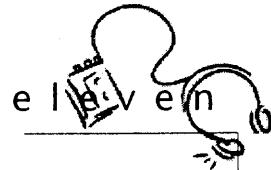


The public realm is perceived to be both magnetic and repulsive at the same time. Those sentiments encouraging silence and privacy in the city suggest an explanation as to the ease with which new forms of technology, such as personal stereos, have been developed and taken up with such enthusiasm and success in urban culture. Though Sennett does not develop this theme it seems likely that new developments in the privatization of experience together with a furthering of asymmetrical social encounters are enshrined in these new technological artifacts as indeed are notions of withdrawal. However, Sennett overlooks important alternative elements in the constitution of withdrawal that might aid an adequate explanation of personal-stereo use. This lies in a reformulation of the constitution of relational experience mediated through technology. Personal-stereo users move in public isolation but are not alone in their mediated flights of the imagination. Users are never 'alone' as theirs is a more intimate yet more 'isolated' form of company.

In this chapter I have analysed the potential contribution that visually based epistemologies of urban experience might have in relation to personal-stereo use. They all, however, fail to address the specificity of the auditory nature of experience. Neither do they sufficiently address the increasingly technologically mediated nature of everyday experience, a concern addressed in the following chapter.



Technology and the Management of Everyday Life

from M. Bull, Sounding Out The City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life, 2000.

Since phenomenologically, everydayness is constituted as a living, extended or durational present, in principle incomplete, it cannot be structured by repetition alone. Rather, it is the place where the riddle of recurrence, intercepts the theory of becoming.

P. Osborne, *The Politics of Time*

In a sense all experience for Benjamin is technological, since the term technology designates the artificial organisation of perception; as such, experience changes with the development of technology... he proposed a notion of technology as a medium of organisation which patterned experience while being reciprocally subject to change in the face of experience.

H. Caygill, *Walter Benjamin*

The everyday experience of personal-stereo users is imbued with a range of strategies aimed at managing increasing portions of their daily life. I have described these strategies as being habitually asymmetrical whether it be in strategies of looking, interpersonal engagement or attending to the urban spaces passed through. Personal-stereo users also demonstrate an acute awareness of the fragility and potential oppressiveness of the everyday and manage this perceived contingency through the use of their personal stereo. This technologized form of management has not arisen in a social and cultural vacuum. Rather, personal-stereo use can be located within an historical and cultural trajectory in which traditional forms of face-to-face communication

increasingly compete with technologically simulated forms of experience that are perceived of as being more attractive, predictable and secure to users. The phenomenology of personal-stereo use has illustrated the complex manner in which users routinely enact patterns of asymmetrical interpersonal contact within the everyday. Users have been described as being continually accompanied by the mediated sounds of their personal stereos whereby they manage their relations in public through their own personalized and manufactured auditory.

The generation of experience through technology and the cultural predispositions or cultural imperatives that lie behind it poses a question concerning the relation between technological experience and unmediated forms of direct experience within urban spaces. This constitutes the moral spacing of urban culture which has been a common concern of writers from a wide variety of theoretical perspectives from Simmel to Honneth. However, few have located explanations concerning this moral spacing of behaviour in the interface between technology, cultural values and experience as I do in the present study.

In order to fully understand this process it is necessary to situate personal-stereo use critically within the use of other forms of communication technologies. Previous work in this field has often discounted the relational consequences attached to the use of such technologies. In the following pages I focus upon the use and role of communication technologies in the generation of habitual forms of managing everyday life, in order to situate personal-stereo use within the framework of other communication technologies.

Personal Stereos, Communication Technologies and Everyday Life: A Critical Evaluation

Technologically mediated and constructed behaviour is, as the analysis of personal-stereo use indicates, heightened behaviour. Critical Theorists were aware of this phenomenon as early as the 1930s. Benjamin described the camera as acting as a form of 'optical unconscious' whilst Adorno was acutely aware of the reconstitution of presence engendered through music reception together with the manipulative and suggestive role that music played within film (Adorno and Eisler 1994). Technology thus became important in terms of its role in reconfiguring the site and constitution of experience.

The prioritizing of individual experience and desire through forms of communication technology is embedded in a variety of daily social practices. Within the home it is signified by the positioning of televisions

in bedrooms, along with video and hi-fi equipment (Silverstone and Hirsch 1992). In public, it is represented by personal stereos, car radios and increasingly, through the use of mobile phones. Many personal-stereo users describe patterns of childhood use in the home or in the family car, listening whilst parents were otherwise engaged. Personal-stereo use enabled users to reinscribe their own desires within those situations holding no interest to them. The analysis of personal-stereo use outlined in earlier chapters appears to indicate that the social network within which people move on an everyday basis has undergone a recent transformation. Users appear to be increasingly retreating from direct interactive forms of behaviour and increasingly identifying with a manufactured sense of 'we-ness' embodied in representational space construed as 'music space'. As such personal-stereo use exemplifies an implicit set of attitudes to the social which are instrumentalist and asymmetrical.¹ Personal-stereo use represents a way of 'being in the world' in which technology constitutes an accompaniment to and mediator of the mundane everyday construction of social experience. In order to explain the role of technological artifacts within both the structural realm of culture and the experiential realm of the everyday it is necessary to give due weight to the placing of technology within the everyday. This in no way implies attributing to it a deterministic or monocausal function. For example, it is possible to discuss the structural functions of television without necessarily falling into an image of passive consumers. More interestingly, television use has been historically tied to both the process and furtherance of individualism, privatization and the changing constitution of family life in the West as well as with the transformation of lived family space.² Communication processes are thus both mediated and constituted by transformations in the home as well as in public spaces.

