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Seduced by (a) last year

Interdisciplinary Music Motivated by
Non-Idiomatic Improvisation,
The Non-Productive Attitude, and
Pluralist Aesthetics

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt, konstnärligt arbete

Det självständiga, konstnärliga arbetet finns
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Abstract
In my master’s project I investigated an interdisciplinary musical practice based on my artistic and educational background in art, music and philosophy. I chose one concept per discipline: non-idiomatic improvisation from the field of music, the non-productive attitude from art, and pluralist aesthetics from philosophy. I used the three concepts to find materials for my project: both musical materials, for example live improvisation and recordings, and non-musical materials, for example photographs and texts. The materials I found made up the components of a performative piece of music and became musical through contextualisation and metaphor. The photographs, recordings and texts were collected from different periods in my life and represented my interests, relations and values during my different educations.

The ensemble that I assembled to perform the music consisted of people that were close to me on both a personal and professional level to emphasise that the music was based on my educational background and personal narrative.

Initially I was less interested in the sonorous outcome of my project and I would have accepted it based solely on its interdisciplinary motivations. During my studies I realised that involving musical parameters to a greater extent enhanced the interdisciplinary and non-musical aspects of my project.

An important learning outcome of my project was that focusing on the musical particularities of my artistic practice strengthened its interdisciplinary character. This is something that I wish to investigate further as a continuation of this project.

Keywords: interdisciplinary music motivated by art and philosophy, personal narrative, metaphor, non-idiomatic improvisation, the non-productive attitude, pluralist aesthetics, performative writing
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Introduction

My master’s project consists of me exploring ways of making music out of my artistic and educational background in art, music and philosophy. More specifically, I explore three concepts – one per discipline – and experiment with how they can be combined and made use of in an ‘interdisciplinary’ musical practice. The concepts are: non-idiomatic improvisation (music), the non-productive attitude (art), and pluralist aesthetics (philosophy). I am investigating how attitudes and materials that are usually not regarded musical, for example projecting photographs and reading texts, can become musical by way of ‘contextualisation’ and ‘method’. In my project I mainly use contextualisation in the sense that Claes Entzenberg proposes in his work Art from Death Originated, in which he writes:

Contextualization of understanding is a dynamic interactive act of enclosure that serves to demarcate it from other fields and that tells us how to regard it... Contextualization is the very process where the fusing of the object and context turns them into an inseparable unit, an object becomes an artwork. In short: A work of art can have a single meaning. What we must do is explain how this can happen. The multiple use of context is not difficult to combine with the idea that a work of art has one meaning. It “has” this and that meaning until someone challenges it with a new contextualization. The context is neither part of it nor apart from it. The Latin word “contextere” reveals this constructive role: “to weave together”, “to join together”. (Entzenberg 2013: 57)

Thus, in my project I use contextualisation in the following sense: I present my references in art, music and philosophy and show how I consciously see them as crucial to and intrinsically dependent on each other in making up my particular artistic practice.

I will begin by concisely describing my artistic and educational background, since I believe that it is a decisive context for my project. I began playing and studying music at an early age and continued playing music until I, in my early twenties, had an artistic and personal crisis, which made me pause playing music. I felt that I needed new and wider perspectives on music in order for me to renew my interest in it. Between 2011 and 2017 I instead studied art and philosophy, which helped me become interested in practicing music again from a perspective informed by these subjects. This project can be considered as my attempt to begin playing music again.

I have assembled an ensemble specifically for this project, which consists of musician and composer Johan Jutterström, artist Johanna Arve and myself. With the ensemble, we rehearse

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1 I elaborate on this concept in chapter B. 1.7, Non-Idiomatic Improvisation, I here refer to Derek Bailey’s concept of free improvised music in terms of ‘non-idiomatic’ as distinguished from genre-motivated improvisation. See (Bailey 1993: xi-xii), in which he writes: ‘Idiomatic improvisation, much the most widely used, is mainly concerned with the expression of an idiom – such as jazz, flamenco or baroque – and take its identity and motivation from that idiom. Non-idiomatic improvisation has other concerns and is most usually found in so-called ‘free’ improvisation and, while it can be highly stylized, is not usually tied to representing an idiomatic identity.’

2 I elaborate on this concept in chapter B. 1.8. The Non-Productive Attitude – Language as (Non-)Musical Material. See (Strau 2006: 28-30), in which he writes: ‘In short, the popularity of anti-productive attitudes in Cologne was maybe a result of some iconoclastic tendency, the sympathy for an attitude which substitutes image qualities with narrative impulse, in the best years the non-productive artist got great recognition if he substituted his work for a good personal narrative. He could be a kind of island in the main art world, while securing continuity with the tradition of anti visual heresies. The practice of including autobiographical personal references gave artists in Cologne the reputation for mere ‘Referenzkunst’. In that sense the anti-productive attitude was a kind of iconoclast discipline, . . . more artistic aesthetic focus left more traces in the public memory, while the more theoretical, political discourse did not leave much behind. Many of us used these dialectics of the political and the aesthetic as the diagnosis of nearly everything. Its synthesis was the great final aim, the claimed last accomplishment of any cultural production. The non-productive attitude should be seen as a refusal of production values but not as a refusal of expression as such.’

3 I elaborate on this concept in chapter B. 1.9. Pluralist Aesthetics – Non-Development. I here refer to the pluralist accounts of Arthur C. Danto and Claes Entzenberg, which relate to history of western ‘aesthetics’ in general and G. W. F. Hegel in particular, replacing a ‘teleological’ and ‘formalist’ view of art with a ‘pluralist’ view, which relies heavily on art world references and narrative, see, e.g., (Danto 1983; 1984; Entzenberg 2013).
and discuss the music that my project is instrumental in. We also performed the music at my degree concert and a documentation of this concert is accessible through the online service of the Royal College of Music (hereafter abbreviated RCM). This critical reflection is intended to articulate my interdisciplinary practice and the work with my ensemble.

The critical reflection is divided into three chapters: A, B and C. In the first chapter (A) I introduce my artistic and educational background and explain how and why I, by way of musical motivation, decided to study art and philosophy after several years of studying and playing music. In this chapter I explain how I came to a point in my musical practice, at which I felt a need to broaden my artistic horizon and ‘perception’ in order for me to renew my interest in music. I then began to develop an interdisciplinary musical practice, in which I let ideas, materials and methods from my studies in art and philosophy add to my musical experiences. This expanded interdisciplinary practice allowed me to make my sensibilities and materials from art and philosophy to become musical through my practice, which made music interesting to me again.¹

In the second chapter (B) I present my master’s project and the three concepts that I explored in my project: non-idiomatic improvisation, the non-productive attitude, and pluralist aesthetics. I explain each concept and experiment with how they can be combined and made use of in this project together with the ensemble that I have put together specifically for this project. The ensemble did not exist prior to this project. Rather, I designed it in tandem with the development of the project and its concepts and values. For example, I chose the members of the ensemble - people who are close to me both personally and professionally - to perform themselves, both in terms of the materials they play and what roles they have in the ensemble, which is in line with the non-productive attitude; to make artistic use of one’s own personal narrative. This chapter also contains some of my ideas concerning my improvisation on drums and how I see its relationship to metaphor and performativity.

The third chapter (C) is an appendix in which I have assembled original articles and materials, which are referred to in the first two chapters.

The purpose of this project might primarily have been for myself to explore my interdisciplinary musical practice, in the form of a master’s project. However, I do also hope that this project can be informative and inspiring for other musicians, as in how attitudes, materials and methods coming from art, music and philosophy can be used and combined to make up a musical practice. A major outcome of this project is that I have begun playing drums on a regular basis again, both as part of this project as well as in other ensembles.

When I began the master’s programme at RCM in the fall of 2018, I had already made some music concerned with my background in art and philosophy and I regarded this music as artistically stimulating, see (Jutterström and Larsson 2015; J/L Duo 2018). I wanted to make a project specifically devoted to developing this kind of interdisciplinary music, which meant that when I began my studies I had some references and substantial ideas and as to how and with what materials I thought my project should be made out of. I expected some resistance from the institution, since I knew that my project would be different from what is usually a master’s

¹ Since an interdisciplinary approach to artistic practice is not unusual within the field of ‘artistic research’, I should here position my practice somewhere between ‘experimental’ and ‘practice-based’ artistic research. The former category means to investigate one’s research questions through a constructed artistic experiment and the latter category means to articulate an ongoing artistic practice. As is exemplified in my project I am both conducting a musical experiment through having an ensemble perform my personally narrated musical history through playing and improvising from a text score as well as with archives of materials accumulated from my studies in art, music and philosophy. This ‘performatve’ musical practice is equally as much an articulation of my ongoing interdisciplinary practice as an experiment. For more information and perspectives on artistic research in general and experimental and practice-based artistic research, aesthetics, performativity and ‘ethics’, see, e.g., (Arlander 2014; Mersch 2013; Bolt 2016; Pollock 1998; Hannula, Suoranta, Vadén 2014).
project at the jazz department. I also thought that my project would likely be uncomfortable, in terms of what courses and teachers the institution could offer me. Looking back at the past two years at the master’s programme, I see how the jazz department is transforming in ways that I believe are beneficial for the educational role of the institution. For example, I regard conceptual analysis, critical self reflection as well as critical consciousness towards one’s own preferred aesthetics as paramount for jazz music to have a say in contemporary life and I welcome that the institution has begun to include such concepts and values into its curriculum. I struggled at RCM but I also saw how the institution tolerated my artistic concerns and my project.

During the fall semester of 2018 I had composer Magnus Granberg as my teacher in composition, and during the spring semester of 2019 I had interdisciplinary artist Leif Elggren as my supervisor in a project course. Both Granberg and Elggren were instrumental in my project in that they challenged my initial framework for my music and helped contextualise my work by suggesting ideas and references other than what I already had in my project. For example, Granberg asked me: ‘Is a place or a site really a non-musical material? Is it not more of a condition for music? Think of Alvin Lucier’s piece I Am Sitting in A Room; at the end of the piece, only the sound frequencies that the room or site has favoured are being audible.’, see (Lucier 1961). This question made me shift focus from the prerequisite condition of a room or site for music to exist, to instead focus more on the ensemble play, which I believe was of great value for the process of my project.

In a conversation with Elggren, he said that the music I was making in my project reminded him of ancient Greek dramas and ‘dithyrambs’. This remark resonated with me and had me realise that the music I was making in my project did share a property with music of ancient Greece; it had a motivational function - making me wanting to do things I otherwise did not know I wanted to do while not being of an explicit ‘moral’ kind, which was generally the case in music of ancient Greece, see, e.g., (Higgins 1991). This remark also had me realise several other similarities between my music and music of ancient Greece, such as the disposition in my music of the ‘text score’ and its relation to the ensemble playing, and the main character in dithyrambs reciting an often morally tinged narrative to which a choir is responding.

Apart from the theoretical framework that I had developed while studying art and philosophy during my hiatus from music, studying at RCM enabled me an artistic process in which I realised how rehearsing with my ensemble, discussing my project with teachers and colleagues as well as dynamics, sonorous textures and conventional musical gestures were equally important in articulating the music according to my intents. Such insights proved to be central to my music and I have come to see that the decisions and the progress I have made together with the members of my ensemble, I could not have accomplished without my studies at RCM.

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5 Excerpt from my Journal: conversation with Granberg, Stockholm, 7 October 2018.
6 This information is based on an excerpt from my Journal: conversation with Elggren, Stockholm, 25 February 2019.
A. Artistic and Educational Background

In this chapter I explain how I by way of musical motivation, decided to study art and philosophy after several years of studying and playing music. I describe how I came to a point in my musical practice, at which I felt a need to broaden my artistic horizon and perception in order for me to renew my interest in music. I then began to develop an interdisciplinary musical practice, in which I let ideas, materials and methods from my studies in art and philosophy add to my musical experiences. My artistic and educational background is what has led me to make this project. Thereby, I want to share an account of this background as a context for this project. I believe that this will make my project easier to understand in terms of intents, methods and motives.

Contextualising Overview of My Background

1.1. My Introduction to Non-Idiomatic Improvisation – Artistic and Personal Crisis

Growing up, I mainly played traditional jazz music. When I began to study for a bachelor’s degree at RCM, in 2006, I started exploring less traditional ways of improvising within jazz music. My exploration into experimental attitudes toward music led me to focus on what is referred to by for example Derek Bailey as non-idiomatic improvisation, see (Bailey 1993). At this time I tried hard to adopt what I understood to be the attitude of non-idiomatic improvisation. I did this through studying with for example Swedish drummer and percussionist Raymond Strid. Strid had me go through exercises that amounted to me shifting perspective from rhythmically and dynamically controlled phrases, which I played as part of genre motivated music, to more gestural and sound oriented phrases, widening my role as a drummer from playing set rhythmical patterns to exploring virtually any sounds, dynamics, durations, textures etc. Studying with Strid, as well as allowing my desire to find ‘other’ expressions with drums that resonated profoundly with me as an artist and a human being, led me to stray away from ‘conventional’ drumming and music. What this experience taught me was ‘relativity’ in terms of music; I basically went from having a few perspectives to experiencing and appreciating several more, which eventually made me realise that the term music can entail too many different views and practices to actually make sense as one unified concept or name.

For examples of my earlier non-idiomatic improvisation, please listen to the tracks ‘Solo (2007)’; ‘J/L Duo, live at Hotell Hellsten (2009)’; ‘With the Arrow (2010)’, found through this link: https://soundcloud.com/andreashirouarsson/sets/seduced-by-a-last-year/s-zmRB9

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7 For a description of the concept of non-idiomatic improvisation, please see note 1 as well as chapter B 1.7. Non-Idiomatic Improvisation.

8 At the time I understood the attitude of non-idiomatic improvisation to imply a break with or an ’iconoclastic’ approach to what Bailey et. al describes as a conventional musical language; a musical language that they considered to be inapt in accounting for their artistic, philosophical and political sensibilities. I elaborate further on this issue in chapter B 1.7. Non-Idiomatic Improvisation.

9 I should mention that my understanding of the attitude of non-idiomatic improvisation did, at the time, generate suspiciousness toward the traditional musical expressions, ones that I had previously appreciated and enjoyed. Today, I consider this approach somewhat exaggerated, and due to my studies in aesthetics and art I now regard non-idiomatic improvisation to be one attitude or perspective on music among many others. My reasoning today is greatly informed by pluralist aesthetics, which I elaborate on in chapter B 1.9. Pluralist Aesthetics – Non-Development.
Since I was a child I have been very dedicated to music and over the years I have listened to an enormous amount of records as well as gone to many concerts and festivals. However, I gradually found myself less satisfied with and interested in both playing and listening to music and at around 2010-11 I experienced a crisis - artistic and also personal - in which I simply wanted all music to become silent. I wondered why and how I could have been so magically enthralled and captivated by all these - what now seemed to me - simple ordered patterns of sounds. All of which, to me, seemed to be conditioned by preconceived aesthetic ideals determined by either mainstream or more subcultural sensibilities. I found myself thinking what does it all mean? Do I understand why and what this or that person is communicating with their music? What aesthetic, artistic and historic contexts are they coming from? What do I really understand about all this? To me, the magic - in both playing and listening to music - was gone. I just wanted silence. Of course I knew of earlier examples of ‘silent music’. For example, upon hearing such works as John Cage’s 4’33, I was never baffled, disturbed or provoked, see (Cage 1952). Rather, I thought it made perfect musical sense. Sometimes, I thought that my preferred music was silence. Like a naive thought, personal and private, I thought that in silence resided all the potential that I used to love about experiencing playing and listening to music, and this way it remained undisturbed in my head; it was never let down or interrupted by what others brought to it. For me, silence became an ‘idealistic’ and ‘sentimental’ space. However, during my silent years music was still present in my life in the way that it did continue in my mind in the form of me imagining and reasoning about playing drums and music.

I gradually became uninterested in music. Simultaneously, I became a little bitter and was disappointed with how I thought music - particularly jazz and improvised music - was being regarded in society. I would rarely find a musical situation with which I agreed aesthetically. Aesthetics, to me, implied then as it does now a philosophical reasoning, including having one’s musical ethics and morals engaged; considering music from this perspective, I rarely thought I agreed or even was ok with what I heard and saw. I also felt that I no longer understood the non-idiomatic improvised music scene, a scene that I myself was a part of. At the time, I thought that non-idiomatic improvisation per se should imply an ongoing reasoning of one’s musical ethics and thereby entail a transformation of one’s musical aesthetics. But instead, I regarded the scene - which I myself was a part of - to primarily consist of improvisers repeating ideals of non-idiomatic improvisation, which were created by earlier improvisers. In other words, I found the situation such as that our scene of non-idiomatic improvised music - in direct opposition to its main incitement - had itself become a musical genre.

I became severely critical towards music in general, including all of my heroes’ music as well as my own music. Since I preferred silence to music, it seemed quite natural to me when I during the summer of 2011 decided to quit playing music in public. During spring that same year I applied for a preparatory art school in Stockholm.10

1.2. Moving Towards the Non-Productive Attitude and Pluralist Aesthetics – Preparatory Art School

I was looking forward to meeting new people. Maybe they could help me with my overarching dwelling on aesthetics, music and society. During the two-year program at the art school I got intensely motivated with what was to me a fresh subject. I studied drawing and painting thoroughly and then realised I could not see myself as a painter. I felt strangely disconnected with society when making drawings, paintings and sculptures, in short ‘formal’ artworks that

10 I studied at Pernby School of Painting between 2011-13.
have their aesthetic ‘merits’ due to their formal ‘properties’. Instead I started reflecting and paying grave attention to what and why the teachers said about the students’ work and I began discussing issues such as aesthetics and ‘interpretation’ at length with them.

My perception of the things I saw – both in my everyday life and the artefacts I produced at the school – now seemed to unlock a wealth of artistic material for me, but surprisingly, not so much in tangible form as in linguistic form. Suddenly I understood that the way I name the things I see could be a poetic interpretation of them and that this was one of my strengths as an artist. When I would be present in person, I seemed to captivate others through the way I spoke about my work, and when I was absent they would more easily not pay attention to my work. My formal training as an artist was of course conditional for this development and the skills I acquired were definitely necessary in order for me to translate my linguistic thoughts into a pictorial or exhibit space. In hindsight I can now see how I basically moved from a formal concept of art, which through my studies in aesthetics have come to be historically situated foremost in the ‘modernism’ of early 20th century, to a ‘postmodern’ concept of art in which all objects – including everyday and industrially produced objects – can become works of art, see, e.g., (Bell 1914). In Bell’s account, an artwork is constituted by the virtue of its ‘significant form’, i.e., the formal properties of an object in relation to the concept of beauty, valued by the institutions of its time. Distinct from Bell’s account of significant form is everything that is other than the formal properties of the artwork, for example the ethical or political significance of an artefact. The view that art and music is necessarily expressions of beauty, in turn mediated through an ideal organisation of materials, for example dynamics, harmony, melody and rhythm in music and symbolically dense composition of colour, form and material in art, can be considered a ‘classicist’ and formalist concept of art and music. For me, being conscious of this historical conceptual construct freed me from its horizon. To mention only one positive consequence from this would be that I immediately could more easily understand and appreciate art and music made during my own lifetime, something that I had struggled with before. Basically, up until this time, I had not understood the ‘paradigm shifts’ in aesthetics, art, ‘epistemology’, music and philosophy, caused by for example ‘the linguistic turn’ in philosophy of language and postmodernism in the western world.

