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Mobile Music Listening

– an aesthetic and aestheticizing practice

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Abstract

How are we to conceptualize the experiences of mobile music listeners as they move through the city listening to a private soundtrack? The phenomenon has been described as an aestheticization of urban space (Bull, 2002, 2005, 2007; Hosokawa 1984 a.o.), and this perspective seems to focus on the listeners' wish to alter and manipulate the impression of the surroundings. This article, however, explores and re-thinks how the terms aestheticization and aesthetic experience may be used to describe the specific relationship between the listener and the surroundings, which is established through the act of listening. To support this focus and claim I refer amongst others to Morten Kyndrup's thoughts on the aesthetic relation (Kyndrup, 2008a) and Mikel Dufrenne's theory on the aesthetic object as a perceived object (Dufrenne, 1973, 2001).

Aestheticization – a symptom of the narcissistic late modern man

In his book *Mesterlære* ([Apprenticeship], Bastian, 2011), the Danish musician Peter Bastian describes the values and priorities of late modern humans. He explains how we in Western society today have almost unlimited possibilities to plan and design our lives and identities. This results in a psychological sense of self, where our emotions become primary guidelines for important life decisions. Bastian uses the term *pathological narcissism* to describe and criticize this current preoccupation with our own feelings and emotions. He explains how this focus in some cases will result in inauthentic relations with our surroundings. We become more concerned with our own emotional reaction to an experience than the actual object of the experience. He exemplifies this by describing how we, when we are moved by music, in fact are more concerned with ourselves 'being moved' than with the actual music that causes the emotional reaction.

As such we become main characters in the narration and aestheticization of our own lives. We experience ourselves experience, and when we add music to this experience (using an iPod or any MP3 player) we perceive the situation as a music video (Bastian, 2011, pp. 193-194). This mobile listening, which is extremely popular today, can be characterized as an aestheticization of public space. Private, mobile music listening has often been described as a way of 'coloring', affecting, and aestheticizing the perception of the surroundings.

Researchers such as Michael Bull (2002, 2005, 2007) and Shuhei Hosokawa (1984), among others, use the term aestheticization in their description and critique of this private listening in public. Michael Bull characterizes auditory aestheticization as a manipulation of the surroundings and a way for listeners to create a private space in public, where their personal mood is in accordance with their experience of both the music and their surroundings.

In this article I will add a new perspective to this understanding of mobile listening by re-evaluating how the terms *aestheticization* and *aesthetic experience* relate to MP3 music listening. This study and re-evaluation primarily focuses on *music* listening and the aesthetic feeling that may emerge from these mobile listening situations.¹ I argue that the aestheticization process that may occur during listening forms relations between the listener, the music, and the surroundings. For there to be an aesthetic experience, there must be an *aesthetic relation* between a listening subject and the object – i.e. the music and/or the surroundings (Dufrenne, 1973, 2001). So even though Peter Bastian presents an incisive characterization of late modern humans' preoccupation with aestheticization and describes why this is so important to us today, I will argue that the aestheticization process is not only and always an example of pathological narcissism. It is more complex than merely a listener's wish to intensify his or her current mood or impressions of the surroundings.

Fictitious mobile music listening

Michael Bull describes in his book *Sound Moves* (2007), which is based on extensive empirical material on iPod users from all over the world, how the portable music player may be used in a process of aestheticization:

The use of an iPod enables users to create a satisfying aestheticised reality for themselves as they move through daily life [...] 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 (Bull, 2007 pp.39-40).

Bull associates this process of auditory aestheticization with an almost physical as well as social withdrawal from the rest of the world. He describes mobile music listening as giving the listeners autonomy over time and space, and he explains how “the aesthetic moment of urban experience within iPod use draws the ‘other’ mimetically into the users’ own imaginary realm – theirs [the iPod users’] is a strategy in which all ‘differences’ are negated to become one with the user” (Bull, 2007, p.39).²

Bull gives an example of this aestheticization. He describes a situation where a man is sitting in a café listening to an audio book. This man enjoys imagining that people around him are characters in the book (Bull, 2007, p.40). He creates a fictitious connection between the auditory narration and his physical environment. This example illustrates how mobile listening with headphones can create a private space in public that is dominated by the listener's personal mood and agenda.

Furthermore, it exemplifies Bastian's description of pathological narcissism and touches on the fictitious elements of this type of listening, which are also inherent in Bastian's comparison to the music video.

