SEVINDZH IDRISOVA

Ukrainos nacionalinė P. Čaikovskio muzikos akademija, Ukraina
Ukrainian National Thchaikovsky Academy of music, Ukraine

URBANISTINIS GARSAS: GARSO STUDIJŲ SUKURTŲ DISKURSŲ ANALIZĖ

Urban Sound: An Analysis of Discourses
Constructed by Sound Studies

SUMMARY

For several of the latest decades, the “sensory turn” in humanities and social sciences has marked a new stage in rethinking the roles of non-visual media (sounds, smells) and perception modes (auditory, tactile, olfactory). The present article pays special attention to the consideration of urban sound discourses that have formed within sound studies. Systematization of the existing literature shows several important themes describing sound in the city. These themes include: sound as the marker of identity, memory, power, socio-economic relations, etc. A complex coverage of discourses about urban sound permits broadening its comprehension limits.

SANTRAUKA

Per pastaruosius kelis dešimtmečius „juslinis poslinkis“ humanitariniuose ir socialiniuose moksluose pažymėjo naują nevaizdinių medijų (garsų, kvapų) ir suvokimo būdų (audialinių, lytėjimo, olfaktorinių) vaidmens permąstymo etapą. Šiame straipsnyje ypatingas dėmesys skiriamas urbanistinio garso, susiformavusio garso studijų aplinkoje, diskursų nagrinėjimui. Turimos literatūros sisteminimas išskėlė keletą svarbių temų, apibūdinančių garso mieste kaip tapatybės, atminties, valdžios, socialinių ir ekonominių ryšių ir t. t. žymeklį. Kompleksinė urbanistinio garso diskursų aprėptis leis praplėsti jo suvokimo ribas.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years a research of bodily aspects of human being recovers interest of social sciences and humanities. “Sensory turn” moved beyond the dominance of visiocentric perception strategy towards other – non-visual modes (audi-

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: akustinis poslinkis, garso studijos, urbanistinis garsas.

KEY WORDS: acoustic turn, sound studies, urban sound.

tory, tactile, olfactory, etc.). Since then new terms have developed in the researches – “soundscape” (Shefer 2004), “smellscape” (Porteous 1985). Furthermore, theoretical works have started appearing, wherein senses are regarded as dynamic and historically conditioned formations (so called “cultural histories” of sounds, aromas, touch) (Biddle and Gibson 2017, Classen 2012).

Bodily experience becomes the subject of interest of anthropology, geography, sociology, urban studies. On the level of theoretical knowledge – discussion of this topic is aimed to deal with Cartesian dualistic philosophy, stressing on prevailing of mind over senses in the process of cognition. On the practical level – it allows developing principles of new sensory aesthetics that are continuously implemented in different spheres of human activities: communication (Dargina-vičienė 2019), architecture (Pallasmaa 2005), museology (Howes 2014), etc.

The “auditory” or “acoustic turn” is one of important directions of sensory studies (Braun 2017). This approach is based upon consideration of sound in events, listening practices, as well as their interpretation. Theoretical works, dedicated to relationship between sound, bodily experience, and city form a remarkable category inside “auditory turn”. For a long time, the researchers have been neglected sound in urban space, but in recent years, the number of publications on this issue started to rise gradually.

On the example of Amsterdam, Berlin, and London of XX century Bijsterveld

and others consider how urban sound is represented through texts, radio plays, films, and how these mediated sources reveal changes in nature of identity of the cities (Bijsterveld 2013: 14). In LaBelle’s “Acoustic Territories” sound is described as a relational subject, for this reason, sound traces of a modern metropolis are considered in the ratio to spatial and social structures of everyday life (LaBelle 2010: xxi). Bull and Thibaud show how digital technologies change a sound map of urban space and listening experience as a whole. Walking with portable mobile devices provides “recomposition of the city” depending on the subjective perception of here and now (Thibaud 2003: 329). The city becomes a musical interface with a plurality of “individualized sound-worlds” (Bull 2000: 3).