I continued working on installations that consisted of a wide range of materials, including artefacts I had done, found or let others make for me, industrial objects and materials, photographs of everyday scenes in various sizes and instances where compositional, formal or visual properties could be interpreted into resembling that of something else within that same installation.

What I wanted to communicate with my installations was my philosophically and poetically informed perception of my silent language. In other words, I wanted to convey my intimate and private interpretations of what interested me as art, which I spoke to myself, thus silent. This voice – when one is engaged in conversation while speaking for someone else, in my case I conversed with as well as for myself – is sometimes called ‘the interlocutor’s voice’ in philosophy of language, see, e.g., (Wittgenstein 1953/1968). I thought that the ‘authorial intent’ of my work then was no particular one’s, since the interlocutor or the ‘me’ speaking to myself, could never say anything to anyone outside of itself/myself, for then it would cease to be the interlocutor speaking and instead it would be me, Andreas, who is speaking and representing myself. I thought that this implied a paradox, which motivated me to make increasingly abstract works: How is it that we seemingly can understand something spoken or written by no one in particular, e.g., the interlocutor as author of an artwork? What really interested me was: If we can understand the ‘semantics’ of a spoken or written sentence, but no one is there to have
meant this sentence in any particular way, what have we then understood? I began regarding language as my artistic (immaterial) work, hoping to replace (material) objects altogether with my language, and just like I would try to develop a painting or an idea into its most minimal and concise form, I believe I started thinking about a potentially ‘ideal language use’, i.e., semantically dense.

Larsson, A. H. 2015b. Here is nothing else to be seen. Vienna.

This idea of an ideal language use motivated me into making several works and I also found out how the early philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein consisted of a similar view of language, see (Wittgenstein 1921). I would now, in hindsight, say that my idea of an ideal language use was a grave misconception, and it did cause me a lot of trouble. I was so obsessed with this idea that I became ‘solipsistic’, I regularly dismissed the way my colleagues were speaking as non-sense were their sentence structures not apt with my theory. I now also disagree with my thoughts on the interlocutor’s voice. Instead, I have a more ‘pragmatic’ view on language, which does not bother much with the ‘ontological’ status of abstract subjects, but

11 See (Larsson 2014), in chapter C. Appendix.
rather regard them as necessarily tied to some particular human author in order for them to make any sense.

I continued pursuing both ‘phenomenology’ and philosophy of language, on my own, reading and discussing, e.g., (Husserl 1965; Wittgenstein 1921; Derrida 1971/74; 1988) with Claes Entzenberg and Ruth Sonderegger, who were my teachers in aesthetics and philosophy.

1.3. My Introduction to the Non-Productive Attitude – Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien

I finished my art studies at the preparatory art school in 2013 and moved together with my partner to Vienna where we both had applied and were accepted as students at Akademie der bildenden Künste (hereafter abbreviated AkBild) in the classes of ‘performative’ and ‘textual’ sculpture. I studied at AkBild between 2013-15 and during those years I was introduced to a great amount of approaches to what contemporary art can be. Based on what was said by my teachers I could not understand their intents and artistic values. To me, the language they used was ambiguous to say the least, but they still favoured some students and I wondered why. By observing again how and what my teachers said to the students and vice versa about the artworks discussed I began thinking hard on the language used in different artistic contexts.

I was just as ambitious and fervently intense in my artistic work as I had been my previous years studying and working with music. My work at the time could be both physically manifested installations as well as theories articulated in written language presented together with various media such as photographs of installations, interventions in public spaces, drawings, diagrams, etchings, etc., which both depicted and challenged the content of the texts.

Still, my teachers met my work with ambiguity. I was encouraged by my teachers in art to pursue philosophy and my teachers in aesthetics and philosophy thought my art was important and special. Teachers sent me here and there. For example, I was sent by my teacher in textual sculpture to meet with a professor in ‘linguistics’ at the University of Vienna and to speak with him about my work.

During my last semester at AkBild, I had the great fortune of meeting the artist Josef Strau who was a guest teacher in my main subject, textual sculpture. Strau’s approach to making art – known as ‘the non-productive attitude’ – made more sense to me and felt more interesting than what I had previously encountered. I believe his work stems partly from the fact that he used to live in Cologne and later also Berlin, toward which a lot of art world attention was directed in the 1980’s and 90’s, see e.g., (Decter and Draxler 2014: 44-64; Strau 2006). Strau and his colleagues could hold experimental attitudes toward artistic practice, since they got the public attention needed for making a living as artists without having to conform too much to market conditions. Strau and his friends experimented with taking on different roles and occupations themselves, I think in order to question and explore the conditions and demands directed toward artists in society. For example, Strau managed a gallery in an abandoned glass pavilion, facing the Volksbühne Theatre in Berlin, called ‘Galerie Meerrettich’. Here he could create his own context and determine who and what would be presented as art. Strau exhibited several of his friends who later became internationally recognised artists, for example Bernadette Corporation, Claire Fontaine, Ei Arakawa, Isa Genzken and Wolfgang Tillmans.

12 My artistic work at the time was primarily motivated by genres within aesthetics and philosophy of language, e.g., metaphor, interpretation, semantics and ontology.

13 See (Larsson 2015), in chapter C. Appendix.

14 Without completely adopting a professional attitude towards curatorial practice, I together with musician and composer Johan Jutterström, have experimented with organising presentations of aestheticians, artists and musicians while regarding this as part of my artistic practice, Johan and I curated, e.g., the #series at KHIMAIRA, at which we presented concerts, displays, publications and talks with aestheticians, artists, musicians and composers, see (Jutterström and Larsson 2018-19).
Meeting Strau was uplifting to me and it is still one of my most important experiences of meeting another artist and seeing someone’s work.¹¹ My partner and I left Vienna and I began studying aesthetics at Uppsala University, where Claes Entzenberg was teaching.

Stackenäs, D. 2018. Installation view of Bow II, as part of the #-series, curated by Johan Jutterström and me. Stockholm: KHIMAIRA.

1.4. My Introduction to Pluralist Aesthetics – Aesthetics at Uppsala University and Philosophy in the Context of Art at the Royal Institute of Art

Studying aesthetics with Claes Entzenberg at Uppsala University was a revelation to me. I had already in Vienna read his dissertation on ‘metaphor’ and ‘verbal arts’ as well as his book on aesthetics and interpretation, and they had influenced and helped me with further widening my understanding of philosophy of language, poetic interpretation and theories of metaphor, as well as aspects of artworks after formalism and postmodernism, see (Entzenberg 1998; 2013). In Uppsala I spent many hours discussing history of aesthetics with Entzenberg and how central questions within aesthetics can be actualised with regard to contemporary examples, as well as issues regarding ontological ramifications of artworks and works of music.

¹¹ For a selection of works by Strau that have greatly influenced my own artistic sensibilities, see (Strau 2003; 2008; 2011; 2014a; 2014b; 2015; 2017; 2018).
Going through a thorough historical rendering of key figures and inquiries in European aesthetics together with him and continuously challenge his position as well as those of the aestheticians and philosophers we read, I noticed two basic observations that seemed important:

(1) From a pluralist perspective, both my own as well as others’ artistic practices - all of a sudden - seemed to become precisely understandable to me, and to a very great extent possible to articulate. In short, both my own as well as historical, and contemporary artistic practices started to make sense to me, when understood through aesthetic theories. I realised how much of - non-articulated and unconscious - both contemporary and historical aesthetic values had informed how I thought of the idea of an artist and what artists create as artworks. Consequently it freed my mind substantially and again - just as happened when I at my preparatory art school realised that formalism was not for me and instead my philosophically and poetically informed perception became my artistic material - I worked painstakingly hard on updating my view of art to include the lessons I had learned from aesthetics. One of the lessons I had learned from Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language was that with my language comes a ‘form of life’, therefore I should carefully consider what language I use, see (Wittgenstein 1953/1968). I extrapolated this into asking myself: Why should I conform how I think of art and music according to what art and music institutions prescribe, if I feel that they disregard the possibilities I had learned from my studies and practice in art, music and philosophy? Another view at this could be: If I would make music that I did not find any genuine interest in for the sake of becoming professionally or economically successful while becoming neither, what worth would it have to me? Instead, if I could make art and music that I actually did have a genuine interest in and become just as professionally or economically (un-)successful, and regard this practice as providing meaning to my life, why would I compromise and do anything else? I realised that I could make and play whatever I found to be stimulating to me, in terms of art and music, instead of what I thought was expected of me. For me, this development was not ‘dogmatic’, but rather a widening of my horizon; I may want to make art or play music the way someone else suggests, even if it is an institutional concept of art or music.

(2) It also seemed that these - to me - wonderful new glasses were not implemented or put to use, perhaps naturally because of their undermining function, at the art and music institutions with which I was in contact. It became increasingly clear to me that, instead of an ‘objective’ position held by the teachers and taught to the students at art and music institutions, the teachers became visible to me as artists just like us students, with their respective ‘subjective’ aesthetic preferences. In other words, I could say that such, to me, symbolic terms as objective and subjective became relative and changed in terms of what they represented to me. It is not that I don’t trust the ‘judgment’ of a teacher, but rather I regard it as coming from someone who has for some particular reasons had the opportunity to form this judgment against a background of ‘discursive’ knowledge and practical experience that have been valued by a societal structure as ‘legitimate’, see, e.g., (Welsch 1997). I thereby mean, that this person has his or her chance of offering a judgment stemming from a position which inevitably relates to both what

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16 I here mean that a position of pluralist aesthetics suggests a break with ‘grand theories’ of art, such as is exemplified in modernism and instead supports a manifold of ‘small theories’ of art. For more elaborations on pluralist aesthetics, please see note 2 as well as chapter B, 1.9. Pluralist Aesthetics – Non-Development.

17 I here mean that from an aesthetic perspective, both historical and contemporary artistic practices became – to me at least – as understandable as theories of aesthetics could afford to articulate. This also entailed informing me of aesthetic and artistic areas I did not have the ethical right to thread.

18 If I know both several histories of European aesthetics, art and music as well as have a substantial experience of my own artistic practice, I believe that I can be freer in choosing what art and music may be. With this freedom comes of course a sense of great responsibility; if I would treat what I consider to be music unethically I might have to face whatever consequences can follow.

19 Here Welsch argues for an aestheticisation of epistemology.
institutions consider to be the history of this teacher’s particular field of expertise as well as his or hers particular generation’s interests and sensibilities as well as distancing himself or herself from these aspects to whatever desired degree. In other words, what a person, artist or teacher might say is what is at stake; what else would it be? What more became clear to me was that several of the more influential artists who hold positions as teachers and professors at art and music institutions are children of their generation and often prefer art and music that either stem from or relate to the central artistic sensibilities of their generation.

I really don’t find this way of regarding art and music disrespectful to neither the artworks or the music nor the artists making and performing them. Rather, I find this disposition less hierarchical, in terms of opposites such as teacher-student, person-society and individual-collective etc. At the same time, to me, it seems to offer - just like I said above - very resourceful and precise ways of understanding as well as not understanding artworks and music.20 I started slowly and tentatively to, once again, become interested in doing something within my artistic practice that could have its root in my musical sensibilities.

During these years I wrote an article on performative actions and interpretation as well as essays on how knowledge production in European aesthetics had historically been produced, transformed and relativised, which were published in a monograph on aesthetics, see (Larsson 2015; 2018a).

Entzenberg recommended me applying for the postgraduate course ‘Philosophy in the Context of Art’ at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm21 with the motivation that he thought artistic research was a field for me to focus on instead of ‘analytic’ philosophy and aesthetics, see Larsson (2018b: 63-70).22 Teaching the course was the French philosopher Catherine Malabou. She had done her dissertation on G. W. F. Hegel, yet I was surprised when she during her Hegel lecture at the course never mentioned Hegel’s linear view of history and goal oriented approach in his concept of art.23 After the lecture I asked her if we could meet and discuss our different readings of Hegel. She agreed and we met the day after. Our conversation centred on Hegel’s aesthetics and I argued for how art institutions today fail to see both how their attitudes toward art and its related theories often are friendly towards Hegel’s aesthetics and its goal oriented approach and thus fail to realise more updated attitudes toward concepts of art, which would really support the ambitions of most art institutions of today, such as equal conditions and rights for people of all ethnicities, genders, sexual and religious beliefs. I suggested a pluralist position, with which I argued for more equal and less hierarchic cultures could grow. Malabou agreed and thought I was right about this.

The class was quite large, around 20-30 people, most of them were artists and not trained philosophers, which made the seminars quite difficult, I believe due to most of us having vastly different understandings and motives toward the subjects at hand. However, I thought it was a challenging situation but also rewarding in hindsight to be able to try to follow first an advanced lecture on French 20th century philosophy and then student presentations with diametrically different content.

20 Here I mean why circumvent my artistic practice according to the experiences of others’ at the cost of what I find to be my artistic value when they can never be relevant – in a fair proportion – to my own experiences?
21 I studied at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm between 2016-17.
22 For a discussion on problematic perspectives in both analytic and ‘continental’ aesthetics, see, e.g., (Larsson 2018b: 63-70).
23 See (Larsson 2018b: 64).
Prelude to Seduced by (a) last year

1.5. Music Anew and Experiments with Text and Music – The Performing Arts Forum

I had kept contact with my close friend since high school, Johan Jutterström, throughout my years off music. Johan and I have a duo together – J/L Duo – since the year of 2003. We had just released our debut album Lovsång och hemlighet/Cerchio when I withdrew from playing music publicly, see (J/L Duo 2011). Since then we had sporadically recorded different ideas that we wanted to try out in addition to or together with our already existing musical practice that we had created for ourselves over the years in terms of improvisation and composition. During the spring of 2015 Johan suggested that we should together apply for a music and philosophy residency in the fall of the same year at the Performing Arts Forum (hereafter abbreviated PAF) in Saint-Erme, France. Our stay at PAF became an emotional and intense experience for the both of us as we – after having reached a culmination of our discussions of music over the last four years – determined that our duo had, there and then, resurrected. We performed and recorded two experiments at PAF, which proved to be transformative experiences for both of us in terms of our musical work. The recordings of our experiments at PAF became the basis for our coming years devoted to working with our second duo album.

The first experiment that Johan and I carried out at PAF was also the first time I recorded myself reading aloud one of my philosophical articles with the intention of it being music.24 For this particular work, it is important to note that Johan and I intended the recording to be nearly inaudible. The reason for this was that we wished for the listener to only hear the text as extremely quiet sound, and only if the listener would make an almost impossible effort would he or she be able to hear fragments of what is actually being read. At the same time the content of the text was of importance to our experimental position, which entailed a paradoxical situation.

24 I here mean the sounds produced of myself reading as well as the arguments presented in the text. The content of the texts that I used for such a particular musical purpose always concerned ontological issues, which I regarded and argued for as musically relevant. See, e.g., my discussion on metaphor and ‘non-conceptual content’ in my work referred to in note 13, which I use as non-musical material in this particular project.
Photographic documentation of Johan Jutterström (right) and me (left) working on I Is True Iff O. 2015. Saint-Erme: The Performing Arts Forum.

Please listen to the track ‘I Is True Iff O (2015)’, found through this link: https://soundcloud.com/andreashirouilarsson/sets/seduced-by-a-last-year/s-zmRB9

This was something I had desired intensely, since I regarded it as stemming from my musical interests and sensibilities as well as from my artistic and philosophical ones.²⁵ I thought and felt that this could be a music that I would be aesthetically agreeing with, for the first time since I quit playing music in 2011. I regarded the philosophical text to be a material, which did not fit the expectations of regular music material and was neither manipulated, rehearsed nor edited in any way in regards to becoming more musical than a philosophical argumentative text would be otherwise. Thereby I thought of the text as a ‘non-musical material’ and this was motivated by most of what I had read in philosophy of language, aesthetics and also what I had argued for in some of my papers, see (Larsson 2015). But this non-musical material was to be placed or performed within a situation that would suggest to a listener to engage in an interpretational process in which the text - the non-musical material - makes the most sense as being interpreted musically. I thought that if Johan and I would succeed in communicating this, then the text (the non-musical material) would become paradoxical in the way that it would - judging by its formal properties - not make sense as a conventional musical material while at the

²⁵ I here refer to my affinity for iconoclastic tendencies, see, e.g., my schooling in and appreciation for the non-productive attitude, which is elaborated upon above in chapter A. 1.3. My Introduction to the Non-Productive Attitude – Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, as well as below in chapter B. 1.8. The Non-Productive Attitude – Language as (Non-Musical Material. In the referred to chapters I describe my disposition in favour of e.g., letting theoretical engagements replace the aesthetic formalist conception of what an artwork is; theory becomes one’s art. When I during the process of making this project played I Is True Iff O to my teacher in composition, Magnus Granberg, he brought in references in terms of literature of and on composers whose work are and were in a similar field as mine, see e.g., (Brecht 1963; Lucier 1961; Saunders and Lely 2012; Saunders 2017).
same time – due to the situation it is understood as being inseparably part of – make the most sense as being music.  

Thus, I thought that our non-musical material should be regarded as, at least, material of this particular music. This contradiction was very stimulating to me and I think to some extent to Johan as well.

I think it is important to note here that in terms of art, things can, in short, both be and not be simultaneously, see, e.g., (Baker 1999: 144-65). The importance lies not necessarily in the materials, what I above have called a formalist conception of art, but rather in what someone, like me for example, ascribe something in terms of meaning. I additionally find it important to note that it is not necessarily the materials that change – however they can of course do so in cases other than what I discuss here – but rather how and what I regard the materials as such, see, e.g., (Danto 1983; Entzenberg 1998; 2007; 2013; Larsson 2015; 2018a; 2018b).

The second experiment that Johan and I recorded at PAF consisted of a sort of ‘field recording’ in which we recorded ourselves walking out of a room at PAF, out into the streets, out of the town Saint-Erme and into a vast field. At the field we placed the recording microphones at a great distance from us while we discussed among other things, ‘fundamental questions about the nature and value of music and our experience of it’, moving the microphones closer to us in two stages until they eventually were shut down when finally being up close to us.

After our residency at PAF, I found myself interested in making music again. However, not what might be called regular music, but rather a specific attitude towards a particular concept of music. I wanted to further explore my possibilities of ‘playing’ or rather ‘reading’ the philosophical texts I wrote and having them become music by way of a listener’s interpretation, both on my own as well as together with Johan – in our duo – and potentially also together with others.

1.6. Example of a Non-Musical Material Performed Musically – My Snare Drum Technique

In 2016 I found a way of playing my snare drum in a way that, to me, seemed to prolong the paradox and contradiction that I found so intensely stimulating at PAF; performing a non-musical material into music. I used a piece of cloth – meant to be used for cleaning the shells of the drums when I would change heads – as my so to speak sticks, brushes, mallets, or whatever have you. I then basically found four modes of playing or wiping my drum with the head on readily tuned; (1) wiping either the batter or the resonant head of the drum with the cloth in a counter clockwise motion at a moderate to slow pace, (2) wiping the rims of the drum and its screws with the cloth at a moderate to slow pace, (3) wiping the batter head with the cloth and with my second hand tapping – on the cloth as it is wiping the head – the rhythms I could hear from performing mode No. 2 and (4) whipping the cloth back and forth in the air above the drum so that either the flapping sound it produces barely resonates in the drum or sporadically hits either the batter or the resonant head of the drum.