This focus on fiction and the narrative elements is also present in Shuhei Hosokawa's description of the aesthetic aspects of Walkman listening (Hosokawa, 1984):

The aesthetic aspects [of the Walkman] are, at least in this case, also linked with semantic and theatrical ones (Hosokawa, 1984, p.178).

Here Hosokawa refers to the narratives that may arise from experiencing the combination of music, the surroundings, and the listener's body movement. The listener can construct and deconstruct networks of urban meaning while listening to the music and moving around the city. As such he is controlling the aestheticizing process. The mobility - the physical movement during listening - is according to Hosokawa important for the understanding of the experiences that occur. The bodily element helps the listener to let go of his control and be seduced by or absorbed in the experience.

Through the walkman [sic.], then, the body is opened; it is put into the process of the aestheticisation, the theatricalisation of the urban - but in secret (Hosokawa, 1984, pp.176-177).

As such Hosokawa presents two important aspects of aestheticization: The fictitious elements, which offhand seem to be consistent with both Bastian's views and Bull's theory regarding the manipulation of and withdrawal from the surroundings, and the bodily aspect referring to the process in which the listener opens himself up to the impressions he receives from the surroundings. The first aspect is often used in the description of mobile music listening³. The other, less acknowledged aspect, describes how the listener lends himself and his emotions to the combination of music, surroundings and his own personal body and mood. It explains how he is open to the possibility of an aesthetic experience.

Both aspects are present in Wolfgang Iser's description of the role of aesthetics today. In the article "Aesthetics Beyond Aesthetics" (1997) he describes how aesthetics have become a big part of our everyday lives as we engage in aestheticizing processes with almost everything around us. He gives two examples of how this manifests itself:

- Fashioning of reality
- Understanding of reality⁴

The first refers to a popular tendency to embellish our surroundings. We can style and stage urban areas, the economy, ecology, and our own body, soul, and behav-

our (Welsch, 1997, p.23).⁵ Everything is potentially an object for aestheticization and Welsch believes this to be a problem:

...fashioning everything as beautiful destroys the quality of the beautiful. Ubiquitous beauty loses its distinguished character and decays into mere prettiness or becomes simply meaningless. You can't make what's exceptional a standard without changing its quality (1997, p.25).

According to Welsch, the constant aestheticization results in numbness towards the truly aesthetic and beautiful elements around us. "It ends in anaestheticization" (1997 p.25), he says. Based on this standpoint it seems likely that Welsch would characterize the aestheticization of mobile music listening as a sedative surface oriented aestheticization and perhaps even an example of anaestheticization. Nevertheless, I use Welsch's points here to position my own thoughts on this aestheticization process and to accentuate the sensory and epistemological aspects of aestheticization and the aesthetic experience. These aspects are introduced in Welsch's second point, which describes how the embellishment of the environment becomes a way of apprehending the surroundings.

"An obvious predominance of images and aesthetic patterns exists today, not only in the current shaping of reality addressed so far, but in the current mediation and apprehension of reality as well. In earlier times, to count as being real, something had to be calculable; today it has to be aesthetically presentable" (Welsch, 1997, p.27).

Welsch argues that this mediated version of reality affects how we perceive reality:

We no longer take reality quite so seriously, or as being quite as real (1997, p.28).

Here the fictitious element is again present in the critique of the aestheticization of everyday life. Allegedly, to aestheticize means to manipulate or remove oneself from the truth in the aesthetic object. It is these perspectives on aestheticization as a one-way 'communication' or a fictitious manipulation of the surroundings presented by Bull, Welsch, and Hosokawa that I question in this article.

Due to the broad use of the term aesthetics and the widespread aestheticization of our everyday lives we need to rethink our understanding of this term. Welsch also argues for the need of this re-evaluation. He describes how the term has been associated with art and artistic beauty since Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1794) and later with philosophers such as Hegel, Heidegger, and Adorno. Today, however, the term covers several aspects and qualities beyond the arts. According to Welsch, our understanding of the term must go beyond *artistics* – 'beyond aesthetics' (Welsch, 1997, p.19). We must go back to Baumgarten's original understanding of the word (mid-18th century) deriving from the Greek *aisthesis* and referring basically to sensorial perception. Everything around us may be subject to a process of aestheticiza-

tion. Therefore the term must also refer to a way of sensing and perceiving objects. Because aesthetics today is pluralistic, Welsch argues that as a field of research it should be transdisciplinary. It should include aspects of philosophy, sociology, art history, psychology, anthropology, neurosciences, and so on (1997, p.34). Welsch's transdisciplinary method however, does not seem to recognize that all the elements involved in the aestheticizing process, which precisely make it a transdisciplinary matter, also influence this process and the aesthetic experience. In this article I argue that the aesthetic experience is a result of a dialogical exchange of inputs between the listener, the music, and the elements in the surroundings. This dialogical theory is found in the work of Mikel Dufrenne and Morten Kyndrup.

