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Rhythmanalysis of the Policescape: The Promise of an Ecological Turn in the Practice of Soundscape Studies*

Analiza ritma policijske krajine: obljava ekološkega preobrata v praksi študija zvočnih krajin**

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IZVLEČEK

ABSTRACT

Na podlagi koncepta *analize ritma*, katerega avtor je Henri Lefebvre, zagovarjam ekološki preobrat pri izvajanju študij zvočnih krajin, kar naj bi zagotovilo subjektu – poslušalcu oziroma *analizatorju ritma* – osrednji položaj v sklopu raziskave. Ponujam kritično (pomarksiistično) »analizo ritma« zvočne pokrajine pejsaža »policinga«, kot ga je definiral Jacques Rancière.

Employing Henri Lefebvre's concept of *rhythmanalysis* I argue for an ecological turn in practicing soundscape studies, which would entail putting the subject – the listener, or "rhythmanalysist" – in the centre of research. I offer a critical (post-Marxist) "rhythmanalysis" of soundscape of landscape of "policing" (concept developed following Jacques Rancière).

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The Practice of Soundscape Studies: From Acoustic Ecology to Sound Heritage

From its beginnings, soundscape studies have nurtured an ecological dimension of its research. Unlike “music studies”, understood in a very broad sense, which have aimed at turning our attention towards the singularity of a music work or a music event, soundscape studies were concerned with the plurality, the “leftovers”, the noise and the ubiquitous sounds to which little awareness is given. The basic question which was put forward by R. Murray Schafer, widely considered as the founding pioneer of the discipline, “what is the relationship between man [*sic*] and the sounds of environment and what happens when those sounds change”¹, is itself a deeply ecological question. Jacques Attali in his aboundedly cited essay *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* similarly claims that “by listening to noise, we can better understand where the folly of men [*sic*] and their calculations is leading us, and what hopes it is still possible to have”². It, thus, seems obvious that ecological perspective is deeply embedded in soundscape studies, in respect that they study (1) sonic *environment* and (2) relations and interactions between humans and sounds, while (3) understanding and approaching to the phenomenon of sound in a non-discriminatory fashion (in other words, ignoring, overriding or arguing against the binaries of music-noise, culture-nature, etc.). However, observing the current practice of soundscape research³, as well as certain trends in historical soundscape studies,⁴ one can note a strong emergence of what I will label as *conservationism paradigm*. Instead of a study of an “extraordinary music event”, these soundscape studies practices are now offering us a study of a sound event which is (at least described as) *ordinary*, but is still place-bound and positioned as a unique occurrence. By the dint of the researcher’s microphone, this sound event is thus “conserved” as an audio recording, but it is at the same time isolated from its ecological context and even placed into a new one. Indeed, the projects which aim at enabling the listener “to explore the sounds of the city wherever [she or he is]”⁵ are not only creating new spatial economies of the sound, but can also potentially restructure the way we listen to the environmental sound and its “ordinary” occurrence, guided by the proliferation of interactive “soundscape maps”. Even more interesting is the alliance which is being forged between the soundscape and heritage studies, as through high-profile projects which “consider the sound as a living heritage, which must be preserved and enhanced because of its fragility”⁶, recording of the ordinary sound becomes closely related to tourist and heritage industry.

1 R. Murray Schafer, *Our Sonic Environment and the Soundscape: The Tuning of the World* (Rochester VT: Destiny Books, 1994), 3–4.

2 Jacques Attali, *Noise. The Political Economy of Music*, transl. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 3.

3 I refer specifically to *practices* of soundscape research, which are often stepping over the narrow bounds of scholarship and are also visible outside academia. The *theory* of soundscape (and sound) studies, however, often does provide an innovative thinking on the ecological trail; cf. Pinch and Bijsterveld 2012, Thompson and Biddle 2013 and García Quiñones, Kassabian and Boschi 2013, specifically Grimshaw 2012, Biddle 2013, Rai 2013, etc.

Soundscape Rostock, 2010–2011, accessed on May 1, 2016, <http://www.soundscapestrostock.de/>.

Limerick Soundscapes, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://www.limericksoundscapes.ie/>.