The relationship between communication practices and forms of technology have been investigated and speculated upon since the early Payne Fund Studies. However, research has recently tended to concentrate on the domestic placing and context of pieces of communication technology examining their relationship to patterns of domestic use, often stressing the gender or intra-familial aspects of use. One of the main purposes of this type of research has been to rehabilitate the consumer as an autonomous choice maker. The consumer thus becomes sovereign and the research describes the myriad number of ways that consumers exercise their choice in relation to themselves, other family members and friends. The problems involved in this type of research are multiple. The work of Lull, which in many respects is an excellent

piece of ethnography, is typical of this type of approach to technology and communication:

Mass media can be viewed as important and uniquely employed social resources in interpersonal communications systems. They are handy expedients which can be exploited by individuals, coalitions, and family units to serve their personal needs, create practical relationships, and engage the social world. Television and other mass media, rarely mentioned as vital forces in the construction or maintenance of interpersonal relations, can now be seen to play central roles in the methods which families and other social units employ to interact normatively. The interpersonal use one makes of the mass media constitute the construction of a particular subset of actions which find practical applications in the home environment. (Lull 1990, p. 29–30)

Whilst Lull's work on domestic television use gives a useful insight into the context of structural and regulative use within interpersonal domestic settings, his analysis remains largely descriptive and suffers both from the hypostasizing of the category of experience as well as that of technology. It is also typical in its separation of the domestic sphere of the everyday from the social structures within which these practices are situated. This lack of theoretical reflection on the qualitative constitution of social experience results in a neglect of the political, social and historical context within which these practices are situated. The consequences of treating technology and the interpersonal in this way is that there is a tendency to treat all behaviour as functionally given thereby leaving the wider constitution and contexts of choices unexamined. This positivistic circumscribing of social practices produce an implicit assumption that description is explanation. The ideological meaning of behaviour mediated and constructed within a changing technological environment is taken for granted or assumed, whereas I argue that it is precisely this which is of theoretical significance.

Other work has gone some way to addressing some of these limitations. For example, it has been argued that forms of communication technology and the competition over their use represents general cultural values relating to individualism, gender or class. This has led researchers to investigate how communication technologies in the home either reinforce or subvert gender patterns of authority in the home (Silverstone and Hirsch 1992). Another way of productively looking at the relationship between culture, content and the use of a given technology is given by Provenzo, writing in relation to computer games, where he argues that:

Video games such as Nintendo, through a process of incorporation, have the potential to amplify certain values (for example, women as victims; women as individuals who are acted upon rather than initiating action; women as dependent rather than independent). In doing so, the games reflect a larger cultural hegemony that functions on multiple levels. (Provenzo 1991, p. 46)

The cultural predisposition of game content, he argues, tends to exclude girls from the outset. Provenzo does not limit his analysis to merely maintaining that, if the games somehow transcended the gender stereotypes within culture, they could be played equally amongst both sexes. The general ideological predisposition of the playing of the games in terms of the generation and reflection of cultural and social preferences reflected in use becomes a central concern of this type of analysis. Equally Selnow in his analysis of children's use of video games argues that they have certain ramifications concerning their relation to interpersonal behaviour:

Video games rate higher than human companionship – the games were viewed as more exiting and more fun than human companions . . . [through the game medium] they are transported from life's problems by their playing, they experience a sense of personal involvement in the action when they work the controls, and they view video games as not only a source of companionship, but possibly a substitute for it. Heavy users of video games may be 'satisfying' their companionship need with video games rather than with less available [less fun, less exiting] human companions. (Selnow 1984, p. 63–4)

This prioritization of experience is learnt through the activity of playing the games and becomes part of the child's taken-for-granted everyday behaviour. The work of Sherry Turkle also follows this line of investigation in her discussion of communicating through MUDs on the internet:

Virtual communities ranging from MUDs to computer bulletin boards allow people to generate experiences, relationships, identities, and living spaces that only arise through interaction with technology . . . We have learnt to take things at interface value. We are moving toward a culture of simulation in which people are increasingly comfortable with substituting representations of reality for the real. (Turkle 1995, p. 21–3)

At present I only wish to take up Turkle's theme of the transformation of interpersonal experience rather than the transformation of space, or the imaginary spaces which provide the material of communicatory practices. Turkle points to the historical derivation and normalization of modes of communication. She notes a comment made to her by one respondent:

