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A post-qualitative performative method of inquiry

Master's thesis in Arts Education Research / Kunstfagdidaktikk
Supervisor: Sunniva Skjøstad Hovde
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Sammendrag

I mitt virke som kunstfagpedagog ble jeg introdusert for konseptet stemmeskam, da en gravid elev uttrykte bekymring over hvorvidt hun ville tørre å synge for barnet sitt. I denne teksten ønsker jeg å utforske hvordan vokal selvsikkerhet blant småbarnsforeldre kan medføre positive ringvirkninger for barnas oppvekst og dannelse. Jeg støtter meg på teorier om blant andre musicking og prosodi, og analyserer ved hjelp av performativ metoder hentet fra post-kvalitativ metodologi, som stop moments og diffraksjon. Teksten blir etterhvert et verktøy, en metodologisk utvikling der affekt, kreative narrativer, stop moments, og musikalsk kompositorisk diffraksjon spiller hovedrollene.

Abstract

Through my work as an arts educator, I was introduced to the concept of voice shame when a pregnant student expressed concern for whether or not she would dare to sing for her child. In this text I aim to explore how vocal self-assurance among parents of toddlers might lead to positive effects on their childrens upbringing and education. I lean on theories of, among others, musicking and prosody, and I analyze through performative methods from post-qualitative methodology like stop moments and diffraction. The text turns into the outline of a design of an emerging methodology where affect, creative narration, stop moments, and musical diffractive composition are key.

Key words: vocal self-assurance, musicking, diffractive composition, creative narration, affect

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1 Introduction

1.1 Curtain up

My parents would always read to me before going to bed, usually my mom one night and my dad the other. The books would differ from mom's nights and dad's nights, but every night, without exception, always ended with our two special good-night songs. No matter what had transpired through the day, the calm and comfort of singing together remained constant.

> Klatremus' Voggevise
> So ro Lillemann
> Nå er dagen over
> Alle mus i alle land
> Ligger nå og sover
>
> So og ro og tipp på tå
> Sov min vesle pode
> Reven sover også nå
> Med halen under hodet
> (Thorbjørn Egner, 1952)

Wiegenlied, Op. 49, No. 4, or Brahms' lullaby (1868) was then repeated upon demand, and my respective parent and I would harmonize over the melody until I was calm enough to fall asleep. Of course, there were other songs, and sometimes the singing could go on forever and ever, but these two were the absolute minimum requirement for a good night's sleep.

Play through song was continuously present throughout my upbringing, and I had thought – or hoped – that every home contained the same joy of silliness and musicking. I suppose the variables are too many to explore in a master's thesis, but surely there must be a common denominator for families enjoying multimodal expression and exploration? In my later years, as an educator, I have found that this hypothetical denominator does not necessarily apply to even half the population, and that I have in fact been enormously privileged to be allowed this embodied modal safety. I laugh entirely too loud; I speak my mind; I ask questions when I am curious; and I sing – at all hours of the day, in public as well as private, as a practitioner of the arts as well as with friends and family. I wish this vocal self-certainty for everyone – to be comfortable enough to express oneself through various modalities rather than only lexically provides a person with a wider range of expression, and in my opinion, more joy and color in life.

1.2 Aims

When I first had the idea to write about the relationship between parents of toddlers and their voice as a modality of play, I centered my interest and exploration around feelings of shame or inadequacy tied to vocal self-assurance. My aim was initially to explore and unpack the self-censorship that sometimes occur in parent-child communication through play and song. I wished to conduct this investigation to better understand how we as educators might aid in positive vocal affirmation through the educational system. Later, my focus has shifted from shame to self-assurance, but the aims remained the same. My research has not yielded what I thought it would in terms of contributions to the field of knowledge within arts education, but there are other important contributions emerging from this thesis that are discussed in later chapters, such as post-qualitative methods for

performative inquiry. My aims have shifted from what happens in self-censorship to how one might examine such phenomena.

1.3 Significance

Although I have an interest in the topic and have experienced voice shame causing self-censorship in professional performative contexts, I am personally unfamiliar with the feelings of voice shame arising in different modes of play. Coming from a home where musicking was a natural part of multiple facets of our everyday lives, including bursting into song around the dinner table for humorous purposes, feelings of voice shame or uncertainty in using song as a mode of expression in casual scenarios is not something I can fully relate to, or even understand, which might be why I have been so intrigued by the topic and its implications.

This project has become a window into a method of inquiry within post-qualitative research. Although I set out to answer a series of rather concrete questions about vocal self-assurance and its implications, which you will learn in the next sub chapter, the result of my project has become a methodological contribution instead. Therefore, the product that is this text is significant for how other researchers might go about examining similar questions.

Embarking on my master's project I was curious about the examination of the relationship between parents and their toddlers, thereon consequently how this relationship might be affected by the parents' potential feelings of uncertainty or shame in relation to play with voice and song as modes of expression and exploration. I encountered the term voice shame (Schei, 2007) in my work as a vocal educator while musicking along with adult students who sought to "improve" their singing, expecting this "evolution" to abolish their fears, subsequently allowing them to dare sing with their children.

> «[Voice shame is] the uncomfortable feeling of being heard as ridiculous, worthless or 'not good enough.' Voice shame arises when a subject becomes aware of an observer's attention and believes the evaluation to be negative. It causes intensive monitoring of one's vocal expression and of others' perception of oneself.» (Schei, 2017, p. 1)

Most people I have addressed this topic with have expressed that the feeling of not being "good enough" to sing, or use their voice in other modes, in certain situations is entirely relatable, and I myself have, as previously stated, untimely experienced my embodied feelings of shame arise to the surface in professional performative situations. However, experiencing this type of shame during play was a feeling hitherto unknown to me, and I became intrigued by its mechanisms, asking myself; why does it arise; when does it arise; how might we as educators prevent or disarm this feeling; why is it that a vital mode of expression, as explained by Kulset (2015) has become exclusive to those of us with perceived "talent", and, generally speaking, only reluctantly used in play? I believe that voice shame does not only affect performers who use voices in their art making, but also people living their everyday lives; taking turns exchanging ideas with a group of friends; making your opinions heard at work; public speaking, and various other instances. However, instead of focusing on the feelings of shame – which is what brought this topic to my attention – I chose to center my exploration around vocal self-assurance; vocal safety; vocal self-certainty. I will outline my original plans for the

project, although this thesis has severely changed over the course of planning, application, and reflection, thus offering a perspective revolving different issues than planned. I deem it necessary to show where I came from, and how the thesis changed through a series of unpredictable events and revelations.

1.4 Analytical questions

My original thoughts and questions were: how is parental vocal use impacted by voice shame? How do the melodies of interaction change when communicating musically as opposed to lexically? How does a change in voice-led communication affect the toddlers and their relationship with their parents? However, none of these questions are answered in this text, as my work slowly became a methodological design, and the plans I had made for the project provided little material to examine my original questions from.

I found later on that in the context of examining the musical communication modes occurring between parents and toddlers through guided song might prove more enlightening than the initial questions, which is when I formulated the tentative analytical question: How might the relation between parent and toddler be affected by the parents' feelings of uncertainty or shame in relation to voice and song as mediums of expression? I still find this question to be intriguing, however, someone else will have to answer it, because you will not find this either illuminated in this thesis.

In the end, I had to work backwards in creating an analytical question that actually is enlightened through my work. The process of this project has taken me on a journey from immediate perception to emergence of actual embodied knowledge, and the analytical question "How might one generate and examine embodied knowledge through creative modalities?" is what this text examines.

1.5 Justification

I am certain that many parents are aware of, or have been told, that musicking in some shape or form is somehow important for early childhood development, including the acquisition of important skills beyond musicking, such as those mentioned later in this chapter. Still, feelings of shame might hinder parents in guiding their children through musicking, which is mainly, yet only partly, why I sustain the importance of investigating this phenomenon. I reiterate, however, my turning the research towards positive reinforcement, rather than focusing on "what went wrong", will remain my focus – although this too will to some extent be explored in the Analysis chapter.

Researchers (Woodruff Carr et al, 2016) have found that language skill development is closely linked to practicing of beat synchronization, and that children with better beat synchronization skills have more stable speech processing abilities than those with poorer beat synchronization. Beat synchronization refers to the "coordination of rhythmic movement with an external rhythm" (Repp & Su, 2013, p. 403). This suggests that music training, formal or informal, might lead to improved language processing skills, among other neural developments. In analyzing of the generated material, I am leaning on "Music with the under-fours" (Young, 2003) to emphasize the important part music plays in early childhood education and interaction. In the book, Young describes children's spontaneous musical abilities in a range of education and upbringing contexts, as well as illuminate how toddlers engage in musical activities presented by adults, and how adults may guide toddlers in their exploration and development of their musicality. Using this lens as an analytical agent has allowed me a deeper level of insight into how best to

interact with toddlers through musicking, and it has aided me in narrowing my focus as I took on the part of observer, however sporadically – as I had many interchanging and simultaneous roles during the workshops.