Aestheticization as a matter of relations

Morten Kyndrup reconceptualizes the term aesthetics in his book *Den æstetiske relation* ([The Aesthetic Relation] 2008a). He describes how the meaning of the term has changed over time and how we need to re-evaluate its meaning today. He explains how aesthetics has failed to evolve as a discipline due to its relation to art. Aesthetics as a field has been used to judge art objects and to create a discourse around art (Kyndrup, 2008a, pp.38-56). But this alliance is slowly breaking up as aesthetics, as mentioned, become a ubiquitous part of our everyday life. This break-up calls for the aforementioned re-evaluation of the meaning of *aesthetics*, *the aesthetic*, and *aestheticization*.⁶ Kyndrup does this by focusing on the personal meeting between the subject and the aesthetic object.⁷ Aesthetics as a science is a theoretical description of empirical relations (Kyndrup, 2008a, p.24). It is a way of having new experiences and gaining new knowledge of an object.

In Mikel Dufrenne's theories on the aesthetic experience he also works with this relation between an aesthetic object and a perceiving subject. Dufrenne emphasizes how this relation is a prerequisite for defining something as being aesthetic or having an aesthetic experience. He argues that the aesthetic relation requires both a subject and an object with a specific aesthetic intentionality, which they direct towards each other (Dufrenne, 1973).⁸ According to both Dufrenne and Kyndrup, it is in this meeting that the aesthetic object is completed. The aesthetic object is relational because it only exists when it is perceived as such (Kyndrup, 2008a, p.100; Dufrenne 2001, p.94). Both Kyndrup and Dufrenne elaborate on this by describing how the aesthetic object is not simply an object in-itself-for-itself, but instead an object in-itself-for-us (Dufrenne, 1973 p.221.). This means that the aesthetic object has certain characteristics and aesthetic qualities but it is not complete as an *aesthetic* object until it is perceived as such by an aesthetically intentional subject (Dufrenne, 1973, p.iii; 2001, p.93). Moreover, it seems that some objects are more prone to attract the aesthetically intentional perception than others. These objects

‘direct’ themselves at the subject in a way that invokes this specific aesthetic perception.

Dufrenne and Kyndrup’s definitions of an aesthetic object are however, slightly diverse. Kyndrup presents an inclusive understanding of the term as he describes it as anything we ascribe aesthetic value to (2008a, p.101). He elaborates on this saying that some objects may attract this type of perception more than others. This understanding matches Kaare Nielsen’s thoughts on aesthetic practice. Kaare Nielsen describes how the expansion of an aesthetic discourse is a symptom of modern life today. He explains, (also with reference to the Greek term *aisthesis*), how aesthetic practice is connected to a particular sensory way of learning and acknowledging the world around us (Nielsen, Kaare, 2006, pp. 142-145). This article is based on this understanding of aestheticization and aesthetic practice.

Dufrenne acknowledges this open definition of the aesthetic object to some extent:

When an object, which we find beautiful, becomes aesthetic under our gaze, our perception by no means creates a new object but only does justice to the original object, which must lend itself to this aestheticization (Dufrenne, 1973, p. 72)

However, he maintains, that “the aesthetic object is the work of art perceived as a work of art, that is, the work of art which gets the perception it solicits and deserves and which is fulfilled in the spectator’s docile consciousness (1973, p.72). As such Dufrenne’s theories on the aesthetic object are based on art objects and not other objects in the world. Nevertheless I find his connection between the perception of the object and the completion of its aesthetic qualities interesting in the examination of the aesthetic elements of the mobile music listening experience. The idea of a particular aesthetically sensitive or intentional perception bringing out or completing qualities in the object helps us to understand, how the surroundings during mobile music listening may be infused with aesthetic meaning for the listener. This perceptual mode is characteristic for experiences with art, but it also gives us a new perspective on the perception and sensory modes of the mobile music listener.