Who was upset by what she described as the flight of her friends to the internet, 'Now they just want to talk online. It used to be that things weren't so artificial. We used to phone each other every afternoon.' To this young woman, phone calls represented the natural, intimate and immediate. We build our ideas about what is real and what is natural with the cultural means available. (Turkle 1995, p. 237)

Turkle claims that for MUD users the 'real' is necessarily perceived to be not as interesting or as stimulating as the virtual. Whilst this point is hardly novel and exists in several variants within postmodern thought, her concern with the interactive potential of technology reflects key concerns within the present chapter's analysis of contextualizing personal-stereo use. She situates use dialectically by pointing to the consequences of the privatizing tendencies of technology together with the communicative transformation and potential of the same technology. One part of this dialectic in the context of MUDs is the retreat of some users into 'virtual' communities:

Women and men tell me that the rooms and mazes on MUDs are safer than city streets, virtual sex is safer than sex anywhere, MUD friendships are more intense than real ones, and when things don't work out you can always leave. (Turkle 1995, p. 244)

To understand the use of MUDs it becomes necessary not merely to discuss the structural propensities attached to their use but also to locate their use within the cultural values within which use is situated; the generation of those cultural values and the everyday lifeworld of people patterned and structured by the urban environment within which these practices occur. Personal-stereo use also takes its place within a cultural environment saturated with communication technologies and their products (Baudrillard 1993; Jameson 1991; Poster 1995). The above analysis permits us to connect the use of personal stereos to other forms of domestic communication technologies. Through an imaginative reading of previous literature it is possible to connect habitual forms

of use to both existing cultural values and technological design.

Personal stereos, however, radically extend users' abilities to control or manage experience so that many previously immune or excluded realms of the everyday are now included within technological mediation. The present analysis permits us to move out of the domestic environment of the user into the public realm of the street in order to investigate how users' habitual dispositions towards their experience extends into realms of the 'impersonal' made habitable through the use of personal stereos.

Managing Contingency

Throughout this study it has been apparent that personal-stereo use is not explained merely by recourse to the physical presence of urban spaces but is more appropriately understood through solipsistic pre-occupations with a fragile narcissism fed through, amongst other things, forms of 'we-ness'. Users, through their efforts to negate the perceived contingency of the everyday that lies in wait for them, create habitual forms of cognitive management based on personal-stereo use that blurs any distinctions that might be made between inner and outer, the public and private areas of everyday life.

The object of regulation for users varies as does its significance among different users. Personal-stereo use produces a successful technological intervention in the implementation of any desired cognitive state for users. Users invariably are not able to successfully emulate this type of management without the use of their personal stereos. Moreover, it appears that users come, through habitual use, to develop an orientation to the regulation of their cognition in public and in private that is largely dependent upon technology. It is instructive to see these patterns of dependency or orientation to the everyday management of experience as being conditioned through the habitual use of other forms of information technology from an early age. Users have learnt to trust other pieces of communication technology in the organization and management of their daily experience although not all are as successful as the use of a personal stereo. Users appear to become dependent on the use of personal stereos in order to obtain a certain 'fix', just as a person might become habitually orientated to any number of other artifacts, activities or substances (Provenzo 1991; Turkle 1995).

The mobility of personal stereos enable users to maintain contact with their favourite types of music around which aspects of their own social identity, orientations and interests are formed and constituted.

Other users may pick up a personal stereo later in life in order to ameliorate feelings of boredom whilst commuting or use them in specific sporting activities such as jogging, swimming or skiing. In these situations the user's desire and ability to prioritize their own desires in public is set in place. The use of personal stereos creates a sense of security and comfort in public which is a central component of its use together with its function as a time filler, mood enhancer and motivator.

Many users choose specific music to play on their machines in order to achieve their desired effect. They may have 'personal stereo tapes' containing a personal or narrative attachment, or their tape may include music that has a proven track record of enabling them to face the world more successfully. It is precisely users' chosen connection to the products of the culture industry through both the artifact of the personal stereo and its 'sound' that enables them to prioritize and implement one set of desires and orientations over others. In doing so users attempt to impose order onto both the perceived potential chaos that might exist both in the ordering of their senses and onto the contingency of the everyday that continually confronts them publicly. As such the use of personal stereos reduce both interior and external 'risk'. Silverstone has pointed to a variety of this type of orientation with reference to television use:

Everyday life, it is argued cannot be sustained without order – an order manifested in our various traditions, rituals, routines and taken for granted activities – in which we, paradoxically, invest so much energy, effort and so many cognitive and emotional resources. In the ordering of daily life we avoid panic, we construct and maintain our identities, we manage our social relationships in time and space, sharing meanings . . . but avoiding for the most part the blank and numbing horror of the threat of chaos. (Silverstone 1994, p. 16)

The rituals surrounding and constituting everyday life through communication technologies give users the expectation and impression of having and subsequently needing much greater management potential over their everyday experience in all of its forms than had previously been imagined. The changing constitution and ordering of time, space and social relationships within domestic environments through communication technologies can be seen to prefigure the development and use of the personal stereos in reconfiguring these relationships in potentially every social or public environment. Personal-stereo use highlights the strategies of extending order into

realms of existence otherwise largely immune from technological intervention and construction. There are, however, structural problems attached to these types of strategy. Cohen and Taylor, like Critical Theorists before them, point out the structural and empirical problems of using the 'inner life' as a 'sanctuary' from the object world within which thought and action are situated:

The problem for those who would rely upon the inner life as a sanctuary from the routines and repetitions of life, as a private site where personal identity might be assiduously cultivated, arises not only from ways in which society regulates and shapes the nature of that inner life, but also from the difficulties in effecting continuity between our imaginings. We experience the external world as bound together by time and space, it spreads before us in an ordered and predictable manner. But often the purely inner life is far more random and inchoate. Sometimes we literally cannot get our fantasies going. We lie back and wait but they will not unroll, our inner eye refuses to travel, remaining myopically fixed upon a single obstinate image. We respond by feeding it with further stimuli, we gaze at pictures, read books, assemble relevant properties. We try to facilitate the appearance and development of our fantasy by constructing a compatible external world. . . By resorting to such activities, we reveal the unsuitability of fantasy as a means for genuinely transforming our lives. (Cohen and Taylor 1976, p. 102)

 This account of everyday life was originally written in the mid-1970s and pre-dates personal-stereo use. It is useful in demonstrating the historical variability attached to any such 'escape attempts'. My analysis of personal stereo use demonstrates that the relationship between volition and success in mood management is indeed historically situated and technologically mediated. Contemporary personal-stereo users, do not experience barriers to the successful negotiation and orientation of their experience in the manner described above by Cohen and Taylor.

To the extent that use facilitates a withdrawal from the external world it can also be argued that the desire for centredness through the management of experience is an attempt to maintain a sense of coherence over time. The construction or maintenance of a sense of narrative is inscribed into many user practices. Understood in this manner, use can be interpreted as a strategy aimed at achieving a greater sense of integrated experience (*Erfahrung*) within the perceived daily world of fragmentary experience (*Erlebnis*). Personal-stereo use represents

the dual aim of management of the subjective as well as management of the environment within which experience takes place. Users do indeed, following Sennett, tend to make ghettos of their own experience in public. This use of personal stereos can be interpreted as a response to the threatened internal chaos of users and their attempt to stabilize and maintain their orientation to everyday experience. In so doing, personal stereos become starter motors or fantasy triggers through which users construct forms of experiential certainty in which both space and time becomes predictable. The external world, if reflected on at all, becomes a reflection of the subjective intention of the user. The use of personal stereos demonstrates that embedded in the everyday lifeworld of users is a dialectical tension: the desire to maintain forms of experiential control is expressed precisely through forms of dependency on technologically mediated forms of company. How then should we perceive this mobile technologized site of habitation? It is precisely the constitution of this site that is unreflectively ignored in much literature on the use of communication technologies (Fiske 1989).

Living Inside a Personal Stereo

The ethnographic material presented in the earlier parts of this book demonstrates that personal-stereo users construct conceptual habitats for themselves through which they manage their daily experience. These habitats are mobile and technologically constructed and transforms the user's relationship to representational space. Indeed the two can no longer be easily separated as the site of experience becomes synonymous with representational space through use. I have been arguing throughout this book for the need to evaluate the meanings of those terms that often become mere coat hangers upon which writers drape examples. One such term in need of critical reflection is the 'site' of experience. How then should the site of experience be articulated so as to cast explanatory light upon personal-stereo use?

The present analysis indicates that users display a heightened sensitivity towards being centred and in control of the everyday, both cognitively and spatially. These strategies appear to mask an anxiety concerning the fragility of these states, both in relation to their own cognition and the contingency of the social world through which they move. In the following pages I wish to investigate the meanings attached to notions of 'centredness' in order to fully understand its applicability to the strategies engaged upon by personal-stereo users. I begin with the work of Richard Sennett (1990) who has provided an

articulate and historically informed account of strategies of centredness in Western culture. Interestingly he locates 'centredness' as existing in the geography of urban spaces in which sanctuaries were created, initially in the form of churches and later in the bourgeois home itself. These rather material and spatial manifestations of sanctuaries represent a physical zone of 'immunity' between the person either as a member of a congregation or as a member of a family and the world or space beyond. Sennett describes this zone of separation as in a sense being blessed with qualities not attributable to the world beyond. These spaces provide a clarity not available in the world beyond. In inhabiting them urban subjects are perceived of as withdrawing from a world of confusion and instability that lacks adequate definition. Sennett interprets the attempt to create order, stability and control within an 'inner' realm in terms of a progressive 'privatization of experience' embodied in Western culture. By developing this train of thought the use of personal stereos might constitute the last, albeit problematic, refuge of a retreating public subjectivity. Personal-stereo use substitutes or supplements the home, and more recently the car, as a creator of private space, conceptualized phenomenologically, as a 'sanctuary'. There is a technological sanctuary conceptually created or constituted through auditory listening which erects a barrier between the subject and the exterior world.

