

# The Functions of Walkman Music

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## Abstract

Since its release in 1979, the Walkman has engendered new modes of musical experience for millions of listeners. Its portability and the apparent isolation offered by its headphones enable Walkman users to listen to music in situations where it would otherwise be impossible. They can also use Walkman Music to achieve outcomes for which other forms of music may not be suited.

Eleven functions of Walkman Music, ten adapted from Michael Bull's (2000) strategies of Walkman use and one derived from this study's fieldwork results, are examined here. Following Timothy Rice's (1987) model for ethnomusicological study, the functions' origins in historical musical practice are investigated, as well as their maintenance in social interaction and listeners' individual experience of them. This study demonstrates Walkman listeners are focussed entirely on their Walkman Music in only two functions, either enjoying it or trying to learn it. Four functions involve Walkman listeners' interactions with their surroundings – namely, listeners use Walkman Music to control their environments' soundscapes, to ease their negotiation of places they consider unpleasant, to control personal interactions and, in combination with their surroundings, Walkman Music gives listeners the impression they are viewing or acting in a film for which their music is the soundtrack. Listeners use Walkman Music for its effects on themselves in five functions. They choose rhythmic music for motivation during exercise or music which will influence their mood. Listeners also use Walkman Music to simulate the presence of a companion or because they consider it a more enjoyable or productive use of time they would otherwise consider wasted. Finally, Walkman Music can prompt listeners' memories of past events. While similar observations have been made in previous studies and particularly by Bull, music's role has not been appropriately acknowledged. This study's examination of Walkman Music in terms of the functions it fulfils for listeners corrects this imbalance.

Observations in the literature relating to Walkman use are tested for their resonance with Walkman listeners in ethnographic interviews conducted in Adelaide, Australia. Conclusions are drawn regarding the degree of isolation listeners actually achieve from their surroundings and also regarding the relative novelty or otherwise of the uses to which listeners put their Walkman Music.

## **Declaration**

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

The Walkman has changed the daily experiences of millions of people, enabling them to listen to music wherever and whenever they choose. Listeners put on their headphones every day, enjoying music transmitted directly to their ears. Walkman listeners might be focussed entirely on their Walkman Music. Alternatively, listeners might use Walkman Music to control the sounds of their surroundings, to ease their negotiation of places they consider unpleasant or to control personal interactions. As they watch their surroundings, Walkman Music might give listeners the impression they are viewing or acting in a film for which their music is the soundtrack. Listeners might choose rhythmic music for motivation during exercise or music which will influence their mood. Walkman Music might substitute for the presence of a companion or simply allow a more enjoyable or productive use of time listeners would otherwise consider wasted. These and similar experiences, involving Walkmans and the music they reproduce for individual listeners, are the focus of this study.

The Walkman is a device which allows its users to listen to recorded music through headphones or earphones. Since the introduction of the original Walkman by the Sony Corporation in 1979, the Walkman has been released in many different forms so that radio broadcasts, compact discs, minidisks and a variety of formats of digital file can provide the data it transmits to the listener's ears in musical form. These various designs, produced by Sony and other manufacturers, have sold worldwide, including in Australia, by the millions. Walkmans are easily portable as a result of their small size and weight and internal battery power supply. In addition, they reproduce music from sources which fit into the structure of the Walkman and do not compromise its portability. This means Walkmans can be used virtually anywhere and while listeners are engaged in virtually any activity and can add music to almost every aspect of their users' lives.

In this study the term 'Walkman' refers to any design of portable personal stereo which transmits the listener's chosen music to their ears using headphones or earphones. No distinction is drawn either between similar products from different manufacturers or between Walkmans which employ different formats of recorded music. These variations, between cassette-tape, compact disc (CD), minidisk (MD) or mp3 file, make no difference to the fundamental role of the Walkman and all are considered to fall within the scope of this study.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Radio broadcast, by comparison, limits users' listening choices to music selected for broadcast by radio stations and therefore is not considered here. In another, related issue, there is a fairly new range of composerly and creative functions

In addition to equipment commonly regarded as 'a Walkman', there is also equipment which performs an equivalent function but which may not be generally considered a Walkman. A computer which plays mp3 music files or CDs in its CD-ROM drive and which listeners use to listen to music transmitted via headphones or earphones at their desks while they work is one example. Home stereo equipment used in combination with headphones or earphones is another. In each case, assuming they do not want to be mobile as they listen, listeners could use a 'real' Walkman with the same result. For the purposes of this study such equipment is considered a Walkman.

The Walkman is one of a series of developments in the technology of recording and reproducing music. The earliest precursor of the Walkman, in terms of equipment for the playback of recorded music, is the phonograph.<sup>2</sup> Roland Gelatt (1977), after some investigation, concludes '... the first working phonograph was made in the late [northern hemisphere] autumn of 1877' (1977:22) to a design of Thomas Edison, who was issued a patent for the invention on February 19, 1878 (1977:22). Raymond Wile (1977) generally agrees with Gelatt but suggests slight differences in the timing. Gelatt and Wile both demonstrate Edison was not the only one to develop such an idea, noting that on April 18, 1877 Charles Cros published a paper describing a process of sound reproduction similar to that of the phonograph<sup>3</sup> (Gelatt 1977:23-24; Wile 1977:11).

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that have become increasingly common since digital audio files have become easily manipulable but these other uses are not considered here. Similarly, mp3 files are obtained by downloading, a different means than recordings such as CDs which require a physical medium, but this is a study of the experience of listening via headphones to pre-recorded music of the listener's choice and not of any other functions or protocols around recorded music which are simply a consequence of the recording's form.

<sup>2</sup> Gelatt (1977) provides a description of the phonograph and its workings. The instrument:

... consisted basically of a metal cylinder (with a fine spiral groove impressed in its surface) and two diaphragm-and-needle units – one to be used for recording, the other for reproduction. The cylinder was mounted on a screw, so that turning a handle would make it both revolve and move from left to right. A piece of tin foil was to be wrapped around the cylinder, and thereon the recording needle, following the spiral groove, would indent a pattern of the sound vibrations directed into the mouthpiece. The stylus would move vertically, creating a so-called "hill and dale" pattern in the trough of the groove. On replaying, the reproducing needle was to convert these indentations on the tin foil back into sound. (1977:20-21)

<sup>3</sup> Gelatt (1977) cites the process of sound recording and reproduction Cros described. It:

... consists in obtaining traces of the movements to and fro of a vibrating membrane and in using this membrane to reproduce the same vibrations, with their intrinsic relations of duration and intensity, either by means of the same membrane or some other one equally adapted to produce the sounds which result from this series of movements. (1977:23)

Gelatt notes:

In essence Cros and Edison had hit upon the same idea. In detail there were differences. Cros specified a disc rather than a cylinder; and instead of recording on tin foil, he proposed tracing the sound waves on lamplacked glass and photoengraving the tracings into reliefs or indentations. (1977:23)

Cros never constructed a working model to fulfil his ideas (Gelatt 1977:23-24; Wile 1977:11), which anticipated Edison's, but credit must go to both Cros and Edison for their ingenuity. They were the first to develop the idea of recording and subsequently reproducing sound.<sup>4</sup>

Other significant early precursors to the Walkman were early small, portable transistor radios. Michael Schiffer (1991) discusses such radios and notes 'Teenagers soon discovered that transistor portables, especially the shirt-pocket variety, gave them and their music unprecedented mobility' (1991:181). These devices enabled convenient mobile listening in the manner subsequently replicated by the Walkman, the only difference being that the Walkman allows its listeners to choose their listening material whereas radio listeners have little or no choice in the music that is broadcast. The developments noted here, along with advances in recording technology, miniaturisation and in battery and materials technology, combine to enable the experience of listening to music on a Walkman.

Varying accounts of the genesis of the Walkman idea are presented in the literature (see Adler 1999; Chambers 1994; Gumpert 1987; Hosokawa 1984; Morita et al. 1986; Nathan 1999; Thomas 1999) and their examination bears interesting results even if their veracity is not tested. Akio Morita (1986), co-founder of Sony, acknowledges that his partner, Masaru Ibuka, was instrumental in germinating the idea of the Walkman. He recounts:

The idea took shape when Ibuka came into my office one day with one of our portable stereo tape recorders and a pair of our standard-size headphones. He looked unhappy

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<sup>4</sup> Shortly after he invented the phonograph Thomas Edison proposed the following eleven applications for it, as reproduced by Harvith and Harvith (1987:1)

1. Letter-writing. The main utility of the phonograph ... being for the purpose of letter writing and other forms of dictation, the design is made with a view to its utility for that purpose.
2. Dictation. All kinds and manner of dictation.
3. Books. Books recorded by professional readers to be used in the asylums of the blind, hospitals, the sickchamber, or even with great profit and amusement by the lady or gentleman whose eyes and hands may be otherwise employed.
4. Educational purposes. As an elocutionary teacher, or as a primary teacher for children, it will certainly be invaluable.
5. Music. The phonograph will undoubtedly be liberally devoted to music. As a musical teacher it will be used to enable one to master a new air, the child to form its first songs, or to sing him to sleep.
6. Family record. For the purpose of preserving the sayings, the voices, and the last words of the dying member of the family.
7. Musical Boxes, Toys, etc.
8. Clocks. The phonographic clock will tell you the hour of the day; call you to lunch; send your lover home at ten, etc.
9. Advertising, etc.
10. Speech and other utterances. It will henceforth be possible to preserve for future generations the voices as well as the words of our Washingtons, our Lincolns, our Gladstones, etc.
11. The phonograph will perfect the telephone, and revolutionize present systems of telegraphy ... enabling the speaker to simultaneously transmit and record his message.

Note music, the area in which the phonograph's greatest business potential was subsequently found to lie, was only fifth on the list.



and complained about the weight of the system. I asked him what was on his mind and then he explained, "I like to listen to music, but I don't want to disturb others. I can't sit there by my stereo all day. This is my solution – I take the music with me. But it's too heavy".

I had been mulling an idea over in my mind for a while, and now it was coming into focus as Ibuka talked. I knew from my own experience at home that young people cannot seem to live without music. Almost everybody has stereo at home and in the car. In New York, even in Tokyo, I had seen people with big tape players and radios perched on their shoulders blaring out music. I remembered that one time when my daughter, Naoko, came home from a trip she ran upstairs before even greeting her mother and first put a cassette in her stereo. Ibuka's complaint set me into motion. (Morita et al. 1986:79)

The Walkman was Morita's response to his colleague's complaint and to the desire for constant music he observed in young people including his daughter.

Eric Adler (1999) and John Nathan (1999) also credit Ibuka with the initial idea of the Walkman, writing that Ibuka requested '... a highly portable player that would allow him to listen to stereo recordings on long international flights' (Nathan 1999:150). Gary Gumpert (1987) asserts the Walkman was originally developed '... for weary commuters who wanted relief from the boredom of their routine daily roundtrips' (1987:87). The Walkman as relief from the rigours of travel, either commuting or long distance, is the recurrent theme of these sources.

Shuhei Hosokawa (1984) mentions walking – this is travel of a kind – in his account of the Walkman's origins, but credits Morita rather than Ibuka as the source of the original idea. He writes that the idea '... first came to him [Morita] while walking in New York ...' (1984:168). Iain Chambers (1994) presents a similar account. He suggests:

... this urban, hi-fi gadget was based on an idea that came to Morita, President of Sony, while, rather appropriately, walking in New York. (1994:49)

It seems likely that Chambers has read Hosokawa's essay and simply reiterated his assertions.

Finally, Brian Thomas (1999), marking the twentieth anniversary of the Walkman's development and with tongue in cheek, recounts his version of the inspiration behind the Walkman. He suggests:

In the late 1970's, Sony co-founder Akio Morita (no relation to Pat) was spending another long stay in the bathroom with nothing to read. The Walkman was born. "I wanted to listen to Toshiko Kudo (the great Japanese disco mega-group) and

couldn't get off the toilet to put on the stereo in the other room". Morita said, "That was the first time I desired a portable listening device". (1999)

This account of the Walkman's genesis is not an accurate historical account. Rather, the decision of a satirical internet newspaper columnist to lampoon the Walkman's development is noteworthy as an indication of the Walkman's cultural significance, achieved in the twenty years since its development.

## **The Gap in the Discourse**

Study of the experience of listening to Walkman Music is generally neglected in the discourse. However related issues, such as solitary experience in general, the experience of listening to music in general, the experience of listening to recorded music and the experienced of listening to music while engaged in other activities, are discussed. It is now appropriate to review research in these fields.

A striking feature of the Walkman is the apparently solitary nature of the experience it engenders. Marc Augé (1995) advocates a general study of solitude, writing:

... there will soon be a need – perhaps there already is a need – for something that may seem a contradiction in terms: an ethnology of solitude. (1995:120)

In an example of a study of solitude, as recommended by Augé, and of listening to recorded music, Evan Eisenberg (1988) discusses solitary listening to recorded music. He proposes that individuals are able to construct solitary rituals in which recorded music plays an integral part (see 1988:43-68). William Kenney (1999) responds to Eisenberg's work, suggesting:

For the historian, a more accurate image of the phonograph's past would involve not just the individual alone with his "talking machine", but large numbers of individuals around the country and indeed the world, "alone together", actively using their phonographs to replay as they wished commercially mediated musical messages. As a point of departure, this different vision allows us to begin to see that phonographs, far from promoting only "ceremonies of the solitary", paradoxically encouraged widely shared patterns of popular behaviour, thought, emotion, and sensibility. (1999:4)

Kenney does not specifically discuss the Walkman and Eisenberg focuses on listening alone to other forms of recorded music. Nonetheless, Walkman listening exemplifies solitary listening to recorded music as studied by Eisenberg and the ubiquity of such experience, as observed by Kenney, indicates it is a fruitful area for research.

Tia DeNora (2000) is explicit in her observation of the great potential in the study of solitary listening, and for reasons other than its ubiquity. She writes:

Focus on intimate musical practice, on the private or one-to-one forms of human-music interaction, offers an ideal vantage point for viewing music "in action"... (2000:46)

Listening to music on a Walkman, the focus of this study, is one example of the private listening or one-to-one human-music interaction DeNora discusses. DeNora suggests the study of individual musical experience is timely and offers great potential for understanding how listeners understand their musical experiences. Also note that DeNora refers to music "in action", suggesting music achieves some purpose for listeners beyond musical enjoyment. This study's focus on the functions of Walkman Music is another manifestation of this understanding.

Several writers, in addition to observing potential for the study of listening, discuss the reasons for previous neglect of such study. Firstly, Regina Bendix (2000) observes:

The nineteenth century's unreflected preference for writing and print as media of learning and communicating knowledge almost automatically impoverished our understanding of the sensory and sensual totality of experience. (2000:34)

Bendix argues that the sense of hearing as well as the sensory experiences associated with it – listening to music for example – is one aspect of the totality of experience which has been neglected in favour of visual media such as writing and print. In a similar argument, Bull criticises previous accounts of '... the role or use of personal stereos [Walkmans]<sup>5</sup> in the everyday experience of users' (2000:4). Bull suggests one shortcoming of such accounts is 'An unreflective use of visually based epistemologies by which all behaviour is explained' (2000:4) and, in response, proposes study of '... the nature and influence of the auditory in everyday life' (2000:2). Auditory experience in general is ripe for analysis and the study of listening to music on a Walkman is only one example of possible research in this field.

In addition to the general preference she observes, as noted above, for visual media, Bendix (2000) perceives another factor hindering study of musical listening. She observes '... the more intimate, affective linkage between burgeoning scholars and their disciplinary subject'

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<sup>5</sup> At this point it should be noted, in much of the Walkman scholarship reviewed in this study, writers refer to the 'Personal Stereo' in the same manner as the 'Walkman' is discussed here. The terms are essentially interchangeable. The term 'Personal Stereo' is retained in direct quotes. 'Walkman' is used elsewhere.

(2000:34), such as sensory experience, affect or emotion, is marginalised in academe. This is despite the fact that:

... it is more often than not such sensual experience that draws scholars into working with expressive culture and that has been central to the way they identify and locate subject matter to work with. (2000:37)

Thus the very qualities of music which have the greatest power to attract scholars to it are those with which music scholarship is least equipped to cope.<sup>6</sup>

Several writers recommend the study of the experience of listening to recorded music.<sup>7</sup> Rey Chow (1999) is the first to be examined here. She writes:

What we need, in other words, is a history of listening – a history of how listening and the emotions that are involved in listening change with the apparatuses that make listening possible. (1999:474)

Chow captures one of this study's fundamental assertions – that is, the experience of listening changes with the apparatus which generates or reproduces the sounds in question. This is not to suggest recording technology changes music which otherwise exists in some ideal state. Rather, Chow acknowledges that, as the means of music's creation or reproduction change, they, along with the music itself, enable changing listening experiences.<sup>8</sup> It seems intuitively

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<sup>6</sup> While Bendix (2000) and Bull (2000) discuss the neglect of the study of listening, John Blacking (1995), writing from the perspective of an ethnomusicologist, outlines a methodological approach which can be brought to bear on such a study. Blacking encourages the use of musical participants as informants, suggesting:

The most accessible sources of information about the nature of "music" are to be found in ... the different perceptions that people have of music and musical experience, ie., the different ways in which people make sense of "musical" symbols. (1995:225)

Blacking realises, apart from the music itself, in terms of resources to aid understanding of the experience of solitary music listening, listeners are the only possible source of information. Blacking continues, asserting:

... until the importance of "lay" views in understanding and analyzing musics is recognized, we shall not progress toward a clearer understanding of "music" as a human capability. (1995:228)

Listeners are a valuable source of information regarding musical experience, and should be recognised as such by music scholars. The significance of listeners' understandings of their experiences is recognised in this study, as demonstrated by the use of interviews with Walkman listeners.

<sup>7</sup> Various writers have used different terms to facilitate their own examinations of recorded music. For example, in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1968), Walter Benjamin discusses the 'mechanical reproduction' of art in general. In the same essay, in a discussion specifically related to music, Benjamin refers to its 'technical reproduction' (1968:221). Theodor Adorno (1990a:50) refers to 'technological reproduction', Bull (1999:201 and 219) discusses '... technologically mediated forms of experience ...' and Berland (1998:132) discusses '... technological mediation ...'. John Mowitt (1987), clearly influenced by Benjamin, discusses "The Sound of Music in the Era of its Electronic Reproducibility". Writers use each of these terms to refer to recorded music. 'Recorded Music' is the term used in this study to refer to music which is recorded and subsequently reproduced by a Walkman or related device.

<sup>8</sup> Lysloff and Gay (2003) discuss the place of technology within society, particularly as it is involved in musical practice. This study exemplifies 'the 'pragmatic', one of three methodological distinctions they identify. The pragmatic is concerned with '... how technologies are used and the practices ... that arise from their use ...' (2003:6). The listening experience associated with

obvious that the experience of listening to music played by a symphony orchestra in a grand concert hall differs from the experience of listening while jogging to recorded music using a Walkman. They are both, however, musical experiences and thus have similarities as well as differences. Chow encourages study of the differences as an attempt to understand the effects of technological developments on the listening experience.

Jody Berland (1998) also sees value in study of the experience of recorded music, but for reasons which differ from those of Chow. Berland notes:

Theorists have suggested that as soon as music is approached in terms of its technological mediation, the analysis of musical reception becomes more clearly decisive. As music comes to depend more on sound recording, broadcasting, and other technological mediations, so we must increasingly depend on understanding the practices and structures of listening to determine what and how the music means. (1998:132)

Berland proposes, as more people only ever experience music from recordings, the experience of music tends toward one of pure listening, separate from composing, performing, practising, attending concerts and other musical activities. In order to understand this increasingly ubiquitous mode of musical experience the study of listening, especially to recorded music, assumes greater importance. Expressing her understanding of the reasons for previous academic neglect of the study of listening, Berland cites Barthes' (1985) observation that '*... listening does not figure in the encyclopedias of the past, it belongs to no acknowledged discipline ...*' (1985:260, italics in original). Berland's understanding of the reasons for the neglect she observes in the study of listening supplements Bendix's (2000) view, examined above, that music scholars are ill-equipped to deal with the sensory experience of music.

It is now appropriate to review different aspects of the study of listening to recorded music, including Benjamin's (1968) ideas relating to 'Mechanical Reproduction', Brown's (2000b) concept of the 'Transparency Perspective' and the general ubiquity of recorded music, as observed especially by Pekka Gronow (1983).

Benjamin (1968) develops the idea of mechanical reproduction in an essay aimed at exploring differences between individually created works of art and the results of mass-production. In the essay Benjamin provides a sketch of the history of mechanical reproduction along with examples which aid understanding of the concept. His discussion outlines the consequences

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each of the functions of Walkman Music is a practice arising from use of the Walkman and the technologies of sound

of recording and reproducing music and demonstrates approaches from which recorded music, including that reproduced by a Walkman, can be studied.

The first examples of mechanical reproduction Benjamin discusses are founding and stamping, by which processes 'Bronzes, terra cottas, and coins ...' (1968:220) are produced in quantity following the design of an original. Prior to the development of such processes man-made artefacts could only be '... imitated by men' (1968:220). The processes by which music is recorded and made available for repeated reproduction display obvious parallels with these early methods of mass-production. Essentially, as it relates to music, the term 'mechanical reproduction' refers to means by which music can be recreated at times and places removed from the circumstances of its original production. For example, Benjamin discusses '... the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, [which] resounds in the drawing room' (1968:223). Benjamin sees the separation, both temporal and spatial, of the listener's experience of recorded music from the time and place of its originally intended live performance as the primary consequence of music's recording.<sup>9</sup><sup>10</sup> This separation invites examination of recorded music in terms of its variance from the experience of live music and is an angle from which the study of recorded music can still be fruitfully approached.<sup>11</sup>

In another example of the history of live music performance influencing writers' examination of recorded music, Lee Brown (2000b) discusses the assumptions under which recorded music is heard. He writes:

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recording.

<sup>9</sup> Schafer (1977) also discusses this separation, using the term 'Schizophonia' to refer to '... the split between an original sound and its electroacoustical transmission or reproduction' (1977:90).

<sup>10</sup> Mowitt (1987) examines the debate between Benjamin (1968) and Adorno (1978) regarding the social and political significance of mass cultural idioms and, in doing so, demonstrates an application of Benjamin's ideas to the examination of Walkman Music. Mowitt discusses the consequences for music of its recording and subsequent reproduction as Walkman Music, writing:

The device [the Walkman] offers maximally portable hi-fidelity to listeners who are, through its use, radically reindividuated while they collectively recontextualise "masterpieces" as (among other things) the soundtracks for health routines. (1987:190)

Mowitt's discussion of music's recontextualisation by Walkman listeners is relevant to all of Walkman music's functions. In each function Walkman Music is heard in circumstances peculiar to the needs of individual listeners and is thus recontextualised with every hearing. This corresponds with Benjamin's writing and with the example of choral music, written for open-air performance, which resounds in the drawing room (see Benjamin 1968:223). In that case the open air is the original and intended context while, in terms of location, the drawing room is the recontextualisation. Recontextualisation can involve more than a shift of venue, however, and Mowitt's example of the masterpiece used to accompany exercise is only one of many possible recontextualisations. Many more are to be found in every Walkman listener's account of their listening.

<sup>11</sup> Although it can be useful, this approach is not without danger. As noted in subsequent discussion, the ideas of Theodore Gracyk (1997) are pertinent in response to criticisms of recorded music on grounds which are more applicable to criticism of live music. He observes:

... the success of recorded music means that familiar standards of integrity, developed in conjunction with the music-making technology of the last few hundred years, will be superseded by new standards. (1997:144)

The recording industry has lived mainly by what might be called the transparency perspective, according to which a sound recording is understood on the model of a transparent windowpane through which we can see things undistorted. (2000b:361, italics in original)

Such a perspective is deceptive, particularly when the nature of many musical recordings is considered. Many writers, including Brown, observe modern recording techniques can result in a recording which does not reproduce any actual performance, whether occurring in the recording studio or elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> Firstly, advances in recording technology allow the creation of an optimised recording comprising many small 'takes', each of which may be enhanced by any number of studio techniques. The resulting recording does not correspond to any single original performance despite the coherent musical impression it makes.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, technical limitations affecting either the recording or playback equipment can result in a recording which differs from the original performance for reasons unrelated to the music itself.<sup>14</sup> For example, the limited recording capacity of early 78rpm recordings required long works to be drastically cut in order to fit on the four-minute sides of the 78s.<sup>15</sup> In each instance the recordings that result will, in all probability, give the impression of musical coherence for non-expert listeners. These impressions of coherence are instances of the effects of Brown's 'transparency perspective'. Investigation of listeners' assumptions of musical coherence and related assumptions under which listeners hear recorded music has potential for illuminating the nature and experience of recorded music.

A final demonstration of the need for examination of the experience of listening to recorded music is found in the work of Gronow (1983). In his study of the recording industry, Gronow makes some observations which have substantial implications for musical scholarship. He observes the ubiquity of recorded music and, in doing so, alludes to the potential futility of music scholarship which ignores it. Gronow writes 'Records and music are becoming almost synonymous' (1983:72) and 'Today it is impossible to think of almost any type of music

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<sup>12</sup> John and Susan Harvith (1987) edit and present the results of 41 interviews with prominent musicians and others regarding the essential differences between live and recorded music.

<sup>13</sup> See Bicknell and Philip (1980:625-626), Boorstin (1973:173-174), Brown (2000b), Chanan (1995:143-150), Copland (1937:28-30), Cubitt (1998:101-102), Davies (2001b:314-317), Day (2000:1-57), Eno (1983b; 1983a), Goodall (2000:226-227), Gould (1984:338-339), Kolodin (1957), Mussulman (1974:10), Negus (1992:25), Shorter (1980:571-573) and Will (1986). See also Day, Katz, and Philip (2000:156-159; 1999; 1992), who take the idea one step further and investigate how recording techniques influence recordings and how the resulting recordings subsequently influence live musical activity.

<sup>14</sup> See Béla Bartók (1976:292), Copland (1937:28) and Goodall (2000:213-214).

<sup>15</sup> See Bicknell and Philip (1980:621) and Copland (1937:29).

without considering the role of recordings' (1983:72). For these reasons, and on the grounds put forward and reviewed above by Chow (1999) and Berland (1998), the study of listening to recorded music assumes an importance which might have been previously unacknowledged. Such study could be undertaken by employing the approaches reviewed above, including exploring differences between individual art works and mass produced replicas as exemplified by Benjamin (1968), by examining assumptions which underpin the experience of recorded music in the mode of Brown (2000b), as well as other approaches.

Study of the Walkman itself is another field which has a bearing on the examination of the functions of Walkman Music. Chambers (1994) and Bull (1999; 2000; 2001; 2002) have both published studies of the Walkman. Chambers alludes to the complexity of study of the Walkman, observing:

... to understand the Walkman involves multiplying on it diverse points of view, and appreciating that it does not subtract from sense but adds to and complicates it.  
(1994:51)

Regarding the Walkman itself Chambers notes it '... is simultaneously a technical instrument and a cultural activity' (1994:51) as well as '... an immediate historical reality and practice' (1994:51). The Walkman can be studied from any one of these perspectives and the resulting complexity, when compared with the relative paucity of published Walkman scholarship, suggests great potential for more study in the field.

Bull (1999; 2000; 2001; 2002), the most prolific Walkman scholar, points to the Walkman's ubiquity as his reason for studying it, much in the manner Gronow (1983), cited above, recommends study of recorded music. Bull observes that 'Personal stereos [Walkmans] have become a truly international tool used in New York, Tokyo, Berlin, Paris or any metropolitan environment' (2000:3). This ubiquity, undiminished since Bull observed it, persists as a reason for study of the Walkman. In addition, recommendations cited above for the study of listening to recorded music, of listening as a musical experience and of listening as a solitary experience all relate to study of the Walkman and the recorded music it reproduces and demonstrate angles from which such study can be approached.



## **Key Definitions**

The aim of this study is to examine the functions of Walkman Music. The key terms of this aim are explored and defined below. As well as defining the study's focus and approach, the following definitions serve to illuminate the premises under which the study is carried out.

### **Walkman Music**

Walkman Music's primary defining characteristic is that it is reproduced by a Walkman. Walkman Music also displays a number of additional characteristics which are corollaries of this. First, in order that it can be reproduced by a Walkman, Walkman Music must be pre-recorded. Second, Walkman Music is the listener's choice of listening material. This point relates to the first in that listeners can select listening material because Walkman Music is pre-recorded and thus readily available to them. Third, Walkman Music can be heard in places and situations where other forms of listening may be impossible or socially unacceptable and also while the listener is mobile or involved in other activities. This quality of Walkman Music is a consequence of the Walkman's portability. Listeners can take it virtually anywhere and use it to reproduce recorded music while they are engaged in other activities. Further, the Walkman's transmission of sound via headphones or earphones enables listening in situations where other, less contained, means of sound transmission may be inappropriate. Fourth, listeners may perceive listening to Walkman Music as an insular or solipsistic experience. Thus listeners may use Walkman Music in response to social situations or physical environments which they perceive as oppressive. These characteristics of Walkman Music are examined in detail below.

#### Characteristic I: Walkman Music is Reproduced by a Walkman

Keith Negus (1992) expresses ideas which aid understanding of the significance of Walkman Music's reproduction by a Walkman as its primary defining feature. He asserts the means by which music is created is its most fundamental defining feature, observing 'The character, conventions and reception of a particular music have been shaped by the machines of sound creation' (1992:28). This anticipates Chow's (1999:474) idea, cited above as a recommendation of the study of the experience of listening to recorded music, that the experience of listening changes with the apparatus which generates or reproduces the sounds in question. Negus' assertion, as it relates to Walkman Music, implies Walkman Music's character and reception are shaped by the Walkman, its means of reproduction.

Negus' (1992) discussion regarding the aims of his own study is also reproduced here. Negus' aims are pertinent because they express the premises under which this study is carried out. He writes:

My aim is not to assess the impact of technology on popular music, as if technology was an external phenomenon exerting an influence on some pure and abstract form of expression known as music, but to suggest through my discussion that musical meanings and practices at any one time cannot be separated from their realisation in and through particular technologies ... (1992:20, italics in original)

This passage is extremely pertinent to this study and the understanding of Walkman Music's nature assumed throughout. In the terms of this study, Walkman Music cannot be separated either from the practices in which people engage while listening to it or from its transmission by the Walkman. The inseparable combination of Walkman Music and the Walkman – the music and means of its realisation – is consistently expressed in the name and definition of the object of this study's focus, Walkman Music. The combination of Walkman Music and the listening practices in which its listeners engage is implicit in the study of the functions which Walkman Music fulfils for its listeners.

#### Characteristic II: Walkman Music is the Listener's Chosen Music

Any given Walkman Music is the listener's chosen music. This cannot be said of all music that listeners hear. For example, listeners have relatively little input into the music they hear at a live performance or when listening to the radio although in both cases an element of choice is involved regarding whether or not to attend or listen in the first place. Some Walkmans feature radio receivers and are thus able to reproduce music transmitted via radio. This phenomenon is not examined in this study. Rather, the focus here is on the pre-recorded music as chosen by the listener. The format in which the music has been recorded, for example cassette tape, CD, MD, mp3 or any other, is irrelevant.

Daniel Barbiero (1989) makes observations which are relevant to any discussion of Walkman listeners' chosen music. He observes consequences for music when it is available in this way and subject to listeners' discretion, as occurs in Walkman listening. He writes:

Most music has become music to do other things by, regardless of its genre or the things we do as it plays. The professional with his Walkman, reading the Wall Street Journal or Foreign Affairs on the morning bus, can just as easily be listening to a Schoenberg quartet as he can the latest Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young release. Music has become a background texture for daily life. (1989:147)

Barbiero thus draws no distinctions between genres of music or between different musical works with which listeners accompany other activities such as commuting to work. This approach is adopted in this study, where no attempt is made to distinguish between specific examples of Walkman Music. In interviews, some of this study's fieldwork informants refer to specific examples of Walkman Music. Their references are included but not examined in any depth. Rather, the listeners' understandings of their own musical experiences are recognised and their understandings of the functions Walkman Music fulfils for them are taken at face value.

### Characteristic III: The Walkman's Portability

The Walkman, with its small size and weight and built-in battery power supplies, is inherently portable. This portability means Walkman Music can be heard virtually anywhere, including in places where music produced by other means, either live or recorded, cannot. Berland (1998), among others, observes this feature of Walkman Music. She sets the Walkman in context as one of the more recent examples of music's 'mobilisation', writing:

Listening practices are continuously transformed by technical innovations in music reproduction: the long-playing album, the transistor radio, and the Walkman have each successively shaped and mobilized our listening practices, enabling us to carry music "belonging" to one location or spatial scale into other places. (1998:133)

Berland's observation develops Benjamin's (1968) argument, reviewed above. Benjamin noted recording music enabled it to be heard in situations for which it was originally unintended. By including the Walkman in her discussion, Berland demonstrates how it represents the apogee of music's separation from any given single performance situation. The Walkman allows virtually any music to be heard at virtually any time or place, at the discretion of individual listeners. As noted, another consequence of the Walkman's portability is that listeners can use them while engaged in other activities, including those involving movement. As one newspaper staff writer somewhat redundantly observes, 'Walkman is synonymous with music on the go' (Anon. 1999:1). Despite its name, the Walkman can transmit musical accompaniment for listeners engaged in many activities besides walking.

### Characteristic IV: The Solitary / Shared Paradox

Sony, the developers of the original Walkman, are aware, as are Walkman listeners, that 'Headphones are essential to the Walkman concept' (Sony 1999). The Walkman's headphones mean listeners hear their Walkman Music transmitted to their ears from close range. One result of this close-range transmission is, to the potential annoyance of people in their vicinity

who can see listening taking place but not share in it, the complete sonic palette of Walkman Music is available only to Walkman listeners. On this basis the experience of Walkman Music can be thought of as solitary. By contrast, Hosokawa (1984), observes:

What surprised people when they saw the walkman for the first time in their cities was the evident fact that could know whether the walkman user was listening to something, but not what he was listening to. Something was there, but it did not appear: it was secret. Until the appearance of the walkman, people had not witnessed a scene in which a passer-by "confessed" that he had a secret in such a distinct and obvious way. (1984:177, italics in original)

Thus Walkman Music, even though its experience is generally understood to be solitary in nature, can involve people other than its immediate listener.<sup>16</sup> Also, depending on the volume at which the Walkman headphones transmit Walkman Music and on the venue in which listening takes place, a degree of noticeable sound leakage may occur so bystanders hear an incomplete and distorted rendering. Martin Newell (1999) observes Walkman listeners with 'Headphones fizzing alien whispers' (1999), and asks 'Ever sat beside somebody, listening to the tiska-ticking, driven mad by sheer frustration trying to find out what they're playing?' (1999). The leakage of sound is another example of interaction between Walkman users and those who inhabit their surroundings. It is also an example of circumstances under which the experience of Walkman Music might be considered shared as well as solitary.

Chambers (1994) examines another example of interaction between Walkman users and those in their surroundings. He writes:

... the Walkman has offered access to a portable soundtrack that, unlike the transistor radio, car stereo and the explicitly opposed intention of the bass-boosted "ghetto blaster" or "boogie box", is, above all, an intensely private experience. (1994:49)

He continues that '... such a refusal of public exchange and apparent regression to individual solitude also involves an unexpected series of extensions' (1994:49). Chambers understands, while the experience of Walkman Music might be private, it might or might not be completely solitary. Some listeners' experiences of Walkman Music can take the form of a response to their physical and social environments and therefore represent a kind of interaction with their surroundings rather than a solitary musical experience. These responses will be discussed further in this study but Chambers' understanding of the shared aspects of the Walkman is

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<sup>16</sup> Chambers (1994) virtually reiterates Hosokawa's point when he writes '... the Walkman is both a mask and a masque ...' (1994:51) and defines masque as '... a quiet putting into act of localised theatrics' (1994:51). The idea that the Walkman can be some sort of disguise yet also a form of public performance captures Chambers' understanding of the joint individual and

pertinent here. He writes 'In the manifest refusal of sociability the Walkman nevertheless reaffirms participation in a shared environment' (1994:50). Thus a listener's attempts to avoid personal interaction by listening to Walkman Music inevitably reinforces the listener's presence in a common habitat. This is another example a shared aspect of the apparently solitary experience of Walkman Music.

Having discussed its individual characteristics it is now possible to compile the defining features of Walkman Music. Walkman Music is reproduced by a Walkman and transmitted from close range to the ears of listeners by headphones or earphones. The nature of this transmission enables listeners to hear Walkman Music in places and situations where other forms of listening are impossible or socially unacceptable and while they are mobile or involved in other activities. Walkman Music is heard in its entirety only by individual Walkman listeners but may be heard incompletely by bystanders and listeners might use Walkman Music in response to their social or physical environments. Thus, despite appearances to the contrary, listening to Walkman Music is not necessarily a purely solitary experience. Walkman Music is pre-recorded and the user's choice of listening material.

### **Music's Functions**

With Walkman Music defined above, it is now appropriate to explore the concept of its functions. In this study 'function' is defined in the terms of ethnomusicological theorist Alan Merriam (1964), who notes:

The uses and functions of music represent one of the most important problems in ethnomusicology, for in the study of human behavior we search constantly ... not only for the descriptive facts about music, but, more important, for the meaning of music. (1964:209)

Merriam suggests a significant key to understanding the meaning of music lies in the role it plays for the people who hear it – that is, its functions. Merriam also distinguishes clearly between 'uses' and 'functions', writing music is *used* in certain situations but it may or may not have a deeper *function* (see 1964:210). As Merriam concludes:

"Use" then, refers to the situation in which music is employed in human action; "function" concerns the reasons for its employment and particularly the broader purpose which it serves. (1964:210)

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social nature of the Walkman Experience. Chambers suggests the nature of the theatrics that the Walkman stages when he discusses '... the inner secret it brazenly displays in public (what is s/he listening to?) ...' (1994:51).

This is a valuable distinction. The uses of Walkman Music pertain to the situations, times and places in which people employ it while the functions<sup>17</sup> of Walkman Music are the listener's reasons for listening.

As noted, the aim of this study is to examine the functions of Walkman Music. Writers, including Adorno (1976; 1990b), Benjamin (1968), Bull (1999; 2000; 2001; 2002), Chen (1993), Crawford (1980), Eisenberg (1988), Katz (1999), Rösing (1984), Sloboda (1999) and Williams (2001), who discuss music in general, recorded music and Walkman Music in terms of their functions are now reviewed in order to set the context for this study's findings.

