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Soundwalk as a multifaceted practice

Kamila STAŚKO-MAZUR*

ABSTRACT

The soundwalk was invented as part of the initiatives undertaken by the World Soundscape Project group with an acoustic ecology profile, which emphasised the noise pollution that exists in people's sonic environment and the need to reacquire our 'lost skill' of conscious listening. Initially, the practice of soundwalking was used as a method allowing us to 'hone our hearing' (to boost our sonological competence), to show the human condition with respect to modern reality. Soon, the soundwalk became an inspiration for many artistic undertakings that made use of the sonic properties of the environment and employed various listening strategies. This article is designed to present the idea of soundwalking since its theory and practices began to form. By presenting selected works by Hildegard Westerkamp, I intend to show the motivations behind the practice of soundwalking, which encompass the complex issues of perceiving and assessing city sounds. I refer these to Tim Ingold's proposition to understand sound as a medium of experience. Soundwalking, as a practice of conscious listening by focusing attention on aural sensations, paradoxically seems to reveal the multi-sensory structure of our relationship with the world, and the mediatory function of sound in our experience of being-in-the-world.

KEYWORDS

soundwalk; sonic environment; soundscape; mediation; perception

* Ph.D. candidate at Musicology Department, Soundscape Research Studio, University of Wroclaw, Poland. E-mail: kamila.staskomazur@gmail.com.

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Soundwalking as a practice organised around conscious listening is an elaborated, listening-oriented, modern variety of an traditional walk. The fundamental characteristic of the practice — attentive listening — is assumed to lead to a heightened awareness and an ecological attitude. However, the potential imbedded in soundwalking lets one interpret and apply it in various ways. Because of the large number of different practices that considerably transform the original premises of the technique, the determinants that lie at the basis of its development are worthy of discussion. When presenting the concept of soundwalking in the works of Hildegard Westerkamp, I would like to juxtapose the practice designed as part of the activities of the World Soundscape Project with a critical discourse on soundscape and Tim Ingold's understanding of sound with a view to creating a perspective that shows the common points of the two proposals.

The idea of a walk has had a long tradition that is varied in terms of objectives, strategies, tactics, cultural practices and geopolitical conditions (Chatwin, 1998; Urry, 2009: 77–95; Paquette & McCartney, 2012: 136–138). A special interest in the meaning of the practice of walking is reflected in the consideration of mobility, the philosophy of being, philosophy of space, psychogeography, urban studies, meditation, sensory studies, including studies research into the sonic environment. The mentioned trends that restore the value of a walk include a very specific proposition, which is soundwalking. Andra McCartney observes that:

> soundwalking can be situated in relation to long-standing artistic, philosophical and political concepts that theorize through the practice of walking, such as haiku poets' use of daily walks as a creative structure, writing about the figure of the flaneur and the situationist concept of the dérive, as well as the approaches of conceptual artists, such as those in the Fluxus movement (McCartney, 2014: 213).

A considerable role in developing the practice of soundwalking, apart from any political and ideological determinants, was played by the advance of technology and its presence in daily life and art, the ability to record and reproduce sound, and to carefully explore the sounds of our environment, and the inclination by artists, composers and philosophers to include daily sounds, noise and industrial sounds in their area of interest. The late 1970s are usually given as the time when the practice of soundwalking emerged:

> Until the 1970s, there was no practice defined as soundwalking as such: practitioners came from such fields as audio documentary (such as Schwartz), film (Ruttman) or conceptual art (Piper) [...] In the 1970s, prepared by the artistic work and political ideologies of the Fluxus movement in New York and the Situationist movement in France, both of which emphasize a focus on art from everyday life, two major research groups began more sustained work in researching and recording sound

environments, providing more possibilities for collaboration, exchange and publication (McCartney, 2014: 217).

As the initiators of the practice of soundwalking, two groups are normally mentioned: CRESSON[1] — set up by Francois Augoyard, author of *Pas à pas: Essai sur le cheminement quotidien en milieu urbain* (Augoyard, 1979), and the World Soundscape Project[2] (WSP) — established at the discretion of Raymond Murray Schafer, composer and educator, creator of the concept of soundscape and acoustic ecology (Schafer, 1973).