In each of the mentioned case studies, sound in city is researched from restricted viewpoint: for instance, urban sound and media technologies (Thibaud 2003, Bull 2000, Bijsterveld 2013), urban sound as art practice (Belgiojoso 2014), etc. Therefore, the purpose of the present article is to systematize and categorize multiple interpretations of urban sound within sound studies. Zooming out allows departing from singular research perspective towards integrity of comprehension of this phenomenon and its dynamic, fleeting nature. With this purpose, it is necessary to present a brief historiography of sound studies and key issues, articulated within this approach, while comparative method and discourse analysis allow representing narratives, revolving around urban sound.

SOUND STUDIES

The emerging of sound studies in the 1960s has identified the challenge to the dominance of sight in the social sciences and humanities. According to Trevor Pinch and Karen Bijsterveld's definition, the peculiarities of "material production and consumption to music, sound, noise, silence" as subjects of historical changes are considered from the perspective of this approach (Pinch and Bijsterveld 2012: 7). Alongside with institutionalization of this research field, the scientific journals appear offering sound-based analytical strategy ("Journal of Sonic Studies", "Interference: A Journal of Audio Culture", "Sound Effects", "Organised Sound").

Among spheres, related to sound studies there could be called acoustic ecology, sound design, anthropology of senses, cultural geography, urban studies, art history, musicology, ethnomusicology, etc.

The theoretical work of Canadian composer R. M. Schaefer "The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World", has become an important milestone in the historiography of sound studies. The author offers an ecological approach to assess the sound environment and directly criticizes noise pollution, which adversely affects the human body. The main idea of Schaefer's study is the development and improvement of sound design of the world; the intention to augment natural sounds and reduce negative sound effects. As he states, "only a total appreciation of the acoustic environment can give us the resources for improving the

orchestration of the world soundscape" (Schaefer 2004: 3).

Going beyond ocularocentric model of sensory cognition is a priority in sound studies. However, the presence of both sensory modes, such as auditory and visual, is in the basis of the term "soundscape" developed by Schaefer. The contradiction, inherent to this concept, has been often criticized "for implying visual metaphor in a field of study" (Järviluoma 2013: 645). However, the possibility of sound studies existence is closely connected with multisensory understanding of the world. Bull notes "If we are looking at embodiedness, then senses appear as very hybrid, one plays off against another" (Giunta and Palazzetti, 2016). It is, therefore, inappropriate to focus the studies within sound frames, omitting other sensory regimes.

Since the time, when the term soundscape had appeared in the work of Schaefer, the researchers began to actively use it in the headlines of their studies (Thompson 2002, Bijsterveld 2013 and others). The starting point of this theoretical works has become the consideration of sound not so much within the acoustic ecology, proposed by Schaefer, as in a wide cultural context.

There are a lot of attempts by various researchers to give the definition of the term soundscape. According to Schaefer, it "consists of events heard" (Schaefer 2004: 6), Järviluoma describes soundscape as "meta-discourse that should be understood <...> as something ethically framed and intelligible only in relation to specific cultural and historical condi-

tions" (Järviluoma 2013: 645). Berrens, instead, emphasizes the sensory dimension of this phenomenon: "Talking about the soundscape is talking about how we sense our environment, aurally in this case, and shifting the focus from cognition to sensation" (Berrens 2016: 75).

There also exists the difficulty in determining the subject area of sound studies. Morat states that within this approach many concepts are used, such as auditory history, listening history, "alongside each other without a very clear understanding of the differences between them" (Morat 2017: 3). However, despite the terminological uncertainty, a growing number of publications illustrate the gradual institutionalization of sound studies.

The question of what sound is, what meanings it conveys, how these meanings are perceived by different individuals or social groups, becomes important from the perspective of this viewpoint. According to Stern, sound studies reconsider "what sound does in the human world and what humans do in the sonic world" (Sterne 2012: 2). Thompson notes that "a soundscape is simultaneously a physical environment and a way of perceiving that environment" (Thompson 2002: 1). Based on these thoughts, we can state that sound studies deeply rooted in the phenomenological approach, where the remained important issue is the relationship between the body and the surrounding space.