4 John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

5 Limerick Soundscapes, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://www.limericksoundscapes.ie/>.

6 European Acoustic Memory, 2013, accessed on May 1, 2016, <http://map.europeanacousticheritage.eu/>.

It is clear that what conservationism paradigm of soundscape research practice is actually aimed at is changing relationship towards public sound in terms of accessibility, preservation, and even inscribing value. What it does not contribute to, and in that respect betrays the ecological paradigm of soundscape studies, is understanding the politics of sonic immersion, “intimate listening”⁷ or “listening to the *longue durée*”⁸. In this article I argue that by betraying the ecological paradigm, soundscape studies are in the danger of losing their critical potential. Namely, arguing for ecological understanding of listening, listening as a continuous process, is not only a mere philosophical exercise but a prerequisite in understanding the operations of the social machines of subjectification.⁹ As machines operate through numerous albeit limited points of “coding”, in other words, singular events – such as the music or sound events studied in (ethno)musicology – listening only to these singularities would leave us hopelessly shackled in the doings of the machine. Understanding listening from the ecological perspective, however, would offer a different understanding of production of meaning in the social space and time, which would, on one hand, help us analyse how the social machine operatively succeeds in “smoothing” the listener¹⁰, and, on the other, it would face us with a leftover, a non-signified materiality obscured by the narratives¹¹, which, by force of its own materiality, holds the potential of the escape. As Félix Guattari notes, ecology in this sense has the potential to question “the whole of subjectivity and capitalistic power formations”.¹²

Romanticism Out of Joint: Henri Lefebvre and Rhythmanalysis

In order to develop an ecological method of soundscape research practice, I will employ the concept of *rhythmanalysis* proposed by the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre in his last major book originally published in 1992 (*Elements de rythmanalyse: Introduction a la connaissance de rythmes*, translation in English by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore as *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*¹³). I choose to address Lefebvre’s *rhythmanalysis* for two reasons: firstly, I believe that there is an overriding commitment in Lefebvre writing to an ecological understanding of the social reality, and, secondly, I recognize a potent practical perspective in the manner

7 Ian Biddle, “Quiet Sounds and Intimate Listening: The Politics of Tiny Seductions,” in: Thompson and Biddle 2013, 206–222.

8 Deborah Kapchan, “Learning to Listen: The Sound of Sufism in France,” *The World of Music* 51 (2009): 65–89. Deborah Kapchan, “Slow Ethnography, Slow Activism: Listening, Witnessing and the *Longue Durée*,” Keynote paper presented at 12th Congress of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, Zagreb, Croatia, 21–25 June 2015 (SIEF2015).

9 Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, transl. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

10 William Bogard, “Smoothing Machines and the Constitution of Society,” *Cultural Studies* 14 (2000): 269–294.

11 Srdan Atanasovski, “Consequences of the Affective Turn: Exploring Music Practices from without and within,” *Musicology* 18 (2015): 65.

12 Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, transl. by Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2000), 52.

13 Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, transl. by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore (New York: Continuum, 2004).

Both in the French and in English edition, the “*Essai de rythmanalyse des villes méditerranéennes*” (“Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities”), originally published in 1986 and co-authored by Catherine Régulier, was included in the volume (Lefebvre and Régulier, 2004).

Lefebvre describes the work of a prospective “rhythmanalyst” which can serve as a trailblazer in soundscape research practice.

With a clear footing in non-orthodox Marxism Lefebvre’s writings can be succinctly summarized as a quest to answer a single question – what is the locus of the true reality. Therein Lefebvre openly advocates a “new romanticism” which would help us grasp the issues of the contemporary world,¹⁴ one might say an “ecological romanticism”, an understanding of the social reality which would go beyond semiotic analysis of singular coded events and endeavours to grasp the lived experience. Subverting the theoretical milieu of his day, Lefebvre’s discourse goes against creating fixed and ostensibly novel theoretical concepts and instead works by exploring the world through ironical twists on traditional notions. However, he nevertheless becomes heavily embroiled in key questions of postmodernist debates, namely, in conceiving the ways to think of radical immanence. The trail of irony which leads to thinking on/in immanence is most visible in Lefebvre’s study on the “production of space”.¹⁵ For Lefebvre, space is a key concept precisely because of its material irreducibility which makes it impossible to disentangle not only singular coded events from the non-signified materiality, but also the very sign, or signification process as such, from its physical materiality. To describe this, Lefebvre ironically plays with the concept of representation, distinguishing between “spatial practice”, “representations of space” and “spaces of representation”,¹⁶ which he offers as nodes of three-part dialectical analysis, and he also subsequently eloquently reaffirms his position in *Rhythmanalysis*:

*If there is difference and distinction, there is neither separation nor an abyss between so-called material bodies, living bodies, social bodies and representations, ideologies, traditions, projects and utopias. They are all composed of (reciprocally influential) rhythms in interaction.*¹⁷

Lefebvre’s study on “rhythmanalysis”¹⁸ is a work in which he explicitly draws inspiration out of music, and a three-part dialectical model is accordingly reformulated to encompass “melody–harmony–rhythm”.¹⁹ However, it quickly becomes clear that Lefebvre does not wish to discuss music as the canon of art works, but music and sound as means of aestheticizing and dis-alienating the lived reality. Thus, the key question which Lefebvre poses in relation to music and sound is whether musical time coincides with the “lived time”, that is, whether musical time is inextricably sociospatial or it resides in the transcendent reality of music as art and/or institution. Not surprisingly, Lefebvre renounces the possibility of the existence of imaginary time that exists

14 Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes, September 1959 – May 1961*, transl. by John Moore (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 239 ff.

15 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, transl. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

16 While Nicholson-Smith translates “les espaces de représentation” as “representational spaces” (Lefebvre 1991), other scholars favour the more literal translation (cf. Elden 2004b, 206).

17 Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 43.

18 Lefebvre takes the phrase “rhythmanalysis” from philosophers Lúcio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos (1931) and Gaston Bachelard (1964).

19 Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 12. Stuart Elden, “Rhythmanalysis: An Introduction,” in: Lefebvre 2004, xi.

outside the social space, by which he also waives the possibility of the existence of “meaning” as transcendental in relation to the material rhythm of the body.²⁰ However, while renouncing the ontological otherness to music and sound, Lefebvre is insisting on a new form of their aesthetic otherness, that is, aesthetic autonomy. Discussing the autonomy of music in relation to the spoken word,²¹ the author truly speaks in favour of the existence of aesthetic autonomy in relation to the semantic. Similar to the architecture in terms of space,²² music is the one that aestheticizes time, and its ethical and cathartic social role is not “the other” in relation to the aesthetic, but it is precisely contained therein. Music and sound open the possibility of aestheticizing the contradictions of the lived, the possibility of performative misinterpretations which hold the potentiality for subversion and de-alienation.²³ Needless to say, this aestheticization of the moment is not to be achieved through music art as an institution of bourgeois provenance, on the contrary, the frames of music art as an institution hinders this mission and only the destruction of art as institutional practice and translation of the aesthetic to the everyday experience of an individual (as the locus of “permanent revolution”) can resist the dialectics of alienation.²⁴

For Lefebvre the concept of *rhythm* serves to establish the repetition and repetitive organisation as the cornerstone of the everyday experience. Rhythm connects the “rational laws” of the capitalist society with “the carnal”, “the body” of the subject. As the flow of production, rhythm at the same time organizes the bodies and exposes the organization of the flows of capital:

*Rhythms. Rhythms. They reveal and they hide. Much more diverse than in music, or the so-called civil code of successions, relatively simple texts in relation to the City. Rhythms: the music of the City, a scene that listens to itself, an image in the present of a discontinuous sum. Rhythms perceived from the invisible window, pierced into the wall of the façade... But next to the other windows, it is also within a rhythm that escapes it...*²⁵

Exposing the rhythm is a task which Lefebvre assigns to “rhythmanalyst”. On one hand, his task is light, as nothing is hidden to him and the doings of the capitalist society are inescapably exposed through the rhythm on the plane of material immanence.²⁶ On the other, his methods are so removed from the standard methods of social or anthropological research that the competencies of researcher as such need to be revisited:

20 Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 60.

21 Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 62.

22 Henri Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, ed. by Łukasz Stanek, transl. by Robert Bononno (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

23 In this sense one should read Lefebvre’s statement that “by and through rhythm, music becomes worldly [se mondialise]” (Lefebvre 2004, 65).

24 Henri Lefebvre, *S onu stranu strukturalizma*, transl. by Frida Filipović (Beograd: Komunist, 1973), 210.

25 Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 36.

26 “Might there be hidden, secret, rhythms, hence inaccessible movements and temporalities? No, because there are no secrets. Everything knows itself, but not everything says itself, publicises itself. Do not confuse silence with secrets! That which is forbidden from being said, be it external or intimate, produces an obscure, but not a secret, zone” (Lefebvre 2004, 17, emphasis removed).