It is precisely the nature of this technologically constituted site of experience which needs articulation. Sennett leaves the actual 'site' of the 'experiencing subject' as unproblematised and instead concentrates on the interpersonal ramifications of this retreat into inwardness in terms of its consequences on multicultural urban living. He is aware, not so much of technology as constituting the 'quality of touch' (Silverstone) but with attributing the values of individualism to a retreat from the 'touch'. This is because he is primarily concerned with behaviour in 'public' as signifying experientially a cultural set of values encompassed by 'individualism'.

Whilst I am in agreement with Sennett's analysis of a progressive withdrawal from the public, I wish rather to focus precisely upon the nature of a technologized form of the site of experience. The history of technological habitation has hardly been written. Television viewers, for example, have been characterized as increasingly retreating into forms of interior space, yet the constitution of this 'interior space' is invariably left open (Moores 1993). In this context, personal-stereo use might be understood as representing a desire for some kind of 'ontological security' (Giddens 1991). However such existentialist notions

are often neglectful of the historical contextualization of both the subject and the technological artifact. With this potential criticism in mind I now discuss the work of Gaston Bachelard (1988). He provides an original phenomenological description of the site of experience that can be creatively adapted to shed light on the meanings attached to personal-stereo users' attempts to construct safe urban habitats of experience. Bachelard analyses metaphors of 'enclosure' found in poetry and in doing so points to the phenomenological status and significance of the site of experience intentionally conceived in terms of metaphors of 'home'. His analysis perceptively points to a dialectics of home understood in terms of the polarities of safety and danger. Whilst he fails to provide any historical contextualization of these experiences his analysis can provide a useful contextualization for personal-stereo users' descriptions of the 'site' of experience. His description of 'home' resonates closely with contemporary descriptions of personal stereo experiences as they describe their technologically mediated universe. Personal-stereo users are certainly no poets, but the metaphor of 'home' resonates clearly as a form of phenomenological intentionality in their account of living inside their personal stereos. Bachelard claims that a phenomenology:

Should therefore have to say how we inhabit our vital space, in accord with all dialectics of life, how we take root, day after day, in a 'corner of the world' . . . All really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home. The imagination functions in this direction whenever the human being has found the slightest shelter: we shall see the imagination build 'walls' of impalpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of protection . . . A house constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability. We are constantly re-imagining its reality . . . A house is imagined as a concentrated being. It appeals to our consciousness of centrality. (Bachelard 1988, p. 4-5)

Bachelard, whilst providing an interesting explanation of the relationship of the site (inner experience) to the context of experience (outer experience), tends to create a dichotomy between the two whilst also ignoring the interpersonal nature of habitation so important to the present analysis. Lefebvre is correct in his observation of Bachelard's work when he says that:

The relationship between Home and Ego, meanwhile borders on identity. The shell, a secret and directly experienced space, for Bachelard epitomises the virtues of human space. (Lefebvre 1991b, p. 121)

However, what I take from Bachelard is his descriptive richness of the phenomenological construction of the site of experience which can be appropriated and used to cast light on the technological constitution of 'home' For Bachelard 'a poem possesses us entirely' and through it we are able to 'experience resonances, sentimental repercussions, reminders of our own past'. The experience of using personal stereos similarly engulfingly absorbs the user directing them into the imaginary reconstruction of their own past. Yet instead of recreating this sense of 'home' in the meditative or imaginary realm constructed out of the 'text', as described by Bachelard, the personal-stereo user does this both in the privacy of listening in the home, a conceptual home within a bricks-and-mortar home, or continually recreates it within the public realm.

Bachelard's construction is a phenomenology of a utopian intentionality, a grand metaphor of escape. In this imaginary escape the subject is free:

But phenomenology of the imagination . . . demands that images be lived directly, that they be taken as sudden events in life. When the image is new, the world is new. And in reading applied to life, all passivity disappears if we try to become aware of the creative acts of the poet expressing the world, a world that becomes accessible to our daydreaming. (Bachelard 1988, p. 47)

In this act of freedom through the imaginary, space is reconstituted, it 'flees the object nearby and right away it is far off, elsewhere, in the space of elsewhere' (Bachelard 1988, p. 184). Bachelard provides us with a description of the reinscription of space through the imaginary creation of the site of experience as that of a self enclosed 'shell' that freely takes the subject into a freer realm of 'inhabited space'. Bachelard's description of this bears a great resemblance to the dreaming that Rousseau recounts on his solitary walks rather than to today's technologically mediated imaginary space of the personal-stereo user. Bachelard's dreamers dream in silence whereas it is precisely this silence that personal-stereo users fear. They tend to feel isolated with no sound. Their home has to have sound, not the sound of the street, the chaos of urban sounds but their own controlled, predictable technological sounds. Their own technologically mediated sound constitutes their 'inhabited space' which correspondingly transcends the sounds of 'geographical space'. Ernst Bloch's early description of the intimate and utopian space of 'habitation' is in tune with Bachelard's:

Here too the fun of being invisible ourselves. We seek a corner, it protects and conceals. It feels good in a narrow space, but we know we can do what we want there. A woman relates, 'I wish I could be under the cupboard, I want to live there' . . . The hidden boy is also breaking out. He is searching for what is far away, even though he shuts himself in, it is just that in breaking free he has girded himself round and round with walls. All the better if the hiding place is mobile. (Bloch 1986, p. 22-3)