To WSP, the consideration of the sonic shape of the environment and the practice of conscious listening constituted the fundamental aspects of educational work (Schafer, 1967) and research projects (Schafer, 1977a; Schafer, 1977b; Schafer, 1978). Analyses of acoustic features, recording of the soundscape and electroacoustic works were used both for archival purposes and to draw attention to how we perceive and receive particular acoustic spaces. The concept of soundwalking inspired by such ideas acquired an additional dimension as a technique restoring a personal relationship to one's living place (there are numerous references, for instance, to Vancouver). The goals of the practice of soundwalking in the works by Westerkamp reflect a consistent idea of a dialogue with the environment, the idea to undertake a responsible co-creation of its form through recognising one's own attitude to it, which, at the same time, allows you to shape your own internal balance. The encouragement to decompose the processes of sound habituation is linked here with the need for the awareness of a skillful use of various modes of listening. They enable you to recognise, among other things, urban noise as a negative value, but — what is important — as something requiring dialogue. Listening operates as a tool for active participation in the world.

Nowadays, the concept of soundwalking encompasses many new forms that make use of selected tactics of listening and walking as well as various artistic goals. 'Electrical walks', designed by Christine Kubisch with a view to listening to sounds generated by electromagnetic fields in the urban space, use purpose-made headphones that transform electromagnetic fields into sound signals. On the one hand, the idea expands the premises of soundwalking with the

[1] The profile of the CRESSON team set up in the 1970s includs interdisciplinary studies into acoustics and the *ambiance* of architecture and urban space, anthropology of space, sociology of the city. The studies conducted under the aegis of Jean Francois Augoyard became an inspiration, for instance, for an essay by Michel de Certeau *Walking in the city* (Certeau, 1984: 91–110).

[2] In the early 1970s, members of the World Soundscape Project (WSP), founded at Simon Fraser University, included: R. M. Schafer, Barry Truax, Howard Bloomfield, Peter Huse, Bruce Davis and Hildegard Westerkamp. The projects implemented by the group concerned, among other things, noise pollution of the environment and studies research into the soundscape of towns and cities in Canada and Europe.

ability to hear sounds that are usually inaccessible to the human ear, and, on the other, it focuses attention on the peculiar phenomena of secret 'pollution' of the environment, which is in agreement with the WSP's research desiderata, which call for analysis of the technological sounds.[3] A characteristic feature of 'electrical walks' is also the fact that its participants are made aware of a constant flow of sounds or, more broadly, electrical impulses (Cox & Kubisch, 2006: 7).

'Shadow-walks', done by Viv Corringham, are intended to artistically reinterpret private ways of walking, listening and experiencing places. The concept involves memory processes, construction of psychogeographical maps, focus on objects found during walks, the voices and accounts of walk participants, which are subject to artistic interpretation, presented during the postproduction stages. A work created on the basis of a walk combines field recordings, walker accounts and vocal improvisations they inspired. In their authors' intentions, shadow-walks are a type of trace, a human shadow cast in a given place, presented in audio form. In practice, the idea of soundwalking is transformed here, constituting an element of a complex process of implementation, whose form is closer to a radio programme or a place-inspired composition.

The concept of soundwalking is also present in projects to be found in the media or on the Internet. Often such forms of presentation provide a compression of a real experience of soundwalking to several minutes, which also occurs in the case of installations that make use of field recordings registered during a sound walk.[4] Their principal task is to recreate, collect, reconstruct or make available sounds and past experiences that usually possess a form of a visual frame. Various forms of sound webmaps (*e.g.* ones available online) create rich databases. A special place among them is occupied by projects that take account of the perspective of the blind or the visually impaired, as in the case of an 'Invisible map — of the city of Wrocław', which is a valuable attempt to show a non-visual way of constructing the world (Bączyk, 2006). Some of the ideas related to soundwalking are still useful as an element of research methodologies in sound studies, which regard soundwalking as a support practice in, for instance, disclosing the cultural identity of a city (Losiak & Tańczuk, 2014) or reconstructing its auditive form.[5]

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[3] I mean the *Hum map of the World* that the group intend to create while taking account of variable cycles of electric current, cf. Shand, 1974: 6.