Dufrenne refers to Merleau-Ponty’s focus on the body’s impact on perception. He declares that the bodies of the subject and the object meet and coincide in the aesthetic perception and the aesthetic experience. In this meeting the truth in the aesthetic object is revealed (and produced). The aesthetic object will therefore always be different from other perceived objects, which are primarily objects ‘in-themselves-for-themselves’. These objects hold a meaning that the subject may begin to understand through the perception, but which can never be fully explored or understood. The opposite is true for the aesthetic object, which is completed in the perception. The truth and meaning of this object is produced in the meeting and the relation because the aesthetic object is something ‘in-itself-for-us’. As mentioned, perceiving

(and co-producing) this truth calls for a specific intentionality. The subject has to be open and aesthetically oriented in his perception for the aesthetic experience to arise. It must be available to the object, and this structure contrasts the traditional subject-object relation. Here, the subject becomes an instrument in a process of completing the aesthetic object (Dufrenne, 2001, pp.97-98). Dufrenne explains how this is a result of the special power of the aesthetic object. It 'forces' the subject to focus on specific elements that may ordinarily seem uninteresting. The aesthetic object fascinates us, and because it speaks to us on a sensory level we are able to lose ourselves completely in the perception (Dufrenne, 2001, p.99). Dufrenne uses music to exemplify this special power of the aesthetic object, and he describes that the aesthetic object exercises a particular form of magic that makes the subject focus on these different aspects of the object. Dufrenne explains that the subject's emotions become part of the aesthetic experience because the subject has to open himself and use his emotional life in the perception and completion of the object.

Aesthetic feeling is deep because the object reaches into everything that constitutes me. My past is immanent in the present of my contemplation and exists there as what I am – it is not the result of history which would turn me into the final term of a causal sequence, but the seat of a duration in which I am conjoined with myself [...] How would I have any sensation of music if my ear were a mere receptacle for sounds, if it were not informed, and, moreover, if it did not allow for the sounds to reverberate and find an echo in this self which I offer them? (Dufrenne, 1973, p.404).

Again, this quote only refers to aesthetic qualities of art objects. Nevertheless the description of the effect of music on the listener's mood and emotions is interesting in relation to mobile music listening. The listening experience should not in a traditional sense be considered an aesthetic (art) object. However, the emotional investment that is described here seems to also characterize some aspects of the strong and memorable experiences that may arise during mobile music listening. As such I argue that this listening, and the experiences it may bring with it, can be understood as establishing an 'aesthetic' relation (in Kyndrup's definition of the word) between the listening subject and the object, which in this situation can be considered as both the surroundings and the music.

MP3 listening and the aesthetic relation

As a part of my investigation of mobile music listening experiences I have interviewed ten MP3 users, asking them about their reasons for listening and their experiences during listening. This empirical material tells me that many listeners use music to enhance certain moods or emotions. They try to *embellish* (cf. Welsch) their surroundings. This perspective has, as mentioned, been covered in the existing research in this field. But mobile music listeners also use music to relate to their

surroundings and understand and appreciate what they see, smell, feel, etc. Here ‘Nola’ describes how this process of auditory mediation may occur:

Hmmm, lets say that I have a broken heart – that’s a classic [...] then you can have a sort of empty feeling [...] In this situation music can enhance or help to make sense of what you are feeling. If, for instance, I’m feeling low, then I can listen to really depressing music, and then it can bring me some sort of cleansing feeling or an understanding... well, create an understanding. So you can make sure that the urban space forms an appreciation of the [mental and emotional] world you are situated in (‘Nola’, May 2010).⁹

‘Nola’ uses music and its aestheticizing qualities to relate emotionally to her surroundings. She orchestrates her surroundings through the music, and because these surroundings ‘respond’ to the process, she has what may be identified as an aesthetic experience. This dialogic relation between the listener, the music, and the environment seems to exemplify Morten Kyndrup and Mikel Dufrenne’s theories on the aesthetic object and the aesthetic experience. Below I elaborate on the different aspects of this aesthetic relation.