The place where one can be oneself is articulated here in terms of physical separation. Of escaping to be oneself. Adorno, in contrast to this, whilst agreeing with the subjective sentiment concentrates on the historical process of the 'colonization' of the 'site' of experience by the social network in which:

We might conceive a series leading from the man who cannot work without the blare of the radio to the one that kills time and paralyses loneliness by filling his ears with the illusion of 'being with' no matter what. (Adorno 1991, p. 16)

Adorno points to the problematic nature of constructing a 'site' of experience within representational space together with the problematic nature of the phenomenological construction of subjective intentionality. In Adorno's analysis the subject dresses up his site which is actually an 'illusory realm' filled out by society. The impulse to create this 'illusory realm', however, is where I interpret Adorno's analysis as being in agreement with both Bloch's and Bachelard's. It is precisely the status of this utopian 'imaginary' realm that needs articulating.

Adorno points to the very specific spatial redistribution of experience through technology which manufactures states of 'we-ness' in contemporary culture. In analysing personal-stereo users' habitation of space and place I have thrown light upon the dialectical nature of this process. Personal-stereo users construct their urban experience through a privately experienced auditized soundworld. Through the construction of auratic states of 'we-ness' which signifies an intimate and consuming form of mediated 'company', personal-stereo use is understood through a negative dialectic whereby users withdraw into public forms of solitude. As such, users are both isolated and accompanied. Their accompaniment is constituted by the mediated messages of the products of the 'culture industry'. The above analysis points to these states of 'being with' as being appropriately understood as part of an historical

and cultural trajectory highlighted in the early work of Critical Theorists. Intrinsic to users' management of the spaces of habitation is their management of time, the precondition for all experience.

Managing Time

In Chapter Five I demonstrated how personal-stereo users managed their day with great precision, and in doing so the present analysis casts doubt on the usefulness of discretely partitioning everyday life into the categories of free and unfree, leisure or work. Rather, personal-stereo use indicates that these categories themselves need to be understood both dialectically and historically. However, in much sociological literature time is regularly represented dichotomously as either 'leisure' or 'free' time and then contrasted and compared to 'work' time. Equally, as noted previously in this chapter, it is common to decontextualize everyday behaviour from the wider structural constraints within which it is placed, which results in an unreflective engagement with those categories.³ The analysis of personal-stereo use indicated that it is more accurate to understand use as an attempt to create 'free time' together with 'free areas' of experience. However, historically notions of 'free time' have invariably meant time away from work, with 'identity' work being situated within the realm of the 'unfree', in the realm of productive activity (Marx 1964). More recently the significance of the role of work has become progressively displaced with identity work becoming located in the private realms of consumption and leisure.⁴ In contrast to both of the above positions personal-stereo use appears to blur any reified distinction that might be made concerning the division of people's 'lifeworld' into dichotomous realms of 'work' and 'leisure'. Personal-stereo users rather attempt to reclaim the significance of their experience of time precisely in those lifeworld areas that have previously been perceived to be of little significance in the literature on time, identity and experience.

Personal-stereo use demonstrates the extension of scriptwriting into areas of everyday life previously considered to be insignificant. The ritualized journey and the pressing demands of the everyday come with a recognition that the cyclical and linear components of the day constitute either a threat or an unacceptable incursion to their everyday life. Users' experiences are rather understood in terms of their desire to operationalize a 'compensatory metaphysics' in which time is transformed and experience heightened through its technologically mediated management.

Both reproduced sound and the artifact itself are themselves products of the culture industry and this makes the relationship between technology and the construction and role of 'free areas' of personal stereo experience problematic. Whilst Cohen and Taylor point to the dialectic construction of everyday experience they nevertheless fall back on dichotomous distinctions of daily experience:

Now for many parts of our daily life, the situation may appear unscripted. Our journey to work, for example, does not involve any necessity to name actors or plot behaviour. However, as soon as we come into contact with others in those spheres of life which we consider as 'projects', 'key areas', 'life plans' – areas of home, work, leisure, politics – then we are more likely to enter into miniature dramas where defining, naming, plotting, are at a premium. (Cohen and Taylor 1976, p. 71)

In contrast to this, personal-stereo users rewrite scripts continually within areas of the everyday that were previously assumed to be 'unscripted'. Scripts become imposed upon those mundane and routine periods of empty time. Alternatively, scripts are extended into linear time in order to delay involvement in the 'bad' script of unpleasurable but inevitable reality. Users need to re-appropriate time and script in as many activities as possible. Yet an analysis of the everyday constructed around the reification of private (meaningful) and public (meaningless, unscripted) misunderstands significant features of the constitution of those very practices. For example Cohen and Taylor argue that:

We can happily become lost in the anonymous ritualised journeys to and from work, for we know that this surrenders nothing that is important to ourselves. We do not live or do identity work in these places. Real life is elsewhere. (Cohen and Taylor 1976, p. 50)

Personal stereo use implies a rather different story. The ritualized journey and the pressing demands of the everyday come with the recognition that both the cyclical and linear constitute a threat. Identity work is thus continually enacted by users. Alternatively some users reinscribe the ritual of everyday practices with their own chosen, more meaningful set of 'rituals'. What becomes clear is that users often believe that 'real life is elsewhere' and use personal stereos to reclaim the significance of the present. The feeling that 'something' should be happening, that the user's life is significant in the here and now, is

part and parcel of the incursion and constitution of time through the consumption of culture-industry products within the everyday.