### Functions of Music in General

Helmut Rösing (1984) discusses the functions of music in general, writing:

Music has always had a multiplicity of functions, which ensure for it an important and usually too-little recognised role within society and for each individual member of society. Not even an "unmusical" person, or someone uninterested in music, can evade these functions. (1984:123)

Here Rösing expresses the basic premise of this study; listeners understand music in terms of the functions it serves for them. Rösing is not alone in this understanding. Adorno (1976) also considers music from the perspective of the functions it fulfils for its listeners, observing 'The function of music in present-day society raises substantial questions' (1976:39). For Adorno, the primary function of music is as the object of appreciation in terms of its aesthetic autonomy (see 1976:39). Music is experienced in this capacity by the 'expert'<sup>18</sup> (1976:4) listener. Walkman Music, which is almost invariably experienced as accompaniment to other activities and relatively infrequently as an object of aesthetic appreciation, would be seen by Adorno as distorted in its social function. Nonetheless, Adorno does not deny music has a non-aesthetic functional role for many of its listeners (see 1976:39).

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<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that writers quoted in this study employ words such as 'use' and 'usefulness' in the sense this study employs 'function', as defined above. Terms other than 'function' are employed only in direct quotes from those sources.

<sup>18</sup> Adorno writes that the expert listener:

... would have to be defined by entirely adequate hearing. He would be the fully conscious listener who tends to miss nothing and at the same time, at each moment, accounts to himself for what he has heard. For a start, if a man has his first encounter with the second movement of Webern's trio for Strings and can name the formal components of that dissolved, architectonically unsupported piece, such a man would qualify as an expert. (1976:4)

Adorno relates the shift he observes in music from aesthetic autonomy towards functionality to a change in music's nature. He observes that the aesthetic meanings of some elements of music persist even as music becomes functional. For example, tonality:

... which circumscribes the traditional stock of music consumed today, is identical with the worldwide musical consumers' language. People may fail to grasp what was said in that language, the specific content of the musical works, but they are familiar with the works' superficial connections insofar as the traditional idiom links them automatically. (1976:39)

Thus expert listening has been replaced by 'Splashing along with the idiomatic current ...' (1976:39). Tonality and other musical elements such as timbre, rhythm and melody which were 'Specific values crystallized in the music ...' (1976:40) have been reduced to '... sensual stimulants ...' (1976:40). These shifts in the roles of music's components have changed the previously autonomous artistic language of music to what Adorno terms '... a communicative language ...' (1976:40) and this change permits music to have '... something like a social function' (1976:40). Adorno regrets the social function of music '... is the remnant that is left of an art once the artistic element in it has dissolved' (1976:40). If listeners considered music primarily in terms of the functions it could fulfil for them, as is often the case for this study's fieldwork respondents, Adorno would maintain they were missing the point although he does not deny their existence.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In recent years the work of Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) has figured prominently as background in many studies on recorded music. A brief discussion of the context in which Adorno developed his ideas may be useful, both because of their historical importance, and because this study makes use of them in a context that is very different from the one that Adorno worked in.

Adorno embarked on an intellectual career in Frankfurt and Vienna during the Weimar Republic. He was exiled in Britain and America during World War II, but returned to West Germany after the war to re-engage with the Frankfurt School of neo-Marxist critical theorists, including Max Horkheimer. Adorno was a formidable and prolific force in music criticism, sociology, aesthetics and philosophy; an early champion of musical modernity and a very public intellectual figure. He was influenced by Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), a notable thinker devoted to art who also informs this study, and the two, both exiles from their native Germany, left a significant correspondence. Adorno's "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening" (1978, originally published 1938) was a direct response to Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1968, originally published 1935) and both essays examine issues around the production and consumption of art. Notably, both essays were written within a fascist climate and, as noted by Leppert (2002), both men saw fascism as the symptom of a prevailing condition rather than as a political aberration. Fascism's effect on German intellectual activity was to dismiss reflection and attack already existing patterns of thinking and feeling through its hostility against independent thought.

Adorno understood the power of the mass media to shape taste, observed fascism's dependence on the mass media to advance its message and responded with criticism of any mass-produced art. In this regard Adorno differed from Benjamin

John Sloboda's (1999) examination of "Everyday Uses of Music Listening" is the final example reviewed here of the study of function in music in general. Sloboda, a music psychologist, outlines the position from which he undertakes his research. He:

... emphasises the role of the listener as an active agent, who makes choices about what music to listen to, where and when to listen to it, and what to listen for, according to needs, goals and purposes. (1999:355)

In describing the assumptions inherent in his own work Sloboda captures the perspective from which this study is carried out. He discusses music in general, not distinguishing between live music and recorded music, whether reproduced by a Walkman or any other means, but his approach is highly pertinent to a specific examination of Walkman Music's functions. Echoing Sloboda's approach, in this study Walkman listeners are understood to choose to listen to Walkman Music as and when they please. Further, Walkman users often choose to listen in order to achieve specific goals or purposes or in response to specific needs, whether those needs are related to the listener's surroundings, to the listener themselves or to the music. Sloboda's work thus sums up this study's approach to Walkman users and is reviewed below in more detail as it relates specifically to each of Walkman Music's functions.

### Function in Recorded Music

It is now appropriate to review sources in which recorded music is discussed in terms of its functions. Mark Katz (1999) suggests it is not inevitable that the experience of recorded music be considered in terms of its functions, or in any single way in particular. He writes:

Recording itself does not directly act upon them or impel them [listeners] to commit to any specific action. To be sure, design circumscribes use, and users often alter their actions to best accommodate a technology's deficiencies or exploit its possibilities. Yet no design is so specific that it fully determines how the technology is employed. Users ultimately decide a tool's applications. (1999:3)

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who advanced a theory of mass art that is "useless for the purposes of fascism" (1968:220) but useful "for the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art" (1968:220). Benjamin argued that modern reproductive technology, used in many artistic realms as well as in music recording, fundamentally alters the cultural landscape by changing the way art is perceived. When it is recorded, music is made available for repeated listening and becomes familiar. As a result, an audience's response differs markedly from their reaction to a unique performance and the artwork, to which they might never previously have had access under a fascist regime, is brought closer to them. In this way mass art sabotages the division between fascist elites and their subjects.

The difference between Adorno's position and that of Benjamin serves to open up debate on any question of mass art. This includes the experience of Walkman Music, a question on which the thoughts of Benjamin and Adorno make significant contributions.



Regarding listeners who understand their recorded music in terms of the functions it can fulfil for them, Katz's analysis implies such an approach is not inherent to the medium but decided by listeners themselves. Other listeners might regard recorded music in other terms, perhaps as the object of aesthetic appreciation, as Adorno (1976), cited above, suggests. Katz' analysis is in contrast to that of Richard Crawford (1980), who writes:

When a musical performance is offered as an artistic statement, it is an end in itself. But if a musical performance is recorded, it invites further use and can no longer be an end. (1980:59)

There is a sense of inevitability to Crawford's statement; as if recorded music can be viewed no other way than in terms of its 'further uses' or functions. Crawford also sees that recording has consequences beyond those for the listener's perception of recorded music. These consequences extend, almost in reverse, to the live performance. He writes musical performances become '... links in a chain of utilitarian purpose' (1980:59) and all music is thought of in terms of its functions because listeners think of recorded music, the most commonly occurring type of musical experience, in this way. If the ideas of Katz and Crawford are related back to this study two options appear. Following Katz, Walkman Music is whatever its listeners want it to be. They might think of it in terms of the functions it fulfils for them or in any number of other ways. Conversely, following Crawford, listeners can only think of Walkman Music in terms of its functions and as a means to an end. Katz' ideas seem more realistic. Crawford cannot account for the thoughts of every person who listens to recorded music.

In another example of the study of music's functions, Christina Williams (2001) conducted discussions with teenagers and found:

These young people articulated the significance of popular music in their lives in terms of its usefulness within the context of their daily routines, rather than as a meaningful source for identity investment. (2001:223)

In her study Williams refers to recorded music but does not distinguish between television music videos, recordings on a home stereo, Walkman Music or any other forms of recorded music. Williams found her respondents used music in a variety of functions, including '... changing or enhancing their mood ...' (2001:236), '... to organise and mark their daily routine ...' (2001:237), '... relieving boredom and passing the time ...' (2001:237), and '... as a way of easing an awkward social situation ...' (2001:238). Williams' study is relevant here because it

provides solid examples of listening practices which rely on music's ability to fulfil functions for listeners. What is more, the functions Williams discusses relate closely to some of the functions of Walkman Music examined in this study.<sup>20</sup>

Adorno's (1976) comments regarding changes in the nature of music associated with its shift from aesthetic autonomy to functionality are noted above. In addition to these comments regarding music in general, in his essay "The Form of the Phonograph Record" (1990b) Adorno criticises one function to which recorded music may be put. He refers to '... the hours of domestic existence which while themselves away along with the record' (1990b:58), and states:

The phonograph record is an object of that "daily need" which is the very antithesis of the humane and the artistic, since the latter cannot be repeated and turned on at will but remain tied to their place and time. (1990b:58)

In what is essentially a comparison between live music practice and the functions of recorded music, Adorno condemns the use of music as accompaniment to other activities. In doing so he pre-empted Benjamin's similar discussion in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1968), where Benjamin also discusses art in terms of its function. Although this part of Benjamin's discussion does not explicitly mention music – it is presented in terms of 'the work of art' – his ideas hold for the discussion of music. Of the authentic, or non-mechanically reproduced, work of art, Benjamin writes that its unique value '... has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value' (1968:226). On the other hand, '... mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual' (1968:226). Benjamin suggests 'With the emancipation of the various art practices from ritual go increasing opportunities for the exhibition of their products' (1968:227), then continues:

... by the absolute emphasis on its exhibition value the work of art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, among which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental. (1968:227)

Related to music, Benjamin observes shifts in its functions resulting from its recording. Music, which previously had ritualistic and then artistic functions, when it can be reproduced by recording, possesses functions related to its status as a consumer commodity. Eisenberg (1988), perhaps in response to Benjamin, also discusses recorded music in terms of its ritual

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<sup>20</sup> For example, 'changing or enhancing moods' (Williams 2001:236) corresponds to Mood Management. 'Relieving boredom and passing the time' (Williams 2001:237) corresponds to Time Management and 'easing awkward social situations' (Williams 2001:238) corresponds to Interpersonal Mediation.

function.<sup>21</sup> Eisenberg's position – namely, recorded music enables the creation and maintenance of solitary ritual – clearly opposes that of Benjamin, who held music's ritual function is dispersed when it is recorded and reproduced, as necessary for it to achieve a new consumer-related functionality. Eisenberg recognises as ritualistic in the experience of solitary listening to recorded music that which Benjamin would consider mundane in comparison with music's function when it is heard in its originally intended setting. For example, Eisenberg would consider accompanying the nightly drift off to sleep with Mozart's C Minor Mass, a habit attested to by one of this study's interviewees (Erin 2001), a form of private ritual and potentially of great significance to the listener. Benjamin would consider this to be a greatly diminished function for the Mass in comparison to its originally intended function of worship.

### Function in Walkman Music

Bull (1999; 2000; 2001; 2002) and Shing-Ling Sarina Chen (1993) both discuss the Walkman in terms of the functions it fulfils for listeners, although both are reluctant to engage with the music which it transmits. As such, these writers approach an examination of the functions of Walkman Music but miss the point by concentrating on the Walkman rather than the music it reproduces. Chen notes 'Individuals manipulate the Walkman in the light of the situation in which they are, and use the Walkman to achieve objectives' (1993:89). Although not expressed in this study's terminology, this is clearly a discussion of the Walkman in terms of the functions listeners perceive it to hold for them. However, Chen continues her discussion, observing '... the mobility of the Walkman allows the listeners to merge the use of the Walkman with other ongoing activities' (1993:92). The Walkman's portability, not the music it transmits, forms the basis of Chen's understanding of the Walkman's functionality. While, as noted, the Walkman's mobility plays a part in enabling the experience of Walkman Music, a Walkman, no matter how portable, is virtually useless if it does not reproduce recorded music.

Bull's Walkman studies are also premised on the questionable understanding that the Walkman alone fulfils certain functions for its users. He observes '... the fleeting and complex nature of Walkman use' (2001:212), with '... each user engaging in a multiple set of uses, motivations and responses' (2001:212). In order to examine such observations, Bull

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<sup>21</sup> Brown (2000a) responds to Eisenberg's *The Recording Angel* (1988) and in particular to Chapter Four – 'Ceremonies of a Solitary', writing 'Eisenberg details how recording media help consumers organize individualized rituals tailored to their schedules.' (2000a:111) For example, Eisenberg provides details of his own ritual of recorded music:

My own ancient AR turntable needs to be spun a few times by hand before the pulley and gears will catch, and the tone arm has to be lowered preliminarily beneath the level of the platter to get the damping right. No one else knows to do things. My Levitical knowledge makes me master of all phonographic rites conducted in my home. (1988:52)

determines upon 'An analysis that focuses upon strategies of use ...' (2001:212) – this is an examination of the Walkman in terms of the functions it fulfils for listeners. He warns against the creation of '... anything resembling an "essentialist" caricature of a typical Walkman user ...' (2001:212) in favour of an analysis of strategies of Walkman use because 'Not all Walkman users are the same' (2001:212). In many regards Bull's approach is logical and it forms the basis of this study's methodology, as discussed below. However, Bull fails to address the crux of the issue – that is, he does not recognise the importance of the music the Walkman reproduces for listeners.

## **Previous Examples of Classificatory Analysis of Music Listening**

In this study, the act of listening to Walkman Music is analysed by classification into discrete functions Walkman Music fulfils for listeners, each more narrowly defined than the general phenomenon of listening to Walkman Music. Such analysis, in which related objects or phenomena are arranged in classes or categories, is generally termed 'classificatory analysis'. Previous studies of music listening (see Adorno 1976; Bull 2000; Merriam 1964; Moebius and Michel-Annen 1994; Rösing 1984) have focussed on different aspects of listening. Despite variations in focus, classificatory analysis is employed in each of these studies. They are reviewed here in order to inform this study's methodology.

### Classificatory Analysis Study I: Alan Merriam

The first example of classificatory analysis is that of Merriam (1964), who recommends ethnomusicological study in terms of music's uses and functions. Merriam's writing is reviewed above as it pertains to examination of the functions of music. It is revisited here with a specific focus on the classificatory analysis which Merriam employs. With the motivation that '... we are searching for answers to the question of what music does for and in human society' (1964:219), Merriam proposes ten '... major and over-all functions ... of music ...'<sup>22</sup> (1964:219) into which local or individual examples of musical practice can be grouped. Merriam's proposition differs from other sources reviewed here in that it is a recommendation for study rather than an actual example of analysis of listening behaviour. It is nonetheless highly relevant to this study's examination of the functions of Walkman Music, advocating

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<sup>22</sup> Merriam proposes 'The function of emotional expression' (1964:219), 'The function of aesthetic enjoyment' (1964:223), 'The function of entertainment' (1964:223), 'The function of communication' (1964:223), 'The function of symbolic representation' (1964:223), 'The function of physical response' (1964:223), 'The function of enforcing conformity to social norms' (1964:224), 'The function of validation of social institutions and religious rituals' (1964:224), 'The function of contribution to the continuity and stability of culture' (1964:225) and 'The function of contribution to the integration of society.' (1964:226)

both the study of music in terms of its functions and the use of classificatory analysis in order to do so.

### Classificatory Analysis Study II: Theodor Adorno

Adorno (1976) classifies listening behaviour although he does so subject to the knowledge that '... the listening types do not occur in chemical purity' (1976:2). Thus he indicates no single classification within a single system can perfectly describe an individual's listening behaviour. He is correct in this regard but classificatory analysis is useful in spite of its shortcomings. Adorno generally classifies listeners based on their understanding of the form and structure of music they hear. For example, the 'expert' (1976:4) listener, already noted, who occupies one extreme of Adorno's scale of listening behaviour, spontaneously following the course of:

... even complicated music, ... hears the sequence, hears past, present, and future moments together so that they crystallise into a meaningful context. (1976:4)

This type of listening demands a thorough knowledge of the work as well as of the history of the musical culture of which it is a part. It is most likely the province only of privileged listeners who have been exposed to multiple hearings of many works within the tradition of Western art music and received an extensive education in that field.<sup>23</sup> At the other pole of Adorno's classification lies '... the listener to whom music is entertainment and no more' (1976:14) and Adorno proposes differing classifications of musical comprehension which lie between these extremes. Adorno's work, even though it does not proceed beyond hypothesis and it is not supported by empirical evidence, demonstrates the potential usefulness of classificatory analysis of listening behaviour.

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<sup>23</sup> Adorno has been unreasonably criticised as an elitist, avant-gardist rejector of popular culture (see Paddison 2001). DeNora (2000) writes a more considered and nuanced response to Adorno. On the one hand DeNora finds:

... Adorno's work represents the most significant development in the twentieth century of the idea that music is a "force" in social life, a building material of consciousness and social structure. (2000:2)

DeNora's concerns with Adorno's work arise:

... because it provides no machinery for viewing these matters as they actually take place, Adorno's work also has the power to frustrate; his work offers no conceptual scaffolding from which to view music in the act of training unconsciousness, no consideration of how music gets into action. The weakness of Adorno's approach thus lies in its failure to provide some means by which its tantalizing claims can be evaluated. (2000:2)

This criticism may be unreasonable in the light of Adorno's *caveat* (see Adorno 1976:) that his statements are made in order to be tested. DeNora (2000:see 61) nonetheless specifically rejects Adorno's classificatory analysis of listening according to the degree of understanding of the musical work that the listener achieves. Adorno's work is frequently cited here because it represents a significant contribution to the field. Nonetheless, it is used with an awareness of its shortcomings as identified by DeNora.

Classificatory Analysis Study III: Helmut Rösing

Rösing (1984) analyses listening behaviour and musical preference, specifically to music on '... radio, cassette recorder, television or records' (1984:119). With regard to classificatory analysis, Rösing notes such systems:

... have one great drawback. They almost never do complete justice to reality, since many details have to be sacrificed in the interests of a simplificatory schematisation. Their virtue is that they can be applied as working hypotheses in cases where the complexity of the problem situation, and the variety of the details of different societies, would otherwise make a scientifically based method of observation – ie. one that can be checked and repeated – impossible. (1984:122)

Rösing's misgivings regarding classificatory analysis are reasonable and correspond with Adorno's (1976), as cited above. Nonetheless, Rösing's subsequent use of such analysis while aware of its drawbacks demonstrates its usefulness.

Using classificatory analysis, Rösing examines listening in terms of varying degrees of attention paid by the listener to the music. At one extreme of listening behaviour is concentrated or attentive reception. At the other extreme lies inattentive reception, and various degrees of listening attentiveness lie between the two. As a result of his analysis Rösing draws conclusions about listening behaviour, observing that the music he examines is, '... as a rule listened to incidentally and unconcentratedly ...' (1984:147). Rösing's work is directed towards findings which are not the aim of this study. Nonetheless, it is another demonstration of the usefulness of classificatory analysis in examining various aspects of listening behaviour.

Classificatory Analysis Study IV: Horst Moebius and Barbara Michel-Annen

Moebius and Michel-Annen (1994) conduct interviews with young people and young adults and interpret their results to propose four classifications of Walkman user according to a sliding scale of users' interactions with their environment. Their study has particular relevance here because of its focus of Walkman listening.

Moebius and Michel-Annen use the term 'everyday' to describe the Walkman listener's external environment. For 'The Egg-Worlder' (1994:574), the least inclined of Moebius' and Michel-Annen's four classifications of Walkman listeners to interact with their environment, the everyday is '... overloaded with demands and challenges' (1994:574). This Walkman user is 'Driven by a constant search for security ...' (1994:574) and finds:

... at last, through Walkman using, a quiet, warm vanishing point. There they can retreat into themselves completely, like crawling under a blanket. (1994:574, italics in original)

For 'The Stroller' (1994:574), the next of Moebius' and Michel-Annen's classifications, '... the world is not something to reject but, rather, something to be distanced from' (1994:575). For 'The Juggler' (1994:575), 'Everyday and dreamworld are interchangeable, and they turn to whichever appears more attractive on the spur of the moment' (1994:575). Moebius and Michel-Annen argue the Walkman enables such listeners to achieve the distance from the world which they desire or to enjoy their musical dreamworld as they choose. Moebius' and Michel-Annen's final classification of Walkman user is 'The Symphonist' (1994:575). This category of Walkman listener '... can no longer detect the border between the skin and the outer world' (1994:576) and perceives their Walkman Music as continuous with the external environment.

Moebius and Michel-Annen focus on one aspect of Walkman listening, the withdrawal of listeners from their surroundings. Within this focus they employ classificatory analysis in order to define differing degrees of withdrawal, an example of how classificatory analysis can be employed to examine a facet of listening to Walkman Music in particular.

#### Classificatory Analysis Study V: Michael Bull

In the final example of classificatory analysis of listening behaviour Bull (2000) produces '... a typology of [Walkman] users' strategies together with an overview of personal stereo practices' (2000:185). 'Typology' is the study and interpretation of types and is essentially another name for classificatory analysis. Hence, Bull classifies Walkman user's strategies of Walkman listening.

Observing that a listener may listen for different reasons at different times or for more than one reason at once, of the strategies he proposes Bull acknowledges '... one example can slide imperceptibly into another' (2000:186). Bull's acknowledgment relates to Rösing's (1984) and Adorno's (1976) similar acknowledgments, cited above, regarding a weakness of classificatory analysis in singular cases. Nonetheless, using his system of analysis, Bull is able to identify eleven strategies of Walkman listening, demonstrating the usefulness of the method. Of the examples of classificatory analysis reviewed here, Bull's most closely relates to the system of analysis used in this study and is adapted to form this study's system of classification of

Walkman Music's functions. The other examples also inform this study, its methodology in particular, and set its context.

### **Adapting Bull's Analysis to Focus on Music**

Bull (1999; 2000; 2001; 2002) has written prolifically regarding various aspects of the Walkman. As noted, across this work Bull consistently directs his analysis towards the apparatus of the Walkman rather than towards the music it reproduces. At one point Bull justifies this focus, writing:

Of significance ... is that "something" is listened to and that the use of the Walkman facilitates an auditory re-prioritization of forms of urban experience. So while Walkman users will describe music as an activating force facilitating a variety of feelings and will describe their fantasies to music I am more concerned with the role of Walkmans in the construction and transformation of experience. (2001:213)

Thus Bull examines the Walkman to the neglect of the music it transmits.<sup>24</sup> In a critical passage which serves to highlight the shortcomings of his approach, Bull notes failings of other Walkman scholarship. He asserts:

Existing accounts of Walkman use reflect a singular lack of empirical investigation. They are either anecdotal, situated in the realm of "representation", or are theoretical meditations upon "imaginary" Walkman use.<sup>25</sup> (2001:211)

In response, Bull maintains that his own study:

... attempts to overcome these theoretical and empirical restrictions through a combination of phenomenologically inspired ethnography coupled with a dialectical understanding of social experience. (2001:211)

Throughout his book Bull cites his informants, thus fulfilling his pledge to use ethnographic methodology. However, Bull's informants refer constantly to the music they listen to using their Walkmans. Despite this, Bull maintains his focus on the apparatus. Having stressed the importance of an ethnographic approach, it is contradictory that Bull should subsequently proceed to ignore his informants' descriptions of music as an activating force and of their

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<sup>24</sup> Bull's position contrasts dramatically with that of Blacking (1995), whose directives for ethnomusicological study are reviewed above. Blacking asserts:

... the music is the most important aspect of music-making, not only for someone who studies it but also for those who participate in it. (1995:227)

<sup>25</sup> Regarding "anecdotal" accounts of Walkman use, Bull provides the example of Chambers (1994). Regarding accounts that are "situated in the realm of representation", Bull provides the example of du Gay *et al.* (1997). Regarding theoretical meditations upon "imaginary" Walkman use, Bull provides the example of Hosokawa (1984).



fantasies held to music (see 2001:213) and concentrate instead on the Walkman itself. Bull's failure to engage music seems even more contradictory in the light of his acknowledgment that 'The technology of the Walkman cannot be easily disentangled from the technology of sound listened to through the Walkman' (2001:213).<sup>26</sup>

Lind's (1989) ideas on the role of music in any Walkman experience are also relevant here. At one point Lind takes a similar position to that taken in this study, observing '... content and medium may be considered as inseparable'<sup>27</sup> (1989:38). When it is considered that the content Lind discusses is music, the assertion assumes a certain irony when Lind elsewhere dismisses music from her study in a manner similar to Bull. She defines '... personal stereo use ...' (1989:9) as '... the wearing of a small, portable device requiring headphones to allow the user to listen to prerecorded or broadcast material' (1989:9). She then explicitly rejects any role of music in the Walkman functions she observes, writing:

... this definition does not require the wearer to be listening to anything; the device is considered to be "in use" as long as the headphones are being worn, even if the device is turned off. (1989:9-10)

This understanding of the relative importance of the roles of Walkman Music and the Walkman which transmits it is inverted relative to listeners' understanding of their experiences. Without music or other content for it to reproduce the Walkman amounts to very little beyond a conglomeration of plastic and other materials. Moreover, many of the functions which Bull and Lind ascribe to the Walkman have analogies which are carried out by music when it is transmitted by other means.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Lysloff and Gay (2003) make the same point in general terms in their introduction to a collection of studies into music and technoculture, writing '... common sense tells us that technology, rather than being part of our lived experience, only mediates it' (2003:3).

Bull's thoughts raise another issue. Some may question the importance of music to Walkman users. It could be argued that, in some contexts, a talking book or language instruction tape or CD could play a similar role to recorded music and that music is not necessarily the key to the listening experience. In such instances the talking book or language instruction recording would be the key, as is music when that is what the walkman user chooses to hear. In any case, it is the combination of the listener's chosen listening material and the Walkman, the machine that allows them to listen when and where they please, that is critical. No one without the other can provide the mobile experience of chosen listening material. Talking books and language instruction recordings are, however, outside the scope of this Ethnomusicological study and each function discussed here is, by definition, a function of Walkman Music.

<sup>27</sup> This study's definition of Walkman Music, outlined above, is premised on the inseparable combination of music (content) and the means of its production (medium).

<sup>28</sup> For example, Bull states 'Personal stereos are mood managers ...' (2000:189) while Lind similarly suggests the Walkman '... cheers you up, or puts you in a better mood' (1989:59). Both suggest the Walkman itself is responsible for the changes in mood they observe in listeners. By contrast, F. E. Sparshott (1980), in his survey of musical aesthetics, notes discourse which asks:

... does music express what is already felt, arouse new feelings, alter their character, distract one from them, or unite men in them? (1980:121)

Gronow (1983), in addition to his observations discussed above regarding the ubiquity of recordings and their synonymity with musical experience, observes the problem which may be at the heart of Bull's and other scholar's inability to engage with music. He observes:

A glimpse at standard textbooks on mass communication makes us doubt our common sense. Records are seldom mentioned at all, and certainly not considered as a medium comparable to film or radio. (1983:53)

In response, Gronow suggests 'The problem is in the message. The message of records is usually music, and communications research does not know how to deal with music' (1983:53). Bull and Lind need not be considered less insightful than any other scholar in the light of a general inability of people and scholars without musical training to intelligently discuss matters related to music.

Adorno's (1990a) criticism of the early audiophile also resonates in discussion of Walkman scholarship in which music is ignored. Adorno writes:

With its movable horn and its solid spring housing, the gramophone's social position is that of a border marker between two periods of musical practice. It is in front of the gramophone that both types of bourgeois music lovers encounter each other. While the expert examines all the needles and chooses the best one, the consumer just drops in his dime – and the sound that responds to both may well be the same.<sup>29</sup> (1990a:52)

The Walkman seems to mark a similar divide between two understandings of the role of music for its listeners. While some scholars ignore music in their analyses of the Walkman, Walkman listeners continue to use the Walkman to listen to music, to complement their daily lives with music and thus to modify aspects of their routine. Music is a fundamental part of users' experiences of the Walkman. The approach of Bull and Lind, who do not acknowledge the role of Walkman Music in spite of the testimonies of their informants, is rejected in this study. Here the focus falls squarely on Walkman Music.

Despite the failure of Bull's Walkman scholarship to meaningfully engage with music, if appropriately adapted to properly engage with the music it transmits for listeners, his

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Sparshott thus demonstrates the common understanding that music can influence listeners' moods. Bull's and Lind's suggestions that the Walkman, rather than Walkman Music, is responsible for changes in listeners' moods ignores the body of research into music's mood-related qualities to which Sparshott refers. Leonard B. Meyer's writings (see 1956) are seminal early examples of this research and Eugene Narmour' (see 1990) has written in the field more recently.

<sup>29</sup> Adorno tends to use anachronistic class distinctions in his writing, such as 'bourgeois', 'the masses' and 'petit-bourgeois'. His observations regarding recorded music are pertinent in spite of this.

approach is a viable method with which to examine Walkman Music's functions. As noted, Bull (2000) produces a typology of Walkman user's strategies which takes the form of a numbered list of eleven examples of typical Walkman use, the situations in which such use typically occurs and the motivations of Walkman listeners who employ it. Bull's examples of typical use are adapted in this study to focus on music and form the nucleus of the definitions of Walkman Music's functions.<sup>30</sup> The titles of Walkman Music's functions are not derived from Bull's strategies but are original to this study.

As discussed above, Bull (2000:186) acknowledges that the individual examples of Walkman use which form his typology are ideals which may or may not shift or combine as a Walkman user listens. The functions of Walkman Music examined in this study can also shift and combine as listening occurs, an inevitable consequence of employing an inherently simplified system of classificatory analysis. Nevertheless, classificatory analysis provides a useful mechanism to investigate how Walkman users understand their listening experiences in terms of the functions they perceive their music to fulfil for them.

Bull's analysis includes Walkman use which involves listener's modifications of their interactions with their environments. Listeners use their Walkmans in response to unpleasant sounds in their environments, in response to crowded or otherwise unpleasant situations or in response to people in their vicinity with whom they do not want to interact. One notable use combines elements of listener's environments with certain qualities of the Walkman experience. For example, listeners may enjoy the feeling that they are either watching or participating in a film of which their environments and their Walkman Music each comprise a part. Other Walkman uses involve listener's responses to their own thoughts and desires. Listeners might use their Walkmans nostalgically in the knowledge that Walkman Music prompts desirable memories. Other 'listener focussed' reasons for Walkman use include assuaging feelings of loneliness, managing moods or for motivation in physical exertion or exercise. Conversely, listeners might feel that time spent commuting, particularly on public transport, can be more constructively spent listening to music. Finally and most simply, Walkman users may choose to hear their chosen music for the pleasure it affords or in order to study it. These functions are initially outlined below and then summarised in Table One.

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<sup>30</sup> As noted, Bull (2000) proposes eleven strategies of Walkman use. He describes the eleventh as follows:

Users are not always alone. Sometimes they share their personal stereo with a friend, both listening by sharing one headphone. They listen, both attentive and absorbed by the sounds of the personal stereo. Personal stereos constitute a form of 'group' exclusivity. (Bull 2000:190)

In this study the focus falls on individual listening to Walkman Music. As a result this strategy of Walkman use, involving two listeners, is not adapted in order to define a function of Walkman Music.

## **The Functions of Walkman Music**

### **A: Functions in which Listeners Focus on Walkman Music**

#### Function One: Chosen Sounds

In this function Walkman Music is simply the Walkman user's chosen listening material and, as such, fulfilment of the user's desire to hear it. A Walkman listener wants to hear particular recorded music and uses the Walkman in order to do so.

#### Function Two: Learning

This function of Walkman Music stands alone in this study in that its definition is not derived from Bull's (2000:186-190) typology of strategies of Walkman use. The need for an additional function became apparent when this study's interview results were analysed, since a significant number could not be classified according to the functions already defined.

In Learning, Walkman Music functions as the subject of the listener's attempts to learn it. Typically although not necessarily a music student, the Walkman user listens to Walkman Music in an attempt to become familiar with it and to understand it. The listener can learn the structure and form of the work, attempt to make aural sense of theoretical information regarding the music, compare interpretations or stylistic variations and generally familiarise themselves with it.

### **B: Functions Involving Listeners' Interactions with their Environments**

#### Function Three: Aestheticisation

Aestheticisation is the listener's construction of a unique perception of their environment, combining their surroundings with Walkman Music. There are two aspects of Aestheticisation to consider. Firstly, Walkman Music combines with the visual environment within which listening occurs. In an effect they frequently liken to a film, listeners hear Walkman Music while observing their surroundings. Secondly, Walkman Music combines with the aural elements of the listener's environment which are not filtered out by the Walkman headphones or earphones. In this way the listener notices an aural combination of Walkman Music and ambient noise.

Function Four: Environmental Control

In Environmental Control, listeners choose to replace external ambient sounds with Walkman Music so the music acts as an alternative soundscape, preferred by listeners to environmental sounds they consider unpleasant.

Function Five: Boundary Demarcation

Listeners feel Walkman Music can set them apart from their surroundings. Walkman Music demarcates no literal or physical boundary around listeners but Walkman listeners can feel 'removed' from unpleasant environments nonetheless. Public transport frequently recurs in Walkman listeners' accounts as the setting for Boundary Demarcation.

Function Six: Interpersonal Mediation

Walkman Music mediates personal interaction in two ways. First, because listeners' attention is directed towards their music and not towards their environments, they are more difficult to approach. This may be unintentional, with Walkman users unaware of the reduced attention they pay to bystanders. Conversely, users may listen to Walkman Music with the express purpose of eliminating undesirable personal interaction. Second, Walkman Music may render the listener unable to hear others' verbal attempts to gain their attention by overwhelming external noises. While listeners may otherwise choose to interact, they remain unaware of the opportunity to do so.

The Walkman apparatus also plays a role in Interpersonal Mediation. Its presence, visible to bystanders, indicates the Walkman user's intention to listen to Walkman Music as well as their consequent reduced attention to their surroundings. For bystanders, the listener's Walkman Music plays no role in any subsequent modification of social interaction because, apart from leakage, only the Walkman user can hear it. Nonetheless, bystanders interpret the presence of Walkman equipment to mean Walkman users are focussed on something other than the potential for social interaction. Bystanders modify or reduce their attempts to interact with the listener accordingly, considering any such attempts unnecessarily difficult and potentially wasted.

**C: Functions in which Listeners Focus on Themselves**

Function Seven: Company

Company is Walkman listeners' perception of the presence of the musicians whose Walkman Music they listen to. Listeners use Walkman Music as a substitute companion. This perception

occurs despite the temporal and spatial separation between listeners and the musicians who recorded the Walkman Music in question.

Function Eight: Aural Mnemonic

Certain music becomes associated in listeners' minds with events from their pasts. Consequently, when heard from a Walkman, the music prompts listeners to think of such events. In addition to memories, Walkman Music triggers feelings and emotions associated with events from listeners' pasts.

Function Nine: Mood Management

Walkman listeners use Walkman Music in order to modify undesirable moods or to sustain moods they enjoy.

Function Ten: Time Management

Walkman users listen to Walkman Music instead of resigning themselves to complete lack of activity or instead of undertaking boring or monotonous activities. Listeners consider their Walkman Music to be a relatively more productive occupation than alternatives open to them.

Function Eleven: Activation

Walkman Music, especially when it is rhythmic in nature, stimulates movement in Walkman listeners. They move to the rhythm of the music and may undertake more strenuous physical activity as a result.

These functions are now presented overleaf in tabular form. Table One summarises Bull's (2000) strategies of Walkman use and the functions of Walkman Music adapted from them. As noted, this adaptation takes the form of a shift of focus from the Walkman itself to Walkman Music. This demonstrates the links between Bull's work and this study and highlights the differences between them.

**Table One:** Adaptation of the Functions of Walkman Music from Bull's Strategies of Walkman Use

<b>Bull's Strategy of Walkman Use</b>	<b>The Functions of Walkman Music</b>
<b>A: Functions in which Listeners Focus on Walkman Music</b>	
<p>Users describe being absorbed in the pleasure of listening uninterruptedly to their own music. Their Walkmans satisfy their desire for their chosen sound accompaniment wherever they might be. (see Bull 2000:187)</p>	<p><b>Chosen Sounds</b> Walkman Music is the listener's chosen listening material. Listeners enjoy hearing it and choose to listen as a result.</p>
<p>Note: This function of Walkman Music is derived from this study's fieldwork results rather than from Bull's strategies of Walkman use.</p>	<p><b>Learning</b> Walkman Music is material with which listeners want to become familiar. In learning Walkman Music can be compared with a textbook or similar study material. It is the focus of the listener's attempts to learn it.</p>

Table One continued on next page.

**Table One** (Continued)

<b>Bull's (2000) Strategy of Walkman Use</b>	<b>The Functions of Walkman Music</b>
<b>B: Functions Involving Listeners' Interactions with their Environments</b>	
<p>Users construct the world narcissistically as a projection of their own mediated sound world. They describe the experience as aesthetically pleasurable. (see Bull 2000:188)</p>	<p><b>Aestheticisation</b>                      Listeners experience and enjoy Walkman Music in combination with visual or aural elements of their surroundings. Listeners often relate this experience to that of a film or film-clip.</p>
<p>Walkman users aim to block out unwanted external sound. They replace it with their own personal soundscapes, transmitted by Walkmans. (see Bull 2000:186)</p>	<p><b>Environmental Control</b>                      Listeners use Walkman Music to eliminate and replace sounds of the external environment they consider unpleasant.</p>
<p>Walkman users experience discomfort in crowded or otherwise unpleasant spaces. Their Walkman becomes a kind of mobile book or newspaper giving them something else to attend to in order to pretend they are not really there. (see Bull 2000:186)</p>	<p><b>Boundary Demarcation</b>                      Listeners feel listening to Walkman Music serves to set them apart or 'remove' them from surroundings they consider unpleasant.</p>
<p>Users feel their Walkmans are efficient tools for controlling the nature of their contact with others. Walkmans are the equivalent of 'Do Not Disturb' signs. (see Bull 2000:189-190)</p>	<p><b>Interpersonal Mediation</b>                      Walkman Music interferes with listeners' capacity to interact with other people. Walkman Music distracts listeners or leaves them unable to hear verbal attempts to gain their attention. This can be unintentional or listeners might be aware of it and take advantage of it in order to avoid unwanted personal interaction. Aware of this, bystanders choose not to attempt to interact with Walkman listeners.</p>

Table One continued on next page.