The mobile music listener as an aesthetically intentional subject

Mobile music listeners have many different reasons for listening with headphones in public.¹⁰ Some, for instance, try to make time pass faster or they want to be entertained during their commute. Others wish to create an illusion of privacy in public so that they do not have to concern themselves with other people, and others yet again wish to enhance certain personal emotions or focus on specific elements of the public atmosphere in order to have a meaningful or memorable (aesthetic) experience. The listeners who have this emotional experience can in this context be understood as aesthetically intentional in their perception. My argument is that the combination of the music and the surroundings opens the listener and makes him sensorily tuned in to any aesthetic qualities he may perceive. Before I began my empirical investigation on this topic I expected most listeners to have this approach to their mobile listening. I thought their strong emotional experiences would be a result of a carefully planned listening strategy, where the music fit the surroundings and the listener’s mood. As ‘Nola’ describes in the quote above this may be the case in some situations. Here the listener uses the music to manage her personal mood and the overall atmosphere.¹¹ However, sometimes these strategies may inhibit the unfolding of the object’s truth because the listener is too preoccupied with her own agenda. The aesthetic and emotional experience may just as well be a result of a more coincidental combination of music and surroundings, for instance, when listening in shuffle mode as ‘Christina’ did here:

Some days [...] something happens in traffic or around you that just fits with the song you are listening to. Or you make it fit. Something happens in the music and at the same time you see a bird taking off. And it is just like: 'Oh, yes! The soundtrack to my life!'. And then it all comes together ('Christina', March 2011).

In this situation the relation between the subject, the surroundings, and the music creates an experience of serendipity for the listener.¹² Her experience of both the music and the surroundings is highly intensified. In this particular situation 'Christina' was not prepared for this aesthetic experience. She did not initially have aesthetic intentions with her perception. Still, this specific perceptual mode was triggered by the music, partly due to the concurrency of the music and the surroundings. Here the music functions as a generator for the aesthetic intention. In the final section of this article I will elaborate on this perspective on the music's function as an instrument or a medium in the aestheticizing process.¹³

The surroundings perceived with aesthetic intentionality

Some areas are particularly picturesque and seem more prone than others to evoke an aesthetic perception (cf. Kyndrup). They may address themselves to the subject in a particular aesthetic 'tone'. Other areas are more anonymous. They are places you would not usually dwell on. My argument is, however, that the MP3 player (and the music in it) can affect the listener's mode of perception particularly in these places, and help to establish an aesthetic relation between the listening subject and the surroundings, the object.

Returning to 'Christina's' quote, the bird taking off may not in itself be an aesthetic scenario. It is something 'in-itself-for-itself'. Nevertheless, it seems to be directed at the listener, and it becomes an aesthetic scene the moment the melody mimics the movement of the bird. The overlap between the private auditory space and the public space affects the listener's perception. She is open to letting these impressions affect her emotionally partly because the object (the bird taking off) suddenly seems an object 'in-itself-for-her'. In this situation the music created a moment where a relation between the listener and the surroundings could be formed. Therefore, by listening to the music, the listener not only relates to an auditory space, she may also be more open to relate (aesthetically) to her surroundings.

Mobile music listening as an aesthetic relation

... But there is something about this grandiose music. And then when you are out in nature like that...It just does something to you ('Mads-Peter', January 2010).

I was riding my bike through the city recently, and I was listening to Tina Dico, right? And just as I went past Copenhagen city hall square it played 'Copenhagen' haha...

And it sounds silly, I know, but I got all teary eyed because I'm so happy to be living here. I just love this city ('Christina', March 2011).

These two quotes exemplify how the music in the MP3 player both affects listeners on a personal, emotional level and affects how listeners perceive their surroundings. They illustrate how the music can infuse both parts with aesthetic intentionality. The MP3 player works as a link helping the (aesthetic) relation along between the listener and the surroundings. In the case of an aesthetic experience, the music may on the one hand, open up the subject to an aesthetic intentionality and an aesthetic perception and on the other hand, point out aesthetic elements in the object. It shows how it is an object 'in-itself-for-us'.

It is important, though, to remember that this connection does not occur in all listening situations. Sometimes the listeners are indifferent to both the surroundings and/or the music.

Henrik Kaare Nielsen also emphasizes the importance of the aforementioned dialogical relation between the subject and the object. There has to be a dialogue between the subject's expectations and the object's inherent truth and meaning for there to be an aesthetic relation. The object must give a confirming or dismissive 'answer' to the intentions of the subject, and this dialogical exchange will produce new meaning and new experiences.¹⁴ It is in these aesthetic experiences that the 'truth' in the object is revealed and perceived (Cf. Dufrenne, 1973, p.501), and because it requires an open and aesthetically intentional subject this subject's sociocultural position and experience becomes a part of this truth and part of the completion of the aesthetic object (Kaare Nielsen, 2006, pp.144-145). It was for instance partly 'Christina's' personal relation to and emotional investment in Copenhagen that made the experience of the city hall square extraordinary and memorable.

