
An Emergent Tuning as a Molecular Organizational Mode

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Introduction, or, On Paralyzed Becomings

In his book *Multitude, Between Innovation and Negation*, Paul Virno (2008) asks a crucial question: is it possible to found [or create] an organizational base that identifies and recognizes both the instability and dangerousness, and the potentiality of a human animal, (within the same condition), and with which to “hold” and handle this very condition?

With this paper I cannot obviously have a satisfying answer to this wide question, but I hope that during the paper, I will be able to present some elements of a singular aesthetic “method”, which I call *an emergent* (or *becoming*) *tuning*, which nevertheless has some proximity with Virno's question. This vocal-bodily method, or practice, is not an exact method – nor it is an exact answer – but proceeds rather as series of fragile and uncertain experimentations, in order to create some molecular moments of transsubjectivity, of sharing, and light, temporal communities (with no designated common denominator).

To return to the question of the condition, or rather the ability, to be both compassionate, co-operative spirits, and to be hostile, or the “evil eye” – terms

that Bracha Ettinger (see 2006a and 2006b, 85), has named through her psychoanalytical and artistic work. This condition to be both is positioned at the very heart of a deep human ability. The different appearances of friendship and sharing, and as well the molar imbalance, or the “paralyzings of becoming”, have concerned also other contemporary thinkers, philosophers and artists such as Felix Guattari, Giorgio Agamben, Franco Berardi, Brian Massumi and Erin Manning. To begin now with the affects that the unstable and violent fluctuations of this ability causes in the bodies it touches or penetrates into, I will pause in Adriana Cavareros’ project, with which she tries to unmask the lack of coherence being built on the terms of the spreading contemporary violence, now being called (in its extensive forms) as “terrorism”, “war” or “humanitarian war”. To speak primarily of the crime of violence, rather than of the strategies and politics of it, she introduces the word *horrorism* – “as though ideally all the innocent victims, instead of their killers, ought to determine the name.” (2009, 3). By *horrorism*, she refers to the physical affects of violence – the bristling, hair-raising sensation of an “instinctive disgust”, in which the body is disabled in a state of a total paralysis, a bit like the physical feeling of gooseflesh and growing stiff when freezing. *Terror*, or panic terror and panic fear, refers also to “not a psychological dimension but a physical state” of fear, and is, as Cavarero articulates, an instinctive movement of an individual, in order to flee from a violent death (Ibid, 4, 7–8) – or as for example Franco Berardi (2006, 134–138), has talked about, from the acceleration of the infosphere that is too much for us, and opens our minds up into a chaotic state of panic. However, the collective and contagious forms of panic seem to bring the fear, as a physical state, to its fulfillment: according to Cavarero (2009, 6), it seems to turn the very violence that forces the body to flee, into a killing machine, (or other kinds of devastating, but non-fatal acts of violence as well), against one another.

The argument that Cavarero makes is that it is not (only) the end of a human life that is at stake here, “but the human condition itself, as incarnated in the singularity of vulnerable bodies” (2009, 8). How does this trauma of the horror, and of states of paralysis, transmit and emanate in and through humans, through

us? For example, through the traces of moments of physical and mental paralyses, the small stiff moments that we might feel and sense, but not be able to show, or know, exactly where they come from. How can we try to articulate – or rather resuscitate and resonate – those stiff and immobile “parts” (of the trauma) in us and in others?

As Felix Guattari has also stated, through a different frame, the ecological catastrophe that we are facing at the moment doesn’t concern only the state of nature, but is thoroughly human - her body and soul. Guattari worries about the loss of, not only the species, but the words and gestures of our understanding and solidarity, which we are about to lose (2008, 12).

Spinoza suggests that we can choose the idea of those “bodies” that bring us delight (Deleuze, 2006, 219). The challenge seems simple, although as Cavarero highlighted, it actually is not – at least not for everybody. What are the ways for art to participate or generate a production of the solidarity, the gentle power or potency in human life? I am talking about small, molecular vibrations and resonations of power, (not hunting for a powerplant). With an extension: under what kinds of conditions, or, the mutations of which kinds of processes can a human generate her own life? This generation or creation would be rather more like the process of the sprouting and germination of a plant, than the extravagance of the divine creation of the world. This kind of a “creation” is also *an act of resistance*. It is resistant in the way in which the direction of the resistance has transformed from one more restrained to a more yielding, expressive and productive one.

