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The Sounds of the Woods and Mountains

Human Voice, Nature Sounds, and Music in Astrid Lindgren's *Ronja Rövardotter* and Maria Parr's *Tonje Glimmerdal*

Abstract: The article takes the form of a comparative analysis of the soundscapes in two classic Nordic novels: Astrid Lindgren's Ronja Rövardotter *(1981;* Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*) and Maria Parr's* Tonje Glimmerdal *(2009;* Astrid the Unstoppable*). The aim of the analysis is to explore the role sound plays in the novels' place-making, and how place is conceptualized. Drawing on theory of place and topoi (Bakhtin; Cresswell; Curtius) and inspired by Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis, I analyze cyclical and linear sounds. As the study shows, we find spatial rhythms in both novels, and in both there is an interplay between the human voice, nature sounds, and music, but the sounds are orchestrated in very different ways. Overall, the soundscape in Lindgren's novel is more cacophonic, while it comes across as harmonious in Parr's. Furthermore, based on the analysis and academic discussions on the novels as pastorals, I argue that Lindgren constructs a more literary and static place or topos while the place-making in Parr's novel is more dynamic and in line with current concepts of place (e.g. Cresswell).*

Keywords: soundscapes, pastoral, music, place, topos, literary geography, Astrid Lindgren, Maria Parr

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When Lovis in Astrid Lindgren's *Ronja Rövardotter* (1981) gives birth to one of the most iconic girls in children's literature, Ronja, the Robber's Daughter, it is a noisy affair. Outside the thunder is roaring so loudly that only the harpies fly across the sky, shrieking and hooting. This disturbs Lovis who sings during labour. She commands the soon-to-be-father: "Skräm iväg grymvittrorna, så här blir tyst, annars hör jag inte vad jag sjunger!" ("Drive the hell-harpies away and let me have some quiet. Otherwise I can't hear what I'm singing!"; Lindgren 7/3).[1] All the while, in the stone hall, the robbers are behaving in their typical style: eating, drinking, and growling in anticipation of the child. Turning our attention to another Scandinavian literary classic, *Tonje Glimmerdal* (2009) by Maria Parr, the landscape is presented in a totally different auditory key, as embedded in total silence – a silence that is underscored by the repeated mentioning of the absence of sounds from a range of possible sources:

> Det er **veldig stille** heilt framme i Glimmerdalen kalde ettermiddagar i februar. **Elva brusar ikkje**, for ho er under isen. **Fuglane kvitrar ikkje**, for dei har drege til Syden. **Ein høyrer ikkje sauene** eingong, for dei står inne i fjøsane. (Parr 14/15, my emphasis)
>
> (Cold February afternoons are **very peaceful** at the top of Glimmerdalen. The river is **quiet**, because it's all iced up on top. There are **no birds tweeting**, because they've flown south. You **can't even hear the sheep**, as they're inside, in the barns.)[2]

It is a silence that is about to be broken by the voice of the protagonist Tonje (Astrid in the English translation), who always sings so loudly when skiing that she starts avalanches from the mountain top (Parr 17/18). In both novels, there is an orchestration between the sounds of nature, the human voice, and music, which begs to be further explored.

The aim of this article is to identify the role of sound in the creation of place in *Ronja Rövardotter* and *Tonje Glimmerdal* through a sound analysis. Based on the conviction that notions of sound, as well as of place, are historically and culturally contingent (Coates), I argue that a comparative analysis of the books' soundscapes is telling of the concepts of place that govern the novels. It has been observed that explorations of place in literature and culture to a large degree have concentrated on visual aspects, neglecting sounds (Coates; Hones). However, during the last decades there has been increased interest in the explorations of what musician Murray Schafer (7–8) has termed *soundscape* – the sonic equivalent to landscape (e.g., Cuddy-

Keane; Hones; Taylor). However, though we can notice a surge of interest for place and geography in children's literature, none of the major anthologies (Cecire et al.; Goga and Kümmerling-Meibauer; Hudson) or special issues in journals (Pavlik and Bird; Samoilow and Johansen) in the field have included soundscapes.[3] This study contributes to the field of literary geographies in children's literature by partaking in the growing attention to sound, conducting a sound-focused rhythmanalysis inspired by Henri Lefevbre. Furthermore, through the analysis, the article also adds to an ongoing discussion on the role of place and the construction of the pastoral.[4]

The main research questions are: What is characteristic of the texts' soundscapes? How do the sounds of humans and sounds of nature blend with, disrupt, and vary the spatial atmosphere of the novels? And what role does music play for the creation of place?