In closing this argument regarding mobile music listening's ability to form aesthetic relations it is interesting to consider whether this relation is nothing but an illusion created by the emotional effects in the music and helped along by a listener's wish to change his or her experience of an environment. Is it merely a fictitious connection to the surroundings and an example of pathological narcissism (cf. Bastian)? Even though many mobile music listeners refer to different audiovisual media when they talk about their listening experiences¹⁵ and even though mobile listening may offer a more 'enchanted'¹⁶ version of the surroundings, I still maintain that mobile listening in some situations can establish an aesthetic relation between the listener and the world. For, as Dufrenne states, this 'magic' is not in opposition to the real world. Instead this magical quality helps to open up the listener in an aesthetically sensitive and intentional perception that occasionally identifies otherwise overseen qualities in the surroundings. The music in the headphones seems to initiate and enhance the aesthetic sensitivity. Therefore mobile

music listening in public is not necessarily an example of pathological narcissism. It may just as well be a way for late modern humans to relate to their surroundings and achieve personal and emotional experiences in a sometimes chaotic public space. In this way we end up approaching and rethinking Welsch's second example of the manifestation of aestheticization today – the 'understanding of reality'. In some sense the surroundings seem more real and emotionally moving when we engage in a personal relation with them – when we perceive them with an aesthetic intention and are able to detect their inherent aesthetic qualities.

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Notes

- 1 The article is a continuation of my PhD dissertation, which is based on an empirical material consisting of ten qualitative interviews with MP3 listeners. This material will mainly serve as exemplifying and emphasizing certain arguments. Gram, Nina (2013). *Når musikken virker*. PhD dissertation. Department of Aesthetics and Communication, University of Aarhus.
- 2 Bull describes this as reverse flâneurism, because the flâneur, contrary to the MP3 listener, is open to the impulses of the world, and he is drawn into the world of everyone around him instead of trying to make them fit and enhance his personal agenda and mood.
- 3 For instance in Michael Bull's work and Miriam Simun's article *My music, my world: using the MP3 player to shape experience in London* (2009) among others.
- 4 Welsch, W. (1997). *Aesthetics Beyond Aesthetics*. In: *Practical Aesthetics in Practice and Theory*. vol. III. Honkanen, M. (ed.) Helsinki, p.22.
- 5 For more on this perspective see Marcuse, Herbert 1980: *The Aesthetic Dimension*. Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 1978 and Dewey, John (1934): *Art As Experience*, Peigee Books, New York, a.o.
- 6 Morten Kyndrup discusses the borderlines between these different terms in the article *Kyndrup M. (2008b). Aesthetics and Border Lines. Design as a Liminal Case In: The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*. No. 35, pp. 24-31.
- 7 This focus is i.a. inspired by Kant's focus on the singular aesthetic relation that characterizes the aesthetic judgment. This judgment is not particularly relevant in this context, but the relation between the subject and the aesthetic object is essential, because it points out important elements in the relation between the MP3 listener and the surroundings.
- 8 This focus on intentionality also implies how phenomenology works as a basis for this examination of the aesthetic experience.
- 9 All quotes from my informants are translated from Danish.
- 10 Cf. Bull, 2005, 2007.
- 11 The element of control, both emotional and physical, when listeners block out unwanted sounds, is of great importance, and it is also a central theme in a great deal of the research in this field (C.f. Bull, 2005, 2007 and Simun, 2009).
- 12 For more on serendipitous experiences during music listening see Leong, Tuck Wah (2009). *Understanding Serendipitous Experiences when Interacting with Personal Digital Content*. PhD dissertation. The University of Melbourne.
- 13 Aside from being a medium in a process of enhancing an aesthetic intentionality in both the subject and the object, the MP3 player may in itself be understood as an aesthetic object. Apple, for instance, has been highly focused on aesthetics in the design of their MP3 players. I will not go further into how the interaction with this product may result in aesthetic experiences in it self, but it is important to note that aesthetic intentions can be identified on more levels in this auditory aestheticization process.
- 14 This seems to be the reverse of the aforementioned phenomenological structure where the object directs questions to the subject. However, the point here is not so much the direction of the questions as it is the whole dialogical process.
- 15 This is evident in Michael Bull's work (Bull, 2005, p.350), and I see the tendency in my own empirical material as well.
- 16 Cf. Dufrenne 1973, p.231.