CATEGORIZATION OF DISCOURSES ABOUT URBAN SOUND

On the one hand, sound is an abstract, pure material, on the other – it represents cultural frames we overlay on it, depending on the context of our perception. According to Arkette, "sound, especially within the urban environment, is never a neutral phenomenon; <...> each sound is imbued with its own lexical code" (Arkette 2004, 160). Deciphering of symbolic meanings of urban sound is becoming important for the researchers in order to disclosure of its functioning in the city. However, it is worth mentioning that present research is not an attempt to categorize urban sound as it is, as much as discourses describing it. For this reason, on the basis of analysis of the research literature the following items will be distinguished,

which include, but are not limited to the following issues:

Urban sound as the identity marker. Sound distinguishes identity codes that cannot be considered beyond self-consciousness and sense of belonging to a certain place. In Alain Corbin's theoretical work dedicated to soundscape of French countryside in XIX century it is shown how sounds of church bells served as communicative maps for local residents and framed their collective identity (Corbin 1998).

Sound differentiates and assimilates. Uniqueness and dissimilarity of soundscapes of different cities is transformed into the "phonic" (Rehan 2016: 339) or "the sonic identity of the city" (Amphoux 2003: 2), representing a set of

sound characteristics being auditory symbols of urban space. Thus, not only does the sound mark individual or collective identity, but creates sound aura of the city – its auditory identity.

Urban sound as the memory marker. Each city is a repository of auditory experiences of the past. In recent years the urban soundscape has been considered as the key component of intangible cultural heritage (Losiak 2016), that is why sound is an essential component of the city memory.

From the other side, sound makes the city memorable. In “One Way Street” Benjamin states “The special sense of a town is formed in part of its inhabitants – and perhaps even in the memory of the traveller who has stayed there – by the timbre and intervals with which its tower-clocks begin to chime” (Benjamin 1997: 82). In this fragment the auditory trace of the Freiburg Cathedral becomes a sound metaphor of the city as a whole.

According to Tonkiss, Benjamin collects sounds, captured in different places and combines them in peculiar urban vignettes – “aural postcards” (Tonkiss 2013: 306). The last term is characterized as capability of memory to attach certain sounds to our life stories. Thus, on the one hand, urban sound is a part of city memory, on the other – it is memory about the city.

Urban sound as a marker of public and private. LaBelle interprets sound as the mediated power reducing boundaries between public and private (LaBelle 2010); Born questions how spatializing capacities of sound transform the nature of public and private (Born 2013); Thi-

baud stresses instead the threshold between public and private is defined, mostly, by change in perceptual orientation (Thibaud 2003: 3).

In any case, understanding of this binary opposition is determined by dominance of visual cognition mode, since, on the contrary from other senses, sight maps the surrounding environment.

Urban sound as the marker of power and socio-economic relations. There is acoustic zoning in the city area: every district has its own sound identity depending on socio-economic stratification and residents’ daily practices. Moreover, any event occurring in the city either military parade or combat clashes are accompanied by the corresponding sound policy.

Attali’s classical research interprets music as the analysis tool and forecasting of socio-economic transformations in the society (Attali 2009: 4). Born emphasizes that “music and sound media both to demarcate and reinforce social and psychological boundaries through the creation of sonic autonomy and segregation” (Born 2013: 27), but it is worth adding, that sound does not form social inequality, it serves its indicator.

Urban sound as the tool of violence can be referred to the abovementioned category. This opinion here interpreted ambivalently, because, on the one hand, acoustic violence manifests itself as an act of demonstration of power, control or censorship of the citizens’ behavior, and on the other – as noise pollution of the surrounding space, having a negative impact on a human being’s emotional and physical state. In both cases the sound dejects, induces stress and anxiety.

