CrimethInc.
Practical Tips for CrimethInc. Agents
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fundamental difference between the thinker and the rest of humanity, by appropriating the thinker's material as the property of humanity.

After all, a good idea should be available to everyone—should belong to everyone—if it really is a good idea. In a society organized with human happiness as the objective, copyright infringement laws and similar restrictions would not hinder the distribution and recombination of ideas. These impediments only make it more difficult for individuals who are looking for challenging and inspiring material to come upon it and share it with others.

So, if there truly is "nothing new under the sun," take them at their word, and act accordingly. Take what seems relevant to your life and your needs from the theories and doctrines prepared by those who came before you. Don't be afraid to reproduce word for word those texts which seem perfect to you, so you can share them with others who might also benefit from them. And at the same time, don't be afraid to plunder ideas from different sources and rearrange them in ways that you find more useful and exciting, more relevant to your own needs and experiences. Seek to create a personally constructed body of critical and creative thought, with elements gathered from as many sources as possible, rather than choosing from one of the prefabricated ideologies that are offered to you. After all, do we have ideas, or do they have us?

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heritage. What can we do to address this problem? One of the possible solutions is plagiarism.

II. Plagiarism and the Modern Revolutionary

Plagiarism is an especially effective method of appropriating and reorganizing ideas, and as such it can be a useful tool for a young man or woman looking to encourage new and exciting thinking in others. And it is a method that is revolutionary in that it does not recognize "intellectual property" rights but rather strikes out against them and all of the negative effects that recognizing them can have.

Plagiarism focuses attention on content and away from incidental issues, by making the genuine origins of the material impossible to ascertain. Besides, as suggested above, it could be argued that the genuine origins of the contents of most inspirations and propositions are impossible to determine anyway. By signing a new name, or no name at all, to a text, the plagiarizer puts the material in an entirely new context, and this may generate new perspectives and new thinking about the subject that have not appeared before. Plagiarism also makes it possible to combine the best or most relevant parts of a number of texts, thus creating a new text with many of the virtues of the older ones—and some new virtues, as well, since the combination of material from different sources is bound to result in unforeseeable effects and might well result in the unlocking of hidden meanings or possibilities that have been dormant in the texts for years. Finally, above all, plagiarism is the reappropriation of ideas: when an individual plagiarizes a text which those who believe in intellectual property would have held "sacred," she denies that there is a difference in rank between herself and the thinker she takes from. She takes the thinker's ideas for herself, to express them as she sees fit, rather than treating the thinker as an authority whose work she is duty-bound to preserve as he intended. She denies, in fact, that there is a

ognized "thinker" and "artist" at the expense of everyone else. When ideas are always associated with proper names (and always the same proper names, in point of fact), this suggests that thinking and creating are special skills that belong to a select few individuals. For example, the glorification of the "artist" in our culture, which includes the stereotyping of artists as eccentric "visionaries" who exist at the edge (the "avant garde") of society, encourages people to believe that artists are significantly and fundamentally different from other human beings. Actually, anyone can be an artist, and everyone is, to some extent; being able to act creatively is a crucial element of human happiness. But when we are led to believe that being creative and thinking critically are talents which only a few individuals possess, those of us who are not fortunate enough to be christened "artists" or "philosophers" by our communities will not make much effort to develop these abilities. Consequently we will be dependent upon others for many of our ideas, and will have to be content as spectators of the creative work of others—and we will feel alienated and unsatisfied.

Another incidental drawback of our association of ideas with specific individuals is that it promotes the acceptance of these ideas in their original form. The students who learn the philosophy of Descartes are encouraged to learn it in its orthodox form, rather than learning the parts which they find relevant to their own lives and interests and combining these parts with ideas from other sources. Out of deference to the original thinker, deified as he is in our tradition, his texts and theories are to be preserved as-is, without ever being put into new forms or contexts which might reveal new insights. Mummified as they are, many theories become completely irrelevant to modern existence, when they could have been given a new lease on life by being treated with a little less reverence.

So we can see that our acceptance of the tradition of "intellectual property" has negative effects upon our endeavors to think critically and learn from our artistic and philosophical

LIE and CHEAT.

Hypocrisy, The will to a system is the will to a lie.

Today it is impossible to avoid hypocrisy in any struggle against the status quo.

The political and economic structures are constructed so that it is practically impossible to avoid being implicated in their workings. Today, whatever a man thinks of the employment opportunities available to him or of our economic system itself, he has almost no choice except to work if he does not want to starve to death or die of an illness for which he could not afford health care. If he does not believe in material property, he still has no choice but to buy all the food and clothing he needs and to buy or rent living space (that is, if he is not ready to live at odds with our very effective legal system)—for there is no free land left that has not been claimed by someone, almost no food or other resources anywhere that are not someone's "property." If a woman wants to distribute material criticizing the capitalist system of production and consumption, she still has no way to produce and distribute this material without paying to produce it, and selling it to consumers—or at least selling advertising, which encourages people to be consumers—to finance production. If a woman does not want to finance the brutal torture and slaughter of animals in the name of capitalism, she can stop eating meat and dairy products, purchasing health products which are tested on animals, and wearing leather and fur; but there are still animal products in the films in her camera and the movies she watches, in the vinyl records she listens to, and in countless other products which she will be hard-pressed to do without in modern society. Besides, the companies she buys her vegetables from are most likely connected to the companies who make meat and dairy products, so her money goes to the same ends; and these vegetables themselves were probably picked by migrant workers or other oppressed labor.