Furthermore, it is our responsibility as educators to aid our students in their journey to become global citizens. An education includes not only subject-specific considerations; an education is much more holistic. All facets of our lives, including our relational capabilities, are determined by how we learn to interact with one another; patience; understanding and compassion; collaboration; practical thinking; creative problem solving; leadership; work ethic; emotional management; critical and reflective thinking; all taught through, and in combination with, "traditional" school-subjects, like mathematics, languages, history, and all the rest.

Moreover, in our rapidly changing environment, it is crucial that we install our students with an awareness outward of themselves, including global and social issues. A recent study (Juntunen & Partti, 2022) examined how arts education might support growth in terms of global citizenship. Although this study was performed in the context of subject teacher education, there is no reason to believe it would be differently received by children of all ages – with age-appropriate modifications. The students welcomed the approach outlined in the 2022 article, where they explored alternate and holistic modes of dialogue through artistic practices.

> «The teaching experiment provided both the teacher-researchers and student-teachers an understanding of the pedagogical possibilities of interdisciplinary arts education practices designed to support the cultivation of responsiveness and ethical responsibility to advance global citizenship. According to the students, working with a global theme increased their motivation to study and to delve deeper into the significance of relationships that humans have with one other, with other beings, and the planet.» (Juntunen & Partti, 2022, p. 13)

One student profoundly explained their experience of participation in the study: "one can experience the humanity that unites us in its ultimate form." (Juntunen & Partti, 2022, p. 14). 'The ultimate form of unifying humanity' seems too important to overlook in any educational context. I understand this concept of art unifying us as integral to global citizenship, and our collective growth as a global society.

All of these justifications are pointed toward the importance of art education research. In this text I will not answer very concrete questions, like I had imagined, but I will outline my process of inquiry, that shows how one might go about carrying out such research. Contributing to the methodologies through which one might work is crucial to the field of arts education research, or any other research.

2 Theory

Throughout the master's course and the process of my research, I have found that my perspectives on the use of theory have shifted. As I kept reading the same literature over, I found more meaning, and the theories I have chosen to include in my thesis went from acting as supporting to my own claims and reflections, to becoming essential components reliant on one another. The performative aspects of the thesis as a whole have become the main drive. Even as I am writing now, I am performatively narrating the process. All the theories I use in this research have aided in my understanding of the

wider field of arts education, as I similarly hope they will help you, the reader, understand what I have done throughout.

Although the theory chapter is primarily meant to present the literature used, I have additionally included some reflections to tie together theory and how it applies to the project and remaining text. I find that this action clarifies early on to the reader how each piece fits into the puzzle, as well as contributes to the linearity of the text.

2.1 Musicking

The term musicking (Small, 1998) describes a wide range of musical actions such as composing; listening; practicing; dancing; performing; communicating. Musicking is what we did in the workshops. When we partake in musical activities with children, a plethora of things happen, among others; emergence of learning; entangling; intra-action; transformation – all of which will be unpacked in turn throughout this thesis. First, let us take a closer look at musicking as a concept.

> «There is no such thing as music. Music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do. The apparent thing "music" is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it at all closely. This habit of thinking in abstractions, of taking from an action what appears to be its essence and of giving that essence a name, is probably as old as language; it is useful in the conceptualizing of our world but it has its dangers. It is very easy to come to think of the abstraction as more real than the reality it represents, to think, for example, of those abstractions which we call love, hate, good and evil as having an existence apart from the acts of loving, hating, or performing good and evil deeds and even to think of them as being in some way more real than the acts themselves, a kind of universal or ideal lying behind and suffusing the actions. […] Music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do.» (Small, 1998, p. 2)

By extension one could similarity state, on a larger scale, that art is an abstraction of the acts of art, art-ing. Small's proposed definition: «To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.» (Small, 1998, p. 9). Therefore, to engage in performative inquiry within the art of music is to music. By performing even the smallest of musical acts, one is musicking. Small does not only claim that music is an activity, but further goes on to explain how musicking, and by extension art-ing, exists in all facets of human life. Adorning, displaying, cuisine, aroma, and more, all make "contribution[s] to the occasion." (Small, 1998, p. 106). That is not to say that art-ing serves as contributions alone, but he rather continues: «[…] ritual is the mother of all the arts. […] Ritual does not just use the arts but itself is the great unitary performance art in which all of what we today call the arts— and some of the sciences as well—have their origin.» (Small, 1998, p. 105-106). To condense my reasoning for using Smalls verb: there would be no workshops without musicking, nor would there be a thesis. Musicking is the very essence of my research.

2.2 Prosody and parentese

Considering performative actions, in this case mainly musicking (Small, 1998), and stop moments (Fels, 2012) – which I will illuminate in the Methodology chapter – as the theoretical and methodological pillars of my research, I found motherese (Dissanayake, 2001), or parentese (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009), and prosody to be enlightening lenses to view these through.

Infants usually stimulate an affectionate adult, male or female, to extended poetic or musical speech, which often moves into wordless song, or imitative, rhythmic and repetitive nonsens sounds. This distinctive style of adult speech is called "motherese", "parentese", or "infant directed speech" (IDS), and is attended to and responded to with much pleasure by infants.» (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009, p. 30)

Prosodic communication can be explained as the non-verbal patterns in which modalities such as tone of voice, timbre, quantity, and volume of sound making operates as lexical supplements to form and convey meaning (Mitchell & Ross, 2013) to dialogue. In parentese, these patterns are narrower than in adult-on-adult conversation, which became relevant for me to consider during the workshops. Malloch and Trevarthen (2009) concludes that "Communicative musicality is the art of human companionable communication. It consists of our innate abilities, which function from birth, for being able to move sympathetically with another. It is the vehicle which carries emotion from one to the other. When our ability to share emotions is impaired, it appears that the elements of communicative musicality change in ways that make them less 'musical'."(Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009, p. 48).

We instinctively acknowledge that parent-child bond is strengthened when the parent "takes turns" (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009) in communicating prosodically with their baby through softening their voice and lightening their pitch. This mode of communication was coined motherese (Dissanayake, 2001) or the more socially aware and appropriate term parentese (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009), and stretches back to the time of early evolution of homo sapiens. Arguably, this mode of communication is, in a broad sense, our first encounter with musicking (Small, 1998).

2.3 "We"

Recent research points to the notion of a "we" as bond strengthening, and how it might minimize feelings of vocal ineptitude or voice shame (Kulset & Halle, 2020).

Kulset and Halle refer to the "[…] term musical identity as defined by MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002, 2017), which points towards how our view of ourselves as capable (or not capable) musical subjects influences several aspects of our self-perception and identity formation." (Kulset and Halle, 2020, p. 305). The term musical identity includes a spectrum between positive and negative in which people might identify themselves. In light of budget cuts in Norwegian musical education, Kulset and Halle claim that the drastic reduction of funds and time allocated towards musical education will in time prove a "vicious cycle" during which teachers will experience reduced confidence in their music-making abilities, resulting in musically deprived future teacher students (Kulset & Halle, 2020).

When they visited a Norwegian kindergarten with a "musical profile", Kulset and Halle discovered that the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) staff members all used the word "we" more frequently than any other word in interviews for the study; striking them as an important clue for the investigation. Even if the staff members individually experienced a negative musical identity, their feelings regarding joint musicking differed greatly (Kulset & Halle, 2020). Ehrlin and Tivenius (2018) explain it like this: "Stating that music is important for learning about music implies that music has value for its own sake—l'art pour l'art—and therefore that music is regarded as a subject that demands practical skill." (Ehrlin & Tivenius, 2018, p. 24). They go on to suggest that:

> «ECEC staff members who mainly see music as something important in and of itself (l'art pour l'art) carry out fewer music activities than peers who value music's transfer effects. The reason for this, argue Ehrlin and Tivenius, is if music is important in itself, it must be difficult to do, but if music is for learning about colours or the days of the week, singing is an appropriate activity because the stu- dents are not performing 'real music.'» (Ehrin & Tivenius, 2018)

Kulset & Halle (2020) has examined the implications of the notion of a "we" in a context of voice shame in early childhood educators. Their findings are represented in the following bullet points (Kulset & Halle, 2020, p. 308):

- The music making and singing is better when we do it together

- Making each other feel safe

- Increased self-confidence due to the working environment (performing music together)

Although this research focus on early childhood educators, I consider it helpful to apply it in a context of group based guided toddler song, because we too aimed to create a safe space where the sense of community with one another might have untangled certain affects hindering a more positive musical identity.