Urban sound as commodity object. So-called background music, accompanying city-dwellers' daily activities, is characterized by variable nature of functionality. It is used in offices for stress relief, establishment of comfortable relations among employees and serves as a hidden stimulus of their motivation and working efficiency (Westerkamp 1988: 40); background music in shopping malls, cafes and other places is an powerful marketing tool, which accelerates intensity of commodity-money relationship (Alpert 1989). Thus, sound is an integral part of the consuming society.

Urban sound as eco-design tool. Following Schafer's idea about sound ecology, a wide range of the researches (Atkinson 2007, Adhitya 2017), urban designers, and planners emphasize the importance of creating zones with natural soundscapes within the city. It allows minimizing residents' stresses, related to noise pollution.

Urban sound as a mapping practice. In recent years the number of online platforms with embedded sound maps of cities, regions, and countries keeps rising (e.g., Montréal Sound Map, Sound Around You). Their common peculiarity lies in their interactivity: each Internet and mobile device user can record sounds of a certain place and fix it on the online map. Thulin differentiates several con-

nection types between sound and mapping practices: sound-as-map, sound-into-map, map-into-sound, maps-of-sound (Thulin 2018). The researcher underlines that "sound maps bring together visual and sonic epistemologies and practices, they offer rich ground for exploring how representations of time and space are performed between and across the senses" (ibid, p. 2). Thus, sound is a specific form of sensory mapping.

Urban sound as a social communication design tool. Sound and listening practices play an important role in local development of the community, neighborhood, and city. Therefore, due to sound mediation, connections between the place and people are strengthened (Shapiro 2019). In this context, artistic and participative strategies (festivals, sound installations or other site-specific works) use sound for social communication design, promotion of relationships and coping with the boundaries between the differences.

All the listed categories make us think that sound is media establishing communicative networks between different actors (human, non-human, real, imaginary, natural, cultural). For this reason, systematization of the relevant discourses of urban sound allowed to shed light into reading methods of this phenomenon within sound studies.

CONCLUSIONS

The "sensory turn" in humanities and social sciences ensured search of new ways activating bodily involvement and reflexivity. In recent decades, consider-

ation of auditory experience has become a thriving field within sensory studies. Sound is the relational object, that is why it cannot be examined beyond the bound-

aries of contextual connections. The issue of urban sound holds a specific place among the researchers, because city is a specific context, where stories, memories, and senses are intersected.

In the theoretical works urban sound is usually described from a singular viewpoint. For this reason, it is necessary to cover a wider range of the existing topics interpreting urban sound from different research perspectives.

On basis of analysis of relevant studies several important narratives have

been distinguished, representing sound in the city as the marker of identity, memory, power, economic relations, as a mapping practice, as media, that constructing social communication and transforms meanings of public and private, etc. All these discourses, which have emerged within sound studies, open multidimensional nature of sound and reflect cultural patterns that determine our understanding of the city as a whole, and its auditory culture, in particular.

