The

Sound Studies Reader

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THE AUDIO-VISUAL IPOD

Whether at home or in some modern means of transportation, society's actions remain everywhere the same. Changes in the landscape, however, distract attention from the hypocrisy of societal events, whose monotony is forgotten in the adventure of the voyage . . . Travel is one of the best means for a society to maintain a permanent state of absentmindedness, which prevents that society from coming to terms with itself. It assists fantasy along mistaken paths; it occludes one's perspective with impressions; it adds to the wonder of the world, so that the world's ugliness goes unnoticed.

(Kracauer 1995: 299)

The consumer is engaged by his or her own mobility and imagination: movement and incompleteness equally energise the imagination; fixity and solidity equally deaden it.

(Sennett 2006: 149)

A fictitious world, as illusion it contains more truth than does everyday reality.

(Marcuse 1978: 154–155)

Cities are fabulous with a soundtrack. They morph so easily – to becoming super-modern places if you're listening to, say, Belle and Sebastian, or a sexual playground if you're listening to some hot R&B. Or a melancholy wasteland if indie rock. People change accordingly. Rural landscapes are best appreciated with ambient stuff, or, in the case of America, good classic rock. Irrespective of what music you listen to, it makes your environment seem 'super-real' or more animated – charged somehow with the life of the music. Banal things seem more significant or poetic. You feel 'cooler' too, in your soundtrack cocoon.

(iPod user)

ONE SET OF STRATEGIES EMBARKED upon by iPod users in their effort to deal with the contingent and chilly nature of urban space is to aestheticise it. This aesthetic colonisation of urban space is in part a technological tale whereby urban experience becomes synonymous with technological experience. This technological structure to experience is both pervasive and increasingly taken for granted in wide areas of daily life. The pervasiveness is simultaneously empowering and dependent for contemporary consumers. Technology as a medium of organisation seamlessly mediates urban experience for large numbers of citizens — whether it is through individualising technologies like the iPod, the mobile phone or the automobile or through the multitude of hidden technologies that enable everyday life to function.

This chapter focuses primarily upon the aestheticising potential of the most totalising of all of these technologies, the iPod. This aesthetics of the street is largely an audio-visual one in which iPod users are transported from one cognitive and physical space to another through the dominant organising potential of privatised sound. The aestheticisation of urban space represents one set of strategies undertaken by iPod users in their management of daily life. The use of an iPod enables users to create a satisfying aestheticised reality for themselves as they move through daily life.

The aestheticising strategies undertaken by iPod use differs from the traditionally accepted mode of urban aesthetics which goes by the name of flâneurism, which has become the romantic metaphor for city life in much urban analysis.[1] Flâneurism as a mode of urban appropriation is representative of the dominance of the visual in urban and cultural studies (Amin and Thrift 2002; Freidberg 1993; Jenks 1995; Tester 1994; Tonkiss 2005). The flâneur, in this literature, is understood as a rootless, displaced subject who places themselves in the shoes of the 'other' — imagining what the world would be like from the position of the other. Flânerie is an act of alienated integration representing a quest to understand the other, albeit in imaginary terms, and *is* 'characterised by its very receptive disposition, a mode of embracing rather than of excluding external impulses' (Gleber 1999: 26). Benjamin understood the flâneur as representing the image of the outsider, yet in contemporary rhetoric flânerie has become universalised — we all become flâneurs in a sanitised image of urban relations in which flânerie becomes an integral part of the 'tourist' gaze.

Flâneurism is, however, an inappropriate concept for understanding the audio-visual world of the contemporary iPod user. The mundane and routine daily experience of the urban citizen is not primarily made up of the tourist gaze. Indeed, iPod culture embodies a directly contrary position to that of the flâneur. The aesthetic moment of urban experience within iPod use draws the 'other' numerically into the users own imaginary realm — theirs is a strategy in which all 'differences' are negated to become one with the user. iPod culture represents the aesthetics of mimicry; it is an audio-visual mimicry.

Visual epistemologies impose a silent gaze upon the city in a manner that mimics the 'purely visual *agora*' of the city, which itself is thought to 'provoke mutual withdrawal' (Sennett 1994: 358). Visual descriptions of the city often resemble the snapshot — the fragmentary distillation of urban life as if through the aperture of a camera (Benjamin 1973). iPod culture, by contrast, concerns the seamless joining together of experience in a flow, unifying the complex, contradictory and contingent nature of the world beyond the user. The success of these aestheticising

strategies depends upon the creation of an all-enveloping wall of sound through which the user looks. Users report that iPod experience is at its most satisfying when no external sound seeps into their world to distract them from their dominant and dominating vision.

