

**Abstract: *The distracted iPod listener?***

Music listening has changed concurrently with the expansion of portable MP3 players. It has become a dynamic yet private activity that is part of the personal management of everyday life. Now more than ever it seems relevant to examine listening from an epistemological point of view as Steven Feld suggests with his term 'acoustemology' (Feld in Bull & Back ed., 2004). The way we consume and listen to music is directly connected to the way in which we perceive the world around us. However, Feld's term is connected to the World Soundscape Project revolved around R. Murray Schafer and his ecological ideals regarding listening to our soundscapes [Schafer, 1977]. As such this acknowledgement of the importance of sounds and listening seems to be based on an ideal understanding of listening as a focussed and attentive act [Schafer, 1977; Stockfelt, 2004]. Listening is thus closely connected to perception and to being alert and as such it is also a moral issue. From this perspective iPod listening may be characterized as the opposite of the ideal focused listening, namely as distracted listening [Tebutt, 2009].

In my paper I will present a case describing iPod-user 'Christina'. Using Christina's experiences with mobile listening as point of departure I will examine the different ways in which mobile listening may be used as a tool to manage everyday life. Furthermore I will relate these listening strategies to the moral and somewhat normative perspectives on listening. I will ask if this distracted listening is an example or a result of a 'universal deafness' [Schafer, 1977:4] or if it may entail yet unexplored qualities.

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