26 I here mean that this material would not consist of pitched tones or rhythmic patterns and thereby not give way for harmonic, melodic or rhythmic phrases, gestures and patterns. In other words, this material would not make any conventional musical progressions audible.

27 I here refer to the ‘Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy’ and its description of the genre of philosophy called ‘ontology of music’, as it describes what Johan and I were discussing during these years.

28 I here refer to my iconoclastic tendencies as well as my schooling in and affinity for the non-productive attitude, see (Strau 2006).

29 In this project I use the term ‘non musical-material’ to describe motives, materials and concepts that come from contexts other than musical ones.
I found that playing my snare drum this way, the technique and modes of playing I had framed myself within, created yet again a prolongation or an artistic dialectic of the paradox I mentioned above in the previous chapter, consisting of a non-musical material transformed into music through interpretation and performativity.\(^{30}\) I also found that this technique and framework for playing snare drum generated new material to be played each and every time I used it. The rhythms I would hear when wiping the rims of the drum and its screws would always be of a very soft dynamic, and so I would have to really make an effort of listening intensely and carefully each and every time in order to hear them. Of course, a concern of equal relevance would be: Do I actually hear them? Since the sounds produced of my snare drum technique are so soft in dynamic, they are barely audible. However, I do hear rhythms when wiping the rims of the drum and its screws only that to me it is difficult to be certain where a distinction would determine and separate what I hear from what I imagine or ‘supplement’ for what I did not hear. This difficulty in determining and separating what I hear from what I interpret as well as the overall very soft dynamics were all to my aesthetic, artistic and not least musical preference.\(^{30}\) In short, it created something that I both did and did not plan for. In other words, I appreciate what kind of musical material this technique produces and I cannot predetermine exactly what it will be.

\(^{30}\) I here mean that such a transformation occurs, as part of when one intently interprets a non-musical material musically due to the context and situation presented.

\(^{31}\) I here refer to my iconoclastic tendencies and affinity for the non-productive attitude, see (Strau 2006). See also the current chapter in which I explain my wish to supplement my musical work for silence on the basis of my personal narrative, i.e., my emotional and theoretical motivations. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, since my personal crisis in 2010-11 that made me pause my work in music I had up until this point wanted for most things to be silent, of soft dynamics or only sporadically of strong dynamics. Between 2011-16 I almost exclusively listened to music that was very soft in dynamics, see e.g., (Günter 1993; Ullmann 2012).
Photographic documentation of me using the technique for snare drum described above, during my solo performance After writing this text you know my name, at C/O Percussion, curated by Stockholm Art Music Center (SAMC). 2019. Stockholm: Fylkingen.

I have used this snare drum technique when playing solo concerts and in projects together with other artists, e.g., DOGMA15. Johan and I also composed and recorded a piece of music called LETHE, in which I (1) use this snare drum technique for one of the three parts making up the composition, see (J/L Duo 2018). The other two parts of the composition consists of (2) me reading an article I have written and published on ontology of music and (3) the two of us improvising on instruments. Both of us thought that the three parts enforced, contextualised and articulated each other in an unpredicted manner that we appreciated. We thought that this kind of approach to making music was fruitful for us and we wanted to continue exploring it further in future works.
B. Master’s Project – Seduced by (a) last year

In this chapter I present my master’s project and the three concepts that I explore in my project: non-idiomatic improvisation, the non-productive attitude, and pluralist aesthetics. I explain each concept and experiment with how they can be combined and made use of in my project together with the ensemble that I have assembled specifically for this project. This chapter also contains some of my ideas concerning my improvisation on drums and how I see its relationship to metaphor and performativity.

Concepts

1.7. Non-Idiomatic Improvisation

Idiomatic improvisation, much the most widely used, is mainly concerned with the expression of an idiom - such as jazz, flamenco or baroque - and take its identity and motivation from that idiom. Non-idiomatic improvisation has other concerns and is most usually found in so-called ‘free’ improvisation and, while it can be highly stylised, is not usually tied to representing an idiomatic identity. (Bailey 1993: xi-xii)

For an example of how I employ non-idiomatic improvisation in my project, please listen to the track ‘Example of Non-Idiomatic Improvisation’, found through this link: https://soundcloud.com/andreashirouilarsson/sets/seduced-by-a-last-year/s-zmRB9. The recording is from a rehearsal with the ensemble that I have put together for this project.

Basically, non-idiomatic improvisation or ‘free improvisation’ (hereafter referred to as non-idiomatic improvisation) is a practice without motivations of being conditioned by a genre. Instead, non-idiomatic improvisation, at least in the case of Bailey et al., was spurred in relation to the notion of a conventional musical language; a language that Bailey among others found to be inadequate for their musical sensibilities in a wide sense, including their political and philosophical positions, such as preferring genuine democratic musical communities instead of a music industry in which commodification and production are the aims. At the same time it does not necessarily prohibit someone from playing notes or sounds that could be considered stemming from any musical genre. Non-idiomatic improvisation is more of an attitude towards making music, which may cultivate values and sensibilities apt for motivating someone to an intentional act of improvising without expressing any particular musical genre.

The question: How do you know that someone is really improvising idiomatically, let alone non-idiomatically? is a relevant one, but it is not crucial for my particular project. A short answer could be that Bailey’s concept of non-idiomatic improvisation is close to the account of metaphor I support, which is sketched below in chapter B. 1.18. Example of Metaphor; non-idiomatic improvisation and metaphor cannot reside in ‘predetermined’ materials such as musical structures and ‘linguistic items’, but are rather ‘internal matter’ inseparable from interpretive acts motivated by specific ‘intentional’ approaches to music and language.

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32 I am aware of some critical views toward the ‘Eurocentricity’ of non-idiomatic improvisation. See, e.g., (Lewis 2002), in which he uses the perspectives ‘afrological’ and ‘eurological’ to show how the concept of improvisation both differs from the two perspectives and how practitioners of the ‘eurological’ perspective have – as part of structural racial oppression in American society at large – coined terms that are synonymous to properties fundamental to ‘afrological’ perspectives while simultaneously negating them and exchanging them with a ‘new’ meaning; all for the sake of excluding ‘non-white sensibilities’ from improvisation. I could easily adopt Lewis’ radical criticism, however the non-idiomatic improvisation that Derek Bailey practiced and that I examine as part of this project, neither primarily draws from nor negates forms of improvisation developed by Afro-American culture, such as blues, gospel, swing, bebop and free jazz.
respectively. I would suggest that whether or not someone is improvising non-idiomatically or not is determined as part of a general ‘sense-making’ on behalf of a ‘historically positioned subject’; the situation you are witnessing is not understood to you as otherwise.

For example, when I improvise on drums, I think of and intend to communicate something not predetermined, while still allowing for the notes I play - the analogy with linguistic theory here being the words I use - to have a musical semantics tied to them. I might play a rhythm, sound, texture, gesture or general attitude which refers to another time and place; a triplet phrasing orchestrated over hi-hat, rivet cymbal, snare drum, bass drum and tomtom, which refers to Elvin Jones’ rhythmic spacing and harmonic gesturing moving through time and Jack DeJohnette’s ‘broken’ phrasing with which, similar to extended harmonic resolutions, rhythmic tension is systematically constructed and either resolved surprisingly with an unexpected part of the drum kit – for example a phrasing ending with a snare hit or a closing of the hi-hat – or suspended until being resolved at a surprising beat in a later bar. To someone who is unfamiliar with improvisation - either idiomatic or non-idiomatic - and a history of improvisers on drums, such a situation could still be identified as making sense only as ‘someone improvising something on drums’. What I mean here is that that there is - as paradoxically as it is - somewhat of a canon, history and tradition of improvised music and in my case particularly on the drums. This way, similar to the linguistic theories I discuss in this text - within my interdisciplinary project - I regard playing a certain way, with a certain phrasing, sound, texture, gesture etc. parallel to what I refer to as ‘conventional word meaning’.

Bailey describes non-idiomatic improvisation in terms of: ‘Improvisation is always changing and adjusting, never fixed, too elusive for analysis and precise description; essentially non-academic’ (Bailey 1993: ix). If by ‘non-academic’ Bailey means a textual context being laid out, which statements ‘recursively’ are referring and being validated according to, then I agree that non-idiomatic improvisation is different.

1.8. The Non-Productive Attitude – Language as (Non-)Musical Material

... I could now say that I unfortunately loved both opposing strategies for the evasion of production: the delay of production caused by theoretical engagement, the commitment to theoretical studies which ‘allowed’ for the production of an art object only as deferral, such that theory would itself become the production; but also the opposite – the non-theoretical, non-political artistic maneuver

33 My view is that materials and predeterminations are necessary ‘givens’ and can be regarded as ‘presuppositions’ for improvisation. I regard the conceptual or predetermined materials to be conventional and it is only in relation to them that an ‘other’ can exist; a ‘deviancy’ can in this sense be similar to improvisation. For other approaches to improvisation that also emphasise non-predetermination while still having a very different perspective than the one I have, see, e.g., ‘musical affordances’ and ‘semiotics’ in (López Cano 2006).

34 I here refer to the term sense-making, which is closely tied to pluralist aesthetics. This term generally designates a discursive process of understanding, and it is thus for the most part language oriented. However, the main purpose of sense-making is to see something (e.g., an object, act or phenomenon) as understandable given the contexts with which it is presented or actualised, and if such contexts are more bodily, emotionally or materially-oriented, then so is the process of sense-making in such cases.


36 I here refer to my account of metaphor and linguistic theory in my work (2015) as well as in chapters B, 1.11. Example of Metaphor and B, 1.8. The Non-Productive Attitude – Language as (Non-)Musical Material.

37 This is something that Derek Bailey is critical of and which – to some extent – could be argued as in favor of undermining my argument. The simile I am making of words and notes, tones or sounds is something that Bailey not explicitly announces in his book. Rather, he solely focuses on music in order to exclude such ‘idiomatic tendencies’ that my simile could be viewed as inviting.

38 Basically, playing a way that was made known by a precedent improviser is equivalent to what words mean regularly and not when used in figures of speech. In other words, I find them to represent ‘building blocks’ and not necessarily the actions performed within the ‘actual house’ that the ‘blocks’ make up.
of constructing the artist as a personality who could gain social recognition without having made any work. (Strau 2006: 30)

The non-productive attitude (hereafter abbreviated NPA) was termed and used by the Austrian artist Josef Strau already in the early 1990’s, but it became widely known in contemporary art contexts around 2006, when he declared it in the publication Make Your Own Life: Artists In & Out of Cologne, see (Strau 2006). As Strau writes, NPA is basically about the evasion of production of artworks according to market interests. Artworks and their representational objects are supplemented for a commitment to theoretical practice; in short theory becomes one’s art. According to Strau, an artist working with NPA is motivated by a general iconoclastic tendency and explains his or her practice on behalf of ‘a good personal narrative’. To me, NPA seemed to fit like hand in glove; it has several productive traits relative my social and educational background and intents and I think it opens up artistic practice and production to a situation I am more sympathetic towards compared to regular market regulated art production. For example, with NPA I can now explain how I make use of my aesthetic, artistic and musical knowledges and experiences in ways that conventional artistic production did not recognise.

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39 See (Strau 2006: 28), in which he writes: ‘In the best years the non-productive artist got great recognition if he substituted his work for a good personal narrative. He could be a kind of island in the main art world, while securing continuity with the tradition of anti-visual heresies. The practice of including autobiographical personal references gave artists in Cologne the reputation for mere ‘Referenzkunst’. In that sense the anti-productive attitude was a kind of iconoclast discipline.’

40 See chapter A. Artistic and Educational Background as well as chapter B. 1.11. Example of Metaphor and chapter C. Appendix, for discussions on metaphor and contextualisation.

41 See (Decter, and Draxler 2014), see also chapter A. 1.3. My Introduction to the Non-Productive Attitude – Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien and chapter A. 1.5. Music Anew and Experiments with Text and Music – The Performing Arts Forum, in which I write: ‘I have previously experimented with recording myself reading aloud a philosophical article, which I have written myself, with the intention of it – meaning the sounds produced of myself reading as well as the arguments presented in the text – being music. This was something I had desired intensely, since I regarded it as stemming from my musical interests and sensibilities as well as from my artistic and philosophical ones.’

42 Usually the art and music markets condition easily sellable products and personas, which reward medium specific and ‘mono-medial’ works and practices, e.g., being a painter or a composer and not a writer who makes art of her writing. Fernando Mesta writes of Strau’s practice: ‘…artists that are also writers generate some kind of mistrust in certain circles, as if the writing was a crutch for the works, or the works were a crutch for the writing. As if they were not unified. As if an artist and an author could not have both identities fully.’, see (Strau et al. 2014b: 39-60).
Larsson, A. H. 2013-20. After writing this text you know my name. Stockholm.

This particular work refers to both the non-productive attitude (through iconoclastic tendencies and supplementation of art objects with text based on theoretical commitments and personal narrative) and pluralist aesthetics (contextualisation of ornamental aspects of Greek art from around 430-00 B.C.). During the Peloponnesian war ($451-04$ B.C.) sculptors in Athens, Greece (around 430-00 B.C.) found refuge from the torment and uncertainty of the times in sculpting the ‘wind-blown’ draperies of their motific deities into ‘aimless’ ornaments, see (Pollitt 1972: 111-25). Both of these references can be regarded as resonating with non-idiomatic motives and values (creating an emancipatory alternative to conventional artistic production, by way of a radical ‘process-based’ collective language). See also in the chapter Introduction, how Leif Eklgren contextualised my interdisciplinary practice with references to ancient Greek art (similarities between the dispositions of dithyrambs and my ensemble setting and orchestration).

The formal properties of someone’s music, art or philosophy were never – if abstracted from the person presenting them – autonomously enough for me to get a sense of trust and credibility of that particular person’s work, see (Carroll 1992: 97-131). In other words, however identical someone’s ride cymbal pattern would be to that of Tony Williams’ or Elvin Jones’, it did not matter to me in terms of trustworthiness or credibility. I needed for an artist to have a reason for playing either way, which did not exclude someone’s playing being identical to that of Tony Williams or Elvin Jones. I perceived the intensity in terms of consciousness and communication between the notes played and the personalities of artists like Tony Williams and Elvin Jones, which made their work trustworthy and credible to me. In other words, I

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43 I agree with the British aesthetician Noël Carroll in that I too have ‘conversational interests’ with the author of a piece of art, music or philosophy, which play in to what extent I find a work in question plausible. Thus, I do not believe in a ‘hedonistic’ view of aesthetic value. However, I do not support the view that an aesthetic value that does not include what Carroll calls ‘conversational interests’ is hedonistic per se. For discussions on ‘arousal’, ‘expression’, and ‘hypothetical persona theory’, see, e.g., (Levinson 1996: 175-213; Robinson 1994: 13-22).

44 Basically, this functions as a way for me to get to understand more of how and what an artist or a musician regards her practice and work to be. However, I do not consider such a way of framing one’s artistic practice as the only legitimate one; ‘logocentrism’. Rather, as I try to articulate throughout this text, my studies in aesthetics and art taught me relativity and plurality in terms of knowledge production. Thus, in line with pluralist aesthetics, I am open to artistic practices that I do not have the ethical right to judge and that I instead would remain an outsider to or uninitiated observer of.
believe I craved for a kind of trustworthy personal narrative on behalf of the artist, in order for them to be considered as credible in my judgment of them. This stressing of a trustworthy personal narrative could allow for someone to have me overcome what I might first consider to be a sub-par or deficient work, due to them explaining to me what the work is and why it is so, see, e.g., (Eaton 2012: 281-92).45 This is of course a fine line, since such an affinity could become problematic in that it might lend itself to manipulation.46 At the same time, I think it worked for me in the sense that I got help to stray away from a formalist and romanticist concept of artistic value. Similar to a pluralist conception of aesthetics – which I will elaborate on below – this notion relies heavily on the explanatory47 contextualisation48 of a work of music or art, which could be less apt of accounting for an author who does not have an intent of or need to explain or verbally contextualise her work. However, what I found this attitude to particularly help me with was that it allowed me to make musical use of my love for music, even though this love had made me pause playing music publicly and instead motivated me to educate myself within aesthetics and art. What I mean is that, I had a musical motivation to get away from the musical environment I found myself in at the time, as well as a musical motivation to study and produce aesthetic and artistic work49 and I now, with NPA, have a reason to regard my partly musically motivated (but formally deviant non-musical) works within aesthetics and art become musical works. In other words, I employ NPA on my musical work on the basis of my personal narrative.50 However, I am not doing this in order to get social recognition as Strau writes could be a risk with the NPA, but rather to painstakingly trying to find a way for me in which I believe and trust in what I do, which entails using all my knowledge, sensibilities and desires as aesthetician, artist and musician. I could not make work in either of these three fields without making use of my knowledge, experience and sensibilities stemming from the other two; they exist for me in a ‘dialectical’ relationship with each other and were motivated into existence for me as a subject by each other.51 On a general level of analysis such an interdisciplinary scope of artistic practice could easily be categorised as modernistic and I might be more indebted to modernism52 than I would like to admit, but for me, this dialectical

45 See my discussion on Eaton and ‘robust immoralism’, in chapter C. Appendix.
46 Imagine someone generatively giving excuses as to why something is never being done. This could be, according to my view of artistic practice, an interesting attitude. However, it is easy to imagine someone employing such an attitude becoming greedy and solipsistic; holding their subjective ways for always being relevant to others. See also (Strau 2006: 30), in which he admits: ‘In a maybe too-heroic, narcissistic interpretation of my ‘non-production’ of that time, I could now say that I unfortunately loved both opposing strategies for the evasion of production: the delay of production caused by theoretical engagement, the commitment to theoretical studies which ‘allowed’ for the production of an art object only as deferral, such that theory would itself become the production; but also the opposite – the non-theoretical, non-political artistic maneuver of constructing the artist as a personality who could gain social recognition without having made any work. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, this double affection led to a kind of creative death.’
47 For more on pluralist aesthetics, see (Danto 1983; 1984). Danto explains his position as twofold: (1) An artwork has meaning, by which he means in relation to (western) art history and institutions, thus an ‘artwork’ which someone nominates as such due to it being solely ‘beautiful’ or ‘nice’ is simply not an artwork according to Danto and (2) when one way is no longer plausible for all, conversely no ways are plausible for one.
48 Foe Entzenberg’s concept of contextualization, see (Entzenberg 2013: 57).
49 See chapter A: Artistic and Educational Background.
50 See (Strau 2006: 28), in which he writes: ‘In the best years the non-productive artist got great recognition if he substituted his work for a good personal narrative.’
51 Strau writes: ‘…more artistic aesthetic focus left more traces in the public memory, while the more theoretical, political discourse did not leave much behind. Many of us used these dialectics of the political and the aesthetic as the diagnosis of nearly everything. Its synthesis was the great final aim, the claimed last accomplishment of any cultural production.’, see (Strau 2006: 30).
52 I for instance love the Swiss artist Paul Klee, who also was a musician first, then artist while being knowledgeable in poetry and philosophy. From a perspective of history of aesthetics, one of the general ideas tied to modernism is that it was considered to be the final synthesis of body and spirit; the great surplus of the synthesis of mind and matter manifested into tangible form.