The Aesthetics of the Street

Urban citizens frequently ignore the physical environment through which they move. The mundane journeying through the city invariably does not evoke the 'tourist' gaze (Urry 1995), with city dwellers rarely mentioning the spaces that they daily pass through. City spaces are, rather, experienced as habitual, not meriting mention. iPod use provides one way in which the urban dweller navigates through the mundane spaces of the city, frequently preoccupied with their own mood and orientation rather than the spaces passed through. iPod users' inattention to the visual is true both of crowded city centres and of quiet suburban streets. When iPod users do choose to look, their attentiveness is an auditory attentiveness facilitated by the rhythm of sound pumped directly into their ears. iPod users aim to create a privatised sound world, which is in harmony with their mood, orientation and surroundings, enabling them to re-spatialise urban experience through a process of solipsistic aestheticisation. iPod users aim to habitually create an aesthetically pleasing urban world for themselves as a constituent part of their everyday life. The aesthetic appropriation of urban space becomes one cognitive strategy as users attempt to create a seamless web of mediated and privatised experience in their everyday movement through the city, enhancing virtually any chosen experience in any geographical location at will. In doing so they create an illusion of omnipotence through mediated proximity and 'connectedness' engendered by the use of their iPod.

Jason is thirty-five years old; he lives in New Orleans and works in online media distribution. He is married, with one young child, and has owned an iPod for over a year, never having possessed a mobile music player previously. He regularly listens to music and audio books on his iPod, and employs both in his aestheticising strategies. Jason describes listening to a talking book on his iPod whilst drinking a cup of coffee in a local café: 'I love the experience of listening to a work of fiction and being in a public place like a coffee store. I like to watch people around me and imagine them as the characters in the novel.' The aesthetic impulse transforms the mundane space of the café into the scenario of the novel being listened to, with its customers as unknowing characters. The aesthetic impulse energises the mundane space of the café, creating an audio-visual drama in which Jason becomes its active audio-visual master. Listening frees up the eyes to observe and imagine, thus differing from the traditional reading of a book, in which the reader is visually engaged in the text. Jason can look around the café, the movements of his body unconstrained by the act of reading. The text becomes a continuous flow of sound on to which he adds a level of physicality in the act of imagination. The sound print of the book is imposed on the silence of the world around him. Jason does not experience the café itself as an unpleasant environment – he chooses to enter and have refreshments, after all. The

aesthetic impulse is triggered by the desire to heighten his experience. The mimetic character of iPod aesthetics occurs equally in music listening, as Jason explains, again in the café:

> My world looks better. I get more emotional about things, including the people I see and my thoughts in general. Sometimes I project the lyrical content of songs on to the people I see while I'm listening. For example, I can distinctly remember listening to U2's 'Stuck in a Moment' and I was looking at some of the people standing around me in a coffee shop, with the look of anxiety on their faces and general angst. It made me want to hug them and tell them it's OK . . . I would look at other people and they would smile at me, almost like they knew what I was thinking. . . . It's like it polarised my world into these hemispheres of those who understood Bono's message and those who didn't. I'm not a Bono worshipper or anything; it was just the first time I had really listened to the lyrics of the song. That's a very private moment (in public). . . . it's difficult to explain, but when he said the words 'I know it's tough, but you can never get enough of what you don't really need' it all just crystallised for me. I've had a lot of surreal moments like that listening to the music on my iPod and watching the world around me . . . It's almost like watching a movie, but you're in it.

The reference to iPod experience as being like that of a movie is common, although its meaning varies (Bull 2000). In Jason's account it refers to the world in which he lives, appearing as if it were a movie in which he is also placed. The U2 song heightens Jason's mood. Listening to the song, he recognises the superfluity of the ethics of consumption as articulated by Bono and seemingly etched upon the faces of the hapless customers in the café. The lyrics of the song appear to describe the cognitive state of the others, visually imagined and interpreted by Jason. The aesthetic principle serves to elevate Jason beyond mundane concerns – placing him in a position of an empowered interpreter of the world whilst remaining distant. In the act of interpretation Jason remains silent, impenetrable to others.

