja! I must admit it didn't feel like a woman! Snake maybe perhaps a bit more cause it felt very much so like she, the identifying was with the Eve character who in my mind I associate with a woman.

What were certain things that maybe I'm reiterating again, but what made it feel like woman didn't write this kind of stuff?

Like not necessarily male or female!?

Ja! Or well in this case why was it, why did it feel like it was not necessarily a female who wrote this? Like what was some of the things that didn't make it feel female to you?

Umm I suppose when I say it didn't make it female I'm saying it didn't make it feel either it felt like the comment wasn't so much like I think maybe thinking of it as a woman or a man singing it would make me interpret it in a certain way that might be different and maybe I did maybe think it was different cause I knew it was a woman that it doesn't sort of, I felt like it could be sung by either and still have a …

The fact that they speaking about 'sex' does it matter if it comes from a man woman?

Oh no! Maybe that's why…

Well when there is so many sexual metaphors and so many connotations used does it matter whether it comes from a man or woman?

No I don't think so!

Okay!

But, but I think that probably, I'm just thinking in terms of like during radio airplay there like I wouldn't expect to find it somewhere, that's why I don't know maybe if I've got too much almost knowledge behind it that's not kind of telling whether it's a guy or a girl.

Perhaps maybe it has implications!?

What do you mean!?

For it coming from a man or a woman!? The fact that its loaded with so much sexual stuff in terms of what she's saying, does it have implications whether it comes from a man or woman, would you think so?

Implications for!? For me!?

For you, for society maybe!?

Umm…

The implications for this kind of reality and this kind of performances!?

For me maybe coming from a woman umm the implications would be that I'm almost looking for umm identity comments, gender identity comments. Umm for society (laughs) but maybe like it wouldn't, you don't expect strong sexual images from woman even from men in terms of umm like radio play. Its perhaps not socially more,

more expected from men! Whereas for women there's an expectation that the sort of sexual orientation or umm…

Is more soft maybe!? More softer!?

Ja! Like this is, it's feels very like direct imagery! "Like my legs I'm on fire!/Lick my legs of desire!" That's really umm overt, it's, it's not trying to hide it or anything which I think in many cases the social expectation of women musicians is to be umm or if they're gonna talk about being hot, there's almost a tendency to, to, to portray in a such graphic terms I think is the word, is more what I'm thinking. Sex isn't supposed to be graphic! It's just not allowed! Umm it's more the expectation!

Tell me do you struggle to kind of like when you read this like maybe, maybe I'm, maybe this an uncomfortable question but do you like personally struggle to make sense of this because of your idea of yourself as a woman and how you've internalised kind of your idea of what it means to be feminine, does it make it difficult for you to kind of read stuff like this and identify with this stuff or does it make it easier or does it make it difficult or maybe does it not matter at all?

Umm I think difficult is a right word to use but I think the difficulty is more in trying to understand what's actually being said. I don't feel difficult in terms of feeling uncomfortable or umm 'Oh my God! This is gonna attack me or who I am!' or, or even opposite like 'Oh my word! I so strongly identify!' you know! Umm I think my difficulty comes into trying to understand what's being actually said and I wonder if maybe I'd feel differently if I understood everything a bit more in detail of what she was trying to say. Umm maybe my emotional reaction to these two that had a lot more err I'm not whose actually speaking, '50ft Queenie' and 'Man-Size', or what the switch is going on in the song umm maybe my emotional reaction was more about that let me just think.

Do you think she's doing it deliberately?

I don't know! I, doing what deliberately!? The ambiguity!?

The ambiguity! Because if she were doing it deliberately then you would expect everyone to be like 'okay! Well what the hell! Well what are you talking about!?' you know!

Ja!

Because if you're doing it deliberately then she wants to kind of maybe, maybe disturb or confuse people when it comes to gender identity!?

Ja! In a way although the initial reaction from me was like why the confusion!? That irritates me a little, umm the ambiguity at the same time tones down that frustration in me cause I think well maybe it is supposed to be a play on guy/girl, him/her, me/her,

it/him, and that for me is quite nice I like the idea that maybe it is all ambiguous that maybe there isn't something definite, that there aren't these definite boundaries that can say whose the speaker and I think that's just my social assumption about who expect it to be in each case.

