

Against Intellectual Property

This will raise the ire of some libertarians, but I can see no merit in arguments that a copy of the product of one's mental effort is "property."

Suppose I make a clay pot. Assuming that the clay was mine, and the tools were mine or were legitimately in my hands, and I had no prior commitment to produce the pot for others, that pot is mine.

If a replicator then makes an exact duplicate, the pot belongs to whoever owns the replicator, just as a copy machine produces copies of paper documents. So-called IP laws seek to claim property in copies and even sort-of-vaguely-like "copies" of the arrangement of bits, blobs of ink, or physical stuff. If taken to extreme, you would owe royalties to the first creators of every word you utter, in perpetuity.

There's a lot to be said on this topic. Recommended reading list:

The Case Against Intellectual Property

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The Case Against Patents