07.05.2023

ŁUKASZ PIASKOWSKI

Sound and musical aspects of poetry of the interwar period

SUMMARY

The dissertation deals with the issue of sound and music in Polish poetry of the interwar period. It can be classified as works in the field of music and literary research, as well as sound studies in literature. The work basically consists of two large parts. One is devoted to the issue of sound as a theme in poetry, and the other to music in the same function. The range of methods used is wide, but the most important of them are the methodology developed by researchers associated with the trend of interdisciplinary comparative studies (three types of musicality in literature) and the methodology related to broadly understood studies on sound in culture and nature.

Globally, however, the dissertation is divided into 4 chapters. The first was devoted to the history and methodology of sound studies. It is a chapter in the broadest methodological sense and introduces to specific issues that have not yet been assimilated by the science of literature. The chapter introduces various concepts taken from such fields of science as acoustic ecology, bioacoustics or sound anthropology. The main goal of this operation was to implement and embed in a new context methods and concepts typical for this research area, which would enable a more efficient interpretation of sound as a motif or theme in a poetic work and in literature in general. These basic concepts include, above all, the audiosphere, sonosphere, phonosphere, melosphere, musicosphere, galenosphere, as well as the most important concept, i.e. soundscape. Each of these concepts serves a completely different area of sound reality, and their meaning, which is quite easy to define, enables an operation that can be called an audio interpretation of a poetic work or the study of sound motifs other than through the prism of insufficient concepts in the field of poetics or music-literary research. In order to separate musical sounds from sounds as such, the most general division of their thematization methods was introduced: Audiality I, II and III. These concepts will enable a strict separation of sonic qualities from purely musical ones, which have not been strictly distinguished so far.

The second chapter is devoted to the practice of interpretation, the aim of which is to determine the general shape of the audiosphere of the interwar era. All previously introduced concepts were used, but also the research method created by Bernie Krause, which the scholar called the anatomy of the soundscape. On the basis of Krause's decisions, a basic classification of soundscapes was established. Specific concepts here include basically: geophony, i.e. sounds of inanimate nature (in interwar poetry, it is basically wind, rain and water areas: rivers, the sea, and to a lesser extent lakes or ponds), biophony, i.e. sounds of animate nature, the source of which is not human activity (in the

poetry of the interwar period it is mainly mammals, amphibians, insects, birds; forests, trees, plants), and anthropophony, i.e. all sounds created by man. The latter category is the most extensive, so small subcategories (physiological, electro-mechanical, controlled and incidental sounds) have been introduced within it. The most important type of soundscape, from the point of view of poets, is the interwar anthropophony, mainly the one associated with a set of electro-mechanical sounds: general acousmatic culture (detachment of sound from its source and its medialization, e.g. through the radio or gramophone, gramophone), sounds of modern work (factory, plant, port, etc., and to a lesser extent work in the countryside), sounds related to modern infrastructure (telegraph poles, telegraphs, telephones) and sounds of machines (airplanes, trams, cars, buses, trains). The greatest sound changes concern urban culture and its typical anthropophony. Biophony and geophony were updated essentially and mostly through the prism of human-generated sounds or through musicalization – i.e. subjecting the sonic quality, typical of nature, to anthropophonic interpretation.

The third chapter is devoted to the history and theory of the long relationship between music and poetry: from the ancient triple chorea, through the Romantic and modernist correspondence of the arts, to interwar poetic musicology. It basically has a historical overtone and makes it possible to understand the path of development of the relationship between these two arts, as well as to notice the fundamental difference between the previous periods in literature and the interwar period, in which various musical experiences accumulated, which on the one hand invalidated the sense of the old idea of the correspondence of arts and, on the other hand, opened up new perspectives for her.

The fourth chapter is devoted exclusively to music, which is considered from the perspective of the revealed poetic motifs and the theme of the poems. Thus, music in almost all possible forms is distinguished: music as the main theme of the work, music of the spheres, popular music (cabaret, dancing, jazz) and „concreto" music (a gallery of Polish and foreign composers). The relationship between forms and literary genres is also discussed separately on the example of references used by interwar poets (nocturne, scherzo, prelude, sonata, symphony and concerto). The chapter closes with a large catalog of musical instruments that were used in the poetry of that time as literary motifs (chordophones, aerophones, membranophones and idiophones). The whole dissertation is closed with a short summary.

Łukasz Piasnowski