**Table One** (Continued)

<b>Bull's (2000) Strategy of Walkman Use</b>	<b>The Functions of Walkman Music</b>
<b>C: Functions in which Listeners Focus on Themselves</b>	
<p>Users might feel an overwhelming sense of loneliness while alone – their Walkmans provide company. (see Bull 2000:189)</p>	<p><b>Company</b> Walkman Music accompanies listeners, substituting for 'real' personal interaction and assuaging loneliness.</p>
<p>Users enjoy playing music which reminds them of something in their own narrative. As they listen they become absorbed in the flow of memory sparked off by their Walkman. (see Bull 2000:188)</p>	<p><b>Aural Mnemonic</b> Walkman Music prompts memories, thoughts and emotions associated with aspects of listeners' pasts.</p>
<p>Users respond to a sense of their own 'internal' chaos. Their Walkmans minimise the contingency of their thoughts, moods and emotions. (see Bull 2000:189)</p>	<p><b>Mood Management</b> Walkman Music modifies or sustains listeners' moods. Listeners are aware of this and take advantage of it, thus 'managing' their moods.</p>
<p>Walkman users are often oppressed or fed up by their routines. The use of a Walkman makes the time pass bearably for them, permitting them to reclaim otherwise wasted time. (see Bull 2000:190)</p>	<p><b>Time Management</b> Listeners consider Walkman Music a more productive focus for their attention than alternatives and listen rather than resigning themselves to frustration or boredom.</p>
<p>Walkman users describe feeling energised. The steady rhythm of the music helps them in this – their body and the sound are felt as one. (see Bull 2000:190)</p>	<p><b>Activation</b> Walkman Music, especially when it is rhythmic in nature, energises and invigorates listeners. Listeners may take advantage of this in order to exercise or work more productively.</p>

## **Rice's Model for Ethnomusicological Study**

In addition to the use of classificatory analysis, further analysis of the interview results and the literature is possible with the application of Timothy Rice's (1987) model for the study of ethnomusicology. Rice's proposals are influenced by Merriam's (1964) earlier model which '... involves study on three analytic levels – conceptualization about music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound itself' (1964:32). Rice's model is expressed as the three-part question, '... how do people historically construct, socially maintain and individually create and experience music?' (1987:473), each part of which can '... be explained in terms of the other two' (1987:479).<sup>31</sup>

Rice explains the subject matter which each of his model's three parts might cover. First, historical construction:

... comprises two important processes: the process of change with the passage of time and the process of reencountering and recreating the forms and legacy of the past in each moment of the present. (1987:474)

The synchronic nature of this study precludes substantive examination of any process of change over time with regard to the functions of Walkman Music. It is possible, however, to study the processes by which forms of past musical practice which relate to present Walkman practice are re-encountered and recreated and thus establish the historical construction of Walkman Music's functions. Examination of the historical construction of Walkman's Music's functions also enables findings regarding their relative novelty – that is, it enables findings which help answer the question: have Walkman Music's functions arisen since the Walkman's development or are they modifications of older functions of music?

Regarding the social maintenance of music, Rice discusses '... the way music is sustained, maintained, and altered by socially constructed institutions and belief systems ...' (1987:475). Examination of the social situations within which Walkman listening occurs aids understanding of the functions which Walkman Music fulfils for individuals within those situations, as well as any effects their listening may have on other people. Study of the social structures surrounding music other than Walkman Music can inform the examination of Walkman Music's functions.

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<sup>31</sup> Rice's model demands examination of historical, social and individual influences on music and therefore invites comparison with Blacking's (see 1995:227) subsequent assertion, previously noted, that examination of the integration of musical and non-musical experience is a vital part of music scholarship.

The final part of Rice's model is the study of the individual experience of music. Rice's examples of issues which might be discussed within the area of individual experience include:

... emotional, physical, spiritual and multisensory experience mediated by music; and individual cognitive structures for organizing musical experience and associating it with other experiences. (1987:476)

These issues include many which relate to the study of Walkman Music. Listening to Walkman Music is a multisensory experience as a result of the combination of stimulations from listener's external environments with those from Walkman Music. Also, because people often listen to Walkman Music while undertaking other activities, the individual cognitive structures by which listeners organise the combined experience assume importance in the study of Walkman Music. Thus Rice's proposed study of the individual experience of music seems tailored for the study of Walkman Music.

Following the general perception of the solitary nature of the Walkman experience, intuition suggests that examining the individual listener's experience is fundamental to understanding the functions of Walkman Music. In presenting his model, Rice demonstrates how individual musical experience relates to both the historical construction and social maintenance of music. As noted, historical and social aspects of Walkman listening are examined in this study as per Rice's model. In this way study of the experience of listening to Walkman Music, commonly understood as an exclusively individual experience, is fully informed through investigation of its historical antecedents and the broader social setting within which it occurs.

## **Interviews**

Interviews were carried out to ensure the individual experience of Walkman Music's functions would be comprehensively examined and accurately described. The interviews enabled the functions of Walkman Music, derived as most of them are from the literature, to be tested against the perceptions of real-world Walkman listeners. The only criteria applied to the selection of interview subjects were that they used a Walkman to listen to music and were willing to participate. Twenty-six listeners were interviewed between May and November, 2001. Fifteen were students of The University of Adelaide and one other a staff member of

the same university.<sup>32</sup> Four subjects worked together in a design office and two others were family members of one of these designers. The remainder were acquaintances of other interviewees. Of the twenty-six respondents, sixteen were male. Interviews were carried out face-to-face, by telephone or email correspondence. The interviews were informally structured but each was directed toward ascertaining the Walkman user's own understanding of their reasons for using a Walkman and therefore the functions which Walkman Music fulfils for them. Qualitative analysis of the interview data was deemed the most effective way to extract relevant and useful information that could subsequently be compared against the literature. Respondents constructed their understanding of their listening experiences to the interviewer, who provided only limited prompting to ensure the discussion remained relevant to the study. In order to maintain confidentiality, interviewees are identified only by first name. Full details are held by the author.

As noted, a primary purpose of the interview process was to test whether this study's proposed functions of Walkman Music resonated with the perceptions of actual Walkman users. This was vital to the study because the relevant literature is essentially speculative in nature and rarely supported by ethnographic or other empirical evidence.

The eleven functions of Walkman Music are now examined in Chapters Two, Three and Four. Functions in which Walkman listeners focus on their Walkman Music are examined in Chapter Two. Functions which involve Walkman listeners' interactions with various aspects of their environments are examined in Chapter Three. Functions in which Walkman Music affects and relates to listeners themselves are examined in Chapter Four. In each case the examination proceeds by application of Rice's model, prompting consideration of historical, social and individual factors relating to each function. The lengths of the discussions of individual functions vary quite considerably, indicative of the quantity of relevant material derived from the literature and the interviews. The aim and findings of the study are revisited in the Conclusions in Chapter Five.

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<sup>32</sup> Their involvement was solicited during music lectures at the University of Adelaide and in the course of the interviewer's interactions with acquaintances who used Walkmans. Some interviewees were found by following leads from previous interviews.

## Chapter Two

Two functions of Walkman Music are examined here: Chosen Sounds and Learning. These are the only functions in which the Walkman user's only aim is listening. In Chosen Sounds, listeners concentrate on their Walkman Music because they enjoy listening to it. In Learning, listeners concentrate on their Walkman Music because they are studying it. Initially it may seem strange that there are only two functions in which Walkman Music is the listener's sole focus. However, as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, Walkman Music's functionality for listeners extends beyond providing listening material. As a starting point, though, it is appropriate to examine the functions in which listeners focus on their Walkman Music.

### **Function One: Chosen Sounds**

Chosen Sounds is the most straightforward of Walkman Music's functions. In this function Walkman Music is simply something Walkman users enjoy. They want to hear it and use their Walkmans in order to do so. In Chosen Sounds, Walkman Music is the fulfilment of listeners' desires to hear it.<sup>1</sup>

### **Historical Construction and Social Maintenance of Chosen Sounds**

The perception of music as a source of enjoyment is so fundamental it is rarely documented. Apart from certain responses arising in interviews, this investigation found only four sources (Aristotle 1992 (c330BC); Davies 2001a; Merriam 1964; Sparshott 1980) in which this premise was explicitly discussed although it was often implicit. These sources reflect the contemporary social perception of music as the source of enjoyable experience as well as the historical basis of that perception. Because of the relative scarcity of relevant sources, Chosen Sounds' historical construction and social maintenance are discussed together here.

Firstly, Aristotle briefly observes 'Most men nowadays take part in music for the sake of the pleasure it gives ...' (1992 (c330BC):455). This is an early observation of the pleasure listeners take in music and their resulting desire to play or hear it. Aristotle's words could apply in a discussion of contemporary listeners and, while he could not have been aware of technological developments which would enable people to enjoy music without playing it

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<sup>1</sup> Note Chosen Sounds is the function of Walkman Music which most often occurs in combination with other functions. Intuitively, it is clear Walkman users will listen to their choice of music. Therefore, Walkman Music will always function as Chosen Sounds even as it functions simultaneously in other ways. This concurrence of multiple functions exemplifies

themselves, there is no reason to doubt that pleasure still motivates listeners' efforts to hear music.

Secondly, Sparshott (1980) reviews the field of musical aesthetics in an earlier edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. He understands that the fundamental question for the field '... must be the nature of the musical work itself' (1980:120) and subsequently suggests several possibilities for that nature. One possibility is that the musical work is '... essentially an object of a certain sort, an achieved reality which, once made, may be understood and enjoyed for whatever it is ...' (1980:120-121). Here Sparshott expresses the basis of Chosen Sounds – namely, for many listeners, Walkman Music is something they enjoy hearing. The enjoyment listeners derive from their Walkman Music motivates their listening.

Next, in a survey of philosophies of music in the subsequent edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stephen Davies (2001a) writes '... musical works are valued for the pleasure that attends their appreciation' (2001a:623). Davies does not comment on the musical work itself but on the manner in which listeners receive it, observing listeners value, appreciate and enjoy listening to music. This is the manner in which Walkman listeners receive their Walkman Music in Chosen Sounds.

Finally, Merriam (1964), as noted in the Introduction, discusses ten functions of music from an ethnomusicological perspective. Of particular interest here is what Merriam names 'The function of entertainment' (1964:223). He writes 'Music provides an entertainment function in all societies' (1964:223) and Chosen Sounds is one example of this. Walkman users listen to Walkman Music because it entertains them or occupies them agreeably.

Chosen Sounds, then, is a relatively recent and technologically advanced manifestation of a function which music has held at least since the days of Aristotle and, following Merriam, which it continues to hold in every society. The sources reviewed above represent a meagre return regarding the view that music is a source of enjoyment for listeners. As noted, however, the scarcity of relevant sources can be read as an indication that the view of music as a source of enjoyment is so obvious to most it is infrequently documented.

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Rösing's (1984), Bull's (2000) and particularly Adorno's (1976) observations regarding the nature of classificatory analysis as discussed in the Introduction – that is, single classifications rarely exist in '... chemical purity ...' (1976:2).

### **Individual Experience of Chosen Sounds**

In addition to individual listeners' accounts, cited below, aspects of Lind's (1989) and Bull's (2000) examinations of the Walkman are pertinent to Chosen Sounds. Firstly, Lind<sup>2</sup> finds two common reasons for Walkman use are 'you can listen to what you want, when you want to' (1989:59) and 'it [the Walkman] allows you to listen to music while you're "on the go"' (1989:59). Both reasons correspond to Chosen Sounds, in which people choose to listen to Walkman Music because they enjoy it and because the Walkman facilitates their enjoyment in most situations.

Bull (2000) observes:

Users describe being absorbed in the pleasure of listening uninterruptedly to their own audited flow of experience. These users prefer to hear their "own" music whilst on the move. They may or may not take notice of their environment but more often than not they merely attend to their music. Personal-stereo use satisfies user's desires for their chosen sound accompaniment wherever they might be. (2000:187)

Enjoyment of Walkman Music motivates such listeners to use the Walkman. Despite their focus on the Walkman apparatus rather than on the music it transmits, both Bull and Lind are forced to acknowledge Walkman Music because it is important for the listeners they discuss.

As noted, Walkman Music functions as Chosen Sounds when Walkman users' listening is motivated by simple enjoyment of Walkman Music. Three Walkman listeners professed this motivation in their interviews. For example, Daniel (2001) stated:

For me, the Walkman is just the logical outcome of how I feel about music. I mean, I'm studying it here at the Con.<sup>3</sup>, I play in bands and go out to hear bands. I just love music and with the Walkman I can listen to more of it. (2001)

Daniel's love of music is the main motivation behind his listening to Walkman Music at times when he cannot participate in music in other ways. He desires constant exposure to music and Walkman Music suits him because it can be heard in almost every situation. Jessica (2001) explained her motivation for Walkman listening in similar terms:

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<sup>2</sup> In her study Lind (1989) posed the research question: 'What are the functions of the personal stereo for college students who use such devices?' (1989:55). She conducted telephone interviews and surveyed the frequency with which her respondents' reasons for using their Walkmans corresponded to fourteen reasons she formulated in advance. As noted above, some of Lind's proposed reasons for Walkman use relate to the functions of Walkman Music examined here. Further instances of similarity are noted as other functions are examined.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Con' is the Elder School of Music, formerly The Elder Conservatorium at The University of Adelaide.

Well, I love music. I know that sounds really dumb but it's one of my passions. It's about the music. (2001)

Daniel's and Jessica's Walkman listening clearly demonstrate the principles of Chosen Sounds.

Erin's (2001) account of her Walkman listening is the final example of Walkman listening for the sake of the music alone and thus of Chosen Sounds. Erin listens to Walkman Music on public transport. Asked whether she prefers to commute with or without Walkman Music, Erin responded:

I prefer to have it with me, actually. I like listening to music on the bus. I like listening to music anyway and so if I listen to music on the bus I get to listen to more music. (2001)

Many Walkman listeners use Walkman Music on public transport to block out surroundings they consider unpleasant.<sup>4</sup> Other Walkman users choose to listen on public transport because they feel their listening is more productive use of time which they would otherwise consider wasted.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, Erin's only motivation for listening is enjoyment of her Walkman Music. Her Walkman Music functions only as her Chosen Sounds.

### **Summary of Chosen Sounds**

In Chosen Sounds, Walkman Music fulfils the listener's desire to hear it. It is simply music Walkman users enjoy and want to hear. Chosen Sounds' only distinction from listener's enjoyment of music in other situations is that the chosen music is Walkman Music and thus facilitates listeners' desires to hear it in virtually any situation. Finally, because Walkman Music is always the listener's chosen music, even as it fulfils other functions it simultaneously functions as listeners' Chosen Sounds. In this manner Chosen Sounds describes at least a part of all Walkman Music listening.

### **Function Two: Learning**

In this function Walkman Music is the focus of the listener's attempts to learn it. Listeners are typically music students who listen to Walkman Music in order to make aural sense of theoretical information about it. In many cases the resulting knowledge is applied towards the listener's studies and subsequent performance of the music. When the interviews were analysed it became apparent that a significant cohort of the Walkman users interviewed (ten

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<sup>4</sup> This phenomenon is examined in Chapter Three in discussion of Boundary Demarcation.

<sup>5</sup> This phenomenon is examined in Chapter Four in discussion of Time Management.



out of 26, or 38%)<sup>6</sup> listened to their Walkman Music to learn it. Three indicative interview responses are cited below.

Firstly, at the time of her interview Aliese (2001) was attempting to familiarise herself with the string quartet repertoire for her own Ph.D. studies. She stated:

At the moment I'm going to really have to start listening to these tapes of the string quartets because I want to know the repertoire. The reason I taped it is because I know I'm more likely to listen to it on my Walkman than if I have to keep going down to the library. (2001)

Aliese carries her Walkman around with her. This means she can listen to the music she wants to study whenever she gets an idle moment rather than having to make a special effort. The convenience of Walkman Music allows Aliese to listen more than would be otherwise possible and thus optimise her study efforts.

Secondly, Glenyce (2001) drew a comparison between listening on a home stereo system and on a Walkman:

It's much more direct on a Walkman. The more direct approach, well I think it's better for learning actually. It makes you focus a lot better. I tend to get distracted quite easily so it's a good learning tool for me. (2001)

When she tries to learn music, Glenyce appreciates the Walkman's direct transmission of music to her ears. The Walkman's headphones shut out ambient noise and thus remove possible distractions. Glenyce feels she concentrates more effectively on her Walkman Music and learns it more thoroughly as a result.

Finally, Scott (2001) illustrated an important facet of Learning. He related:

[When I'm listening] I might be thinking about how I'd play it [the Walkman Music]. Because I'm a musician I'm thinking of what I'd be doing in that situation. I think of transcribing what I'm hearing or playing it myself. (2001)

As he listens, Scott attempts to learn his Walkman Music from the perspective of a performer. Whereas Aliese attempts to become familiar with certain music and understand it in theoretical terms, Scott aims to develop his own playing by first understanding, then imitating

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<sup>6</sup> Note fourteen respondents (approximately half) of the total of twenty-six were music students. This weighting of the sample group explains Learning's inclusion here and its exclusion from other, related, studies such as Bull's (2000) and Lind's (1989), in which it is possible, even likely, that no music students were included.

and possibly improving on what he hears in his Walkman Music. Although it is not apparent from her interview extract, Glenyce is also a performer and her approach to Learning is similar to Scott's.

In Learning, Walkman users listen to Walkman Music in order to learn it and the Walkman enables them to do this in situations where it would otherwise be impossible. The Walkman, because it shuts out a great deal of ambient noise, also enables listening which is relatively free of distraction, thus enhancing the listener's attempts to learn it.

### **Historical Construction and Social Maintenance of Learning**

Several significant composers (see Bartók 1976; Sousa 1906; Stravinsky 1962; Vaughan Williams 1963) have expressed negative opinions regarding the gramophone's impact on music education and training. This literature informs Learning's historical construction because it pertains to forms of recorded music predating the Walkman's development and the place of these forms in music education. In addition, the thrust of the criticism is that the gramophone will eliminate traditional music teaching and the experiences of hearing live music and of playing music with others. In other words, the solitary experience of recorded music will usurp methods of learning music which involve social interaction. This literature thus also relates to Learning's social maintenance and is now reviewed in order to inform both Learning's historical construction and social maintenance.

Of the composers mentioned above who offer their views on music education's imminent downfall in the face of the gramophone, John Philip Sousa (1906) is particularly vehement. He writes:

I foresee a marked deterioration in American music and musical taste, an interruption in the musical development of the country, and a host of other injuries to music in its artistic manifestations, by virtue – or rather by vice – of the multiplication of the various music reproducing machines. (1906:278)

Sousa predicts this deterioration will occur because listening to recorded music will substitute for the study of the practice of music:

The child becomes indifferent to practice, for when music can be heard in the homes without the labor of study and close application, and without the slow process of acquiring a technic, it will be simply a question of time when the amateur disappears entirely, and with him a host of vocal and instrumental teachers, who will be without field or calling. (1906:280)

Sousa feels a music student's efforts to master an instrument are motivated by the desire to hear music however it is likely music students are also motivated by the desire to play music. Thus, the opportunity provided by the gramophone to hear more music than was previously possible might not be as disastrous for amateur musicianship as Sousa predicts. Nonetheless, others share Sousa's concerns. Bartók (1976) is also wary of the gramophone's effects on performance. In an essay on "Mechanical Music" he writes:

The propagation of the radio and gramophone would have a very great drawback if it caused people to give up performing instead of arousing a longing to play music. (1976:296)

Unlike Sousa, however, Bartók sees potential for recorded music to have a positive as well as a negative influence on musical participation; recordings might arouse the desire to play music. While critical of recordings as they compare with live music, Bartók sees a role for recordings in teaching and learning of music. He writes:

Although the very best gramophone records can never replace the original performance from an aesthetic point of view, they still must be considered as a surrogate. The role of the gramophone is more important from the pedagogic and scientific point of view. (1976:292)

Bartók employs the familiar device of comparing recorded music to live music. In this comparison he notes deficiencies in recorded music on the grounds of aesthetics but, foreshadowing Learning and the listening practices of many music students in particular, he notes its usefulness to pedagogy. Apart from anything else, recorded music enables music students to hear the music they are studying while they study it. This measure of convenience was impossible before recording and, as noted, the Walkman facilitates even more convenient listening. Using the Walkman, as Aliese, noted above, attested, students can take advantage of convenient listening and study whenever and wherever the motivation strikes.

Stravinsky (1962) also criticises recorded music – not from an aesthetic point of view in the manner of Bartók, but rather in response to his observations of changes in the process of hearing music. Stravinsky observes a downside to the easy availability of recorded music and writes:

In John [sic] Sebastian Bach's day it was necessary for him to walk ten miles to a neighboring town to hear Buxtehude play his works. Today anyone, living no matter where, has only to turn a knob or put on a record to hear what he likes. Indeed, it is in just this incredible facility, this lack of necessity for any effort, that the evil of this so-called progress lies. For in music, more than in any other branch of art, understanding

is given only to those who make an active effort. Passive receptivity is not enough. To listen to certain combinations of sound and automatically become accustomed to them does not necessarily imply that they have been heard and understood. (1962:152-153)

Stravinsky seems to feel that the effort required by Bach to walk to the next town contributed to his understanding of Buxtehude's works. By contrast, it is possible the exertion involved in walking ten miles (16km) to a church service or concert could in fact promote passive listening, induced by fatigue, of the kind deplored by Stravinsky. It is also possible that many Walkman users, listening to their Walkman Music in circumstances most convenient to them, could listen actively and with a great deal of critical awareness and insight. Stravinsky's criticisms of recorded music and its consequences for music education seem reactionary in the light of the contemporary assimilation of recorded music into everyday life and music scholarship.

In some ways, Ralph Vaughan Williams' (1963) understanding of the pitfalls of attempting to learn music by listening to recordings are similar to those of Stravinsky although his opinion differs in one important facet. He writes:

In those days, before the gramophone and the wireless and the miniature score, the pianoforte duet was the only way, unless you were an orchestral player, of getting to know orchestral music, and one really got to know it from the inside, not in the superficial way of lazily listening to a gramophone record. (1963:183)

As noted, Stravinsky is critical of learning music through listening to recordings in comparison to hearing live music. With a slightly different emphasis, Vaughan Williams criticises recorded music as a learning tool in comparison with active participation in music-making. Vaughan Williams feels that actually playing the music with another pianist in the form of piano duet reductions of orchestral scores is the best way to gain an understanding of the music. Compared with this method, he considers listening to recorded music on a gramophone to be irredeemably lazy. Of the composers whose views are reviewed above, Vaughan Williams' are the most sensible. Convenient listening, in the manner enabled by the Walkman and the gramophone before it, does not necessarily detract from the learning of music. It is accepted here, however, that listening alone does not comprise a complete musical education and should be accompanied by other practical and theoretical studies. Nonetheless, the convenience with which students can hear recordings of the music they are studying can only assist their learning efforts.

In "The Curves of the Needle" (1990a), Adorno makes observations which are relevant to discussion of the use of recorded music as a means of learning. He observes a change in musical participation due to the gramophone's increasing ubiquity and suggests the gramophone is:

... a utensil of the private life that regulates the consumption of art in the nineteenth century. It is the bourgeois family that gathers around the gramophone in order to enjoy the music that it itself – as was already the case in the feudal household – is unable to perform. (1990a:50)

Adorno's observation is still pertinent despite his reference to the nineteenth century and his use of anachronistic class distinctions. Many people who use Walkmans and other means of reproducing recorded music are unable to play the music they hear. Unlike the writers reviewed above, Adorno does not attribute the musical incompetence of this bourgeois family to the advent of the gramophone. He observes, in feudal times before the development of any means of music recording, people were also unable to play music which they might have heard played by professional musicians. Adorno demonstrates recorded music should not be considered the downfall of music education in the way which Sousa and others thought when it was first developed and introduced.

Adorno also makes observations relevant to Learning in "Opera and the Long Playing Record" (1990c). His observations support ideas already discussed in this chapter. Adorno observes that the introduction of the long-playing record meant:

The entire musical literature could now become available in quite-authentic form to listeners desirous of auditioning and studying such works at a time convenient to them. (1990c:63)

Here Adorno makes several relevant points. First, Adorno's reference to the use of recordings to study works is a direct acknowledgment of recorded music's role in music education. Learning, using Walkman Music, is one particular example of this general capacity of recorded music. Second, Adorno's observation of the long-playing record's 'quite-authentic form' acknowledges that musical works, previously artificially shortened and broken up in order to fit on record sides of restricted capacity, are now recorded in complete and uninterrupted form. Subsequent technological developments such as the CD have removed limitations of capacity even further into the memories of early listeners. 'Quite-authentic', though, is a somewhat reserved and two-edged approbation. Along with Adorno's observation that recordings enable listeners to 'audition' works, it implies a belief live performance maintains

some kind of superiority over recordings. Adorno suggests recordings can aid listeners in decisions whether or not to hear a live performance of the work in question and familiarise listeners with the work which they will subsequently hear in live performance. Recordings are thus an appetiser for the 'real thing' but not a meal in themselves, despite their usefulness to students of music. Third, recordings allow people to listen to music at times convenient to them. Continuing the theme of convenience, recordings are particularly useful in the study of music because:

The ability to repeat long-playing records, as well as parts of them, fosters a familiarity which is hardly afforded by the ritual of performance. (1990c:64)

Once again, recorded music serves music education well because of its convenience. Students can hear the music they are studying in the classroom, while their teacher discusses it. Students need not wait for a local ensemble to play particular music but can hear it at their leisure and repeat it many times if they desire.

### **Individual Experience of Learning**

Further insight into the individual experience of Learning can be gained from the accounts of Walkman listening in this study's interview responses. Aliese (2001), whose efforts to familiarise herself with the string quartet repertoire are noted above, thinks using the Walkman to learn music is more effective than other listening techniques. She related:

At first the whole string quartet repertoire was incomprehensible. You can't tell one person from the other: Beethoven, whatever. But I know that if I listen to it enough I can get the hang of it and I know that the only medium I'm going to listen to it on is my Walkman. Even when I'm sitting there in the library doing nothing, reading the liner notes, whatever, I'm not thinking about the music. But if I'm on the train or whatever I'm just sort of staring into space but really, really concentrating on each note and how they're all working against each other. (2001)

Aliese finds her most concentrated learning efforts take place in situations where she is least likely to be distracted. She has taken her train journey so many times she is thoroughly familiar with the route and can direct her attention completely towards her Walkman Music. For Aliese, Walkman Music's convenience and portability optimises her learning because it allows her to study in environments which she considers most conducive.

Miriam (2001) discussed her Walkman use:

If I need to learn a piece for uni or something I'll pop it on and listen to it over and over again until I get it into my head. That way I can actually hear it and save time because I'm travelling and doing work while I'm travelling. (2001)

Miriam considers that her Walkman listening, especially because it is directly related to her studies, is a more constructive use of time which would otherwise be devoted only to commuting.<sup>7</sup> Note Miriam explicitly thinks of listening to music as working. Miriam's Walkman Music is her course material, equivalent to a textbook, and her listening is study.

Aaron's (2001) interview introduces an idea which stretches the concept of the use of the Walkman in Learning. Like Scott (2001), noted above, he relates his listening back to himself, although to a much greater extent. Discussing his Walkman use, which directly relates to his violin studies, Aaron tells:

I've got an MD [minidisc] Walkman which I primarily use to record my own performances or other performances as well as getting, copying recordings that I get a hold of from the library. I tend to use that on a daily basis, taking it everywhere as a form of documentation. I especially use it in performance to get another perspective of my own playing. This can be really helpful. (2001)

Aaron explains how recording and subsequently listening to and reviewing his own performances is helpful to him:

You're your own best critic. You always hear your mistakes very clearly. The littlest thing you don't like is immediately apparent, which to me is perfect. Being able to hear them and think about it – "Why did I do that? How did it happen?" – only goes to further my own playing and performing abilities. (2001)

To this point this study has discussed only Walkman Music which listeners hear once other musicians have recorded it. The technological advance represented by the Walkman has been discussed only in terms of the mobile listening it affords. Now Aaron's listening demonstrates another level of the application of the Walkman's technology. In addition to its mobility, Aaron exploits his Walkman's recording capabilities in order to review his own performances. Thus, he learns about himself and his performance techniques and subsequently improves as a musician. This, while it differs slightly from other Walkman listening documented in this study, is still Learning and, in addition to every other example of Walkman use examined in this study, demonstrates the application of available technologies by individual users to their own ends.

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<sup>7</sup> The ability that Walkman Music gives listeners to make productive use of time they would otherwise consider wasted is termed Time Management and discussed at length in Chapter Four.

### **Summary of Learning**

Learning is one of only two functions of Walkman Music in which Walkman Music is at the forefront of the listener's attention. The listener is trying to learn the music in order to subsequently perform it, to analyse it or for other reasons. As a result of the attention paid by the listener to the Walkman Music, Learning differs from other functions of Walkman Music examined in this study when it does not necessarily gain the listener's full attention but functions toward some other end.

Walkman users' accounts of listening corresponding to Learning belie opinions in the literature suggesting that the advent of recorded music would be disastrous for domestic music making and musical competence in general. Listening to Walkman Music alone cannot transform a person into a competent musician. Nonetheless, the convenience with which it enables musicians to listen to music when it would be otherwise impossible can only be considered a boon for their attempts to learn music.



## Chapter Three

The four functions of Walkman Music examined in Chapter Three exemplify the ways Walkman users choose to modify their interactions with various aspects of their surroundings. In Aestheticisation, listeners construct a unique perception of their surroundings, combining them with Walkman Music. In Environmental Control, listeners choose to replace external ambient sounds with Walkman Music. In Boundary Demarcation, listeners use Walkman Music to set them apart from their surroundings, especially when they consider the surroundings to be unpleasant. Finally, in Interpersonal Mediation, listeners use Walkman Music and also the Walkman apparatus to modify their personal interactions with people in their vicinity.

### **Function Three: Aestheticisation**

In Aestheticisation, Walkman Music functions in two closely related modes. In the first mode, Walkman listeners experience something similar to watching a film<sup>1</sup>, observing their surroundings while listening to Walkman Music. Walkman Music is thus the aural component or 'soundtrack' of this filmic experience and listeners' surroundings are the visual component. In the second mode of Aestheticisation, Walkman Music combines with aural elements of listeners' surroundings which are still audible over their Walkman Music. Listeners thus hear an aural 'collage', comprising a combination of Walkman Music and ambient environmental noise. In both modes, Aestheticisation is the listener's experience of their environment as it combines with the sounds of their Walkman Music.

### **Historical Construction of Aestheticisation**

Listening practices similar to Aestheticisation, but involving live music or forms of recorded music which existed prior to the Walkman's development, can be considered precursors to Aestheticisation and part of its historical construction. The first example, relevant to the historical construction of Aestheticisation's first mode, is related by Eisenberg (1988). He observes:

When a record is fitted over the platter, a transparency or slide is fitted over a segment of space and time. The effect is a double exposure. But if the music is worth its salt, it

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<sup>1</sup> Moebius and Michel-Annen (1994) also draw the comparison between the experience of listening to Walkman Music and watching a film, writing:

Life is changed into a cinema event. Contact with reality decreases, Walkman users feel that they are the audience at a movie as voyeurs. (1994:572)

will assert itself as the true reality, and all the lovely furniture of one's room will seem (if one is aware of it at all) a mere picture ... (1988:251)

Eisenberg discusses fitting a record over a platter. This is a reference to playing an LP on a turntable but Eisenberg's insights relate to music in any form, live or recorded. Recorded music simply allows listeners to achieve the transformation Eisenberg discusses at their convenience. Importantly, note listeners perceive music, rather than their mundane surroundings, as 'reality'. This is a triumph for music rather than its unfortunate dismissal to the background. Eisenberg's understanding of recorded music as capable of overcoming mundanity is noteworthy, especially in comparison to other sources relevant to the first mode of Aestheticisation and reviewed later in this chapter. Eisenberg's reference to the listener's surroundings as a 'picture', with its connotations of artistic beauty, emphasises the aesthetic nature of this experience of recorded music. Also note Eisenberg employs an analogy of photography in his reference to 'a double exposure'. This relates to the 'film' analogy which best explains the first mode of Aestheticisation and which other writers, reviewed below, also employ in relevant discussions.

Barbiero (1989) is the next writer reviewed. In the context of a discussion regarding the continuing vitality of twelve-tone, serial and expressionist music, he observes a shift in music's role in listeners' daily lives. He writes:

Music has become a background texture for daily life, and we tend to hear it as we hear a film soundtrack: as a supplement to action within the frame. (1989:147)

Barbiero does not support his assertion with empirical evidence but intuition suggests it is not unreasonable. In fact, Adorno made the same observation several years earlier in "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening" (1978), writing music '... is perceived purely as background' (1978:271). Despite his affinity with Adorno, Barbiero's position should not be taken as the only possibility. It is noted above that Eisenberg (1988), for one, has a different opinion. He suggests listeners' surroundings fade into the background while their music asserts '... itself as the true reality ...' (1988:251). It seems probable that different listeners have different focuses which may also vary with different listening circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Despite these varying possibilities, Barbiero's use of the word 'supplement', as cited above, to describe music's role for listeners clearly expresses its function in

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<sup>2</sup> This is the basis of Rösing's (1984) research, as reviewed in the Introduction.

Aestheticisation. Walkman Music supplements listeners' experiences of their environments, creating unique aesthetic experiences.

In the final source relevant to the historical construction of Aestheticisation's first mode, Jan Morris (1989) describes her own experience of listening to recorded music:

... when I drove for the first time down the coast of Yugoslavia, from Istria to Montenegro, I had just acquired a recording, by Vladimir Ashkenazy with the Philharmonia Orchestra, of one of Mozart's piano concertos, I forget which. The allegro movement of this piece contained a tremendously vivacious solo run, cascading from one end of the piano to the other, which was repeated several times and which absolutely suited, it seemed to me, the swashbuckling landscape of karst, sea and island through which my white BMW was sweeping. (1989:33)

Morris' account relates closely to Bull's (2000) strategy of Walkman use, adapted here to define Aestheticisation. Bull observes listeners '... often pick music to "suit" the environment passed through' (2000:188). Morris' description of her driving experience is a vivid account of how a listener might understand the music they are listening to suits the environment they are passing through in the manner Bull discusses. It is also an excellent account of a listener's combined experience of their music and their surroundings in the manner enabled by Walkman Music in Aestheticisation's first mode.

As noted, Bull's (2000) strategies of Walkman use are the basis of most of the functions of Walkman Music examined in this study and Aestheticisation's first mode falls into this category. However, Bull's writing suggests nothing of Aestheticisation's second mode. Consideration of this mode was prompted by the writing of Steve Connor (1999) and this study's interview results where listeners recounted experiencing Walkman Music in combination with the sounds, rather than the sights, of their environments. It is now appropriate to review Connor's discussion. He refers to the musical aesthetics of John Cage and also, of particular relevance to this study, discusses the Walkman. He writes:

In the Walkman we have a perfectly ordinary and very casual coming together of the impulse towards absolute technical perfection that we find in CD technology, in which what we hear has never taken place in the here and now – it's a purely artificial sound – and the aesthetics of John Cage, who wanted music to be an exposure to the here and now, to the chances of what happens to happen ... (1999:308)

Connor observes Walkman listeners hear the combination of two sets of sounds: firstly, their Walkman Music and secondly, ambient environmental noises. Regarding Walkman Music, it is already noted, particularly in the Introduction and in discussion of Chosen Sounds, that

Walkman Music is the listener's choice of listening material. Walkman Music's status as the fulfilment of the listener's desire to hear it is of greater relevance to this discussion than its artificiality, as observed by Connor. Nonetheless, the keenness of his observations and the perceptive connection Connor draws between them and Cage's musical aesthetics provides the key to understanding Aestheticisation's second mode. He notes that Cage's aesthetics provide a theoretical framework within which ambient environmental noise is considered of aesthetic or artistic significance. These aesthetics are exemplified in Cage's infamous 1952 piece, *4' 33"*, in which no sounds are made by the performer. This work is considered to epitomise chance in composition and indeterminacy in performance because the only sounds an audience hears for its duration are random ambient environmental noises. In effect, in *4' 33"*, Cage '... simply invites audiences to listen to the sounds around them ...' (Nicholls 2002:228). Related to Walkman Music listening, Connor suggests that, combined with a listener's chosen Walkman Music, ambient sounds can provide an enjoyable listening experience. Walkman listening becomes partially pre-determined and partially indeterminate and listeners enjoy it for the chance juxtaposition of their chosen sounds with random environmental noises. Cage's musical aesthetics are an element in the historical construction of Aestheticisation's second mode.

### **Social Maintenance of Aestheticisation**

Aestheticisation sometimes involves a certain quality of social interaction for Walkman listeners. A writer for *The New Yorker* (Anon. 1989) relates an account of her Walkman Music listening which demonstrates this point. She<sup>3</sup> first presents her experience in terms which explicitly suggest the first mode of Aestheticisation, writing '... when I listen to the Walkman I'm not just tuning out. I'm also tuning in a soundtrack for the scenery around me' (Anon. 1989:20). The writer compares her Walkman Music to the music of a stage production<sup>4</sup> and understands it as remarkably appropriate musical and lyrical accompaniment for what she sees around her. Two social aspects of listening to Walkman Music, generally considered a solitary experience, are captured in this writer's account of a particular listening incident:

I was walking down Sixth Avenue and "High Hopes" was on [the Walkman] – a song I had thought was a little foolish, to tell the truth – and right in front of me were two men struggling to carry two six-foot-high rubber-tree plants. The plants swayed, and then the men swayed from side to side as they tried to balance them, and just then I

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<sup>3</sup> Although its author remains anonymous, the article in *The New Yorker* is introduced with the phrase: 'A young woman we know writes ...' (Anon. 1989:19). The appropriate feminine personal and possessive pronouns are therefore employed here.

<sup>4</sup> The comparison between Walkman Music and the music of a stage production is a slight variation on the analogy of film commonly found in literature related to Aestheticisation's first mode.

heard "Whoops, there goes another rubber-tree plant". I only wish every single person passing them on the street could have heard that song. (Anon. 1989:20)

The writer is the only one who can completely hear her Walkman Music. This is an undeniably private aspect of her listening experience. However, the unwitting involvement of the two tree-carrying workers in her listening experience lends it a social aspect. In this instance the social relations are not mutual because the workers are not aware of their involvement. The writer's particular experience of Walkman Music depends on the participation, though unintentional, of others and is thus a social experience. Another instance of a social aspect to this particular experience of listening to Walkman Music is manifest in the writer's wish that '... every single person passing them [the rubber tree carrying workers] on the street could have heard that song' (1994). This element of the listening experience is not Aestheticisation because the listener does not specifically relate her Walkman Music to her environment in the manner of a film. Nonetheless, the writer's Walkman Music makes such an impression that it causes her to wish people in her vicinity could experience it. Again, this is not typical social interaction because it is not mutual. It is, however, an instance of listening to Walkman Music which is not solitary or solipsistic in nature and which confirms the listener's existence within a shared environment.