Place: Creating Pastorals

The pastoral is a favorite in children's literature. Often it is interpreted symbolically as either an expression of the adult author's nostalgia (e.g., Nodelman 46), a place for dreams (Carroll 71–72), or as a symbol of children's psychological state and development (Natov, *Poetics*). In his seminal study *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (*European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*) from 1954, Hans Robert Curtius leads the topos of the pastoral back to Homer. Typically, it is a green landscape, with trees, woods, grass, and flowers. It is full of life, with running waters, birds, sheep, and summer breezes. Especially in the early pastorals that lead back to ancient mythology, nature is animated and populated with nymphs and other creatures (Curtius 196). Within a Roman tradition, such enchanted places were named *genius loci*, the spirit of a place (Alexander 40). It was believed that the spirit of a place functioned as a protector. Today, such animated nature is mostly found in fantasy fiction. Later pastorals are often created as a *locus amoenus*, a good and loving place. As a green and lively world, the pastoral is a kind of everlasting and ever-returning spring (Curtius 209) that is determined by the rhythm of nature. As Mikhail Bakhtin stresses in his work on the literary chronotope, which he describes as genre and plot-defining motifs and places that integrate time and place, the pastoral (or idyll as he terms it) is often a secluded place in literature, a "little spatial world [that] is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world" (225).

Both Curtius and Bakhtin consider the pastoral a relatively stable topos in literature, though its components can be altered; trees and animals vary, and different authors pay more or less attention to sensual details. Bakhtin in particular stresses that chronotopes are constantly reformulated due to socio-cultural changes. This counts for sounds as well. Both sounds described in literary texts and the evaluation of these sounds are subject to cultural historical changes (Coates).

Though sound and other sensuous aspects of the pastoral are not explicitly discussed by either Curtius or Bakhtin, Curtius' literary examples in particular are shot through with smell, touch, and sound. Recent studies on soundscapes in literature and culture have emphasized the importance of sound in, for example, Romantic literature (cf. Taylor) and modern pastorals such as Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) or Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) (Coates). This attention is part of a shift in interest toward sensuous aspects of place-making and is connected to discussions about the *sense of place*. As Neal Alexander reminds us, sense of place is often associated with the *genius loci*, but can nonetheless be rooted in very different understandings of place (39). In his carefully crafted essay "Senses of Place" (2017), he shows how geographers oscillate between understanding sense of place as something that belongs to a place and the subjective experience of place. Furthermore, and as a consequence, some thinkers, such as the human geographer and phenomenological thinker Yi-Fu Tuan, have an essentialist understanding of place. For him, place has to be fundamentally stable so that individuals can sense it in similar ways. More relational-oriented geographers see place as constantly changing (cf. Alexander 41). The topos of the pastoral in literature is thus subject to change, a change that can be linked to different ideas of what a place is and how a place can be modelled in a literary text. Because sound is so essential to the pastoral, a sound analysis can be an apt way to examine different conceptions of place. As I will argue, the complex pastoral of Lindgren's woods operates with a much more essentialist understanding of place than Parr's mountain pastoral.

Methodologically, the analysis is inspired by the French philosopher and place thinker Henri Lefebvre's *rhythmanalysis*. This method was established in order to conduct deep analyses of places and is well known in sociology. Lefebvre calls for a bodily analysis of place, where one observes, listens to, and senses a place's rhythm over time – its cyclical and linear regularities and repetitions as well as its differences and breaches. The rhythmanalyst, then, must observe

a place over time with their whole body, using all of their senses. Through this phenomenological approach, one will be able to detect a spatial rhythm. Rhythm is not the same as sound, but encompasses every movement that can be detected in a place, including, for instance, visual aspects. It appears in the interconnection between "a place, a time and an expenditure of energy" (Lefebvre 15). To detect a rhythm, then, is to recognize a pattern in repetition and to observe sequences and regularities (Lefebvre 7–9) as well as disruptions (16). The point for Lefebvre is not so much the individual experience of and responses to sounds, as is the case in many studies on soundscapes (cf. Taylor 385), but to study the interaction between sounds (and other sensual aspects) that derive from different sources, both humans and nature. It is exactly this interaction that is the focus of this study.