Tuning to a compassionate zone

In trying to resonate, gently, these states and zones of paralysis and muteness amongst us, the “zones” that I’m hoping to tune with this paper are encouraging for a certain molecular “co-recovery” and “co-emergence” of a human being, and also for humanity. To recover means crucially to transform. In recovery it is not

about restoration, but about generating new passages and trajectories; about pulses and rhythms. Even though the context of this work belongs roughly to the area of art, or the area of vocal art, those processes and events of a molecular anabiosis of humanity, (that are the basis of my work), are not meant to be only metaphorical. This work – the so called “artworking,” after Ettinger (see 1999, 124), or, as Brian Massumi and Erin Manning have termed “research-creation” – also considers a few areas of knowledge other than art. Areas such as philosophy, and perhaps also some forms of therapeutic healing, or, “the work of healing.” The level, or “plane”, of artworking differs however from the abstract concepts of philosophy, or, for example, the clinical work in medicine.

A musicologist, Gascia Ouzounian, writes that my work enables an “actualizing philosophy”. One that is placed in “the zone of indistinction” between art and philosophy. She argues that this philosophy, (or philosophy-in-action), “actualizes virtualities (unrealized potentialities), affecting transformative shifts through small mutations in perceptions and behaviors – displacements specifically centered upon refocusing relationships between bodies and environments”. (2009, 75) I have been applying the term “compassionate zone” to describe the work of *an emergent tuning* within my artworking. There is a certain phrase in astronomy, which describes a zone that is favorable to life around a star as a “habitable zone, HZ”. A non-life, that is, not death, but “the non-life as not yet emerged, as the not yet becoming alive”, as Bracha Ettinger writes (2005, 709). The not-yet-emerged life is something that is *still* virtual, and not yet actualized. For an artist, the zone that is “habitable”, but the zone of *a non-life*, may enable the generation, (or the sub-breathing), of a certain unclear “place” with an artwork. A place that opens up for the potential germinating of something new – “molecular” thickness between the internal and the external, between the listener-viewer and the artist, small mutations of moments of subjectivity. This is a new kind of encounter – an “encounter-event”, after Ettinger (2006c, 201) – with the world, that is in the mode of happening without being foreclosing or segregated. Or it is a place of mutation between the virtual and the actual, as Akseli Virtanen articulates, the power-field of becomings and

linkings, the source of small divisions of the multitude (2007, 8). A certain kind of an experience that an artist might face in jointness with a listener-viewer within an art-event. This kind of a gentle and erotic “extension” of an artist, as also the particular ethical attention, are the conditions for being able to generate healing, argues Ettinger (2005, 706).

The virtual, “habitable zone” deals also with the proliferation or breeding of power, of movement. In relation with the deep human ability, (this condition to both “good” and to “bad”), Giorgio Agamben talks about power and potency as something, that the human is, or what she has that is existent. Meaning “a simple fact of ones own existence as a potentiality or a power” (1995, 46). After that everything seems to become complicated for a human being. And for this very same reason the ethics are starting to work (Ibid.). In power-ethics, (or the ethics of the condition to both compassion and hostility) – that is, according to him, the only possible ethical experience – there is no room for regret. This is because Agamben’s ethics are fundamentally linked with the potential and the not yet actualized, the not yet “sprouted”. The most beautiful thing with what he says, is it’s request to deal with the jointness of power and action (of a human) in the shape of a particular kind of a halo or an aureole. This jointness in the action is applying particularly to new forms of subjectivity, resonances and feelings arising and emerging. I think that the important thing still is the scale through which Agamben presents the potential generation of new subjectivities: the *new* doesn’t mean that we need to establish an entirely new world, since it is enough just to “move this cup a bit or that plant or this rock, and thereby all the things” (1995, 53). The same minimal scale, a slightly-sized offset, or a transformation, rules also in the entwinement or interdiffusion of art and philosophy, or, art and therapeutic action.