2.4 Music with the under-fours

> «If spontaneous efforts and activity are largely ignored, or at worst closed down because they are 'noisy' or 'boys don't sing', then the effects drive deep into the sense of self as musical. Once absorbed, negative dispositions are very resilient. Ours is a culture which is not good at fostering positive identities of ourselves as musical people.» (Young, 2003)

Young's finds that three-year-olds are the most active in nursery settings – which in the workshops became very apparent, as the only participating children were either younger or older – and refers to this age as a "window of opportunity". Further, she explains how children's expressional modalities – particularly in free play – are inseparable, as their vocalizations are intertwined – consisting of multiple expressive textures. These, she demands, we must recognize, understand, provide for, and partner within children's musical play in order to prevent capacities for positive musical identities from disappearing. «Rapid progress in singing at this age is associated with the amount of singing that takes place between child and adults, how their own singing is recognized and how much singing is modelled for them." (Young, 2003).
In addition to having vocally self-assured adults surrounding them, having the opportunity to explore in an environment that invites to song and movement seems essential. An environment of this variety, Young states, should include light, airy spaces with "good quality flooring" – free spaces which evokes a playfulness in children – taking advantage of the chance to run, jump, sing, dance. Play-objects like miniature figures of vehicles and animals; puppets and soft toys; picture books – all create ample ground for vocal exploration. Young observed that children have enormous capacity for sensitivity to timbre, imitations, and drama as exhibited during play with various toys. They create stories and dramatize using tone of voice – imitating the world around them, by observing ECEC staff, parents and family members, or popular culture and media. In addressing themes of imitation and learning I find it appropriate to mention Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. The types of play in question can be utilized by adults as

scaffolding, facilitating learning on the children's premises by joining in play and adding to it.

> "This is how we measure the effectiveness of adult help: if children become capable of doing independently what "yesterday" they could do only in collaboration with an adult, then the help was effective. If this does not happen, then the adult should consider what methods are being used to provide help." (Zaretskii, 2009, s. 78)

Among the singing activities Young observed in children she mentions word-changing and vocalizing to match own movement or to match the movement of moving objects. By word-changing she refers to the type of vocal play where the words of a known song is exchanged with others – often silly words or syllables – to play with language. Vocalizations to match movement is the practice of adding onomatopoeias; sound features like "boom" or "swoosh" to moving bodies or objects.

An important note to make is that Young makes apparent that there are clear advantages to growing up with parents who practice musicking confidently; children of parents who notice, encourage, praise, and partner singing and musicking with them, are likelier to identify with positive musicality, and confidently vocalize further into their lives. Reflecting back to my own childhood; this seems an obvious connection. Additionally, as discussed in the analysis chapter, the parents participating in my research project made this connection themselves, as they believe they would feel much more vocally confident had music played a bigger part of their upbringing and education. Furthermore, they stated that should their children show the least bit of interest in musical and instrumental play, they would gladly facilitate this emergence for their child.

3 Research methodology

Working with children was always likely to be an unpredictable affair. In designing the workshops for this project, I had initially planned to equally divide the time into two sections in which the first part would be for song and motion, and the second reserved for conversing with the parents. However, upon the realization that this was an impossibly optimistic plan, I found that unpredictability is more interesting for this research after all. Like in improvised music, I am far more pleasantly intrigued by surprise rather than predictability.

As a vocal performer I am rooted in the jazz tradition, where the music is more spontaneous than other genres of music. The specific kind of jazz that I have grown up with and love is usually expressed rather freely over a set of chord changes, and within a loose framework of "rules". The jazz standards, old tunes that remain with us and have been re-worked many times by different artists, are usually comprised of a set of chord changes, a melody, and often lyrics if sung. A popular way of working with these tunes is to play through the song, and then, as the band plays the chord changes again, one or several singers or instrumentalists may improvise a melody, rather than replaying the original one. This is, as they say, where the magic happens. A musician who is proficient in this genre can use their knowledge and experience to create the most beautiful melodies, and personally I find the unsuspected ways of navigating a chord chart to be the most exhilarating and joyful. When navigating the "chord chart" of the workshops – the setting – it quickly became apparent that the melody – the plan – was good enough, but the true musicking happened as I freed myself from the constraints of it.

To accommodate this manner of exploration, I landed on stop moments as the methodological lens, as it provides opportunity for unpacking moments that arise in the musicking end of the workshops as well as in the conversational section.

During the planning my project and thesis, I eventually landed on the idea of utilizing stop moments (Fels, 2012) and musicking (Small, 1998), and I was heavily intrigued by the performativity of these concepts. I had decided, at this point, to create some musical expression to aid in the embodiment of the knowledge I was contributing with, but I had not yet determined the modality or genre of this music. Based on this foundation I planned to host a series of workshops to generate material for analysis. Instead of writing the traditional field notes I wrote narratives after the completion of each workshop, as a way for me to personally gather my thoughts and experiences, and to reflect on these. However, with the guidance from my supervisors I decided that the narratives made a valuable performative addition to the thesis, along with the music I had planned on composing. Collectively these form a strong tool to help the reader embody the contribution of knowledge. Then, both the narratives and the musical components went through a process of diffraction (Barad, 2014), after which I collected my stops. Affect (Østern & Dahl, 2019) and entanglement (Barad, 2007) plays a part throughout. Already as I was searching for themes to investigate for my thesis I was heavily influenced by affect. In this chapter I present each component from performative and post-qualitative approaches I have used to design a methodology from this process. They will illuminate how I went about executing the workshops, and also how I analyze the material I generate throughout. In the discussion chapter, I am "plugging in" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013), and presenting how all of the methodologies and theories come together, but also how the transformations and realizations cannot be contained in the vacuum of a project or a thesis.

3.1 Diffraction

In analyzing the generated material, I am applying diffractive composition (Bjørkøy, 2020) alongside narratives of the workshops as whole entities, where diffraction acts as a digestion of occurrence, and the compositions attempts to insert the listener into the stop as it was experienced. I understand diffraction and diffractive analysis through Barad's article "Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart", where she outlines the process in which diffraction might help us understand a phenomenon by making agential cuts, re-turning them, and putting them back together. "Intra-actions enact agential cuts, which do not produce absolute separations, but rather cut together apart (one move)." (Barad, 2014, p. 168). She defines the 'now' as «[…] not an infinitesimal slice but an infinitely rich condensed node in a changing field diffracted across spacetime in its ongoing iterative repatterning.» (Barad, 2014, p. 169). This thinking is reflected in one of my compositions in the analysis chapter, where patterns are repeated, or re-turned, multiple times in a seeming continuum – a spectrum of re-turned agential cuts into the respective stop. Barad includes in her article (2014) several other researchers and their work on diffraction and differences, one of which caught my attention. Haraway (1992) explains how «Diffraction does not produce 'the same' displaced, as reflection and refraction do. Diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of difference appear.» (Haraway, 1992 in Barad 2014, p. 172). A diffraction is not a reproduction of an occurrence, nor does it mirror it. A performative diffracted analysis utilizes performative tools to portray one or more facets of how difference as agent(s) affect an occurrence – or a stop.

Bjørkøy (2020) has created a way to analyze her material through the thinking of Barad, which I am attempting to apply in my own fashion in my compositions. She shares, in her doctoral thesis, a visual model (Bjørkøy, 2020, p. 68, figure 9) clearly illuminating

the process of composing through diffractive analysis; how an agential cut into an ongoing occurrence takes one piece, or stop, of the occurrence out of the flow of interaction, re-turning the different components of the stop through performative agents, and putting them back together, now transformed into a performative lense to help embody knowledge of the occurrence. She describes her compositions as a condensed understanding of the ongoing occurrence. In employing affective sensibility she cuts into the material, in her case the videotaped song-interactions, and explores and unpacks the effects of the extract on the interaction as a whole, subsequently creating an informing performative analysis by cutting the extracts back together after the re-turning, or exploration. "[…] jeg [gjør] en gjennomgang og en re-turning, der jeg gjentatte ganger vender tilbake til sangsamspillet og framstiller det i ulike analytiske formater […]" (Bjørkøy, 2020, p. 67). A rough translation and paraphrasing informs us that she makes reviews and run-throughs including a re-turing, where she repeatedly returns to the song-interaction, then consecutively present them in various analytical modes.

3.2 Affect

In a performative, post-qualitative study, the concept of affect becomes an important facet of the research. Not only in analysis of generated material, but the generation itself, the planning, is also deeply affective, in the sense that I, as the educator and researcher, insert myself into all aspects of the project, including the thesis. I aim to study a phenomenon, but I myself am not outside of the phenomenon looking in – what constitutes the project and the thesis is the entanglement of intra-acting agencies; me as a person, teacher, artist, and researcher; my participants, who too are complex people with their own histories and entanglements; the performative material; the room; the stops; the compositions and narratives I generate from the lived experience of performing this exploration.