Conducting a rhythmanalysis of a literary text means, as Søren Frank points out, paying attention to the material aspects of a text rather than trying to reveal any underlying meaning (258). It can be said to be a kind of materialist approach, anchored in an "ethics of attention" (Moi 6). Because this study concentrates on sound, the first step of the analysis was to conduct a close reading of the two novels in order to map all of the sounds that play a key role for the creation of the literary places. The sound analysis concentrates on explicit mentions and descriptions of sounds. It does not include what has been termed "implied sounds" (Lyngstad and Samoilow), that is, sounds one might imagine as an effect of an action. I differentiate between sounds made by humans, sounds made by nature, and music. The next step was looking for patterns. For instance, the harpies' cries in the opening of Lindgren's book are just individual sounds, but they become a rhythm when repeated over time and seen in connection with other sounds. Following Lefebvre, I differentiate between two main types of rhythm: linear rhythms (here sounds) that are repeated but not regular and cyclical rhythms, which are sounds that return with regularity and are tied to nature's cycles (Lefebvre 8).

In the following, I will first present and discuss the main findings of the analysis of *Ronja Rövardotter*. To begin with, I identify the main places of action and their soundscapes. I then concentrate on what dominates these soundscapes, as well as the role of music. Finally, I discuss the overall spatial acoustic atmosphere that is created through the sounds. I then move on to *Tonje Glimmerdal*, which I analyze in the same way. The article concludes with a discussion of the notions of place in the novels.

Anarchy and Harmony in *Ronja Rövardotter*

There are two main places of action in *Ronja Rövardotter* – the fortress and the forest. They both have their specific soundscapes. From the beginning, the soundscape of the fortress is dominated by linear sounds, "the daily grind, the routine […] made up of chance and encounters" (Lefebvre 30). As opposed to cyclical rhythm, linear rhythms are not harmonious, but "brutal repetitions […] tiring, exhausting and tedious" (Lefebvre 73). In the novel, linear sounds dominate in three ways. The robbers are noisy: they drink and growl while waiting for the child to be born, in the winter they scream when rolling in the snow, and the discourse between them consists of foul language and sounds from fist fighting (cf. Edström 247). One voice in particular dominates the soundscape of the fortress – that of the father Mattis (Matt in the English translation). We read about his ringing laughter, but also his angry shouting, shrieking, and desperate crying. Lefebvre calls noises "disdainful" and that "which are said without meaning" (19). Angry shouting and desperate crying are hardly meaningless, but are rather emotional expressions. Consequently, Mattis's mood influences the cacophonous soundtrack of the fortress.

Alongside these eruptive noises, the fort of Ronja's childhood is characterized by song, dance, and laughter. These sounds are as much a part of the place-making practices that create the soundscape of the fortress as the shouting and swearing. The little girl loves to sit under the table and listen to the robbers' songs, and eventually, when she knows the repeated songs by heart, she contributes with her own clear voice (Lindgren 16/10). In this way, linear sounds can also ring through the fortress joyfully. Therefore, in the novel, linear sounds can be both soothing and disturbing.

In the outside space – the woods – eruptive noises are also highly present. Apart from the cyclical, but often eruptive, sounds of the seasons, the woods are full of strange creatures from ancient times that contribute to its soundscape. There are the dangerous, uncanny harpies shrieking

> "Hoho, lilla vackra människan, nu ska blodet rinna, hoho!" (Lindgren 31/21)
>
> ("Ho, ho, pretty little human, blood will run now, ho, ho!")

while the gray dwarfs mutter and drone in strange old voices

> "grådvärgar alla, bit och slå till, grådvärgar alla, bit och slå till!" (Lindgren 23/15)
>
> ("Gray dwarfs all, bite and strike, gray dwarfs all, bite and strike!")

and the friendly rumphops repeat

> "Voffor gör ho på detta viset?" (Lindgren 72/52)
>
> ("Woffor did un do that?")

These creatures are present throughout the year, but they are erratic in their behavior, adding to the danger of the woods by interrupting the tranquility of spring. Roni Natov sees these elements as part of what she calls a dark pastoral, that is, the uncanny and darker parts of nature, corresponding to children's nightmares. While she links them to Ronja's development in the novel (Natov, "Pippi and Ronia" 96), they might also be connected to the idea of *genius loci*, the spirit of place (cf. Alexander 40). While today the spirit of place is often understood as its uniqueness, the Romans understood it as a "guardian spirit of a particular place" and a place where one encounters the divine (Alexander 47). If we understand the construction of the woods as a *genius loci* instead of a dark pastoral, we emphasize the cultural understanding of place rather than read the landscape as a psychological mirror. It also illuminates what is truly at stake here, the enchantment of place and the liveliness of the woods.

