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### 1.

I understand landscape as presently perceived phenomena, isolated through acts of perception which can be mediated (via technology). The phenomena in question may constitute a part of the surroundings or concepts and most often tend to be described and assessed in terms of values. A vital element in this context is experience—which I construe as framing landscape and living through it. The question concerning landscape is coupled with the question about the senses—their role and the links between them. In this perspective, the experience of landscape is aesthetically marked. There are such traits of landscape which are associated with a particular sensory facility (for instance the horizon in the visual perspective) as well as those related to the tensions between the senses (for instance wind and other elements in motion). I am particularly interested in the role of sounds which enable the processual treatment of landscape. The idea of acoustic ecology, advanced by Murray Raymond Schafer and the resulting studies into the soundscape may, in my opinion, offer an interesting complement to contemporary analyses of landscape.

As early as the 1970s, Schafer began to pay attention to the conscious planning of the sound environment. With his newly-coined terminology, his paradigm of thought as well as specific proposals for cultural practice, Schafer sparked a debate on the threats arising from theoretical and practical neglect of the sound universe. Has our awareness changed after four decades which elapsed from the first attempts at consistent propagation of the idea of acoustic ecology? Which of the issues that Schafer noted at the time have been resolved and what new problems, owing to the technological and cultural transformation, have emerged? These questions relate directly to the landscape studies which we see developing today. The answers, I believe, should be formulated not only from the standpoint of contextual investigations prompted by the concepts of acoustic ecology, but also by employing a broader perspective combining studies from various domains and disciplines of contemporary humanities.

It would be worth noting that in *The Soundscape. Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* Schafer has to overcome a number of linguistic issues, given that certain ideas associated with our aural experience are difficult to

express (1994). This is due to the fact that most metaphors established in Western culture by means of which our modes of being in the world are conveyed relies on visual perception. Vision has very often been associated or equated with knowledge, which had led to the epistemological validation of a particular manner of speaking about the world. The very term *universe*, which most Slavic languages utilized to refer to “world” had originally denoted “light”. Numerous Greek and Latin terms relating to seeing or elucidation have become entrenched in philosophical discourse as oculo-centric metaphors which ennoble visual experience, and thus forged a particular sensorial hierarchy with the sense of sight at the very top (Jay 1994; Przeźmiński 2004).

Schafer comes forwards with new terms, neologisms which draw attention to spheres of experience that Western philosophy has tended to disregard. Such words as *soundscape*, which by analogy to *landscape* would mean the “landscape of sound”, or *schizophony*, a term which emphasizes its affinity with schizophrenia. These notions were intended to provoke discussion about our auditory experience in contemporary culture, as well as point to a new problem area of the ecological that Schafer is engaged with. Today, his proposal may be an incentive to revise the habits of language and open paradigms of landscape description to a quest for terms which are capable of conveying the perceptual complexity of experience.

One of the projects which may be used to expand the spectrum of concepts employed in the description of landscape is a series of interdisciplinary studies launched in France by Jean-François Augoyard and Henry Torgue (2005)—as well as investigators from various research centres who focused on the sound experience in a city. Their work yielded a book-dictionary, containing descriptions of a range of “effects” resulting from the impact of sound in urban spaces. The notion of “effect” was used by the authors in a two-fold meaning: on the one hand, it denotes the outcome of the influence that sound exerts on the surroundings, and on the other hand it means a sound-effect with a specific acoustic profile. This approach enabled them to underscore the importance of experience and the significance of the presence of sound in urbanized metropolitan areas, through which particular landscapes or soundscapes come into being.

Apart from studies of that kind, in which theory was fused with practice in strictly delimited spaces, the attempts at a broader theoretical reflection must not be overlooked. Thus, in the context of sound features of the contemporary landscape and the issues of aural experience the concept of *sound studies*, advanced and popularized by Jonathan Sterne, may prove quite useful.

In the introduction to *Sound Studies Reader* (2012)—a book conceived as a collection of canonical sound studies texts—Sterne encourages one to conduct a singular, auditory-mental experiment. He suggests trying to spend several days of one’s life paying particular attention to what can be heard during everyday activities.

This should be done by focusing the sense of hearing and considering the resulting input. One should also reflect on how many of the sounds heard today existed ten, twenty or thirty years ago. How has the audiosphere (Misiak 2009)<sup>1</sup> of our daily life transformed over the years? Questions should also be asked about the diverse contexts of the sounds we hear, about their roles, forms of mediation, the institutions tasked with maintaining their order, as well as about our responses to the sounds which constitute an integral component of our environment. Finally, some thought should be given to the earliest human experience with sound, as well as the first forms by means of which sound was mediated and the modes of listening which have been changing due to technological advances and cultural transformations (Sterne 2012, 1). At the same time, that simple experiment outlines a certain perspective which may be adopted as one surveys the world. A perspective in which sound, the ways in which it is mediated and received serve as a guiding element and point of reference. “Sound studies is a name for interdisciplinary ferment in the human sciences that takes sound as its analytical point of departure and arrival” (Ibidem, 2), Sterne writes. This is more of a demand than a new discipline; a call to analyse various phenomena of contemporary culture through sound; listening is to be an “intellectual reaction to changes in culture and technology” (Ibidem, 3) which are coupled with sound. Sound studies are also an attempt to analyse the aftermath of the experience whereby “if you hear the same sound in two different places, you may not even recognize it as the same sound” (Ibidem, 4). This kind of theoretical backdrop to deliberations on landscape could, in my opinion, contribute to a multi-aspect answer to questions concerning e.g. the role of sound in constructing identity, uniqueness as well as cultural belonging of a particular place.