Connor's (1999) thoughts are relevant once more. He discusses Walkman listeners' interactions with their environments and responds to a common abuse of the Walkman: '... it seems to subtract people from social life' (1999:308). By contrast, Connor suggests:

... the experience of the Walkman, the intoxication of the Walkman, comes from the fact that for the user they're not withdrawn from the scene that they're walking through or the tube train that they're sitting in. The Walkman-user is often creating a kind of a chance collage between the sounds that are filtering through and are purely contingent and the organized sound that they're hearing. (1999:308)

Connor's 'chance collage' exemplifies the second mode of Aestheticisation. Regarding Aestheticisation's social maintenance, Connor clearly believes the experience of listening to Walkman Music in public is not solitary. Listeners are engaged with their environments, noticing aspects which are pleasing in combination with their Walkman Music. Aestheticisation involves the listener's surroundings. The listener's surroundings, in turn, are irrefutable evidence of the listener's place in a collective environment. Aestheticisation is thus 'socially maintained' whenever it occurs.

### **Individual Experience of Aestheticisation**

The interview process generated several accounts of Aestheticisation. Before they are reviewed, however, it is appropriate to review Bull's (2000) strategy of Walkman use as it corresponds to the first mode of Aestheticisation. Bull writes:

Users sometimes describe their experience as particularly pleasurable ... as an aesthetic experience. Users often pick music to "suit" the environment passed through.<sup>5</sup> (Bull 2000:188)

He also writes 'Personal stereos used in this way permits [sic] the promotion of aesthetic or "filmic" experience' (2000:188). Two important points arise from Bull's observations. Firstly, and as noted previously, even though Bull presents strategies of 'personal-stereo use' (2000:186), he mentions music when describing this strategy: 'Users often pick music to "suit" the environment passed through' (2000:188). Walkman Music, not just the Walkman apparatus, is the key to Aestheticisation and Bull's discussion implicitly acknowledges this. Secondly, Bull describes this strategy in terms of '... an aesthetic experience' (2000:188). It is noteworthy that listeners consider their surroundings of aesthetic significance (even though they might not describe them in those terms) when combined with their Walkman Music. This is an indication of music's capacity to transform listeners' everyday experiences from mundane to vivid and captivating.

Other accounts of Walkman listening are present in the literature, differing from Bull's in that they are autobiographical rather than documented from a researcher's perspective. Discussing a time when he was sick, Giles Smith (1995) writes:

A friend bought me a Walkman to cheer me up, the first one I ever had. It struck me, even before I owned one, that the Walkman was, after the in-car stereo, probably the finest technical achievement of the twentieth century – about as refined as man was ever going to get. Without having to go in for bells on our fingers and bells on our toes (cumbersome and, let's face it, not all that satisfying, musically speaking), we could have music wherever we went. On my way to and from the endless clinics and surgeries, I played almost to ribbons an old cassette of Deniece Williams's ineffably joyful "Let's Hear It For The Boy" (the way the words snap against the beat!) and sat there, clamped between the skinny plastic headphones, enjoying its friendly, life-affirming fizz. I could stare out of the windows of the bus and the world would turn

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<sup>5</sup> Also relevant, Chen (1993) presents the example of Terry, a subject of her study who recounts:

Sitting outside my apartment watching things happen. I have my headsets on so as not to hear anything but to just see what is happening. With not hearing anything but the music you can try to match the song to something that is going on around me at that moment. (1993:105)

This is a clear example of the first mode of Aestheticisation. Terry's Walkman Music, in combination with the surroundings in which he hears it, creates a unique and aesthetic aural and visual experience. It also supports Bull's observation that listeners choose music to suit their surroundings.

into a video, which is not the kind of perspective you would want all the time, maybe, but which seemed wondrously absorbing at this point. (1995:152)

Note Smith's reference to his listening experience as a video. Along with references to film, this analogy recurs constantly in discussion of listening to Walkman Music related to the first mode of Aestheticisation. As a rule the writers reviewed in this study do not delve more deeply into their listening experiences than to draw this analogy. Nonetheless, this clearly identifies the writers' listening experiences as instances of Aestheticisation's first mode.<sup>6</sup>

The fieldwork component of this study also generated accounts of listening practice which exemplify both modes of Aestheticisation. Pertinent to Aestheticisation's first mode, Aliese (2001) related:

I sort of think that people fit in to what I listen to [on the Walkman]. I thought that the other day when I was watching this lady walk. I was listening to Groove Armada and she wasn't stepping in time with it but the music really fit what she was doing. It was just this lady walking along and I automatically thought that it would make a really good video-clip. (2001)

Aliese also uses the analogy of a video-clip to describe her experience. In her interview Bettina (2001) also drew an analogy between her Walkman listening and a video-clip. However, Bettina's account of her listening differed from that of Aliese and others reviewed here in the matter of her perspective. Rather than having the perspective of a viewer of a video-clip, Bettina had the impression of active involvement *in* the clip. She comments:

... sometimes it [listening to Walkman Music] used to make me feel like I was in a music video-clip, as an active member. (2001)

As noted, the analogy of the video clip, from the perspective either of observer or participant, is frequently used by Walkman listeners to describe their experiences of Walkman Music and clearly express the individual experience of Aestheticisation's first mode. It is interesting to speculate regarding how Walkman listeners would describe their experiences had such an analogy not been available and musical theatre might provide the answer. In the manner of the *New Yorker* writer (Anon. 1989) most interviewees and writers reviewed here might understand their experiences in terms of viewing a particularly life-like production while Bettina might picture herself performing in one.

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<sup>6</sup> See also Pinchas Zukerman's interview with Stephen Fenichell (1983:170), William Gibson's discussion of his early Walkman use in an interview with Bruce Headlam (1999:7) and Chris Hardman's narration of his first Walkman experiences in Europe (1983:43). These are all instances of Aestheticisation.

In her interview Aliese (2001) also discussed an example of Aestheticisation's second mode. She recounted:

One day I was waiting for someone at the Silver Balls<sup>7</sup> and I was listening to my Walkman. I think I was listening to the Spice Girls but there was a guy playing the violin and the violin line fit really well with whatever the Spice Girls were doing. I was just thinking, "This is really cool, I wish this guy could hear it, like he should play this [Spice Girls recording] as he is going". (2001)

Aliese hears her Walkman Music as it combines with the noises of her environment. In this case, Aliese's Walkman Music combines with other sounds widely regarded as musical: the playing of a busker violinist. It is not necessary, however, that the ambient noises in Aestheticisation be of this nature. Listeners can enjoy any type of environmental sound in combination with their Walkman Music.

### **Summary of Aestheticisation**

In Aestheticisation, Walkman Music combines with elements of the listener's environment, each time creating a unique event. Aestheticisation comprises two subtly different modes of experience. In the first, listeners experience Walkman Music in combination with the sights of their environments. This results in an experience frequently compared to a film or video-clip. Walkman listeners can experience this combination from the perspective of the viewer of the film or from the perspective of a cast-member or active participant. The second mode is entirely aural; listeners experience Walkman Music combined with any environmental ambient noise that their Walkman headphones have not eliminated from their hearing.

Scholars have received this phenomenon in two markedly different ways. On the one hand, Barbiero (1989) considers listening combined with aspects of the surroundings part of a general trend towards the regrettable relegation of music to the background, where it is not actively listened to. On the other hand, Eisenberg (1988) considers it a triumph of music over the mundane. Judged either way, Walkman Music combines with listeners' environments to create unique and aesthetic listening experiences as they pursue their daily business.

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<sup>7</sup> Landmark and common rendezvous point in Adelaide, Australia.



## **Function Four: Environmental Control**

In Environmental Control, listeners use their Walkman Music to replace external sounds which they consider unpleasant. As a result, listeners perceive Walkman Music rather than ambient sounds as their sonic environment or soundscape.<sup>8</sup>

### **Historical Construction of Environmental Control**

There are several accounts in the literature of listeners' use of recorded music other than Walkman Music to control their aural environments. While these accounts were not necessarily published before the Walkman's introduction, in discussing forms of recorded music which predate the Walkman these sources inform the examination of Environmental Control's historical construction. Firstly, Eisenberg (1988) draws a distinction between the act of listening to recorded music on the one hand and using it to control the sonic environment on the other. He writes:

The city is no place for *listening* to records. Half the time one has to use them as shields against other people's sounds. Music becomes a substitute for silence. (1988:44, italics in original)

Eisenberg believes the use of recorded music as a shield against the noises of other people is necessarily distinct from listening to records for the sake of the music. However, the interviews carried out for this study reveal contrasting points of view. For example, Miriam (2001) compared Walkmans to household stereos as means of listening to recorded music and recounted:

... often, even if I'm in bed, I'll just pop the Discman on anyway, just because it sort of blocks out a bit more of the noise [than the stereo does] so that you can actually concentrate fully on what you're hearing. (2001)

Unlike Eisenberg, Miriam draws no distinction between concentrated listening and the use of recorded music to block out ambient noise. Miriam's specific reference to "the Discman" indicates she has the benefit of headphones to block out external sound as she listens. By contrast, Eisenberg discusses recorded music in more general terms. Nonetheless, Miriam feels recorded music's ability to overcome external noise actually complements its use as the

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<sup>8</sup> Intuitively, Aestheticisation and Environmental Control appear to be similar. Note in Aestheticisation Walkman Music is replacement 'soundtrack' of the listener's aestheticised experience of the surrounding environment. In Environmental Control, Walkman Music is a replacement 'soundscape' for the listener's surrounding environment. The difference between a soundscape, Walkman Music's role in Environmental Control, and a soundtrack, Walkman Music's role in Aestheticisation, defines the essential difference as well as any perceived similarity between the two functions.

focus of concentrated listening. Aaron (2001), a violinist, described his listening practice similarly:

It [the Walkman] forces you to concentrate on what you're listening to a bit more. It's right in your ear. I use it if I'm preparing new works, reading the score as I'm listening. Before I go to bed one of my favourite pastimes is to choose a CD or particular piece that I'm interested in listening to in depth with no outside stimulus at all, turn off the lights, lie down and basically have just the sound. There's no other distraction and I find that I get a lot out of that. (2001)

Aaron's Walkman Music blocks out external noises and, together with his elimination of visual stimuli and distractions, this enhances his ability to concentrate on the music. As opposed to the sharp distinction Eisenberg draws between listening to music and using it to block out unwanted ambient noise, Aaron and Miriam recognise the reduction in ambient noise particularly associated with listening to Walkman Music as an aid to their ability to focus on the music. In the terminology of this study, Miriam's and Aaron's interviews suggest that Environmental Control complements Chosen Sounds and occurs concurrently with it.

Sean Cubitt (1998) discusses a particular feature of recorded music which contributes to its capacity to control listeners' sonic environments. He writes:

Recording is ... a way of controlling the soundscape so that it will always conform to an already catalogued expectation, magically confirming our desire to hear with the desired sound. (1998:100)

The repetition inherent to recorded music – the music is the same each time the recording is played – means listeners know exactly what they will hear when they play a recording and thus exactly what recorded soundscape will replace non-desired external sounds. To Cubitt, this foreknowledge is an inherent part of the control recorded music allows listeners to impose over their sonic environments. This principle was confirmed by Lorrin (2001) who recounted:

When I'm using my computer to work, I put a CD in the tray and put the earphones in, turn it up fairly loud and listen to music that I'm familiar with so I can drown out the sound of everyone else in the office and concentrate on my work. I'm more productive because there's other things happening in the office and I don't hear conversations which, if I didn't have the headphones on, I would probably join in and stop working. (2001)

This is a straightforward account of Environmental Control in which Lorrin's Walkman Music enables her to manage her sonic environment in order to work more productively. Lorrin's use of familiar music supports Cubitt's (1998:100) suggestion that repetition enhances recorded music's capacity to control environmental sounds for listeners. Nonetheless, for

some writers, recorded music's repetition is problematic. It is now appropriate to review this aspect of the recorded music experience as discussed in the literature.

Roger Sessions (1970) holds a particularly strong opinion regarding recorded music's repetition. He recounts:

... the day, some fifteen years previously, when I had hurled a gramophone record across the room in a fury, intentionally shattering it. I did this not because it was a bad recording or a bad performance or even a bad piece. It was none of these things; it was Debussy's *Fêtes*, beautifully played by, I think, the Philadelphia Orchestra. I loved the piece, and still love it. But what infuriated me was my fully-developed awareness of having heard exactly the same sounds, exactly the same nuances, both of tempo and dynamics, the same accents, down to the minutest detail, so many times that I knew exactly – and I emphasize *exactly*, to the last instant – what was coming next. The performance of the music had become, as regards my awareness of it, completely mechanical, and I reacted as one does to any sensation of mechanical repetition. (1970:52, italics in original)

In later writing, Sessions (see 1971:70-71) explains his violent reaction to literal repetition in music. He proposes recorded music holds pleasure for listeners as long as it remains to some degree unfamiliar. It is likely to be of no further interest the instant the listener becomes aware of literal repetition.<sup>9</sup> Sessions' assertions invite comparisons between recorded and live music.<sup>10</sup> Live music is inherently variable; repeated performances of a given work, even by the same ensemble in a given venue, inevitably differ to some extent. Conversely, recorded music is identical each time it is played.<sup>11</sup> Thus, while Cubitt (1998) feels recorded music's repetition enhances its functionality for listeners such as Lorrin (2001), who uses it to control her aural environment, Sessions feels, because of repetition, recorded music sometimes even '... ceases to be music' (1971:71).

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel Boorstin (see 1974:385) expresses a similar view.

<sup>10</sup> Sessions is not alone in criticising the repetitious aspect of recorded music, especially as it stands in comparison with live music's variation. For example, Bartók also contributes to this discourse and imagines a time when, in terms of fidelity, '... the reproduced music will necessarily be exactly the same as the live music ...' (1976:298). Bartók then asserts:

But even in that case there will be an irreplaceable superiority, for which there is no substitute, of the live music over the stored, canned music. This substitute is the variability of live music. That which lives changes from moment to moment; music recorded by machines hardens into something stationary. (1976:298)

<sup>11</sup> Rick Altman (1992) observes any sound '... is a heterogeneous event that carries its own temporal and spatial dimensions ...' (1992:16) and 'When we listen to recorded sound we are therefore always listening to a particular account of a specific event' (1992:16). Thus, the experience of even recorded music varies with each playing due to environmental circumstances. The headphones associated with Walkman Music eliminate much of the variation in sound which results from changing listening environments. Small variations may still occur with the penetration of a listener's headphone soundscape by ambient noise but repeated hearings of Walkman Music are identical to a far greater extent than repeated listening experiences of any other kind. In any case, Sessions is not concerned with variations which result from changes in listening environment but with variations, or the lack thereof, in musical interpretation. For any given recording, interpretative variation is impossible.

Brown (2000a) rejects Sessions' milder assertion, noted above, that recorded music is no longer interesting for listeners the instant they become aware of repetition in the details of its interpretation. He argues there are three mechanisms by which the repeated experience of recorded music remains musically interesting (see 2000a:113-119) although it is his conclusions which are most relevant to this argument. He writes:

... we listen to sound recordings as documents of an art form that is more and more *constituted* by the medium, in the sense that our experience of the thing as it is documented is something very different from our experience of it in its live, never-to-be-repeated state. (2000a:123, italics in original)

As noted in Chapter One, Brown (1996:366) advocates the study of recorded music on the basis it differs markedly from live music. Also noted in that chapter, Berland (1998:132) suggests the meaning of music depends on the means of its transmission and therefore that recorded music's meanings can differ from those of live music. These writers imply the judgement of recorded music on criteria more applicable to live music is dubious. Sessions' (1970; 1971) criticism of recordings on the basis of their lack of interpretive variation is an example of a judgement of recorded music which might be viewed with scepticism by Brown and Berland. The results of Lorrin's (2001) interview for this study suggest Brown's and Berland's views resonate with at least some Walkman listeners who enjoy and take advantage of recorded music's repetition. These listeners know their Walkman Music and enjoy a listening experience which precisely conforms to their expectations in every detail. This is not to deny the validity of opinions such as Sessions'. Different listeners have different expectations of their listening experience. It is undeniable that the experiences of live music and recorded music are different. It is foolish to expect live music to exactly fulfil every preconceived expectation in the manner of recorded music just as it is foolish to demand variation from recorded music in the manner of live music.

Adorno (1990b) also discusses recorded music's repetition, writing:

There is no doubt that, as music is removed by the phonograph record from the realm of live production and from the imperative of artistic activity and becomes petrified, it absorbs into itself, in this process of petrification, the very life that would otherwise vanish. The dead art rescues the ephemeral and perishing art as the only one alive. Therein may lie the phonograph record's most profound justification, which cannot be impugned by an aesthetic objection to its reification. (Adorno 1990b:59)

A musical performance, normally evanescent, is rescued by its recording. It is captured and preserved, to be heard again each time the recording is played. Adorno observes, though, that

this rescue comes at the price of the music's '... third dimension: its height and its abyss'<sup>12</sup> (1990b:57). This is a reference to interpretive variation but, unlike Sessions, Adorno feels the recording's 'rescue' of otherwise ephemeral music justifies the loss. This is perhaps the ultimate justification for recording music. It goes beyond Cubitt's justification on the grounds recorded music sets listeners' expectations and then is the only means by which those expectations can subsequently be filled. Although it is now considered commonplace and often taken for granted, recording is a significant development in the experience of music and it is unrealistic to expect that recordings should overcome music's ephemeral nature while maintaining interpretive variation.

### **Social Maintenance of Environmental Control**

Walkman listeners use Walkman Music to control their sonic environments – environments inhabited by people as well as occupied by inanimate sources of sound. Consequently, such listening impacts on listeners' social interactions. Several writers discuss the social consequences of the use of Walkman Music in Environmental Control although they do not use this study's terminology. These discussions are relevant to discussion of the social maintenance of Environmental Control and are reviewed below. Firstly however, it is appropriate to examine one of this study's interview responses. David's (2001) Walkman listening exemplifies the way Walkman Music, used by listeners in Environmental Control, modifies personal interaction. He recounted:

In the past I have done a lot of 3D-CAD work. It is a very single minded task at times and sometimes repetitive and often requires extended periods of model regeneration time. Listening to a CD through earphones blocks out all the background noise – other people's chatter and phone conversation, machinery noise etc. – it allows you to "zone out". (2001)

David eliminates the noises of his workmates by listening to Walkman Music. Their noise might otherwise tempt him to interact but David's use of Walkman Music in Environmental Control eliminates the potential for this distraction. This demonstrates possible social side effects of Environmental Control.

Hosokawa (1984) examines the effect illustrated above by David's interview. He introduces the concept of *musica mobilis* and defines it '... as music whose source voluntarily or

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<sup>12</sup> Adorno's reference to music's 'third dimension', originally written in 1934, anticipates Benjamin's (1968) discussion of the 'aura' of the work of art. By music's 'third dimension' Adorno means the interpretive variation inherent to live music. This differs slightly from Benjamin's 'aura', which refers to the uniqueness of original artworks, lacking in multiple reproductions. Both writers regret the lack of interpretive variation in recordings, the qualities which tie live performances to their place and time and make them unique.

involuntarily moves from one point to another, coordinated by the corporal transportation of the source owner(s)' (1984:166). Hosokawa describes the development of *musica mobilis* as four stages in the evolving interactions between people involved in playing and hearing music. Each stage accompanies a technological advance in sound production and the last is facilitated by the Walkman. In Hosokawa's first stage, the relevant sound is '... the tone of urban life in general' (1984:166) and '... nothing but one of the secondary consequences of other non-music-making activities ...' (1984:166) which occur as people move around the city. Interaction involving such sound '... only shows that those involved *live together*' (1984:166, italics in original). An example is interaction taking place between a vendor and a buyer to the sound of the vendor's cries. The second stage involves the sounds of street musicians who play in the urban setting to earn money. Hosokawa notes:

Though the music is transmitted mono-directionally, the two groups [musicians and audience] react and "communicate" bi-directionally: a mutual tuning-in relation is maintained even if it is very transitory. (1984:167)

Hosokawa describes the interpersonal relations in the second stage as '*... making-music-together ...*' (1984:167, italics in original). In the third stage people do not play music or even create it as part of their daily activities. Rather, they '... listen to it [recorded music] through technological "instruments"' (1984:167) as they move through the city. As examples of this practice Hosokawa discusses people who listen to portable radios, cassette players or car stereo systems. He observes that a form of interaction still occurs as listeners walk or drive through the city with their technological instruments dispersing music because 'Passers-by are obliged to hear it for a few seconds' (1984:167). Hosokawa terms the interaction which results as '*... listening-to-the-music-together*' (1984:167, italics in original).

The final stage in the development of *musica mobilis* is manifest in '... the walkman listener, who is found in the world of *listening to music alone*' (Hosokawa 1984:167, italics in original). In an example of Environmental Control, Hosokawa suggests the '... listener seems to cut the auditory contact with the outer world where he really lives: seeking the perfection of his "individual" zone of listening ...' (1984:167).

Hosokawa's discussion is relevant to both the historical development and social maintenance of Environmental Control. It describes Hosokawa's understanding of the historical lineage of Walkman related behaviour and also how the behaviour of Walkman listeners relates to the

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social fabric which surrounds them. Regarding the latter, Hosokawa believes Walkman listening is inherently an act of solipsism. Listeners dismiss the auditory content of their environment, including that essential for social interaction, preferring instead their own chosen soundscapes, transmitted directly to their ears by their Walkmans. Thus, with regard to Environmental Control's social maintenance, Hosokawa feels the act of Walkman listening is a rejection of social interaction which listeners achieve by eliminating ambient sounds.

Chambers (1994) also discusses Walkman listening and, in doing so, illuminates a social aspect to what often, in the mode of Hosokawa, is considered a solitary experience. Focussing on the individual experience of Walkman listening, Chambers sees Walkman listeners as occupying an '... ambiguous position ...' '... between autism and autonomy ...' (1994:51). The autistic<sup>13</sup> condition is one of self-absorption and a reduced ability to respond to or communicate with the outside world. By comparison, the state of autonomy is one of personal freedom. In positioning the Walkman experience ambiguously between these two conditions, Chambers suggests that autonomy, the goal of many Walkman users, is only achieved at the cost of 'autistic' interactions with the outside world. Listeners cannot cut themselves off from the sounds of their environments yet still partake in normal social interaction.

Unlike Hosokawa, Chambers feels Walkman listeners' dismissal of their environments is not complete. Observing a contradiction in Walkman users' actions, he proposes 'Each listener/player selects and rearranges the surrounding soundscape, and, in constructing a dialogue with it, leaves a trace in the network' (1994:50). Chambers' observation that listeners select and rearrange their soundscapes points directly to discussion of Environmental Control. Chambers also uses the term 'dialogue'. This suggests a two-way communication and implies that Walkman listeners, despite their apparent isolation, are actually engaged with their environments. Chambers subsequently makes this explicit when he writes 'In the manifest refusal of sociability the Walkman nevertheless reaffirms participation in a shared environment' (1994:50). Listeners employ Walkman Music in Environmental Control as well as in other functions as a response to their environments. Chambers suggests the fundamentally reactionary nature of these strategies only confirms listeners' reluctant, and thus autistic or maladjusted, involvement in their environments as opposed to the autonomy they aim to achieve.

Like Chambers, Chow (1999) also suggests Walkman listening is not without a social component. Chow's understanding of the social participation which she observes involving

Walkman listeners is different, however, from that of Chambers and also Hosokawa. As noted, Chambers and Hosokawa discuss Walkman listening in terms of listeners' withdrawal from their surroundings, even if, in Chambers' estimation, listeners' withdrawal only reconfirms their essential participation in their environments. By comparison, Chow discusses Walkman listening in terms of listeners' subversion of powers authorities hold over them, writing Walkman listening can be '... a "silent" sabotage of the technology of collectivization with its own instruments' (1999:475) and hence a form of social or even political action.<sup>14</sup> In this way, rather than withdrawing from their environments, Walkman listeners are actively engaged with them. Chow explains her understanding of the Walkman listener's subversion of the regimes to which they are subject, suggesting, because Walkman Music is hidden from others, it '... leads to a certain freedom. This is the freedom to be deaf to the loudspeakers of history ...'<sup>15</sup> (1999:475). In *Environmental Control*, Walkman Music screens out these external sounds and also makes it impossible for bystanders to share or understand listeners' experiences. Thus Walkman Music provides:

... the possibility of a barrier, a blockage between "me" and the world, so that, as in moments of undisturbed sleep, I can disappear as a listener playing music. (Chow 1999:475)

In this manner Walkman listeners withdraw from the regimes to which they are subject, rendering them impotent. The social aspect of this apparently solitary experience is clarified when Chow writes '... the Walkman's artificiality makes us aware of the impending presence of the collective'<sup>17</sup> ...' (1999:475). For Chow, the Walkman's artificiality is the listener's impression

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<sup>13</sup> Rey Chow (1999:475) also discusses Walkman listening in terms of autism.

<sup>14</sup> Before mounting her argument Chow refers to Adorno's description of popular music in America as '... a training course in a passivity that will probably spread to his [the fan's] thought and social conduct' (1976:30). Judith Williamson (1988) expresses similar reservations. She specifically discusses the Walkman and writes:

Of course, *what* the walk-person controls is very limited; they can only affect their *own* environment, and although this may make the individual *feel* active (or even rebellious) in social terms they are absolutely passive. The wearer of the Walkman states that they expect to make no input into the social arena, no speech, no reaction, no intervention. (1988:210, italics in original)

Williamson observes Walkman listeners may *feel* rebellious but she is clearly aligned with Adorno (and against Chow) regarding the passivity of popular music listeners. Williamson disagrees with Chow even regarding the intent of Walkman listeners, suggesting they are content to enjoy their isolated feelings of rebelliousness but have no expectation of actually making social or political input.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that Chow writes with regard to communist China, where propaganda is transmitted by means of loudspeakers.

<sup>16</sup> Tetsuo (1988) also notes loudspeakers are a component of ambient noise Walkman listeners seek to avoid, writing "one gains protection from the more and more electronics-oriented city environment with blaring speakers, noisy traffic and flickering shop windows" (1988: 60).

<sup>17</sup> The significance of Chow's statement relies on the idea of 'the collective' in the Chinese context. Chow explains:



of their absence from the collective. This impression is, of course, deceptive and in this aspect Chow's argument is reminiscent of Chambers' (1994:50) assertion, cited above, that Walkman listeners cannot completely exclude their surroundings by listening.

Regina Bendix (2000) also observes the paradox between Walkman listeners' apparent withdrawal from their surroundings and the social aspect of this reactionary behaviour. Reviewing Bull's (2000) Walkman studies, she observes:

... the social collective does not disappear in this personal maneuvering [listening to Walkman Music to block out environmental noises] on the part of the individual. At any moment, forces beyond the individual can intrude on the carefully managed aesthetic and experiential control, and the very fragility of this strategy thus continually reminds the individual of the powers – social and technological – that control her environment. (2000:38)

It is notable that Bendix, Chambers and Chow all make this point. Each writer suggests Walkman listeners' attempts to block out their environment only confirms their presence in its midst. Hosokawa does not acknowledge this contradiction, suggesting Walkman listeners are successful in cutting contact with their environments. Of the writers reviewed here, he is the most concerned regarding the social consequences of this severance, suggesting Walkman listening is the most recent of a number of steps of decreasing social interaction which are a consequence of music's increasing transmission by recording rather than live performance. While Hosokawa differs from Bendix, Chambers and Chow regarding the effectiveness with which Walkman listeners cut themselves off from their surroundings, both sides of the argument acknowledge that listeners control their environments with Walkman Music, replacing ambient sonic environments, including noises related to social interaction, with their preferred sounds.

### **Individual Experience of Environmental Control**

Many personal accounts of Walkman listening are found in the literature, a high proportion of them demonstrating Environmental Control. These sources, along with personal accounts from the interviews, serve to highlight different aspects of Walkman listeners' experiences of that function. It should be noted, when controlling their aural environments, Walkman listeners eliminate the noises of people as well as of machinery and traffic. Thus, discussions of individual listeners' motivations or experiences often refer to people in the listener's vicinity

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In contemporary Chinese fiction, the forty years of communist history are increasingly understood to be the alienation of human life *par excellence* through what poses as the "collective good". The collective is now perceived as that mysterious, objectified Other against which one must struggle for one's life. (1999:469)

and to modified interactions with them. Consequently, the literature often informs both the social maintenance and individual experience of Environmental Control.

Bull (2000) discusses Walkman listeners' motivation, writing:

Users might be aiming to block out any external sound that they might otherwise hear in the street or elsewhere. The intrusion of any collection of aural sounds located within space is unwanted. They aim, through use, to replace the involuntary auditory sounds experienced in public space by their own personal soundscape placed directly between their ears. (2000:186)

Clearly also pertinent to discussion of Environmental Control, Lind (1989) comments '... the personal stereo allows the user to alter any acoustical environment' (1989:6). Williamson (1988) similarly observes:

It [the Walkman] attempts to negate *chance*: you never know what you are going to hear on a bus or on the streets, but the walk-person is buffered against the unexpected – an apparent triumph of individual control over social spontaneity.<sup>18</sup> (1988:210, italics in original)

Williamson's discussion relates especially to the *control* aspect of Environmental Control and concludes that Walkman Music represents listeners' implementation of personally selected constraints over the random nature of their aural environments. Chambers (1994) also puts this idea forward, writing:

... if the Walkman so far represents the ultimate form of the art of the transit, it also represents the ultimate musical means in mediating the ambient. For it permits the possibility, however fragile and however transitory, of imposing your soundscape on the surrounding aural environment and thereby domesticating the external world: for a moment it can all be brought under the STOP/START, FAST FORWARD, PAUSE and REWIND buttons. (1994:51, capitalisation in original)

Chambers extends discussion of Environmental Control beyond the idea of Walkman Music simply as a replacement soundscape. He understands Walkman Music acts in this way, but proposes such replacement provides a means by which listeners tame what they perceive as a hostile external environment.<sup>19</sup> Chambers thus proposes, by controlling their environments, listeners can influence their feelings and render themselves comfortable in many different environments which they would otherwise consider hostile.

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<sup>18</sup> Bull (2000), in his discussion of the strategy of Walkman use adapted in this study as Mood Management, notes Walkmans '... minimize the contingency of users' thoughts, moods and emotions' (2000:189). In this understanding, Bull's thoughts are similar to those of Williamson (1988), cited above, who feels Walkman listeners attempt '... to negate chance' (1988:210).

<sup>19</sup> Pianist Misha Dichter's (see Fenichell 1983:140) account of the motivation for listening to Walkman Music is similar to Chambers' (1994). His account of his Walkman listening exemplifies Environmental Control but, like Chambers, Dichter understands listeners may consider their environments to be hostile, rather than merely unpleasant.

Moebius and Michel-Annen (1994), as discussed in the Introduction, analyse Walkman listening based on listeners' varying interactions with their environments. Moebius and Michel-Annen use the term 'everyday' to describe listeners' environments and propose that Walkman Music changes listeners' interactions with that environment. Describing these interactions from the listener's point of view, they write:

This appliance mediates a hitherto unknown intensity of hearing: everyday sound, the environmental noise, is suppressed. Walkman users feel the music as if it were inside them. There is no localized source of sound, no big loudspeakers, no instrumentalist. The music appears to be directly in their head, and attains a consciousness-filling quality. The sense of hearing is flooded with music, and normal communication may become well-nigh impossible. Contact with the environment, then, takes place through the eyes, not the ears. The meaning of vision increases from the subjective point of view of the Walkman user. (1994:572)

This is an evocative description of listening to Walkman Music which corresponds to Environmental Control. It highlights the significance of the Walkman and its headphones to the experience of Environmental Control as they 'inject' Walkman Music directly into the ears, flooding them with musical sensation and eliminating ambient noises from the Walkman listener's experience.<sup>20</sup>

The final relevant source in the literature is from an anonymous writer for *The New Yorker* (1999), who gives an evocative account of her own experience in which Walkman Music functions as a means of Environmental Control. She writes:

I know how people who don't wear Walkmen feel about the rest of us. I know because of the way they ask me if I think it's such a good idea to wear headphones around, as if there might be something *natural* or *wholesome* about subjecting oneself to the cacophony of, say, a midtown sidewalk next to a construction site during rush hour. Once in a while, when my batteries run low, I'm forced to hear what I've been missing, and, except for the occasional titillating snatch of conversation, I don't think it amounts to much.<sup>21</sup> (Anon. 1989:19-20, italics in original)

This Walkman user listens to Walkman Music because she considers it more interesting and less offensive than ambient noise. Along with the sources cited above, this description of the personal experience of Walkman Music conveys the essence of Environmental Control, in

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<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to note the contrast between this account of Walkman listening and those discussed earlier relating to Aestheticisation. In Aestheticisation, the listener experiences a collage or combination of Walkman Music and their environment. By contrast, Moebius and Michel-Annen describe a separation along the lines of the senses between the listener's experience of Walkman Music and of their environment. Walkman Music floods the listener's hearing while listener's interactions with their surroundings are conducted visually. Moebius and Michel-Annen discuss these different aspects of the Walkman listening experience separately, even though they are concurrent.

<sup>21</sup> This anonymous author uses 'Walkmen' as the plural of 'Walkman'. As the reader will have noted, in this study, 'Walkmans' is the preferred terminology for the plural of Walkman.

which the convenience of Walkman Music enables listeners to modify their experiences of their aural environments wherever and whenever they choose.

In addition to the literature cited above, several of this study's interviewees recounted Walkman listening which related to Environmental Control. David's (2001) and Lorrin's (2001) listening within their workplaces are cited above and Fiona (2001), the next interviewee cited, also listens at work. She recounted:

I use headphones at work to listen to music via my CD-ROM player. As I work in an open plan office it is sometimes hard to concentrate with the level of noise around me. (2001)

Fiona listens to Walkman Music at work to eliminate ambient noise and thus optimise her ability to concentrate on her duties. Jessica (2001) similarly described her Walkman Music listening as an escape from ambient noise although, by contrast, Jessica's listening is not intended to improve her productivity, but simply to eliminate sounds she describes as boring:

All you can hear walking around the city is shops advertising themselves and people talking and it's not stuff that I haven't heard before. So it's not something that I miss out on and they're easy to take out [by listening to Walkman Music]. (2001)

Jessica considers ambient noise to be boring rather than unpleasant in the sense of a violent assault on her hearing. Using Walkman Music as a replacement soundscape enables her to overcome the monotony to which she would otherwise be subject as she moves through the city.

In the penultimate example from this study's fieldwork, and in the manner of many interview respondents cited in Chapter One with regard to Learning, Glenyce (2001) uses a Walkman to listen to music she needs to learn for her studies. She drew a comparison between listening on a home stereo system and on a Walkman:

It's much more direct on a Walkman. The more direct approach, well I think it's better for learning actually. It makes you focus a lot better. I tend to get distracted quite easily so it's a good learning tool for me. (2001)

When she tries to learn music, Glenyce appreciates the Walkman's direct transmission of music to her ears. Her use of Walkman Music suggests an overlap between Environmental Control and Learning. The Walkman removes ambient noise from Glenyce's aural environment. This minimises distraction and enables Glenyce to concentrate more effectively

on her Walkman Music and learn it more thoroughly. Glenyce's listening recalls that of Miriam (2001) and Aaron (2001), discussed above, in which Walkman Music's capacity to eliminate ambient noise complemented its role as the listener's choice of listening material. As noted, in Glenyce's case Environmental Control overlaps with Learning. In Miriam's and Aaron's listening, Environmental Control is concurrent with Chosen Sounds.

These are obvious examples of Environmental Control in that the listeners use Walkman Music in order to avoid the sounds of their environments. However, in the finer details of listeners' motivations, these accounts vary slightly from others already discussed. For example, Williamson (1988:210), as noted above, suggests listeners choose to control their own sonic environments as an exercise in overcoming the vagaries of chance or in order to feel rebellious. Hosokawa (1984:167), also noted above, suggests Environmental Control is really a side-effect of listeners' pursuit of their own 'perfect' listening experience. By contrast, both the *New Yorker* writer (Anon. 1989) and Jessica (2001) argue that ambient noise is mundane, even unnatural, by comparison with their chosen music and better avoided as a result.<sup>22</sup> Fiona's (2001), David's (2001) and Lorrin's (2001) listening represented their attempts to be productive in their workplaces while Glenyce's (2001), Miriam's (2001) and Aaron's (2001) listening reflects their desire to listen to their chosen music without distraction. Despite the slight variations in motivation, these accounts of Walkman listening each epitomise listeners' control of their aural environments with Walkman Music and thus Environmental Control.

At this point, having examined literature and fieldwork results which demonstrate listeners employing Walkman Music as Environmental Control, it is pertinent to highlight the interview responses of one particular Walkman listener. Steven's (2001) response contrasts with the discourse reviewed above and with every other interview which relates to Environmental Control. He described his response to the purchase of a minidisc recording Walkman in a lengthy email:

I never intended to use it as a Walkman (it was for field-recordings mostly, as I am occasionally guilty of contributing to the glut of experimental electronic noise myself) but since I had this portable music listening device I slowly got into the habit of (very) carefully taking it along for the daily commute. I think about the time that I started doing this I was infatuated with this particular CD which was mostly atmospheric

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<sup>22</sup> Gumpert (1987) discusses motivations for Walkman use which correspond almost exactly with those proffered by the *New Yorker* writer and Jessica – namely, the mundanity and potential harmfulness of ambient noise. He suggests:

For commuters, the motive [for Walkman listening] is to create another sound environment, replacing the one which accompanies the mundane, routinized ritual, or to substitute pleasant sound for often harmful noise. (1987:90)

drone. As you can imagine, this didn't come across very well on public transport [because of its resemblance to ambient noise], but I persisted for a little while. I noticed that my listening tastes were slowly propagating towards beats [dance music] again to defeat the restrictions of my primary listening situation. I noticed this trend and I wasn't too happy about it. I didn't like the idea of such an arbitrary external force moulding my musical taste. I battled against it for a while, even purchasing some noise-cancelling headphones at one point, but they really don't provide the absolute silence required to enjoy some of the CDs which I was listening to at the time. This led to me discarding the whole idea of personal audio in exchange for a more developed appreciation of ambient noise. It hit home when I was deciding if I should take my minidisc on holiday with me. Surely there would be things to hear as well as things to see? This made me wonder how much of a waste it would be to block out the sound around me as habit. Would you wander around with your eyes closed if it were technically feasible? What makes vision more interesting than sound? It's even more likely that I will hear something interesting on any given day than it is that I will see something interesting. (2001)

Steven composes experimental electronic music and it is possible this pursuit is related to a heightened sensitivity to sound on his part. Perhaps for this reason, Steven's response is at odds others examined in this study regarding Environmental Control although it bears closer examination nonetheless.