Apart from the linear sounds described above, *Ronja Rövardotter* is also determined by the cycle of life (Edström 299). "The cyclical originates in the cosmic and in nature," Lefebvre asserts (8). It is the rhythm of the seasons and the day. In the novel, the cyclical sounds fill the soundscape with beauty, contributing to the pastoral elements of the novel. Remarkably, these sounds are either music or are described as such. In the fortress, there is merely one sound that brings calm and regularity, and that is Lovis's Wolf's Song, which she sings every night. The song is mentioned in eight chapters, underscoring its regularity. In her ecocritical reading, Judith Meurer-Bongardt argues that Lovis is especially connected to nature, living in harmony with its cycles (31). Her nightly song brings a cyclical order to the anarchy of the fortress. As Lefebvre remarks, "everyday life remains shot through and traversed by great cosmic and vital rhythms" (73).

Lovis's song also has a metaphorical meaning and functions as a leitmotif. When in the woods with Birk, Ronja tries to sing it, but it is linked to her mother and the fortress – it is the sound of home. Only once, when Lovis comes to the cave and sings the Wolf's Song, making Ronja's world whole again, is the song taken outside the fortress in its entirety.

The second musical sound is the melody of the Unearthly Ones – creatures that come with the autumn mists, enchanting passersby with their song. It is after Ronja has met Birk for the first time and they are on their way home, in time to hear the Wolf's Song, that Ronja hears their voices for the first time:

> Då kom där djupt inne från dimman några stilla ljuva klagande toner, där kom en sång, och det var den underligaste sång. Aldrig hade hon hört något som liknade den, å, hur vacker den var, hur den fyllde hennes skog med sin ljuvlighet! Och den tog bort all rädsla, den tröstade henne. Hon stod stilla och lät sej tröstas. Vad det var skönt! Och vad den sången lockade och drog! Ja, hon kände att de där som sjöng ville att hon skulle lämna stigen och följa locktonerna in i dimman. / Sången blev starkare. Den fick hennes hjärta att darra, och med ens glömde hon Vargsången som väntade där hemma. (Lindgren 60/41–42)

> (Then, from deep in the thickest mist, there came soft, sweetly plaintive notes – a song, and it was the most wonderful song. She had never heard anything like it. Oh, how lovely it was, how it filled her forest with beauty! And it took away all her fear; it comforted her. She stood still and let herself be comforted. How beautiful it was! And how the song charmed and enticed her! Yes, she could feel that those who sang it wanted her to leave the path and follow the enchanting music into the darkness. / The song grew louder. It made her heart shake, and all of a sudden she had forgotten the Wolf Song awaiting her there at home.)

The passage underscores the emotional and bodily impact that the song has on Ronja, taking away all her fear, comforting her, and making "her heart shake." It also impacts the soundscape of the forest, filling it with beauty. Their song is juxtaposed with the Wolf's Song, which Ronja forgets, and metaphorically she forgets home. Thus, the Unearthly Ones try to lure her under the earth. When Ronja encounters the song for the first time, the music makes her forget time and place. A sense of *radical now* emerges; she becomes immersed in the song that threatens to lead her into annihilation. It is Birk who saves her. Towards the end of the novel, when the two robber families are

reconciled, Ronja is no longer affected by their song, but can listen to it from a distance, with the knowledge that the Unearthly Ones come along with the autumn.

Finally, there is the song of spring, which can be described as a symphony:

> Och så kom våren som ett jubelskrik över skogarna kring Mattisborgen. Snön smälte. Den rann i strömmar nerför alla bergsidor och sökte sej till älven. Och älven röt och skummade av våryra och sjöng med alla sina forsar och fall en vårens vilda sång som aldrig tystnade. Ronja hörde den varje vaken stund och ända in i nattens drömmar. [...] Och här var hon nu och hade störtat huvudstupa in i våren. Den fanns så härligt överallt runt omkring henne, ja, den fyllde henne så stor hon var, och hon skrek som en fågel, högt och gällt, tills hon måste förklara för Birk. / "Jag måste skrika ett vårskrik, annars spricker jag. Hör! Du hör väl våren!" / De stod tysta en stund och hörde hur det kvittrade och susade och brummade och sjöng och sorlade i deras skog. I alla träd och alla vatten och alla gröna snår levde det, överallt ljöd vårens friska, vilda sång. (Lindgren 104–106/76–78)

> (And then spring came like a shout of joy to the woods around Matt's Fort. The snow melted, streaming down all the cliff faces and finding its way to the river. And the river roared and foamed in the frenzy of spring and sang with all its waterfalls a wild spring song that never died. Ronia heard it every waking hour and even in her nightly dreams. […] And here she was now, diving headfirst into spring. It was so magnificent everywhere around her, it filled her, big as she was, and she screeched like a bird, high and shrill. / "I have to scream a spring scream or I'll burst," she explained to Birk. "Listen! You can hear spring, can't you?" / They stood silently, listening to the twittering and rushing and buzzing and singing and murmuring in their woods. There was life in every tree and watercourse and every green thicket; the bright wild song of spring rang out everywhere.)