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relationship between aesthetics, art and music began even after postmodernism,55 and could more comprehensively be referred to what the Dutch improviser Han Bennink is cited saying below on page 31: it has its roots in me exploring and making music out of my background, what I am and why I prefer such and such.

I also regard my aesthetic and artistic work musically relevant because of their content.56 The philosophical reasoning I have written about has been concerning whether a theory of language actually can be (1) encompassing all forms of linguistic use by a competent speaker of a language and (2) based on linguistic meaning being located both in predetermined word meanings57 and linguistic items.58 What I found from working on these questions was that languages seem to be more flexible than what an abstract57 theory can account for – which then seemed to make generally musical and particularly non-idiomatic improvisational sense to me.28

There is a double-sidedness to how I see language and music relating to each other, which I find particularly interesting. One side being that through contextualisation, language can be made a musical material, and the other side being that language and music work if not the same way, then analogous to each other, which I have found to be excluding and misleading, see, e.g., (Sharpe 2005). After studying aesthetics and ontology of art and music, I realised that in principle most scholars who do ontology of music centre their ‘ontological ramifications’ on western classical music, which then allow them to make an assumption – seemingly a lucky fit – that music59 and language are analogous to each other. This problematic notion then allows for the next problematic assumption, that music that does not fit the former assumption – music being analogous to language – is deficient and should be abandoned.60 It is not difficult to think of a kind of music today that is not suitable for these conceptions of music and language being analogous to each other. Non-idiomatic improvisation is for instance in no way regarded as included in such accounts; improvisation – due to the fact of its unruly nature

53 I here refer to the fact that I was born in 1987, thus long after modernism had its heyday and I was in my daily life consequently confronted with expressions of fine arts, sub-cultures and popular culture; they all existed in the same room so to speak. See my elaboration on this in chapter B. 1.9. Pluralist Aesthetics – Non-Development.
54 Since my schooling at art institutions I have become suspicious of definitions. When I later studied aesthetics and philosophy I read the following remarks which made me think even harder on the issue of definitions, see, e.g., (Wittgenstein 1953/1968: 85, §217), in which Wittgenstein writes: ‘Remember that we sometimes demand definitions for the sake not of their content, but of their form. Our requirement is an architectonical one; the definition a kind of ornamental coping that supports nothing.’
55 I here refer to conventional word meaning as opposed to ‘deviant’, ‘creative’ and ‘novel’ meaning, which is created by the subject intentionally interpreting the given words on the basis of their conventional word meaning; this is the case when something is interpreted metaphorically.
56 I here refer to the assumption that the very words, in particular situations when metaphor is concerned, exist as some ‘linguistic entity’ out there in the world, thus a ‘positivistic’ view, and not being conditioned and subjected to change by a historically positioned subject.
57 I here refer to what I found to be the main problem of linguistic theories based on predetermined word meanings; the exclusion or inaptness of accounting for a historically positioned subject; what use would one have today of a theory of language that states the meaning of a word only as the 15th-century meaning of that word?
58 This is for two reasons: (1) See (Bailey 1993: ix), in which he writes: ‘Improvisation is always changing and adjusting, never fixed, too elusive for analysis and precise description’, i.e. it is external to the analytic and academic confines of musical categorisations. Thus, non-idiomatic improvisation is motivated by avoiding – and because of this, also to some extent, challenging – musical genres and idioms. (2) Also taking into account that from my aesthetical perspective the harmonic system, which western music is based on, has problematic connotations tied to it; e.g., ‘thanks’ to the maintenance that the western harmonic system is given through conservative culture politics serving obsolete nostalgic dispositions, it is still considered by the mainstream public to symbolise fixed ‘attributes’ such as intersubjectivity, spiritual refinement as well as the assumption that music is a manifestation of a ‘universal language’ of a ‘free human spirit’, ‘transcendent’ and thoroughly good. I see no convincing aesthetic reasoning in favour of such a proposition, in relation to the current situations of what can be regarded as art and music today.
59 By music, I here refer to Western classical music, which is tonally based and harmonically symbolic in its very constitution in contrast to, e.g., non-idiomatic improvisation, ‘atonal’ music, post-cagean ‘silent’ music, ‘experimental’ music etc.
60 For an example of a philosopher who entertains this notion, see (Sharpe 2005), and for a discussion on Sharpe’s view, see, e.g., (Larsson 2018b).
and difficulty of being successfully systematised - is often regarded by aestheticians as altogether suspect. I wrote a paper about this problem, which was published in Nutida Musik, a journal for contemporary music, see (Larsson 2018b). One might think that I am simply prolonging this issue of believing that 'fine art music' is analogous to language through employing NPA on music and thus subletting it for theory. However, my point is that I know due to my schooling in aesthetics, art and music that in order for me to be taken seriously by the aestheticians, artists and musicians who uphold these problematic notions, I must speak 'their language'; relate to and have genuine experience in both thinking of the discursive references they actualise as well as of a historically conscious contemporary artistic practice. This way, I believe I can make a music which is conscious of its history while not being circumvented by it and instead propose a - to my mind - challenging and fresh alternative to 'tonally centred music'.

I should also emphasise that my music in this project is consciously performative and thus intently intrinsically 'non-dualistic'.61 I here refer to the concept of 'mind-body dualism' in the philosophy of mind, which asserts that mental phenomena are non-physical and that mind and body are plausibly distinct and separable. This means that I am purposefully inverting a particular framework, in this case of language and music, in order to show how I see their historical systematisation as artificial. Imperative to the concept of performativity is to generate an 'emancipatory other'; to create a new and often radical meaning and subject out of problematic conventions. Examples of applied performativity can be found in 'feminist performance art', see, e.g., (Piper 1970; Wilke 1976).62

1.9. Pluralist Aesthetics – Non-Development

The sort of improvisation I am interested in is the sort that everyone does in their lives. They improvise in taking six or seven steps to the door, scratching their heads with one or two fingers. Group improvisation takes place according to common points of education, aims and subjects and it is interesting as far as the material reaches. When there is nothing more to develop it should stop. Misha Mengelberg cited in (Bailey 1993: 132)

For an example of how I employ pluralist aesthetics in my project (combining musical and non-musical materials for the purpose of constructing a music without a clear idiomatic identity, while still being informed by both idiomatic and non-idiomatic attitudes, thus showing a 'pluralist' break with traditional aesthetics), please listen to the track 'Example of Pluralist Aesthetics' found through this link: https://soundcloud.com/andreshiroouilarsson/sets/seduced-by-a-last-year/s-znRB9. The recording is from a rehearsal with the ensemble that I have put together for this project.

I will here mention the influential 19th century philosopher G. W. F. Hegel’s linear and teleological view on history, fine arts, aesthetics and how his ideas, to my mind, no longer are of any use in understanding aesthetics, art and music of today, see (Hegel 1835-38/2005; Lyotard 1983/1998)63; why scholars who do ontology of music rarely use contemporary music as

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61 I here mean that I use performativity for the purpose of dissolving dualisms within my project such as composition/improvisation. Please see note 74 for how I contextualise and use performativity in my project.

62 I elaborate on performativity in chapter B. 1.10 Improvisation, Metaphor and Performativity.

63 Hegel refers to his systematic transcendental aesthetics as per definition void of what he calls: 'A reflexive act relative societal change', which is precisely what distinguishes his celebrated account of fine arts from contemporary art and its central preoccupation with a critical inscribedness; reflecting upon and critiquing societal conventions, norms and structures. See also the linguistic turn in 20th century philosophy, which meant that 'metaphysics' no longer was of an autonomous world independent of a historical perceiving subject; instead it was located in language. This was paradigmatic to philosophy and spilted over into aesthetics and art; informing 'conceptual', verbal, and textual art, 'anti-foundationalism' and the 'contextual necessity' for conceiving of what was regarded as contemporary art. Due to postmodernism, as recognised by Jean-Francois Lyotard, and its strife with Hegel's dialectical system of fine arts, pronouncing war with the false 'history of the unified one subject and one aim' and choosing to forget this discriminative teleology, its aims and purposes is a first step towards conceptions of art in accord with present day values such as gender equality and inclusion of others than Caucasian male Europeans, see, e.g., (Lyotard 1983/1998). The Marxist Frankfurt School informed research genre 'critical studies' has since
examples in their investigations is, according to my thinking, due to them not having the apt tools for understanding such music. Danato and Entzenberg try to show how contextualisation is crucial today in order to understand something as art and music, and that development in art and music, in the historical sense, is over; it is ‘dead’, see, e.g., (Baumgarten 1735/2012; Kristeller 1951-52/1996; Larsson 2018a; Danto 1983; 1984; Entzenberg 2013). Instead art and music – as they try to show – exist nowadays due and thanks to its historical ‘death’; the death of the linear developmental historical art and music is ‘inscribed’ in contemporary art and music’s very ‘constitution’ as part of their resurrections.

Non-idiomatic improvisation, according to Derek Bailey, is as far from a linear teleological developmental idea as that of Danto and Entzenberg’s ontology of contemporary art; development in a historical and thus formalist sense – in terms of harmonic, rhythmic, melodic, dynamic structure etc. – is by the very nature of non-idiomatic improvisation not included, see (Bailey 1993: ix). What entails is a precarious situation; contemporary art and non-idiomatic improvisation exist thanks to the ‘death’ of linear historical art and a concept of music only encompassing idiomatic improvisation, e.g., music equivalent to linear historical art. It is easy to find this proposition normative, however I think this would be a too broad generalisation and it would thus simply be inaccurate in particular cases, see, e.g., (van Winkel 2013). I for example grew up being captivated by modernist art and music as well as

the 1980s brought with it several subgenres to art institutions throughout the western world, all of which are centred on the above mentioned ‘criticality’ towards dialectical fine arts.

64 See my reasoning on this issue above in chapter B. 1.8. The Non-Productive Attitude – Language as (Non-)Musical Material.

65 See (Entzenberg 2013: 57).

66 I here refer to a commonly used notion of grand narratives or grand theories meaning fine arts; an idea, which since the inception of European aesthetics have centred around intersubjectivity, transcendence and the ‘representational means’ of which one might materialise ideal visions of paradigmatic values, e.g., moral virtues in ancient Greece, religious values in medieval times, ‘pure aesthetic experience’ and judgment during the enlightenment, mythological fables and ‘sublime’ imagery during romanticism, the artwork as a portal to a new world during modernism and art as social critique and a philosophically informed alternative during postmodernism. This systematic variation on aesthetic beauty, according to historical principles – the fine art dialectic – is since postmodernism relativised to such a degree, see, e.g., Andy Warhol’s Brillo Box (Soap Pads), David Hammons’ Bliz-aard Bail Sale and John Cage’s 4.33, that the premises have changed if one is to understand present day art or what is referred to as contemporary art. In other words, the dialectical fine arts are no longer the only axiom for making institutionally sanctioned art. For a comprehensive account of European dialectical fine arts, see (Kristeller 1951-52/1996; Larsson 2018a).

67 It is against the discursive background mentioned in the previous note that Danto and Entzenberg use the death of art as metaphor for communicating a paradigm broader and less systematic than what has been; art since postmodernism, thus after Hegel’s teleological act, does not necessarily have to be identified according to its formal or visual properties, but rather requires a discursive contextualisation – made on behalf of the audience, the artist and the artworld – for it to be art. This conception of contemporary art relies heavily on textual contextualisation and merits a historically conscious art while devaluing purely formally motivated art as being ‘below the level of meaning’. Danto supports this position by referring to the difficulty of giving a testimony of one’s aesthetic appraisal or experience of an artwork void of touching upon historical aspects of art; if one regards an artefact as being an artwork judging purely by its formal properties, then one’s contextualisation is, according to Danto, already undermined in terms of its theoretical legitimacy in relation to post-Hegelian times.

68 See (Bailey 1993: ix), in which he writes: ‘Improvisation is always changing and adjusting, never fixed, too elusive for analysis and precise description; essentially non-academic.’, and (Bailey 1993: 133), where he writes: ‘Once the music hardens its identity to the point where it becomes susceptible to self-analysis, description and, of course, reproduction, everything changes… ‘our music’ reaches a stage where, although it might continue to develop musically, and be more marketable – an almost irresistible combination – nevertheless at this point the music becomes less relevant to, less dependent upon, improvisation.’ Thus Bailey’s conceiving of non-idiomatic improvisation is close to the account of metaphor I sketched in chapter B. 1.11. Example of Metaphor, in which I write: Non-idiomatic improvisation and metaphor can not reside in predetermined materials such as musical structures and linguistic items but rather are inseparable from an interpretive act motivated by a specific intentional approach to music and language respectively.

69 See, e.g., (van Winkel 2013), in which he describes contemporary art practices in terms of ‘de-skilling’ and ‘professionalization’, both, which denote a conscious forgetting of the craftsmanship and formalism of historical art, and instead replace such skills with a cultural persona, who not necessarily need to be a skilful craftsman in order to be considered an artist. Rather, van Winkel states that to act in accord with current institutional values, market trends and above all to have an exam from a prestigious art school is today of more importance in order to be regarded as a ‘legitimate’ artist. Needless to say, the development of such approaches to understanding art of today is problematic in terms of accessibility; preserving an understanding of art for people of economic classes that can afford the fees of prestigious art schools.
postmodern music and that did not seem to cause any troubles for me, devoting my time to them all for different motives and reasons. I might like to look at a painting by a modernist artist due to his or hers ability of putting a poetic and philosophical conception of the world into a picture and perhaps with an enigmatic and metaphorical title to it, see e.g., (Klee 1923). Then I might listen to some romantic music for it instilled in me a yearning for hitherto unknown aesthetic pleasures, see e.g., (Debussy 1909-13). I could then listen to some modernistic music, which taught me to broaden my conceptions of what I could fathom in terms of harmonic, melodic and rhythmic structures, see, e.g., (Messiaen 1939). And later that same night I could listen to some postmodern hip-hop for the sake of how the mechanically constructed versions of funk beats and raw lyricism created an atmosphere of transgressive, aggressive confidence with which anything seemed possible, see, e.g., (Gang Starr 1998; Milano Constantine 2000).

My point here is that contemporary art and non-idiomatic improvisation - if acknowledged to exist as such - only adds to the possibilities of what art and music can be; they

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78 See and compare the photographic documentation of (Klee 1923; Larsson 2015c).
are not normatively putting down older conceptions such as linear and historical views of art, unless a particular subject has this intention for reasons other than what I intend to cover in this text. However, both the linear historical and contemporary, non-idiomatic concepts of art and music can be used, put normatively, to exist on behalf of each other’s deficiencies and – taken to an extreme – death. What I am trying to show here is that this is not necessarily needed. One can instead realise that conceptions of both art and music today might simultaneously entail paradoxes and contradictions such as these without anyone of them necessarily being ‘right’ and the other ‘wrong’, see, e.g., (Blue Jazz T.V. 2013). Rather, I think that what is at stake today among other things is to by way of contextualisation try to show the actuality and relevance of either one conception of art and music. What these issues centre on today could be to fight for some desired audience’s hard earned short attention span. This of course leads this discussion into a different area, while my main point is that judging by the premises, with which academically trained aestheticians regard art and music, contemporary art and non-idiomatic music is not a development, in the Hegelian dialectical historical sense. Rather, such art and music are expansions of sub-genres of not new but already existing historical concepts of art and music, only put together and thus contextualised differently. In other words, though ‘the house of art’ (grand theories of art and music) has collapsed, and ‘new houses’ (new smaller theories of art and music) can be constructed, the bricks with which they are to be built are the same as before.

Metaphor

Metaphor is important and perhaps crucial for my own thinking, perception and making of my artistic practice as well as for someone else to understand my intents with this practice. I also believe that metaphor is used when one proclaims that a musician is unique in how they play. I here therefore, in line with the overarching theme of my project, elaborate a bit on how I see metaphor operate within my music, as well as how it relates to improvisation and performativity.

1.10. Improvisation, Metaphor and Performativity

I, just like many other drummers, might practice traditional instrumental skills – for example my hand and foot technique and my ride cymbal pattern – and thereby increase my ‘idiomatic technique’, with which I can clearly see how, as I keep practicing, development occurs. However, when I then listen to a recording of myself playing my drums and hear how these different exercises and patterns which I have practiced have been incorporated into my playing, so that I can play for example faster with more endurance and precision or a slow groove with less friction in my articulation, I can not find any musical situation in which I would need or want to hear such playing. It now seems to me to be a gap between what music I grew up listening to – including drummers who motivated me to practice immensely – in which these formal or musical properties or skills are at home or needed and what music I nowadays want...

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71 Here the lyrics are: ‘Ain’t no wrong it ain’t no right, it just feels like black and white.’
72 I here refer to, e.g., endurance, fine muscle development and precision.
73 What I have learned to be a frustrating fact for me when it comes to making music in general and playing drums in particular is that there are or can be differences between: (1) What I want to play alone and what I want to play with others; (2) what I want to listen to alone and what I want to listen to with others; (3) what I desire to get back – stimuli – from certain kinds of playing or listening alone and what I desire to get back – stimuli – from certain kinds of playing or listening with others; (4) what kind of music I want to play or present for others and talk about with them and what kind of music I want to play or present to myself and talk about with myself.
to hear or play myself. Sometimes I do want to play such idiomatic music but it is almost only for myself, when I am alone, it is not something I would want to play, present or talk about with others. To me, this idiomatic music is somewhat similar to what I above in chapter A. Artistic and Educational Background called the interlocutor’s voice; it is a private conversation I am having with myself, and one that I no longer have a desire or an intention of presenting to others.

However, there are other kinds of creating and playing music that I might be at least ok with playing to, presenting for and talking about with others, e.g., the music that I am presenting in this project as part of my interdisciplinary practice. Why this practice seems more socially apt for me, I guess is due to it being closer to a metaphor for my interlocutor’s voice and thus being personal while less private and instead increasingly abstract simultaneously, thereby closer to others’ voices, what others’ have played, discourse etc. I believe that this mediation of me creating and playing music alone and together with others, through ideas of metaphor as well as non-idiomatic improvisation, the non-productive attitude and pluralist aesthetics, provides a method that offers enough ‘otherness’ and distance for me to wanting to share this music with others.