As Akseli Virtanen writes, we seem to be in the state of a fundamental displacement in which the belief in “meaning or some other external reason that organizes action is lost, while all the external basis collapse” (2006, 261). In this time of more and more strong fluctuations from compassion to hostility, as it

seems, resistance as a power becomes important, since “arbitrary power” (as an organizing method of power) affects exactly those qualities typical of the human race, of which Virtanen talks about, and in her own way also Cavarero, those “that make us human” (Virtanen 2006, 262).

Artworking in a world, in which it is not possible to split any more between that what is mute, and that which can be communicated, calls for practices that are not restricted purely (and only) to artistic or aesthetic fields. The central point is not this or that private process, or a certain disciplinary capacity to solve problems, but the generation of manifold junctions of co-resistance, solidarity and joint responsibility. This kind of a delicate and “breathing” *resistor* is completed in the virtual (the non-life) sector, and is affecting above all our own future. Alain Badiou uses the term “infinite thought” for this kind of zone of indistinction (2005, 32). A thinking that doesn’t close to any specific function or aim, but a thinking – or thinking-in-action – that envelopes inside itself the fine and discrete pulse of modulation.

The *compassionate zone* that I’m trying to tune here, is a scale of a non-manipulative actuation of minimal pulsations of compassion and potentiality – and a moment of transsubjectivity.

Vocal human voice as an element of a molecular resistance

In her work on psychoanalysis, painting, visibility, memory and trauma, Bracha Ettinger writes, that art today should pass from reality, concept and phantasm to trauma, and “hence shift from thinking art in matrixial terms” (1999, 115). In the matrix, or *matrixial borderspace*, it is a matter of a human, psychic ability and potentiality to share and to distribute amongst several. The matrix is a certain *extimate zone* for an encounter, where the internal becomes external and the external becomes internal “in a continual attuning of distance in proximity” (1996, 127). Although she speaks in terms of painting and visibility, I like to have some proximity with these sensual and unique terms, since they seem to arrest

beautifully also something of the structure and “organization” of vocal voice.

In the basis of my vocal thinking there is an understanding of the vocal human voice, (and this is a factor of a human species), that is fundamentally inter-spaced and concurrent with its own interior and exterior places, because it is co-sounding and resonating both of these areas at the same time. Vocal voice – which doesn’t clearly belong to the realm of speech but emanates as occasional pulsations and strings of energy – affects and comes to the listener on an unclear level. This level or space, which activates many senses, doesn’t happen in the internal and intimate, or the external space of the listener, but is an utter state of complication and confusion. This confusion arises from the point that voice opens the perception of the body – both the one who produces it, and potentially also the listener’s – by happening and resonating in both of these spaces, (internal and external), at the same time. Thus the human voice is an opening in between different extensions, more than a stretch, or, analogously an inner and private happening of one human being. It composes itself rather as a spatial interval, or a happening, that *always* includes and evokes the multitude, as Finnish musicologist Milla Tiainen said: the assembly of both the human and non-human components. I will now modulate a bit Ettinger’s idea of an “extimate zone”, or “matrixial borderspace”, in order to move it maybe a bit closer to the “realm” of vocal voice. Within this “realm”, the extimate zone might no longer be only a psychic space, but also, (in a molecular level), a physical one: with vocal voices rather extending than binding dimensions, the voice cranks the oppositions of different spatial dimensions out of their joints, causes molecular flicker, and really touches the body: the skin, the flesh, the inner organs.

Even though I am not willing to draw a sharp line between listening to and looking at, since it might be even more appropriate to think about that which sounds and one can or has to listen, and the sights one sees or tries to see, more as synesthetical and constantly crossing currents, my point with this essay takes up a position closer to the scale of listening and the audible act of attuning.