While the stormy autumn night in the opening of the novel made up a discordant mixture of sounds, the sound of spring is composed into a song. As Lefebvre reminds us, every blade of grass, flower, bird, and tree has its own rhythm. Together they are formed into a *polyrhythm*, or even a symphony (Lefebvre 31). Although the river's roaring, the insects' buzzing, and the birds' twittering are penetrating, loud, and wild, they are perceived as a beautiful whole. Meurer-Bongardt remarks that Ronja is an excellent observer (36). The descriptions of spring, however, are more than observations. The sound is described through both external and internal focalization

as experienced by the children, and it is underscored by Ronja's remark to Birk about hearing the spring. As in the encounter with the Unearthly Ones, Ronja does not merely observe from the outside, but she experiences it with her whole body. She is penetrated by spring and even tries to participate in its song through her spring scream, a scream that also fills the woods on the novel's last page when she once again is compared to a bird making her spring scream. Natov remarks that the literary pastoral "echoes the suspension of time experienced in childhood where the summer felt like forever and the landscape could hold all children" ("Pippi and Ronia" 92). A similar sense of eternity is evoked here. However, as opposed to the autumn song of the Unearthly Ones, the now of spring is not devastating, but constructs the woods as a childhood pastoral.

The spatial acoustic atmosphere in *Ronja Rövardotter* is complex. Underneath the arhythmic pulse, the noisiness, there is the audible rhythm of the seasons and of the three songs, filling the soundscape of the novel and its two main settings – the fortress and the woods – with beauty. As the sound analysis shows, both the inside and the outside settings are governed by linear as well as cyclical sounds, with music playing an important role in both. This highlights the complexity of the constructions of place in Lindgren's novel. The sounds of nature, the human voices – as well as those of the mystical beasts and music exist alongside each other. They are there at the same time, overlapping. However, though there certainly is a reciprocity between Ronja (and Birk) and nature (Natov, "Pippi and Ronia" 98), as far as sound is concerned they are not blending and influencing each other, with the exception of Ronja's scream. In his study on music and literature, Zoltan Varga quotes museologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez who claims that the only valid definition of music is that it is "whatever people recognize as such," while noise on the other hand is what one experiences as disturbance (Nattiez qtd. in Varga 8). In *Ronja Rövardotter*, music plays a vital role in the construction of the soundscape and as part of the novel's plot, but I recognize no overall harmonious composition in the soundscape of the novel as a whole. Although it includes musical parts and cyclical rhythms, the soundscape is anarchistic, as are the robbers themselves.

Musical Compositions in *Tonje Glimmerdal*

As pointed out earlier, the predominant sound of Glimmerdal is silence, a silence that is broken by Tonje's loud singing when she sets out on her skis. In contrast to Lindgren's novel, Parr opens with an

outside scene. Here, too, are two main places of action – Glimmerdal and the town that can only be reached by boat. However, there are no auditory descriptions of the town, and thus only Glimmerdal has a soundscape. This enhances the sense of seclusion of the valley, which is so important to the literary idyll (Bakhtin 225).

As Nina Goga, with reference to Bakhtin, points out, the idyll in general and in *Tonje Glimmerdal* in particular is marked by *folkloric* time, that is, a cyclical conception of time (Bakhtin 224; Goga, *Kart* 73). As in *Ronja Rövardotter* there are cyclical sounds, but Parr intertwines the rhythms of nature with the rhythms of the humans to a much greater degree. Every March is lambing season and "Inne i fjøset brekar sauene" ("ewes were bleating"; Parr 145/164). With an auditory intertextuality to the book *Heidi* that Tonje finds in Gunnvald's house and reads with delight, she remembers all the times she has slept in the summer house with the sound of the wind on the walls.[5] In the autumn, when they go hunting, one has to be all quiet, only listening to the river and the whispering of the trees, until there is a loud gunshot.