Literature and References

- Adhitya Sara. 2017. *Musical cities*. London: UCL Press.
- Alpert Judy, Alpert Mark. 1989. Background Music As an Influence in Consumer Mood and Advertising Responses, Srull T. K., (ed.). *Advances in Consumer Research* 16: 485–491. UT: Association for Consumer Research.
- Amphoux Pascal. 2003. L'Identité sonore urbaine. Une approche méthodologique croisée, Moser G., Weiss K. (eds.). *Espaces de vie: aspects de la relation homme-environnement*. Paris: Armand Colin. Available: <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01561759/document> (Visited on November 21, 2019)
- Arquette Sophie. 2004. Sounds like city, *Theory, Culture & Society* 21(1): 159–168.
- Atkinson Rowland. 2007. Ecology of Sound: The Sonic Order of Urban Space, *Urban studies* 44(10): 1905–1917.
- Attali Jacques. 2009. *Noise: the political economy of music*. Translated from French by B. Massumi. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Belgiojoso Ricciarda. 2014. *Constructing Urban Space with Sounds and Music*. Ashgate: Farnham and Burlington.
- Benjamin Walter. 1997. *One way street and other writings*. Translated from Germany by E. Jephcott and K. Shorter. London: Verso.
- Berrens Karla. 2016. An emotional cartography of resonance. *Emotion, Space and Society* 20: 75–81.
- Biddle Ian, Kirsten Gibson (eds.). 2017. *Cultural Histories of Noise, Sound and Listening in Europe, 1300–1918*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bijsterveld Karin. 2013. *Soundscapes of the Urban Past: Staged Sound as Mediated Cultural Heritage*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Born Georgina. 2013. Introduction, Born G. (ed.). *Music, sound and space: transformations of public and private experience*: 1–69.
- Braun Hans-Joachim. 2017. An acoustic turn? Recent developments and future perspectives of sound studies, *AVANT* 8(1): 75–91.
- Bull Michael. 2000. *Sounding out the city: personal stereos and the management of everyday life*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Classen Constance. 2012. *The deepest sense: a cultural history of touch*. Urbana, Chicago, Springfield: University of Illinois Press.
- Corbin Alain. 1998. *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-century French Countryside*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Darginavičienė Irena. 2019. Multimodality in Communication, *Logos-Vilnius* 98: 146–153.
- Giunta-Nigro Violeta, Nicolò Palazzetti. 2016. New Avenues for Listening: Sensory Culture in the Digital Age and the Persistence of Utopia, *Transposition: Musique et Sciences Sociales* 6. Available at: <http://journals.openedition.org/transposition/1580> (Visited on November 21, 2019).
- Howes David. 2014. Introduction to Sensory Museology, *The Senses and Society* 9(3): 259–267.

- Järviluoma Helmi, Noora Vikman. 2013. On Sound-scape Methods and Audiovisual Sensibility, Richardson J., Gorbman C., Vernallis C. (eds.). *The Oxford handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*: 645–658. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- LaBelle Brandon. 2010. *Acoustic Territories: sound culture and everyday life*. New York and London: Continuum.
- Losiak Robert. 2016. The Soundscape as the City's Intangible Heritage. Study, Protection and Restoration, Kwiecińska M. (ed.). *Intangible heritage of the city: musealization, preservation, education*: 61–73. Kraków: The Historical Museum of the City of Kraków.
- Morat Daniel. 2017. Introduction, Morat D. (ed.). *Sounds of Modern History: Auditory Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe*: 1–9. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.
- Pallasmaa Juhani. 2005. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Pinch Trevor, Karin Bijsterveld. 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Porteous Douglas. 1985. Smellscape, *Progress in Geography* 9(3): 356–378.
- Rehan Reeman Mohammed. 2016. The phonic identity of the city urban soundscape for sustainable spaces, *HBRC Journal* 12: 337–349.
- Schafer Raymond Murray. 2004. Soundscapes and Earwitnesses, Smith M. M. (ed.). *Hearing history: a reader*: 3–9. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press.
- Shapiro Shain. 2019. The music cities manual. Available at: <https://www.sounddiplomacy.com/our-insights/music-cities-manual> (Visited on November 21, 2019)
- Sterne Jonathan. 2012. Sonic imaginations, Sterne J. (ed.). *Sound Studies Reader*: 1–17. London and New York: Routledge.
- Thibaud Jean-Paul. 2003. The sonic composition of the city, Bull M., Back L. (eds.). *The Auditory Culture Reader*. Amsterdam: Berg Publishers.
- Thompson Emily. 2002. *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933*. Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press.
- Thulin Samuel. 2018. Sound maps matter: expanding cartophony, *Social & Cultural Geography* 19(2): 192–210.
- Tonkiss Fran. 2013. Aural postcards: sound, memory and the city, Bull M., Back L. (eds.). *The auditory culture reader*: 303–309.
- Westerkamp Hildegard. 1988. Listening and sound-making: a study of music-as-environment. Available: summit.sfu.ca/system/files/iritem1/5386/b15022705.pdf (Visited on November 21, 2019)