

# trickling music

It's probable that innovations in the musical avant-garde 'trickle down' into more popular forms. This notion appears to provide an easy justification for the often technocratic and rarefied explorations of 'difficult' composers and sound artists.

*"They make waves, and slowly inspire more popular artists that actually have a direct impact on mass sonic culture".*

In a real avant-garde, activities are (ideally) unfettered by the need to *function* and can be truly autonomous, allowing the sort of genuinely innovative developments that would otherwise be filtered out. These innovations don't just stay floating around in the world of musical academia however; there exists a sort of musical hierarchy of mass appeal, through which ideas can be passed.

The need to see these avant-garde experiments as having a real 'impact' or 'effect' completely undermines the very notion of a rarefied culture of innovation that isn't smothered by the crippling demands of *utility*. In seeking justification for avant-garde art, we succumb to an implicit capitalist ideology, wherein nothing has inherent value beyond its power to generate further value (defined abstractly).

We shouldn't view this web of inspiration as a justification of the initial act, but as an inevitable process of cultural digestion.

Do avant-garde artists feel vindicated by their displaced notoriety? What happens to these ideas once they are adopted in other forms? Are they bastardised or simply utilised? If we layer a William Basinski loop over a drum-track, is it even the same thing at all? What's carried over into the new form, if anything?

I have a feeling that, in the main, avant-garde composers are imbuing their work with a fair amount of conceptual content that cannot possibly be carried, *in toto*, into other forms.

But, this amounts to saying that two pieces of art are different, having different inceptions and different meanings. A Cageian would say that two different performances of Beethoven's 9th have two different meanings and effectively constitute two different artworks.

When sonic tropes from the underground (e.g. early dubstep) are imported into other cultures (e.g. brostep), we are simply witnessing different attempts to realise the objective potential of aural materials.

We must be careful in conflating the morphological similarity of sounds with an ideological or functional proximity.