There is one sound that is both cyclical and eternal at the same time, and that is the sound of the river, as mentioned in 15 of the 32 chapters and in all three prologues to the main parts of the book. It is most fully described in the spring scene:

> Våren lèt seg ikkje stoppe sjølv om alt er forandra inne i husa. Det surklar og dryp og glitrar i Glimmerdalen no så det er ein fryd. Smeltevatnet fløymer nedover fjellsidene, og Glimmerdalselva buldrar songen sin i djupe, dirrande tonar. Tonje har sovna og vakna til dei tonane heile livet. Elvelydane er nesten som pusten hennar eller noko anna som berre er der. / Men då Tonje vaknar denne søndagsmorgonen, høyrer ho buldringa på ein ny måte. Ho høyrer elva fordi ho tenkjer på at Gunnvald ikkje høyrer henne. Han skulle vakna til elveduren han også. (Parr 167/188–189)
>
> (Spring couldn't be stopped, even if everything had changed for some of the people who lived in Glimmerdal. The glen was so full of water bubbling, dripping and glittering that it was a joy to behold. The meltwater flowed down the mountainsides, and the river roared its deep, throbbing song. Astrid had been falling asleep and waking up to those sounds all her life. The voice of the river was as familiar as her own breathing, always there in the background. But when Astrid woke up that Sunday morning, she heard the thunderous noises in a new way. She heard the river because she was thinking of Gunnwald, who should have been waking up to the roaring river too, but wasn't there to hear it.)

The description mirrors the spring scene from *Ronja Rövardotter* quoted above. It is predominantly auditory with the bubbling, dripping, roaring, and throbbing. As in Lindgren's novel, the sound of spring is equated to a song and is described as a sound of joy. The importance of the river's place-making is underscored through Tonje's grief on behalf of Gunnvald. In a hospital in town, he cannot hear the river and thus is cut off from the sound of home. As a spring scene, it is linked to the cycle of nature. However, the river is also a constant. It is always there, except in the winter, when it is frozen. The sound is overpowering: "elv, elv, elv. Ingen andre lydar. Ingen andre tankar" ("There was only the river, the river, the river. No other sounds. No other thoughts"; Parr 169/190).

As opposed to the chaotic and simultaneous presentation of sounds in *Ronja Rövardotter*, here the sounds are presented individually. In musical terms, the soundscape of *Tonje Glimmerdal* is characterized by counterpoint. Counterpoint is a method that combines several individual musical lines that make up a harmonious whole (Jackson). The keywords here are individuality and harmony. The basic sound – silence – is associated with calmness and harmony, counterpointed with the sound of the river. The river can be said to form part of the landscape's auditory theme, together with the music of the violin, to which I will return shortly.

There are other sounds that counterpoint these sounds as well. Apart from one-time sounds such as a dog barking or the sound of an engine, there are three linear sounds. The first is the sound of children, especially Tonje's own voice: singing, laughing, and, as Goga points out, frequently swearing ("Landskap"). The second is the sound of a snowball or stone against the flagpole every time Tonje passes the campsite of her enemy, Klaus Hagen: "Det vert så fin lyd når ein skyt på flaggstenger, og så er det utruleg vanskeleg" ("It makes such a good sound when you fire your catapult at flagpoles, and it's incredibly difficult to do"; Parr 24/27). The modifying second sentence indicates some irregularity in the shaping of the sounds, and the reader learns that Tonje once missed and broke a window. The third recurring sound is the yelling of Tonje's seagull Måse-Geir:

> Han er tre år gammal no og har vorte ein feit og bråkete måse av verste sort. Tonje og pappa elskar han. (Parr 46/50)
>
> (He was three years old now and had grown into a fat and noisy seagull of the worst kind. Astrid and her dad loved him.)

Though linear, the repetitive occurrence of the sounds and their positive associations form the soundscape into a harmonious whole.

There is, of course, an interpretational problem. If the distinction between music and noise really is subject to individual perception, how can one claim that the linear sounds make up a harmonious whole? Furthermore, much of the text indicates auditory ambivalence. The seagull is described as noisy, yelling every time Tonje puts on her helmet. Furthermore, using internal focalization, the pleasant sound of stones on the flagpole are clearly only perceived as such by Tonje herself, while both this sound and Tonje's voice in general are perceived as torture by Klaus Hagen. As the owner of the valley's camping site, he wishes that

> "Gjestene mine skal høyre elvebrus og gransus, ikkje mas og ståk" (Parr 23/25)
>
> ("My guests want to hear the rushing river and the fresh breeze blowing through the spruce trees, not some horrible racket")

This is the crux of the novel's place-making and one of the most interesting scholarly discussions – the pastoral is under contestation. Aslaug Nyrnes argues rightly that Glimmerdal is established as a winter pastoral, a happy and secluded place, but where the greenness is slightly overshadowed by other things. She refers briefly to sound when she comments that there is not only the typical running of a river and bird song, but the sound of engines as well, which together form a "polyvalence" in the novel (Nyrnes 86). The point for Nyrnes is that the rather static idea of place that lies at the core of the pastoral – the *locus amoenus* (pleasant place) – is transported to the North and is further altered by climate change and must be perceived as part of the Anthropocene.