Steven's thoughts are triggered by his enjoyment of a recording which resembles ambient noise. When he attempts to listen to this recording on public transport the high levels of noise present in that situation overwhelm it. When Steven subsequently finds himself listening to other recordings which feature more highly defined musical events he is displeased his musical preferences are at the mercy of external and arbitrary forces. When Steven is considering whether or not to take his Walkman on holiday with him, he realises that blocking out the sounds of his holiday and listening instead to Walkman Music essentially defeats the purpose of his holiday. By listening to Walkman Music, Steven feels he would be wasting an opportunity for new experiences. Steven draws a telling comparison, observing the fatuity of wilfully controlling the visual content of his holiday. On consideration Steven decides to develop a heightened appreciation of ambient noise.<sup>23</sup> No prediction can be made regarding the frequency of the occurrence of opinions similar to Steven's, but its existence is noteworthy and demonstrates that the literature does not capture all of Environmental Control's nuances.

### **Summary of Environmental Control**

Environmental Control is the replacement of external sounds with Walkman Music so, instead of the sounds of their environments, listeners perceive Walkman Music as their individual

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<sup>23</sup> This decision is reminiscent of the musical aesthetics of John Cage (see Connor 1999:308; Nicholls 2002:228), discussed above as they relate to Aestheticisation, in which audiences are invited to listen to and appreciate the sounds around them.

soundscapes. Reminiscent of the distinction Adorno (1976:1-20) draws between 'expert' listeners and listeners who are not aware of the form and structure of their music, Eisenberg (1988:44) compares the use of music to control the listener's environments with actually *listening* to it. He suggests the two roles of music are not compatible. However, the interview responses of Miriam (2001) and Aaron (2001) in particular prompt deeper consideration of this distinction. Is it valid to sharply distinguish between listening to Walkman Music and using it as Environmental Control? Ambient noise, although its nature and volume may have changed with the Industrial Revolution in particular, has always been an issue, especially as it relates to listening to music. It is doubtful audiences for even the most intellectually demanding live music were ever perfectly silent. As suggested by the testimonies of Miriam and Aaron, it seems likely that, more often than not, music must overcome ambient noise and Walkman Music, because of the headphones associated with listening to it, is better equipped than other forms of music to achieve this. Thus Walkman Music is extremely effective as the focus of concentrated, even expert, listening, allowing listeners to partake when they choose and simultaneously optimise the listening experience.

### **Function Five: Boundary Demarcation**

In Boundary Demarcation, Walkman listeners feel Walkman Music sets them apart from their surroundings, 'removing' them from unpleasant environments. Listeners have this perception as a result of Walkman Music's dual capacity to engage their attention and to block out ambient noise.

### **Historical Construction of Boundary Demarcation**

The literature features several discussions which demonstrate listeners' use of music to set themselves apart from their surroundings. Featuring examples of musical practice involving forms of music and sound which predate the Walkman's development, these sources inform the examination of Boundary Demarcation's historical construction. Reviewed first, Gumpert (1987) observes the musical maintenance of personal space as well as its origins in the use of sound in the animal kingdom.<sup>24</sup> Next, Berland (1998) attempts to define the properties of music which enable listeners to successfully use it in this way and Davies (2001b) examines developments in musical listening which accompany the use of music to demarcate boundaries. Finally, Eisenberg (1988) develops an idea of Paul Valéry (1964 (1928)) and proposes that listeners' sense of 'musical time' facilitates separation from their surroundings.

Gumpert (1987) develops the concepts of 'acoustical space' and 'the wall of sound' to discuss music's establishment of boundaries between listeners and their surroundings. He defines the 'Wall of Sound' as '... that sense of acoustical space which surrounds each of us ...' (1987:87) and suggests the acoustic maintenance of personal space is a practice whose origins lie in audible signals generated by animals as a means of marking their territory. The cricket song is an example of this and Gumpert suggests music, especially recorded music, provides humans with a similar capacity. As Gumpert observes:

Many of us surround and protect ourselves with walls of sound while we are engaged in public activity. A bicycle is adorned with a small radio. A picnic includes a portable radio in the spread. The distance between blankets on a crowded day at the beach is not only determined by personal space, but by zones of music. (1987:87)

Gumpert's discussion indicates precedents for Boundary Demarcation in forms of recorded music other than Walkman Music and suggests music can demarcate a boundary around groups as well as around individual listeners. Following Gumpert's observations, it seems clear Boundary Demarcation's origins lie in fundamental responses to sound and music. The Walkman's development allows listeners to take advantage of this capacity of music wherever and whenever they feel the need.

Gumpert subsequently offers further insights which are pertinent to Boundary Demarcation's historical construction. He writes:

While the speakers of a portable radio or cassette player create a wall of amplified sound, earphones and earplugs create a silent wall, which separates the listener from those around him or her. The earphone mentality is based on privatization and isolation – on withdrawal from public sound and interaction. For some, like the roller skater or the music aficionado, excluding the extraneous helps them concentrate. For commuters, the motive is to create another sound environment, replacing the one which accompanies the mundane, routinized ritual, or to substitute pleasant sound for often harmful noise.<sup>25</sup> (1987:89-90)

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<sup>24</sup> To this end Gumpert cites both R. Murray Schafer (see 1977) and Edward O. Wilson (1957). Wilson points out many insects use '... repetitious vocal signalling ...' (1957:261-262), to maintain their territory while Schafer (1977:29-39) observes similar behaviour in birds and animals.

<sup>25</sup> Chanan (1995) also examines the Walkman and observes a particular combined effect of stereo music recording and headphones which adds to Walkman Music's capacity to define personal space. He writes:

Headphones allowed the listener to attach their head directly to the source of the sound, dissolving the physical space of their body into the virtual space created by the music's stereo image. (1995:154) 'Stereo image' is associated with stereo recordings in which two channels are independently recorded and played back. Listeners perceive the effect of sound coming from different directions in three-dimensional space, apparently larger than the real space defined by the listener's headphones. Chanan attributes the capacity of Walkman Music to create a virtual space to its stereo image, suggesting listeners understand their music's stereo image to correspond to their own personal space.



In the terminology of this study, Gumpert understands Boundary Demarcation as an extension of Environmental Control. This is apparent in his references to '... excluding the extraneous ...' (1987:90) and to commuters' creation of '... another sound environment ...' (1987:90), clear examples of that function. Most importantly with regard to Boundary Demarcation's historical maintenance, note Gumpert's discussion regarding the Walkman continues his discussion of the wall of sound. This illustrates that, as noted, Boundary Demarcation is simply a more recent manifestation, possible since the Walkman's development, of a property sound and music have always possessed.

Several interview responses effectively illustrate Gumpert's ideas as they relate to Boundary Demarcation. Firstly, Darryl's (2001) account of his Walkman listening on daily train commutes between his home and work corresponds with Gumpert's observations relating to the acoustic creation and maintenance of personal space.<sup>26</sup> He observed:

I think there's so many people on the train and everyone's after their own personal space. I reckon it gives you your own personal space if you've got your Walkman on. (2001)

Then, summarising his Walkman use and making the role of Walkman Music in this function clear, Darryl recounts:

It's just that it's my own personal space. A lot of the times I just go into my own world, like totally zone out, and I can think about all sorts of things or think about nothing apart from just thinking about the music. (2001)

Darryl uses the idea of his personal space to explain his Walkman listening. It is useful to compare Darryl's account of his listening with Gumpert's suggestion that earphones and earplugs demarcate boundaries for listeners. Darryl states, while listening, he might think only about his music. This statement implies Darryl's Walkman Music, particularly his focussed concentration on it, allows him to create personal space in a crowded environment. Darryl's earphones, which transmit Walkman Music directly to his ears and block ambient noise in the manner of Environmental Control, also play a role. Ultimately though, it is Darryl's Walkman

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<sup>26</sup> Similarly, in an interview, William Gibson discusses his early Walkman experiences in terms of personal space, stating 'It's [listening to Walkman Music] almost a metaphorical realization of what we do anyway – a souped-up version of being lost in one's own thoughts ...' (Headlam 1999:7). Gibson continues:

Given the conditions in which most of us increasingly live and the hard work required to obtain personal space, I think that's not entirely a bad thing. (Headlam 1999:7)

Gibson is the writer who coined the term 'cyberspace' and he recalls '... a large part of the inspiration for "cyberspace" resulted from his first experience wearing a Sony Walkman in the summer of 1981' (Headlam 1999:7).

Music and his concentration on it which results in his feelings of personal space and experience of Boundary Demarcation.

Darryl's idea of personal space recurs in interviewees' understandings of their Walkman listening although various respondents use different terminology. Ellen (2001) expresses these sentiments in different words, saying:

... you're in your own little world when you're listening to the Walkman. (2001)

Ellen's 'own little world' corresponds to a personal space although Ellen's expression captures her state of mind while listening as well as the space which literally surrounds her. Her thoughts are directed towards the music rather than to her surroundings. Scott (2001), although not using the term 'personal space', nonetheless also explains his listening to Walkman Music in terms of a 'space':

I prefer listening to the Walkman on the bus than not having the Walkman. It puts me into a space that isn't on the bus and I just kind of escape with it. (2001)

When asked to describe his understanding of the space he experiences, Scott responds:

It's another place, another dimension I guess. I'm not on the bus when I'm listening to the music. I'm somewhere else. I'm listening to the band or in the band. I'm not there. (2001)

Scott relates the space he perceives to the experience of live music as part of the audience or as a band member. This is a particular example of the listener's 'removal' from their surroundings and Scott states, for him, this phenomenon is not peculiar to Walkman Music:

I get that on a stereo as well. But I think it's also the context, that I'm on the bus and it's boring on the bus so I'm more likely to do it there. (2001)

Scott's statement acknowledging he is 'somewhere else' when listening to music on a stereo serves to reiterate an important point regarding Boundary Demarcation. This function of Walkman Music is a recent manifestation, possible since the Walkman's development, of listener's responses to previous forms of music, live and recorded, and to sound in general.<sup>27</sup>

Berland (1998) discusses the nature of the boundary listeners consider recorded music to demarcate around them. She observes:

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<sup>27</sup> Jonathan Sterne (1997) discusses a particular instance of the use of recorded music in the demarcation of boundaries. He examines the Mall of America – at the time the largest shopping mall in that country – and analyses the use of pre-

We objectify location as the space that contains our individual means of reception: the car, bedroom, or bar where the music is heard, the physical site within which one's body is surrounded by sound. (1998:130)

Listeners 'objectify' their location as the place defined by the music they hear there. The boundaries of these spaces are defined by the music heard within them as well as by walls and other physical barriers. The examples which Berland provides of the car, bedroom and bar, where music other than Walkman Music achieves this objectification, are examples of the historical construction of Boundary Demarcation. However, in actual instances of Boundary Demarcation involving Walkman Music, the listener's 'location' is not so easily defined because its boundaries do not coincide with easily observable physical boundaries. Walkman Music is transmitted to single listeners by headphones and listeners hear it wherever they happen to be. By Berland's analysis, listeners are 'located' in the space within which their '... body is surrounded by sound' (1998:130). It is clear Walkman listeners' bodies are not surrounded by sound in the sense that the bodies of other, non-headphone using, music listeners are surrounded. Nonetheless, the headphones inherent to Walkman Music can give listeners the impression their Walkman Music surrounds them, leading to the objectification of location which Berland discusses.

Davies (2001b) draws a distinction between listening to recorded music and its use by listeners in order to 'withdraw' from their surroundings. He first notes the benefits for listeners of recorded music over live music, observing that with recorded music listeners can hear what they like, when and where they like and while doing what they like (see 2001b:327-328). Davies then notes, as a result, the listener '... can cocoon herself in sound for much of her waking life' (2001b:328). Such use of recorded music relates to Boundary Demarcation and Davies' use of the word 'cocoon' evokes some of the sense of listeners' experience. Davies asserts an associated consequence of this use of recorded music is that the music '... is liable to slip below the horizon of consciousness' (2001b:330) and listeners '... treat music as not requiring ... attention' (2001b:330). He refers to this as the 'desensitization' (2001b:330) of listeners and makes it clear he considers the desensitised consumption of music, as opposed to really listening to it, a regrettable consequence of music's recording.<sup>28</sup> The distinction Davies

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programmed recorded music within the complex. He observes 'Music is a central and architectural part of malls and other semi-public commercial spaces throughout the country ...' (1997:23).

<sup>28</sup> Simon Frith (1983) also alludes to the listener's, especially youth's, perception of music used to demarcate boundaries. He writes:

Music is used, equally, to distinguish the young from the old, to identify a place or time or occasion as youth's property. Music – played on transistor radios, record players, portable cassettes – is the easiest way

draws between listening to music and using it to demarcate a boundary is reminiscent of Eisenberg's (1988) thoughts, reviewed above as they pertained to Environmental Control. As noted, Eisenberg draws a distinction between the act of listening to recorded music on the one hand and using it to control the sonic environment on the other although this study's interviews revealed contrasting points of view. The interviewees suggested Walkman Music's capacity to eliminate ambient noises complements its use as the focus of a concentrated listening experience. Similarly, the interviews inform discussion of Davies' views as they relate to Boundary Demarcation. For example, Shoji (2001) states:

Sometimes it [listening to Walkman Music] is very good for not being distracted when there's all sorts of things going on around me like people saying disgusting things and all sorts of stuff. If you want to remain focussed it's a bit easier. (2001)

Shoji listens to Walkman Music because it isolates him from his working environment and he consequently feels his concentration on his work improves. It is noteworthy that Shoji's concentration is not directed toward his Walkman Music but toward his work. In Davies' (2001b:330) terminology Shoji is 'desensitised' toward the music which serves to establish a boundary between his surroundings and himself. Shoji's listening supports Davies' theory.

It is also pertinent to consider the subtext to Davies' observations – namely, it is regrettable music is used to demarcate a boundary rather than for focussed listening. This study's fieldwork results also offer insight into this discussion. Lorrin (2001) also listens to Walkman Music at work '... to block out sound ...' and '... to enjoy the music' (2001). In her interview she recounted:

When I am working I am concentrating on the task at hand and not the music but when I finish that task I often then listen and enjoy the music. Therefore it is playing without my noticing it. Is this unfortunate? I guess in a way but I don't appreciate the music any less as a result. Am I disrespecting the intent of the artist? Probably but I don't think this is a result of having a recording of the music. Even at a live concert I find my attention will occasionally wane. I start thinking about something else and I am no longer hearing the music. Whether it is due to a lack of concentration or preoccupation with another task I think that music will always become background

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for the young to signal their control of their rooms and clubs and street corners. The demands made of it – noise, beat, flash, are general rather than specific: if the noise is right, any noise will do; music is the context rather than the focus of leisure. (1983:216)

Frith asserts youth do not 'focus' on the music they use to claim their territory, but rather that music, as well as signalling territorial boundaries to outsiders, forms part of the setting for what goes on within the designated spaces. This phenomenon relates to Boundary Demarcation, where Walkman Music signals an individual space for the listener and also accompanies the activities in which the listener engages. Similar to Davies' (2001b) assertion, noted above, Frith observes music used in this way is not the focus of listeners' activities or attention. In Davies' terminology, the youth Frith observes are desensitised to their music.

noise at some time. Even if my exposure to music is reduced there will still be times when I am not listening, as unfortunate as it may seem. (2001)

At work, Lorrin's attention is not always focussed on the music she is hearing. At times she may be distracted by tasks at hand. Lorrin maintains that the variations in her concentration are not necessarily related to the fact she is listening to recorded music; her concentration also varies at live concerts. Lorrin's distraction at concerts does not contradict the connection Davies (2001b) draws between increased exposure to music as a result of recording and desensitised consumption – Lorrin might not find herself distracted at live concerts if she did not hear as much music as recordings enable her to. Davies' argument against recorded music mainly concerns the over-exposure he observes as a result of recording rather than the phenomenon of recording itself. Lorrin perceives her occasionally distracted listening may not be considered ideal and looks to '... the intent of the artist ...' (2001) for her model of ideal listening, presuming artists desire the undivided attention of their audiences.<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, Lorrin feels her appreciation of music is not diminished by her distraction and that occasional distraction is inevitable. There are two related perspectives here. First, Davies (2001b) regrets the desensitisation of listeners as a result of increased exposure to music in its recorded form. Second, Lorrin, perhaps representing many listeners, considers her distracted listening inevitable even while at a concert, but can see it may be at odds with the wishes of the musician. Lorrin's account of her own listening supports Davies' written observation that most musical listening is distracted. However, her opinion that distracted listening is not necessarily regrettable is at variance with his disapproval of same.

In an essay first published in 1928, Valéry (1964 (1928)) provides an insightful and prescient examination of the production and reproduction of multiple copies of works of art. With regard specifically to music and of great relevance to examination of the functions of Walkman Music, Valéry writes:

It [music] is of all the arts the most in demand, the most involved in social existence, the closest to life, whose organic functioning it animates, accompanies, or imitates. Whether it be a matter of speaking or walking, of meditation or action, of monotony or surprise in the temporal flow of our lives, music can take hold of us, combining and transfiguring the pace and sensory values of them all. (Valéry 1964 (1928):226)

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<sup>29</sup> Lorrin may be unaware of the Ambient Music of Brian Eno or the *Musique d'ameublement* (furniture music) of Erik Satie (see Toop 2001).

This study's examination of the functions of Walkman Music demonstrates many examples of music's involvement in social existence as observed by Valéry. For instance, Aestheticisation and Environmental Control, examined above, are examples of ways in which Walkman Music modifies listeners' experience of their surroundings and the people within them. Valéry's reference to music's transfiguration of the sensory values of life's experiences is particularly relevant to Aestheticisation.<sup>30</sup> With regard to Boundary Demarcation, Valéry proposes a broad mechanism by which music transfigures listeners' experiences of their surroundings, writing 'It weaves us an artificial span of time ...' (1964 (1928):226). This idea is further developed in the writing of Eisenberg (1988), to whom this study now turns and who specifically discusses Walkman Music, although it is important to note Valéry was the first to expound it.

Eisenberg suggests the reason for the use of headphones '... is the sense they give that one has escaped the city's voracity, because one is inside the music' (1988:44-45). Eisenberg's references in this sentence to both music and headphones are noteworthy in that these are the key elements of the experience of Walkman Music. His use of the term 'voracity' can be understood in the light of his description of the city, which represents the environment from which Walkman users attempt to remove themselves in Boundary Demarcation. He observes:

... living in the present is (contrary to vulgar opinion) nearly impossible in the modern city, which always hungers for the future and eats the past. (1988:44)

For Eisenberg, Walkman Music allows listeners to realise the present and to overcome a multitude of competing time structures such as '... the business day, the schedules of radio and television, the neighbour's lifestyles and *their* music' (1988:44, italics in original). Eisenberg maintains Walkman Music allows listeners to construct a sense of personal time in opposition to the conflicting time structures of other people and organisations. His discussion is reminiscent of the more common idea, noted above, that Walkman Music creates a personal space for listeners in opposition to the public space in which the Walkman listener actually exists. Within their personal time listeners can undertake their desired activities to the accompaniment of Walkman Music.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Valéry's writings also predict functions of Walkman Music examined later in this study. His reference to music's ability to transfigure monotonous experiences is relevant to Time Management, in which listeners feel oppressed by their routines and listen to Walkman Music to regain control of time they might otherwise feel is wasted. Valéry's reference to speaking, a form of personal interaction, relates to Interpersonal Mediation in which listeners use Walkman Music to control the nature of their contact with others.

<sup>31</sup> The ideas noted here of both Valéry (1964 (1928)) and Eisenberg (1988) appease Bull's (2000) criticism of various writers' use of '... visually based epistemologies ...' (2000:4) to explain behaviour which relates to aural experience. Both Valéry and Eisenberg understand music is a form of art whose structure unfolds through time as opposed to visual forms such as sculpture and painting which occupy space.

Eisenberg subsequently investigates the qualities of music which enable individual listeners to use it in the manner described above. He writes:

A record is a sculpted block of time, repeatable at the owner's whim. That block may have been carved from another time and place (though only live recordings are carved in one piece) and so may be a document or record of its quarry. But a record of music does not exist in historical time, is not of it. A violoncello is already a time machine, taking its listener to a place outside time. The phonograph is also a time machine of this sort, but with the difference that the listener operates it himself and can take a spin as often as he pleases. (1988:46)

Musical sounds function within a framework of time as colours and shapes operate within the boundaries of a canvas to appear as an aesthetic, coherent whole.<sup>32</sup> Listeners' heightened awareness of the duration and succession of musical events is the key to music's capacity to impose its own time-structures upon them. Music catches listeners up in its flow and their sense of time is governed by the succession of musical events rather than by chronometry. It is in this sense Eisenberg refers to the violoncello as a time machine. He could have referred to any source of musical sound; recording only adds the potential for listeners to exploit this phenomenon at the time and place of their choosing.

Eisenberg's and Gumpert's (1987) ideas, reviewed earlier in discussion of Boundary Demarcation's historical construction, are not mutually exclusive. As noted, Gumpert understands music demarcates a personal space around listeners while Eisenberg suggests the listener's sense of musical time is the key. In the case of Walkman Music, which is effectively heard only by the Walkman listener concerned, there is no means by which the music can demonstrate the boundaries of the listener's personal space to bystanders. However, Walkman listeners experience for themselves the sense of personal space Walkman Music marks out as well as the sense of musical time and consequently feel removed from their surroundings.

### **Social Maintenance of Boundary Demarcation**

Several issues are examined below pertaining to Boundary Demarcation's social maintenance, although the primary issue concerns the reality of the social isolation achieved by Walkman

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<sup>32</sup> Justin London (2001) also explores music's relationship with time. He writes that time is:

The essential medium for music and musical performance, a non-spatial continuum of past, present and future in which music exists and is understood. Music requires no material substance, nor can one circumscribe any set of sounds as inherently musical (and others as inherently non-musical), but all must occur in time. Consequently, music makes us vividly aware of the duration and succession of events and our sense of change and continuity. (2001:479)

This is the sense in which Eisenberg proposes that a violoncello, or any other means of producing or reproducing music, is a time machine.

listeners. Boundary Demarcation involves listeners' isolation from their surroundings and, in pursuing this, listeners also isolate themselves from people within their surroundings. In this manner, Boundary Demarcation has social consequences, the focus of this section. Some writers, for example Adler (1999) and Negus (1992), understand Walkman listeners are able to completely isolate themselves from their surroundings, eliminating all interaction with both animate and inanimate elements. By comparison, Chambers (1994) feels any isolation Walkman listeners perceive is false and that their Walkman listening only confirms listeners' interactions with their surroundings. Other relevant issues include Williamson's (1988) discussion of Walkman listeners' real intentions as they close themselves off to their surroundings and Bull's (2001) application of a new paradigm to deal with new technology and the experience associated with it. These issues are pursued below, beginning with the thoughts of Negus and Adler.

Adler (1999) observes that Walkman users revel '... in the solitary world of a personal stereo' (1999), suggesting Walkman listeners are able to segregate themselves from their surroundings and achieve isolation.<sup>33</sup> Negus similarly observes Walkman listeners' mobile isolation and also discusses the social consequences of Walkman listening. He writes:

The Walkman enables its user to take music wherever they go and exclude the external world and other human beings. It may enable Japanese commuters to cope with crowded subway trains, but the Walkman induces a sense of solipsism. It isolates individuals from the world through music ... (1992:35)

Negus continues that the Walkman allows the listener to '... shut out society ...' (1992:36) and thus explicitly rejects the possibility Walkman listening has any socially interactive component.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Writing in a design journal and therefore from a different perspective than that adopted by sociologists, musicologists or ethnomusicologists, Steve Braidwood (1981) discusses the Walkman and speculates regarding the motives behind its use. He judges that the Walkman '... would, after all, be pretty expensive ... if all it was offering was a constant source of music' (1981:27). Braidwood's understanding of Walkman use is that listening to music is secondary to making '... a personal statement ...' (1981:27) that 'I'm here, but I'm not really here, I'm far too cool for this kind of thing' (1981:27). The listener's feelings that they are not really where they are correspond to Boundary Demarcation but Braidwood suggests Walkman listeners are more concerned to convey their non-presence to bystanders rather than revel in it as Adler (1999) suggests. Such use of Walkman Music is effectively for (anti)social rather than individual ends.

<sup>34</sup> When he wrote this passage Negus could not have read Bendix's (2000) response, published eight years later, to Bull's (2000) Walkman scholarship. Bendix writes:

... the social collective does not disappear in this personal maneuvering, but it remains present through its very denial on the part of the individual. (2000:38)

Bendix's position, that Walkman listeners cannot completely shut themselves off from their surroundings because their listening, which occurs as a response to their environments, only acknowledges that they remain present in those environments, is thus contrary to Negus' assertion Walkman listeners achieve isolation.



It is appropriate now to turn to Chambers (1994), whose understanding of the Walkman listening experience is at odds with those of Adler and Negus. Chambers pursues the question of the effectiveness of Walkman listeners' attempts to isolate themselves. While observing the Walkman<sup>35</sup> offers a '... private experience' (1994:49), Chambers also observes a degree of interaction between Walkman listeners and their surroundings, writing that the Walkman:

... like dark glasses and iconoclastic fashion, serves to set one apart while simultaneously reaffirming individual contact to certain common, if shifting, measures ... (1994:50)

As noted above in discussion of Chosen Sounds, Walkman Music always represents the chosen listening material of the Walkman listener. Making the same point, Chambers suggests, even as Walkman Music demarcates boundaries around listeners, it also manifests aspects of listeners' identities – Walkman Music is the fulfilment of listeners' musical tastes. Only individual Walkman listeners can hear the Walkman Music in question and this confirmation of the listener's preferences is therefore not evident to anyone but the listener. Nonetheless, with regard to Boundary Demarcation, Chambers points out that Walkman listeners isolate themselves from unpleasant aspects of their surroundings even as they draw enjoyable aspects even closer, choosing to hear their preferred music transmitted intimately to them by their headphones. In this manner, Walkman listening, rather than completely isolating the listener, only confirms their relations with certain chosen aspects of their surroundings. Nonetheless, Chambers acknowledges listeners' feelings, as noted above, that they are in another place, dimension or world while listening to music. He refers to listeners' '... diasporic identity ...' (1994:50), a term which implies listeners are 'dispersed' from their rightful location. Thus, Chambers asserts, while listeners are ultimately 'where they are' and inhabiting physical space, listening to music promotes a sensation of 'removal' from the surroundings.

Williamson's (1988) perspective varies from those reviewed to this point. She maintains a critical attitude in her discussion of the Walkman, particularly regarding annoying leakage of sound from headphones. In an observation which pertains to Boundary Demarcation, Williamson reasons:

The argument that the walkman protects the *public* from hearing one person's sounds, is back-to-front: it is the walk-person who is protected from the outside world, for whether or not their music is audible they are shut off as if in a spell. (1988:209, italics in original)

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<sup>35</sup> In the manner of many writers and of Bull (2000) in particular, Chambers discusses the Walkman but ignores Walkman Music. Nonetheless, his ideas are useful and are adapted here in order to examine the functions of Walkman Music.

Williamson understands Walkman listeners perceive their Walkman listening as an attempt not to subject others to their chosen music. Walkman headphones contain the listener's music such that only they can hear it although, given Williamson's complaints about leakage, this is not always successful. Williamson's understanding is unique in the discourse although it is supported by one of this study's interview subjects. In her interview, Ellen (2001) related her opinion of Walkman use which is audible to people in the vicinity. She opined:

I find it annoying when other people are listening to Walkman on the bus because they sometimes have the volume up so loud and then it's distracting for others. I try to keep it fairly quiet and hope that I'm not disturbing anyone around. (2001)}

Ellen's testimony indicates some Walkman listeners consider the Walkman a means by which they can satisfy their desire to listen to music without disturbing others. This is the reverse of the situation typically envisaged in discussion of Boundary Demarcation where listeners desire to use their music to eliminate the distractions otherwise imposed on them by their surroundings.

Williamson (1988) subsequently develops her argument and presents her understanding of the Walkman with reference to the specific social and political environment she observes:

The walkman is a vivid symbol of our time. It provides a concrete image of alienation, suggesting an implicit hostility to, and isolation from, the environment in which it is worn. Yet it also embodies the underlying values of precisely the society which produces the alienation – those principles which are the lynch pin of Thatcherite Britain: individualism, privatization and "choice". The walkman is primarily a way of escaping from a *shared* experience or environment. It produces a privatized sound, in the public domain; a weapon of the individual against the communal.<sup>36</sup> (1988:209-210, italics in original)

This is the typical view of Walkman listening and, in the terminology of this study, of Boundary Demarcation. Listeners want to remove themselves from their environments and their Walkman Music enables them to feel as if they have done so. This is a clear contrast with the idea Walkman listening in public might be prompted in the first place by listeners' desire to listen and in the second place by listeners' concern that people in their vicinity not be annoyed by sound leakage. In an account of Walkman listening relevant to much of

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<sup>36</sup> Williamson's ideas anticipate those of Chow (1999), reviewed above in discussion of Environmental Control and relating to the motives behind Walkman use in Hong Kong and China. Both Chow and Williamson enunciate their understanding of the experience of Walkman Music as a private struggle against the public environment, a recurring theme in discussion of Walkman Music's functions. The ideas of Chow and Williamson are not perfectly aligned, however. Whereas Chow sees listening to Walkman Music as at odds with the regime she observes Williamson suggests Walkman listening reflects the values of the government to which she and the Walkman listeners she observes are subject.

Williamson's writing, in his interview Joshua (2001) referred to the private nature of listening to Walkman Music in a public space:

It's just cool that if you're into particular types of music you can just have them on in your own little space and hopefully not disturb people around you because people on the bus don't want to be disturbed. So I think that's part of the appeal of having a Walkman, that it's a personal thing. (2001)

In this passage Joshua supports both of Williamson's assertions. He clearly feels the Walkman is a means by which he can enjoy his chosen music without disturbing people in his vicinity. Joshua also feels listening to his Walkman Music facilitates his 'own little space' and thus excludes people around him from his own experience. Although Chambers (1994), as noted, disputes the true nature of this experience, the Walkman listener's understanding of their experience of Walkman Music as a solitary one is at the heart of Walkman Music's capacity to demarcate a boundary for listeners. Listeners' enjoyment of the solitary nature of their listening does not preclude their consideration of people around them as they recognise the leakage of Walkman Music can be annoying.

In a further development, Bull (2001) discusses the Walkman listening experience in terms of a private/public duality. He suggests the experience requires new thinking and terminology in order for it to be adequately examined. He observes that the Walkman permits:

... a reorganization of public and private realms of experience, where what is traditionally conceived of as "private" experience is brought out into public realms in the act of individualized listening. (2001:210-211)

Bull ultimately finds the terms 'public' and 'private' inadequate for description of the site of the Walkman Music experience and suggests an alternative, writing '... urban experience becomes, in a significant manner, technological experience' (2001:211). Bull understands the distinction between public and private fails in the face of technology which enables people to engage in what was previously understood as private behaviour in public spaces.<sup>37</sup> The concept, 'technological experience', eliminates these problems. However, Bull's development of the idea of 'technological' experience remains inadequate in the description of the experience of Walkman Music. As noted during the course of this study, Bull does not engage with the musical aspects of the Walkman experience and the concept of 'technological' experience, while it overcomes the problems associated with the obsolescence of 'public' and

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<sup>37</sup> Bull's (2001) suggestion of 'technological experience' to describe the experience of Walkman Music listening is the fruit of his criticism in earlier writing of 'An obsession with explaining the nature of everyday life with a theoretical set of dualisms ...' (2000:4). Public/private is one such dualism.

'private' in the face of new technology, still fails to address relevant musical issues. There are elements of the experience of Walkman Music which can only be understood in terms of musical experience.

### **Individual Experience of Boundary Demarcation**

Studies by four scholars (Bull 2000; Chen 1993; Chow 1999; Lind 1989) inform discussion of the individual experience of Boundary Demarcation. Bull and Chen, in particular, add an important new perspective to this study and these sources are reviewed here.

To begin with, Lind (1989) and Chow (1999) observe Walkman listening behaviour which relates to Boundary Demarcation although they do not examine it in any depth. In her study, Lind observes 'it [the Walkman] allows you to create private space' (1989:59) while Chow describes the Walkman as '... the hiding place for the music-operator' (1999). Bull (2000:186-187) also discusses a related strategy of Walkman listening. His strategy is adapted in this study in order to focus on Walkman Music and consequently to define Boundary Demarcation. He presents an analogy which, in the mould of that drawn above between film and Aestheticisation, enables Boundary Demarcation to be easily understood. He observes:

... urban dwellers are reacting to the lack of personal space both bodily and visually. Personal stereos thus become a kind of mobile book or newspaper permitting users to attend to something else. In their absorption they can partially pretend that they are not really there. (2000:186)

It has been noted Walkman Music's capacity to overcome ambient noises contributes to the isolation it affords listeners from their environments. Bull's analysis highlights another facet of Boundary Demarcation in that Walkman Music also engages listeners' attention so they are distracted from their surroundings which consequently no longer impinge upon them. Chen (1993) makes the same point and draws a comparison between Walkman listening and reading. She writes:

Even though reading is an individualistic act, reading does not prevent intrusion from others. Walkman listening, by impairing the hearing of outside sources of sound, and by enveloping one in a surrounding filled with rhythm, melody, images, and emotions, can more completely cut the listener off from the external environment. (1993:93)

Chen's comparison suggests Walkman Music presents listeners with a smorgasbord of musical delights (rhythm, melody) as well as the meanings they hold for listeners (images, emotions) which tempt their attention away from what is happening within their surroundings. Chen's comparison suggests listening to Walkman Music is even more effective than reading a book

for eliminating contact with the surroundings. In addition to engaging listeners' attention, Walkman Music also eliminates ambient noises. This double action is a highly effective means by which listeners can use Walkman Music to control their interactions with their surroundings.

Chen (1993) subsequently adapts the concept of narcissism in order to present her understanding of the Walkman Music listening experience. Informed by her reading of Freud, Chen defines narcissism as '... a state of self-absorption in which the individual withdraws from the external environment, disengages from social activities, and is indifferent to others' (1993:95). The listener's withdrawal from the external environment corresponds to Boundary Demarcation and Chen relates her concept of narcissism to the experience of Walkman Music as follows:

The Walkman enables individual listeners to enjoy in private the visceral sensations called up by the music. As one indulges in experiencing private sensations, one is fully wrapped up in one's own world. (1993:95)

Chen suggests it is music's ability to generate visceral sensations in listeners which enables it to remove listeners from their surroundings. Chen does not explain the origins of music's ability to generate visceral sensations, but her observation seems to correspond to music's capacity to engage listeners' attention and consequently remove it from their surroundings. Further, Chen's observation that listeners are wrapped up in their own worlds corresponds with the feelings, cited above, of Walkman listeners interviewed for this study (Darryl 2001; Ellen 2001; Scott 2001). These listeners felt as if they were in 'their own world' or in 'a different place' while listening to Walkman Music.

### **Summary of Boundary Demarcation**

In Boundary Demarcation, listeners use Walkman Music to set themselves apart from their surroundings. This allows listeners to ease their passage through crowded or otherwise oppressive places. Boundary Demarcation comprises two elements. Firstly, it can be considered an extension of Environmental Control. Walkman Music blocks out ambient noises, replacing them so listeners experience individual soundscapes and consequently feel 'removed' from their surroundings. Secondly, Walkman Music engages Walkman listeners' attention so they are distracted from their surroundings and do not engage with them as they otherwise might.

Gumpert (1987) observes the animal kingdom, where insects and other animals mark their territories with sound, and suggests this represents the earliest precedent of Walkman Music's use in Boundary Demarcation. This exemplifies the understanding of Boundary Demarcation in terms of space or place, held by Walkman listeners interviewed for this study and by several writers (see Berland 1998; Chow 1999; Lind 1989; Sterne 1997). By contrast, Eisenberg (1988), reminiscent of the thoughts of Valéry (1964 (1928)), understands music is an art form which unfolds through time. He proposes that Walkman Music offers listeners an individual experience of time, uninfluenced by other time structures such as the working day, business hours or the movements of noisy neighbours. Within their personal, music-structured cocoons, listeners shut out their physical surroundings.

As noted, Chambers (1994) questions the efficacy of music in demarcating boundaries for listeners. He suggests music selections are evidence of listeners' ironic adherence to certain aspects of the society from which they attempt to remove themselves. This is a valid point although there is no doubt that Walkman listeners believe they can block themselves off from their immediate surroundings (see Adler 1999; Negus 1992).

Another important point emerges from the preceding discussion. On the one hand, Boundary Demarcation can be considered a recent evolution of a fundamental function of sound as evidenced by Gumpert's (1987) discussion of animals' territorial behaviour. On the other hand, Boundary Demarcation can be considered a new musical experience, enabled by the technological developments manifest in the Walkman. A review of the thoughts of the various scholars represented above leads to the conclusion that Boundary Demarcation is a recent manifestation of an ever-present function of sound, exploited in many new situations by listeners who take advantage of the Walkman's convenience.

### **Function Six: Interpersonal Mediation**

Interpersonal Mediation, in which the act of listening to Walkman Music modifies interactions between listeners and bystanders, comprises three modes. In the first, Walkman Music overwhelms external noises and renders Walkman listeners unable to hear bystanders' attempts to gain their attention. While listeners might normally choose to interact they remain unaware of the opportunity to do so and their personal interactions are modified as a result. In the second mode of Interpersonal Mediation, listeners' attention is directed towards their Walkman Music and not towards their surroundings or bystanders. Thus distracted, listeners are unaware of opportunities to interact with others and their personal interactions are

modified once again. In the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation, the Walkman apparatus itself modifies Walkman listeners' personal interactions. The visible presence of the Walkman apparatus (especially the headphones) on a listener's person suggests to bystanders that listeners might not hear them or notice their attempts to interact with them. Bystanders consequently choose not to interact with Walkman listeners since attempts to initiate interaction are unnecessarily difficult and potentially futile.<sup>38</sup>

### **Historical Construction of Interpersonal Mediation**

Two important points arise from the sources reviewed here, including from interviews. Firstly, the impact on personal interactions was one of the first concerns raised in response to the Walkman's development. Secondly, the Walkman's reception was often negative because of this impact. Such a negative response features in Morita's<sup>39</sup> (1986) account of some very early Walkman Music listening, occurring when he tested a prototype Walkman at home. Morita states:

I rushed home with the first Walkman and was trying it out with different music when I noticed that my experiment was annoying my wife, who felt shut out. All right, I decided, we need to make provision for two sets of headphones. The next week the production staff had produced another model with two headphone jacks.<sup>40</sup> (1986:80)

This is probably the first instance of the modification of personal interactions by Walkman Music and thus of Interpersonal Mediation although it is impossible to determine if Morita's anecdote is an example of the first or second mode. Morita's wife's displeasure is also the first annotated example of a negative response to another's Walkman listening and was sufficiently forceful that Morita instigated modifications to the original Walkman design. As indicated above, similar negative responses are documented in other literature<sup>41</sup> and in this study's

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<sup>38</sup> For bystanders, Walkman Music plays no direct role in the modification of social interaction because, apart from leakage, they cannot hear it. However, bystanders understand Walkman Music's effects on listeners and, observing the Walkman apparatus in place, choose not to interact with listeners on the basis of that understanding.