[4] I mean, for instance, the installation constructed on the basis of a repeated soundwalk in the Queen Elizabeth Park in 1997 (that followed the route of the original 1974 walk). The installation in Toronto and Kingston in 1998 — as a description of the project points out — compressed the effects of the walk to two minutes: 'by using asyndeton, synechdoche and elipse as compositional strategies twenty minutes becomes two minutes' (McCartney, 2014: 223–224).

[5] Cf. *e.g.* a reconstruction of a soundwalk through the eighteenth-century Paris in the quartier du Grand Châtelet (Website 1).

Other forms of walks, which show more distant relations with the idea of soundwalking, such as audio walks or tourist walks, because of different aims, often constituting a contradiction of the original assumptions of soundwalking,[6] have not been included and are a separate issue of a modern urban practice. However, the scope of impact of the idea of soundwalking on such varied projects as the geosonification projects of Andrea Polli in Antarctica or the sonic bikes of Kaffe Matthews indicates that the practice of soundwalking has a huge potential for exploration and is still an inspiring motive for science and art.

THE CONCEPT OF SOUNDWALKING IN THE SELECTED WORKS OF HILDEGARD WESTERKAMP

'We should listen to our cities as the native did to the forest' (1974)[7]

One of the first published texts that described the practice of soundwalking and set out the principles of the 'technique' was an article by Hildegard Westerkamp entitled *Soundwalking* (Westerkamp, 1974). In it, the authoress presents a definition of soundwalking, stating that it is an 'excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment. It is exposing our ears to every day sound around us no matter where we are' and stresses the need to take care of our acoustic environment,[8] because 'listening to our cities as a soundwalker can be a painful, exhausting and rather depressing experience' (Westerkamp, 1974: 18). Opposing the illusory defence mechanism and a polluted sonic environment, Westerkamp proposes to undertake the first soundwalk in the form of an 'intense introduction into the experience of uncompromised listening' with a view to 'rediscovering and reactivating our sense of hearing' (Westerkamp, 1974: 18). The first 'ear-opening' exercise consists in listening to one's own body and then to the surrounding environment. When analysing the various textures and forms of sounds, in the proposal one can discover references to Schafer's metaphor that treats the sonic environment as a composition (Schafer, 1973: 3) and an interesting definition of sound or rather 'soundmaking'[9] as a relation between humans and the environment interpreted in the metaphor of a dialogue: 'with your voice or your footsteps for instance

[6] The use of headphones with a recording which the listener is supposed to listen to all the time, without confronting it with an actual experience of the place, seems to be in conflict with the idea of a dialogue with the environment.

[7] The quote is from a text by Westerkamp entitled *Soundwalking*, which sets out the fundamental goals of the practice (Westeramp, 1974: 18–27).

[8] I use the term acoustic environment after Westerkamp to mean sonic environement.

[9] *Listening and soundmaking* (Westerkamp, 1988).

you are "talking" to your environment, which then in turn responds by giving your sounds a specific acoustic quality' (Westerkamp, 1974: 19). Pointing out that the notion of 'soundwalk' originates from 'sunday-walk' and considering the condition of modern man, who is stuck in front of the screens or behind the walls, Westerkamp recommends that we 're-establish contact between our natural sense and the acoustic environment' (Westerkamp, 1974: 21). To this end, she proposes that we undertake another soundwalk along the chartered and planned out route — presented together with a map and supporting, analytical questions — in Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver (Westerkamp, 1974: 21–27).

It is worth pointing out that already in the first attempts at reestablishing contact with the place and strengthening the ability to consciously listen, attention was drawn to the visual aspects of space and their impact on perception and entanglement of the senses in multi-sensory perception (Westerkamp, 1974: 21). By selecting a route in the attractive surroundings of Queen Elizabeth Park, it is possible to experience various spaces, views, smells and sounds, including the delicate sounds produced by water; the noise of the city — coming from afar — gradually fades away. Despite this interesting — one could add: comfortable — perspective of the exploration of the park's sounds, Westerkamp recommends that an active and responsible attitude be adopted in any acoustic environment. She notices that practising soundwalking in a city centre or a similarly loud environment would be useless, but it is essential that we do not cut ourselves off from the sounds of the environment and that we always retain contact with our urban environment, as one of the fundamental principles of the practice of soundwalking is the restoration of a dialogue with reality. As Westerkamp observes: 'we should listen to our cities as the native did to the forest' (Westerkamp, 1974: 24).