I was just going to ask and I think you've answered it, how do you feel about the ambiguity, do you feel like umm like what relevance would ambiguity or do you feel like its good, like it sits okay with me?

Ja! Both! I think I find myself feeling frustrated because I have a tendency to want to make sense of everything and, and find almost a definite meaning in it for me. Umm and I do tend to look for that in poetry, in songs umm but at that same time its perhaps if I knew what was written I'd be able to recognise the ambiguity in all, if it's always intended. And in that way it's quite nice that it doesn't sit so well and that's something perhaps I could identify with on a more personal level is that I don't like the idea that things always have to fit in one way. Umm that makes it comfortable for everybody else or clear for everybody else umm so while it irritates me at the same time I can identify with it.

Okay, so it does both for you hey!?

Ja!

Alright umm was there anything that you particularly liked or disliked about what you just read?

Again I think the same as the first err umm…

Do you find yourself generally liking the material?

Generally liking in terms of I find it interesting, thought-provoking, umm ja and some little things which like I was saying I could identify with, umm ja!

It's interesting! You mentioned something that really struck me, you said that it's important and I'm sure not only for you but for many people, I think you echo what a lot of people would feel. You mentioned that it's important for you to make sense of what you reading, umm because, because ultimately that's where we all sort of operate from. And the fact that you can't make sense of what you, of what you're reading means that you're going to struggle to sort of umm because obviously you've got an idea of things in your head like women and men and sex and religion and blah, blah, blah, and when you're reading something that's, that's, that's obviously speaking to something in a sexual or religious or in a gendered way and when it's not making so much sense it's going to disturb the kind of idea you have about it. Err well the idea's that you have about sex or

religion or gender I imagine right!? So it's almost like, I guess I was just struck when you said that it's important for you to kind of make sense of it.

I think ja maybe important is not so much the making sense but I find it's the making sense almost means in way to be finding meaning and I, I sort of do tend to look for meaning where, and I think that's where for me I feel frustrated by not being able to make sense, to make meaning and at the same time I quite like that because I feel then it's not boxed and into one or religion, sex, sexuality, gender, umm aggression, competition, but all those things aren't made to make one clear image that maybe they all do interact in a way that isn't always predictable in a way that isn't always clariable umm and while I suppose my natural way of thinking is to be 'No! I've gotta make sense of it all! I've gotta find a definite meaning behind it all!' at the same time I suppose my own experience is what brought me to a place of thinking that I'm never going to make sense of it all and find umm a perfect meaning of it all or categorise even those things.

How does that sit with you?

It sits not well in terms of

The fact that you can't know everything, the fact that there's going to be times where there are going to be things you're not going to know!?

Ja! In a way it's nice because it feels more real!

Okay!?

That it is more real to…

Not know sometimes!?

To not know and a lot of the time and that perhaps a lot of what we do know is about our own expectations and I find when I read these songs and the other ones that my starting point is always from a point of umm expectation, whether it be my own personal expectation or what my expectations are about these singers because even though I don't actually know their music I know a little bit about them sort of what you've said about Liz Phair. Umm and then from social expectations in terms of what do words mean umm when you use words like, words like desire, words like queen, umm words like man-size, words like snake, umm Adam and Eve, words like divine, words like 'oh happy day!' phrases like that that, that all of those words sort of come with expectations that might be my own personal experience, that might be umm what these artists might intend by them and then, and then what society is and for me it's trying to negotiate what is the intention here, does it speak to all three of all three, is it supposed to be what the general societal expectations are of those words or not. Cause

that for me helps to figure out what the writers meaning is and then my own meaning at the same time as well as…

Society's!?

Society's ja!

So there's three levels almost hey!?

Ja!

It feels like!?

Umm ja! I think so and then I think the different I suppose overall themes I was talking about don't always gel, like we don't tend to like to mix umm sex and religion in society, it's considered offensive, not all the time and that's quite a generalisation of me to make but I think often its taboo to do so, and that's a 'religious' experience umm sometimes the language feels as if they are, that sex or gender or religion or identity, all of those things aren't separate entities which can be quite confusing. Cause there's a tendency I don't know for most people but certainly for me to umm almost need to separate at times to clarify umm meaning which is difficult when the reality is that they can't be separated and therefore what you're clarifying isn't actually a clear picture.

