Taylor, Jeremy E. "Auditory responses to occupation and colonialism: Introduction to Part III." *Sonic Histories of Occupation: Experiencing Sound and Empire in a Global Context*. Ed. Russell P. Skelchy and Jeremy E. Taylor. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 171–172. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350232310.0015>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 10:50 UTC.

Copyright © Russell P. Skelchy and Jeremy E. Taylor 2022. Released under a CC BY-NC-ND licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Part III

Auditory responses to occupation and colonialism

Introduction to Part III

Jeremy E. Taylor

Part III of *Sonic Histories of Occupation* is entitled ‘Auditory responses to occupation and colonialism’. The chapters here examine how the circulation of sounds through media, art, music and technology under colonialism and/or foreign occupation has created new identities, modes of expression and aural spaces. The chapters all explore the role of sound in the territorial expansion of various empires – Russian, Soviet, American and British – as well as auditory responses to such sonic imperialism on the part of local populations.

Dimitri Smirnov’s analysis of the work of the Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov in Chapter 7, for instance, details references to the sounds of ‘railway imperialism’ – from trains to station loudspeakers – in Russian and Soviet Central Asia in Aitmatov’s fiction. The ‘noisy’ expansion of Russian (and later Soviet) control in Central Asia was exemplified by such mundane features of the occupied soundscape as public address systems or the screeching sounds of passing trains. By bringing such sounds into his literature, Aitmatov writes in a tradition of intellectuals who have tried to incorporate the sounds of the railway into their critiques of colonialism and occupation.

For Skelchy, the central question of Chapter 8 is ‘how sound was engineered and experienced through a wider sensory world shaped by US colonialism in

the Philippines', with this chapter specifically considering the ways in which sound was incorporated into the design of the colonial hill town of Baguio in the Philippines. Drawing on the emerging literature on sensory history, Skelchy shows how the 'colonial reconfiguration of Baguio's auditory environment' was central to the (re)creation of this town in the early twentieth century, as US planners sought to create a Simla-inspired upland space in which colonial officials could find respite not just from the heat of Manila but also from its supposed noise.

Tan's chapter adopts a quite different perspective – and material sources such as newspapers and gramophone records – to demonstrate the ways in which 'hybrid' music cultures developed in the cosmopolitan port cities of colonial Malaya. As she shows, 'the soundscapes of colonial Malayan port cities articulated the merging of diverse cultures and the creation of new mixed identities' – including those that were at odds with the image of the 'Anglicized Malayan' that had been imposed on the region under British colonial rule.

All three chapters in this section bring together sound and space – even while they analyse the links between the two from very different disciplinary approaches (comparative literature, sound studies, historical ethnomusicology) and by utilizing very different types of sources. In doing so, however, they address two of the core questions raised by this volume as a whole: How does occupation give rise to distinctive auditory environments and music cultures? And how are sound and music implicated in controlling and disciplining colonized or 'occupied' peoples and aural spaces? As Part III as a whole shows, colonialism and foreign rule did indeed impose new sounds and soundscapes on local populations. Yet local groups also displayed agency in either recording their opposition to such sounds or using technologies and media that arrived alongside foreign rule to develop new modes of sonic self-expression.