And at the same time, modern Western culture is so deeply ingrained in our minds, indoctrinated with it as we are from an early age, that it is practically impossible to avoid being influenced in our actions by the very assumptions and values which we are struggling against. After a lifetime of being taught to place a financial value on the hours of our lives, it is hard to stop feeling like one must be rewarded materially for an activity for it to be worthwhile. After a lifetime of being taught to respect hierarchies of authority, it is very difficult to suddenly interact with all human beings as equals. After a lifetime of being taught to associate happiness with passive spectatorship, it is hard to enjoy building furniture more than watching television. And of course there are ten thousand more subtle ways in which these values and assumptions manifest themselves in our thoughts and our actions.

This does not mean that resistance is futile. Indeed, if our choices today are so limited that we cannot act without replicating the conditions from which we were trying to escape, resistance is all the more crucial. This does mean that "innocence" is a myth, a counter-revolutionary concept which we must leave behind us with the rest of post-Christian thinking. The traditional Christian demand upon human beings is that they be innocent, that they keep their hands clean of any "sin." At the same time, "sin" is so difficult for the Christian to avoid (as counter-revolutionary activity is today, for us) that this demand leads to feelings of guilt and failure in the believer, and ultimately to despair, when he realizes that it is impossible for him to be "innocent" and "pure." In fact, by forbidding "sin," Christian doctrine makes it all the more tempting and intriguing for the believer; for whether the mind does or not, the human heart recognizes no authority and will always seek out that which is not permitted to it.

We must not make the same mistakes as Christianity. The demand that people be free from hypocrisy, free from any implication in the system, will result in the same effects as the

make similar statements about their own ideas. Even the most notoriously "radical" thinkers have still proudly claimed their ideas as, first and foremost, their ideas.

Consequently, little distinction is made between the thinkers and their thoughts. Students of philosophy will study the philosophy of Descartes, students of economics will study Marxism, students of art will study the paintings of Dali. At worst, the cult of personality that develops around famous thinkers prevents any useful consideration of their ideas or artwork; hero-worshipping partisans will swear allegiance to a thinker and all his thoughts, while others who have some justified or unjustified objection to the conceiver of the ideas will generally have a difficult time not being prejudiced against the ideas themselves. At best, this emphasis upon the "author-owner" in the consideration of propositions or artwork is merely irrelevant to the worth of the actual propositions or artwork, even if the stories about the individual in question are interesting and can encourage creative thinking by themselves.

The very assumptions behind the concept of "intellectual property" require more attention than we have given them. The factors that affect the words and deeds of an individual are many and varied, not the least of them being her social-cultural climate and the input of other individuals. To say that any idea has its sole origins in the being of one individual man or woman is to grossly oversimplify. But we are so accustomed to claiming items and objects for ourselves, and to being forced to accept similar claims from others, in the cutthroat competition to acquire and dominate (before we are acquired and dominated) that is life in a market economy, that it seems natural to do the same with ideas. Certainly there must be other ways of thinking about the origins and ownership of ideas that warrant consideration… for our present approach does more than merely distract from the ideas.

Our tradition of recognizing "intellectual property rights" is dangerous in that it results in the deification of the publicly rec-

efforts uselessly! Even then, it might have unforeseen effects… Who can tell for sure?

The thing is to act, to act joyously, not to accept that we are helpless to effect change, even if we really are. For if we seek to resist the roles and lives set forward for us, if we fight a spirited fight against the forces that would keep us in despair, if we dare to act on our own and to act passionately and joyously, then that is in itself the revolution we seek.

STEAL.

Plagiarism, a CrimethInc. exclusive!

The marketplace of ideas, like any marketplace, is fit only for looting.

I. "Intellectual Property"

We have all been taught from our youth that "there is nothing new under the sun." Whenever a child has an exciting idea, an older person is quick to point out either that this idea has been tried before and didn't work, or that someone else not only has already had the idea but also has developed and expounded upon it to greater lengths than the child ever could. "Learn and choose from the ideas and beliefs already in circulation, rather than seeking to develop and arrange your own," seems to be the message, and this message is sent clearly by the methods of "instruction" used in both public and private schools throughout the West.