City life is invariably about surfaces, the superficial reading and the transitory clues involved in our observations of others, hence the overriding dominance of the visual in urban accounts of experience. The presentation of self is a largely visual one – the presence of the other is largely a silent presence in urban culture, even in the urban world of the mobile phone. Silence protects the urban subject from 'the harsh realities of the world'. It is this silence which promotes both isolation and the flowering of self; the richness of interiority contrasted with the blandness of the outside world. The flow of people moving through the street differs from that of those sitting or milling around a café. The café is also a place of talk, of snatched conversations, of potential exposure. The above account of iPod use re-imposes the purely visual on to the activity of others in order to construct them as significant, yet imaginary, others. Jason in drawing others into his 'enlightenment' vision is essentially saying, 'If you could hear what I hear, then you too would be transformed.' Jason's enlightenment, however, remains a mute and private

enlightenment in which others are unaware as they move through space with their own unknown preoccupations. Jason's private revelations nevertheless cognitively empower him, heightening his sense of presence and purpose; his is an audio-visual mastery of the world:

> Sometimes I think I can calm people down just by looking at them when I'm listening to music. And sometimes, when they look at me, I think they do 'shift', because they recognise that I'm in a 'good place'.

Jason, in the act of private listening, imagines that he ceases to be a blank canvas, a mere surface that others look at uninterestedly. Meaning radiates from him, the internal becomes externalised, constructed through music and made transparent – immediate. He is transformed in the imagined eyes of others becoming the centre of a cognitive universe through which others reflect – his cognitive state becomes their cognitive state – though they are not privy to his sound world. The auditory 'look' is a sufficient tag, in the above account, for an 'imaginary' recognition to flow from the 'other'. Jason is not merely a part of this audio-visual world; he becomes its director, orchestrating meanings in which he imagines others as 'knowing' cast members. Jason is not alone in summoning up precise aesthetic re-creations through the creation of scenarios in which others play unwitting stand-up parts:

> For some reason, Talking Head songs seem to work best for this. Like, I will look at an old woman with a cane, and imagine her singing one lyric. Then move on to a hip-hop style teenage boy, and have him sing to the next line. My imagination really can take off. It sometimes makes me laugh and smile to myself – especially if a particularly amusing line comes up. It really does transform my surroundings. I sort of feel like I'm in my own music video.
>
> (Karen)

Underlying this virtual connectivity appears a playful narrative of invention in which users remain cognitively invisible. Alternatively, the personalisation of the user's sound world imbues the street and its atmosphere, indeed the whole world, with an intimacy, warmth and significance it otherwise lacks. The world mimics and moves to the rhythm of users. For iPod users the street is orchestrated to the predictable sounds of their favourite playlists:

> The world looks friendlier, happier, and sunnier when I walk down the street with my iPod on. It feels as if I'm in a movie at times. Like my life has a soundtrack now. It also takes away some of the noise of the streets, so that everything around me becomes calmer somewhat. It detaches me from my environment, like I'm an invisible, floating observer.
>
> (Berklee)

The process of auditory looking described above by the young Dutch user in Amsterdam mirrors that of users elsewhere. iPod users in their viewing strategies

often describe themselves as 'not really there'. The solipsistic viewer is shielded by their iPod from a truly reciprocal gaze. Jason's description above, for example, was of the imaginary gaze of the other; a constituent part of his own imaginative construction. iPod users frequently engage in non-reciprocal gazing whereby they don't receive the gaze of others at all – the iPod acts as a virtual pair of sunglasses from which the user stares imperiously. Susan, a manager from Toronto, describes this transformative power of the iPod over her urban environment:

> I find when listening to some music choices I feel like I'm not really there. Like I'm watching everything around me happening in a movie. I start to feel the environment in the sense of the mood of the song and can find that I can start to love a street that I usually hate, or feel scared for no reason.
>
> (Susan)

The solipsism of the user is frequently referred to in terms of general feelings of separateness:

> I'm living in a world where music is going on and things are happening and everyone else who can't hear what I'm hearing is not really in that world or slightly less connected to it. There's something going on in my head that's for me and only me.
>
> (Kate)

> I see people like I do when I watch a movie . . . there is a soundtrack to my encounters . . . music to accompany my thought about others. It dramatises things a bit, it fills the silent void.
>
> (June)

Streets perceived as silent are in reality a complex of sounds. June's observation that her iPod filled the 'silent void' is indicative of users' experiencing the world solely as a function of mediated sound. The unmediated sound world of urban society is a place where nothing happens – devoid of interest, throwing the subject back into the world of contingency, isolation and incompleteness.

