

On Intellectual Property IV

I heard the claim recently that to use an idea that originated with someone else is to commit a trespass. This begs the question and assumes what proponents of strong intellectual property rights are trying to prove. A trespass is to enter the owner's property without permission. If ideas cannot be the subject of a property claim, then no trespass can occur by using or copying an idea that originated with someone else. For the sake of argument, let us posit that using someone else's idea does amount to trespass. Since every new idea is a re-mixture of old ideas, everyone is a trespasser, as I've already written. Where does this get us, precisely? Exactly nowhere except gobs and gobs of statecraft in the attempt to balance interests over the use of things infinite and unhindered by natural scarcity. It's all perfectly ridiculous, and *insidious*. And that's today's two cents.