The breathing voice, the breath of an ear, and of the listening and accepting body, the space(s) as breathing elements, calls for the artist, (the one producing the voice – either on an actual, immanent event, or through different kinds of media), and the listener-viewer, (as well as other living material), to a certain constant and emergent state of tuning. I will give you an idea of a work of mine, called *Amorous Dialogues, practicing acoustic ranges*, that happened in 2006, in order to illustrate some molecular ways of resistance through “emergent tuning”. This was a piece, co-commissioned by ANTI-Festival, an annual festival of site-specific works held in the Finnish city of Kuopio, and a local real estate company, which provided me with the use of a temporarily vacant three-bedroom apartment in a multi-storey building in Kuopio. *Amorous Dialogues* took place over the course of two days, of which on the first day, there was a three hour long “open concert” happening within this apartment. (Open at least in a sense that the audience could enter and leave at will.) For the open concert I assembled a small multitude of materials inside the apartment: five small loudspeakers that I installed in different rooms, a synthesizer/sampler that I used to control the playback of pre-recorded vocal sang (without any words) materials, (along with both a composition-notation and with the movements and rhythms of the listener-viewers), two videos that I projected from television screen in different rooms, a blanket with a poem I had sewn into it, and a poster, with a poem within it, that I mounted inside an adjacent elevator.

There was a certain way that I intended to come to that empty apartment, which had to do with hospitality – maybe even compassionate hospitality. I tried to resist the positioning of myself (as an artist), or the work, as penetrating or overwhelming the apartment I was about to enter. With the work, I tried to create “extimate” and light joints, linkages and zones of proximity with the listener-viewers, the diversified durational elements of the work and the spaces it inhabited, in a way that didn’t reject that “other life”, external to the work, that (constantly – during the open concert) was in the mode of happening. This organization, and the way of linking and sharing in *Amorous Dialogues*, was rather a kind of a continuous and emergent tuning; a gentle resistance, in a sense,

that intended to accept and become (compassionately) part of that Other happening, (like the transitions with the people moving during the open concert, or the sounds emanating from the street, through the open windows. How the work – and the artist beside it – tried both to affect and be affected by that constant change and the quality of it.

The name, *Amorous Dialogues* referred to a logic of an encounter-event, (see also Ettinger 2006c, 201), that is the logic of currents and change. Even though the open concert in the apartment was not singing together, (in a sense that I would have invited people to sing with me, as I did on the second day of *Amorous Dialogues*, in *the Song of the Dwellings*), the condition for listening did try to be something else than simply passive. *Amorous Dialogues* referred to a certain power and energy, (of which Luce Irigaray writes about), that as a sap of musical rhythms and tones, arises at us from below, in order to create transformation. This power, says Irigaray, (which is not mentally [or physically] paralyzing as some other powers might be), is the power of listening and receiving. A receiving, or acceptance, that isn't just passive, and doesn't just belong to the ear, but in which the whole body, breathing and *soul* should participate. (2004, 134-135).

A fragile state of listening

Can you experience “wit(h)ness” (Ettinger 1999, 115) while listening? Or is it about something even more subliminal (or “sub-physical”)? In what other ways, than through sight, does trauma – or the unknown, or even uncognizant traces of it – wander and press in on us? Is trauma a synesthetic event of memory, or does it happen especially, (and only), in sight? In listening it is always, in a way, about sharing the moment of listening, listening together – co-listening – because the vocal voice doesn't differentiate itself, (at least not easily), to one listener at a time. In other words, in a shared listening the voice filters, gets absorbed, comes, bends and fades to the ears, and to the intermediary, but also the interior and “extimate” space of the bodies in a slightly different moment, and in a slightly

different way. These processes are rather about pressing within each other, about the intensities of touch, and about small movements in folding and becoming-round. It's a kind of embrace accessible to anyone who can tolerate the modulating resonance of the voice in one's body, and is able to lapse together into a zone of active listening, in order to pass and derive further the area of non-cognitive knowledge and the internal-external energy of the "intervals" of the body-mind.