Richard Sennett has argued that feelings of subjective incompleteness in urban space might be conquered through the mere act of movement. To move becomes an end in itself, whilst to remain still is to be reminded of 'self' as 'object' rather than self as activity; as Paris Hilton was heard to comment, 'I walk, I don't think.' iPod users, however, display no such completeness through the mere act of movement. They experience unmediated experience as threatening, silence is associated with falling prey to the unmanageable and contingent nature of their own cognition. In addition to this cognitive frailty they also become aware of the chill of city spaces, which are perceived as inhospitable, without the warmth of desired communication. Whilst the use of a mobile phone makes for a temporary respite, iPod use provides the user with the power to transform their environment seamlessly and continuously. A sense of completeness arrives through mediation – not movement.

Sound Enhancement

To aestheticise, as Marcuse argued, is to simplify, to strip reality of its inessentials. The aesthetic principle is inherently one of transcendence. An essential component of this transcendence for iPod users is to replace the multi-rhythmic and hence unmanageable nature of urban life with their own manageable mono-rhythms. Mundane yet nevertheless unmanageable urban life is transformed through iPod use, creating movement and energy in the user where there was none before. Amy, a thirty-two-year-old who works in product design in Philadelphia, describes walking down the street with her iPod playing;

> My music drives my attitude as I walk down the street. If I'm listening to melancholy music my surroundings are a little greyer, a little more dismal, and the strangers I see on the street become a little more menacing. If I'm listening to upbeat music the strangers look friendlier and my surroundings are not as depressing. While living in a city is practical for many reasons, it can also be overwhelmingly depressing. Having cheerful music in my ears as I see a homeless person digging through garbage to find a meal is disconcerting. Sometimes the music acts as a buffer between me and the city, and other times the music draws such a sharp contrast between what I'm hearing and what I'm seeing that it's hard to take. Other times, when I'm walking through the city with a great song, one that's appropriate to my external surroundings and internal feelings, I feel like I'm the star of my own personal movie, strutting along to my theme song of the moment.

Common in iPod accounts of aesthetic experience is making the street mimic the mood engendered by the music playing on the iPod. In the above account the homeless that are observed are not so much aestheticised as recessed. The use of the iPod provides a 'buffer' between the user and the recognised reality of the city street, invoking Kracauer's observation that 'the world's ugliness goes unnoticed' in iPod culture. Negatives are transformed into positives as Amy describes her elation as she traverses the spaces of the city. Emily, a twenty-six-year-old worker in the advertising industry in London, paints a dystopian image of her experience of the city, highlighted by both her mood and her music:

> I'd just moved house, was going through a *very* tough patch in my life and particularly with my boyfriend. I decided to walk to a different Tube station, trying to find my way without the aid of a map. The song which came on was 'Roses' by Outkast. It's about a nasty woman whose boyfriend is fed up of her . . . You can see the resonance – there's a sense of lonely resignation to the song, and this transformed the surroundings. (I was getting lost and moved from Little Venice, where I live, to the grittiness of Edgware Road.) I was into dull and hideous. Crossing a huge road – filthy petrol fumes, etc. – it all became more intense, thanks to the music. Another time was when I was in Paris for work, and was feeling less than good about work, and wanted to be home, and listening to familiar upbeat

music (Basement Jaxx) made the surroundings seem even more melancholic and alien to me.

(Emily)

Ironically the comfort of listening to familiar music whilst in Paris highlighted her alienation from the streets of Paris – acting merely to remind her of her wish to be home. The following respondent also highlights this colonisation of space in which one's surroundings take on the ambience of the cognitive state of the user, mediated through their soundtrack:

> I feel as though life is a movie and is playing especially for me. If I listen to sad music, which I only listen to when I'm down (boyfriend break-up, bad grade, just bad news) then everything sort of has a grey shadow over it, even when it's sunny outside.
>
> (Betty)

The world experienced as a movie script in which the user takes a central role is a common description of iPod use. The selection of 'sad' music to match the user's mood transposes those feelings to the streets passed through. The world and the user's experience within it gain significance through their enveloping and privatised sound world. iPod users invariably prefer to listen to their music loud, thus providing them with an overwhelming sense of presence whilst simultaneously blocking out any sound from their enviornment that might sully the heightened and empowering pleasure of use. In their world of aesthetic euphoria, experience is simplified, clarified – the aesthetic impulse provides an unambiguous sense of purpose and meaning for users, creating a 'space' within which to unwind and unravel their emotions. When attended to, the street becomes a function of their mood and imagination, mediated through their iPod:

> I like to crank angry, loud music at night; the city seems so much more dark and brutal in the dark if I do that. Walking home, I sometimes listen to more soaring, passionate melodies, and they make me see things differently. I listen to rhythmic and pulsating music sometimes, which makes me feel confident and secure – I don't have to do anything but 'following the beat', so to speak. Sometimes I listen to piano music, and because most of my piano music is kind of depressing/saddening (in a good way) it makes the world seem more fragile and on the verge of collapse. Delirium's music always strikes me in this emotional, soul-searching way, and elevates even the smallest details to some greater significance; every movement of the people in the streets seems spiritual and sacred.
>
> (Brian)

> If it's dark and gloomy and raining outside, I'll pick something that complements the weather, and that can alter the outlook on the world around me. I can take joy in otherwise gloomy, rainy, dank weather by

putting on something wonderfully gloomy and dank, something I love to hear. It's a fine synergy of the visual and auditory environments. It makes me feel like I'm walking through my own movie, with my own soundtrack. The people around me look like extras on the set. Dark clouds look brighter and the smell of the rain gets stronger. I see myself in the third person.

(Kerry)

My iPod puts me in a place and time. It's very common for me to walk to the music, so to speak. What I am listening to affects how I see everything around me. I might listen to some classic soul while I walk and the city seems to have a very mellow vibe. On other occasions I might have on some Rage against the Machine or something like that, and the city seems chaotic, crazy, too fast. What I listen to always impacts the way I view my surroundings.

(Freedom)

Aesthetic enhancement is a central strategy of iPod use. Times of the day or weather conditions are complemented by and enhanced through the use of music played on the iPod. This might be predetermined through the construction of playlists made for these occasions or found whilst scrolling through the contents of the iPod. The contents of the iPod represent a repository of sensory and environmental stimuli.

Some iPod users play music at random, rather than sorting through their playlists to find a suitable track to harmonise or illuminate their surroundings. They have their iPod on shuffle, thereby forcing a level of contingency upon the juxtaposition of sound and street. None the less, the aestheticising impulse continues to throw up interesting options for users in which the world continues to be brought into harmony with the music:

I find that my iPod 'colours' my surroundings quite significantly; as it's on shuffle I don't know what's coming up next, and it often surprises me how the same street can look lively and busy and colourful one moment and then – when a different song starts – it can change to a mysterious and unnerving place. I like the sensation, though.

(Andy)

iPods are non-interactive in the sense that users construct fantasies and maintain feelings of security precisely by not interacting with others or their environment.

Sound both colonises the listener and actively recreates and reconfigures the spaces of experience. Through the power of a privatised sound world the world becomes intimate, known and possessed. Imagination is mediated by the sounds of the iPod becoming an essential component in the ability of users to imagine at all. Users are often unable to aestheticise experience without the existence of their own individual soundtrack acting as a spur to the imagination.

In this ordering of cognition the user surpasses the disjunction that exists between their own soundtrack, the movement of others and the environment passed through.

Without the iPod they experience the world out of sync. The polyrhythmic nature of the city relativises their own place within the world, making them just one more piece of an anonymous urban world.

Sound Utopias

If movement is itself a potentially transformative activity, then moving to sound is doubly so. Movement itself embodies an element of ideology as the subject moves through the city. In the modernist urban world of the city it was the subject who was traditionally colonised by the enticements of the city, interiorising the utopian dreams fabricated in the electronic lights and billboards of the city of which the subject became a constituent part. The representational spaces of the city fill up subjectivity, so to speak:

> Illuminated words glide on the rooftops, and already one is banished from one's own emptiness into the alien advertisement. One's body takes root in the asphalt, and, together with the enlightening revelations of the illuminations, one's spirit – which is no longer one's own – roams ceaselessly out of the night and into the night.
>
> (Kracauer 1995:332)