Such a broad perspective of studies into sound requires one to operate between many disciplines which explore sound in view of the diverse goals. So, sound studies have to consciously employ certain well-established paradigms and research approaches, such as Schafer’s acoustic ecology or Steven Feld’s (2012) acoustemology—derived as it is from ethnological foundations—or various media studies (Misiak 2013)<sup>2</sup>.

The approach adopted in sound studies relies quite substantially on experience-related association with experience, thus facilitating a revision of the stereotypes of sensory perception, especially in the context of tensions between sight and hearing, between the image and the sound. Sound is here not deemed solely a decipherable sign but also as an element giving shape to our experience, on the one hand, and requiring constant assimilation, on the other. So sound studies agrees with the logic of “cultural turns” which do take note of the need to introduce new

1 The idea of an audiosphere still requires in-depth consideration, if only to clarify the relationships with such terms as *sono-* or *phono-*sphere. For a semantic analysis of these terms, see Tomasz Misiak (2009).

2 For a broader appraisal of diverse disciplinary assignments of sound studies see Tomasz Misiak (2013).

perspectives into the broadly understood sciences of culture—as aptly observed by Doris Bachmann-Medick: “Not everything can be taken as a mere sign, symbol or text. The world also consists of material and matter” (2012, 54).

## 2.

I am convinced that landscape studies cannot do without reflection in the humanities. The fields I have in mind in particular include aesthetics (broadly understood as a theory of perception), axiology, hermeneutics, communication theory and media theory. Aesthetic inquiry is crucial given the role of experience and perception. The description of sensory experience occasioned by perception and the analysis of landscape are also profoundly linked to axiology, which facilitates the isolation of particular types of landscape. In their turn, various (not only aesthetic) forms of valuation involve interpretation which determines our attitude to landscape. Moreover, as a form of identification, each landscape is a communication system containing specific information (spatial, temporal, or cultural, for instance). Finally, landscape is associated with varied modes of representation, and increasingly often constitutes the outcome of intentional design, so the media which contribute to the form of landscape need to be considered too.

## 3.

The need for interdisciplinary landscape studies is undeniable. What values and emotions are entailed in the contemplation of landscape? What goals are set when designing particular landscapes? What information does the landscape convey? In what sense can one speak of the culture-building role of landscape? In what kind of network of geographical and aesthetic reference does a particular landscape function? Which landscapes require protection and why? If those and similar questions are to be answered, we have to use tools belonging to various scientific disciplines and associated domains of knowledge. Addressing the senses, Michel Chion (2012) endorses a trans-sensory (or meta-sensory) approach, arguing that individual senses do not constitute isolated areas of experience but are channels or pathways through which its varied forms emerge. In my opinion, a similar approach should be applied in the analyses of landscape, whereby particular theories or viewpoints of research which may be used to resolve the above questions fuel and actuate one another, yielding the multi-aspect picture of the analysed “object”. In this sense, one should perhaps speak of the need for trans-disciplinary research, both in terms of analysis as well as methodology.

At this point, it would be worthwhile to quote Michel Chion, whose observations, albeit concerned with the audio-visibility of film, draw on the complexity of our sensory experience which often tends to be ignored in the discourses of the

human sciences. “The eye carries information and sensations only some of which can be considered specifically and irreducibly visual (e.g., colour); most others are trans-sensory. Likewise, the ear serves as a vehicle for information and sensations only some of which are specifically auditive (e.g., pitch and intervallic relations), the others being, as in the case of the eye, not specific to this sense” (Chion 2012, 110), Chion writes. The dependencies between hearing and vision thus construed warrant a singular theoretical dichotomy between the inter- and the trans-sensorial. “In the trans-sensorial or even meta-sensorial model, which I am distinguishing from the Baudelairian one, there is no sensory given that is demarcated and isolated from the outset. Rather, the senses are channels, highways more than territories or domains.” (Ibidem, 111).