Within this context personal-stereo use might be seen as an everyday 'strategy of dissociation' (Cohen and Taylor 1976) whereby users operationalize role-distancing strategies in imaginative forms of consumption that they perceive to be both 'personalizing' and liberating. Cohen and Taylor, like Lefebvre and Adorno, view these strategies as products of the very system to be escaped from:

By our diligent use of escape routes we seek to construct in our minds that which does not appear to us in the world. We attempt to create free areas in which our individuality having been rested from society, may now enjoy a certain immunity. The ability of society to co-opt, infiltrate and subvert those very areas which we had hoped to hold sacred for the attainment of meaning, progress and self has been increased through this century. (Cohen and Taylor 1976, p. 225)

This dialectic of control and resistance articulated in everyday life is in need of theoretical articulation. The structure of everyday life is constituted by rhythms imposed upon subjects by system world formations in the everyday lifeworld of subjects. Personal-stereo users' lifeworlds are thus built upon routines and repetition which are both historically and culturally conditioned as are the structurally conditioned nature of 'escape' routines found within culture. From this point of view users operationalize prescribed forms of individualism which condition subjective forms of escape from routines deemed threatening to their status as an individual user. Critical Theorists were amongst the first to analyse and articulate the formation of structurally determined forms of escape through the constitution of the the 'culture industry' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1973).

The escape from everyday drudgery which the whole culture industry promises may be compared to the daughter's abduction in the cartoon: the father is holding the ladder in the dark. The paradise offered by the culture industry is the same old drudgery. Both escape and elopement lead back to the starting point. (Horkheimer and Adorno 1973, p. 142)

However, the above represents a premature foreclosure of meaning. Adorno's pessimism should not be taken literally but rather as a dialectical moment in the analysis of everyday life. Throughout my analysis of personal-stereo use notions of experiential saturation and

colonization have vied with those concerned with mediation and the expression of utopian aspirations. The use of personal stereos appears both to saturate the experience of the everyday and to mediate it. To saturate implies a filling up, a taking in, an all-engulfing process or alternatively a taking over whereby mediation implies a more active process of filtering and adjustment. I take the position that the relationship between technology and experience in the 'lifeworld' can be construed as two moments in the dialectic of experience, that these 'are the torn halves of an integral freedom, to which however they do not add up' (Wolin 1994).

By developing the often fragmentary concepts introduced by early Critical Theorists I am able to articulate the ways in which users' resistance to colonization within their lifeworld might be understood. Through the operationalizing of notions of 'compensatory metaphysics' and 'exact fantasy' together with Lefebvre's understanding of the phenomenology of experiential time a set of useful tools are created in articulating a dialectic of colonization and mediation. Throughout the analysis the imaginative strategies of resistance have been understood as being grounded in the commonplace activities of the everyday. Whilst users might be said to experience the social totality as being increasingly deterritorialized and transacted in their private networks of individualized consumption this does not merely imply that 'commodities and industries now realise themselves in human beings'. Experience is rather usefully perceived of as being 'at once pre-organized and unorganized'. (Negt and Kluge 1993, p. 6)

The construction of experience through personal-stereo use can be understood dialectically whereby the products of culture, in the form of music listened to and the artifact of the personal stereo, are inscribed into any public or private environment and increasingly incorporate both the private realms of users' experiences and the context of their everyday life. Whilst these products increasingly constitute the lifeworld of the subject population there remains a disjunction between the subject and the object of the culture industry that produces a necessary failure of total subsumption or incorporation of all elements of the everyday into that system world. This point is highlighted in the dialectical relation of forms of 'compensatory metaphysics' incorporated through forms of aestheticized experience that take their form in notions of narrativized experience within personal-stereo use. However, this experience is also problematic in the sense that the imaginary lies within the remit of the consciousness industry. In this sense, are the imaginative strategies used by users merely culturally prescribed? I argue

that the creativity often displayed in personal-stereo use often arises precisely through those formulaic modes of experience in which users make their daily life habitable. Negt and Kluge, whilst recognizing the ambivalent nature and role of the imaginary, argue that:

experience and fantasy production are far richer than the consciousness industry can represent, the possibility for organising this experience of fantasy is limited structurally. (Negt and Kluge 1993, p. 170)