Affect might be attempted described as moods, sensations, or emotions, but it is more fleeting and pre-lexical than that (Østern & Dahl, 2019). In their chapter on performative research in the book Dybde//Læring, Østern and Dahl endeavor to, paraphrased as translation, describe affect as diverse, bodily sensory, experienced materialities. They are deeply influenced by Massumi's (1995) writings, and explain how affect might be experienced as intensities. Affect is not to be understood as spoken or understandable emotion, but rather like ripples and intensities within and between bodies. Additionally, they reference McCormick (2013), who emphasizes that the body is essential for affect, but that the body's physical limitations under no circumstance is to be understood as a "container" for affect. Instead, we might understand affect as a diffuse and distributed field of intensities that circulate within the body, but also between and around bodies. The body receives and circulates not only affects as intensities or embodied moods, but it produces, inhibits, make, spread, and effect actively the affects in circulation. The body is always and already active, participating and creating. Affect might be expressed through the body as higher pulse, sweat, weakened voice, or a tingling sensation in your abdomen (Østern & Dahl, 2019, p. 34-35). My body, my participants' bodies, as well as the «body» - or mass – of the room and the musical material, create the space in which affect is intertwined within the roots of all intra-action.

I could just as easily have put the paragraphs on affect in the Theory chapter, as I use the theory of affect as another lens for understanding what I do and what happens as I do them. However, I have chosen to leave it here in the Methodology chapter, because to me it is not only a way of viewing occurrences, but it seeps through all of my work, from

beginning to end, as a compass, a deciding factor into how I have progressed throughout the process.

3.3 Stop moments
Stop moments is a post-qualitative research approach, allowing the stops to inform the research, yet it additionally serves as a form of world view, or philosophy – one can apply stops into several facets of life, examining certain moments of interest to learn more about oneself or one's surroundings.

> "Performative inquiry requires of its practitioners four key things: to listen deeply, to be present in the moment, to identify stops that interrupt or illuminate our practice or understanding, and to reflect on those stops, in terms of their significance, implications, and why they matter." (Fels, 2012, p. 53)

Lynn Fels describes stop moments as "a tug on the sleeve"; moments where you are pulled out of a perceived situation and thrown into unfolding actions; moments that disrupt, interrupt, and sends you into an unexpected direction; moments that offer new perspectives on who we are as educators, artists, and researchers (Fels, 2012). The children participating along with their parents might just as well have been "done" singing in a matter of seconds, thus must the workshops, and the project as a whole, be fluid, in the sense that "whatever happens happens". At any given time, a moment might occur that sends the research into a new, or parallel, direction.

Utilizing this methodology enabled me to improvise; using my competence in arts and arts education to follow up on moments of interest for the research, rather than pre-fabricating questions that needed answering, rather inorganically. The themes of the project is not centered around controlling the environment of musical and lexical exploration, and its structure should reflect this.

As a flawed human, I do hypothesize several times every day. However, I do also understand that the vast world contains unsurmountable amounts of knowledge that I cannot fully understand by myself in one lifetime, which is why I think it wise to let the moments inform the conversation and the research rather than trying to imagine what needs to be investigated beforehand.

3.3.1 Generating material through stop moments
To generate material, I invited 3 pairs of parents of toddlers of ages 2-4 to three weekly workshops, together with my colleague with background from Dronning Mauds Minne Høgskole for Barnehagelærerutdanning, where we first sang with the parents and their children, followed by a roughly 30-minute conversation - both led by stop moments - between me and the parents while my colleague oversaw the children in activities, mainly drawing. Moments occurred already in the singing portion of the workshop, some of which were addressed in the following conversation.

Originally, I had hoped to commence the project much sooner than what came to pass. In doing so I might have had the time to initiate more than the three workshops, which to me seems like a limiting amount of time to properly dive into and unpack emotions connected to the themes of the research. Finding interested participants took far longer than I had initially anticipated, and as the search went on to secure enough participants to call the group a "community", the research was halted. Nevertheless, two of the three planned workshops were executed, albeit with very few participants. Because a crucial element of the research included the creation of a sense of community, the moments

that arose might differ substantially from potential data generation performed over the course of a longer time period with a larger group of participants.

Ideally, participants would have signed up for the workshops because they have uncertainties tied to the use of song as a mode of communication, hindering them in guiding their children towards their developmental potential, and potentially standing in the way of certain bond strengthening. Further, the participants would be eager to explore said uncertainties, and maybe even begin their path to resolving those feelings through the workshops. Circumstances, however, provided a selection of parents whom I knew very little about concerning their feelings tied to singing all together. These parents displayed great comfort within this mode of expression throughout the workshops, however, the participants agreed that this was only possible after the birth of their children, and that it would be inconceivable to sing among others before. The "we" was in fact compiled of their respective families. Nonetheless, for reasons illuminated in the analysis chapter, gatherings like these are monumental to children in their early upbringing, which seemed an important role in the parents' decision to participate.

Although I am much more in tune with chaos being a part of this exploration than I was two years ago while planning it, I will admit that I was slightly disappointed when these workshops took a different turn from what I had hoped, yet incredibly thankful for the few able to join; their participation saved my research from being a collection of literature, and enabled me to generate and analyze embodied data, which would have been impossible for me without them. Research still happened, only in a different way than I had initially intended.

3.3.2 Where are the stops?
I caught myself, several times during the workshops, trying to spot the stops, while in reality stops happen all the time; the stops occur in our everyday lives, in how we interact – as educators, researchers, musicians – and how we think, not only in the "sterile" environment of a lab, or a classroom, or a workshop. The stops passed without me having to locate them throughout. Of course, certain stops are eye-catching while they happen, and these caught my attention while conducting the workshops. Nonetheless, several stops occurred to me only as I began reflecting after the conclusion of either and both of the workshops, yet these are no less illuminating of my practices in either of my roles.

3.3.3 Analyzing the stops
The nature of this research being performative, I feel it necessary to treat the material accordingly. Embodied material cannot adequately be expressed trough only one mode, but is symbiotic; dependent on the senses that embodied the material as the stops occurred. Because the workshops were conducted through musicking, musicking must also be part of the analyzation of said material, to allow a more in depth representation of the emergence that transpired. "[…] performative inquiry invites performative representations of the learning that has emerged so that the reader may also experience the stop." (Fels, 2012, p. 55). I have therefore recreated (re-turned) and processed a series of the stops that occurred as diffractive compositions in the form of sound scapes in an attempt to present the learning that emerged through the experience of designing, conducting, and writing this project.

3.4 "Plugging in" with theory

I found that Barad's (2007) concept of "entangled states of agencies" helped in understanding the concept of «plugging in» (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013) as a useful approach, or philosophy, for my research and thesis. Barad explains that "To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not preexist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating." (Barad, 2007). When Jackson and Mazzei put entanglement into the context of "plugging in", I understand agency as intra-actions – thus "in theorizing the social and natural together, our research participants intra-act with the matter of their worlds in ways in which they are transformed by matter and vice versa." (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013). I employ this thinking in my analysis; in the sense that the entanglement of agencies intra-acting between my participants, their pre-existing entanglements, the room in which we held the workshops, the songs used in the workshops, and all other matter – all are responsible for the transformation that occurs; not only my own and my participants' actions in the designated room in the designated time, isolated from other matter and action. Transformation; embodiment; meaning-making; theory; practice; emergence – they are all entangled, meaning there is no one result of the research, but rather a multitude, and as such I, as a researcher, must analyze "in a way that moves [my research] away from what is told by [the participants] toward what is produced in this intra-action." (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013). The emergence of meaning does not exist in a vacuum. The meanings I have chosen to include in this thesis consists of matter that intra-acts with me and my interests and histories in a way that engages me in further entanglement – and on it goes; the entanglement will never cease, nor will the meaning making. In a way, this thesis is in itself but an agential cut into the entanglement of intra-actions and emerging meaning, diffracted and re-turned, while the flow of entangling narratives, performative actions, and matter transformation continues indefinitely in all directions – not only linearly; as I have previously imagined.

4 Ethical considerations

4.1 Formalities

Participation was voluntary, and I focus on the parents rather than the children, as well as their dynamics. Because I have not at any point in the process recorded occurrences on video, audio, notes, or photographs, nor included any kind of information about my participants that may reveal their identity, I am emancipated from legal obligation to apply for permission for conducting or publishing this research. The participants were provided with comprehensive information before the initiation of the workshops, and they were thoroughly informed that they were at liberty to withdraw whenever, which some chose to do. However, there are other aspects and challenges to consider.

I primarily sought participants who have no prior knowledge of one another, nor did I wish to invite participants I personally knew. This was to ensure that the group dynamic was as neutral as possible from the beginning, with everyone being equal to one another in the group. Of course, being the researcher in the group, my participation cannot be fully equal to the remaining participants, as my participation is more observative in nature, which naturally will set me on the perimeter of the group dynamic. If any of the parents knew each other prior to the workshops I could not ensure that the data generation or analysis thereof would be beneficial to the research, as the group dynamic would be affected by personal dynamics within the group, not resembling the dynamics of strangers coming together. After trying for months to invite strangers to participate, I

admitted defeat, and sought help through my network to gather enough participants to commence the workshops.