[The rhythm analyst] will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises, which are said without meaning, and to murmurs [rumeurs], full of meaning – and finally he will listen to silences. [...] The rhythm analyst will not have [...] methodological obligations [of a psychoanalyst]: rendering oneself passive, forgetting one's knowledge, in order to re-present it in its entirety in the interpretation. He listens – and first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome.²⁷

From the perspective of soundscape studies, there are four striking and particularly useful points on which Lefebvre insists in his description of rhythm analyst and rhythm analysis as a research method:

- A) *Practice* – However unlikely this might be at the first, having this abstract, poetic and theory-saturated text in mind, Lefebvre insists that rhythm analysis is essentially a practical discipline, as every critical theory ought to be if it wishes to produce an effect. Even further, the social mechanisms which make us think separately of “practice” and “theory”, “research” and “knowledge”, are exactly the mechanism through which capitalist society keeps obscuring its own reproduction.²⁸ Rhythm analyst performs his analysis by “catching a rhythm” and perceiving it “within the whole”, arriving “at the concrete through experience”.²⁹
- B) *Body* – Proclaiming that “at no moment” could “the analysis of rhythms” afford to lose “sight of the body”, Lefebvre insists that the research has to be both centred on body and to be performed as an embodied activity. In other words, the body is not only an object of analysis, it is an analytical toolkit, serving as a “metronome”.³⁰ In order to produce critical knowledge, the researcher must think “with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality”.³¹
- C) *Listening* – It might not come as surprise that the key method of rhythm analysis is listening. However, having in mind the scope of the tasks which rhythm analysis is to meet, that is, the analysis of the totality of social space and time, resorting to listening not only as a prime, but virtually as the *only* method which the researcher is to use, is, to say at least, a drastic move. It is clear that we speak about a different kind of listening, which can't be described neither as “attentive”, nor as “casual”: the rhythm analyst “is always ‘listening out’, but he does not only hear words, discourses, noises and sounds; he is capable of listening to a house, a street, a town as one listens to a symphony, an opera”.³² Musicology and ethnomusicology are the disciplines which are probably most prone to having listening – also usually described as “close listening” – as the methods of their research.³³ But even these disciplines are repeatedly struggling to include other, “scientific” methods in order

27 Lefebvre, *Rhythm analysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 19.

28 Henri Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier, “Attempt at the Rhythm analysis of Mediterranean Cities,” transl. by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore, in: Lefebvre 2004, 87.

29 Lefebvre, *Rhythm analysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 21.

30 Lefebvre, *Rhythm analysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 19. Stuart Elden, 2004a, “Rhythm analysis: An Introduction,” in: Lefebvre 2004, xii.

31 Lefebvre, *Rhythm analysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, 21.

32 Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier, “Attempt at the Rhythm analysis of Mediterranean Cities,” 87.

33 For current debates on listening in musicology see Dell'Antonio 2004.

to vindicate their position in the social field, whether it is the written methods of music analysis or various forms of structured ethnography. Listening to a town as one listens to a symphony can be a task of musicologists, but in order to answer it, they must renounce the research object of their discipline (“symphony”, that is, a musical work of defined scope), while retaining their competences (or, one might add, transforming close listening into “ecological listening”). In this regard, Lefebvre shows a path towards rhythmanalysis as a “post-musicology”.³⁴

- D) *Silence* – Insistence on purportedly meaningless murmurs and, even more, on silence is a striking feature on Lefebvre’s essay and probably the most damaging to the previously described conservational paradigm of soundscape research practices, for it is the silence, that is, the ecology of the sound event, which is therein disregarded. For Lefebvre, listening to silence in its full extension in which it surrounds the sound is what is necessary if one wants to grasp the social significance of the sound, listening to rhythm basically coming down to listening to sounds *and* silences. It is this silence, the non-sounding ecology of the sound event, the non-signified materiality, which unravels the “secret” of the rhythm. One might also be tempted to compare this silence with “empty space” and to recall that Lefebvre’s adamant assertion that there is no such thing as “objective, neutral and empty space” is part and parcel of his critique of the semiotic models which disregard the very brute materiality of space and time.³⁵

With these lessons I now turn to the sonic policescape as the body of my analysis.