<sup>39</sup> As noted in the Introduction, Akio Morita and Masaru Ibuka were co-founders of Sony corporation, the manufacturers of the original Walkman.

<sup>40</sup> Nathan's (1999) account of the motivation behind the inclusion of two headphone jacks on the original Walkman, along with '... a button to depress the volume and enable conversation with the headphones in place' (1999:152), corresponds to an extent with that provided in Morita's biography. He writes the modifications were suggested by Morita's wife but the reason for her suggestion was that she '... had not enjoyed her first experience of headphone isolation' (1999:152) rather than annoyance at her own exclusion from Morita's Walkman Music experiments.

<sup>41</sup> Lind (1989) responds to Morita's account of the development of the Walkman and also notes the immediate negative response to the Walkman's effect on personal interaction. She observes:

... the potential interaction of personal stereo use and interpersonal communication was considered from the very beginning of Walkman product development. Further, the potential impact was deemed to be something which should be remedied, hence, the addition of extra jacks and the "hot line" feature [which reduces playback volume and allows sharing listeners to converse without removing their headphones].

fieldwork results. For example, Campbell (2001) would rather interact socially with fellow bus passengers than listen to Walkman Music. He felt that excluding fellow commuters is a regrettable consequence of Walkman listening:

I definitely use it [the Walkman] on buses but I'm always looking for an opportunity to talk to somebody. Very rarely do I use the Walkman when I'm around conversable [sic] people. I live in the hills so it's a very communal bus; it's always a pleasure to meet somebody. (2001)

Similarly, in his interview Darryl (2001) regrets Walkman listening which diminishes personal interaction. Darryl's response is a more explicit example than Campbell's of a negative response to Walkman listening. He stated:

Well, so many people have them [Walkmans] on the train. I think it actually saves people actually communicating. It's a sad thing in one way that people don't communicate as much. (2001)

Darryl thinks it is sad that commuters listen to Walkman Music rather than communicating with their fellows. He feels engaging his peers in conversation would be preferable to shutting them out as a consequence of his Walkman listening.<sup>42</sup> The modification of personal interactions he observes has been the key issue in Interpersonal Mediation's historical development and interviews demonstrate it remains an issue.

### **Social Maintenance of Interpersonal Mediation**

In the case of Interpersonal Mediation, discussion of social maintenance assumes great importance because social interaction, its avoidance and modification by listeners, is at the heart of Interpersonal Mediation. Interactions between listeners and bystanders are not social

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Because these attempts were made to neutralize this situation, we may assume that the personal stereo was at first considered to have a potentially negative influence on interpersonal communication. (1989:3)

Lind's study also provides fieldwork evidence of negative responses from bystanders towards Walkman listeners. Lind discovers '... there is a powerful norm of not initiating conversation with a personal stereo user' (1989:99). Bystanders consider interpersonal communication with a Walkman user 'too hard' (1989:80), or Walkman users themselves 'too rude' (1989:80) or 'too loud' (1989:80). Descriptions such as 'too loud' and 'too rude' exemplify negative responses to Walkman listening and to the modification of bystanders' interactions with Walkman listeners associated with it.

<sup>42</sup> Another interview response, from Daniel (2001), is an amusing example of Interpersonal Mediation and one to which his fellow passengers would probably respond negatively:

It's funny, you know. If you're on the train and sitting next to some people and listening to your Walkman, if the tape runs out and you rewind it you can hear what they are saying. I remember, that happened and these two people were having this really intimate conversation while I was within earshot, because they thought I was listening to the Walkman and couldn't hear. You could have a lot of fun that way, although I didn't. (Daniel 2001)

In an example of the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation, Daniel's interaction with his fellow-passengers is modified because of his apparent listening. The visible presence of Daniel's Walkman headphones gives his fellow-passengers the (mistaken) impression his attention is directed towards his music and that he cannot hear their conversation.



in the sense that they concern companionship, cooperation and mutually enjoyable interaction. Rather, interactions involving Walkman listeners and bystanders are social by definition because they involve more than one person. The key point arising from the review of relevant sources is that, even though some Walkman listeners might intend to eliminate interactions with bystanders as they listen, they cannot entirely do so. In modified form, interactions still take place between Walkman listeners and people in their vicinity.

Gumpert's (1987) writing informs discussion of Interpersonal Mediation's social maintenance. He observes:

The [Walkman] earphones establish an acoustical territory which is not to be entered without permission and which restricts interaction with outsiders. The wall of sound is silent, but communicates quite clearly. The presence of a Walkman renders the outsider invisible – a strange and unsettling feeling. It is equally strange to witness a person gyrating and foot-tapping to an imperceptible beat. The suspicion of a possible mental disturbance vanishes with the sight of an earphone, and the alien walks and jogs to the beat of a different tape.<sup>43</sup> (1987:91)

This statement captures Gumpert's understanding of the bystander's perspective – the person who is deterred in their attempts to interact with their acquaintances while they listen to Walkman Music. Gumpert's observations correspond to the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation. He notes, apart from the Walkman apparatus, bystanders might observe Walkman listeners as they gyrate or display other evidence of their listening. An extension of the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation, listeners' responses to their own Walkman Music can also discourage bystanders from attempting to interact with them. Stephen (2001), one of this study's interviewees, related an instance from his experience which corresponds to Gumpert's observation:

Some people get on the bus with [Walkman] music and everyone on the bus can hear it. They've only got little earphones in their ears and I hate to imagine what on earth it's doing to their ears. You can actually see when they get on the bus that they're very, very energised. So the music's having a big effect on their brain, that's for sure. (2001)

Listeners' responses to Walkman Music might not always be as apparent as in Stephen's example, but his observations nonetheless support Gumpert's assertions. Walkman listening is sometimes apparent to bystanders and tends to set listeners somewhat apart. Walkman Music, however, cannot entirely preclude the potential for interaction and Stephen's consideration of Walkman listeners he observes on the bus is an example of a possible type of interaction

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<sup>43</sup> Gumpert's concept of the wall of sound is discussed above as it informs the examination of to Boundary Demarcation.

between listeners and bystanders. As noted, this is not social interaction in the sense of mutual enjoyment, but is based around an individual's Walkman listening and bystanders' responses to it.

Chambers' (1994) writing, reviewed above as it related to Boundary Demarcation, is also relevant here. As noted, he argues Walkman listening cannot entirely eliminate listeners' interactions with their surroundings and writes 'In the manifest refusal of sociability the Walkman nevertheless reaffirms participation in a shared environment'<sup>44</sup> (1994:50). Morita's anecdotes, the fieldwork accounts of Walkman listening and Gumpert's ideas, presented above, all support Chambers' assertion that Walkman listening modifies, but does not eliminate, listeners' social interactions. Walkman listeners remain aware of modified social interactions which take place as they listen. For example, Morita (1986) is aware of his wife's displeasure as he listens, to the extent he is motivated to order modifications to the Walkman prototype. Morita's listening does not dismiss his wife from his thoughts. Rather, Morita's relationship with his wife and the consideration he gives her opinions are confirmed. In another example, Darryl (2001), despite the contribution of his own Walkman listening to the silence, finds the lack of communication between people on public transport sad, thus affirming his empathy with fellow passengers.

In a published interview with Stephen Fenichell (1983), Welsh rock and roll musician Dave Edmunds expresses an etiquette of Walkman use which differs slightly from those reproduced above, although it also confirms Edmunds' presence in a shared environment as Chambers (1994) suggests. Edmunds states:

... I do find the personal stereo terrifically handy, because I get sent a lot of cassettes by budding songwriters and bands, and usually they're not very good. So it's quite nice to be able to play all this stuff without making such a nuisance of myself around other people. The unit is also invaluable on the tour bus because you're practically living together, you and the band, and it's important not to get on anyone's nerves. With these things, people can listen to whatever they want. (Fenichell 1983:140-141)

Edmunds considers his Walkman listening to be an act of courtesy.<sup>45</sup> The Walkman's headphones allow him to listen while not obliging people in his vicinity to hear his music.

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<sup>44</sup> This is a similar idea to that of Bendix (2000), discussed above as it relates to Environmental Control, '... the social collective does not disappear in this personal maneuvering, but it remains present through its very denial on the part of the individual' (2000:38). Despite Walkman listeners' attempts to withdraw from social interaction, Bendix suggests they inevitably remain involved.

<sup>45</sup> The view of Walkman listening as a courtesy to neighbours is discussed above as it relates to Boundary Demarcation. As noted, Williamson (1988:209) rejects the idea Walkman listeners might be motivated by politeness and a desire not to disturb

Other means of playing his tapes would involve a greater degree of 'leakage' of the sound so the fellow inhabitants of bus would hear it and possibly be annoyed by it. Edmunds' account supports Chambers' assertion that Walkman listeners' surroundings remain tenaciously present. Edmunds' band-mates are foremost in his thoughts as he listens, evidenced by his conscious efforts to maintain good relations with them.

Hosokawa (see 1984:177) presents a theory which informs discussion of the bystander's perspective as well as of Interpersonal Mediation's social maintenance. As discussed in Chapter One, he discusses Walkman listeners as secret-holders (only they know what they are listening to) and bystanders as secret-beholders (they see the Walkman listener is listening to something but cannot know what it is). Hosokawa develops this idea, explaining a possible basis of ill-will bystanders might direct toward Walkman listeners. Understanding 'The secret-holder always has an advantage over the secret-beholder ...' (1984:177), Hosokawa suggests:

The superiority felt by the holder to the beholder is far from the casual satisfaction of acquiring something fashionable, but relates to receiving the visa for the secret garden of the walkman in which people communicate with one another through the form – not the content – of the secret. (1984:177-178)

Hosokawa refers to the sounds reproduced by the Walkman as the 'content' of the Walkman 'secret'. As discussed above, apart from the possibility of slight leakage, bystanders cannot respond to Walkman Music because they cannot hear it. Bystanders can only respond to the appearance of the Walkman and their understanding of what that appearance entails – namely, to what Hosokawa terms the 'form' of the secret. Hosokawa is unique in the literature in drawing a distinction between the physical appearance of the Walkman to bystanders on the one hand and Walkman Music on the other. This distinction is reflected in this study's approach to the examination of the three modes of Interpersonal Mediation.<sup>46</sup>

In a discussion which pertains to the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation, Hosokawa develops his idea of the Walkman as secret theatre. He writes:

... with the appearance of this novel gadget [the Walkman], all passers-by are inevitably involved in the walkman-theatre, as either actors (holders) or spectators (beholders) ... (1984:179)

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others although the idea is supported by this study's fieldwork results and now also by Edmund's account of his Walkman listening.

<sup>46</sup> As noted, the first and second modes are considered functions of Walkman Music while the third mode relates to the presence of the Walkman itself.

Hosokawa asserts bystanders must be involved in Walkman listening, even if it is the listener's goal to make themselves unavailable for personal interaction with them. The visible presence of the Walkman alerts bystanders to Walkman users' listening and they are intrigued by it. They do not interact with the listener in the sense of engaging in conversation, but the combined acts of listening on the one hand and curiously observing listening of an unknown nature on the other hand must be considered a form of interaction. Hosokawa aptly compares this interaction to '... the theatrical process ...' (1984:178) in which listeners are actors and observers are members of the audience.<sup>47</sup>

In her study of the Walkman, Lind (1989) proposes three effects of Walkman listening which relate to Interpersonal Mediation. Lind's discussion captures the perspective of bystanders for whom interaction with Walkman listeners is modified, if not entirely eliminated. She observes:

... because any existing sound environment can be substituted with whatever the user prefers, others who may be physically close to the user do not experience the same environment. This inability to share a common environment may act to separate personal stereo users from others. (1989:8)

Firstly, in her observation that Walkman Music replaces any existing sound environment, Lind's comments are pertinent to the first mode of Interpersonal Mediation. Lind suggests Walkman listening disrupts listeners' presence in the aural environment they would normally share with people in their vicinity. Listeners are 'separated' from bystanders because they do not share an audible environment with them.<sup>48</sup> This disruption compromises social interaction between listeners and people with whom they could otherwise easily interact by speaking.

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<sup>47</sup> Adorno (1990a) presents an account of music listening using early headphones which relates closely to Hosokawa's discussion. He writes:

In Nice, on the other side far away from the big hotels, there is a locale where, with considerable effort, one extracts some publicity from the gramophone whose private character is conserved in French fashion. There, along the walls in sealed glass cases, one finds twenty gramophones lined up one next to another, each of which doggedly services one record. The gramophones are operated automatically by inserting a token. In order to hear something, one has to put on a pair of headphones: those who don't pay hear nothing. (1990a:52-53)

Adorno observes the audience for these gramophones, '... petit bourgeois girls, most of them underage' (Adorno 1990a:53), are also the object of passers-by's attention. The girls '... wait for someone to approach them' (1990a:53). Here Adorno observes a paradox. Because of the headphones only the petit bourgeois girls can hear their chosen music as reproduced by the gramophone. The privacy of their listening attracts attention and the girls, knowing this, take advantage of it and wait to be approached. Thus their private listening is effectively a public ploy for attention. In Adorno's words, the private character of gramophone listening is conserved while listeners simultaneously extract some publicity from their listening. Likewise, adapting Hosokawa's words, all passers-by are inevitably involved in the gramophone-theatre.

<sup>48</sup> Rainer Schönhammer's (1989) understanding of the impression Walkman users make on passers-by relates to Lind's assertion in his reference to the breakdown in the common environment that the Walkman precipitates. He presents his understanding of the reasons for the generally negative nature of this impression, writing:

We see the earphone user as living in a private acoustic world which we are unable to share. This seems to interrupt a form of contact between "normal" people in a shared situation, even if there is no explicit communication at all. People with earphones seem to violate an unwritten law of interpersonal reciprocity: the certainty of common sensual presence in shared situations. (1989:130)

Secondly, Lind suggests '... users may be perceived as seeking "private space", thereby potentially constraining interpersonal communication' (1989:1). Lind's reference to listeners' private space clearly links her observations to the second mode of Interpersonal Mediation. Although she examines the '... effects ...' (1989:1) of the personal stereo, Lind's observations bring the role of Walkman Music into sharp relief. She writes 'Because the listening experience is so private, others are excluded from listening – in effect, isolating the listener' (1989:8). In its focus on the listening experience, Lind's approach implicitly acknowledges that Walkman Music plays the key role in the constraint of interpersonal communication she observes. After all, in order to be distracted from their surroundings, as is the case in Interpersonal Mediation's second mode, listeners need something with which to be distracted. Walkman Music provides substantially more scope for distraction than the Walkman apparatus itself.

Thirdly, and relevant to the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation, Lind turns to generally prevalent attitudes regarding the Walkman. She writes:

... an individual is expected to *either* use a personal stereo *or* interact with others. The attitude seems to be that these activities are mutually exclusive. (1989:101, italics in original)

Lind's discussion encapsulates Interpersonal Mediation from the bystander's perspective. One implication of the expectation she discusses is that people cannot satisfactorily interact with their fellows while listening to Walkman Music, if interaction can be initiated in the first place. As noted, the consequence of this expectation is that people are less likely to attempt to engage Walkman listeners in interaction.

Finally, Walkman users' modified interactions with other people is the source of satire in *The Onion* (Dickers 1999).<sup>49</sup> Describing the Walkman as a '... portable populace-pacification device

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First, Schönhammer understands Walkman listening as deviant – it interrupts contact between 'normal' people. This is another instance of a negative response to changes Walkman Music makes to listeners' personal interactions. Second, Schönhammer explicitly outlines an idea only hinted at by Lind. This is the concept that people within a certain vicinity normally share '... a common sensual presence ...' (1989:130), in the words of Schönhammer, or that they experience the same environment (1989:8), in the words of Lind. Schönhammer's discussion combines elements of the first and third modes of Interpersonal Mediation. Walkman listeners' existence in a private acoustic world is an instance of Interpersonal Mediation's first mode. However, more than a simple inability to hear, Schönhammer suggests Walkman listeners' obvious removal from the common aural environment or soundscape deters bystanders' attempts to interact. Schönhammer refers to bystanders 'seeing' the earphone user and drawing conclusions regarding their presence in the shared soundscape and thus about listener's availability for interaction. This is the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation. Lind's and Schönhammer's observations illustrate that, in reality, several modes of Interpersonal Mediation occur simultaneously. However, distinctions are drawn between the modes in this study for the sake of understanding.

<sup>49</sup> *The Onion* is an internet based satirical newspaper. The extracts cited in this study are sourced from a hard-copy compilation of *Onion* highlights. (see Dickers 1999)

...' (Dickers 1999:130), *The Onion* suggests it '... transports its user to a warm, self-contained aural environment, freeing him from social interaction with others' (Dickers 1999:130). Then, ascribing the observations it publishes to fictional Sony spokesperson David Gelfand, *The Onion* alleges the Walkman is '... superior to other music-playing devices in that it not only plays music but also blocks out one's awareness of the rest of the world' (Dickers 1999:130). The best consequence of this isolation is that:

... any sound below 60 decibels – including the voices of nagging authority figures, co-workers, intrusive bus patrons or loved ones – is eliminated, along with the need to respond. (Dickers 1999:130)

Sony allegedly predicts:

When each and every American consumer is outfitted with this small metal box and the accompanying length of cord and two sponge-like ear-mounted speakers, all forms of discontent will cease to exist. (Dickers 1999:130)

It was noted above that the consequences of Walkman listening for personal interactions have generated many responses in the literature. While *The Onion* exaggerates the consequences of Walkman use for the sake of satire, it is significant that the isolating qualities of the experience of Walkman Music are sufficiently apparent and ubiquitous that they are subject to mockery.

### **Individual Experience of Interpersonal Mediation**

Chen's (1993) writing is of interest here because it corresponds closely to this study's analysis. She discusses the individual experience of listening to Walkman Music and presents examples of Walkman listening which correspond to Interpersonal Mediation's first and second modes. Related to the first mode, she examines Walkman use among college students and observes '... the impairment of hearing [as a result of listening to Walkman Music] makes intrusion from others difficult' (1993:109). Also, related to Interpersonal Mediation's second mode, she writes:

The use of the Walkman creates social segregation, with the enveloping musical environment decreasing the likelihood of social interaction. The anti-social tendency allows an individual to use the device to create an invisible private world out of the existing social environment, segregating herself from others.<sup>50</sup> (1993:108)

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<sup>50</sup> Interpersonal Mediation can be a result of Walkman listeners' intentional efforts to render themselves unavailable for personal interaction. In an instance of intentional Interpersonal Mediation, Chen (1993) presents an example from her fieldwork. Her informant, Shane, relates:

While sitting outside, I spied somebody coming toward me. I can't STAND this person because she talks my leg off about trivial matters that I care nothing about. Quick! On with the Walkman and break open my note pad. The Dragon Lady passes. (Chen 1993).

Chen notes that the segregation she observes occurs as a result of '... the enveloping musical environment ...' (1993:108) and thus indicates the role of Walkman Music in the modification of listeners' personal interactions. She suggests Walkman listeners are immersed in their own music-related thoughts and consequently distracted from their surroundings. This is another example of Interpersonal Mediation's second mode.

The perspective of bystanders is discussed above in terms of Interpersonal Mediation's social maintenance (see especially Gumpert 1987:91; Hosokawa 1984:178-179; Lind 1989:101). Lind (1989) and Bull (2000) discuss the other important perspective in Interpersonal Mediation's third mode, that of the Walkman listener. Firstly, in her study of the Walkman, Lind (1989) examines fourteen reasons for personal stereo use and ranks them according to the frequency of their occurrence within her study group. 'It's a way to let others know you don't want to be disturbed' (1989:59) and 'It provides distraction in an uncomfortable social setting' (1989:59) correspond to Interpersonal Mediation and are respectively the tenth and thirteenth most frequent of those Lind examines. These reasons capture the motivations of Walkman listeners who use their Walkmans to avoid interactions with other people in Interpersonal Mediation.

Secondly, Bull (2000) observes that users '... sometimes even pretend to listen' (2000:190) as they use their Walkmans to avoid unwanted personal interaction. This further demonstrates Walkman Music's non-involvement in the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation. Bystanders make judgements on Walkman users' availability for interaction on the basis of the presence of the Walkman apparatus. Aware of this, Walkman owners may choose to wear their Walkmans when they want to avoid interacting with others. As Bull observes, Walkman users:

... feel that other people do not trouble them so much as they are harder to approach. Users often describe feeling more confident in public wearing their personal stereos. Personal stereos are visual "do not disturb" signs. They are also an efficient tool for controlling the manner and nature of contact with others. (2000:189)

Bull's examination of strategies of Walkman use is criticised in this study because it does not acknowledge the role of Walkman Music. However, as it relates to the third mode of

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Interpersonal Mediation can also be unintentional. As noted in discussion of Chosen Sounds, Walkman listeners often listen for the sake of the music. In such instances Walkman Music blocks out ambient noise and engages listeners' attention. Modification of the listener's personal interactions by the first and second modes of Interpersonal Mediation results, although listening and not Interpersonal Mediation is the Walkman listener's primary intent.

Interpersonal Mediation, Bull's focus on the Walkman apparatus rather than on Walkman Music is appropriate.<sup>51</sup>

Having reviewed published sources pertaining to the Walkman listener's experience of Interpersonal Mediation, it is appropriate to turn to this study's fieldwork results. The personal accounts included here provide insight into subtleties and nuances of the experience which are not represented in the literature. Firstly, Aliese (2001) discusses her understanding of the consequences of Walkman listening for personal interaction. In her interview, Aliese related that she initially suspected shop assistants only greeted her out of ulterior commercial motives. This suspicion motivated Aliese to continue listening after entering shops and she was subsequently surprised to find shop assistants regarded her Walkman listening and consequent non-availability for personal interaction as rude and anti-social. Aliese persisted with her listening nonetheless, consciously deciding not to pay shop assistants the courtesy of removing her headphones and thus making herself available for interaction. She relates:

I couldn't be bothered [taking my headphones off] and I thought, "I'm just going to hop in this shop for five seconds and look at this book and then hop back out again so what's the point?". I really thought of it as a courtesy thing. I thought, "I can't be bothered to give these people the courtesy of taking my Walkman off right now". Wearing my Walkman, it's like I'm saying, "I'm just here shopping". Shop assistants come up to you and they say "How are you today?" and if you're wearing your Walkman they can't do that and then they wonder why you're not talking to them. This girl came up and said "Hello" and I didn't say anything and then I turned around and said "Sorry, I'm wearing my Walkman" and then she said "Well, aren't we antisocial?" and I thought that was really funny. That's why the Walkman's good; you cut out that bit where they make contact with you. (2001)

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<sup>51</sup> Adorno (1978) also offers insights which relate to the Walkman user's perspective of Interpersonal Mediation. His insights, particularly into the role of music, are at odds with those examined to this point (see Bull 2000; Chen 1993; Lind 1989 as noted) and are footnoted here for the sake of completeness. Sources examined above suggest listening to Walkman Music modifies personal interactions between Walkman listeners and others. By contrast, Adorno asserts communication between people is diminishing anyway and that music:

... seems to complement the reduction of people to silence, the dying out of speech as expression, the inability to communicate at all. It inhabits the pockets of silence that develop between people molded by anxiety, work and undemanding docility. Everywhere it takes over, unnoticed, the deadly sad role that fell to it in the time and the specific situation of the silent films. It is perceived purely as background. If nobody can any longer speak, then certainly nobody can any longer listen. (1978:271)

Adorno suggests work, anxiety and docility result in the decreased ability of people to speak or communicate and that background music distracts people from the depressing silence which results. As noted, in this study the functions of Walkman Music are examined and Walkman Music is understood to play a causal role in listener's experiences. The first and second modes of Interpersonal Mediation, in which Walkman Music respectively blocks out bystanders' otherwise audible attempts to interact with Walkman listeners and distracts listeners from such attempts, exemplify this perspective. In light of Adorno's reasoning, the role of Walkman Music in Interpersonal Mediation could be understood as a complement to or distraction from Walkman listeners' inability to communicate in the first place rather than the cause of their diminished communication.



Aliese regards her Walkman headphones as outward manifestations of her intent not to interact with others and, by not removing them, makes a conscious decision to be discourteous and antisocial in the eyes of people with whom she might otherwise interact. She is aware her Walkman use can be viewed negatively by bystanders. It is noteworthy that Aliese does not mention her desire to listen to music but considers the Walkman good because it cuts '... out that bit where they [shopkeepers] make contact with you' (2001). If Walkman Music is understood to be the Walkman listener's chosen listening material, as noted in the examination of Chosen Sounds, then Walkman Music's other functions, including Interpersonal Mediation, might be regarded almost as side effects of the Walkman user's decision to hear their chosen music. Aliese's account of her Walkman listening supports the understanding that at times Interpersonal Mediation, rather than the desire to listen to Walkman Music, is the primary motivation of Walkman listeners.

Aliese's (2001) listening practices go further than avoiding conversation or interaction with shop assistants to behaviour verging on queue jumping. She related:

... when I'm wearing my Walkman I'm a lot more aggressive getting in lines as well. I'll wait for an old lady who's sort of a bit dazed and then stand in front of her or something. Placebo encourages me to do that. It's easier to see people as enemies if you can't really hear what they're saying or what they're doing or whatever. And also, you can't hear if you're making a big noise coming up to people so you think of yourself as the stealth machine, you know, "just going to stealthily move in front of this old lady".<sup>52</sup> (2001)

It was noted above that Aliese continued listening to Walkman Music in shops in order to avoid interacting with shop assistants while browsing. The second extract from her interview suggests Aliese's experience of Walkman Music changes her attitude towards people in her vicinity even more markedly than noted above. In addition to reducing the probability Aliese will engage in social interaction with them, Aliese's Walkman listening disengages her from people around her to the extent that she consciously views them as adversaries or obstacles, even enemies. Furthermore, Aliese is aware, even at the time it occurs, that her behaviour changes as a result of her listening. By contrast, Daniel (2001) is unaware of Interpersonal Mediation while he listens to Walkman Music:

I constantly had the Walkman on and the earphones in. I remember when I was 15 at school, the whole schoolyard courtship thing, and my girlfriend at the time complained. She was annoyed because she reckoned that she couldn't get my attention in the school corridor. I don't know. Apparently I was always walking along with my head down and earplugs in my ears. My friends still pay me out about it. (2001)

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<sup>52</sup> Placebo are a UK rock band.

Daniel only became aware his listening was excluding people who wanted to interact with him when they told him about it after the fact. Further, even someone as close to Daniel as his girlfriend of the time found him difficult to approach because his Walkman Music distracted him. In addition to their interactions with strangers, Walkman Music also influences listeners' interactions with people with whom they share close relationships. This was demonstrated earlier by Morita's wife's response to his early Walkman testing (see 1986:80).

Scott's (2001) Walkman listening is of interest because he is aware of bystanders' points of view. First he recounted his own understanding of his listening experiences on buses:

I pretty much ignore them [fellow bus commuters] you know. I pretty much just listen to the music and get into the music. I'm not really worried about what everyone else is doing. (2001)

Scott's listening is an example of the second mode of Interpersonal Mediation. Regarding bystanders whom he ignores, Scott stated:

I think they pretty much ignore me. They see I've got a Walkman on and they don't talk to you, they just sort of sit next to you. (2001)

In Scott's eyes (but in this study's terminology) the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation is at play. Similar to the reaction noted by Aliese, Scott is aware of the effect his Walkman listening is having on his interactions with people around him.

Steven's (2001) Walkman listening is an example of the first mode of Interpersonal Mediation; he cannot hear attempts to get his attention. Like Scott and Aliese, he is aware of the effect his obvious listening has on his neighbours. He recalled:

The main bus route that I used went all the way into the icky centre of Salisbury<sup>53</sup> (though I only rode it to the edge), so there were many undesirables on the bus. Apart from the obvious shielding effect of not being able to hear their drunken/psychotic ramblings, it also gave an extra layer of protection. Perhaps you are less of a target because the wires dangling from your ears indicate that your attention will be slightly more difficult to secure. (2001)

In addition to the first mode, Steven's listening also involves elements of the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation; he understands that the wires associated with his headphones make him less of a 'target' for the attentions of people with whom he would rather not converse.

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<sup>53</sup> Salisbury is a satellite city of Adelaide, Australia, the city in which this study was based.

Aaron's (2001) Walkman listening also takes place on public transport although Aaron does not necessarily enjoy the Interpersonal Mediation that results. He related:

It [Walkman listening] does change the experience [of being on a bus]. It blocks you out from everything. If people see you with earphones on you're almost not there. They realise that you can't hear them and you're switched off to anything, any sort of interaction. In that way I don't really like it because it sort of shuts you off from the world. I do it when it's necessary, when there's something I have to listen to, as in preparing or analysing a piece [of music] but apart from that I don't tend to listen to much on the bus any more. I realise a lot of people do listen on the bus, there's a whole group of people and they're all facing forwards and some people want to shut themselves off. It's something to do with living in a city sort of society where you're dealing with lots of people all the time. So I don't like that. I guess that's why I stopped doing it. I saw lots of people with headphones and it just shuts you off from a possible experience that you might have on a bus. (2001)

Aaron's listening is an example of the second mode of Interpersonal Mediation. His concentration on the music he is preparing or analysing distracts him from his fellow passengers. Further, Aaron is aware of the effect of his Walkman listening and observes the third mode of Interpersonal Mediation in action. He notes passengers realise he can't hear them and that he is switched off to any sort of interaction. Similar to the comments of Darryl (2001) and Campbell (2001), noted above, Aaron regrets the reduction in personal interaction brought about by his Walkman listening. When he does not absolutely need to listen, Aaron would prefer to maximise his chances of experiencing some sort of personal interaction by leaving his headphones off.

Varying personal experiences of Interpersonal Mediation are observed in the personal accounts of Walkman listening cited in this chapter. Some Walkman listeners intentionally avoid personal interactions, well aware of the effect their visible headphones have on bystanders. Other listeners are primarily focussed on their music and only become aware of associated disruptions to their personal interaction when friends complain. Another group of listeners need to listen on occasion, but prefer not to use their Walkmans because they are aware of the deleterious effects of their listening on their interactions with others. It is noteworthy that many listeners have a negative view of the disruption to personal interactions brought about by their listening. Bystanders for whom interaction with listeners is disrupted also respond negatively to the experience. It is also noteworthy that the broad range of experiences reviewed in this chapter all relate directly to Walkman Music. Even bystanders who cannot hear a listener's Walkman Music are aware of the effect it has on listeners and understand their modified interactions with the listener in those terms.

### **Summary of Interpersonal Mediation**

Perhaps no other consequence of Walkman use generates as vigorous a response in the literature as Interpersonal Mediation. Condemnations and regrets are rife and responses to Walkman Music's ability to diminish or completely inhibit social interaction tend towards the animated. Interpersonal Mediation has been a factor in Walkman listening ever since its first development, as evidenced by Morita's (1986) account of his wife's displeasure. Interpersonal Mediation may be a side-effect of listening to Walkman Music – unexpected in Morita's case – but some Walkman listeners are well aware they can manage their social interaction by this means.

## Chapter Four

In the five functions of Walkman Music examined in this chapter, Walkman listeners use Walkman Music to manage aspects of their own experience. In Company, listeners use Walkman Music as a substitute companion in order to alleviate feelings of loneliness. In Aural Mnemonic, listeners use Walkman Music as a trigger to aid recollection of enjoyable memories. In Mood Management, Walkman listeners use Walkman Music to improve undesirable moods or to sustain good moods. In Time Management, Walkman users listen to Walkman Music instead of resigning themselves to complete lack of activity or instead of undertaking boring or monotonous activities. Finally, in Activation, corresponding to Merriam's (see 1964:223-224) musical function of physical response, listeners move to the rhythm of the music and often undertake more strenuous physical activity as a result. In each of these functions, the convenience of Walkman Music allows listeners to enhance their daily routines at any time and place they choose.

### Function Seven: Company

In Company, Walkman listeners use Walkman Music to assuage loneliness. They relate Walkman Music to the presence of the musicians who created it and use it as a substitute companion.<sup>1</sup>

### Historical Construction of Company

Adorno (1973) features significantly in the examination of Company's historical construction. His earliest relevant discussion is presented in *Philosophy of Modern Music* (1973). This source was originally published in German in 1948 and it is noteworthy that Adorno first observed one of the more subtle consequences of recording music so long ago. Adorno suggests solitary listeners associate the sound of recorded music with the presence of performers who would play the music in live performance. Listeners thus experience a form of interaction as

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<sup>1</sup> Tetsuo (1984, 1988) proposes a variation of this experience, discussing links between multiple Walkman listeners rather than between individual Walkman listeners and the musicians who created the music they hear. He writes:

This device [the Walkman] is for personal use only, so that the users are isolated from each other even if they listen to the same music source. They are united in the way of marionettes. Walkman users form a collectivity of marionettes, maintaining some kind of individualism of the user. When there is a weak pull in the string, the marionette can, to an extent, enjoy a sense of individualism: electronic individualism. When, though, there is a strong pull, the users will be totally integrated into an electronic collectivity... (Tetsuo 1984: 18)

Tetsuo is the only writer who discusses such a phenomenon, and his thoughts are included here for the sake of completeness. Tetsuo's reference to "the same music source" (Tetsuo: 18) makes it clear he is mostly referring to radio, a source of musical experience which is beyond the scope of this study.

they listen.<sup>2</sup> Adorno terms this apparent paradox the 'antinomy' (1973:18) of modern music, thus capturing the contradiction between the apparently solitary nature of the recorded music listening experience on the one hand and the listener's perception they experience a kind of interaction with performers on the other. Prior to a full examination of this phenomenon, however, it is necessary to examine the consequences of Adorno's understanding that recorded music is a form of communication.

Adorno writes:

Similar to the fate that Proust ascribed to paintings in museums, these recordings awaken to a second life in the wondrous dialogue with the lonely and perceptive listeners ...<sup>3</sup> (1990c:65-66)

To Adorno, music's 'death' is its removal from the singular time and place of live performance by recording. In this death, however, music is resurrected to a new or 'second' life.<sup>4</sup> Recording severs music from the singularity of live performance and releases it for individual listeners who can now spontaneously listen wherever and whenever they choose. Music is no longer tied to the concert hall and to singular performances. In recorded music's 'second life', lonely and perceptive listeners enjoy recorded music as they would a conversation or dialogue<sup>5</sup> with a

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<sup>2</sup> Leppert (2002) also notes this aspect of Adorno's writing. In response to "Opera and the Long Playing Record" (Adorno 1990c), Leppert notes the listener is:

... alone and lonely, but his solitude has been turned against loneliness through the trace of intersubjectivity inscribed on the record's grooves. (Leppert 2002)

Leppert's 'trace of intersubjectivity' is the resonance in recorded music of the immediate and direct interaction which occurs between performer and audience in live performance. This is the basis of Adorno's concept of 'being with', discussed in the main text of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> In this passage Adorno refers back to his essay, "Valéry Proust Museum" (1967), where he wrote:

For him [Proust] it is only the death of the work of art in the museum which brings it to life. When severed from the living order in which it functioned, according to him, its true spontaneity is released – its uniqueness, its "name", that which makes the great works of culture more than culture. (Adorno 1967:182)

<sup>4</sup> In Adorno's terms, music's first life is its original playing for the purpose of recording it, whether at a live performance or in a recording studio. Music dies when it is recorded. Although it can still be heard it no longer changes with varying stylistic interpretation. Once recorded, the original performance is captured and made available for repeated listening. This is the music's 'second life'.

Discussion of music's death by recording recalls a related discussion pertinent to Environmental Control. Cubitt (1998) proposes recorded music's repetition enables listeners to use it as a means of controlling their environment. Other writers, notably Sessions (1970; 1971), are critical of recorded music because of its exact repetition, feeling recorded music is non-musical or dead because of its inherent repetition of every detail. Pertaining directly to Company, Bull (2000) asserts, because of this repetition, Walkman listeners '... "know" their music and never feel "alone" whilst listening to it' (2000:189). This suggests Walkman Music's exact repetition contributes to its capacity to act as a substitute for 'real' company and to assuage loneliness in Company.

<sup>5</sup> Adorno's use of the word 'dialogue' to describe the listener's relationship with recorded music is noteworthy. It captures the sense in which listeners understand their experience of recorded music as a conversation with the musicians concerned. In another relevant source, Berland (1998) also uses telling language. She discusses recorded music in terms of the '... movement of electronically reproduced messages across space ...' (1998:133). Messages are meaningful communications transmitted by a

friend. In this manner, Adorno understands recorded music is a form of communication and can also give the impression of 'real' interaction with the musicians concerned. It is now appropriate to examine some of Adorno's further writings which provide further insight into the nature of this phenomenon.

In a list of variations of what he terms 'entertainment listeners' (1976:16), cited earlier, Adorno refers to '... one who kills time and paralyzes loneliness by filling his ears with the illusion of "being with" no matter what ...' (1976:16). In 'being with'<sup>6</sup> (1973), Adorno proposes listeners associate the sound of recorded music with the presence of the musicians who created it and thus feel accompanied, even though no musicians are present. This idea forms the basis of Company. In Adorno's words:

The fact that music as a whole, and polyphony in particular – the necessary medium of modern music – have their source in the collective practices of cult and dance is not to be written off as a mere "point of departure" due to its further progress towards freedom. Rather this historical source remains the unique sensory subjective impulse of music, even if it has long broken with every collective practice. (1973:18)

Firstly, it is noteworthy that Adorno refers to music's '... progress towards freedom' (1973:18). This recapitulates the idea, discussed above, that music assumes a second life after recording – it is 'freed' from singular live performances. Secondly, and specifically related to Company, Adorno discusses the modern practice of musical experience and asserts that this routine has its origins in ancient practices of cult and dance, cooperative enterprises in which many people are involved. Adorno argues these past collective practices resonate with listeners to the point that, although they are physically alone, listeners associate the sound of recorded music with the presence of the collective who contribute to the ritual of live

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sender to a receiver and in subsequent discussion Berland discusses the meanings of messages contained in recorded music. She suggests '... we find social meanings in the sounds [of recorded music] themselves' (1998:133). Company is one example of social meaning contained in the sounds of recorded music.