4.2 Affective/emotional responsibilities

The themes of this research might feel sensitive and intimate, including having to embrace vulnerability, and the conversations might be experienced as "exposing", which is why I chose to conduct these conversations in groups rather than one-on-one. A sense of "we" (Kulset & Halle, 2020) could disarm the individuals, and promote a certain sense of safety in the "pack", rather than sharing what might feel like intimate information with a researcher coming from the outside looking in, somewhat anthropologically.

Moreover, I hoped that through providing the necessary information I would only receive participants who were open to sharing, however, none of the participants really closely reviewed the provided information before their arrival. Initially, I had feared that this might dampen the emergence of learning, but only appeared to invite inquiry – which was my intention to begin with.

Not having children of my own, I feel thoroughly unequipped to query into parents' relationships with their children. I may merely imagine how they feel, how they interact, and what transpires in their communication and why. In acknowledging my limited knowledge about parenthood, stop moments has led me onto paths I was previously unaware of.

4.3 Positioning

My position during the workshops were that of an insider, in the sense that my being present and participating were a part of the data generation process; the research is conducted through performative inquiry, meaning I am as much part of the data as my participants. Yet, the other invited participators might consider me an outsider; I have no children of my own; I designed and led the workshops; I am a researcher and an educator looking to expand the field of knowledge on a sensitive topic. As the conversations paused at irregular intervals, the adult participants were inquisitive of my motivations and angles, and my perceived outsider position was subtly pointed out. This relates back to the fact that there was not enough time to conduct as many workshops as I had initially hoped, and that if we were to get better acquainted during the course of these gatherings, my perceived position of outsider might have been diminished adequately for my position to become irrelevant. Nonetheless, the gatherings occurred as they did, and material was indeed generated.

4.4 The "Good Girl" -syndrome

Transparency being a vital part of post-qualitative inquiry invites me to share any and all feelings or affects that emerged within the timeline of the performed research, as well as my pre-existing histories and entanglements that I deem relevant in the staging of this thesis. However, transparency is difficult when the embodied experience of academia, or education in general, has indoctrinated a need – or a craving – for "perfection" in all aspects of written text. I have struggled with the process of being transparent, because this means that every reader of this thesis will see how I "failed" certain parts of the research process, and how I had to adapt to the changes – meaning; it was never perfect to begin with, neither is the result a perfect thesis. In the name of science, I have attempted to be as transparent as I can. Still, this active endeavor does not exempt me from my internalized self-censorship, and I fear that parts of the process is still lost to

my automatively repressed memories of occurrences – as if my mind "hides" what is not "perfect", even from my own consciousness.

4.5 Dualities

You, the reader, may have noticed a duality, a dissonance in composition while reading this thesis. There exist within me two forces pulling in different directions: the need to write a thesis within the arts performatively, and the formal and linear nature of an academic paper. I feel as though a post qualitative thesis should reflect the contents through the style of writing. Additionally, I feel that a personal voice in the text is essential when presenting and analyzing themes of lived experience. When I think about my research and my project, which I do all the time, it is a circular thinking – or rather like a mind map, where each of the components are intricately connected. Were I to write about this project outside of a thesis, the text might look even less linear. However, academia demands certain formalities, and I have attempted to balance the two in writing this thesis, where structure and linearity meet artistic perception and expression, however chaotic and non-linear the latter is experienced within me.

5 Analysis

In this chapter I present several different artistic modalities of material generation based on stops through processing my lived experience: lexical, auditory, and visual. Still, this material additionally serves as the analysis of the material generated during the planning and execution of the workshops. The process of performative inquiry has become a rather circular exercise, where material is generated and diffracted simultaneously, creating a never ending spiral of emerging knowledge. The process is only stopped, or paused, by the more or less finite act of putting words to paper and delivering it as a thesis. It could very well go on spiraling in perpetuity, if someone were to pick up where I left off, or if I were to continue my work.
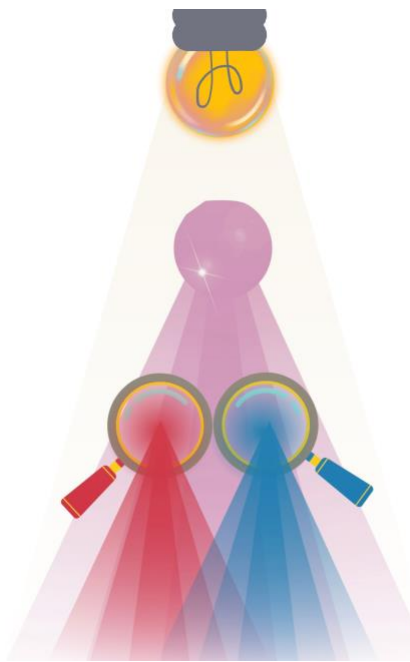
Working with all the different modalities presented in this chapter I am moved with, by, and through affect. My entangled life and work intra-acts to create new entanglements, and during this process material as presented through artistic expression. To paraphrase Bjørkøy (2020, p. 70), "[…] Through artistic expression I aim to understand what it is in [the workshops] that affects me, and how I need those affective parts of myself to express through [different artistic modalities] how I as a researcher am performative and participating in the process of analysis."

I have attempted through visual models to show my process of stop moments to diffraction as generation of material and analysis thereof. I imagine the material as a lump of clay – seemingly gray and uninteresting, but as I work the clay, examining it from different angles, spreading it out to look at its contents, I find gems, sparkling as it peaks through and piques my interest. These gems are my stop moments. I gather the most eye-catching pieces, I view them closely, and I use them to diffract light, allowing that light to inform me.

In the model below is a visual representation of material as a grey clay, and the stop moments within as shimmering gems. The clay is representative of mass: the planning, execution, and reflection of the workshops, the room, the musical material, the participants, myself, and all intra-acting agencies that is (not) contained within my master's project. Within this mass are stop moments: the moments of particular interest to me and my research, which I pick put from the clay and examine.
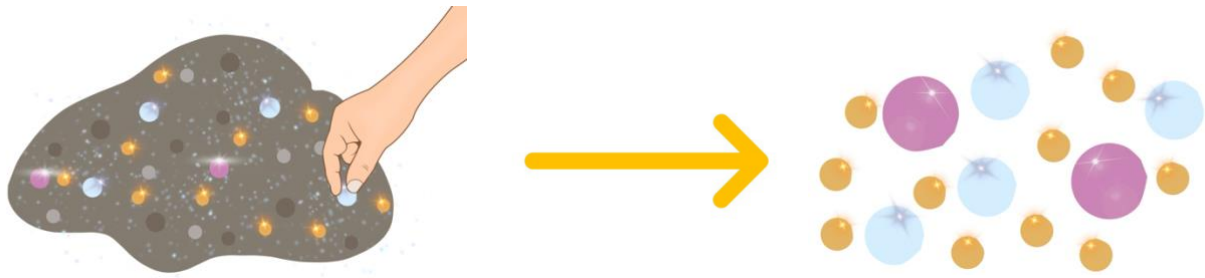
After I have chosen which stops are important to me, I examine them through musical and narrative diffraction. In the next visualization, I show how musical diffraction as represented by one lens and narrative diffraction as another lens create a fuller picture of events transpired. The same stops – here represented projecting light from the lightbulb above it, theory – are diffracted by two different lenses, and together form a spectrum of color only available if the two are put together. The colored light that intersects below the lenses are representative of what you can understand using the different modalities, separate and in combination.

The narrative analysis along with the musical analysis form lenses to view the material with greater depth – much like 3D glasses you get in the cinema: one red and one blue lens create depth in the movie that is otherwise blurry. If you were to watch the movie in 2D you can still perceive it with great meaning, but you are missing a whole dimension. However, once you view the movie through the two different colored lenses, a more accurate representation is available to you.

5.1 Material analyzed through narratives

To process experience or thought, I often feel the need to "complete" a thread – untangle it, if you will – before I can move on to other thoughts or actions. This is why my notes from the workshops quickly became narratives, rather than keywords or mind maps. I finish untangling my experience and the thoughts that came with it before I put pen to paper, which to many makes it seem like I do no "real work" at all. However, my mind is always at work; actively or passively processing lived experience and turning them into text – whether it be lexical, vocal, visual, or musical text. As I kept reading up on the different theories and methodologies, I realized that a narrative of lived experience might be exactly the right processing and analysis of material for this type of inquiry. In accordance with the teachings of Barad (2014), and with the aid of my

councilors, I have therefore chosen to include my "notes" as part of the performative analysis.

The narratives do not exactly serve as 'field notes' alone, but rather as a combination of a production of material, and an analysis of events and lived experience. The processing of the material is simultaneous with the creating of new material. The narratives become a performative processing of material while also creating material.