While having worked on this project, I have come to realise how my initial motivational drive from metaphorology fits somewhat neatly into descriptions of the performativ.74 However alike, of course metaphor and performativity do not mean the same thing. After having given it much thought, I now see why metaphorology – relating to my work within philosophy of language – seemed so attractive to me in a musical sense; I wanted to realise my ideas on metaphor musically as well as have them inform my musical practice in general. Della Pollock writes:

Performative writing is evocative. It operates metaphorically to render absence present – to bring the reader into contact with ‘other-worlds’; to those aspects and dimensions of our world that are other to the text as such by re-marking them. Performative writing evokes worlds that are other-wise intangible, unlocatable: worlds of memory, pleasure, sensation, imagination, affect and in-sight. Whereas a mimetic/realist perspective tends to reify absent referents in language, thus sustaining an illusion of full presence, a performative perspective tends to favour the generative and ludic capacities of language and language encounters – the interplay of reader and writer in the joint production of meaning. It does not describe, in a narrowly reportial sense, an objectively verifiable event or process but uses language like paint to create what is self-evidently a version of what was, what is, and/or what might be. (Pollock 1998: 80)

As Pollock describes above, the performative action operates metaphorically and its effect is to bring forth an imaginative world of otherness, e.g. an alternative/deviance relative the given/conventional. I use the performative force and effect of my artistic actions to push me from one field to another.75 In other words, it suits my interdisciplinary sensibilities well of moving between the fields of art, music and philosophy. This is in line with how the non-productive attitude of Josef Strau works: the performative aspect of letting one’s artistic

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74 The term performativity stems from the concept of ‘performative utterances’ of ‘speech act theory’, see (Austin 1955/1962). It has however been used in a wide sense in – other than philosophical contexts – e.g., ‘performance’ and ‘queer’ theory, see, e.g., (Butler 2003; Phelan 1998). The performative has been described by, e.g., Bradley Haseman in terms of bringing to being what is named (performed): ‘The name perfroms itself and in the course of that performing becomes the thing done.’, see (Haseman 2007: 150).

75 See, e.g., (Bolt 2014: 139), in which she writes: ‘Butler’s theory of performativity relates to the formation of the subject. In Butler’s thesis, there is no subject who precedes the repetition. Rather, through performance, ‘I’ come into being. She argues that “there is no performer prior to the performed, the performance is performative [and] the performance constitutes the appearance of a ‘subject’ as its effect.”'
production, curatorial practice and writing perform the purposes and roles of one another. I would say that this is really a key to my practice in which I am aesthetician, artist and musician simultaneously.

1.11. Example of Metaphor

To simplify gravely, the forging of two things for the sake of them being different – and not alike – could be one way of describing a structure for creating metaphor, which I find plausible. I also find it crucial to note that in the concept of metaphor which I support, it is not in the very material of language or in the case of music, in the sounds themselves, that metaphor resides, for then it would be impossible to ‘locate’ it and distinguish it from similes and other figures of speech in which formal properties are at stake in determining ‘identity’. If this would be the case with metaphor then it could be predetermined by way of a theory of language encompassing fixed meaning for all words in a language; the meaning of a sentence is determined by the meaning of its words plus its structure. This could work to some extent, but it would need for that all words always mean the same thing in the particular language being used. For example, imagine if you could know what a ride cymbal pattern means – even if that proposition might not really make sense to you – without actually hearing it being played by someone in some situation, musical or not. If this was possible, which it is given that a ride cymbal pattern ‘always means the same thing, it would not make a difference in terms of meaning whether it was being played by Tony Williams or yourself. Now, this might not seem right according to one’s intuition; there should be a difference in what I find Tony Williams’ ride cymbal pattern to mean relative mine, even if they would be formally identical, that is having the exact same structure, phrasing, dynamics etc. If this was the case, then I would reasonably not need to hear Tony Williams play, since I could play identical to him and in addition what we play mean the exact same thing. Quite obviously this is not how neither language nor music works; words and tones do not only have a predetermined conventional meaning but they also both have several other meanings as well as can be ascribed and meant differently by the speakers speaking and musicians playing them. What I find important to ask here is that what use would one have of a theory of language with which all words and sentences can be predetermined in terms of meaning, but without taking into account someone – that is a human subject, in a cultural place and within a historical time – actually speaking and thus intending the words to mean anything particular? Thus, on the one hand it seems that one’s particular intention when speaking a language or playing a certain kind of music is left out of such a formalist concept of language

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76 Parallel to working on this project, I completed and had published a performative short story, see (Larsson 2020). Several of the texts that are included in the digital archives that make up the non-musical materials to be played as part of Seduced by (a) last year are excerpts from this publication.

77 In order for a listener or onlooker to be provoked into creatively interpreting them according to the given situation – contextualising them, making sense of them – thus ascribing them with a deviant and new metaphorical meaning, which by definition then can not be conventional.

78 In my practice, metaphorology and performativity are related to each other through some of their foundational conditions, such as imperatively generating fragmentation and ‘metonymy’. I am aware of other non-linguistic perspectives on musical interpretation, such as ‘ecologic’ and ‘semiotic’ interpretations, see, e.g., (López Cano 2006). However, I do not see the explanatory clarity of such views that regard the performers’ bodily movements, gestures and facial expressions as signs to be musically interpreted. I find such theories seeming much too limited in their scope. I cannot but wonder what such theories could say about artists that do not use much bodily gestures other than the pragmatic ones for ‘mechanical purposes’ within their performances. What could an ecologic and semiotic view on musical interpretation offer in such cases? Although I am not entirely convinced of the usefulness of such theories for the kind of music that I engage with as part of this project, I do acknowledge that such views on non-linguistic musical interpretation can potentially be useful in other cases. I also consider such theories making up an alternative to the more traditional and thus linguistically framed approaches.

79 This is – in philosophy of language – sometimes called ‘compositionality’ and ‘the argument from productivity’. For discussions on metaphorology, compositionality and ‘truth-conditional semantics’, see, e.g., (Entzenberg 1998; Larsson 2015).
and music. On the other hand, thus all what is important to a particular intention of a speaker – a human subject, in a cultural place and within a historical time – can be taken into account when a non-formalist concept of metaphor is concerned. According to such a concept of metaphor then, the difference between Tony Williams’ ride cymbal pattern and my ride cymbal pattern can be allowed and make up a part of a larger constructive difference between us, which enables ‘new’ meaning to be creatively construed by us as listeners. Differences become meaningful this way. Questions such as why is he playing this or that sound in that way and in this context can then naturally arise, which then – in my experience as a musician as well as aesthetcian and artist – can pave way to expanding my thinking, perception and practice into ways I did not already know. This is certainly a method that I find useful for my interdisciplinary practice.

**Ensemble Work**

1.12. Method

We try and introduce a broader scale of improvising - as broad as daily life... to make music out of their own background, not someone else’s background. Learning what you are. In my eyes that’s all you can do. Let people find out what they are and where they are and where their musical influences and preferences come from. Teach them to explore their own background. Han Bennink cited in (Bailey 1993: 123)

Just like the Dutch drummer and improviser Han Bennink is cited saying above, I too want to make music out of my personal background, and after having studied the three concepts of non-idiomatic improvisation in music, the non-productive attitude in art and pluralist aesthetics in philosophy, I try in this project, in line with pluralist aesthetics, to make my interdisciplinary practice metaphorically into music. In my practice a philosophical text can be seen, in line with the non-productive attitude, to performatively replace the music score (henceforth referred to as text score). In this project, the text score is comprised of a paper written by me on performativity. In this paper I develop an alternative interpretive position to common linguistic theories, such as truth-conditional semantics, in relation to performative actions. This text score is to be read through aloud by me and determines the total duration of the particular piece and differentiations of its musical parts; its chapters determine when and what other materials are being played, read and/or projected and when the text is read through aloud the piece ends. The actual relation between the content of the text score and the music that it produces is both ontological and performative. I decided to use this particular paper as the text score since it elaborates on performativity while simultaneously being part of a performative act. Therefore I thought that it could potentially work semantically in fulfilling the requirements for being this particular kind of music.80

Then archives of performative and philosophical texts, photographs and recordings can be seen as the stems, which are played by the members of the ensemble, always referring to the content of the current chapter being read in the text score. Similarly, at certain points in the text score, Johan and I improvise on our respective musical instruments in relation to the content of the current chapter being read.

80 See note 74 for a more elaborate discussion on performativity and how I see the text score as an example of performativity.
It should be noted that I do not consider this method an attempt at according with Bailey’s concept of non-idiomatic music (Bailey 1993). Rather this method is motivated by my wish to make use of both knowledge and materials from my fields of education other than music, e.g., art and philosophy. However, making music by way of a method motivated by attitudes and sensibilities stemming from art and philosophy, instead of music, could be argued as stemming from outside of idiomatic musicality. In this sense, my method resonates with a fundamental aspect of non-idiomatic improvisation; not being conditioned by a musical genre.

We, in the ensemble, also improvise with what current material we have access to relative where we are within the text score. We have the interpretive freedom to, for example, play our given materials however way we want to, play another material if we wish so and also refrain from playing at all. I thereby do not regard what we play within this particular project being a musical ‘work’, as discussed by (Goehr 1992), and not even a composition, in the sense of what most scholars who do ontology of music mean by this, see, e.g., (Dodd 2007; Hamilton 2007).  

81 Several analytical aestheticians discuss musical works according to ‘type/token theory’ and Julian Dodd is a prolific advocate of this view. In type/token theory a musical work is argued to be a ‘type’ of an abstract ‘entity’—in the ‘Platonic’ sense—which is perceived by us in terms of its ‘instantiated token performances’. Problems arise however when token
Still, our method here is very different from non-idiomatic improvisation in several ways; the fact that we have a score that we play from is diametrically opposed to the very basic constitutive idea of non-idiomatic improvisation, which is to improvise without preconceived motives and conditions. In other words, it is obviously not my intent to make an impeccable account of non-idiomatic improvisation but to use this concept and method to some extent and show how it can be instrumental in an interdisciplinary artistic practice, in which similar musical motivations are at stake; not being conditioned by a musical idiom or genre.

Photographic documentation of a rehearsal with my ensemble. 2019. Stockholm: KHIMAIRA.

performances of type works differ substantially from one another; where does a token performance of a type work seize to be such and instead become something else? Where can one draw a distinction between a work and an interpretation? In Andy Hamilton’s work on improvisation a different attitude and disposition of ontology of music is displayed. I agree with Hamilton in that entertaining the notion of a work of music (I would allow extrapolation into works of art, literature, theatre etc. too, thus in a general sense) prolongs a primarily Eurocentric ideal of romantic and European tonally centered classical music, in which a composer, artist, author etc., created ‘masterpieces’ by way of ‘compositions’ associated with perfection and should thus not be ‘interfered’ with. Hamilton suggests that improvisation – innate to all music, according to Derek Bailey – is unfairly associated with imperfection, partly due to its constitution of change as opposed to the fixed ‘constitutions’ of compositions of primarily the romantic and ‘absolute music’ era. Thus, since the music we play in this project is partly motivated by attitudes and sensibilities of non-idiomatic improvisation, the non-productive attitude and pluralist aesthetics, I can say that we, in a sense, partly improvise non-idiomatically as well as play from a score, while not playing what might – according to analytical ontology of music – be aptly categorised as a composition. I would, for instance, in our particular case, not be satisfied with nominating the text score as being the musical work. Instead, if such a binary disposition as that of type/token theory would be conditional, I would rather emphasise the opposite and say that our performance – however it may be – each and every time is the musical work; without us performing, the work would not exist in any meaningful sense. In addition, I could say that I do not know of nor think I could ever recognise any kind of work of any sort on account of type/token theory.
After having worked intensely on this music during this project, I have come to think of the music as an expression of my personal disposition. I see the music as constitutive of two distinct different modes that the music is moving in between:

1. The parts where we are playing recordings, projecting pictures and reading texts, I think of as more ‘associative’ and perhaps even without a specific audience in mind. One could think of these parts as a camera lens being ‘out of focus’, and instead seeing a view from nowhere in particular or more abstract.

2. The parts where Johan and I are improvising on our instruments, I think of as the camera lens ‘brining its view into focus’. It is more of a directed communication, making sense for a specific audience. This can also be regarded as an intentional and directed musical communication of what the camera lens had in frame but out of focus.

1.13. Ensemble

My ensemble consists of musician and composer Johan Jutterström, artist Johanna Arve and myself. I have a personal and a professional relationship with both Johan and Johanna, which make the process of articulating the music, conveying my ideas and rehearsing easier for me than had I worked with musicians chosen solely due to them being professionals; Johan and Johanna know my work intimately and since a long time. Johan and Johanna are also chosen to participate in this project as a way for them to perform ‘themselves’ as part of my personal narrative, which is in line with NPA.

1.14. Materials

Johan and Johanna are given several digital archives of materials, often materials with a direct personal relation to them. These archives are to be improvised with by them in relation to the overarching text score. I chose materials to put in different archives due to them representing motives that I associate with particular chapters in the text score as well as events from our shared personal and professional history.

I then hand Johan and Johanna their ‘parts’ in which they first of all have the entire text score to follow with, as well as instructions informing them when and what archive to improvise with throughout each chapter, i.e., playing back recordings, projecting images and reading texts aloud.

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82 The materials given to them comprise of photographic documentation of artworks by me, them and others, performative and philosophical texts written by me in relation to them which are to be read aloud, transcribed lyrics of hip-hop music also to be read aloud, published and unpublished recordings of me together with them, ‘field recordings’, recordings of performances, recordings of me practicing in music shops, recorded conversations, ‘sound works’ and ‘noise’. As an example, Johan and I completed an album with our group J/L Duo during the two years I worked on this project and some of the recorded materials that were included in the archives that Johan were to play come from this album, see J/L Duo 2020.
Above are examples of the kinds of photographs that are included in Johanna’s archives.

As an example, in a certain archive I have selected photographs to be projected by Johanna due to them being decontextualised pieces of lost clothing or tools, in the streets or in public spaces. These photographs are motivated by me as a metaphor, which gives me several associations, one being the theory of a tool by Martin Heidegger\(^3\) and another one being the saying ‘a fish out of water’, which could be interpreted as a dysfunctional metaphor\(^4\) that is slightly similar to a ‘dysfunctional tool’ of Heidegger’s theory, see (Heidegger 1953/1977). I also describe them as photographs that deliberately miss ‘their’ goals,\(^5\) which hopefully give way for unknown interpretations (which satisfies an account of metaphor that I support). Another reason for choosing these photographs is that they, to me, answer to a melancholic atmosphere that I intend to communicate as part of the music. In line with NPA, which was termed as originally motivated by an iconoclastic tendency, I associate this melancholic atmosphere with the iconoclastic absence of what once was something, i.e., music, in this case.

\(^3\) Heidegger’s theory could be simplified and described in terms such as: A tool is invisible when functioning, thus in its proper context, and becomes visible only when dysfunctional, thus out of its proper context.

\(^4\) I here mean, believing that a theory of predetermined word meaning can account for metaphor; a view that I do not support.

\(^5\) ‘Their’, in this case meaning their conventionally expected or assumed goals to fulfil; the photographs are intentionally of a mundane, dull character, seemingly ‘without’ ambition in terms of composition, motive and technical sophistication. However, I have carefully taken these photographs with my iPhone over several years with the ambition of including them in this particular interdisciplinary practice. My intention is for an onlooker to be provoked into reflecting what a photograph is and why one prefers such and such; a meta-narrative concerning ontology and aesthetics parallel with the music presented; what is music and why one prefers such and such. For an example of photographs with similarly self-critical scope and aesthetics, see (Hsu 2019).
1.15. Instructions

Initially when I began working on this project I had a predetermined framework for how dynamics were to be determined by way of the members of the ensemble: each musician reads and plays back material in a dynamic so that they are clearly audible while simultaneously just to mask both the ambient sounds that are already in the room as well as the sound of the reading of player 1 (me) and the sounds produced by player 2 (Johanna) and player 3 (Johan). According to these instructions the perception of each musician becomes an integral part of how and what this particular music will be: (1) each musicians’ interpretive freedom of improvising relative their archives determine within this given framework what the particular piece will be and (2) due to letting the sounds one produce mask both the ambient sounds in the room as well as the sounds produced by the other musicians, the perception of each musician determine how the given piece is formed.

However, during the process of working on this music, and playing it to colleagues and teachers, I realised that I needed to make more subjective decisions concerning the dynamics of the music. This was mostly due to my judgment that the music was too exhaustive and monotone for someone wanting to listen to it. I thought that if we in the ensemble were to use some more conventional musical tools, such as a dynamic spectra, musical gestures e.g., canon, polyphony and unison, then we might get more contrasts in the music, which could aid us in articulating the imperative of transgression in the music.

During the first year of this project, we played as quietly as we could, while during the second year I began writing out dynamics in the text score and in each part for the members of the ensemble. We also began working on reading texts in unison and pausing our reading at certain instances in the music, thus creating more rhythm and space in the overall structure, which otherwise was generally dense and insistently monotone. Throughout the two years I worked on this project, discussing the music with colleagues, teachers and in particular the members of my ensemble was instrumental in the shaping and sharpening of this music.

Drums

Once the music hardens its identity to the point where it becomes susceptible to self-analysis, description and, of course, reproduction, everything changes... 'our music’ reaches a stage where, although it might continue to develop musically, and be more marketable - an almost irresistible combination - nevertheless at this point the music becomes less relevant to, less dependent upon, improvisation. (Bailey 1993: 133)

If I imagine a harmonic rhythm in which I am playing, then I can use particular drums and cymbals at certain times within phrases in order to refer to or negate the current harmonic element at which I am playing. This way I can let my ‘imagination’ condition and guide my orchestration, which can also lead me to hearing and wanting to play certain phrases and even sequences of phrases, which I had not been aware of prior to playing. In other words, this could be termed a generative improvisation; it is improvisation, which feeds itself and gives way to ‘new’ musical material emerging from within this practice. Another way to put it could be that it provokes my listening in a way so that I start to be creative.87

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86 This information is based on an excerpt from my Journal: Rehearsal with my ensemble, Stockholm, 22 April 2019.
Speaking of my improvising on drums - in terms other than musically technical, theoretical contextualisations or a history of improvising musicians relative to aesthetic theories or sub-culture paradigms - is difficult territory to me. Though I can talk about the technical preconditions of me playing, e.g. how I tune my drums and what instruments I chose to play on, music as the combination of gesture and meaning seems to escape language.\(^{88}\) However, following are a few important elements that I am conscious of when improvising on drums.

Photographic documentation of my instrument; drums, percussion, cymbals, sticks, brushes, rods, mallets, pieces of cloth and bows. 2017. Stockholm: KHIMAIRA.

1.16. Bass Drum

The way my bass drum is tuned and primarily how it is played is important to me. My ideal bass drum sound is the sound of a concert bass drum, but not prohibiting other instruments from letting their whole range of timbre being heard. Thus, an 18' bass drum, tuned very low and played without muffling is what I usually use. From playing nationally and internationally, concert halls, clubs and festivals I have learned the importance of being able to make any kind of bass drum have the sounding properties I desire - regardless of size, kind, what kind of heads are on, what bass drum pedal is at disposal and what the acoustics of the room are in which I am to play. I tune my bass drum so that it sounds 'Boooom'. The sound should

\(^{88}\) See my elaboration on this issue in note 73.
resonate with a substantial part of the acoustics in the room; I want the resulting sound to give me a warm sensation in, on and around my ears when playing the drum. This is due to that I want to be able to play one note on the bass drum and be confronted with a surprising acoustic situation to which I would have to ‘protect myself’ from. I want the sound to feel a bit dangerous. Having the bass drum tuned this way, I also feel like I can shape the sound of the drum more and be more dynamic in my phrasing; an open stroke gives a large sound, while two strokes – pushing the beater into the batter head during the latter stroke – gives an option of changing the sound significantly; becoming shorter, higher in pitch and projecting more efficiently than the open stroke. Elvin Jones used this bass drum technique, which gave him a significant sound. Tony Williams had often a shorter and more muffled sound. However, I love the open bass drum sound that Williams displays on the album *Miles Smiles*, see (Davis 1966).  