Kracauer's understanding of the urban colonisation of the subject is essentially Fordist, in which the dominant rhythms of the city create the cadences within which all citizens walk. Urban experience becomes mediated through the advertising technologies of commodity culture and the empowered dreams associated with the very act of movement itself. iPod culture reverses this phenomenon. The user is saturated with the privatised sounds of the iPod – the cultural imperative, fully commoditised, lies in the contents of the iPod itself. The world is drawn into the user's 'individual' narrative rather than the street drawing the user into its realm. The experiences of the city described by Kracauer and those of the iPod user remain mediated and commoditised. Both sets of descriptions are equally filmic. Kracauer's urban stroller lives in the polyrhythmic audio-visual world of the street, which presents itself to him as a spectacle in which the street becomes a commodified dream. iPod users, rather, construct a mono-rhythmic aesthetic narrative to the street deciphered from the sounds of the culture industry emanating from the iPod in their pocket. Theirs is a hyper-post-Fordist street of potentially multiple audio-visual scenarios – with each iPod user constructing their own singular mediated dream world simultaneously. Kracauer's subject is diminished, made smaller, by the scale of the street and its illuminated signs, whereas iPod users such as Sophie, a marketing manager from London, describes her iPod experience as

> making the world look smaller – I am much bigger and more powerful listening to music. The world is generally a better place, or at the very least it is sympathetic to my mood . . . you become part of the music and can take on a different persona.

iPod use inverts the relationship between the user and the world. Sophie occupies the centre of her world. Empowered, she looms large against the horizon. The world, in harmony with her mood, is a better world. The world is brought into line through the privatised yet mediated act of cognition. A potentially perfect mimetic fantasy that denies the contingent nature of the world.

iPod users resemble both the imaginative city dweller who aesthetically recreates any chosen urban space at will, enlivening it as they move through the city, whilst also, and equally, appearing to represent an urban subject in retreat from a bland and alienating urban environment. Accounts of the blandness of urban experience are invariably accounts of the solitary subject confronting the 'non-spaces' of the city (Augé 1995). In these portrayals the city is portrayed as semiotically void, in which the subject, without the ideological props of commodity culture, remains 'transcendentally homeless'.

Aestheticisation has utopian implications for users. To aestheticise is to transcend the mundane world as it is experienced. Aestheticisation remains an active mode of appropriating the urban, transforming that which exists, making it the user's own. The desire to engage in these aestheticising processes derive both from the habitual predispositions of users located in wider media use – for are not television and film viewers equally in positions of imaginary omnipotence whilst they watch from the comfort of their own home? (Morley 2000) – and as a response to the nature of urban space itself and the dislocation from it felt by the urban subject (Augé 1995; Sennett 1990).

In this process of aestheticisation iPod users transform the world in conformity with their predispositions. The world becomes part of a mimetic fantasy in which the 'otherness' of the world in its various guises is negated. This is an important strategy for iPod users, who subjectivise space – consume it, as if it were a commodity. In the process, immediate experience is fetishised. Technologised experience is fetishised experience. Experience becomes real or hyper-real precisely through its technologisation – through technological appropriation. The utopian impulse to transform the world occurs only in the imaginary: in its technologised instrumentality the world remains untouched. Users prefer to live in this technological space whereby experience is brought under control – aesthetically managed and embodied–whilst the contingent nature of urban space and the 'other' is denied. The concept of 'otherness' becomes increasingly redundant in iPod culture. Forms of urban reciprocity, of urban recognition, are denied within the very structure of iPod use. The empowerment of the subject implies an incipient crisis in the way in which users 'recognise' the other (Honneth 1995).

The aestheticisation of experience has traditionally been portrayed not merely as pleasurable, which it certainly is, but also as inconsequential in so far as the object of the gaze is left untouched – unsullied. 'Aesthetically, the city space is a spectacle in which amusement value overrides all other considerations' (Bauman 2000: 168). Yet, far from being inconsequential, this aestheticising mode of urban experience contains cognitive and moral resonances. The aestheticisation of experience remains relational, and, whilst the subjects of the aestheticisation process remain untouched, the aestheticising impulse highlights the underlying values of users in their relation to the 'other' and the spaces passed through. The aestheticising practices of iPod users

contribute to our understanding of what it means to 'share' urban space with others from within an auditory bubble, immune to the sounds of others.

Notes

1.   'Flanerie is very closely related to other constructions of cultural modernity. Linked to the movements and images that belong to the processes of tourism, photography, and psychoanalysis, it ultimately charts the aesthetics of modernity that reveals its affinities to the medium of the cinema and its reception of external reality' (Gleber 1999: 6).

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