Broadcast soundscape: 'To make radio a place of environmental listening' (1978–1979)[10]

The soundwalk assumptions are then reflected in forms other than the basic one, intended for a silent, personal following of a route in the field, aimed at experiencing listening. In the years 1978–1979, Westerkamp, in cooperation with Vancouver Cooperative Radio, produced a series of programmes called *Soundwalking*, designed 'to take Radio listeners into the soundscape of Vancouver and surroundings' (Westerkamp, 1994: 89). The series was prepared by a channel that promoted the slogan 'radio that listens', which set out to broadcast programmes different from the traditional model and common music

[10] The quote comes from a text by Westerkamp that describes the motivations behind the creation of radio programmes entitled *Soundwalking* (Westerkamp, 1994: 88).

programmes by presenting what was regularly ignored in commercial media,[11] aiming to boost its listeners' imagination and creativity, to inspire them to invent and to stimulate them to listen. The radio founders' ambition was also:

> to involve the community in the making of a radio so that radio sound would embody the voice of the community. Any listener could also be a radiomaker, who might then become an increasingly active listener because of his or her immediate involvement with the station (Westerkamp, 1994: 88).

In line with the above assumptions, Westerkamp designed programmes intended 'to make radio a place of environmental listening by broadcasting the soundscapes that listeners experienced in their everyday lives' and 'to create a program that listened to the communities of Greater Vancouver without attempting to report about them' (Westerkamp, 1994: 88–89). The composer presented recordings from various regions of Vancouver — from natural landscapes of mountain regions to the city's public places, making use of various techniques (takes): 'constant perspective' with a stationary microphone, where there is no voice-link to the radio listener and the person recording remains still or is absent, while the microphone records, or a 'narrative perspective' with comments on and information about some aspects of the recorded soundscape.

Thanks to the use of a microphone, Westerkamp brought to light and broadcast microscopic sounds of the sonic environment, various sonic resonances, timbres and textures of places. In some soundwalking programmes accompanied by her voice, she provided a context for the recording, by talking about the weather, time, the feel of places, architecture or how the environment looked. As observed by Westerkamp, the voice transmits information about the place, 'it is also a constant reminder of the recordist's presence in the environment and the fact that this presence creates a specific perspective for the listener' (Westerkamp, 1994: 90). The presentation of such programmes was — according to their authoress — to create an awareness or curiosity in each individual listener of a unique acoustic perspective (Westerkamp, 1994: 90). McCartney also points out a certain potential for a dialogue of such radio undertakings:

> The Soundwalking show is at once a tool of access for her to learn about the Canadian soundscape and engage in dialogue about it with people, as well as a venue to express what she hears, and again to engage in dialogue by playing it back to a wider radio audience (McCartney, 1999: 157).

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[11] Westerkamp talked more broadly on the mission of Radio Co-op during her lecture called *Radio that listens* presented at *Talking back to radio — Radio als Zuhören — Artyści zmieniają radio.* Wrocław, Poland, December 6–11, 2005. Cf. Westerkamp, 2005.

Westerkamp herself indicated the important role performed by the microphone and the radio station in recorded and replayed soundscapes:

> I found the tape recorder at that time a way of accessing this landscape, and the culture. I was still an immigrant, I had just been here maybe five or six years, and even though I felt pretty much at home, still a lot of aspects were strange, and somehow I think the tape recorder gave me the courage to go into environments that I otherwise wouldn't have gone into. The microphone led me in, and it had a justification. I had this radio station to broadcast it over, and it really was a tool of access, in a way[12] (McCartney, 1999: 156).