Despite this common attitude, or perhaps because of it, we are very possessive of our ideas. The concept of "intellectual property" is ingrained in the collective psychosis much deeper than the concept of material property. Plenty of thinkers have appeared who have asserted that "property is theft" in regard to real estate and other physical capital, but few have dared to

Christian demand that people be free from sin: it will create frustration and despair in those who would seek change, and at the same time it will make hypocrisy all the more tempting. Rather than seek to have hands that are clean of implication in the systems we struggle against, we should aim to make the inevitable negative effects of our lives worthwhile by offering enough positive activity to more than balance the scales. This approach to the problem will save us from being immobilized by fear of hypocrisy or shame about our "guilt."

Besides, demands that we avoid hypocrisy deny the complexity of the human soul. The human heart is not simple; every human being has a variety of desires which pull him or her in different directions. To ask that a human being only pursue some of those desires and always ignore others is to ask that he or she remain permanently unfulfilled… and curious. This is typical of the kind of dogmatic, ideological thinking which has afflicted us for centuries: it insists that the individual must be loyal to one set of rules and only one, rather than doing what is appropriate for his or her needs in a particular situation.

It might well be true that the whole self can only be expressed in hypocrisy. Certainly a person needs to formulate a general set of guidelines regarding the decisions he will make, but to break occasionally from these guidelines will prevent stagnation and offer an opportunity to consider whether any of the guidelines need reevaluation. A person who is not afraid to be hypocritical from time to time is in a great deal less danger of selling out permanently one day, because he or she is able to taste the "forbidden fruit" without feeling forced to make a permanent choice. This person will be immune to the shame and eventual despair that will afflict the person who strives for perfect "innocence."

So be proud of yourself as you are, don't try to get the inconsistencies in your soul to match up in a false and forced manner or it will only come back to haunt you. Rather than holding inflexibly to a set system, let us dare to reject the idea that we

must be faithful to any particular doctrine in our efforts to create a better life for ourselves. Let us not claim to be innocent, let us not claim to be pure or right! But let us proclaim proudly that we are hypocrites, that we will stop at nothing, not even hypocrisy, in our struggle to take control of our lives. In this age when it is impossible to avoid being a part of the system we strive against, only blatant hypocrisy is truly subversive—for it alone speaks the truth about our hearts, and it alone can show just how difficult it is to avoid living the modern life which has been prepared for us. And that alone is good reason to fight.

Exhibit A: CrimethInc. Itself "insINC.ere"

The CrimethInc. collective is a perfect example of the difficulties a subversive organization will encounter in seeking to avoid hypocrisy, and of the liberating possibilities that embracing hypocrisy can create.

Harbinger exists to criticize such modern phenomena as advertising, which is fundamentally an effort on the part of modern businesses to influence people to purchase their products whether or not this is in their best interest. And yet CrimethInc. must sell advertising in the pages of Harbinger in order to finance its publication. Harbinger exists to warn against those who would sell ideologies that prescribe certain kinds of thinking and acting, whether or not these manners of thinking and acting are in the best interest of human beings. And yet, in order to compete with these forces, CrimethInc. too must sell an ideology of sorts: an ideology of "thinking for yourself," but an ideology all the same. Certainly we may claim that our products, our ideologies, really are in the best interest of human beings, but isn't that what every corporation and political party claims?

Thus it is impossible for us in CrimethInc. to pursue the goals we seek without simultaneously betraying those goals. Just as we strive to fight against the system, we replicate it.

Selling "revolutionary" ideas is still selling ideas, and as long as buying and selling are taking place, nothing truly revolutionary is happening. Indeed the fact that "revolutionary" ideas are being used to perpetuate the status quo means that whatever resistance there might be is neutralized and assimilated from the start.

On the other hand, activity is better than inactivity, and perhaps the efforts that we make here will still be able to have positive effects despite being necessarily compromised. And perhaps our willingness to point out where we are compromised will prevent those compromises from rendering our efforts useless. It might be possible to incite genuine to change in the lives of human beings, despite the implication inherent in any kind of activity today; and even if it is not, it must still be worth a try.

Of course, perhaps this sort of idealism will only serve to trick us, with the best of all possible intentions, into betraying the very ideals which we seek to promote. Perhaps we are sealing our own fate by transforming whatever genuine desires for change people may have into ultimately ineffectual activities such as purchasing "revolutionary products" and discussing the ideas of others rather than creating their own. Perhaps the advertising we sell in Harbinger will only lead people to purchase the products advertised (and thus be forced to remain trapped in the wage slavery system), rather than just harmlessly raising the funds necessary to publish our demand for the end of this system. Or maybe this hypocrisy is merely a cover that allows us to go about our business of revolution without appearing to be much of a threat, by making us appear to be another innocuous, pseudo-revolutionary group; perhaps we only appear to be hopelessly compromised so that the forces that have a stake in the status quo will not recognize the threat that we do pose until it is too late. And it might even be that CrimethInc. is actually orchestrated by those very forces, to lead those who do desire change astray into expending their