Other non-idiomatic improvisers on drums who are important to me, and who use an open bass drum sound and the technique described above are: Louis Moholo-Moholo, Milford Graves, Paul Lovens and Tony Oxley. More contemporary ones are: Chris Corsano, Paal Nilssen-Love, Raymond Strid and Susie Ibarra.

I rarely muffle my bass drum, only when playing conventional jazz music or music in which set patterns of rhythm and dynamics are consequently repeated.

1.17. Cymbals

My cymbals are important to me, although for a long time I did not have any vintage or special kinds of cymbals. I sure wanted to come across one of the vintage K-Zildjian cymbals that were hand hammered in Turkey in the 1950-60s, but as a fact there are a finite number made and they are neither frequently for sale nor sold to affordable sums. However, one day I got lucky and was offered to buy a vintage 20’ K-Zildjian Constantinople cymbal, hand hammered in Turkey and with one rivet. I love everything about this cymbal and it has shaped and continues to shape my improvising through its mystic, fiery and coarse yet dirty silvery articulate timbre. I spent several years exploring different ways of playing this cymbal; I have played it with the back of my stick, bowed it so that I got a layered note – roughly equivalent to a g1 – along with a sparkling wall of rhythms played by the dance of the rivet, played it at every imaginable level of dynamics, made it resonate by going around it with a rod, luring forth only its lowest register with a marimba mallet etc. I also have a 22’ Spizzichino cymbal from Italy, which is made out of a vintage K-Zildjian cast as well as some A-Zildjian cymbals and various smaller cymbals of different sizes and kinds; I use two 12’ splashes as my hi-hats, which other than functioning as splashes give me a fast, soft, dry and strangely mushy chick when played together.

Other improvisers on drums who are both important to me and use similar cymbals and techniques to play them are among others: Andrew Cyrille, Beaver Harris, Denis Charles, Ed Blackwell, Elvin Jones, Joe Chambers, Paul Lytton, Paul Motian, Sunny Murray, Tony Oxley and Tony Williams.

1.18. Tuning of the Drums

Similar to the bass drum I want all of the drums I play to be open sounding and they should generally all resonate with a great amount of the acoustic frequencies of the room I am playing.

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89 Listen to how Tony Williams accentuates the quarter note on the fourth beat, during Wayne Shorter’s solo on the song ‘Freedom Jazz Dance’.
in so that I get a warm sensation in, on and around my ears when playing each of the drums as well as them all together. I tune the tom-tom and the floor-tom so that when I play them, while sitting beside them and looking at them horizontally with the batter head being the same level as that of my eyes - in other words, basically sitting on the floor and facing the shell of the drum - I should feel the shell noticeably resonating with warmth and the sound produced should resonate to a great extent with the acoustic frequencies of the room. This effect is according to my experience usually arrived at when the drum in question is being tuned close to the resonating frequency of the shell of the drum. I can then tune the resonant head so that it resonates to the frequency of the batter head.

The snare drum should be tuned so that it can be played with a clear and articulate rhythmic phrasing when the snares are on, while having the same tonal, timbre and acoustic properties as that of the toms - as is described above - when the snares are off. This usually means - depending on the material of the shell of the drum, its depth, what rims are on the drum and what the lugs are and how they are constructed onto the shell - that the drum is tuned lower in pitch than average. I find this tuning to bring forth the character of the drum more efficiently and interestingly than would I tune it higher in pitch and use a thick, muffled and less resonant batter head.

Basically what I want is for the drums to be able to speak warmly, with great resonance and above all to be versatile and as dynamically wide in range as possible. After all, non-idiomatic improvisation is not tied to any preconceived ideal of what music it should be regarded as, thus when I play such music I want to be able to make as wide range of sounds as I possibly can and be as open to whatever seems to me are the right sounds for the moment. Of course, this means that I also can muffle the drums or change their sound, timbre, texture, and frequency by placing other things, instruments, cymbals onto them and play both the surfaces of the drums as well as the surfaces of the things I have put onto them. This, to me, changes the gestures, dynamics, references, which I want to communicate at times, which is why I do it.

Some improvisers on drums who have influenced me and who use these techniques for tuning and preparing their drums are: Chris Corsano, Han Bennink, Ingar Zach, John Stevens, Paul Lovens, Paul Lytton, Raymond Strid, Susie Ibarra and Tony Oxley.

1.19. Rhythm and Improvisation

To me, ideals of rhythm are relative, in terms of different concepts of music. When I play drums in this project I use basically two modes of rhythm: one idiomatic (referential) and one non-idiomatic (abstract). I often find that experiences of having played in ensembles of a wide range of musical preferences come useful whenever I improvise, although not usually explicitly but rather as in atmospheric remnants, which I can play against or with.

I used to feel a lot of stress about acquiring technique, sticking, rudiments, phrasing, dynamics, sound, energy, swing and as an answer to this stress I practiced so much growing up, I believe I missed out on things people usually do; for instance, I never graduated high school due to getting accepted as a student at RCM after completing two out of three years of high school. At one point, I felt like I realised how and what they played - the other improvisers on drums that I looked up to - and it eased my stress quite substantially. This did not entail that I thought that I either could or should play the way they played, only that it was not impossible anymore for me to grasp.

I have noticed that I often play rudiments and modified finger techniques; my hands appreciate playing para-para-diddle-diddles, para-diddles, and I also mix different para-diddles in relation to when I play a certain accent or syncopation. I can also orchestrate such para-diddles around my hands and limbs, thereby getting musical phrases perceivable. To develop
things further I can play these musical phrases either referentially (idiomatic) or abstract (non-idiomatic).

I commonly experience that I am completely giving myself to the time being when I am improvising, both when I play publicly and to myself. Although, as I have become more confident and mature as an improviser I feel a calm spatiality in which me, the instrument and the room in which I am playing are situated. This allows me a kind of ‘pictorial space’ in which I perceive time differently than that of the time I perceive when I am at my wage work, interacting verbally with colleagues and other people. Metaphorically speaking, I feel a bit like I am inside the house - which I refer to above when speaking about analogies of improvisation and philosophy of language - doing whatever I want. It could perhaps be likened to being someone living in a house completely made of glass in the very centre of a city, while being so used to everyone’s attention that one has become as little self conscious as if one was alone.

I think I am quite occupied with giving all the attention I can possibly emanate to the very time being that I regard myself improvising. Thus, improvisation, to me, is clearly an intentional practice with a clear pragmatic ontological status; it exists as long as I am engaged in performance and ceases to exist the very moment I leave the comprehensive time period of this intentional activity behind.

Similar to what I wrote in chapter A. 1.5. Music Anew and Experiments with Text and Sound - The Performative Arts Forum of how Johan Jutterström and I appreciated the paradoxical situation that we experimented with at PAF (a musically intended listening to an almost inaudible performative reading of a philosophical text) I also find the paradox of improvising idiomatically with my acquired non-idiomatic sensibilities and intentions useful for the purpose of my interdisciplinary practice, see (Butcher/Nilssen-Love 2006). 90

**Artistic Results**

I together with my ensemble performed the music of my project at my degree concert, which took place on 21 August 2020 in the Nathan Milstein Hall at RCM.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the concert was rescheduled from May to August. Restrictions were held, which meant that only eighteen people were allowed in the audience and they had to be seated wide apart from each other. Initially, I had intended that the audience would be seated on the stage and that we in the ensemble would be placed among them, but the restrictions did not allow it. Instead, the audience had to be seated in the auditorium and the ensemble had to be placed on the stage.

On the one hand the postponing of the concert meant that the ensemble did not have the chance to perform the music when it was new to us and as a part of the overall environment of the master’s programme. On the other hand, instead we got some time to let the music sink in and intermingle with our respective other artistic experiences that we had while working on different projects, which we all did up until the date of the concert. After all, I believe that the

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90 Nilssen-Love is interviewed by Meyer, B., in the liner notes of the record. (2006. Berwyn IL, June 2006.). Meyer writes that: ‘Paal’s evolving engagements with non-idiomatic improvisation, rock, free noise, and the fringes of dub and funk via his associations with Mats Gustafsson, Raoul Björkenheim, Lasse Marhaug, and Ken Vandermark betray no anxiety about historical baggage or musical encumbrance, only a hunger for new musical stimulation. At the same time, his recent work with the swinging ensembles School Days and Atomic proves that ambivalence has never crept into his relationship with the music of his youth; indeed, he thrives on the contrast. ‘I have always dealt with groups playing music with time and melodies, and at the same time groups or ad hoc meetings where the contrary is the case. But I think that if you play really free music, you should feel free to include all elements. When Evan Parker and Derek Bailey chose to exclude time, melody and harmony it was for political reasons then.’
involuntary break from working on the project was to our advantage since I found the performance that we made during the concert to be our most effective yet.

Thankfully, we had the possibility of having two consecutive days of rehearsals leading up to the day of the concert. During the rehearsals we focused primarily on what I described in chapter B. 1.15. Instructions as ‘conventional musical tools’, i.e., musical gestures that in the context of this project served to create contrasts between the musical and the non-musical materials in the music, which aided us in communicating the imperative of transgression in the music. Upon rehearsing we decided that whenever we were to read texts in unison, canon and polyphony we would always collectively emphasise the first word of the section we were to read. Johanna also suggested that Johan and I would extend the second out of three parts in which we played our musical instruments, which we agreed to. Johan also found a way to use two different software programs to play back recordings from his archives. This enabled him to in advance set up a recording that he was to play later on, which made transitions between certain dense sections of the score easier for him to play.

Photographic documentation of Johanna Arve (left), Johan Jutterström (right) and me (centre) performing Seduced by (a) last year at my degree concert. 2020. Stockholm: The Royal College of Music.

To me, the music that we played at my degree concert seemed surprisingly communicative and musically confident, despite its conceptual content and partly non-musical intent. I am usually self-critical and rarely believe that I have something artistic to communicate to anyone that would be of his or her interest. However, when speaking to an audience member after the concert was performed, I was exhilarated to hear how the parts of us reading texts as part of the music worked similarly on her as that of when rabbis read their religious texts. She said: ‘whenever I hear or read any kind of text, I zone out a bit. I do so as a method, so that the distance between the text and me allows me to hear or read it in another and perhaps more musical way. I thought about this when you were reading texts and also when I heard the priests sing’ (at one time during the performance Johanna played a field recording that I had made in Kavala, Greece in 2018, in which you can hear Greek Orthodox priests sing from a distance).
She continued: 'the Jewish priests read their religious texts in a similar way; they read so that you are almost not supposed to think of what is said. Of course the actual texts are essential but the most important thing is perhaps that they are being read.'

This remark made me think of how the silence that I described in chapter A. 1.5. *Music Anew and Experiments with Text and Sound* – *The Performative Arts Forum* and especially in note 31, was expressed to this audience member through the music that my project amounted to. Her account also resonated with my intention of having a performative and philosophical text being read performatively, e.g., a musically intended listening to an almost inaudible reading of a performative text, such as with *I Is True Iff O*, see (Jutterström and Larsson 2015). I genuinely felt that this person had perceived, on her own terms, what I wanted to communicate with my project. Her testimony not only surprised me but also gave me a sense of artistic encouragement and satisfaction.

After the concert there was also a scheduled public conversation between Professor Joakim Milder and me. The purpose of our conversation was to serve as both an introduction to and a discussion about my project. Several members of the audience asked me questions concerning contextualisation, non-idiomatic improvisation, performativity and my decision to ‘abstain’ from conventional artistic production and aesthetics. Milder also complimented my drumming as being strikingly beautiful, my dynamic range and control as an ability to fill a room with quiet but full sound and timbre, referring to it as ‘a voice’. I was moved by his compliments.

In chapter B. 1.12. *Method* I described the music of my master’s project as consisting of two modes that both structured the project as well as represented my personal disposition in a metaphorical way: (1) a camera lens having its frame out of focus (reading texts, playing recordings and projecting photographs) and (2) the frame coming into focus (playing musical instruments). I felt that the two testimonies mentioned above confirmed that the two modes, i.e. my method, operated successfully.

**Conclusion**

After having worked on this project for two years, there are at least two experiences regarding my music that I cherish and that I now believe are important for me to carry with me into my future work with my interdisciplinary musical practice.

The first experience is to have initiated and actually made the music that constituted this project. As I have mentioned above, there is music that is both quiet and made of non-musical materials, but the particular combination and contextualisation of instrumental non-idiomatic improvisation, philosophical and performative texts, non-productive attitude and metaphor was something I had not yet encountered elsewhere. In accordance with the non-productive attitude, which is elaborated on above, the music we made in this project was also informed to a large extent by my personal narrative. Thus I also regard that this music is, in a comprehensive scope, representative of a major part of my artistic, educational and personal history.

The second experience is to have made music that is open in terms of content, dynamics, form and even instrumentation. Basically, as is stated above, the materials being played, the dynamics used, the length of the entire piece as well as its parts were all representative of and to a large extent determined either in dialogue with or by the players themselves.

As I stated in the introduction above, initially I was more interested in developing a framework that would please all of my inner artistic, musical and philosophical judges in serving as foundation for an organic music to come into being, rather than how this music would actually sound. To some extent I still feel this way about the music even now that the project has run its course.
The title of my master’s project, *Seduced by (a) last year*, was intended as a performative demonstration of the project itself. The title is comprised of several references put together to form a ‘new’ contextual sentence. Part of the title comes from the song ‘Money Gone’ by Spice 1, in which he says: ‘...I am out of here like a last year’, see (Spice 1 1992). I thought that this sentence could be a performative and poetic interpretation of an act of contextualisation, thus another part of the title comes from my self critical interpretation of an act of contextualisation being as Entzenberg is quoted saying in the introduction above: ‘to weave different things together into a new whole’, see (Entzenberg 2013: 57). While the things themselves are existing prior to us bringing them into an act of contextualisation, my performative and self critical take on this is that there are problematic limits to what have been considered worthy and valuable enough to have been documented and preserved, thus what make up the materials out of which the new springs forth.  

I thereby mean that when I am engaged in an act of contextualisation, I am always at risk of forgetting potentially relevant acts and people because of them not being documented and preserved; I can become seduced by the materials I use into regarding them as comprising the limits of the subjects that they are representing. In other words, my context is both a condition and an Achilles’ heel; it is limited yet it remains open.

91 I here do not mean that the very ‘locus’ of the new can be said to be in the materials, sentences and words that comprise one’s contextualisation, for then it would be predetermined. Instead, the new is a leap out of while being conditioned by its materials, sentences and words, thus ‘stretching’ its context further. This idea entails a problematisation of the notion of context as a stable and static concept; it emphasises the act of contextualisation and context being the result of contextualisation. Entzenberg elaborates poetically on this point in his text *Contextualization Occurs, But There Is No Context*, see (Entzenberg 2005: 125-37).
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In this text I argue for the metaphysical aspects tied to a particular conception of language as sense-making tool: language as mental picture analogous to the state of affairs in the world it is accounting for as well as its mimesis of the same world. Thus language never reaches the world in a direct sense but only refers to its mediated account by way of its semantics and structural conception. Following this reasoning, I will provide an example of how this particular conception of language can be grasped in concentrated form through the phrase ‘(a) space revisited’, as well as how the noun ‘character’ can be used to illuminate our orientation within linguistic sense-making processes of the world.

1.

Suppose we exist within reality. Then, let us assume that in order for us to make sense of this reality, we need a language mediating it to and between us. Say we could call such a sense-making process a logical concept mimetic of reality, and its meaning an extract of the chosen concept's capacity to re-present, i.e. account for, the reality it concerns. Then it would seem that reality is autonomous from us, since it would be the essence as well as the corpus which our sense-making aims to account for, i.e. there would always be a real state of affairs to measure or judge a statement by, to learn whether it is true or false. At first it may seem difficult to believe that there could be a true and a false reality, or any number of both. But when seeing that language - our sense-making tool - would always, even though we perceive and express it differently, be measured against the same essential reality that is autonomous from us, it seems quite clear that we are faced with an entity that is true reality. I am here referring to the scientific physiological definition of reality, determined by empirical standards: my behaviour as an individual is determined by this ultimate context of reality, which is autonomous from me. Now, whether this reality is solely true or false is another question we might dwell upon. Since reality then is the entity which all and everything is validated according to, and thus is always correct, it is obviously also always true. But could it not be both positive and negative? It could affirm that a tree is alive and is situated next to our garden furniture chair, while also answering the question in the negative whether the doormat is still situated on the front porch. Alas, reality can be a state of affairs both withstanding and not withstanding.

2.

Thus, there seem to be reasons for regarding reality as an entity of which language can be used as a mediator and sense-making tool. Now, let us look at an example of how language can work as a sense-making tool, within this entity of reality.

The American object-oriented philosopher Graham Harman’s metaphysical system is perhaps useful in communicating his speculative ideas, which potentially could account for ‘given objects’, see (Harman 2011). As stated above, in our present inquiry Harman’s system is a sense-making process, in this particular case of given objects, and therefore intrinsically involves language as its mediator. Harman’s system, initiated as speculative ideas and mediated
through language, is according to our reasoning above accounting for given objects as speculative ideas. Given objects, as physiological material, are arguably indifferent to Harman’s speculative ideas. For example, even though we have acquired a more speculative perception of given objects than we used to have, we can still regard them the way we used to do before acquiring this perception, and ultimately the given objects, in their physiological materiality, are most unlikely to change however we perceive them. Now, let us look at Harman’s system as a sense-making tool of a concept in language, to be measured and judged against reality to find out whether it has an equivalent reality to it or not, and perhaps also what perception this might provide when regarding reality. In the early philosophy of the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, a similar view is held of an ideal and transcendental language use: language and its exterior and interior construction, meaning, variables etc. should constitute a mimetic picture of the state of affairs in the reality it is accounting for, see (Wittgenstein 1921). Following this reasoning, in the ideal situation Harman’s system should be a logical translation of given objects, a mimetic picture showing that given objects are nothing more or less than equal to a system of speculative ideas. Needless to say, this is not the case. Let us look at another example of what could be thought of as an ideal language use.

3.
Suppose I was to choose the phrase ‘(a) space revisited’ as the object of analysis in my own text, for its semantics being analogous to the locus of the phrase’s mimetic picture of reality; a particular interpretation of the phrase’s semantics as analogous to its linguistic mimetic picture. Now, in the ideal situation this concept of a particular interpretation through an analogy between the words’ semantics and their mimetic picture of a state of affairs – i.e. regarding the words in relation to their context within the entity of reality - would convey a carefully deliberated interpretation of an author’s chosen representation, as a correct as possible translation of her intentions. If we follow Wittgenstein’s reasoning of language being a mimetic picture of a state of affairs within reality, and apply it to our concept of determining a particular interpretation of a statement’s mimetic picture as analogous to its semantics, relative to the context of the entity of reality, then the state of affairs pictured by the mimetology of language should occur. If the chosen representation of the author’s intentions is correct - i.e. comprehensible to a third-person with no prior conception of the author’s (1) intention, (2) representation or (3) interpretation - then the relational status between each of these three particular concepts should be equal. To illustrate our hypothesis of this ideal language use, I have made a series of five soft-ground etchings. Now, let us examine how our chosen phrase – ‘(a) space revisited’ – can represent our idea of an ideal language use.