In a sense, the work on radio broadcasts/programmes refers to the methods of an anthropologist or ethnologist recounting a given problem through their own experience of having been immersed in the world. It not only encompasses the experience of soundwalking, but also its transmission and reflection on the sociocultural aspects of a sonic space, ways of its impact and reception. Referring to sounds that are known to listeners and — thanks to the recording technique — laboratory-extracted, as it were — and arranged into a radio narration, Westerkamp provides a pretext for thinking about their meaning, considering them on a microscale, with a didactic intent to encourage radio listeners to discover them and to confront them in conscious personal experience.

'To face the city or even to be playful with it' (1989)[13]

The ideas related to soundwalking are also present in Westerkamp's compositions. One of the pieces inspired by an experience of soundwalking is the work *Kits Beach soundwalk* from 1989. The work combines field recordings registered during a walk on Kitsilano Beach in Vancouver in the form of an assisted walk with interest shown in auditory perception and sonic impression in the context of a place that is recorded and listened. The city is a point of destination of a story about delicate sounds and healing dreams, whose power is connected with noble qualities of the sounds. The narration of the composition begins with a consideration of the soundscape of the borderland between the city and the beach. The composer's voice combined with the beach recordings reports:

> It's a calm morning, I'm on Kits Beach in Vancouver.
> It's slightly overcast — and very mild for February.
> It's absolutely windstill.
> The ocean is flat, just a bit rippled in places.

[12] The composer's words come from her interview conducted by McCartney in 1993.
[13] The quote comes from Westerkamp's composition *Kits Beach soundwalk* from 1989.

Ducks are quietly floating on the water.
I'm standing among some large rocks full of barnacles and seaweed.
The water moves calmly through crevices.
The barnacles put out their fingers to feed on the water.
The tiny clicking sounds that you hear are the meeting of the water and the barnacles.
It trickles and clicks and sucks and...
The city is roaring around these tiny sounds.
But it's not masking them.
I could shock you or fool you by saying that the soundscape is this loud. (INCREASE IN VOLUME)
But it is more like this. (DECREASE IN VOLUME)
The view is beautiful — in fact, it is spectacular.
So the sound level seems more like this. (FURTHER DECREASE IN VOLUME)
It doesn't seem that loud.
But I'm trying to listen to those tiny sounds in more detail now.
Suddenly the background sound of the city seems louder again. (INCREASE IN VOLUME)
It interferes with my listening.
It occupies all acoustic space and I can't hear the barnacles in all their tininess.
It seems too much effort to filter the city out.
[...]

(Westerkamp, 1989)

Westerkamp uses some sound editing techniques (*e.g.* volume adjustment, filtering) to picture the complicated meanders of our perception entangled in the feeling of a place with all our senses (once again, she points out the impact of visual experiences as those that draw most attention) to show the insistence and omnipresence of city noise and, above all, to make us aware of the variety of sound structure. Referring to an opinion of Alfred Tomatis, who would say 'that high frequencies charge our brain and give us energy' (Westerkamp, 1989: 4'07), she discusses and presents examples of tiny sounds from her 'healing dreams' (*e.g.* sounds produced by water/barnacles/insects/birds, fragments of Xenakis's *Concret Ph II*, and music by Mozart). The 'punchline' of a story related in this way shows the hum of the city through a hyperbolical monster engulfing such a 'delicacy' of the world. The awareness of the positive and negative qualitative aspects of sound seems to be the *credo* of the composition, which calls for a conscious harmonisation with the sonic form of reality. The message is clear in the concluding words of the piece:

As soon as I make space to hear sounds like this, or to dream them
[tiny sounds — K.S.-M.]
then I feel the strength to face the city again or even to be playful with it.
Play with the monster. Then I can face the monster.

(Westerkamp, 1989: 8'48–9'15)

'Exploring balance & focus' (2011)[14]

The issue of effective dealing with the aggressive civilisational sound returns in successive undertakings focused on the practice of conscious listening from a new perspective. A lecture delivered by Westerkamp at the International Conference on Acoustic Ecology in 2011 (Corfu), entitled 'Crossing Listening Paths', introduced the ideas of balance and focus in acoustic ecology. Using the categories drawn from studies into aural architecture, which differentiate two acoustic and aural design orders (operating within spatial acoustics and cultural acoustics respectively) — proposed by Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter in their book *Spaces speak, are you listening?* (Blesser & Salter, 2007), Westerkamp emphasises the possibility of combining the attributes of the both approaches, proposed by the authors, with a view to achieving 'the inner balance inside our listening attention' (Westerkamp 2011: 8) Inner equilibrium is yet another feature that can be acquired by perfecting one's practice of listening.