The role of fantasy embodied in personal-stereo use demonstrates the success of a range of strategies; habitable space does indeed become more manageable for users. Personal stereos function within this scenario as a form of 'unburdening', freeing up time to be filled by alternative communication technologies. Free time becomes time to be consumed through the management of ever broadening areas of daily life in which users can 'be themselves'. Personal-stereo users can be understood as pitting themselves against the 'realm of the eversame' (Adorno) or the 'ever-always-the-same' (Benjamin). In doing so personal stereos dress up their experience as a form of intimate communion with the world. The narrative, mood or thought processes of the user mediated through their personal stereo changes the significance of experienced time. Underlying this process is the desire to manage time in a manner that either solves the problematic nature of mundane experience through a process of 'reclaiming' time or through an imaginary form of control by which the contingency of experience in public can be managed. Personal-stereo users invariably describe 'needing' their machine to cope with time experienced on their own. The desire to fill up time in this way appears to be historically embedded and situated within a technological milieu that enables not only the solving, but also the creation of this situation. In doing so personal-stereo users redraw the dichotomous categories of public and private; leisure and work in their everyday world. The everyday is defined critically as being unable to provide the significance or meaning desired by users. Personal-stereo use become a temporary, yet everyday, method of dealing with this disjunction.

The everyday is situated at the intersection of two modes of repetition: the cyclical, which dominates nature, and the linear which dominates the processes known as 'rational'... In modern life the repetitive gestures tends to mask and to crush the cycles. The everyday imposes its own monotony. It is the invariable constant of the variation it envelops. The

days follow one another and resemble one another, and yet – and here lies the contradiction at the heart of everydayness – everything changes. But the change is programmed: obsolescence is planned. Production anticipates reproduction; production produces change in such a way as to superimpose the impression of speed on that of monotony. (Osborne 1995, p. 196)

This emancipatory moment in the flux of the everyday is highlighted in Lefebvre's phenomenologically informed analysis of time and experience in which the structure of the everyday is left open, forever unfinished. Lefebvre articulates this in his late work under the notion of 'rhythm analysis' where notions of 'cyclical' and 'linear' time are interwoven:

Time is projected onto space through measures, uniformizing it and emerging in things and products. The apparent reversibility of time through the products of the everyday gives us a feeling of contentedness, constructing a rampart against the tragic and death. The tragic exists outside dailiness but it erupts within it . . . Rhythm analysis is the means by which we understand the struggle against time within time itself. (Lefebvre 1996, p. 31)

Personal stereo use, in this context, is understood as projecting time, the time of music reception, onto the space of the journey thus enabling the user to create forms of 'habitable experience'. In doing so users gain a sense of personal control over time and space and are able to sustain their mood precisely by keeping it 'suspended' in time. Personal-stereo use can be accurately perceived as a temporary wager against the experience of cyclical time. However, in considering the status of this wager an open-ended phenomenology of time would indicate that user's lifeworld experiences cannot coincide completely with the systems world. Yet this is coupled with the recognition that utopian moments of opposition are framed within the consumption of culture that is itself being rebelled against.

Notes

1. It is important to recognise that the role of the personal stereo is not neutral in relation to its everyday use. Due weight should be given to the constitution of ideological dispositions embodied in forms of usage which

appear to be intimately tied to those Western values of individualism, utilitarianism and instrumentalism which are manifested in both the design and uses of the personal stereo in the realm of the everyday. Akio Morita, the then chairman of the Sony Corporation, demonstrates this point with the following remark:

At my home, my children were always playing their stereos in their rooms, making my happy home a noisy one. In the car as well, they played their stereo loudly. But once they went outdoors, there were no machines to play their music. Of course I did see on the street some youngsters carrying big cassette systems on their shoulders, but these were too loud and heavy. So with these ideas in our heads, we thought that the creation of a small stereo cassette player with lightweight headphones had the potential to fill a yet unrecognised market need. (Ohsone 1988, p. 5)

Morita's observation concerning the integral role of music in youth culture is tied to notions of the creation of 'new lifestyles' embedded in the products of the culture industry. Within this scenario the personal stereo answers a latent desire, already firmly established in patterns of consumption; to listen to music wherever and whenever the consumer desires. This observation unreflectively incorporates an orientation to experience that is both instrumentalist and privatized. Morita's remark is also, implicitly, a negative judgment on the role and significance of the urban in the constitution of everyday experience.

These values become operative in the very design of personal stereos. For example, designers created personal stereo headphones that wrapped around the head to be used for solitary use. Later, discrete and more aesthetically pleasing headpieces that fitted directly into the ears were designed only to be replaced by large, very visible, headphones that wrap around the head. If the public realm is increasingly negated then the need for discretion evaporates.

2. Silverstone describes television as having an ontological and phenomenological reality related to 'television's veritable dailiness'. The everyday presence of television becomes, he argues, either a part of, or a substitution for, the securities offered in the past by institutions such as the family, neighbourhood, community or nation which have:

historically been the containers of, and provided the resources for, our ability to sustain that defence (against anxiety). That ability itself is grounded in turn on our ability, within the activities of our daily lives, to preserve a sense of continuity and reliability of things, to provide, as best we can, the necessary distance between us and the various threats to that continuity, either by denying them completely or by absorbing them, in one way or another, into the fabric of our life. (Silverstone 1994, p. 1)