Okay, cool! Umm just a few more questions and we can take a break alright. Umm would you listen to music like this, I know you haven't heard what it sounds like but based on the lyrics would you listen to something like this?

The lyrics would catch me!

Okay! Alright umm, so you've just read PJ Harvey and Liz Phair, could you discuss maybe what do you think was similar between the both or was there a similarity or was it mostly difference?

Umm…

You don't have to elaborate too much, just maybe one or two words on what was similar and what made them maybe different?

Okay so I suppose the similarity was I the overall themes I just discussed umm was some kind of, I felt a gender feel like it made me think about gender umm even if that wasn't necessarily directly expressed umm I felt like that was a common thread and, and there was a link between that and sexuality and sex. Umm I'm not always exactly sure what umm but that felt similar umm I suppose some kind of religious ideas as well here and there, that seemed common to both of them. Okay and I don't know if I'm over-interpreting the first one in that regard. Umm and then some kind of power dynamic but I don't know what but it feel like power came into it for both of them. Maybe I used the words aggression more for the first one and competition for the second but there did feel like a power dynamic somewhere.

And striking differences, maybe what, what made PJ Harvey different to Liz Phair, **How did they differ?**

I don't know if it's just cause we spoke about it more but I did feel err umm less certain of which way to interpret metaphors for PJ Harvey. Umm but perhaps it would be different if I re-looked at the other now especially as we discussed that now. Umm what else is different, ja.

Were there no really striking differences?

Nothing striking!

Okay, and I think that's fine, that's cool. Umm anything else you wanna add or you fine with that?

No! I'm good!

Cool! Umm would you think that people would share, and this is obviously quite controversial, quite and one can argue, umm but do you think most people would share like your views and opinions about PJ Harvey and Liz Phair or are they likely not to?

I think it would depend on who those people are (laughs).

Okay!?

I think mmm I think you could a multitude of reactions, some people might love it, some people might love it for the sake of controversy umm the mixing of things cause it makes other people feel uncomfortable and people quite like that.

Do you think that it would split people?

Err yeah! Maybe that's a good word! Umm some people might find it offensive to mix imagery, some people might just find the graphic nature of talk whether it be violent or sex or even umm what's the word I'm looking for physical, bodily, appendages, whats the word I'm looking for…

Umm I don't know, err…

Biology!? External

Biological, physiological!?

There we go! That sometimes that's too graphic for people, it feels too exposed! Maybe that would, I think there might be an offensive, people taking offence there. It might be umm not taking offence, but it might be…

Indifferent!? Maybe some people might be indifferent to it!?

I don't think that it would be that indifferent…

Either love it or hate it!?

Ja!

Okay!

So I would say maybe taking offence maybe to feeling uncomfortable umm maybe enjoying the controversy or the challenge or the exposure.

Okay!

Ja!

Cool!

Lets start with Liz Phair, did you expect her to look the way she does? May seem a silly question, but did you just in your head when you were reading her lyrics and just sort of getting a sense of her, is the image congruent to what you read?

I'm trying to think what image I had first. Umm you know what's a little unfortunate is that I have seen this before (pointing to CD cover) So its not like …

You haven't seen her!?

Ja! Umm but it doesn't feel congruent. I don't know if it's what I expected.

Umm ja! Is it what you expected?

Maybe sort of the rock-chick look!

So you expected a bit of that!?

Ja!

And do you think that's represented in her pictures , that rock-chick kind of a look?

Ja! To some extent umm maybe what's not is the, the like almost umm girly-slivery-strappy sort of think! That looks like it doesn't fit yet the contrast is good! The quite toned arms umm the contrast is quite nice. That there is a, there's not a sort of a needing to be butch is the only word I can think of.

Still maintaining like some sort of 'feminine-ness', 'femininity'!?

Ja! I know what you mean! (Laughing) What word do we use for that!? Like nowadays that doesn't mean anything else!

I don't know umm, I don 't know!

Okay lets call it stereotypical femininity!

Okay, and PJ Harvey, did you expect what you're seeing here?

Umm what I didn't expect was that like, this strong sort of theatrical look!

Okay!?