To illustrate her thesis, Westerkamp refers to her personal experience, connected not so much with soundwalking as with an unplanned sound interruption that she experienced during a yoga class, when the exercise room became dominated by the noise produced by the nearby construction. Discussing problems with accepting an atypical and unfavourable sound situation, the composer identifies the best possible — in her opinion — solution to be adopted when faced with sound aggression:

> when external pressures are presented and we can not escape them for whatever reason, our focus has to turn inside and with extra strength and determination. Inner focus and inner expansion become a necessity for survival in such instances (Westerkamp, 2011: 9).

Thus, Westerkamp not only recommends listening to the sonic environment, but also skillfully adjusting, focusing and paying attention to current needs, and adopting an approach of awareness. Excluding the possibility of blocking our perception to negative sound stimuli, she suggests that we adopt an attitude of acceptance, consisting in finding one's inner balance thanks to appropriate concentration and its distribution.[15] A conscious recognition of sonic environment and its current experiencing enables adoption of an appropriate attitude towards it. The found situation may also be positive in nature — it is important to recognise the 'poetics' of a given place:

[14] This quote is from Westerkamp's text written for the International Conference on Acoustic Ecology, 'Crossing Listening Paths', Corfu, 2011.

[15] Westerkamp refers to Paulina Olivieros' 'listening balance', which involves focused attention and extensive, distributed, all-encompassing awareness (Westerkamp, 2011: 8).

> soundwalk does not only reveal the relationship within the acoustic environment but perhaps more importantly makes relationship conscious between listeners' experiences and their acoustic social places and it reveals to us the special poetic of the spaces that we traverse. In that lies the inspiration and potential for action and change.[16]

According to this interpretation, soundwalking allows us to adopt the attitude of awareness of our being-in-the-world. It can be used, if we are able to appropriately focus our attention, to hone our inner balance. The transformation of the function of soundwalking from attentive listening to full awareness of the present moment and Westerkamp's metaphor of 'recognising the poetics of a place' may be a pretext for a confrontation with Tim Ingold's theses and his understanding of sound as a medium of experience, permeating us, being a constituent of the perception process that integrates the whole body with the surroundings.

TIM INGOLD'S CONCEPT OF BEING-IN-SOUND

The issue of the mediatory function of sound is discussed by Tim Ingold in the light of the ecological conception of anthopology (Ingold, 2003: 74), an important research issue for which is the determination of the way in which we 'inhabit', participate in and understand reality. Ingold, inspired both by the category of dwelling derived from Martin Heidegger and the bodily perception of James Gibson, points out movement (an activity between action and rest) and atmosphere, called 'the temperament of being' (weather conditions), as the principal elements that structure our perception. Considering the multi-sensory process of perception that involves the entire body, he draws attention to the fact that it is conditioned by a permanent 'flux', which determines our relations with the environment (Ingold, 2014). Ingold adopts the same perspective to think about sound. When comparing various narratives regarding hearing and seeing, and manners of perception when one of the senses malfunctions, Ingold points out that the superordinate observation prior to all questions about sound or vision quality is to notice how they exist. The author stresses that as light determines vision and, when looking, we are also immersed in light, sound should be discussed using 'being-in-sound' categories rather than positioned face-to-face in an objectifying manner. According to the author of *Perception of the environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*:

> sound exists neither on the inner nor on the outer side of an interface between mind and world. It is rather generated as the experiential quality of an ongoing engagement

[16] The composer's concluding remark from her paper entitled *What's in a Soundwalk?* written for Sonic Acts Conference 'The Poetics of Space', Amsterdam, 2010 (cf. Westercamp, 2010).

> between the perceiver and his or her environment. Sound is the underside of hearing just as light is the underside of vision; we hear in one as we see in the other (Ingold, 2000: 268).