Ahmed Akef Khateeb and Are Bøe Pedersen develop this discussion further as they both argue that there also exist different ideas of what this pleasant place is. Through Tonje and her intimate knowledge of the valley as well as the other character's childhood memories, Glimmerdal is formed as a childhood pastoral. The antagonist Klaus Hagen on the other hand seeks to construct an idealized and nostalgic landscape, motivated by economic interests (Khateeb 145). In Khateeb's reading, the struggle for Glimmerdalen is solved when Gunnvald's daughter Heidi, who first agrees to sell Gunnvald's place to Hagen Camping, remembers and reunites with her childhood self. While both Khateeb and Nyrnes work with the "Nature-

culture-matrix" developed by the research group NaChiLitCul, Pedersen opposes the dichotomy between nature and culture altogether and argues that while Hagen teeters between a technocratic and pastoral landscape view, Tonje's and Heidi's interactions with the landscape demonstrate that humans are not only influenced by each other, but are entangled.

It is my contention that there is an innate connection between sound and these pastoral values. When Klaus Hagen recounts his vision of Glimmerdal, he evokes sound: the air in the trees, the running river. He even promotes Hagen Camping as "Hagen Helsecamping – stillast i landet" ("Hagen's Wellness Retreat: the quietest in Norway"; Parr 22/25). It is a place without the sound of children, and from the start his hatred for children is explicitly connected to their noise-making. Tonje and Gunnvald remember a time before Hagen Camping. Gunnvald muses, "Eit himmelsk rabalder var det kvar einaste ferie" ("There was a heavenly hullabaloo every time people came on holiday"; Parr 21/24). The reminiscence of Aunt Eir as a child (or human being as such) further demonstrates the necessity of children's noise for Glimmerdal to remain a pleasant place:

> Tonje trur Gud hadde ein god dag då han skapte tantene hennar. […] Etterpå putta han frykteleg mykje lyd i henne. Han hadde aldri putta så mykje lyd inn i ei tante før, bruker Tonje å tenkje. (Parr 239/267)
>
> (Astrid thought that God must have been having a good day when he made her aunties. […] Then he stuffed her full of noise. He'd never put so much noise in an aunt before, Astrid thought.)

Upon the arrival of Bror and Ole, Tonje enthusiastically remarks that Ole has the ability to create noise. Despite delegating these sentiments to Tonje and Gunnvald, it is clear that they are representative of the text's norm. Therefore, noise is not meaningless as Lefebvre claims; rather, noise is a necessary condition for Glimmerdal to be a good place.

Let us now discuss the significance of music in the books. Nature, the Unearthly Ones, or human singing – each independently – are the sources of music in *Ronja Rövardotter*. In *Tonje Glimmerdal*, what is remarkable is the merging of these elements. The fiddle serves as one of the novel's melodic leitmotifs. It is introduced from the start, when Tonje breaks the valley's silence while skiing. She sings "Per Spellemann," a Norwegian folk ballad about a musician who trades a cow for a fiddle and will never return it for anything. The fiddle is

a cultural product and is associated with both high and folk culture. Gunnvald was once a symphony orchestra musician, and Heidi is an accomplished violinist. When she is a little girl, her mother takes her away from Glimmerdal so that she might pursue a professional career. The fiddle is also played in cultural spaces – the church or Gunnvald's kitchen – often accompanied by Tonje who sings "Blåmann, blåmann bukken min," a classic children's song. Remarkably, while Tonje's singing and the sound of the violin may be generated indoors, they fill the valley, unlike in *Ronja Rövardotter* where the noises from within remain indoors. Repeatedly it is described how the music spreads "oppover kyrkjetaket og heilt til himmelen" ("up to the church rafters and all the way to heaven"; Parr 59/66).

The landscape influences the music in the same way as music created by humans marks the environment. This is particularly clear in the often discussed cave scene where Heidi plays the fiddle:

> Heidi spelar saman med elva. / Bak dei og over dei og rundt dei ligg dåmen av Glimmerdalselva, og når Heidi dreg bogen over strengane, så blandar tonane seg med elvelyden. Gåsehuda putrar fram på heile kroppen til Tonje. Det er musikk kring heile henne. (Parr 234/264).
>
> (Heidi played to the river. / Behind them, above them and around them, they could taste and smell the river, and as Heidi drew her bow across the strings, the notes mingled with the sound of the water. Goose bumps rippled right across Astrid's body. She was surrounded by music.)

It has been pointed out that the difference between nature and culture is overcome in this scene (Pedersen 8). Heidi plays to and with the river and they become one (Bache-Wiig 5).

