

Appendix. Technology Between Support and Control: A Reflection on Agency

This appendix documents a personal reflection on the evolving relationship between technology, agency, and instrument design during the course of this project. It does not aim for academic argumentation, but serves as a research diary entry.

In thinking further about the relationship between technology and human agency, I've come to some deeper realizations.

During my CPM2 phase, I once categorized technologies into two types: those that act as supporters, and those that act as controllers. But through more practice and reflection, I've started to see that this binary was too simplistic. In reality, technologies almost never exist at either extreme; they are distributed along a continuous spectrum between support and control, each occupying different points depending on how they are used.

When I think carefully about it, the essence of using technology is always about delegating a part of our own power.

We hand over certain actions, decisions, or judgments—whether ones we could physically perform ourselves or ones we couldn't—to a technological system, in exchange for efficiency, scale, stability, or new possibilities.

The idealized image I once held, of technologies that serve purely as supporters without any element of control, doesn't really exist. Every tool, even the simplest one, inevitably takes over some part of our control—it's just a matter of degree.

The real distinction, then, doesn't lie in whether a technology exerts control, but in whether we can reclaim the control we have temporarily delegated.

In other words, the key issue is the reversibility of agency.

From this perspective, my attitude toward technology has become clearer:

I am not trying to reject control altogether—control is often necessary.

But I care about whether the control is voluntary, visible, and reversible.

Whether it's an amplifier, a contact mic, or a simple wire configuration, what matters is not how much it controls, but how freely that control can be redistributed, reclaimed, or reconfigured.

Over time, I also realized that the ability to reclaim agency does not depend solely on whether the technology is designed to be transparent.

It also depends heavily on the skills, knowledge, and willingness of the user.

Even if a technology is fully open and visible, if the user lacks the ability—or the desire—to intervene, the possibility of reclaiming control still diminishes.

This line of thinking has deeply shaped the way I approach instrument design.

I no longer see instruments as sealed systems.

Instead, I see them as spaces of negotiation—where technology and human intuition are in constant dialogue, adjustment, and mutual shaping, rather than operating in a strict hierarchy of dominance and obedience.