In an ethical sense, this kind of an open-ness in a listener-viewer calls for an arrival to a certain level of fragility. The fact that vocal voice is actually touching, even penetrating, by its quality, calls for a particularly sensitive, hospitable and tentative kind of practice from an artist. An aesthetical-ethical practice, or a method, that "breathes" at the intimate zones of the artist and listener-viewer, the work and the Other life. And while it is possible, but not obligatory, for the listener-viewer to open herself to this certain frequency, this fragile state of an active acceptance, it is not a truism. In a hospitable, compassionate art-event, where the artist keeps a certain spatial distance, remaining a tone of proximity, the listener-viewer has always the possibility to react critically and not let the potential, or, the molecular flicker of the voice affect on her.

Vocal Thought Material

Vocal thought material is knowledge that doesn't realize in the scale of a cognitive knowledge. The thought is not only an immaterial form, but a material substance, (a place of mutation), and this substance can be located within the material productions of the voice. Ouzounian (2008) thinks that this is a radical concept, because it enables a level of knowledge that is, somehow, a shared and mutual knowledge emerging in the body-mind, within a durational process. This knowledge is not *finished off* by an artist, but is articulated at a more sub-mental level, the level of breath. The body-mind also refers to the spiritual potential of a human. The vocal thought material tries to join lightly with the surroundings of "it", (ie. the place, the durational time, or the human or non-human material), in

order to generate fine movements of transformation in touch with these planes and substances. I want to intentionally use the term "knowledge" or "thought material", to create a distance with the idea in which art is fundamentally (only) a bunch of affects, (and not, say, a creation of a knowledge). This is something Deleuze and Guattari discuss in their book *What is Philosophy?* (1993, 200-201). For them, *a remaining object*, that is a work of art, is a bloc of sensation; which means a certain kind of composition of perceptions and affects (Ibid., 168). Deleuze and Guattari really say: a work of art is a creature of perception and nothing else, existing ipso facto (intrinsically). Existing thus already *before* the viewer or the listener, who are thereby able to experience it always only *afterwards*. Even though there is much beauty in Deleuze and Guattari's definition of art, I cannot not resist the dimension in which art is a collapsing and enveloping composition, and in which the art happens already before the listener-viewer, and particularly, in which the work of art cannot be affected, but it must stay strong.

When Agamben talks about singularity (1995, 63-64), he talks about a certain "happening of the outside" (Ibid., 64). A happening that doesn't have any particular, determinant concept or identity, but which is as a door with which there is no other space (or symbolic reference) behind (Ibid., 63-64). I consider my vocal works through the structure of singularity in so far that they don't present or represent the world, but try to participate in it, or even *generate* it. They are not organizations of representation or authentic and total presence, but are problematic fields that (always) also refer to something unforeseen. So far, (in their participation, exposure and drifting), they are also performative. In vocal performances the vocal "elements", (for example, in *It's Voicy* [another vocal work of mine from 2007] there were assemblages of staccato-like vocal voices, long and even vocal voices, all without any words, and more freely dispersive sounds of an electric bass), in relation with other (living and non-living) material within the piece, can be some kinds of joint and non-cognitive "concepts". "Knowledge" doesn't organize itself as an artistic knowledge (of an artist), or as an absolute knowing (in or with art), but a bit like that what Ettinger (2008,16)

talks about as "the absolute sharing". This unconditional sharing means *an intermediary knowing* between an artist and a listener-viewer, between me and not-me, (and maybe also between a human and non-human), that is being passed on by an erotic attuning. This way of knowing is realized by and within *local and constantly renewing structures*, (see also Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, 88). A non-cognitive knowledge as an emerging power articulated by vocal thought material is as porous, small and brittle as a human voice, and the crucial condition of it is not to serve any particular ("exterior" or symbolic) end.