This is important especially with respect to the different modes of listening and their relations with the perception and description of landscape. We listen to things in numerous ways. While listening, we set ourselves and try to accomplish diverse goals. Alternatively, we listen “unwittingly”, without a teleological perspective determining the horizon of fulfilment. At times, we are interested in what we hear, sometimes we are bored, and on some occasions we are forced to listen. Aural activity is multi-layered—we can listen to something that no one else can hear: our thoughts and imaginations; we can pretend to be listening to what we are being told, while in fact suppressing the external sounds with the inner experience; we may be able to hear what others fail to pick up, even though they are listening to “the same sounds”; we are compelled to listen to the effects of life taking place around us. Hearing and listening is conditioned by both diverse contexts as well as our mental states and neurological capacities. What is more, different modes of listening are associated with various degrees of involvement. The aural bias will differ depending on whether one is in a forest, a crowded street or a concert hall, and not only because we are listening to something else in each case. The sounds themselves do not compel an appropriate listening mode.

Which elements determine the listening mode in particular situations? Can they be isolated from the all-embracing perceptual system? When listening we do not merely hear; listening is always a part of a multisensory process whose components trigger one another. So, one may ask what and how we see, touch, smell, feel etc. influences the manner of our listening? What happens to us when we are listening? What prospects of change and what experiences are involved in particular modes of listening? At what point does listening become a creative effort? How did we use to listen and how will we listen in the future? Many more questions of this kind could and should be asked. Their multiplicity and diversity does not reflect the complexity of experience that accompanies hearing. Nonetheless, sketching a map of relevant issues is a tempting and compelling task.

Questions of that kind may be resolved (as they have been already) from a specific standpoint adopted in research: phenomenological, cognitive, neurological,

psychological, anthropological, aesthetic, musicological etc. One can also take advantage of many traditions and their associated vocabularies at once, so as to describe the phenomena of auditory perception. Taking these and similar questions into account could, in my opinion, enrich interdisciplinary reflection on landscape, especially considering that in recent years the interest in presence and the effect of sound in contemporary culture has noticeably increased. Researchers from numerous academic backgrounds, relying on a vast range of approaches, have conducted analyses underlining the multiple contexts of “sound culture”. The concept of “sound culture”, introduced by German philosopher and cultural researcher Wolfgang Iser (1997) in the domain of aesthetics today influences many others academic subdisciplines, such as the theory of music (Cox, Werner, 2010), sound studies, sound design in urban spaces or research into soundscapes.

The interest in sound is linked to major transformations in culture, such as:

- changes within the hierarchy of senses. At present, the need for a renewed examination of the role of senses in perception is voiced more and more often. The philosophical and aesthetic tradition which gave preference to vision as a sense which enabled objective knowledge of reality is being redefined, in a variety of ways. Contemporary researchers are rather inclined to draw attention to connections between the senses and highlight the importance of multisensory cognition. Consequently, there is an increasing focus on sound and various, correlated modes of listening. These in turn are impacted by new activities enabled by techno-cultural transformations.
- transformations in the realm of music and art. Since the boundary between “musical” and “non-musical sounds” was abolished in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century thanks to the activities of the avant-garde, artists have more often explored territories which had been previously inaccessible to music. The willingness to experiment, the importance of free improvisation, the use of new instruments as well as sound-processing and mediating devices opened the door for music to delve into an unlimited universe of sound. Contemporary theorists of music have had to confront ever new aesthetic and performance-related quandaries, as well as addressing new modes of listening afforded by new media and communication technologies.
- transformations in the sound environment. Civilisational development necessarily entails the introduction of new devices and therefore new sounds into both private and public spaces. Consequently, we have witnessed a revival of ecological attitudes in which a greater awareness of the impact of sound on daily life is often underlined. Ecologists demand that space be planned and designed taking acoustics into consideration, and they advocate education for competent listening and interpreting sounds that are present in our surroundings and shape the space we inhabit.

The above transformations could interestingly complement analyses concerned with landscapes in contemporary culture.

#### 4.

Contemporary landscape education should cover two related problem areas:

- the conservation of unique landscapes and appropriate space management policies—one of the challenges facing landscape education is the need to provide a rationale for why one should preserve unique landscapes which tend to undergo irreversible changes due to technological and cultural transformations. There is a need for a more conscious management of space, both natural and e.g. urban spaces, in view of their non-material assets (aesthetic value for instance), rather than merely utilitarian advantages associated with the acquisition of particular material assets. In this sense, landscape education should go hand in hand with ecological undertakings.
- goal-oriented landscape design—landscape education should also aim to identify the needs associated with the participation of humans in new civilisational conditions. Needs of this kind are apparent in the context of soundscapes. Today, noise is an increasingly problematic issue which could be mitigated, at least in part, by better design of urban spaces with consideration of acoustic phenomena. Education is also needed for better perception of particular spaces and their landscapes by *all available senses*. This will lead to more conscious questions concerning the interaction between the senses in the experience of landscape.

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Taking advantage of the tools of contemporary humanities, landscape studies should translate the newly acquired insights into specific actions. For this purpose, they should combine conceptual analysis, reflection on varied forms of experience and artistic projects.

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## Questionnaire—Answers

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