Policescape and the Act of Listening

Soundscape research practices often involve elaborate planning of the act of recording, performed with high definition audio devices. The act of recording then postpones the moment of analysis, transforming soundscape research into the study of the *recording* – the mediated sound event which is already outside its environment and whose properties are inevitably distorted – and not the sonic environment as such. In this exercise of rhythmanalysis, performed in Belgrade (September 2015 – March 2016) and in Vienna (April–May 2016), I give the primacy to the non-mediated listening of extensive temporal reach. Sound recording and reproduction and “sound diary” are used as assisting, secondary tools. In terms of recording, the preference is given to audio recording devices which are non-obtrusive to wear and which can record extensive swaths of time (e.g. between four and twenty hours), even when resulting in recordings of low definition. “Sound diary” is kept as a written record of the observed properties of sonic ecologies. The research is primarily envisioned as autoethnography, but is additionally supported through a pool of selected interlocutors, which are subjected to in-depth interview and asked to use same tools in everyday listening.

The main task of this rhythmanalysis was locating the mechanisms of *policescape*, understood as the urban soundscape and landscape of policing. Namely, distinguishing

³⁴ For listening as a method in ethnography see also Erlmann 2004.

³⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 36, 154.

between the realm of politics and police, Jacques Rancière broadens the notion of policing from the system of security in order to encompass all actions which are performed in order to prescribe (and inscribe) the social labels and “identities”³⁶ onto certain groups and individuals. While what is commonly understood as “politics” is today mainly practiced exactly as negotiations between groups which already assert their (class, national, ethical, religious) identity, often with the sole demand of continual assertion of this identity, for Rancière, the very act which foreruns these negotiations, the hierarchical differentiation of classes with different responsibilities and privileges is exactly what hinders the political and renders our world the world of policing instead the world of politics. In other words, it seems impossible to enter the political struggle without being already captured by the “police”, that is, by the systems of identification and categorization through which the society operates.³⁷ Drawing on this understanding of policing, I define policescape as an corporeal system of physical devices which are out in motion with an aim to capture the bodies of the individuals through their sensory capacities, such as vision, touch, smell and, last but not the least, hearing. Policescape is a materiality, *res extensa*, an agent which impacts the body without mediation and instructs them how to adopt their responsibilities and privileges, expected patterns of behaviour and prescribed practices of the body. Aspects of policescape as such might relate to different notions of group “identities”, such as religious, class, etc., but one of the key features of the policescape remains *extension*, its indiscriminate affecting of the individual bodies (even when it appears discriminative) which are left to negotiate their relation to it.

By the nature of sound, the sonic policescape cuts across social and physical barriers, which makes it one of the most potent vehicles of imposing and replicating patterns of cultural hegemonies. Our bodies appear as passive hearing objects which become entrained by apparatuses of hegemony, engulfed in their full extent before even having a chance to provide resistance. By hearing, not only that our own bodies become part of the capitalistic system, but we also allow the sound to structure our daily existence, imposing the categories of private–public, activity–passivity, spaces of democracy – spaces of obedience. How does policescape achieves this, how does it render bodies of individuals into passive, “willing” subjects³⁸ capable of being affected but at the same time renouncing their will to affect, to embed themselves into the sonic environment in unexpected or non-proscribed way? In order to answer this question, I will discuss two point which proved to be especially important in my analysis:

A) *The public/private divide* – The separation of the spheres of public and private is one of the cornerstones of the capitalist society. It not only underpins the class-structured social space regulated through the paradigm of “security”, maintaining the relations of inequality and protecting the property, both private and public. It also creates a promise of a personal, private sphere which should be available to each individual. The gated community available to the high echelons of the society

36 Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” *Theory and Society* 29 (2000): 1–47.

37 Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, transl. by Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1995). Oliver Davis, *Jacques Rancière* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 74 ff.

