

## Anachronistic Domain – Study 1: Blurred Edges

*for voltage controlled oscillator and six modulation sources*

*22min 34sec – monaural  
by Benjamin Flessner*

The point, or edge, at which this piece has been or became an original respectively a re-production, is blurred by the circumstances of production in a similar manner as musical structures are diffused in terms of impulse and reaction.

The modulation sources responsible for the structure of this piece were assembled in relation to each other as a feedback loop. All modulation sources are sending and receiving signals within a network where there are no particular starting points or initial impulses, moreover, there is no linear notation or sequential score. Action and reaction are in a cause and effect dilemma with each other, in which both appear in the (a) world simultaneously.

The operations that the modulation sources apply to each other are as such: changing cycle length through control voltage, modifying waveforms and resetting cycles according to arriving impulse signals.

By default all modulation sources and oscillators cycle as soon as they are electronically powered. Independently they are only singular functions of fixed frequencies and waveforms, but when grouped each singular function is effecting and interrupting the other, creating a structure which can only occur within their inter-connectedness and results in rhythmic or other musical, respectively non-musical structures. These are not determined by the composer but rather left to re-adjust themselves throughout the feedback process in states of individuation speaking through a single voice. The voice receives changing values from the modulation sources for its parameters and is perceived as percussive entities, accompanying bass structures, curly artefacts and frequency sweeps throughout altering waveforms. The modulation sources and the voice have in common that they are all oscillators. The voltage controlled oscillator to which I refer to as the voice, has a frequency range that is mostly in the audible range and therefore responsible for the fundamental tonality. The modulation sources are cycling mostly below audible range and are altering designated parameters over time.

The composition itself is as much an oscillating gesture as the sounds of which it is composed. This gesture, as it is happening here, can be described as formalisation, idea or concept but it cannot be presented as a physical action in terms of operating an instrument or apparatus. It is by no means the result of virtuosity, physical strength or mechanical skill and thus the physical presence of a performer is obsolete. It is therefore not only the corporeal presence that is in question but also the identity and authorship of the composer.

The identity of the voice appears to be many rather than one. Sometimes even many at one time. Instruments and ensembles are collective efforts rather than technological entities whose elements arose purely from nature or through individual observation of nature.

Considering the nature of electronic instruments, I am always compelled to keep within the parameters set for me by the developer of this tool; this can never be a blank page but rather defined by personal aesthetic preferences, specific knowledge and eventual blind spots of the builder of the instrument. Therefore every instrument is a version that could be slightly different in design but entirely different in its audible character, or vice versa.

This argument is not only valid in terms of technology, a field that intrinsically advances on previous achievements, but also in the realm of all cultural fields, such as music or politics that function in the very same way. Needless (in the sense of logics) but necessary (in terms of politics) to say, is that developments are not chained into a single narrative. Developments in themselves can happen simultaneously with others, unquestionably influencing each other on subconscious domains but with no guarantee of individuals ever taking note of each other. Meaning that consciousness continues to add up but remains forever incomplete as an archive or hub of all knowledge. Authorship is in this sense something that can be only claimed as a diffusive partial.

The statement above refers mostly to the technological aspects of the composition. The composition en bloc extends into this text. It aims to serve as a reflection. This is not a description. This is the composition. A paradoxical self-referential documentation of the present projected from the past in form of a recording pointing out that from any angle of observation, intellectual hermetics can be falsified solely by the cognition of associations functioning as arrows pointing outside the composition.

This has not been live in the sense of a performance but it will be live at a later point in terms of a live recording. Instead of witnessing the production or interpretation of a piece, you have, with your presence in the room in which this piece has been presented and re-recorded, taken part of the processing of a re-production into a live recording. The original, in case of analogue synthesis, is nothing else than a mathematical functions expressed in voltages. Those voltages do not have any acoustic qualities by themselves and presenting them as an original would have found us staring at a modular synthesizer emitting no sound.