4.
Let us assume that the ‘(a)’ in the phrase is chosen for being the first and thereby initial letter in the Western alphabet. We could interpret its being the starting point of the sign-system, which presupposes language as a sense-making tool, as a metonymic property analogous to metaphysics: the (initial) one reality we all share, as well as make sense of. Let us then say that the word ‘space’ is chosen for its semantics being an open-ended spatial entity. This we could interpret as, in this context, determining a concept analogous to the entity of reality, against which language is measured as either true or false. Lastly, suppose that ‘revisited’ is chosen for

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92 See figure 1, 63.
its semantics, meaning going back to a situation that one acknowledges to have happened before, i.e. earlier in time, in relation to the present moment. This we could interpret as accounting for the conceptual analogy mentioned above, concerning ‘space’ and metaphysics. Here is an example of how this metonymic analogy is meaningful in semantics and metaphysics: if I think of the semantics of the word ‘revisited’, it is in principle the very same ‘revisiting act’ that a statement or an act is subjected to when being measured and judged true or false according to the entity of reality. In other words, if we grant that language is a mimetic picture of reality and that metaphysics is a sense-making process – thus intrinsically involving language as its mediator – then they are both dependent on the entity of reality as key, and thus the ‘revisiting act’ is an essential part in this process, for them to be judged true or false. Then the semantics at play - going back to a situation, earlier in time, relative to the present moment - emphasise the idea of the ‘revisiting act’ even further. This concept of metaphysics can also account for the idea that human beings give linguistic explanations of pictures and thus interpret them. Naturally, the physiological picture is always present before we make sense of it. One could even argue that it has always been present in some form of logical representation. This is true given the reasoning that for anything to be possible, it must answer to the empirical conditions of reality, which in turn determine whether something is likely, possible or impossible, in terms of existing. Here then is a seeming symmetry between ‘subject’ and ‘world’, which gives a metaphysical paradox. According to the reasoning above then, real events are always pre-existing in the logical latent moment of reality’s potentially really existing events. In further developing this hypothetical thought of an ideal language use, let us make another thought experiment.

5. Assume we project the noun ‘character’ in two different settings, within a park open to the public. Suppose the technique of light projection is selected because it employs only light to make its effect. This concept then makes us interpret the analogy of light as the first and initial condition for life, consisting solely of solar-energy, and thus it also presupposes the concept of metaphysics; the presupposition of the (initial) one reality we all share. Let us suppose that the noun ‘character’ is chosen for being the one word that distinguishes language from other sense-making mediators, such as sounds, pictures and physical movements, which is the case according to the thesis of ‘theory laden observation’, see (Hanson 1961). Here is an example of how Hanson’s theory works in reality: one could imagine how two humans regard a tree significantly differently, given that one of them is an arborist and the other an electrician. This is because they have different kinds of knowledge about the tree, which informs their sense data, and this in turn tells them how to regard and make sense of their observations. In fact, the two persons see the same material object in the tree but in their minds it is not the same tree.

Ok, back to our experiment. Say that the first setting on to which we will let ‘character’ be projected is a set of shrubs, which accompany one of the gravel paths in the park. We can assume that the shrubs are selected because they are a ‘natural object’, e.g. they are easily thought of as belonging to the park. Now, suppose that the second setting on to which ‘character’ will be projected is an architectural brick construction, built and installed on site, on the lawn inside the park. Here, the reason for projecting ‘character’ on to the architectural construction is that the building is an ‘abstract object’, e.g. it is not easily thought of as belonging

\[93\] See figure 2, 63.
to the park. Thus, it is in need of absent contexts to make sense. Now, the theoretical as well as practical principles, in both of these situations – a demarcated context with a ‘natural object’ and an ‘abstract object’ – being used as projection screen for a word – as language’s hypothetical distinguishing definition – offer an illustration of what our hypothetical ideal language use could look like: the abstract entity of language when used as a sense-making tool within reality; contextualisation of mimetology in language as metaphysical metaphor.

6.

To summarise, our hypothesis is essentially fourfold. (1) The entity of reality, against which all sense-making mediator’s accounts are measured and judged as either true or false, encompasses all possible state of affairs, withstanding and not withstanding; the reality as entity measures and judges whether the logical picturing of language, or the real picture’s logical arrangement of it, is true or false. (2) For us humans, language mediates the entity of reality; this mediation is a mimetic picturing of state of affairs within the entity of reality which, when used in an ideal way, produces symmetry between an author’s intention, representation and interpretation. (3) An ideal use of language produces a correct (semantically dense) representation of an author’s intentions as well as the logics of the language with which this representation is expressed. The semantics at play will then further emphasise an interpretation analogous to the mimetic picture of the language used. (4) An ideal language use accounts for the mimetology of reality, which represents an interpretation analogous to the semantics of the phrase ‘(a) space revisited’; the meta-occurrence of the state of affairs pictured by the mimetology of an ideal language use as picture is thus a metaphysical metaphor.

The ability to grasp and learn languages is naturally imbedded in the being of a human being, so that is not our main concern here. Rather, our concern is an ideal analytical contextual sense-making process. For an elementary example of latent contextual sense-making processes, think of the situation in the park mentioned above: the demarcated context with its natural object or with an abstract object, in need of absent other contexts to make sense. This situation offers a hypothetical state of affairs, which in theoretical principle encompasses every possible situation that a human being concerned with language and contextual sense-making processes of reality can encounter.

An Alternative Interpretive Model of Non-Linguistic Performative Acts

The scope of this paper is to incorporate non-linguistic performative acts within a sense-making activity. Through placing a sense-making activity within conditions determined by non-linguistic performative acts, informing constitutive categories and orientation among these categories, I aim to explain how and what a symmetrically construed linguistic account of non-linguistic performative acts can look like. This dynamic relational form of language will be discussed and developed in the following chapters as to distinguish how it can explain that what it says of that which is external to language is identifying something that exists on premises other than those of a given presupposed linguistic content. Precisely this dynamic relational form of language seems apt in accounting for fields of inquiry external to language, i.e. non-literal uses of language, due
to its shift of locus of word meaning from solely representing or referring to a given linguistically presupposed content to include an idiomatic supplementary content, determined in creative acts such as interactional and contextual sense-making activities and inventions of site-specific conditions for linguistic interpretation. How we can engage in such an activity, as to locate and identify such non-linguistic content, will be elaborated upon through the lenses of representational and referential views of language, truth-conditional theory as well as an alternative interpretive model.

1.1. Theories of Language

In (Baz 2015), different views of language are distinguished based on what different uses they make our words have. His argument examines the representational, referential, and alternative view of language. The representational view of language is concerned with the presupposition of a given object that is then represented by a certain word. The referential view of language comes into account where there are no given objects to represent by a certain word, e.g. know(ing), see(ing) and understand(ing). Instead of representing a given object, the referential view of language refers to mental states that serve as the guiding principles determining the meaning of a certain word. The alternative view of language derives from the genre of philosophy called Ordinary Language Philosophy, in which Baz is a prominent voice. After having critically scrutinised and argued for how the former two views of language are deficient in giving philosophically satisfactory accounts of what to expect from our (different kinds of) words, the alternative view of language argues, partly in line with Wittgensteinian language-games and Austinian speech acts, for word meaning to primarily be ‘acquired as, an intersubjectively shared instrument that enables speakers, not to report on their own inner mental state, but rather to make certain kinds of intersubjectively significant moves in contexts of shared activity.’ (Baz 2015: 11). Baz comes to summarise the differences between the alternative view, the referential view and the representational view of language as:

First, it is non-representational, in that it allows that even sentences of an indicative form may have uses that are not aptly thought of as representing or communicating information about the world; and, correlative, in that it allows that words - including those words that have featured centrally in the theorist’s questions - may have uses that are best understood non-representationally and non-referentially. Second, the view is holistic, or non-atomistic, in that it proposes that the contribution a word makes to the overall sense of an utterance cannot be determined apart from a determination of the overall sense of the utterance, which in turn is understood in terms of the point of the utterance - the speaker’s intention as embodied in the act of uttering particular words in a particular context. And third, the view is non-static, in that it proposes that the range of a word’s possible contributions to the overall sense of utterances may creatively and yet comprehensibly be expanded. (Baz 2015: 15-16)

1.2. Compositionality and Idiomatic Uses of Language

In Anglo-American philosophy there is a standard hypothesis concerned with linguistic meaning, namely the principle of compositionality. To the example of how one possibly can understand sentences that one has never encountered before, given that one knows all the words in it, the hypothesis of compositionality answers that it is the meaning of each word plus the order in which the words are structured that give the sentence its linguistic meaning. Basically, the meaning of a sentence S is determined by the meanings of the words contained in S plus the structure of S. The argument for this principle that we have just been considering is sometimes called ‘the argument from productivity’. The meaning of a novel sentence can be ‘produced’ or constructed from the meanings of its parts plus its structure.
However, there is a challenge to compositionality in non-literal uses of language, such as idiomatic ones. That is to say, that words can and often ambiguously do have two or several meanings that they can produce, e.g. a literal and an idiomatic one. Sometimes understanding the literal use of language and the principle of compositionality is not enough in order to know the meaning of a sentence. Instead, infinite many idiomatic meanings can be developed, which ultimately ensure the reason to ask someone, whenever in doubt, in what way an utterance is meant. This shifts the locus of word meaning from a historically determined definite word meaning (literal and representational), to a dynamic relational form, which encompasses both the historically determined meaning (literal and representational) as well as the particular context sensitive (idiomatic) readings made conscious on behalf of the speaker there and then. If we at this point bring to mind the second respect in which Baz’s alternative view of language differed from representational and referential ones, we see that it is parallel to, and speaks in favour of the dynamic relational form of language mentioned above. This dynamic and relational form of language will be discussed and developed in the following chapters, as to distinguish how it can explain that what it says of that which is external to language, is identifying something that exists on premises other than those of a given presupposed linguistic content. Precisely this dynamic relational form of language seems apt in accounting for fields of inquiry external to language, i.e. non-literal uses of language. This is due to its shift of locus of word meaning, from solely representing or referring to a given linguistically presupposed content to include an idiomatic supplementary content determined in creative acts, such as interactional and contextual sense-making activities and inventions of site-specific conditions for linguistic interpretation. How we can engage in such an activity, as to locate and identify such non-linguistic content, will be elaborated upon in the chapter below on ‘Theories of Fields External to Language’.

1.3. Truth-Conditional Semantics

Certainly there must be a link between what a truth-conditional theory tells us about a language and the actual practice of speaking and understanding that language. Natural-language semantics just is (part of) the study of the actual practice of speaking and understanding a language; there is nothing else for it to be. But the requisite link is already provided for by the requirement (here I bracket indexicality for ease of exposition) that the right-hand side of a T-sentence theorem of a truth-conditional theory of meaning for a language L—a theorem of the form, ‘S is true iff p,’ with ‘S’ replaced by the name of a sentence and ‘p’ by a sentence—specify the content of an utterance of S by a speaker of L. This requirement ensures that on the truth-conditional approach, semantics is the study of a certain important property of particular uses of language—namely, contents of utterances—and correlative, of a central aspect of what one understands when one understands a language in use. It thus ensures that semantics on the truth-conditional approach is part of the study of the practice of speaking and understanding a language. The idea that knowledge of a theory of meaning explains language mastery (or even that it would suffice for mastery of the language, a weaker idea that Davidson himself did admittedly toy with) is thus gratuitous. (Bridges 2009: 24-25)

As Jason Bridges states above, through a truth-conditional theory of meaning for a language, we can study a certain important property of particular uses of language, namely, contents of utterances, and correlative, of a central aspect of what one understands when one understands a language in use. But, what is actually said of the contents of utterances through a recursive theory, such as truth-conditional semantics, if applied to a case of non-linguistic performative acts? (Non-linguistic performative acts will hereafter be abbreviated NLPA). As Entzenberg puts it:
Due to its configuration, TCS seems to only accept that the meanings a sentence can have are related to what is ‘said’ on the linguistic surface, and not evolved by way of a historically positioned subject’s ‘internal activity of providing linguistic items with a (novel) metaphorical meaning through interpretation.’ (Entzenberg 1998). For the same reason that Entzenberg gives in his case of metaphorical activity, it is equally problematic for NLPAs to be viewed as contained within some presupposed linguistic object. Other than the inability of accounting for agency, the nature of temporality accounted for in TCS is radically different from both Entzenberg’s ‘deviant’ activity of metaphorical interpretation, and our locating a sense-making activity within conditions determined by NLPAs. In so far as TCS is concerned, ‘meaning can be assigned to words apart from particular contexts of use’, making it explicate to any particular speaker and time. This does not entail that meaning can not be assigned to words depending on particular temporalities and circumstances of agency, only that it is not relevant to TCS. If we still were to use TCS for our example of NLPAs, a truth-conditional theorem of a truth-conditional theory of meaning for a language L - a theorem of the form, ‘I is true iff o’, with ‘I’ replaced by the interpretation of order(s) of occurrences and ‘o’ by order(s) of occurrences - which then specify the content of an utterance of I by a speaker of L; what could this theorem tell us about our utterances of NLPAs? A theorem of the form ‘I is true iff o’, is only concerned with what can be assigned temporally to linguistic interpretations of NLPAs, apart from particular contexts of use, while also allowing temporality to be assigned to interpretations of NLPAs depending on particular contexts of use, in order to determine their respective truth-value. This far, our truth-conditional theorem ‘I is true iff o’ seems to work, but its presupposed abstract notion of temporality as a priori and non-contextual, excludes that which enables its existential condition, namely a subject’s engaging with it. Thus, without subjects actualizing the theorem, and thus implicitly sustaining a notion of temporality, there can be no point in assigning truth-value to acts of interpreting NLPAs or any acts whatsoever. Thereby, we need to

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95 Entzenberg elaborates further: ‘Davidson believes that by giving the truth conditions of a sentence we give its meaning. (He creates a recursive theory of truth by selecting a finite number of truth-affecting constructions, of which the simplest example comes from the truth tables of elementary sentential logic.) For Davidson's project to succeed along the lines suggested, it must be possible to uncover recursive procedures for determining the semantic values for all kinds of sentences. Otherwise, we would have to treat an enormous number of sentential expressions as primitive, sub-sentential elements of a vocabulary. Davidson, focusing on which sentences are true for a language, thinks that an agreement is possible, in terms of a widespread sharing of sentences held true as its logical point of departure.’ (Entzenberg 1998: 112).

96 In (Entzenberg 1998: 115-16), Entzenberg writes that Davidson’s ‘denial of meaning altogether’ (metaphorical in Entzenberg’s case, and non-linguistic in our case, e.g. other than literal as in some actual linguistic material such as words, phrases, sentences, etc.) ‘is deeply problematic. An account of metaphorical activity’ (in our case a linguistic sense-making activity) ‘must go beyond his effort to develop a semantic account that will explain only how we understand each other on the basis of words, and more clearly focus on some alternative location, especially the various intentions (writer’s and/or reader’s) behind the particular usage of for example, utterances… As will be demonstrated, the metaphorical activity might be related to an open-ended list of motivations (breaking of semantic rules and propositional falsity might be among them), but more importantly, it concerns, as I see it, a novel, imaginative conceptualization of what will be understood as the primary subject… According to my view it is explanatory to describe the metaphorical activity as providing a (not necessarily propositional) content, while, at the same time dismissing, with some support from Davidson, the idea that it should be located as part of the linguistic utterance or some supposed metaphorical, linguistic entity. Consequently, Davidson’s own statement that ‘[t]he common error is to fasten on the contents of thought a metaphor provokes and to read these contents into the metaphor itself’, must be changed to: ‘the common error is to fasten on the contents of thoughts a metaphorical activity invokes and produces and to read these contents into the linguistic structure itself’. The misguided effort to view metaphor as an external and separate stimulus, as Davidson seems to do here, must be replaced with an account that will attend to the actual activity of interpreting metaphorically; this account is much better equipped to handle the metaphorical activity than an account which is based on a strict distinction between metaphor as a separate object causing interpretation. ‘Metaphor’ must, therefore, be described as an elliptical expression for the internal activity of providing linguistic items with a metaphorical meaning through interpretation.’
locate an activity that establishes necessary and sufficient conditions for the distinguishing of a symmetrically from an asymmetrically construed linguistic account of NLPAs, as well as accounts for how, in terms of the subject’s linguistic competence, the subject understands and performs the sense-making activity of symmetrically construing a linguistic account of NLPAs. Such an activity will be further elaborated upon, in terms of its locus within an intentional sense-making activity, in the chapter below on ‘Theories of Fields External To Language’.

2.1. Theories of Fields External to Language

McDowell corrects Sellars, who speaks about a claim being evoked or wrung from the perceiver by the object perceived. For that suggests that the perceiver actually makes the claim his experience contains. And that is surely not what we would want to say. (But why not exactly? Because of what ‘experience’ means? Because of what ‘a claim contained in an experience’ means?) McDowell proposes that we think instead of the claim as being ‘imposed or impressed’ on the perceiver. So now we seem to have a claim that nobody actually makes. It is now the world that is making the claim, imposing it on us, speaking to us. We find ourselves ‘saddled with content’, but the content is supposed to be captured in words that no one necessarily, is there and then in a position to mean in some particular way. We strip the words of the patterns of care within which the criteria informing their employment can be articulated; we suspend their power of expressing our interests and desires in particular contexts and we still want them to be able to represent our world. (Baz 2003: 494)

As Baz states above, the worldly object seems inapt to express itself linguistically, without us entertaining the problematic notion that our wording of it is not only not expressed by ourselves but instead by the worldly object itself, implying what Baz calls ‘a claim that nobody actually makes’. Now what is the distinction between Baz’s worldly object and NLPAs’ ways of communicating themselves to us? Basically, Baz’s reasoning strengthens the inquiry into what we actually can say of wordless fields such as the world, and worldly objects by showing how they in themselves are inapt of communicating to us in any particular way identical to that of our own capacity as humans to linguistically accounting for them. One deep difference, between Baz’s worldly object and NLPAs, lay in their existential conditions, as how they come to exist for us. Baz leaves the worldly object completely out of a direct linguistic account. Instead, he claims, what is designated in linguistic account cannot as is stated above ‘be determined apart from a determination of the overall sense of the utterance, which in turn is understood in terms of the point of the utterance – the speaker’s intention as embodied in the act of uttering particular words in a particular context.’ (Baz 2015: 16). Baz’s worldly object thus exists, on the one hand unconditioned by our linguistic account of it, and on the other hand it comes into linguistic account as ‘the speaker’s intention embodied in the act of uttering particular words in a particular context.’ Whereas for an NLPAs to first come to exist for us, we have already performed it and acquired a record of our performance of it in memory, but without having linguistically accounted for it. This record of experiencing the performing of this act, outside of language, is one of the distinctions in existential conditions in relation to Baz’s worldly object, as in how they come to exist for us, from outside of language and into linguistic account.