38 Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital: Spinoza and Marx on Desire*, transl. by Gabriel Ash (London and New York: Verso, 2014).

is transformed into utopian ideal of the private spheres which each individual tries to recreate in their own lived experience, inevitably failing in this respect.³⁹ If the ultimate benchmark of success and moral ideal in the neoliberal society is (equally impossible and transient) absolute financial independence and self-sufficiency,⁴⁰ then achieving an ownership over the absolute private sphere which cannot be violated becomes its ultimate fetish, an ultimate point of desire. The utopia (or, one could argue, dystopia) of the gated community as the point of desire actively structures how the individual body hears and listens on two levels: firstly, by delineating the lived space into the spheres of “public” and “private”, and, secondly, distinguishing between “public” and “private” sounds. Although sonic event such as church bells or police sirens, seen as public, overrides enclosures of thin walls and windows of one’s private sphere, inside this enclosure they are heard with apparent ignorance, as mere information at most, while in the public sphere they can command the body into religious devotion or into state of vigilance. In opposition, sounds produced by traffic or even privately owned audio reproduction equipment are commonly ignored as an invisible drone or at most a nuisance in the outside space, only to be scathingly detested once they encroach into one’s private sphere. This is not to say that policescape is innocuous when ignored, in fact exactly the opposite is argued: policescape is reaffirmed when it achieves what could be labelled “patterned interpellation”, that is, when it enters the patterns of ignoring and responding, effectively structuring our understanding of social space. The desire of gated community not only serves to limit our ambitions to freedom and political intervention, it also serves to antagonise individuals and preclude creating coalitions in the social space. Finally, the systematic and thorough imposition of public/private divide serves to destroy and prevent from appearing the space which is outside – or beyond – this divide, that is, the *common* space.⁴¹ If only beyond public and private the *urban* as the space of political can appear, then it becomes obvious that policing is not precluding the Rancian political solely through discursive processes of identification and codification, but precisely through the *res extensa* of the policescape.

- B) *Horror silentii* – As we have seen on the example of the public/private divide, policescape dictates the rhythm of individuals’ daily life through creating spatiotemporal categories which structure the mechanisms of interpellation. While public/private divide is arguably the most deeply rooted, other examples of such categories in opposition can be provided, and possibly traced back to the public/private: work/leisure, commuting/habitation, just to name few important. Each of these categories materializes in space and time and policescape provides sensuous reminders of our identity and function in each of them. As the sound reproduction

39 Interestingly, in a passing reflection in his essay on surrealism, Walter Benjamin ascribes the “virtue” of privacy, that is, the “discretion concerning one’s own existence”, to the aristocracy, which is then being imitated by the petty bourgeoisie (Benjamin 1979, 228). While it is undoubted that privacy has been the object of desire in different historical circumstances, one could argue that it is precisely the bourgeoisie and the advent of capitalism which brought forward the present notion of privacy that can be mass produced and available not only to the few of the ruling class (Colomina 1996).

40 Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 14.

41 Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). Cesare Casarino and Antonio Negri, *In Praise of the Common: A Conversation on Philosophy and Politics* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). Stavros Stavrides, *Common Space. The City as Commons* (London: Zed Books, 2016).

technologies becomes ever more available, the sonic environment often becomes the prime mechanism of this reminder. So called elevator music provides rhythm to our activities in a way which is in many respects similar to early steam engines providing ever-increasing rhythm of factory production.⁴² This might not ostensibly seem as an imposed practice, as we often consciously use different sonic ecologies to self-structure the everyday: the music one chooses to listen at work is different from the music one chooses to listen at homes or in the free time. I would argue that one of the main mechanisms by which sonic policescape operates in this respect is *horror silentii*, that is, a fear of silence, which results in a continuous race to sonically encompass each of the everyday situations in which one may find himself. However, even then, swaths of our spatiotemporality remain silent, both in what is regarded as public and private spaces, not (yet?) engulfed by the sonic policescape, filled by silence or the sounds (“murmurs”) of nature we usually disregard. *Horror silentii*, thus at this point operates most forcibly through sonic commodification of “threshold spaces”.⁴³ It is these spaces which are aggressively transformed into the spaces of commercial activities, dictating our behaviour as one of the customer, whether it is Muzak-featured duty-free shopping zones which are less than a foot-step away from the boarding pass or border control at the Vienna and Belgrade airports, or the speakers of cafes at the central Trg republike in Belgrade which are pointed outwards, transforming the portions of the adjacent street and square into the appendages of its commercial activities. One must note that the effectiveness of the sonic commodification of threshold spaces is not to be measured by the produced profit as such, the prime object of this process is stifling the potential for the political which is embedded into the threshold. Notoriously and unjustly referred as non-spaces,⁴⁴ thresholds have the proclivity of transforming themselves into the commons, not in spite but precisely because of their apparent non-eventfulness and ordinariness. What the mechanisms of horror silentii here does is preventing the individual becoming of a commoner, and in the same time an incipient political subjects, already goading it into the role of customer.