And, and she doesn't always look that, like it's quite different looks in all these pictures. And in here! Not at all! Umm so that for me wasn't a, let me have a look at what I might have expected. Umm…

Is what you expected represented in the pictures of PJ Harvey?

Ja! That's what I'm looking for, maybe what would I have expected. Umm maybe a combination, sort of, let me look here (going through the pictures). The one where she is sitting and the one with the green top on.

With the sunflower!?

Ja!

What kind of looks are these? Sorry! If you can put words to them!

Ja! I'm trying to think…

Would you say it's a rock look, a weird look, a goth look, a challenging look, a pretty look!?

Umm sort of an almost, maybe an ambiguous (Laughs)

(Laughs) Okay, okay!

She doesn't look girly but she does look girly you know even the flower, flowers are so symbolic! Umm but not done up which is why I find these three incredibly contrasting to these three. It's almost a little girl pose here, umm her body is very small so it gives it a little girl feel. And at the same time quite provocative with her legs open! Umm and sort of directly confronting the camera, that, that sort of contrasting look at the time is what I was expecting. These one's I find more extreme, and yet when you look at those, those I could put together and those, I could put together but they're very different. Maybe it actually does what we were discussing, not having to be one way.

Not fixed, quite static!?

Lots of ambiguity and fluidity umm between the meaning of her lyrics and maybe that's what in a way we've identified, the different ways she's portrayed in these pictures. That it feels like so many different types of images, different types of self-portraits which in a way well the images between each other seems inconsistent. That inconsistency is consistent with the ambiguity of the lyrics. If that makes any sense, what I just said! (Laughs) Okay!

In terms of these images, do you like these images or do you not like looking at them? Some people for example may look at them and go 'Oh my God! What is that! Just take it away! I don't wanna see!' or some people might be like 'Wow, they're quite fascinating images, they're interesting!' Do you, do you, I don't wanna put it down to a question of you liking or not liking…

But I wouldn't look away I'd look to! I find them interesting! I find them fascinating! I imagine what makes them also more so is the combination of them. It's not just one image. And I find them, they're quite attractive women. Different kind of attractive. Umm I wonder what's different, umm and I don't know…

But there is a difference hey!?

And I don't know if its aesthetic or my personal, but like Liz Phair looks, even the association with her hair is very interesting umm but she looks almost umm let me think. She seems more integrated in her look, still very as I was saying stereotypically feminine but not only that.

She could be the girl next door right!?

Ja! I suppose certainly in that one and maybe in that one and quite sexy as well, although I think that's something both of them are in different pictures. Here she looks quite provocative , these two pictures I would equate in a way!

So there's some sort of similarity between the provocative images of Liz Phair with the Fanta bottle and PJ Harvey on the stool . You'd equate those two!?

Ja! Something that's sexy, provocative and yet almost a naivety sort of look which, the contrast makes it look like a play on that. Like its' it's not and maybe it's a challenge but I quite like it. And that's why these two images appeal to me more.

So umm the images of these two women does seem to some extent consistent with their lyrics?

Ja! Perhaps what their lyrics portray to me! I think so.

So it wasn't as though you got a completely different image of the women who wrote those songs when, when , when you looked at those images!? It wasn't like 'Oh my word! These images are so different to what I expected!'!?

No! I don't think so! I think like maybe if I'd seen just one song because it's not just all of the same you know although there is stuff that overlaps for each of them maybe having… So maybe there's one songs I might pick out and one picture that stood out. And the fanta bottle! That's a nice phallic symbol there!

Last question! And this may be a silly one but looking at these two women and their images and just looking at the lyrics, and maybe you don't know them all that well but you'd have to spend some time, and again this may seem like a silly question but would these be the kind of women that you'd have in your life as friends or as just like, like would you imagine that you could be friends with women like these?

Ja! Umm but…

Or would it be like "No way! I would never!'!?

Oh no! No! No! I don't think so. No it doesn't make me feel uncomfortable umm I'm just thinking, like this, what you really mean!? Umm that's a weird question!

It is a bit of a silly question!

Maybe if I'm doing all my associations with these women it certainly would not be something that would turn me off or make me feel uncomfortable.

Okay, anything else you wanna add, any last minute things you wanna add or say or are you cool and comfortable with everything that you said?

Umm, no! I'm comfortable!