<sup>6</sup> Bull (1999; 2000) refers to Adorno's concept of 'being with' in several of his Walkman studies. In the first, Bull (1999) interprets 'being with' as '... the re-creation of direct experience by and through technologically mediated forms of experience' (1999:201). In *Sounding Out the City* (2000) Bull writes further that he understands the term 'being with' '... to refer to a qualitative relationship between the subject and that which is experienced' (2000:28). Bull's responses to Adorno aid understanding of Adorno's ideas.

Richard Leppert (2002:234), in comments regarding Adorno's (1990a) essay "The Curves of the Needle", also makes observations which aid understanding of Adorno's ideas. Leppert observes:

... the Sony Walkman/Discman paradox, wherein the aesthetic labor of others is privately heard rather than experienced intersubjectively and socially as may occur in musical ritual, whether ecclesiastical or secular. (Leppert 2002:234)

Firstly, Leppert's insights are noteworthy for their direct reference to the Walkman. Secondly, Leppert describes the connection between solitary listening and the "intersubjective" or social interaction which is inherent to live music and which forms the basis of Adorno's 'being with'.

performance. In another source, Adorno expresses this idea very clearly, writing music's '... sound suggests a voice of the collective that will not quite forsake its compulsory members' (1976:43).

In another reference to music's capacity to assuage loneliness, Adorno (1976) suggests music's '... comfort function, the anonymous solace to the congregation of the lonely, ranks surely not lowest among the functions of music today' (1976:43). Adorno subsequently expands on music's ability to comfort lonely listeners, writing:

By circling people, by enveloping them – as inherent in the acoustical phenomenon – and turning them as listeners into participants, it [recorded music] contributes ideologically to the integration which modern society never tires of achieving in reality. It leaves no room for conceptual reflection between itself and the subject, and so it creates an illusion of immediacy in the totally mediated world, of proximity between strangers, of warmth for those who come to feel the chill of the unmitigated struggle of all against all. Most important among the functions of consumed music – which keeps evoking memories of a language of immediacy – may be that it eases men's suffering under the universal mediations, as if one were still living face to face in spite of it all. (1976:46)

Firstly, Adorno refers here to recorded music in general. However, his reference to recorded music's 'envelopment' of listeners is unexpectedly relevant to Walkman Music which, by virtue of its inherent headphones and stereo image, seems to surround listeners. Secondly, Adorno observes the formal distinction between performers and audience members, such as occurs at concert hall performances of Western art music, is broken down in the experience of recorded music such that listeners feel involved in the creation of their music. Eisenberg (1988:43-68) mounts a similar argument, suggesting listeners use recorded music to create solitary rituals in which they participate in any way they choose. Conducting along with the record and playing air guitar are examples of this. With such behaviour, listeners' sense of participation in their recorded music is magnified. In sum, Adorno argues listeners crave human interaction. The solitary experience of recorded music does not involve 'real' or immediate human interaction, but listeners' 'participation' in recorded music creates the illusion of cooperative effort with the recorded musicians. This illusion eases the essential loneliness of solitary listening.

Eisenberg (1988) also contributes to the understanding of Company as reminiscent of the presence of musicians.<sup>7</sup> He describes listening to recorded music as:

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<sup>7</sup> Cubitt (1998) mounts a similar argument in general terms of sound rather than music. He observes sound:



... a séance where we get to choose our ghosts. The voices we hear come from another world – something voices are good at. So there is a certain bafflement: the voice seems to be coming from the medium, or the loudspeaker, but where is it really coming from? Sight, in the habit of tracing the sound to its source, finds nothing but some wooden boxes and a spinning circle. At the end of the search for focus one finds a surd. The performer becomes (in the etymological sense) occult. (1988:57)

Eisenberg's reference to the 'spinning circle' relates to the mechanism of the gramophone, but his ideas can be applied to any means by which recorded music is reproduced. Moreover, by using the term 'occult' which, in the etymological sense, means 'hidden', Eisenberg suggests the sound of recorded music directly implies the presence of musicians, who, because they cannot be seen but only heard, are understood by the listener to be somehow hidden from sight as they play. Further, a 'surd' is a sound uttered with the breath and not the voice. Such a sound, although diminished to an extent, is not disembodied and requires a human speaker to enunciate it. Thus, although it might be considered in some ways diminished in comparison with live music, as a whisper is to the speaking voice, listeners understand the sound of recorded music to convey something of the presence of musicians who created its sounds in the first place.

In another reference to the gramophone and to its horn in particular, Eisenberg eloquently describes the crux of music's role in Company. He asserts 'You can stare into the horn and know that at some vanishing point beyond the visible concavity there is someone breathing' (1988:64). Eisenberg's reference to out-dated technologies of sound reproduction does not invalidate his point. He maintains, even though it is reproduced by inanimate means, listeners associate the sound of recorded music with the human endeavour which would be required to produce it in live performance. Listeners thus have a sense of the presence of the performers as they listen.

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... was always placed because it was always physical. It burbled up from the wet viscera of the body, the tumbling of water, the impact of bronze on wood, to fill the space of the ear, the valley, the battlefield. (1998:102)

Original sounds have meaning for those who hear them because they are associated with particular events. The tumbling of water is associated with a waterfall. The perceptions of eye and ear are linked in original experience. Related to recorded music, Cubitt suggests the reception of recordings is complex because they take '... fidelity, rather than construction, the false materialism of the replication of origin' (1998:102) as their goal – that is, rather than possessing an aesthetic of their own, listeners understand recordings in terms of the musicians who created them. It is in their reference to the musicians concerned that, as Cubitt argues:

... recorded sounds gain their discretion, their ability to mediate between people over spatio-temporal distances, as relations between people rather than things (Cubitt 1998:103).

Thus, as listeners associate the sound of tumbling water with a waterfall, they associate the sounds of recorded music with the musicians who would create them rather than with the technology of sound recording and reproduction which actually enables them to hear it.

### **Social Maintenance of Company**

Rice (1987) proposes '... the social structure of music ...' (1987:475) as the potential focus of study into the social maintenance of musical practice. The social structure of Company, however, does not involve listeners' direct or immediate interaction with other people. Rather, it involves individual Walkman users' impression of such interactions as they listen to Walkman Music. Thus discussions of Company's Social Maintenance are often difficult to separate from discussions of Company's Individual Experience. For the sake of simplicity, published discourse which relates to Company is discussed here while interview results related to Company are left to the next section.

Bull (2000) and Chen (1993), although they do not use the terminology of this study, have both observed Company in the course of their own Walkman studies. Bull, in particular, outlines a strategy of Walkman use adapted here to define Company, proposing 'The personal stereo gives users a sense of companionship. They "know" their music and never feel "alone" whilst listening to it' (2000:189). Bull discusses Walkman users' motivation, writing '... the primary motive is to fend off feelings of isolation through the mediated company of personalized "sounds". Personal stereos provide company' (2000:189). Although he is not explicitly discussing Walkman Music, Bull refers to listeners 'knowing' (2000:189) their music and to listeners' 'personalised sounds' (2000:189). Walkman Music, not the Walkman which transmits it, is the key to Company. Chen (1993) similarly describes a mode of Walkman use among college students which also relates to Company. She names this mode 'Emotional Companion' (1993:101) and observes '... listening to a Walkman provides companionship for many students' (1993:101).

In response to the advent of recorded music and the Walkman, both Theodore Gracyk (1997) and Crispin Sartwell (1999) call for a new understanding of what constitutes social interaction. While discussing the social aspects of the recorded music experience, Gracyk reviews other writers' criticisms which, while allowing that '... recorded music affords acquaintance with musical works ...' (1997:143), maintain this acquaintance is debased. Such objections are based on the belief '... musical performance is something more than the presentation of sequenced sound'<sup>8</sup> (1997:143). Gracyk takes a broad view in rebutting this position. observing:

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<sup>8</sup> Frank Howes (1926) also takes this view. He discusses a perceived inadequacy of recorded music related to its non-dependence on musicians or other human input. Howes writes '... aesthetic boredom always hovers close over either the desiccated or the condensed forms of music, because the human contacts are remote and precarious' (1926:37). Timothy Day (2000) elucidates Howes' position well: 'Musical performance is of its essence communication and requires human presence and the interaction of players with an audience ...' (2000:209). Howes considers recorded music inferior to live music because it lacks the element of human interaction.

... the success of recorded music means that familiar standards of integrity, developed in conjunction with the music-making technology of the last few hundred years, will be superseded by new standards. (1997:144)

Gracyk thus maintains that old assumptions, appropriate when music was only ever a live experience, are not relevant to recorded music. The impression of the presence of musicians is the basis of Company. Some might suggest the presence of musicians is related to live musical experience and Company is thus an example of exactly what Gracyk criticises. The presence of musicians is, however, vital to the experience of recorded music. Without musicians to create it in the first place recorded music would not exist and it is the impression of the presence of such recording musicians which Walkman listeners enjoy in Company.

Finally, Gracyk observes another common complaint concerning recorded music. Whereas, in the live performance situation, audience members 'experience themselves as a community, not as separated individuals' (Thom, cited in Gracyk 1997:147), some writers object to recorded music on the basis that 'Recordings reduce us to mere voyeurs' (1997:147). In response, Gracyk applies the argument reproduced above; recorded music requires a different analytical approach from that needed for live music. He observes many new types of interaction which occur between those who listen to recorded music<sup>9</sup> and concludes '... the social formation typical of live performance gives way to a different social formation when audiences favour recorded music over live performances' (1997:147). Company is another example of a new social formation associated with Walkman Music. Rather than the direct and immediate interaction between musicians and audience members which occurs in live performance, Walkman listeners have the impression of a form of interaction based around music and with musicians as they listen alone.

Sartwell's (1999) argument is similar to Gracyk's. He refers directly to the Walkman rather than to recorded music in general and heralds the emergence of a new mode of social interaction as a consequence of the Walkman's development. In the first place, Sartwell observes a general disapproval of Walkman users '... hiding in their tiny room of sound, disconnected from the people around them' (1999). He notes 'Many argued that this heralded a dark new era of isolation: It's just you and your machine' (1999), but disagrees with this common reaction, suggesting Walkmans:

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<sup>9</sup> Examples include Jamaican sound system trucks, the British rave scene and musical discussions on the internet (see Gracyk 1997:147).

... have a social aspect: Even as they separate us from other people, they are also ways we connect to one another. The Walkman is, after all, a vehicle for the mass media, whether you're listening to Dixie Chicks or sports on the radio.<sup>10</sup> (1999)

Sartwell believes this is indicative of a more general trend, manifest in such technologies as the networked laptop computer, the pager and the mobile phone. He writes 'Civic participation is not declining; rather the meaning of both "civic" and "participation" are changing' (1999). Company is clearly a new form of civic participation, facilitated by developments in the recording and reproduction of music yet beholden to musical practice set down before recording was a possibility. Before recorded music, listeners had to attend concerts or other live musical events in order to interact with performers. Since its advent, listeners have been able to enjoy this experience at their leisure. The Walkman facilitates a further leap in convenience such that listeners can assuage their loneliness and enjoy musical communication with their favourite performers in practically any situation.

Adorno's discussion in "The Curves of the Needle" (1990a) is pertinent here. He writes:

The turntable of the talking machines is comparable to the potter's wheel: a tone-mass<sup>11</sup> is formed upon them both, and for each the material is pre-existing. But the finished tone/clay container that is produced in this manner remains empty. It is only filled by the hearer. (1990a:55)

This argument relies on the metaphor of the gramophone's turntable, but it is equally applicable to other means by which recorded music is reproduced. Adorno observes recordings are unable to reproduce anything other than music's sound. Any element of the listener's experience beyond the sound of the music – Company is one example of such an

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<sup>10</sup> Chanan (1995) also notes conventional concepts of social interaction and observes they become irrelevant in the face of technological development. Chanan first refers to Benjamin (1968) to explain how '... the age-old dialogue of musical communication was radically upset' (Chanan 1995:8) as recordings became a common avenue of musical experience. He then notes:

Above all, the technique of reproduction – mechanical, electrical or electronic – creates a distance, both physical and psychic, between performer and audience that simply never existed before, which produces new ways for music to be heard and allows the listener totally new ways of using it. (1995:8)

The understanding that recording distances listeners from performers is conventional. The result of this distancing – the new ways in which Chanan suggests listeners can use recorded music – are the subjects of this study. Further, listener's impressions that the distance between themselves and performers is somehow bridged is the essence of Company. Chanan does not examine this bridging any further but Gracyk (1997) and Sartwell (1999), reviewed here, aid understanding of the concept.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Y. Levin, who translated this essay, includes a footnote at this point. It is reproduced here:

Adorno plays here upon the untranslatable polyvalence of *Ton*, which in German means both "sound" or "tone" and also "clay". A *Ton-Masse* is thus a quantity or mass both of acoustic and of argillaceous material. (1990a:55)

element – is brought to the experience by the listener.<sup>12</sup> Applied here to the examination of Company, Adorno's writing suggests any impression gained by listeners that they interact with performers can only be an impression and have no basis in immediate or direct interaction.

Kathleen Higgins (1991) contributes to examination of the nature of the interaction Walkman Music facilitates between listeners and performers. Although she does not use this study's terminology, Higgins clearly expresses the essence of Company. She writes:

Music is, by its very nature, a social activity. Even the music heard through the earphones of a Walkman sounds like it comes from an external reality. In fact it does come from outside the individual listener. A social relationship between those who produce it and the listener still occurs, albeit a highly mediated one. But in addition, I believe that most listeners experience music, even that which comes to them through earphones, as a kind of communication between themselves and other human beings. (1991:151)

Higgins suggests the sound of Walkman Music comes from an external reality. This is aligned with Adorno's concept of 'being with', in which recorded music carries connotations of live music practice. Aligned also with Sartwell's (1999) understanding that Walkmans are instruments of the mass media, 'connecting' listeners to others, Higgins suggests listeners understand that music, even recorded music such as Walkman Music, is a form of communication. This communication is sufficient to forge a social relationship, distant though it is, between performer and listener. Musical communication as the basis of listeners' perceptions of interaction with musicians is an idea Adorno also expresses, as noted. Higgins however differs fundamentally from Adorno when she suggests recorded music facilitates an actual 'social relationship' between performers and their listeners. Adorno asserts no such relationship is possible and any interaction listeners perceive between themselves and performers is a figment of their imagination.

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<sup>12</sup> Benedict Anderson's (1991) ideas of nationhood serve as another example of an imagined union. He discusses how people are joined '... across an ascribed space and brought together in time' (Berland 1998:140) to form a nation. Anderson defines the nation as '... an imagined political community ...' (1991:6) and continues:

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (1991:6, italics in original)

Anderson's description of the communion perceived between members of a nation also describes the communion which listeners perceive between themselves, performers and other fans in Company. It also supports Adorno's assertion that any interaction listeners perceive between themselves and the performers to whose recordings they listen is imaginary.

Bruno Walter (1964) also makes this point, referring directly to the experience of recorded music. He writes:

No technical medium ... can replace or match the spell of personal presence; the best it can do is to arouse in a far-off listener the wish to be there where the music is performed. (1964:375)

The difference between Higgins' and Adorno's positions is a matter of perception. On the one hand, Higgins is content, firstly, that recorded music is a means of communication and, secondly, that listening and responding to such musical communication represents a form of actual interaction. On the other hand, while he acknowledges music is a form of communication, Adorno feels solitary listeners cannot simply wish social interaction into being as they listen to recorded music. He does not set out his minimum requirements of 'real' social interaction but implies a form of dialogue is necessary, rather than the distant monologue that recorded music represents. For individual listeners also, the experience of Walkman Music is a matter of perception. If a listener perceives an interaction with the musicians concerned as they listen to their Walkman Music then, for them and for scholars studying their experience, that is sufficient. This experience is not diminished if another listener does not experience their Walkman Music in that way, even if the second listener dismisses the possibility of such interaction.

### **Individual Experience of Company**

In an interview for this study, Campbell (2001) recognises that his Walkman Music facilitates a kind of relationship between himself and the performers on the recordings. He recounted:

Because there's not a lyrical content to most of the music I listen to there's not the lingual or poetic "I understand what you're saying" kind of thing but there is a kind of connection in a sort of non-personalised way. I'm not thinking about them [the musicians concerned] as individuals or persons. They're more like other beings who are really enjoying the shape and structure of the sound. I share a common enjoyment in the structures that they present. (2001)

Here Campbell expresses an understanding of his Walkman listening experiences relating to Company. It is noteworthy Campbell listens to music without lyrical content, testimony to music's capacity as a medium of communication even in the absence of words. Campbell enjoys the '... shape and structure of the sound' (2001) and understands the performers concerned would have a similar enjoyment of these aspects of their own work. Thus, Campbell feels as if he has something in common with the performers and this is the basis of the connection he feels with them.

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In line with this argument, Walter would probably have dismissed the idea presented in this chapter that Walkman Music can convey an impression of the presence of performers to listeners and thus assuage listeners' feelings of loneliness as discussed here.

John (2001), another interviewee, listens to Walkman Music while running for exercise. Asked why, John responds:

I basically use it to keep me company. I never have the Walkman on when I run with someone else so it's basically just for company. (2001)

John clearly enjoys listening to Walkman Music while running because the music eliminates any feelings of loneliness and makes his exercise more pleasurable. This exemplifies Company as a function of Walkman Music, exploited by Walkman listeners to modify and improve lonely aspects of their daily lives.

### **Summary of Company**

Company is Walkman listeners' impression of interaction with musicians as they listen and their consequent use of Walkman Music to assuage loneliness. Ironically, Company occurs despite the nature of Walkman Music. Walkman Music is recorded and listeners experience it at a spatial and temporal distance from the performers and from its original playing. Adorno (1990a) in particular demonstrates the reality of the experience of recorded music, whereby no actual, mutual and direct interaction occurs. Nonetheless, Walkman listeners use their music as an antidote for loneliness, enjoying Walkman Music's capacity to generate at least the perception of musical interaction.

### **Function Eight: Aural Mnemonic**

In Aural Mnemonic, listeners use Walkman Music to prompt memories of past events. In the classic example of this function, a person hears certain music during a memorable moment in their life.<sup>13</sup> The music thus becomes associated with the person's memories of that moment and they are reminded of it when they subsequently re-hear the music on their Walkman. In this way, the person's thoughts, emotions and feelings are not directed toward their surroundings or their immediate situations as they listen to Walkman Music, but toward memories of their past.

### **Historical Construction of Aural Mnemonic**

Adorno (1976; 1990b) addresses issues relevant to this function in two sources. Firstly, in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (1976), he writes 'Music is nonobjective and not unequivocally identifiable with any moments of the outside world' (1976:44). This is an important qualification. Music is never directly or immediately associated with non-musical

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<sup>13</sup> This initial hearing need not involve a Walkman. Live music or recorded music in any form can be effective.

objects or phenomena and it is only in listeners' thoughts such links are drawn. A listener's understanding of an association between an event and music merely reflects the random concurrence of the music with an event in the listener's history in the first place and subsequently with the listener's memory of that event.

Secondly, in "The Form of the Phonograph Record" (1990b), Adorno realises recordings are '... the first means of musical presentation that can be possessed ...' (1990b:58). Then, specifically relevant to Aural Mnemonic, Adorno draws the comparison that '... records are possessed like photographs ...'<sup>14</sup> (1990b:58). Adorno's comparison between recorded music and photographs illustrates the link between recorded music and listeners' memories of past events. Even for people who do not feature in the image or who did not take the picture, photographs can prompt memories of the past; they are visual mnemonics. Musical sounds are sometimes contrived to resemble sounds associated with non-musical objects or events in a manner which could be compared to a photograph's iconic representation of a scene. Apart from this relatively crude association, music is never explicitly and indisputably associated with extra-musical concepts or objects in the way a photograph is an image of other things. Nevertheless, music can prompt memories in those who experience it in the manner a photograph can for people who view it and this is the basis of Aural Mnemonic.

In the same source, Adorno (1990b) subsequently uses another metaphor in discussing the association between recorded music and listeners' lives. He writes that phonograph record albums are:

... herbaria of artificial life that are present in the smallest space and ready to conjure up every recollection that would otherwise be mercilessly shredded between the haste and humdrum of private life. (1990b:58)

Once again, Adorno's reference to phonograph records is relevant to the discussion of other formats of recorded music. A herbarium is a space which houses a collection of dried plants and Adorno's metaphor is apt. He suggests, in the music captured within them, recordings preserve listeners' memories, helping them recreate the emotions and feelings associated with

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<sup>14</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock (1980) also compares sound recordings and photographs. Relating a contribution to a conference discussion from Charles Hamm, he writes:

There is a certain similarity between the invention of the phonograph and the invention of the photograph. They did not happen at the same time, of course: the photograph was invented some decades before the phonograph. But you can make the case that the two had similar impacts on the fields of art and music. Both fixed something that had been impossible to fix before: the photograph made it possible to fix a very realistic scene, and the phonograph a sound (at first not very realistically but increasingly so), in such a way that it was there whenever you wanted to refer to it. (Hitchcock 1980:2)



their lives' events. Adorno implies a degree of desperation on the listener's part, as if the busyness and mundanity of their existence threaten the imminent destruction of their memories. In this light, recorded music's mnemonic role is all the more remarkable, filling the listener's need for a personal narrative as respite from the toil and monotony of their lives.

The perfect repetition inherent to recorded music has already been observed to play a role in listeners' experiences of Walkman Music's functions.<sup>15</sup> David Hamilton (1980) also discusses such repetition, noting:

... for some listeners (and perhaps occasionally for all of us), the unchanging aspect of recordings can be pleasing and reassuring; they can act as aural security blankets, particularly if they have extra-musical associations. (1980:69)

Hamilton's observations regarding recordings' '... extra-musical associations ...' (1980:69) clearly relate to Aural Mnemonic. The basis of Aural Mnemonic is that Walkman Music prompts listeners' memories. However, Hamilton's observations suggest other motivations in listeners' use of Walkman Music – namely, listeners gain enjoyment and comfort from listening to Walkman Music which reminds them of aspects of their pasts and this comfort, in addition to the memories themselves, motivates their nostalgic listening.

### **Social Maintenance of Aural Mnemonic**

In Aural Mnemonic, listeners understand their Walkman Music to relate to themselves and to their own lives. There is no immediate social interaction involved and people other than the listener only feature in the listening experience to the extent they are involved in listeners' memories. Music's capacity to prompt memories which relate to personal interaction is examined here as it pertains to the social maintenance of Aural Mnemonic.

In what amounts to a general background of Aural Mnemonic, DeNora (2000) writes:

At the most general and most basic level, music is a medium that can be and often is simply paired or associated with aspects of past experience. It was part of the past and so becomes an emblem of a larger interactional, emotional complex. A good deal of music's affective powers come from its co-presence with other things – people, events, scenes. In some cases, music's semiotic power – here, its emblematic capacity – comes from its conditional presence; it was simply "there at the time". In such cases, music's specific meanings and its link to circumstances simply emerge from its association with the context in which it is heard. In such cases, the link, or articulation, that is made – and which is so often biographically indelible – is initially arbitrary but is rendered symbolic (and hence evocatory (sic)) from its relation to the wider retinue of the experience, to the moment in question. (2000:66)

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<sup>15</sup> See discussion related to Environmental Control in Chapter Three, especially the opinion of Cubitt (1998:100). See also discussion related to Company above in Chapter Four, especially Bull's (2000:189) thoughts.

Firstly, DeNora mentions that music's affective powers for listeners can relate to its co-presence with other people. Relevant to the social maintenance of Aural Mnemonic, this passage illustrates the caveat outlined above – that is, although no immediate social interaction takes place, music can prompt listeners' memories involving other people and the emotions associated with those relationships. To that extent, similar to the listening experience discussed above in *Company*, the experience of Aural Mnemonic can be social.

Secondly, DeNora's account is of particular interest because it delves more deeply than other sources into the bases of music's associations with other events of listeners' lives. She confirms the general understanding of Aural Mnemonic, observing music achieves this association through simple 'pairing' with other events – it was there when the event occurred. DeNora, though, makes an important point, commenting that this linking is entirely arbitrary since particular music becomes associated with particular events by pure chance, possibly resulting in obscure combinations.

Thirdly, DeNora observes that links between music and listeners' memories are often indelible. Although she provides no empirical evidence to support this observation and it is difficult to imagine a study which could confirm it, it is sobering that particular music could prompt memories for the rest of listeners' lives. Depending on the feelings listeners associate with certain memories, music's persistence could necessitate lifelong strategies of avoidance.

Finally, DeNora makes reference to '... music's specific meanings ...' (2000:66), suggesting they '... simply emerge from its [music's] association with the context in which it is heard' (2000:66). As the basis of Aural Mnemonic, it is interesting that DeNora refers to such associations as music's 'meaning'. Meyer (1956) is a notable writer who is aware listeners can perceive music's meaning in a number of ways, including '... exclusively within the context of the work itself [or] in the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work of art' (1956:1). This does not negate DeNora's claim that listeners perceive personal meaning in music's associations with extra-musical objects or events, as Meyer (see 1956:1) also acknowledges. However, it is important to recognise this is not the only means by which listeners perceive meaning in their music. Aural Mnemonic is the outcome of only one of a number of ways music can have significance for listeners.

Like DeNora, Kenney (1999) refers to recorded music's capacity to become associated with listeners' memories of people. In writing his book he had access to '... 2644 returns from an alleged 20 000 surveys Edison, Inc. claimed to have sent out' (1999:205) '... asking Americans in 43 states to list their "favourite tunes"' (1999:5). Some precursors to Aural Mnemonic can be observed in the responses Kenney documents. For example, he reports:

Many customers recalled and reaffirmed familial love and family identity by replaying recordings of music that they felt pointed to particular departed family members. Respondents preferred "old music well rendered", music that "takes us back to Grandfather days", tunes that brought "memories of home", old tunes that "take us back to the days of childhood". A striking number of Edison's customers wrote that the emotions stirred by their favourite records brought back treasured memories of their grandparents, parents, husbands, wives, and departed sisters, brothers, and children. (1999:8)

Kenney's research presents examples of vivid associations in listeners' minds between their music and their personal lives. The significance of these associations for listeners comes through in this extract, even as they are filtered through Kenney's analysis and writing. Discussion of 'treasured memories' and references to 'departed family members' indicate the potential for great intensity in the experience of recorded music. They also demonstrate music's capacities to generate new modes of social interaction, even for solitary listeners. In a manner similar to that discussed relative to Company, recorded music may evoke listeners' memories of relatives and friends as well as the emotions associated with those memories.

### **Individual Experience of Aural Mnemonic**

A review of certain facets of music psychology provides insight into the individual experience of Aural Mnemonic. Sloboda (2001) discusses relevant aspects of the field and his thoughts are reviewed prior to the examination of other literature and interviews. Sloboda writes:

Certain types of stimulus (including music, smells and tastes) seem to become associated in human memory with particular contexts or events in earlier life, and provide a trigger to the recall of these events. (2001:545)

Sloboda discusses this phenomenon as 'Extrinsic Affect'<sup>16</sup> and notes it takes place particularly when the original events were '... occasions of strong emotion' (2001:545). To Sloboda, the

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<sup>16</sup> Sloboda (2001) first discusses Affect – music's capacity to influence listeners' feelings and emotions – in general terms. He states 'It is one of the most inescapable and characteristic features of music that people report strong emotional reactions to it' (2001:544). Sloboda subsequently analyses Affect in terms of two processes. The first of these is Extrinsic Affect, as discussed above in the main body of text. The second is Intrinsic Affect, in which listeners understand music to express emotion either iconically, through some resemblance between the music and the event, or symbolically, where the listener's response is determined by an appreciation of '... formal and syntactic properties of the musical sequence' (2001:545). Intrinsic Affect is discussed in detail below as it informs the examination of Mood Management.

emotions related to past events of listeners' lives are fundamental to Extrinsic Affect. He notes specific pieces of music can trigger strong emotions which lead listeners' '... attention away from the present music on to the remembered past event'<sup>17</sup> (2001:545). Thus, in line with Sloboda's analysis, in Aural Mnemonic Walkman Music may be seen to firstly trigger listeners' emotions and, secondly, trigger listeners' memories of events during which they experienced those emotions. Sloboda's thoughts are significant here because they bring discussion of listeners' emotions to the fore. This concept has been hinted at to this point, but not explicitly addressed. As cited above, DeNora (2000) observes music's evocative powers and Kenney (1999:8) refers to recorded music's capacity to bring about emotions associated with listeners' memories of deceased relatives. From his perspective as a music psychologist, Sloboda prompts consideration of listeners' emotional responses to music in addition to the memory responses already discussed and thus augments this study's examination of Aural Mnemonic.

Bull (2000) and Gumpert (1987) both describe Walkman use which relates to the individual experience of Aural Mnemonic. Firstly, Bull suggests listeners:

... become absorbed with the flow of their memory sparked off by the sounds emanating from their personal stereo. They don't look [at their surroundings], rather they recreate the feelings and sensations of whatever their memory conjures up before them. (2000:188)

Corresponding with Sloboda's thoughts, cited above, Bull observes, in addition to listeners' memories, Walkman Music also prompts feelings and sensations associated with them. Bull also emphasises listeners' 'removal', in a manner similar to that discussed pertinent to Boundary Demarcation, from their surroundings. Secondly, Gumpert (1987) discusses the runner, listening to Walkman Music, who:

... is distracted from the pain of running or avoids the monotony of the daily route. In such situations the original sound source is separated from its new use and environment. Energy is directed inward, the visual images induced by the sound not congruent with the task at hand. The music triggers memories and fantasies, while muscle and motor coordination operate in the routine world. (1987:90)

Gumpert notes a sharp distinction between the listener's 'routine world' and the memories and fantasies Walkman Music triggers for them. In the runner's case, this distinction facilitates more enjoyable exercise. Use of Walkman Music in Aural Mnemonic is not, however,

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<sup>17</sup> In another study, Sloboda (1999) examined listeners' chosen personal uses of music. Related to Aural Mnemonic, he found 'The use of music as a cue to reminiscence is the single most frequent use reported' (1999:360).

restricted to fitness devotees but prompts reminiscence and removes listeners' attention from their surroundings in many different situations. As implied by both Bull and Gumpert, Walkman listeners might use Walkman Music intentionally to evoke pleasant memories of their pasts. This is another instance of Walkman listening in which the 'side effects' of listening, rather than Walkman Music itself, is the focus of listeners' attention. Conversely, it is also possible a Walkman user, not anticipating the potency of their particular music, could accidentally trigger memories and emotions. This leads to the possibility that Walkman listeners could unsuspectingly subject themselves to unpleasant memories and emotions, which, although undesirable, would nonetheless be an example of Aural Mnemonic.

On turning to the interviews, the first impression is the relative fewness (two of twenty-six or eight percent) of respondents whose listening corresponds to Aural Mnemonic. This is a smaller return than the 50 percent of respondents documented in Sloboda's (1999) research. This study's more specific focus on Walkman Music might explain the discrepancy: Sloboda drew no distinction in the type of listening he examined. The generally older demographic Sloboda surveyed might also be a factor since thirty of Sloboda's 45 female respondents and 28 of his 31 males were older than 40 years, a total of 58 respondents from 76 (76%). By contrast, only three (12%) of this study's twenty-six respondents were older than 40 years. It is possible, had the respondents been directly questioned about Aural Mnemonic, a greater proportion would have related relevant experiences. Nonetheless, the accounts reproduced below are excellent illustrations of the individual experience of Aural Mnemonic. Firstly, Daniel (2001) recounted:

Even now the music that I was listening to at that time [during high school] has a really big effect on me. Things like the second Powderfinger<sup>18</sup> album, although I'm a little ashamed to admit that now, and this band called Smudge,<sup>19</sup> their album *You Me Carpark ... Now*. If I hear that music now I'm transported back to that time and place.  
(2001)

When he re-hears the music he was listening to at that time, Daniel is strongly affected by emotions and memories corresponding to his time at high school. Daniel is not entirely consumed by his memories while listening. He is aware of his own response and thus recounts his embarrassment at what he now considers a lapse in his musical discernment.

Secondly, Shoji (2001) described Walkman Music to which he will no longer listen because of the memories it prompts. He recalled:

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<sup>18</sup> Powderfinger are an Australian rock band.

... I have a whole heap of CDs that I used to listen to when I was studying in Year 12 but I don't like listening to them any more. It just reminds me of that. (2001)

Like Daniel, Shoji associates particular music with his high school experiences. For Shoji this is not a particularly pleasant reminiscence and is reason enough for him to avoid listening to those recordings. Shoji's account of his listening demonstrates Aural Mnemonic does not always involve pleasant memories.

### **Summary of Aural Mnemonic**

Aural Mnemonic is another example of Walkman Music's ability to modify the everyday experiences of Walkman listeners. Listeners' thoughts and emotions do not reflect their immediate environments but are directed towards their pasts. For some listeners, Walkman Music can be an instrument of reminiscence, played whenever they want to remember a particular event and savour the emotions associated with it. Conversely, listeners might be aware their Walkman Music evokes undesired memories and feelings and consequently avoid listening to particular recordings. Walkman Music might also take listeners by surprise, transporting them unexpectedly to the emotions and feelings of another time and place. Finally, as DeNora (2000) suggests, examination of these phenomena illustrates one aspect of music's possible meanings. For many listeners, the significance of particular music relates to their memories of occasions when that music happened to be playing. As a result, music gains meaning randomly. Its significance is idiosyncratic and unique to each listener.

### **Function Nine: Mood Management**

Listeners use Walkman Music to achieve or preserve a desired mood. For example, listeners use Walkman Music to help get them started in the morning, maintain their productivity at work, overcome irritability, annoyance or even aggression and relax in order to get to sleep at night. In sources reviewed here, scholars discuss live and recorded music's capacity to influence listeners' moods as well as the ways people use music to influence the moods of others. The latter is a form of social interaction and, along with the sources which relate to Mood Management's historical construction, demonstrates the common understanding that music has the capacity to affect listeners' moods. Instances of this use of Walkman Music, along with Bull's (2000), Moebius' and Michel-Annen's (1994) and Chen's (1993) related accounts, are examined in the individual experience section.

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<sup>19</sup> Smudge are an Australian indie rock band.

## **Historical Construction of Mood Management**

Early writings by Aristotle (1992 (c330BC)) are reviewed here as well as Mattheson's (1981 (1739)) writings from two millennia later in order to establish Mood Management's historical construction. Indicative writing in the field of music psychology (see DeNora 2000; Sloboda 2001, 1999) is also surveyed, demonstrating, while the understanding music possesses the capacity to influence listeners' moods is common, the relationship between music and mood is not completely understood.

One of the earliest references to interplay between music and listeners' moods is found in Aristotle's *The Politics* (1992 (c330BC)). He writes:

Now in rhythm and in tunes there is the closest resemblance to the real natures of anger and gentleness, also of courage and self-control, and of the opposites of these, indeed of all the other kinds of character; and the fact that hearing such sounds does indeed cause changes in our souls is an indication of this. (1992 (c330BC):465)

Aristotle observes a resemblance between human character and the sounds of music. His concepts of 'character' and 'soul', which exist in states such as courage and self-control, are broader than the contemporary concept of mood, which is a state of mind or feeling. In contemporary terms, courage and self-control are thought to be personality traits rather than moods. However, Aristotle's 'character' can also exist in a state of anger. Anger is understood today as a mood, suggesting mood is an element of what Aristotle discusses as character.<sup>20</sup> Pertinent to the examination of Mood Management and in contemporary terminology, Aristotle understands music can prompt a shift in the listener's mood and suggests music's influence on mood is a result of resemblance between them.<sup>21</sup> Review of Aristotle's writings demonstrates music's influence on mood has been observed and documented by scholars for

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<sup>20</sup> *The Politics* (1992 (c330BC)) exemplifies one difficulty which arises when reviewing most sources which pertain to Mood Management. Aristotle discusses music's effects on the character and on the soul. Other writers discuss music's effects on listener's emotions and feelings. Despite these variations in terminology, each of the sources reviewed here informs this examination of music's effects on mood.

<sup>21</sup> In his review of affect, discussed below, Sloboda (2001) dismisses the nature of the relationship between music and listeners' moods which Aristotle proposes. He writes it is a feature of the relationships between music and emotion:

... that a listener can recognise or identify the emotion represented without actually feeling it. A necessary consequence of iconic recognition is a cognition such as "this is happy music". This may lead to a further cognition, "this music makes me feel happy", but there is no necessity for this further step. (Sloboda 2001:545)

While Aristotle's understanding of the nature of the interplay between music and listeners' moods is questionable in the light of modern psychological understanding, his writing is noteworthy in that it demonstrates the lengthy history of the idea. Music has long been understood to influence listeners' moods and Mood Management is a single recent instance of this broader phenomenon.

many centuries. As evidenced by interview responses cited below, this capacity of music is still exploited by listeners, using technology not dreamt of in Aristotle's time.

The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries saw a noteworthy development in the understanding of the interplay between mood and music. This, developed from the principles of rhetoric, was the concept of 'affects'. According to the European musical aesthetic prevalent during this time, the affects were '... rationalized emotional states or passions ...' (Buelow 2001:181) which the composer must move in listeners as a good speaker would move the emotions of their audience. Composers, setting texts to music, '... sought to express in their vocal music such affects as were related to the texts ...' (Buelow 2001:181) and thus unify the various elements of their work. Mattheson, one of the more significant Baroque writers on this topic, gives over substantial portions of his treatise, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* (1981 (1739)), to categorising types of affect as well as the affective connotations of various musical components. He writes that music's influence on the affects is the most important and significant of all music's qualities (see 1981 (1739):103). Other baroque writers also dedicated parts of their treatises to discussions of the affects, including Mersenne (see 1957 (1636-7)), Kircher (see 1970 (1650)), Printz (see 1969 (1696)) and Marpurg (see 1977 (1750-1790)). While the explicit, formalised correlations these writers discussed between specific musical features and listeners' moods are no longer the sole basis of musical practice, a more general connection between music and the moods remained during subsequent musical eras and persists today. This is the basis of Mood Management, a function of Walkman Music with its origins in the earliest musical philosophy, in musical practice of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries and, more recently, with its basis in common perception.