Ultimately, by exploring the ubiquitousness of listening, one is also impelled to ask if there are political agency and ramifications of the act of listening as such. If policescape fears the silence, it also fears the subject who is *listening* to the silence, as this subject is always a step closer to becoming a commoner. In words of Salomé Voegelin, “silence provides the condition to practise a signifying language that takes account of its sonic base: it embraces the body of the listener in its solitude, and invites him to listen to himself amidst the soundscape that he inhabits.”⁴⁵ On the end, if it is exactly listening to the silence and the murmurous noise what destabilizes the policescape, then this listening has to be deeply environmental, ecological, and it is a task of soundscape research to trace its occurrence as a promise of the political.

42 Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (London and New York: Verso, 2016), 188–191.

43 Stavrides, *Common Space. The City as Commons*.

44 Marc Augé, *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, transl. by John Howe (London and New York: Verso, 1995).

45 Salomé Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence. Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (New York and London: Continuum, 2010), xv.

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POVZETEK

Vse od svojih začetkov je študij zvočnih krajin gojil ekološko dimenzijo. Toda če si ogledamo sedanje prakse raziskav zvočnih krajin, opazimo porast nečesa, čemur pravim paradigma konservativnosti, po kateri se zvok dojema kot obliko dediščine, ki naj se jo ohrani in povečuje. V pričujočem članku poskušam dokazati, da je s tem, ko se izneverimo ekološki paradigmi, ogrožen kritični potencial študija zvočnih krajin. Argumentacija v smeri ekološkega razumevanja poslušanja, poslušanja kot neprekinjenega procesa, namreč ni zgolj filozofska vaja, ampak močno kritično orodje za razkrivanje delovanja socialnih mehanizmov subjektivizacije. Za to da bi razvil ekološko metodo v raziskovanju praks zvočnih krajin, bom uporabil koncept analize ritma, kakor ga je predlagal francoski filozof in sociolog Henri Lefebvre. Z gledišča študija zvočnih krajin obstajajo štiri izredno jasni in uporabni vidiki, na katerih vztraja Lefebvre, ko opisuje analitika ritma in analizo ritma: a) praksa – analiza ritma je po svojem bistvu praktična disciplina, takšna, kot naj bi bila vsaka kritična teorija, ki želi doseči nek učinek; b) telo – telo ni samo predmet raziskave, temveč tudi analitično orodje, saj mora raziskovalec poslušati »s svojim telesom, ne v abstraktnosti, ampak v doživeti časovnosti«; c) poslušanje – s tem ko določi poslušanje za edino pravo metodo, ki naj jo raziskovalec uporablja, Lefebvre tlakuje pot k analizi

ritma kot »post-muzikologiji«; in d) tišina – za Lefebvra je posluš za tišino v svoji celotni razsežnosti, po kateri tišina obdaja zvok, tisto nujno, če želimo dojeti socialni pomen zvoka. V tej vaji analize ritma, kakor je bila izvajana v Beogradu (od septembra 2015 do marca 2016) in na Dunaju (od aprila do maja 2016), dajem prednost ne-posredovanemu poslušanju širokega časovnega dosega. Raziskava je v prvi vrsti zamišljena kot avtoetnografija, s tem da je dodatno podprta z nizom izbranih sogovornikov. Glavni namen analize je bil locirati mehanizme policijske krajine, razumljene kot urbane zvočne krajine in krajine policijskega nadzora. Izhajajoč iz Rancièrovega razumevanja policijskega nadzora, definiram policijsko krajino kot širok sistem fizičnih prijemov, ki ciljajo na to, da ujamejo telesa posameznikov preko njihovih čutnih zmožnosti. Zaradi narave zvoka zvočna policijska krajina preči socialne in fizične prepreke, kar iz nje naredi eno najmočnejših načinov, kako vsiliti in zamenjati vzorce kulturnih hegemonij. Pojasnujem dva vidika, ki sta se izkazala kot posebej pomembna v analizi: a) javna/zasebna ločnica in njen potencial, da strukturira načine, kako poslušamo in slišimo in b) horror silenti in zvočna komodifikacija predprostorov. Zaključim s tem, da so prav posluš za tišino in različni hrupi tisto, kar destabilizira policijsko krajino, kar lociranje in analizo te vrste poslušanja povzdigne v pomembni nalogi študija zvočne krajine.