To better conserve the creative output in this chapter, I have chosen to refrain from explicitly referring to theories throughout the narratives. However, you may consider certain keywords like community and together(ness) (Kulset & Halle, 2020), activity and repetition i.e. modeling (Young, 2003), room or space (Young, 2003), song i.e. musicking (Small, 1998), and prosody (Mitchell & Ross, 2013). These exemplify the instances of which theory is intra-acting with the material, and thereon unpacked in the discussion chapter.

5.1.1 First gathering

As one might anticipate when working with a limited number of participants, including children, sufficient attendance for conducting research is not a given. Although several participants were eager to join the workshops, they were prohibited from answering e-mails prior to the first gathering, and I was unsure of whether or not there would be any attendees at all. A few days prior to the first gathering I received an e-mail from one of the parents explaining how they would, unfortunately, not be able to attend after all. On the day in question, another one of the remaining two participants could inform me of illness, preventing them from joining the group. Thus, on the first gathering, we were three adults – including myself and my assistant – and the two children of the third participant. I asked myself if this could still be considered a "community". Although it did feel comfortable enough when we were all singing together, this sensation of "community" quickly dissolved as soon as the children started to find interests elsewhere and my assistant followed to watch them. Firstly, this particular participant came into the project not entirely conscious of its themes and goals, but rather to have a fun and meaningful place to socialize their children while including music into their weekly activities. Therefore, much of the time spent conversing became centered around my interests in the topics of song and voice, and of stop moments. Furthermore, they could explain, with seemingly casual and comfortable tone and body language, that they as a family often sing as part of their children's upbringing. This parent was very aware of the many benefits of music and singing in the education of young children. Still, the singing at home was, they told me, "more for the children than with them", so this workshop provided a space for them to interact more together vocally.

Secondly, having only one person come into the conversational section as a participant, I found it more difficult than expected to find a rhythm of exchange. I might have been overly confident while planning the workshop, imagining that the conversation would flow between the several participants, and I felt woefully unprepared when we ended up a duo; working with multiple individuals creates a balance of give and take – a kind of musical back and forth – and as the number of individuals in a group decreases, the focus on each participant increases. I had hoped to take the role of backline or rhythm section but ended up playing first chair.

During the workshop I learned a lesson of preparation; what I had intended as a post-singing activity for the children became noticeable much sooner than I had planned for, when the youngest child excitedly exclaimed while pointing at the scattered blank papers and the bucket of markers in the corner; drawing. The children proceeded to run merrily

about, drawing and giggling, while I chatted with their parent. Although we were able to sing for quite a while before the collective attention shifted, I think I shall hide the markers better before our next gathering.

5.1.2 Second gathering

The second gathering was equally as chaotic at the first, yet unpredictable in brand new ways. This time, two sets of parents were able to attend – each with one child clinging to their leg. The eldest of the two, having participated before, seemed restless and uninterested, yet dutifully attentive. The child appeared to have chosen a favorite among the songs in the repertoire, and playfully requested it to be repeated throughout the singing portion of the workshop. The youngest, and newest member of our group declared profusely, for a full ten minutes, how they did not appreciate being dragged along to this horror show of socializing. The parents could inform us that because the child had been born in the very beginning of the recent, and very much ongoing, pandemic; socializing with both adults and other children have remained a rarity, thus vastly overwhelming for the child – understandably enough. Norwegian new parents have, for a long time, been offered to participate in "barselgrupper"; a group of parents who gave birth around the same time, gathering to share experiences and thoughts and offer one another support. During this period, the babies are also necessarily socializing with each other, and the participating adults. This, however, was not available to our newcomers at their time of birth. Additionally, the child was thoroughly frustrated with their parents for denying them the divine pleasure of pressing the keys on the looming and colorful piano. Note to self; close the lid before the final gathering.

The room we use for the workshops is large, white, and mostly unfurnished, and I chose the room due to its plainness; a sensory dream for inattentive younglings – to keep from distracting the children. Instead of chairs and tables, however, there are floor-to-ceiling curtains covering the windows, and these were an absolute hit with the youngest; a wonderful hiding place. They were, nonetheless, intrigued by the familiar song "Bæ, Bæ, Lille Lam", and consecutively lured out from behind the curtains to join the group for roughly five minutes of song – continuously demanding "mer!" of their beloved favorite. We spent a good while warming to the mere idea of singing, and quickly discovered that movement was essential to keep the children interested. This, however, was more taxing for the adult participants – including yours truly – and the repertoire remained varied to accommodate all attendees. Next time; rhythmic instruments.

Then came the time to separate. Adults gravitate towards small talk when around new people. It is unavoidable, and took up more time from the conversational section of the workshop than I had anticipated – especially due to our roughly twenty minutes long singing and dancing session; which I thought to be enough to warm us up to one another. Still, I may be particular about this; preferring conversation to center around abstract ideas, emotions, concepts, etc. rather than around workplaces, mutual acquaintances, and favorite colors. Therefore, a substantial amount of the time allocated to chatting was spent accordingly. Nevertheless, we managed to cover topics including paid leave for parents with sick children; singing before and after having children; incentives for exploring music within the Norwegian educational system; sufficient number of workshops to create a sense of "community", both for the children and the adults.

The "community" I wanted to create seems simply unobtainable to achieve in such a short amount of time, which has been my concern ever since I had to shorten the project from five to three gatherings – also reflected in the conversation. Although we all present

various personality types, and acquaint ourselves with new people in different ways, three gatherings of less than an hour is a short amount of time to expect someone to feel comfortable sharing emotions. I insert myself into these scenarios almost entirely indifferent to how my own voice sounds in informal settings, yet I am seeking vulnerable expression from my participants. It is slowly dawning upon me how this project is reliant on consistency and duration to create an environment that feels safe enough for my participants to be as nonchalant in their attitude towards sharing as I am. Thankfully, this is but one facet of the research.

On the subject of song before and after having children, the participants shared that they would not conceive of singing in front of, or together with, other people before having their first child. The voice was considered a tool for communicating verbally, but singing remained an unobtainable talent-based skill not to be confused with play or communication. One parent expressed disappointment in their music classes and educators within primary school: merely "going through the motions". The remaining participants nodded in agreement. We can all recall the recorder, which seems to be the only instrument Norwegian public schools invest in, but whether musical skill, or even joy, was explored or encouraged in these music lessons remains scornfully debated throughout comment sections across the wide web. Could these parents have felt a stronger connection to voice in all modes were it not for neglectful education? Every person in the room agreed; they would love to be able to play an instrument, or sing, but felt that the structure of Norwegian public school, and the allocation of funds therein, held them back from pursuing music – even as a hobby. Their free time was spent playing football or other team sports, because this was a much more available alternative. Having children allowed them to bypass embodied reluctance, and to dive into song as a mode of both communication and play. They were also in agreement that should their children display the slightest interest in an instrument they would dive headfirst into this opportunity.

The project might just as easily have been executed using adults without children – maybe even easier. I could serve coffee, and play the piano, and have adults sing well known pop hits in unison, and chat about togetherness and vocal modes and prosodic changes. Not having to cross my fingers for children in kindergarten to stay healthy for my project to proceed. Wouldn't that be nice? Alas, my idea for the project came as a reaction to students expressing discomfort singing for their children, and my mind has been entirely focused on this path.

The parents did in no noticeable way change prosodies between singing mode and lexical mode towards their children. Maybe this is due to their sudden shift in attitudes after having children, but I feel it necessary to explore further before making such assumptions. A very expected change, on the other hand, happened when changing from addressing their child to addressing the adults; we have a more monotonous way of expressing ourselves toward one another than we do toward children – we seem to dramatize prosodically when addressing children this age; we speak slower, pronounce words clearer, lift and soften our voices, and most noticeably – change the melodies and rhythms in our speech more dramatically from high to low, fast to slow. As adults we have a far more substantial vocabulary, both lexically and otherwise, enabling us to communicate more complexly with one another. This might be one facet of our reason for dramatizing speech toward children; we cannot express the full extent of our intent with the limited communicational resources available to children and must subsequently utilize more infantilizing communication techniques for our child listeners to comprehend. Similarly, cats will only make sounds audible to the human ear when communicating with their young – not in interaction with other adult cats, unless antagonized. Kittens have

not fully developed the communication skills necessary to fully interact with adult cats, so the adults communicate to their young in a manner that is available to them. Side note: if you are wondering why your cat mews to you it is because it considers you a big, loud baby.

The third, and final, gathering was cancelled due to a lack of participants.

5.2 Material analyzed as compositions

My desire for creating diffractive compositions as analysis became increasingly clear throughout the process of the work with my master's. Initially, I had a vague idea of wanting to write songs – much like Bjørkøy (2020). The idea rotated in my mind for months, yet as I learned more about performative inquiry, lyrics and harmony seemed to me to become more alienating than representative for the emergence. I felt that the best way to present my experience would not be to write rhymes and verses, but rather to truly embody the mode of which I inhabit. Although both options can be classified as music, the option I felt most accurately would represent my lived experience turned out to be art music.