Consequently, sound should not be interpreted according to the conventions of separately studied objects, external in relation to the inhabited world, nor analysed by separating individual senses or cognitive functions of the body from the mind. Hence, Ingold's objections to the discourse about soundscape, which — as he claims — focuses on an individual sense, and so treating the sense of hearing as an organ for receiving and reproducing certain images, which is linked with a failure to notice its mediatory function (Ingold, 2000: 136–139).

When thinking about the world and our presence in it as an active relation that engages the entire body, I see some common points between Ingold's theses and the practice of soundwalking, based on the participatory function of listening. Such a connection seems legitimate also because of the fact that both concepts were formulated on the basis of similar, ecological premises. The concept of soundscape was created as a result of research into man's relations with the environment and their sound determinants with a view to emphasising the problem of noise pollution and, consequently, to presenting new forms of such relations. The taking into account of the complex perspective of reception pointed out in WSP's research and idealistically assumed by Schafer within the interdisciplinary discipline of soundscape studies and acoustic design (Kapelański, 1999; Kapelański, 2000). However, the team's chief work is done using the analytical-and-compositional approach to the issue of hearing and sound. The question about the way in which the world is mediated in our being-in-the-world did not lie in the centre of the soundscape concept, but often occurs indirectly. It seems to underlie the philosophy of the group whose *credo* links Cage's idea of sound's omnipresence with Schafer's metaphor of an incessantly sounding symphony of the world. Understanding and recognition of such a sonic reality is possible thanks to active participation in it. The category of empirical experience is an important element in WSP's educational activities, present in Schafer's teaching, Westerkamp's concept of 'soundmaking'[17] and Truax's theory of acoustic communication (Truax, 1984). They all seem to touch on the status of epistemological-and-ontological sound (which Ingold problematises), just like it is done by the practice of soundwalking. On many occasions, the motivations and reflections connected with the practice of soundwalking (*e.g.* relating to the visual aspect, which models hearing) resonate with Ingold's judgments on a hearing eye or a seeing ear, or a statement that 'listening is just as much a means of active inquiry and of orienting onself in the world as is looking' (Ingold, 2000: 274).

[17] The term was used by Westerkamp in her MA thesis *Listening and soundmaking* (Westerkamp, 1988).

In the discourse on soundwalking, however, the categories of being-in--sound and of multi-sensory experience appears incidentally, as it were, usually hidden by the focusing of attention on the environment's sonic aspects, although their significance is noted (Westerkamp, 2006: 2; Westerkamp, 2015: 1). Predominant in the theoretical guidelines regarding the practice of soundwalking, which often assume an essayistic and didactic form, is soniferousness. The sonic environment is regarded both as an external reality that we face, challenging any sounds that are imposed upon us, and a reality that we are experiencing and co-shaping as part of a relation occurring at a given moment. Sound is sometimes recorded, penetrated and presented in a way that highlights its sonic qualities, or defined as a phenomenon that originates from the meeting of two subjects (*e.g.* a water wave and a barnacle). Contrary to frequently used formulas that treat sound as an object for analysis, in relation to which one should take a position, Westerkamp also uses metaphors that indicate its elusiveness and process-based reality. By being made to analytically listen, we begin to become aware of the continually 'produced' sounds, a process that we are part of.[18] Space is constantly moving, as emphasised by *Lighthouse Park soundwalk*, which is designed to be presented as part of a radio programme and inspired by a text describing the virgin rainforest in the western part of Vancouver:

> Nothing is still now. Life is sweeping through the spaces. Everything is alive. The air is alive. The silence is full of sound [...] Moss and ferns, and leaves and twigs, light and air, depth and colour-chattering, dancing a mad joy-dance, but only apparently tied up in stillness and silence. You must be still in order to hear and see (Carr, 1966: 193).

In the practice of soundwalking, the attitude of conscious perception and sound analysis is combined with the approach of openness to the experience of the present moment, which is akin to drifting. Auditory aspects of perception are mixed with visual and tactile ones. Soundwalking, apart from educational, learning and meditational goals, thanks to an attitude of involvement, combines various issues related to experiencing, but the problem of their articulation seems to extend the needs (or possibilities) of the soundscape discourse.