Other writers have published their views on the interplay between music and listeners' moods relatively recently. Adorno (1976) is the first of these reviewed here but writings of DeNora (2000) and Sloboda (2001; 1992; 1999) are also canvassed in order to survey more contemporary scholarship which informs Mood Management. As noted in the Introduction, Adorno sets out a typology of music listeners, classified according to the degree of their understanding of the form and structure of the musical work. One classification is the emotional listener for whom:

... the relation [to music] becomes crucial for triggering instinctual stirrings otherwise tamed or repressed by norms of civilisation. Often music becomes a source of



irrationality, whereby a man inexorably harnessed to the bustle of rationalistic self-preservation will be enabled to keep having feelings at all. (1976:8)

Here Adorno proposes music can be a refuge for listeners otherwise consumed by mundanity, providing emotional stimulation and respite in the face of the need to earn a living. Adorno's observation raises the possibility that Mood Management, as well as related use of music other than Walkman Music, is of great importance for some listeners; a matter of necessity. Beyond managing listeners' feelings and moods, in Adorno's somewhat grim vision, music supplies listeners with feelings they otherwise could not experience.

DeNora (2000) conducts a study in which she examines the ways individuals use music in their daily lives. One conclusion is that '... music is an active ingredient in the organization of self, the shifting of mood ...' (2000:61). Of particular interest is DeNora's allusion to the means by which music influences people's moods, or the ways people relate to music which enable it to act in this way. DeNora is certain music's intrinsic qualities alone cannot change a listener's mood. Rather, she believes listeners interpret music in such a way that it holds certain emotional significance for them. Music only influences listeners' moods as a result of this extrinsic emotional significance. DeNora does not investigate this phenomenon further, but music's particular qualities, which give it emotional significance for listeners and the capacity to influence their moods, are examined fruitfully by music psychologists.

Sloboda (2001; 1999), one such music psychologist, examines music's relationship with listeners' moods, offering many useful insights. As noted in the examination of Aural Mnemonic and similar to DeNora's (2000) ideas, cited above, Sloboda draws a distinction between 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' affect. In extrinsic affect (see 2001:545) music becomes associated in human memory with contexts or events in earlier life such that it triggers recall of those events when it is subsequently heard. This is called extrinsic affect because music's significance is derived from its association with non-musical, external events. Then, relevant to Mood Management, Sloboda also discusses intrinsic affect (2001:545-546) in which music itself is related to emotional responses in two ways. Firstly, in the iconic relationship, there is '... some formal resemblance between a musical structure and some event or agent carrying emotional "tone"' (2001:545). Sloboda gives the example of loud, fast music, which '... shares features with events of high energy and so suggests a high-energy emotion such as excitement' (2001:545). Secondly, the symbolic relationship, which comes about '... where the listener's response is determined by an appreciation of formal and syntactic properties of the musical

sequence' (2001:545).<sup>22</sup> By either means, or a combination of both, Sloboda suggests music can prompt emotional responses in listeners and thus influence their moods.

Of great interest, Sloboda also discusses the general features of music which enable it to elicit strong emotions to a greater extent than other art forms, observing three key characteristics. Firstly:

Music unfolds over time and so is capable of engaging the emotions of expectation and expectations realized or dashed more effectively than static forms ... (2001:544)

Secondly, '... music uses directly, and often mimics, the most emotionally important signal of the human species: the voice ...' (2001:544). Thirdly:

... music engages the auditory sense, which gives it a general arousing capacity due to the fact that we cannot escape the source of stimulation ... as well as providing a link to the most primitive and fundamental feelings and experiences of human life. Infants have an inter-uterine auditory life of some complexity well before they are able to engage the other senses to the same degree. (2001:544-545)

Sloboda's research represents recent advances in understanding the interplay between music and listeners' moods which have been gained using music-psychological techniques and thus informs our understanding of Walkman Music's action in Mood Management.<sup>23</sup> While they may or may not involve Walkman Music, Sloboda's observations indicate the commonplace nature of listeners' use of music to manage their moods, exploiting a capacity of music which has been documented, if not understood, since Aristotle's times.

### **Social Maintenance of Mood Management**

Kenney (1999) examines the results of a survey Edison Inc. carried out in 1921 to determine the musical preferences of its customers. His study demonstrates music's capacity to influence listeners' moods is not only employed by listeners to influence themselves. In addition, people sometimes play recorded music in attempts to influence the moods of others. Among the survey returns he examines, Kenney recounts:

Many female respondents revealed that they strengthened family ties in those tired irritable hours late in the afternoon when relations become brittle. One mother got her

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<sup>22</sup> Sloboda examines these properties of music in detail in "Empirical Studies of Emotional Response to Music" (1992).

<sup>23</sup> In another study, Sloboda (1999) surveys everyday uses of music listening and observes sixteen percent of listeners use music to put themselves in a good mood, eight percent to enhance their mood and six percent to match a mood which already exists. In addition, Sloboda also observes other, more specific uses, including to excite (two percent), to motivate (two percent) and to calm, sooth, relax and relieve stress (eight percent). Note the current study, unlike Sloboda's, does not consider subcategories of Mood Management but groups, for example, both music's excitement of listeners with the relaxation which music facilitates under the heading Mood Management.

children to dance to "The Home Dances". Another revealed that: "We have all moods of music. Some one looks *blue* or a little peeved [and] I go in and start "Henry Jones Your Honeymoon is Over" and at once everybody smiles and the white flag waves". (1999:10-11, italics in original)

Kenney demonstrates people have used recorded music from the early days of its availability in attempts to influence others' moods. Party hosts, would-be seducers and film makers<sup>24</sup> are a few examples of people who might use recorded music to influence other's moods and manipulate emotional responses. Such examples illustrate the common understanding that music has an effect on listeners' moods.

### **Individual Experience of Mood Management**

Bull (2000), Moebius and Michel-Annen (1994) and Chen (1993) all describe Walkman use which informs Mood Management's individual experience. Firstly, Bull writes Walkman 'Use ... helps them [listeners] to change their mood in the desired direction' (2000:189). Secondly, Chen writes 'The purpose of using a Walkman is to facilitate the individual experiencing certain mood' (1993:97). Finally, Moebius and Michel-Annen (1994) write:

... they [Walkman listeners] can select the sounds which are best suited to their mood. Thus they can either intensify the feeling they have, or change it. (1994:573)

These sources all make the same point – that is, Walkman users feel Walkman Music influences their mood and take advantage of the Walkman's convenience to manage their moods as they feel the need. This assertion is supported by interview results. For example, and with an evocative turn of phrase, Nigel (2001) stated:

Good Walkman music can make you a superhero when just walking down the mall. A nice triumphant rock song can have you feeling like a million bucks walking down the street. (2001)

Carl (2001) has an interesting perspective on his Walkman Music. Discussing the effects of listening to Walkman Music on other, concurrent, activities, he states:

It makes some things more relaxing. I find that if I start listening to a familiar tune it sort of gives me a lift inside and I want to do more things. I might be down and out and then I hear a piece that I taped a few years ago and I think "Oh yeah, that's really good". It gives you that sort of feeling that you're driving in a car and you go through a speed camera and you know you're over the speed limit and you don't get a ticket. (2001)

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<sup>24</sup> See Mervyn Cooke's (2001) survey of the means by which film music is used to amplify '... the mood of a scene ...' (2001:797) as well as for an extensive bibliography to assist further reading on the subject.

While the pleasure Carl expresses at hearing some Walkman Music might reflect his approach to driving more than his approach to music, it is nonetheless apparent his Walkman Music can change his mood. It relaxes him and gives him 'a lift'. Shoji (2001) is another Walkman listener who takes advantage of Walkman Music's capacity to influence his mood. He states:

It does change your mood a bit. If I'm annoyed I put on some thrashy music to make me feel better. (2001)

The main point to come out of Shoji's listening is the causal relationship he draws between given music on the one hand and mood outcomes on the other. This demonstrates the awareness some people have of their moods and of the effect music has on them, even to the extent they can 'self-prescribe' music to correct recognised undesirable moods.

Darryl's (2001) listening is noteworthy for the dramatic effect of his Walkman Music on negative moods. Discussing how he chooses what to listen to, Darryl reflects:

It can all depend on what sort of week I'm having at work, or things might be going on at home, I don't know. The music reflects the way I feel at times. I love my music so it can probably reflect how I'm feeling. If I've had a bad day at work I want some real heavy stuff, I think, just to get rid of my anger rather than going out and smashing something, kicking the cat. I reckon it's a really great release for me. (2001)

Walkman Music is clearly a means by which Darryl, like Shoji, modifies negative feelings. Darryl's account of his listening recalls Rösing's (see 1984:123) suggestion music can temper aggression. Whether Darryl would actually smash something without the release provided by his Walkman Music is unknown. Nonetheless, it is clear Darryl values his chosen 'heavy' Walkman Music because it helps him to vent feelings of anger and frustration without resorting to anti-social behaviour.

Campbell (2001) is also aware of Walkman Music's mood-altering properties. Asked when he listens to Walkman Music, he responded:

I use it [Walkman Music] to change my mood. I put on music specifically when I'm going for a walk to pump me up or mellow me out. (2001)

In the first place, Campbell's mood is improved as a result of listening to Walkman Music. This subsequently optimises his walking, either for exercise or reflection. This is the first example identified during interviews of a listener using Walkman Music to achieve more than

one resulting mood. Campbell's account illustrates Walkman Music's broad capacities relative to listeners' moods and thus in Mood Management.

Like Campbell, Fiona (2001) recounts that she listens to Walkman Music at work because she knows it can influence her mood in several ways. She related:

I like to keep a selection of my own CDs at work. I find that different styles of music are appropriate at different times depending on my mood, stress level and type of work. If I have had a stressful day then I generally prefer to listen to music that is easy listening and calming. This helps to alleviate tension and get the creative juices flowing. When designing I often need to block out distractions and I use music to do this. I know that certain CDs will put me in different moods. Some of my music leaves me feeling positive and enthusiastic. Other music helps me to mellow. Other music makes me want to dance on my desk and sing at the top of my lungs, which is probably not recommended in my office! (2001)

Fiona uses Walkman Music in a way which demonstrates several of Walkman Music's functions. She listens to block out distractions in the manner of Environmental Control while simultaneously choosing music to achieve various moods as they are appropriate for different working situations. This illustrates the potential for overlap between Walkman Music's various functions, with Walkman users listening to achieve several simultaneous outcomes. Also, relevant to Mood Management alone, Fiona's listening is another example of Walkman Music's capacity to influence listeners' moods in several directions and thus illustrates its utility as a means of Mood Management.

### **Summary of Mood Management**

Aristotle's (1992 (c330BC)) writings, in combination with the various Baroque sources cited in this chapter, demonstrate that music's capacity to influence listeners' moods has long been perceived. It is thought-provoking to imagine what Aristotle might have made of the Walkman and the intensity of its impact on listeners' moods. As several interviewees suggest, Walkman Music can certainly help listeners to relax. This is a mood-related quality of music which Aristotle also observed many centuries ago (1992 (c330BC):464), which suggests the philosopher might not be entirely surprised.

### **Function Ten: Time Management**

In Time Management, Walkman users feel listening to Walkman Music is a more worthwhile pursuit than other activities in which they could engage. Accordingly, users listen to Walkman Music instead of resigning themselves to doing nothing or instead of undertaking activities they consider boring or monotonous. Walkman listeners thus claim time they might otherwise

have considered wasted for a purpose they consider of value and manage their time to best effect.<sup>25</sup>

### **Historical Construction of Time Management**

Adorno (1976) is the only writer whose ideas have been found to pertain to Time Management's historical construction. Unfortunately, Adorno rejects the possibility listening to music can be a fulfilling use of time which listeners might otherwise consider wasted. His opinions are reviewed here in the interests of examining every aspect of the literature relevant to Walkman Music's functions.

In a general observation of music's role for some listeners, Adorno (1976) writes that music can be '... the decoration of empty time' (1976:47) and that it '... "beats time", copying the chronometric beat, and in doing so "kills time" ...' (1976:49).<sup>26</sup> Adorno's observation corresponds somewhat to Walkman Music's function in Time Management. However, his use of the word 'decoration' is noteworthy. Adorno feels music cannot actually hold real significance for listeners when they listen only to pass the time. He suggests music heard in this way can only distract listeners from the passing of time in which they are otherwise unoccupied. In this instance it is likely Adorno's opinion is the product of a somewhat elitist viewpoint. As noted, Adorno considers only 'expert' (1976:4) listening '... fully adequate ...' (1976:5). Expert listening involves achieving complete understanding of the form and structure of complex musical works at first hearing and is impossible for most listeners. For the great majority however, as discussed in Chosen Sounds and as Adorno notes himself (see 1976:14), music is entertainment or an agreeable occupation. The basis of Time Management is that, rather than resigning themselves to boredom or to monotony, listeners enjoy listening to Walkman Music which entertains and diverts them and this is nothing to be sneered at.

### **Social Maintenance of Time Management**

Earlier discussion of Aestheticisation's social maintenance resonates with the present discussion. It was noted that listeners engaged with their surroundings, thus demonstrating

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<sup>25</sup> Note throughout this chapter many references are made to wasted time, boredom or monotony, using these and similar expressions. References are also made in various forms to time well-spent. In each case, these judgements present the listener's perspective as they compare listening to music with other activities. Apart from presenting listeners' perspectives, no judgement is made in this study regarding the relative value or otherwise of listening to Walkman Music or other pursuits. Time Management is a simple function to understand. It relies on Walkman Music listeners' perceptions of their own listening in comparison with other things they could be doing. If they consider listening to Walkman Music to be more worthwhile and consequently listen rather than doing something else, then their listening can be described in terms of Time Management.

their place within a collective environment. The same argument applies here where each source reviewed discusses listeners' engagement in some way with aspects of their surroundings. As was the case in Aestheticisation, a listener's engagement with their surroundings is taken as evidence that they exist within a collective society which consists as much of its physical manifestations as it does of the people who live within it and construct it.

Bull (2000) describes Walkman listeners' relationships with their environments, writing:

City life is often experienced as repetitive and users are often consumed with their oppressive routine. They describe taking the same journey to work every weekday, forty-eight weeks of the year. They might also be fed up and bored with their job, their routine and their journey. They know each step of the daily journey with its predictable monotony, every station and how long it will take them to cover their daily journey. They feel oppressed by it. They have long ceased to take any notice of their surroundings. The use of the personal stereo is the only thing that makes the time pass bearably for these users. At least while they listen to it they do not have to think about their daily routine or the office that awaits them. (2000:190)

Bull discusses this strategy of Walkman use in terms of listeners' monotonous working routines with particular reference to commuting on public transport. This reflects the trend of the literature relevant to 'Time Management' in which discussion of listeners' use of music to make good use of their time is often couched in terms of travel.

Berland's (1998) writing is no exception. She narrates an account of driving at high speed along a familiar road while listening to music and observes:

It doesn't feel like space that interrupts the affinity between me and my destination, but rather time, punctuated by landmarks and musical endings, which together signal the episodic triumph of individual movement over the density of landscape, of time over space. (1998:130)

Berland mentions the landmarks which punctuate her journey. This suggests music cannot entirely remove her attention from the real physical space through which she is travelling. Nonetheless, Berland thinks of the distance she must travel mainly in terms of the time it takes. In turn, she defines her travelling time in terms of the music which she plays as she drives. Her trip is defined by the musical endings she hears before arriving at her destination. In this way Berland claims otherwise monotonous travelling time for her own pleasurable musical experience.

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<sup>26</sup> Recall the discussion, presented in Chapter Three, of listeners' personal sense of time as a means of Boundary Demarcation. That examination of musical time and its relation to chronometric time relates to Adorno's (1976) comments as they are presented here.

Chambers (1994) forwards a similar opinion in an article which specifically discusses the Walkman. Chambers refers to the modern or contemporary 'nomad' for whom the Walkman is '... a significant symbolic gadget ...' (1994:51). For these listeners, Chambers asserts:

... the older, geometrical model of the city as the organiser of space has increasingly been replaced by chronometry and the organisation of time' (1994:52).

Berland and Chambers observe, for the travelling listener whether on a long distance car trip or within a city, music defines travel in terms of time rather than distance. With musical accompaniment, travel becomes a sequence of musical episodes rather than a struggle against physical distance. Thus, time spent travelling – time some would resent and consider ill spent in comparison what they anticipate upon their arrival – can be redeemed by music. Walkman listeners are best equipped to take advantage of this phenomenon at any opportunity.

### **Individual Experience of Time Management**

Interviews revealed several examples of Walkman listening practice which inform the individual experience of Time Management. Firstly, Darryl (2001) discussed the motivation for his daily Walkman Music listening while he commutes on trains:

[When I listen to Walkman Music] I don't have to listen to people talking on the train. I can just zone out. It's just my way of escaping. It saves me communicating with anyone else. That way I can just relax totally because I don't get much chance to relax at home or at work. It's my way of just totally zoning out. (2001)

The 'Interpersonal Mediation' aspects of Darryl's listening are discussed above. Pertinent to Time Management, Walkman Music also enables Darryl to completely relax in a manner impossible for him at work or home. In enabling him to 'zone out' in this way, Darryl's Walkman Music allows him to claim his commuting time for something he would be otherwise unable to do. Note Darryl is not focussed entirely on his Walkman Music, but on the relaxation it provides in the manner of Mood Management. This suggests a previously undiscussed aspect of Time Management – that is, listeners consider music's 'side effects', relaxation in this instance and not just the music itself, to be relatively productive occupations. Darryl's listening is another illustration of possible complexities of examining Walkman Music's functions. Here Walkman Music is observed to simultaneously operate in three different functions for one listener.

Nigel's (2001) Walkman listening also takes place on public transport. He related:



I went through a phase recently when I found that I had a whole load of tapes that I'd never got around to listening to. Not really having too much in the way of tape players around the house, listening to them on the Walkman on the buses was really handy. (2001)

Walkman Music's convenience enables Nigel to claim commuting time for his own enjoyment and for activity which he considers productive. Further, as noted, Walkman Music's functions often overlap and Nigel's listening can be considered in terms of Chosen Sounds as well as of Time Management. Nigel's Walkman Music is obviously material to which he wants to listen.

Scott's (2001) listening further illustrates Walkman Music's multiple simultaneous functions. He stated:

I use it [the Walkman] to listen to music, obviously because I like music, and it helps pass the time on the bus as well. It's better than just sitting on the bus. (2001)

As is the case for most listeners, Walkman Music functions as Scott's Chosen Sounds; he stated '... I like music ...' (2001). Scott's account of his listening clearly marks it as an instance of Time Management as well – '... it helps pass the time on the bus ...' (2001).

Brugh's (2001) listening is also best described in terms of a combination of Time Management and Chosen Sounds. Discussing his experiences on public transport, he stated:

You know there's the saying, 'time flies when you're having fun.' I'm having fun because I'm listening to music, so the trip goes faster. (2001)

The 'fun' Brugh experiences while he listens illustrates that his Walkman Music entertains him and thus functions as his Chosen Sounds. Brugh exploits this enjoyment to manage the time he spends on public transport and transform an otherwise unpleasant experience. This is Time Management.

Continuing the theme in which listeners' accounts of Time Management related listening involve various forms of transport, Katerina (2001) related her own Walkman listening experience in the back seat of her parents' car:

Well my parents listen to talkback radio almost all the time. If I listen to music the time just goes by because I enjoy what I am listening to. If I didn't have my Walkman I would be listening to talkback radio, which to me is really boring, and time would seem to drag. It's a bit like the saying "Time flies when you're having fun". Well I consider it fun listening to music I like. (2001)

Interestingly, Katerina considers time spent travelling with her parents to be boring primarily because she has to listen to talkback radio. She reclaims this time for her own enjoyment by listening to Walkman Music. Katerina's interview response indicates that people can consider time wasted for a number of reasons. Walkman Music's convenience allows many people to convert such situations into opportunities for activity they consider fruitful or enjoyable. Both Brugh and Katerina used the expression 'time flies when you're having fun' to describe their Walkman listening. This phrase is a hallmark of Time Management.

Miriam (2001) also refers to public transport. Asked to compare time spent on the bus with and without Walkman Music, she replied:

It goes a lot more quickly [with Walkman Music] because I've got something to distract me and I've got something to do. So I much prefer travelling on the bus when I've got a Walkman or a Discman. It makes it a whole lot more pleasurable I guess. I feel like I've actually done something by the end of my bus trip rather than just sitting there and doing absolutely nothing. (2001)

Miriam, a music student, enjoys her bus trip when she listens to Walkman Music. Moreover, Miriam considers her Walkman listening to be a constructive activity. It gives her the opportunity to achieve something useful during her bus trip and thus take advantage of time which could otherwise be wasted.

Stephen's (2001) account of his Walkman listening on bus trips is very similar to that of Miriam. He related:

I guess it [Walkman Music] just keeps your mind occupied. It gives you something to listen to. I suppose the same sort of thing would happen if I were reading a book. It's really just to take up some time by doing something profitable. (2001)

Stephen's observation that Walkman Music enables him to do '... something profitable' (2001) clearly indicates his listening is an instance of Time Management. Stephen's Walkman Music enables him to make best use of time which might otherwise pass unprofitably with activity Stephen considers worthwhile.

### **Summary of Time Management**

In Time Management, Walkman Music functions for listeners as an occupation they consider relatively more productive than alternatives available to them. Listeners who employ this function of Walkman Music are disenchanted with tedious or unproductive aspects of their routines and choose to listen to Walkman Music rather than wasting their time. Travel,

especially on public transport, is frequently discussed in literature which relates to Time Management. Berland (1998) and Chambers (1994) propose that recorded music in general, and Walkman Music in particular, can transform travel into the conquest of time rather than space. Listeners understand that their journey is framed by musical episodes rather than by geographical landmarks and thus claim their travelling time for an enjoyable musical experience.

### **Function Eleven: Activation**

In Activation, listeners move to Walkman Music's rhythm and, aware of the stimulation they receive, sometimes take advantage of it in order to exercise or work more productively.

#### **Historical Construction and Social Maintenance of Activation**

Documented instances (see Aristotle 1992 (c330BC); DeNora 2000; Merriam 1964) of the historical application of music's capacity to influence human movement tend to relate to social situations and this is reflected in this chapter's combined examination of Activation's historical construction and social maintenance.

An early account of music's capacity to stimulate physical activity in listeners is found in Aristotle's *The Politics* (1992 (c330BC)). Discussing the modes, Aristotle asserts '... the Phrygian puts men into a frenzy of excitement' (1992 (c330BC):466). Subsequently discussing different types of rhythm, he observes '... some give rise to vulgar movements' (1992 (c330BC):466). While intriguing, Aristotle's concern with the vulgarity of some movements is unimportant to this discussion. It is noteworthy, however, that he observed the movements to occur and perceived they were stimulated by music.

Other examples of music's capacity to catalyse movement, more recent than those observed by Aristotle, are also present in the literature. Sloboda (1999), for instance, conducts a broad survey of peoples' everyday uses of music. He finds twenty-two percent of his respondents use music while running, cycling or driving. The cyclists and runners in this group are probably using Walkman Music in Activation. Other listeners within Sloboda's sample use music to accompany their housework (twenty-two percent) and whilst exercising (four percent). It is impossible to discern the form of recorded music Sloboda's respondents use although these listeners are probably using it in a manner related to Activation. Walkman Music might be used by some but presumably not by all and, by definition, those instances

where Walkman Music is not involved cannot be considered Activation. Nonetheless, Sloboda's research demonstrates music's involvement with physical activity for many listeners. DeNora (2000) also observes a number of situations in which music is employed specifically for its capacity to regulate movement. Some of her examples relate to work. They include sea shanties which are used '... for a variety of specialised tasks on board a ship – hauling sails and heaving heavy weights such as the anchor' (2000:105) and waulking songs which are sung by weavers:

... while going through the motions of hand-shrinking the cloth, a process that involves pulling and beating the cloth, moving from one end of the bolt to the other. (2000:104)

DeNora also examines music's role in aerobics exercise sessions. She finds music is critical in helping instructors to successfully motivate and warm-up members of their classes and then extract maximum physical effort from them (see DeNora 2000:89-102).<sup>27</sup> Similarly, dance, more often than not performed to musical accompaniment, is another example of the relationship between music and human movement.<sup>28</sup> These are all examples of the alignment of bodily movements with musical rhythm and thus illustrate the common perception that music influences movement. Activation, involving Walkman Music, is only one example of this general phenomenon.

### **Individual Experience of Activation**

Bull (2000) discusses a strategy of Walkman use which, as noted, aids this study's definition of Activation. He writes listeners '... describe feeling energized. The music, with its steady rhythm, helps them in this' (2000:190). Lind (1989) similarly observes 'It [Walkman Music] gets you going, or keeps you going when you need energy' (1989:59). Finally, Gumpert (1987) observes:

It is ... strange to witness a person gyrating and foot-tapping to an imperceptible beat. The suspicion of a possible mental disturbance vanishes with the sight of an earphone, and the alien walks and jogs to the beat of a different tape. (1987:91)

Gumpert discusses Walkman listeners in this passage and the gyrations he observes are instances of Activation. Walkman Music is ideal in this role. Apart from its musical qualities,

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<sup>27</sup> Music's role in aerobics classes is an example of what Mowitt (1987:190), as noted in the Introduction, discusses as the 'recontextualisation' of musical masterpieces as the soundtrack for health routines.

<sup>28</sup> Julia Sutton *et al.* (2001) explore the nature of this relationship in an excellent article which includes an extensive bibliography to aid further reading.

rhythm paramount among them, Walkman Music is easily portable. It can accompany listeners in most places and as they undertake most forms of activity or exercise.<sup>29</sup>

Interviews revealed examples of Walkman listening which corresponded to Activation. Aliese (2001), for example, recounted:

I think it's a thing that's been conditioned into me from years of aerobics or whatever. I just want to move in time with the music and if people get in my way I can't. You've got to stop but the music just keeps going and you want to try to go along with it. (2001)

The rhythm and tempo of Aliese's Walkman Music influences her walking to the extent that she is annoyed to have to stop while the music continues. Aliese attributes her particular susceptibility to the rhythm of her Walkman Music to her aerobics exercise experience, but Walkman Music influences the movements of a broader range of people than only aerobics exercisers. For example, Lorrin (2001) chooses to listen to Walkman Music while running for exercise. Discussing whether Walkman Music influences the pace and intensity of her exercise, Lorrin recalled:

It has done. When I first started running with the Walkman I was running to the beat which was a bit of problem because if there was a fast song I was getting tired quickly. (2001)

This is a clear example of Activation in which Walkman Music's rhythmic qualities directly influence the listener's physical movement. In Lorrin's case, the rhythm of her Walkman Music was overly effective and pushed her to attempt exercise beyond her capacity.

John (2001) also uses his Walkman while running. His experiences were similar to Lorrin's. He stated:

Sometimes I get conned into a good tune and I try to keep up with the beat, but that's only sometimes. Usually I'm too buggered to keep up with some of those beats. (2001)

Until tiredness becomes a factor, the rhythm of Lorrin's and John's Walkman Music influences the pace at which they exercise. Such examples demonstrate listeners' practical application of Walkman Music's functions to manage aspects of their everyday lives. Lorrin's and John's listening also relates to the functions of music proposed by Merriam (1964), one of which is 'The function of physical response' (1964:223). Merriam asserts '... the fact that

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<sup>29</sup> Aquatic activities have been the obvious exception but it seems this obstacle might have been overcome with the

music elicits physical response is clearly counted upon in its use in human society ...' (1964:224). Some Walkman listeners count on this function in their daily lives and take advantage of Walkman Music's capacities in order to achieve personal goals. In terms of outcomes, Activation is probably the most obvious demonstration of Walkman Music's functionality for individual listeners.

### **Summary of Activation**

In Activation, Walkman Music's rhythmic qualities prompt listeners to move in time. Listeners take advantage of this to manage their physical activity, especially when it involves repetitive movement, whether for the purpose of exercise or work. Walkman Music's portability and convenience makes it ideal in this role, enabling listeners to enhance virtually any form of physical activity.

## Chapter Five: Conclusions

This study has examined Walkman listeners and demonstrated ways in which they manage significant portions of their everyday lives through music. Its defining premise has been that the experience of Walkman listening is inherently musical; as Walkman listeners work or study, traverse urban environments or exercise their otherwise mundane and everyday undertakings are transformed by music. Using an analytical approach which accurately reflected Walkman users' own perceptions of their listening, the study examined a relatively new and, to this point, virtually unexamined genre of musical experience.

The relative infrequency with which listeners concentrate on their Walkman Music was initially surprising – this occurs only in Chosen Sounds and Learning. Moreover, this focussed listening is related to music enjoyment only in Chosen Sounds. Significantly, in terms of numbers of functions, the majority of listeners would seem to enjoy their Walkman Music principally because it eases their interactions with their surroundings and helps them manage aspects of their lives. This conclusion represents a consequential shift from the common understanding that people mostly listen to music because they enjoy it.

Two comments are necessary regarding methodology. Firstly, the functions of Walkman Music were examined here by extensive review of the literature in combination with interviews with Walkman listeners. This allowed deliberation regarding the extent to which the literature reflected Walkman listeners' thoughts about the functions Walkman Music fulfils for them. It is now evident that, in most cases, the literature represented listeners' experiences accurately. Secondly, once it was adjusted to recognise music's role in Walkman listeners' experiences, Bull's (2000) study provided an excellent methodological foundation. Bull's study is criticised above because he fails to recognise music's role in the strategies of Walkman use he observes. However, it should be reiterated that the Walkman is an integral part of Walkman Music. It is in the combination of music and its transmission by the Walkman that Walkman Music gains its distinctive character and the functions examined here become possible.

This study's interviews were conducted with respondents exclusively resident in Adelaide, Australia, thus prompting the question: are the results indicative of Walkman use in other locations? Review of published literature based on similar fieldwork in other locations (see

especially Bull 2000; Chen 1993; Lind 1989) suggests this study's results are similar to those which have been and potentially would be achieved in other locations. It seems that the experience of Walkman Music operates, for the most part, at the level of the individual listener, reflecting the needs and desires of single listeners much more than it reflects the broader situations within which they choose to listen. Such similarities reflect consistencies in the experience of Walkman Music, as it is perceived by individual listeners, rather than in the situations within which people listen.

The interdisciplinary approach of music psychology would seem to hold potential for further understanding music's effects on listeners. Neuro-imaging and brain wave research also appear to be powerful tools with great potential for fruitfully examining aural experience. These techniques could generate a useful understanding of music's capacities in relation to listeners' emotions and physiology. Whereas this study has served to note listener's use of music according to their intuitive knowledge of its effects on themselves as derived from past experiences and according to anecdotal knowledge, a deeper understanding of music's actions in these situations could lead to useful therapeutic applications.

During this study and especially in discussion of Interpersonal Mediation, it became apparent that Walkman listening generated vigorous responses when it modified people's interactions with listeners. It is interesting to speculate whether subsequent technological developments, most significantly the mobile telephone, have also received hostile receptions for this reason. Walkman listening initially stood out to observers because it was a form of behaviour previously considered private in which people suddenly engaged in public. Moreover, Walkman listening engages the ears (unlike using a laptop computer or personal organiser or reading), thus potentially eliminating interactions more emphatically than distractions which engage only the eyes. Mobile telephony is similar to Walkman listening in both respects. However, whereas only a relatively undecipherable and small portion of Walkman Music leaks into the public soundscape, people engage in mobile telephone conversations at much higher volumes to the extent that one complete side of the exchange is audible to bystanders. It is possible the Walkman prepared people for mobile telephony and generally tempered what otherwise could have been problematic bystander reactions.

Examining the historical construction of Walkman Music's functions prompts the question: has music long held these functions or did they only arise with the Walkman's development? Did they arise in response to social circumstances, or purely as a result of listeners' whims?



Within these concluding remarks it is appropriate to review each function with these questions in mind.

When examining Chosen Sounds it was noted that people often listen to music because they enjoy it. This is the classic individual experience of Walkman Music. In this case, Walkman Music's portability makes such musical enjoyment possible every time and in every place listeners desire it. Similarly, regarding Learning, it seems probable that would-be musicians have always listened to music to assimilate existing practice. Walkman Music's portability means they can now choose to listen and study at any time as an individually directed experience. Thus, in the case of both Learning and Chosen Sounds, the Walkman has simply served to modify and facilitate common and longstanding musical functions which have involved social interaction in the past but are now individual.

Regarding Aestheticisation's first mode, listeners at a live musical event might well perceive the music they hear as aural accompaniment to or augmentation of the visual impression made by their surroundings. This could also occur in response to forms of recorded music other than Walkman Music and the advent of the video clip has simply given listeners a convenient metaphor with which to describe the experience. Walkman Music extends this possibility, allowing listeners to accompany mundane images with music and thus transform their everyday individual experiences and social interactions. Regarding Aestheticisation's second mode, it was noted that John Cage first prompted the understanding that ambient noise, alone or together with other, planned musical sounds, could comprise aesthetically significant aural experiences. Once again, Walkman Music expands music's pre-existing potential. Listeners can now combine sounds from their everyday experience with their chosen music, creating a unique aesthetic and social experience as they do so. Thus, in Aestheticisation's first mode Walkman Music's portability facilitates an expansion of music's long-standing potential. In Aestheticisation's second mode, Walkman Music expands musical possibilities which listeners have consciously acknowledged for the last 50 years. In both, the location of individual listening is transformed through the listener's social interaction with the surroundings.

Several examples of the use of recorded music to overcome ambient noise were noted when examining Environmental Control, but no examples of live music used in this way were found. Recording allowed listeners to play music at the time and place of their choosing, as they needed to block out intrusive ambient noises. Environmental Control, involving only

Walkman Music, subsequently lent listeners the capacity to modify their soundscape wherever they travelled. It appears Environmental Control is a relatively new function of music, existing in a precursor form only since recording and modified to its final form with the development of the Walkman. Here listening is a social event which occurs as listeners interact with their environments.

In the examination of Boundary Demarcation it was noted that animals and insects used sound to demarcate their territory. While examples of related use of recorded music were observed, there was no evidence of the use of live music in a territorial role. Boundary Demarcation would appear to be a recent manifestation of this phenomenon, presignified with recording and, subsequently with the Walkman's development, enabling listeners to demarcate an imagined, yet nonetheless effective, boundary around themselves wherever they may be. It is an example of listeners' response to their social settings.

Regarding Interpersonal Mediation, it is significant that, in the initial discussion, there were no examples in which any music other than Walkman Music was observed to modify personal interactions. The earliest relevant example was that of Morita (see 1986:80) testing a prototype Walkman and annoying his wife in the process. Since Walkman Music was involved in this example, the obvious conclusion is that Interpersonal Mediation is a new function of music, made possible only with the development of the Walkman. However, on reflection a more nuanced situation seems likely. Previously, at a concert for example, personal interactions would have been more or less suspended for the duration. The concert situation represents what might be called a multilateral modification of personal interactions in which all parties concentrate on the music rather than on social interactions between them. By contrast, Walkman Music, heard by a single listener, brings about a unilateral modification. The Walkman listener, intentionally or otherwise, modifies interaction between themselves and others. Bystanders are unable to hear the music in question yet have no choice in their modified interactions with the listener. With this in mind, it seems prudent to think of Interpersonal Mediation as a modification, brought about by the development of the Walkman, of an effect on personal interactions that music has held for some time. Interpersonal Mediation is also a response by listeners' to their social environments.

In its initial examination, it was noted that Company is a case of Walkman Music re-creating, at least in listeners' minds, the experience of live music. Listeners associate the sound of their Walkman Music with the presence of the musicians who would create it in live performance

and use it as a substitute companion. In examining the relative novelty or otherwise of Company it is necessary to distinguish between music as a real or literal form of personal interaction, as occurs in live performance, and music as pseudo-interaction, as occurs in Company. Clearly, listening to music could only become a form of pseudo-interaction when music was divorced from the necessary presence of musicians. Music as an antidote to being alone only became possible, and necessary, when musicians were no longer required to create it. By definition, no audience member is alone when musicians are present and playing music for them. Paradoxically, it seems clear music has functioned in Company, or in a manner similar to it, only since it could be heard in the absence of musicians – that is, since it could be recorded and subsequently reproduced. Company then, is a relatively new function of music, forecast with the development of recording and subsequently modified with the Walkman to fulfil listeners' needs to overcome loneliness in any situation. As such, it represents a unique combination of individual and social experience that builds on historical antecedents.

By contrast, the basic concept behind Aural Mnemonic has existed ever since music held emotional associations for listeners. Walkman Music only adds the capacity for listeners to experience the memories, emotions and feelings associated with their music as they choose. Likewise, the basis of Mood Management has existed as long as listeners' moods have been influenced by music. Walkman Music, because of the convenient and mobile listening it enables, allows listeners to manage their moods as they feel the need. Aural Mnemonic and Mood Management are modifications of functions music has historically held since listeners have associated it with their memories or allowed it to influence their moods.

Time Management is also a recent modification of a longstanding musical function. Among other motivations, people's choice to listen to music often manifests their belief that listening is a more worthwhile pursuit than other options. Walkman Music's convenience simply enables people to choose listening on any occasion it represents a better occupation than others. Similarly, in the initial discussion of Activation, it was noted music has long influenced listeners' movements. Aristotle (1992 (c330BC)) observed this many millennia ago. The Walkman, however, gives listeners the capacity to listen to music of their choice as they engage in the activity of their choice. Individual listeners have before been conveniently able to accompany mobile activity such as running or cycling with music. It must be concluded that Activation is a recent modification by individual listeners of a basic property of music.

The experience of Walkman Music initially appears to be a solitary one. However, scholars as well as the testimonies of several interviewees called into question the true nature of the solipsism Walkman listeners achieve, suggesting Walkman listening is deceptive in its solipsistic appearance. In summary, three indicative scenarios, described here in order from most disconnected to most connected, illustrate listeners' possible involvement with their surroundings. Firstly, a Walkman user who listens to Walkman Music for the sake of the music and gets caught up in the experience might well be as disengaged from their surroundings as appearances suggest. Secondly, listeners' perceptions of their environments might change as they listen so, in the manner of Aestheticisation, listeners enjoy a modified appreciation of their surroundings. Finally, Walkman listening might represent the listener's link with certain aspects of their environments even as they attempt, or appear, to cut off contact with them. Paradoxically, listeners' reactive attempts to withdraw from their surroundings might confirm their presence within them. Similar to the manner in which Walkman listeners' experiences can combine aspects of several functions, their experiences can also combine elements of the three scenarios described here. This sketch of the possible range of Walkman listeners' engagements with their surroundings represents a more nuanced picture of blended individual and social experience than was previously available in relevant discourse.

Walkman Music represents music's democratisation to the level of the individual listener. Prior to recording some musics, notably Western classical music, were not necessarily available to everyone who might have wanted to hear them. Recording was one step in making more music available to more people. The Walkman extended this democratisation still further, making all music equally subject to listeners' choices regarding how it should be used. Walkman Music is the epitome to date of music's capacity to satisfy listeners' needs.

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