5.2.1 Choosing a mode

Although I feel more at home as a listener in more traditional musical genres than I do within art music, writing music is, to me, more cognitive and disciplined an exercise, and art music feels more sudden, non-lexical, bodily, affective. This experience, I'm aware, is not collective, and some people may feel entirely oppositely, but conducting my analysis in this manner has been necessary for me. Reflecting on a stop has resulted in affects I feel I cannot truly describe through rigid form, and making sound scapes has allowed me to tap in to a more 'shapeless' re-turning. The progression of the music is unpredictable in ways western popular musical traditions can't be for me. When I hear a jazz tune, or a pop song, I know almost for sure when the verse ends, and refrain begins. I know the shape of the songs, and I know where they will end. Maybe this is all because I am deeply indoctrinated into these traditions, and not so much in the art music tradition. Nevertheless, the element of surprise has provided my art with less anticipation, and more affect, at least to myself.

For those who know me, the decision to make music in this genre may seem strange, as I have never before been intrigued by this genre of expression, but I have, through the two years of this master's course, been made aware of the possibilities that lie within all genres of artistic expression, and I now – more than ever – truly appreciate how the different modalities of art can transport someone into a lived experience. I thereby learned about diffraction and diffractive analysis and saw great potential in art music to diffract the experience and "cut-together-apart" the stops and present them as performative analysis. I have written four compositions based in individual stops, each presenting a new emergence of learning.

Composing in this genre has come to me with surprising ease. Where I have often felt that songwriting in more set forms has limited my expression, I find this modality to pour out of me. I do believe that the two year long master's course has had significant impact on how I reflect, and how I express this reflection. Before embarking on this degree I find, looking back, that I was quite rigid. I did in no way comprehend the vastness of expression possible in the various modalities I have been exposed to, and during the time spent in class I found it increasingly easier to let go of my preconceptions, and felt increasingly more open to other modalities than I had previously explored. In addition to

the master's course, I had the opportunity to visit the new Nasjonalmuseet in Oslo, where particularly one exhibition stood out to me.

> "Out of the tunnel's darkness, we enter a barren rocky landscape blanketed in fog. We find ourselves in a place above the clouds. where birds soar. A melted ceiling offers a glimpse into the unknown. Global warming has left its mark, but hope can be found in consideration and love of nature and people.
>
> Known for her captivating installations with film, sound, performance, sculpture, textile and text that trigger the senses, Laure Prouvost […] incorporates characteristics of Dadaism and Surrealism, allowing for lawlessness and the irrational. […] the exhibition 'Above Front Tears Oui Float' takes nature, environmental challenges and the pandemic seriously, communicating them with warmth and absurd humour. She appeals to our senses and emotions with gravity, light and colour, and toys with our sense of direction. Pulsating light, sparkling imaginative glass sculptures and fountains bring light, colour and life to a threatened world." (Lisson Gallery, 2022)

The way Prouvost works with different media like textile, video, sculpture, and more, left me with a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the story she aimed to tell with her exhibition than if she had 'only' written it down, or painted it, as separate works. By creating a space where the viewer is invited to touch, smell, and hear, as well as see, she opens up a different dimension for us to explore and insert ourselves into. After experiencing her art installation, I felt as though some puzzle pieces of my own fell into place. I understood that in order to immerse a reader into my experiences I had to provide more than formal text. I was inspired to narrate my work with more senses than one. As I have explained, personally I have trouble transporting myself to a mood, or embody the energies of a piece, if the song is written within a strict form. Thus, i felt compelled after seeing Prouvost's exhibition to explore a mode of music that, to me, is more affective – that allows me to create a sensation that more accurately mimics my lived experience.

The compositions I present in this chapter are nothing if not affective. They are the products of intellectualized affect – the intensities through which I experience the project and the stops are diffracted and re-turned into an entanglement of perception and embodied, lived experience. The transformation has no end but the finalizing of compositions and recordings. If I were to never compose or record, the transformations would be endless – continuously re-turned throughout my life, only living in my body.

5.2.2 Compositions

In this subchapter, I am guiding the reader through the diffractive compositions and how they came about. I created four compositions where I am re-turning the stops I found to be most interesting, and thus eventually enlightening. The first composition is a stop that occurred before the workshops. Composition two and three are stops that illuminate the realities of the gatherings, whereas the first leans heavily on Young (2003), and the second on parentese and prosody, while both contain musicking in various degree. You

may listen to the pieces by scanning the respective QR codes, which will take you to each piece on my SoundCloud.

5.2.2.1 Composition 1: Circles

While attempting to locate any interested participants, most of my days – apart from my work as an educator – felt continuously empty and meaningless. All I seemed to do was perpetuating my existence while in a state of apathetic anticipation, wandering around my gilded cage, and – like the tiger – circling, craving enrichment in my enclosure. Granted; this is a rather bleak and dramatic comparison. Still, the feelings of ineptitude that haunted me throughout the winter months were very real. "Why does it take so long for people to recognize the potential benefits from attending my workshops? Am I doing enough to ensure exposure? Is this project even worth the effort? For what purpose am I even attempting to obtain a master's degree?" These were the questions that I could not shake, and as time went by, this apathy gradually took over the remainder of my existence.

In this composition I aim to transport the listener to a Quiet, where the absence of musicking is treated through musicking, only interrupted by daily maintenance like hydrating, enrichment, and cars passing by my apartment. The composition starts and ends with me having a sip of water – a circle with no end in sight. I shuffle about in my apartment seeking enrichment and open a book that I indifferently flip through. I sigh; this intermission increases my self awareness and reminds me of my basic need for

breath – like how you could be out walking, noticing that you are walking, and then seem to forget how to. A car horn outside prompts me to leave my book and shuffle about some more, fiddling with my hanging laundry that could not possibly have dried in the half hour it has been up. Rinse and repeat.

This diffraction is a horizontal one, as opposed to the other vertically diffracted stops. It cuts through the timeline leading up to the much delayed workshops – a timeline condensed to a stop, whereas the remaining compositions are comprised of several vertical cuts into a moment; audibly processing the various components of the stop and putting them back together as one whole moment.

5.2.2.2 Composition 2: Safe

As narrated in a previous chapter, one child in particular was thrilled by the repetition, or modeling (Young, 2003), of the hit "Bæ, Bæ, Lille Lam". We tried many different tunes to entice the child back into the flock, after they had hidden to avoid any unnecessary socializing, but the repetition of this one particular favorite was the catalyst for transformation in this situation. A thoroughly hitherto unfamiliar scenario for the shy 'pandemic baby' became much less daunting when they sensed the comfort of a familiar song. When repeated until satisfaction, they came out from behind the hiding spot and joined the group. Modeled by parents, the singing did not seem so frightening after all.

This composition is a vertical cut into the transition from uncertainty in an unfamiliar situation to the increasing harmony and joy of the sense of safety provided by a comforting element. The piece begins with distorted noises, dissonance, and an overall eerie sound landscape portraying how I imagine the child might have felt entering a big, white room with adult strangers without having been introduced to many experiences like that in their earliest couple of years. I imagine myself in an unfamiliar and intimidating setting, and I ask myself what the score of that setting might sound like. To me, it feels similar to that scene from Snow White where she runs from all the scary noises and bright, hungry eyes she encounters in the forest, although in this piece much slower than Show Whites chase. Still there is drama and suspense. Then, however, just like Snow White realizes that those eyes along with the foreign noises were in fact sweet, friendly animals helping her find shelter, the reluctant child hears a soothing melody and slowly senses that the space is safe, and the music turns warmer, inviting. Harmonious chord changes very familiar to the western ear, repeating. A calm and pleasantness

representing the transition occurring as a single element of familiarity is introduced and then perpetuated, with only the distant remnants of the once scary elements still present. The chord changes are based on the tune that was used in the workshop – a clear line between events and perceived and embodied experience. The entirety of the piece is comprised of my own voice and scraping of the microphone, and different vocal techniques to create different sensations and spark different affective reactions. The voices in the harmonic section are sometimes synchronized and sometimes not, just like an ensemble of strangers coming together to sing oftentimes are.

5.2.2.3 Composition 3: Rhythm of exchange

When reading Bjørkøy (2020) I came across a phrase that sparked my imagination in respect to rhythm and interaction. She explains how she understands the interaction between participants in her own project through the attributes of pulse and the concept of taking turns with references to Malloch & Trevarthen (2009) as an ongoing intra-action that in its performativity is created in a 'time pocket' providing a starting point for the participation of others in the interaction. This composition is a product of the re-turning of the cut made into my first gathering, when there was only one participating adult present, excluding myself. When the workshop that was initially planned for several participating parties ended up hosting one single family, the conversational section of the gathering made my plan to allow a free flow of exchange give the impression of a lack of preparation. I made the conscious choice to not draw up any conversational points or an interview guide of sorts, because I wished for the exchange to be organic. Material is still material; however it may come to, and in this way, I feel more confident that whatever material was generated is more affective in nature than the product of a more traditional interview – although the cognitive and intellectual outcomes of these are of equal, but different value.

