Name: Frederik la Cour
Stud. Nr.: 201707873
Date: 03-04-2018
Characters: 6821/ 7200

Final Synopsis

I have since the last synopsis assignment, been trying to develop an angle and find questions that would be interesting to reflect on in my assignment, and furthermore read and annotated the texts that I had not read when I was writing the previous synopsis. I have also received feedback upon my previous synopsis and discussed my topic for the final exam with my peers which was really helpful in terms of getting a new view and suggestion of what to work with. Another thing since last synopsis is that I have annotated Philip Galanter's "Generative art Theory", which I now think will be one of the more important texts in my reference list, because it puts forward a lot of very interesting questions that I think could be quite interesting to further reflect upon from a generative music stand point. I also feel that I have to further re-read Steve Goodman's text on Sonic Algorithms because I feel that Galanter's text has given me some new perspectives with which I would be able to gain a better understanding of Goodman's text.

In regard to gaining an angle on my final exam in software studies I think that concentrating on the notion of generativity as the core subject will help me in narrowing down what I want to write about. One of the things that my peers told me and that I sort of already knew is that the dangers of writing about something that you are very passionate about is that you get too caught up in a lot of different topics and that will make the paper less focused. In order to combat this, I think that going with generativity as my main subject will narrow the field down so that I don't go into datafication or temporality to deep, although they are a part of the generative practice. I find that I have collected most of my central literature, and gained an understanding of the what themes and questions that they are about. In my process of figuring out what to write about I drew a brainstorm (Fig. 1) which is what I am currently using to write this final synopsis however I think that I will try to convert this into a flowchart, which should make it easier to get a sense of relation between the different elements and hopefully also result in a better structure for writing the final paper.

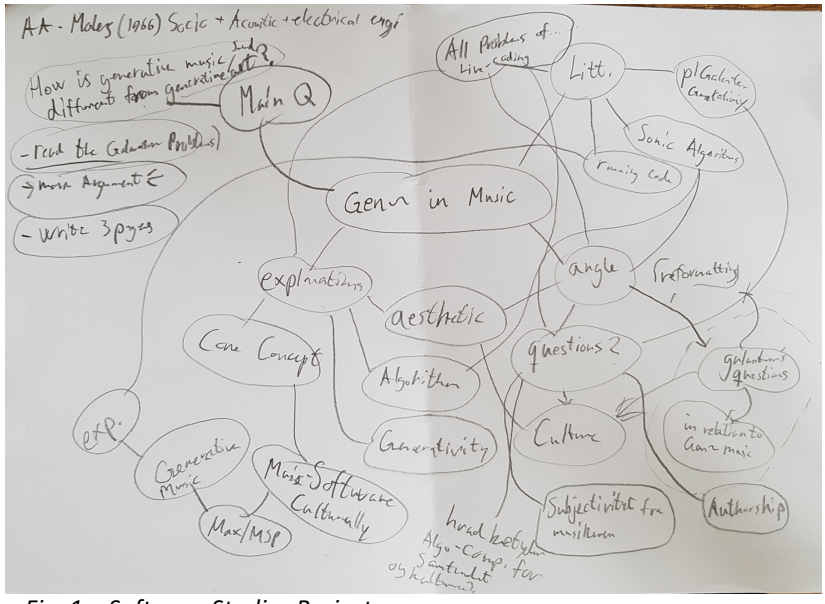

Fig. 1 – Software Studies Brainstorm

As it is quite apparent I am still trying to narrow it down so my paper can be more focused, and I think that one part of doing that is by narrowing the subjects, another way is to figure out what questions that I want to reflect upon, and this

is where I think that Galanter's text proved itself very useful. In his chapter "Problems in Generative Art Theory" he puts forward nine reflective questions concerning different aspects of generative art theory. I find that a selection of those questions could potentially be very interesting to work with from a generative music and composition standpoint. His question "Why is the artist working with and ceding control to generative systems? (Galanter, 2016p. 167)" is one of the question which I find to be quite interesting, because it reflects upon the intent behind the generative art piece, which is very different between the various art disciplines. Galanter often points to different artists in different fields when he gives examples in his questions, maybe trying to narrow the field into just music and composition would put forward some new areas of reflection.

I also find his question on the value of art in relation to mass-production quite interesting in relation to generative music and complexity. When we look at a generative score of music we can very easily copy the output from that score, duplicating audio-files and creating copies happens all the time, however in generative art the output is nothing without the input or in other words the score which could potentially be a Max/MSP patch. These patches can be quite complex, thus not very easy to replicate without a quite substantial understanding of how this complex piece of software works. This would result in fewer, if at all any, copies and duplication of the code.

Something that is also a topic which I think is central to generative music composition is the concept of algorithms, since they play a huge role in the pragmatic way that music is composed. Something that I found really interesting in the Galanter text was where he writes about some of the generative art communities on page 148, and in particular the one concerning computer/electronic music. In that section, he writes about a seminal paper by Brooks, Hopkins, Neumann, and Wright from 1957, which described a system using Markov chains, which essentially is a sequence of states that analyzes data and then through the sequence creates a new system based on the input data. In the seminal paper, it was used to create new musical scores much like Mozart utilized dices to generate new scores. These two examples have a certain degree of statistical complexity, whereas other scores are generated from more complex systems.

Other questions which I find quite interesting from Galanter's text are the following:

- *Is generative art an unavoidably postmodern approach to art?*
- *Is the art in the object, the system, the code, or something else entirely?*
- *Can and should generative art be about more than generative systems?*

I find that these questions will be relevant to keep in mind when defining the problems which I will address in my final paper. Where I to start writing my paper from tomorrow then my main argument would probably be something along the lines of:

I will, based on Philip Galanter's "Generative Art Theory", examine different aspects of generative theory in music composition, in relation to algorithms and complex systems used in software, in order to reflect upon aesthetic and cultural impacts of generative music.

However, this would of course evolve into being more specific through the questions what I will reflect upon during, and while I am reading the literature for the final paper.

In regard to how I will proceed working with the final exam, I have plans of creating a flowchart which I can use to better structure my writing and make sure that I won't deviate too far into topics of interests what are not at all essential to the final paper. Moreover, I think that re-reading the "Algorithm" text from the software studies lexicon might be helpful in terms of getting a more in-depth perspective of more cultural aspects of algorithms. Most crucial of all is obviously to continue working on making a main argument, and figuring out some questions inspired by Galanter's text which would support the main argument. In conclusion, I am narrowing the subject down to be mainly focused on generativity, and I am furthermore planning to use Galanter's and Goodman's texts as a basis for my reflective questions, and further development of my main argument.