To Ingold, on the other hand, the way in which we experience the world, constitutes the basis of understanding, and so the consideration of its status and character is important. Drawing inspiration from the propositions of musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl as to auditory space and Maurice Marleau-Ponty's

[18] 'so far you have isolated sound from each other and gotten to know them as individul entities. But each of them is a part of a bigger environmental composition' (Westerkamp, 1974: 20).

thesis regarding the immersion in the world[19] (Ingold, 2000: 267), Ingold proposes that also sound should be regarded as material in-motion (just like wind is the blowing of air or a stream — the flowing of water) as part of the participatory attitude, which is a condition for observation.

> Rather than thinking of ourselves only as observers, picking our way around the objects lying about on the ground of a ready-formed world, we must imagine ourselves in the first place as participants, each immersed with the whole of our being in the currents of a world-in-formation: in the sunlight we see in, the rain we hear in and the wind we feel in. Participation is not opposed to observation but is a condition for it, just as light is a condition for seeing things, sound for hearing them, and feeling for touching them (Ingold, 2011: 129).

The approach that assumes a processual nature of the world in motion and an involved attitude of participation is close both to the assumptions of the WSP group, designing studies into sounds, which — due to their ephemeral character — dwindle, and to Westerkamp's realisations, who shows that definition of soundscape always implies interaction between environment and individual (Westerkamp, 1988: 3). However, Ingold claims that the concept of soundscape 'objectifies' sound. To better understand the way how we should consider the problem of perception, Ingold proposes — symptomatically — that we exercise walking for instance during a storm. A walk in extreme conditions can — according to the author — perfectly show the world as constantly moving, devoid of any static objects separate from their experience; a world in which participation is built in a present act of perception by the entire body.

The practice of soundwalking seems to be in accordance with Ingold's concept of 'being alive'. Considering the author's thesis regarding the being--in-sound that is a condition for hearing and a multi-sensory dimension of feeling, the practice of soundwalking can obtain the perspective of being-in--the-world by noticing immersion in sound (or being-through-sound, suggested by Barry Truax[20]). Many of those who practise soundwalking talk about a personal discovery of just that mediatory character of sound that becomes apparent during soundwalking. One of them is Robert Losiak — a soundscape researcher, who, when asked about his research and recordings of the city soundscape, remarked:

> Something that is a manifestation of life, human steps, human sounds, rustling, sometimes laughter or crying — these are all expressions of our life, which pass away

[19] 'As I contemplate the blue of the sky, I am not set over against it as an acosmic subject' (Merleau-Ponty in: Ingold, 2011: 129).

[20] Cf. Barry Truax's comments on the way in which language formulates our thoughts in the context of Ingold's remarks: An interview with Barry Truax conducted by members of Soundscape Research Studio, Wrocław University (Website 2).

> quickly, flow away in the city's stream, and I registered them; they will remain [...]. During my research I noticed — and that perhaps was the most shocking discovery I made — that I was not recording sounds– I was recording life [emphasis by K.S.-M.].[21]

A similar conclusion, suggested by the practice of soundwalking, revealing the mediatory role of sound, was reached by Jason Leslie — one of the participants of a project led by Westerkamp, when he said: 'there is a huge connection between awareness of sound and awareness of the present moment... Being aware of sound is a huge gateway into being aware of yourself and into spirituality'.[22] Such testimonies seem to correspond with Ingold's definition of sound as a phenomenon of experience — that is, of our immersion in, and commingling with, the world in which we find ourselves (Ingold, 2011: 137). The discovery of the mutually complementing functions of all the senses, the body and the mind, which are involved in such immersion, constitutes an integral process of soundwalking and a cognitive challenge as part of its practice.

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[21] A statement by dr. Robert Losiak recorded in a documentary by Magda Skawińska entitled *Słyszeć miasto* [To hear the city]. The programme was broadcast by Polish Radio on 4 November 2013. Cf. Website 3.

[22] A statement by Jason Leslie — a member of 'Vancouver Soundwalk Colective' — quoted in Westerkamp, 2010.

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