In this instance, the participating adult was curious about my inspirations and plans for the project, and you will hear two voices producing a rhythmic and melodious exchange, where one of the rhythms is more prominent than the other. The prominent voice is representative of my participation, while the shorter bursts from the other one is meant to illustrate the parent making conversation through inquiry and shorter fills. They are both sometimes interrupted by a different voice entirely, when the children run back and forth between their scheduled activity and their attentive parent, and said parent adapt their prosody accordingly. The exchange is built as improvised phrases, one after another, where I aim to mimic the feel of a conversation between strangers, slightly awkward and overly friendly in tone. There are questions and answers, but most of them are standardized – like small talk. Sometimes there is a clear back and fourth, and other times the voices are over one another, like how different parties in a conversation might insert short phrases in agreement. The language is one I know well: scatting, as you may call this, is what I have specialized in. However, in this setting, there are no chord changes, and every harmony and dissonance are rooted in a feeling, without the logic of a chord chart to guide the melodies. When the children interrupt the adult conversation, you can hear a more high-pitched voice coming in without regard for what is occurring between the two other voices in exchange, and the two adult voices play along, and then return to their conversation. The piece is meant to feel like a familiar language, but uttered with some level of discomfort, a tension, which is why I have made it so un-musical.

6 Discussion

While writing narrative analysis of the workshops, I was completely entrenched from the concepts of theory or methodology. When I write any kind of text, I am unequivocally engaged in the task at hand, trance like. Still, both musicking, prosody and parentese, the concept of "we", and music with the under-fours clearly peak through the text, meaning that all four theories are so incredibly important to my work and philosophies that I include them even as I write to remember. The narratives were never initially intended to be included in the final thesis, but rather as a means to recollect events transpired as well as embodied affects and perceptions. The fact that these theoretical lenses all show up in the narratives inform me of their importance.

Certain moments in the singing part of the workshop sounded prosodically vastly different from moments occurring in the adult conversation, or dialogical narrative, that followed. The parents would sound a certain way chatting with me, and then abruptly sound completely different when addressing their children, like presented in the composition "Rhythm of Exchange". If a non-Norwegian speaker were to listen to the back-and-forth exchange they might hear a melody, spontaneously improvised over the chord changes of interaction. A musicking within dialogue.

The workshops are intrinsically performative in that they are based in musicking as a method of generating material. Musicking is the most tangible performative aspect of the

gatherings, although they are also performative within themselves. Musicking is the main act of the workshops, as it is the singing and moving that are the performative aspects that drive the research.

The community aspect throughout became much less prevalent than anticipated. I have included Kulset & Halle (2020) because the plan to begin with was to use the sense of "we" as a driving component in the workshops. When I wrote the diffractive composition "Rhythm of Exchange", I based it in the experience of being only two adult participants, and the sense of a "we" is near non-existent. There is a tangible stress of the situation not being what any one of us expected, and still carrying along. The theory is also relevant to the text in terms of discussion, as it was a recurring theme of conversation during the dialogical parts of the workshops, which is my reasoning for keeping it in the Theory chapter. Seeing as the number of workshops were reduced from a planned five rounds to two completed workshops, the sense of community didn't really play a noticeable role in any affective ways that I have aimed for. Rather the complete opposite. Therefore, the theory of "we" is not relevant to the original plan, however it is relevant as a source of knowledge still. We have learned for certain that one can not create a sense of community within the bounds of two gatherings of less than an hour each. The building of a community takes more time. All participants were in agreement in this matter.

Music with the under-fours (Young, 2003) is a theoretical lens through which I have made many essential choices, like the planning and execution of the workshops, as well as the creative output. I spent many hours designing the workshops in detail, down to whether or not to keep the curtains closed, and which songs to pick, in addition to what activities should be offered to the children. As you could hear in the second and third composition, and read about in both narratives, these choices made an important impact to the resulting process and creative outputs, including this master's text. Throughout the workshops, the adults were unanimously encouraging any noticeable musicking from the children. I write "noticeable", because there might be many missed cues coming from the children. Nevertheless, we all attempted to accommodate the little ones. The room in which the workshops were held I estimate would be satisfactory to Young; wide, open, airy, and with plenty of possibilities and activities. The repertoire was flexible, to allow the children to feel confident in their exploration and participation. The adults would try our best to model confident movement and vocalization.

6.1 Contributions

In the beginning of the thesis, I posed a few questions that were leading me through the exploration. However, none but one has been answered by the work. I'll repeat the questions as they were presented earlier:

- How is parental vocal use impacted by voice shame?
- How do the melodies of interaction change when communicating musically as opposed to lexically?
- How does a change in voice-led communication affect the toddlers and their relationship with their parents?
- How might the relation between parent and toddler be affected by the parents' feelings of uncertainty or shame in relation to voice and song as mediums of expression?

Prosody does change when communicating musically as opposed to lexically. What is interesting to note, however, about that question is that the prosodic shift happened between adults, not children, which I had initially hypothesized when I composed the question. The remaining questions, I have found, cannot be answered within the

framework of the project I created. The participants were seemingly not affected by voice shame at all after having children, so the first and last question falls out of my final purview. The third question is a big one for the scale of a master's thesis, and I quite frankly do not understand how that question found its way into my thesis in the first place. I believe it might be answered through a doctoral thesis, where one has more time and other resources available. This question is better answered over an extended period of time.

6.1.1 Methodological contribution

The performative agencies of narration and musicking as generation and simultaneous analysis of material are perhaps my most interesting contributions emanating from this thesis. This is a facet of the process and the textual product that was not initially a part of the plan but has rather grown from a reaction to the emergence of learning. Although I am not contributing much to the field of knowledge in the form of theory through this work, I am introducing a compounded methodology based in several others. The emerging methodology is a series of performative acts, beginning with performative inquiry through workshops, and affective reflection. Material is generated from the moment a thought about a project emerges, but the greatest mass of generated material begins with the workshops. Then enters creative narration, where material is generated again, while simultaneously analyzing transpired occurrences: an abstraction of actual events – an affective recollection – and a spreading out the material for it to be examined. This is where we find the third step of the methodology: stop moments. When the material is spread through narratives, we can see stops glimmering more clearly. Whatever is written in the narratives is a clue to what is 'tugging your sleeve', the moments that make you stop and question what really happened and why. Finally, these stops are diffracted through affective composition. I have explained how I am more affective in composing art music than more popular and traditional western music, but you might feel otherwise. Maybe you're not even a musician, but a dancer, or a painter. The point of this final step is to find a modality in which you are most affectively present, and to use your craft to make agential cuts into your material and re-turn it, cutting together-apart. Now we are left with an instrument of rich embodiment from which we can derive knowledge and meaning.

6.2 Curtain down

This master's project and accompanying thesis has been quite the roller coaster, at least to me. I started with the aim of bettering the educational systems that seemingly hinder vocal self-assurance, which is, I must admit, rather a hairy goal for the scope of a master's thesis. Instead, I ended up with a complex methodology design that hopefully might prove useful to the field of arts education research. Although I have not really proven any hypotheses, I feel like I have learned many things that will at least aid me as an educator, but also as a global citizen, and as an art consumer. In addition, I have made an important contribution to the field of arts education research, that might help new emergence of learning.

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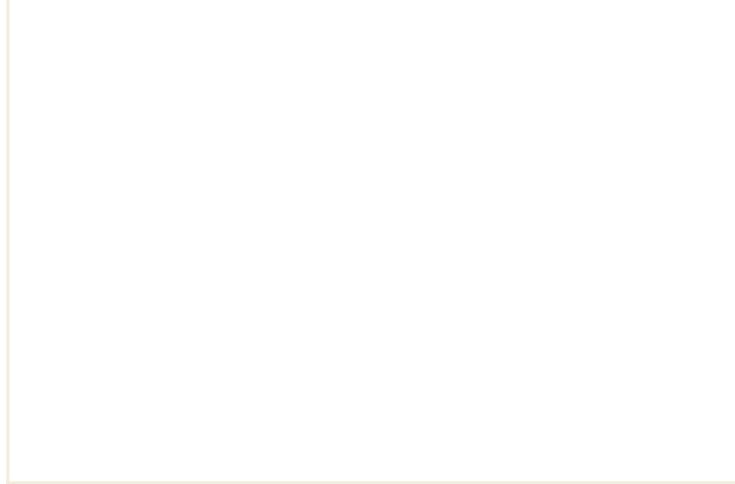
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