In Baz’s worldly object, that which determines our linguistic account of it – what we recognise as significant in locating the determined sense or point of an utterance – is by way of interpreting its determined contexts wholly located within a presupposed and thus already existing linguistic account, see (Baz 2015: 16). In other words, it is reliant on conventional linguistic contexts decisive for word meaning. Even the creative yet comprehensive expansion of a word’s possible contributions to the overall sense of utterances is determined within this wholly presupposed linguistically conditioned framework, and thus it seems, through its asymmetrical relation to what is external to it, problematic when accounting for anything outside of these contexts, i.e. conventional language. In our record of experiencing the performing of NLPAs, we have precisely that which is outside of conventional language and what our language
would need to account for as well as be informed by. For both Baz's worldly object and NLPAs to come, from outside of language, into linguistic account for us, we need to engage in an intentional interpretive activity of combining contexts, mediums and activities in order to determine points of our linguistic utterances, while at the same time avoid the asymmetrical relation to what is external to conventional linguistic accounts, through recognizing that which determines the significant sense of an utterance by way of interpreting its determined linguistic contexts, and thus locate this activity wholly within a presupposed linguistically conditioned framework. Instead, we should make use of the record that we have of the experience of performing the NLPA in recognising the conditions for our interpretive activity, to locate and determine a linguistic account of it.

Here is a deep point to be made, as in recognizing the symmetrical construal of locating and determining the sense of utterances within linguistic accounts of interpreting NLPAs. We should here recognise that, in a symmetrical construal of locating and determining the sense of utterances within linguistic account of interpreting NLPAs, what is external to language, in this case our record of experiencing the performing of an NLPA, posits that which is conditional for such an activity. In letting that which is outside of language determine the conditions, which within an interpretive activity locates and determines an enclosure of linguistic account, focuses the point that for us to engage in such a sense-making activity, we must each and every time intentionally provide that which implies the engaging in an interpretive activity, which locates and determines an enclosure of linguistic account by way of conditions determined by what is outside of language. This might lead us to consider what demands come with this kind of intentionality?

2.2. Interpretive Activity and Truth-Conditional Verification Theorem

Since that which is our record of experiencing the performing of NLPAs is found outside of language, it must not be presupposed by linguistic conditions. Instead, what determines the locus of our sense-making - within which our interpretive activity shall take place - must exist by way of that which is prior to, during as well as after a language is in use. Such a common condition, encompassing both the performing of NLPAs and any kind of language use as well as all form of activity, is the implicit abstract product of time, which is referred to above as order(s) of occurrences.

Thus, in letting the implicit abstract product of time, order(s) of occurrences, be the contextual condition determining significance of linguistic accounts, which within an interpretive activity locates and determines an enclosure of linguistic account, we have intentionally provided a sense-making activity, which recursively imply the engaging in an interpretive activity that locates and determines an enclosure of linguistic account, by way of conditions determined by what is outside of language.

What is recursively implicit in engaging in the interpretive activity, must be guided by (1) an intentional indexical determining of site-specific conditions for (2) performing the NLPA, (3) experiencing the performing of the NLPA, (4) interpreting our experience of performing the NLPA and (5) an intentional indexical determining of linguistic account by way of what is outside of language; these principles will henceforth be referred to as truth-conditional verification theorem, hereafter abbreviated TCVT. It seems thus that the interpretive sense-making activity of NLPAs is determined by linguistic conditions, e.g. such as those the TCVT contains, but the performing of this activity as well as its specified content by this theorem, is performed outside of language, external to it.

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97 See figure 4, 65.
To, at this point, regard the present inquiry as one into metaphorology is not misguided. However, for reasons of keeping this discussion concise, I will quote briefly below texts that illuminate some important explanations within this vast linguistic field.

3. Theories of Interpretation

It also struck me at that time that it is impossible to record with any fidelity a kind of music that is actually derived in some sense from the room in which it is taking place - its shape, acoustical properties, even the view from the windows. What a recording produces is a separate phenomenon, something really much stranger than the playing itself, since what you hear on tape or disc is indeed the same playing, but divorced from its natural context. What is the importance of this natural context? The natural context provides a score which the players are unconsciously interpreting in their playing. Not a score that is explicitly articulated in the music and hence of no further interest to the listener as is generally the case in traditional music, but one that coexists inseparably with the music, standing side by side with it and sustaining it. (Cardew 1971)

Cardew’s account above, is exemplary in outlining our present inquiry into a symmetrically construed linguistic account of NLPAs; providing distinctions between presupposed ordered fields of inquiry such as language and neither presupposed nor ordered fields such as that which is external to language. Our ‘non-linguistic content’ is similar to Cardew’s ‘natural context’ in that it (1) exists unconditioned by linguistic accounts; (2) is external to language by performers within and of it; (3) is only implicit to conditions tied to a mediator’s account of it. If we at this point remind ourselves of the lesson learned in the first chapter ‘Theories of Language’, that an abstract theory of meaning for a language resting on an a priori notion of temporality – apart from any subject’s actualization, whether affirming and or negating, of it – thereby undermines its own existential condition. It should then be quite clear to see, concerning a symmetrical linguistic interpretive account of NLPAs, how a pre-determined conceptual framework, which does not account for a subject’s determining of meaning assigned to its engaging in this activity, no matter how weak or illuminating its construal might be, is deficient. Instead, pace what is stated also in the chapter ‘Theories of Language’, in our present inquiry, what we need is to locate, on conditions determined by the NLPA, an interpretive activity within our general sense-making, that is explanatory through the subject’s chosen linguistic competence of bringing that which is outside of language into language, by way of a symmetrically construed linguistic account. To engage in such a sense-making activity, would allow for a subject to intentionally ascribe any kind of value, in terms of meaning, to its interpretive focus. All the while, still having the option of, at any given moment in this activity, orientate one through reflecting its present activity upon the categories of activities within the TCVT, and determine linguistic conditions for interpreting the experience of performing a NLPA. Entzenberg has a deep point in that:

It will be easy for the receiver to assume that each context must have a special but limited validity and that the best response must be eclectic combinations of all contexts (the constructor's, the artwork's, or the receiver's contexts). It might be suggested that none of these contexts is likely to offer all the important aspects about an artwork (some of us want this 'solution'). By the same reasoning, it is unlikely that all contexts should offer equally valid or useful insights. To put it another way, though we may agree that there is no complete, definitive, and absolutely correct interpretation of an artwork (whatever that could be) it does not necessarily follow that there is no better or worse sense-making, more or less comprehensive, complete, and accurate.

Contextualization of understanding is a dynamic interactive act of enclosure that serves to demarcate it from other fields and that tells us how to regard it. Contextualization is the very process where the fusing of the object and context turns them into an inseparable unit, an object becomes an artwork. In short: A work of art can have a single meaning. What we must do is explain how this can happen. The multiple use of context is not difficult to combine with the idea that a work of art has one meaning. It ‘has’ this and that meaning until someone challenges it with a new contextualization. The context is neither part of it nor apart from it. The Latin word ‘contextere’ reveals this constructive role: ‘to weave together’, ‘to join together’. (Entzenberg 2013: 57)
Thus, in seeing that the representational and referential view of language as well as truth-conditional theory are inapt in accounting for a particular subject’s actualization of contexts, as part of a sense-making activity, and instead resting on pre-determined conceptual frameworks, we should instead motivate ourselves to, each and every time intentionally providing that which implies the engaging in an interpretive activity, which locates and determines an enclosure of linguistic account, by way of conditions determined by what is outside of language.

This is not to put forth a final ‘solution’ to interpreting NLPAs, but rather to, pace Entzenberg above – after critically scrutinizing the task of linguistically accounting for NLPAs, which could include artworks – nuance the discourses of representational- and referential views of language and truth-conditional theory within this sense-making activity, and suggest an alternative approach where a symmetrically construed linguistic account of NLPAs is possible.

**Eaton and Robust Immoralism**

In *Robust Immoralism*, A. W. Eaton argues for how an artwork can be regarded aesthetically valued on behalf of its immoral content, see (Eaton 2012: 281-92). Eaton here means that we should value artworks against a background of what kind of problem a given work is due to solve; its purpose or internal goal. Some artworks are set out to make a receiver – at least to some extent – sympathise with a character which one, in line with one’s moral beliefs, regard as despicable. That an artwork can offer such a situation and then succeed in overturning the receiver’s morally motivated reluctance is according to Eaton an aesthetic quality. Eaton, as well as many other aestheticians, identify moral values, in some cases, with aesthetic values; in virtue of a certain morally oriented response in the receiver towards an artwork, through which an understanding of narrative, roles of characters and expectations on them constitute absorption in the work itself.

I see benefits with Eaton’s position of ‘robust immorality’, for it makes possible understanding of more genres of art than what itself entails. In a contemporary example regarding music – the composer Adrian Knight’s ambiguously postmodern *Alice* (2016) – I regard the lyrical narrative, which constitutes of a collage of indications of trauma, sexual attraction to a minor, fear and escape, in a wide sense as severely morally suspect. The lyrics begin as follows:

> When Alice came home
> she found herself in a random man’s arms
> he knew she’d been waiting
> for a chance, to break away from it all
> ...
> Oh, she’s so beautiful tonight
> she can’t be more than eighteen
> (Knight 2016b)

A development occurs at the refrain and the earlier morally problematic narrative is substituted with a meta-perspective, which to my mind can be said to concern the purpose of popular culture: to aesthetically please as many people as possible:

> Gotta have a better refrain than this
> your life is on the line
> (Knight 2016b)
The refrain is reprised and the meta-perspective is now concerning, what I interpret to be Eaton’s major aesthetic point: moral values are, some times, regarded identical to aesthetic values:

Better forget about all of this
he said and flashed a smile

(Knight 2016b)

One part in being absorbed in Knight’s Alice constitutes of a moral decision, whether I as a listener want to engage in what seems to me as a morally suspect narrative. When interpreting both the lyrical and sonorous side to Alice, I see that the piece offers a self-critical position in its lyrics towards its genre at large, without it sonically necessarily being aesthetically suspect, which offers me an increased sympathy towards the piece in terms of aesthetic quality. I thereby regard Eaton’s position of robust immorality as possibly offering a form of insight and an increased understanding of the moral perspectives in an artwork, which can be said to strengthen its aesthetic value.

Carroll and Conversational Interests

In Art, Intention and Conversation Noël Carroll suggests that we as onlookers of an artwork want to have our ‘conversational interests’ met, much like in an everyday conversation, rather than maximise our single ‘aesthetic satisfaction’, see (Carroll 1992). Against a background of ‘anti-intentionalism’, by which interpretation of an artwork on the basis of authorial biography is excluded, Carroll wants to show an alternative position and discusses authorial intention from two anti-intentionalistic strategies, exemplified in Monroe Beardsley and Roland Barthes, while at last arguing for his own alternative position.

1. Barthes’ strategy rests on his position of an ontological reasoning based on the nature of artworks, according to which he altogether refutes the relevance of ‘authorial intention’ when interpreting an artwork. Beardsley’s strategy argues for the irrelevance of ‘authorial intention’ through an exploration of the aesthetic interests that of an onlooker of art presumably has. Carroll comments that both of these anti-intentionalistic strategies, due to different reasons, suggests that an artwork should be interpreted differently than everyday conversation and actions, which he believes is incorrect. Why should we interpret artworks differently than everyday conversation and actions, in other words, ensure us of the speaker’s intentions? According to Carroll, Barthes assumes that everyday language and actions are bound to act on reality, which makes up the foundation of our preoccupation with authorial intent. When language is freed from this purpose and thereby becomes aestheticised, our cognitive goal of determining authorial intent becomes irrelevant. Instead, we as readers of such language can freely explore this aesthetic language from every conceivable angle and ourselves determine its potential meanings and associations.

Beardsley’s argument is rooted in a distinction between an illocutionary action and representation; if I, upon being robbed of my watch, say ‘you stole my watch’, then I perform an illocutionary act of the category accusation. But, if I am part of a theatre play and on behalf of my character say the very same words mentioned just now, I am representing an illocutionary act. According to Beardsley, illocutionary acts are contextually conditioned; they are generated through the production of a certain text under certain premises and according to certain linguistic conventions. The relation between performing illocutionary acts and to represent
them should be understood through pictorial representation. Beardsley says that a representation of an illocutionary act reminds us of the actual act in some but not all respects; in the example above, it does not satisfy the condition of strengthening our conviction of the robber’s guilt. Beardsley means that everyday language and acts are constituted of mostly illocutionary acts while literature rather represent them; the representation is tied to a partial imitation of a fictional character’s acts, either the literary characters within the text or an ‘implied speaker’. Here, Beardsley points out that – parallel to Barthes’ ‘aesthetised text’ – literary text and its implied speaker no longer can be traced to authorial intention or biography, in terms of determining the intents of the speaker’s and actualising agent’s linguistic meaning. Instead, representation is understood solely in terms of linguistic conventions, which in a wide sense can replace authorial intention; a linguistically conditioned ‘world’.

Carroll however, states that Beardsley – thanks to his central ontological distinction between everyday- and literary language regarding determining of linguistic meaning – seems to assume that all literary text per definition is fictional. Even if a literary text seeks to encompass actual existing geographical sites, people and acts, they are presented through the fictional medium of an implied speaker. Carroll exemplifies: Lucretius and his book On the Nature of Things is a literary text which, according to Carroll, not only represents illocutionary acts made by an Epicurean philosopher, but Lucretius was actually an Epicurean philosopher actually philosophising in his book, see (Lucretius 1473/1924). Here Carroll emphasises that the concept of an implied speaker – however beneficial it may be to make a large part of literature explicitly understandable – cannot meet the necessary conditions of constituting a literary text. Even if several texts encompass representations of illocutionary acts, does not follow that all literary texts must be interpreted without heed of authorial intention, contrary to everyday conversation and acts. Furthermore, Carroll states that texts, which partially seem to be constitutive of illocutionary acts, such as Leo Tolstoy’s War and Peace, would be best understood if interpreted according to the cognitive purpose of determining what the author’s intentions were, see (Tolstoy 1869). Author’s can express their own moral, philosophical and political positions through their literary texts, which do not exclude that in other cases these positions belongs only to an implied speaker. While there may not be any general epistemic principle with which to determine whether an implied linguistic meaning is of the author or an implied speaker, Carroll suggests that we study each text case by case in a kind of critique in practice.

The major critique that Carroll directs toward Barthes and Beardsley, is against their ontological distinctions between literary or aesthetic language and everyday language; that cognitive purposes concerning meaning is determined solely from intertextual associations and linguistic conventions, instead of being determined against a background of an actual author’s and actualising agents’ intentions. Carroll emphasises that all literature is not fictional and not all convictions in fictional literary texts are representations of illocutionary acts; with reference to regarding literary texts relative everyday cognitive perspectives. Literary texts, including parts of fiction, can involve illocutionary acts. If there seems to be a useful cognitive purpose to read intentions into illocutionary acts, then it also seems useful to read literature in accord with authorial intentions.

2.

According to Carroll, another argument common among anti-intentionalists is that even if reading authorial intent into a literary text is possible, without contradicting their ontological distinction between literary and everyday language, it should not be done by virtue of the aesthetic nature of art. Beardsley means that the purpose of literary interpretation is to aid in maximising one’s aesthetic satisfaction. As is mentioned above, Beardsley thinks that a reading
of a literary work is conditioned by linguistic conventions and furthermore, we only need to heed what is the most aesthetically satisfactory and linguistically legitimate. Whether the meaning we ascribe to a literary text does correspond or not with the intentions of the author of the text is thus irrelevant; of course, our ascribed meaning and the author’s intended meaning may converge, but it would be haphazardly and insignificant. Aesthetic arguments in favour of anti-intentionalism make up a sub-category of the general position that interpretations are relative to our purposes. Carroll does not deny our interests of securing aesthetic satisfaction from artworks, but he believes that such interests need to accept other potentially diametrically different interests and purposes, which we ascribe artworks. Carroll names such other than purely aesthetic interests ‘conversational’. He describes these conversational interests in terms of an onlooker’s relation to the author of an artwork in question and in a wide sense they are analogous to an everyday conversation. In an everyday conversation we are presented with partially understanding our interlocutor, which according to Carroll, is also true when concerning interaction with an artwork. He says that in everyday conversation with another human being, our goal is unity and communication. If we left the conversation with only our own initiated constructions and speculations, regardless of aesthetic satisfaction, we would still feel that we are missing out of something; to neither have been unified nor communicated. It is on behalf of this argument that Carroll means that a purely aesthetic perspective not ensure that our interests and purposes are being met, in terms of aesthetic satisfaction. Carroll says that art obviously partially aims to communicate and that we use our human disposition not only when we try to understand what someone is telling us, but also when we interact with an artwork. Carroll imagines that we want to establish an I/you-relation with e.g., the author of a text. Thereby, Carroll wants to state that the purpose of maximal aesthetic satisfaction must coincide with our conversational interests, which are informed by authorial intent.

3.

To exemplify his thesis, Carroll points to how a movie critic ascribes a ‘famously uninteresting’ cult movie - *Plan 9 from Outer Space* by Edward Wood - with attributes that it according to Wood’s said intentions do not correspond to, see (Wood 1959). The major problem that Carroll has with this situation is concerning whether the critic in her ascribing the movie with these attributes (conversational interests), has taken Wood’s authorial intents into account, for the purpose of maximal aesthetic satisfaction. Carroll brings up an anti-intentional argument in relation to this situation: if our primary purpose of interpretation is to maximise our aesthetic satisfaction and the critic’s ascribing of attributes to *Plan 9 from Outer Space* aid in an increased aesthetic satisfaction relative would she refrain from doing so, why not reject our heeds to authorial intentions and accept her interpretation? Carroll insists that if we have conversational interests concerning artworks and ignores Woods contradictory Intentions relative the judgment of the critic, we then undermine our own position as authentic, genuine participants in the conversation. Regardless of what aesthetic satisfaction can be afforded us in such an exchange, this happens on behalf of our conversational interests, since we would then in accord with Carroll’s morally presupposed judgment, act both unintelligently and insensitively. He also mentions Robert Nozick’s famous anti-hedonistic thought experiment, for the sake of showing another situation where we in accord with Nozick and Carroll are expected to prefer a personal and genuine participation in situations rather than a simulated experience. I sympathise with Carroll in that a literary text – including what Beardsley names representations of illocutionary acts and actual illocutionary acts – does not exclude a partially anti-hedonistic and intertextual interpretation, partly motivated by conversational interests conditioned by authorial intentions. However, against a background of discussions today within contemporary art, e.g. ‘post-internet art’, I do not find any encompassing theoretical problem. That Carroll expects an ‘ideal’
Onlooker and interpreter of artworks, which prefers a genuine and authentic, morally and ethically conditioned linguistic conversation with the author of an artwork, is perhaps plausible albeit close to wishful thinking considering the artworld of today. Institutions and museums digitalise their exhibits and collections, which potentially interiorise a situation identical to anti-intentionalism and Nozick’s thought experiment: the exclusion of an actual conversational partner as well as personal experience.

4. In other words, I believe that Carroll’s ushering towards a critique in practice from case to case, instead of a general epistemic principle, seems reasonable regarding situations in which artworks actualised today rely on an onlooker’s understanding of anti-intentionalism, conversational interests, hedonism and more. However, Carroll’s text does not give conditions for artists’ genuine participation in conversational interests. An artist’s honest dishonesty or disinterest in conversation with her audience would be more difficult to predict within Carroll’s theoretical framework, while still being decisive in determining authorial intentions.
Figures