On the emergent logic of composition

An emergent composition is not a certain form or genre of art, but a living system, an event, organized by certain, "breathing", logic, referred to earlier in this paper. This logic might be some kind of a composition of *an autopoietic machine*, like that of Humberto Maturana and Fransesco Varela, and of "*a co-poietic*" (as Ettinger 2006c, 201 continues), non self-sufficient mode of co-operation and co-production. This kind of "a copoiesis involves conductive shareability, which might lead to traumatizing as well as to healing" (Ibid.). This is a logic that doesn't so much – at least not only – need the actual compositional notations, plans, structures and tones mediated by the composer, or the artist, but a certain way of being wide open in the immanent event-moment of the composition. This means widening up the metabolism of the work also towards the external elements of it, (as described before). It might be described by using Felix Guattari's term "the logic of intensities", or, "an ecosophic logic": in an emergent state, (or register), this composition resonates each immanent event-moment, trying to inhabit the human existence of that moment.

The composition of my vocal, environmental work *It's Voicy: Trying out the distance between Amorous Dialogues and non-personal relations*, from 2007, rested on a question of how to generate movement – molecular flicker, germination of subjectivity. It was a trans-subjective project of non-personal singularities, and a light event, of which the compositional organization happened with the logic of

“a breath”. Further, it was thinking about a process – a breathing – between a life, that a human “has”, (a life that she belongs to), and a life, which is not her own. The breath means a hospitable, gentle and tentative practice: a continuous emanating, becoming and change between virtual and actual “spaces” – in between the concrete notations and the immanent happenings, that happened during, and regardless, of the work: the moving of the people – listener-viewers, passers-by – the sounds of the square of Theatre Academy of Helsinki, the agora (where the work took place), the talking, and of course the vocal sang and videoed material of the work.

It's Voicy was a kind of a trans-subjective process, in which the horizontal line didn't signify the event of *transgressing* and *abandoning* none, a human, an individual, my own life, (or the life of others), but “letting go” and unfolding among these all. “*Haecceitas*” is a word Deleuze (2005, 81) gives to these kinds of small and inseparable passages, as he describes this non-personal singularity: “We [Deleuze and Guattari] are not certain that we are persons at all: a breath of air, a wind, a day and night, [---], a place, a fight or an illness each has a non-personal singularity” (Ibid.)

A reciprocal logic, which drives the common communication between people is different when it is realized *within duration*. This kind of logic, suggests Guattari (2008), that doesn't only concern human subjects, but also for example landscapes, “group subjectivities” or faces, is a *logic of intensities* (2008, 12). An erotically toned “body”, one that derives or causes affects, is not exactly the body of an individual human being, but utterly an assemblage. The affect, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the “body's” condition at the moment of it being under the influence of another body. This influence is not just transient, but “affects my duration, my pleasure or pain, my joy or sorrow”. They argue that in affects, one doesn't only transfer from one “state” to another, but the human becomes non-human. (1993, 177) The state of an art-work may also be like this: potentially generous, yielding and drifting.

As “an outcome”, *It's Voicy* was a tiny and gentle act of resistance. It resisted – by light intensities – the myriad expressions of cynicism and hostilities we go through, and the paralyzed states they might produce in us. With and in it I thought that a human needs to look for another dimension or scale other than her own, even though it seems almost impossible.

In his book *The Coming Community* Agamben seeks for the limit of language. Only here, by the fine borderlines of language, at the open threshold in between the interior and the exterior, we can find an experience of the world, he says. (1995, 6, 7, 64) To be able to co-experience, to have compassion without a common language, nation or belief in a restricted spiritual vision, or to be able to create shareable and light human communities, (which don't gain their power from a certain place and a certain time) – communities, that are also able to consider the future human and non-human life – calls urgently for new kinds of logics, methods and intensities of thought and activity, of ethics and aesthetics.

As a conclusion, there is no thick, meaningful sentence that can be given as an answer to the question from the beginning – of an organizational base, that would cradle, somehow, this condition of a human to both hostile action and compassion, to action that can cause both paralyzing, or gentle molecular (therapeutic) “movement”. I hope, however, that during this paper, there have been some moments of flicker and attunement around this problem. The potential moments of molecular resuscitation or gentle resonance are nevertheless something that need to take place in such events, that have at least a slight sense of an immanence – or urgency – within them, and then carry on from those conditions, from those singular, particular zones, in order to awaken the stiff and paralyzed parts, or moments, or memories, in us.

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