The experience and depiction of time in the cave scene, which is reminiscent of Ronja's first encounter with the Unearthly Ones, is another intriguing aspect of this scene that I would like to highlight. Both create a sense of a *radical now*, a forgetting of time and a sense of being immersed. Also, there is a temporal relationship that points both forward and backward simultaneously. As Harald Bache-Wiig notes, the fiddle scene can be read as an intertextual reference to the "Fossegrim" from Norwegian folklore (5). The legend claims that Fossegrim performs his music in rivers and waterfalls, where he occasionally instructs people in it. Like Lindgren's Unearthly Ones, Fossegrim is a creature of nature with human traces that connect folklore, humanity, and the natural world. Furthermore, the anchor-

ing in folklore ties music to tradition and thus to the past as well as the future. With the sound of the flowing river and the cyclical return of spring, there is a suggestion of eternity here.

Ideas of Place: Concluding Remarks

Both novels combine nature sounds, the human voice, and music when they create their soundscapes and pastorals, but in very different ways. While the soundscape in *Ronja Rövardotter* is cacophonic with linear and circular sounds overlapping, the soundscape in *Tonje Glimmerdal* seems to be more compositional: the river and the fiddle are the novel's leitmotifs and musical themes, combined with other sounds that are composed as counterpoints. Thus, the spatial acoustic atmospheres created in the novels are very different: shifting and partly uncanny in Lindgren's novel and harmonious in Parr's.

The key question is what the sound analysis shows about central notions of place. As I suggest in my reading of *Ronja Rövardotter*, rather than understanding the woods psychologically as a dark pastoral, I think the folkloric woodland creatures can be understood as part of the concept of *genius loci*. Alexander points out that the *genius loci* is tightly linked to a static and essentialist idea of *sense of place* (40). I would argue that this is certainly the case in Lindgren's novel. The cyclical sounds and the sounds of the mystic creatures belong to the woods. They have always been there. As do the sounds of the robbers who belong there. As argued, the irregular, but repetitive linear sounds of the robbers and the cacophony of noises in the novel match the robber theme. Though there is a possibility at the end of *Ronja Rövardotter* that the thieves might stop robbing, there is nothing in the novel that suggests the soundscape or the woods will change fundamentally. Thus, what Lindgren creates is a static topos of the *genius loci*. Consequently, we can say that this is a purely literary place.

Nyrnes makes the point that Parr changes the topos of the pastoral when she moves it to the North. Khateeb and Pedersen have shown that there are different pastoral ideas at play in *Tonje Glimmerdal*, but I think the place-making of the novel is even more complex. Parr's place is already understood as constantly changing. As the sound analysis has shown, not only do Tonje and Klaus Hagen have different ideas of what a good place is, Glimmerdal has also changed over time. The laughter of children disappears and then reappears. Tonje's shrieking seagull does not belong to Glimmerdal, but is now a beloved member of it. The idea of place that underlies the novel is

relational and corresponds to Cresswell's conception of place as an assemblage of "materialities, meanings and practices" (176). From this perspective, every blade of grass, tree, flower, stone, building, road, and snowflake; all memories, stories, and emotions associated with a place; and every transaction, ritual, and everyday action that occurs in a specific place make up its whole. These elements are not stable; rather, places are "becoming and dissolving on a daily basis" (Cresswell 175). Change is also inscribed through the music. In the novel, it is rooted in culture – both urban high culture and folklore – but now it belongs to Glimmerdal, filling the landscape with its tune and creating a specific atmosphere. Glimmerdal is most certainly a literary place, a topos, an idealized landscape, but it is remodelled within current conceptions of place as constantly changing.

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Noter

1 All quotations and translations of *Ronja Rövardotter* are from the English edition *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, translated by Patricia Crampton and published by Viking Penguin in 1985. In the following citations, the first page number will always be the reference to the original publication, while the second refers to the English translation.

2 All quotations and translations of *Tonje Glimmerdal* are from the English edition *Astrid the Unstoppable*, translated by Guy Puzey and published by Walker Books in 2017.

3 I make the same point with the same examples in another paper on a different topic that will be published at the same time in the journal *Ella*.

4 On *Ronja Rövardotter* see: Andersson; Edström 248–250; Khateeb; Meurer-Bongardt; Natov, "Pippi and Ronia"; Pohlmann; Skåve. On *Tonje Glimmerdal* see: Goga, *Kart* 70–80, "Landskap"; Khateeb; Nyrnes; Pedersen.

5 The book Tonje is reading is a Norwegian version of Johanna Spyri's *Heidis Lehr- und Wanderjahre* (1880).

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