CrimethInc. Rhetoric Can Be Hazardous To Your Mental Health

Revolutionary General's Warning

CrimethInc.

September 11, 2000

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Intellectuals have quite an aptitude for displacement — when they suffer from the ennui of their dry, disembodied existence, they respond to this suffering not with action but with more desiccating and disembodying. All too often their real discontent ends up being diverted into theory and abstract analysis, and from there back into career and status… and thus, more status quo.

Ideology creeps quickly into *any* language, languages that seek to oppose it no less. It might well be that the language of radical theory, dreary and unbearable as it was with so many academic code words and so much talk about "responsibility" and self-sacrifice and the inevitability of history, would have died out on its own (and right on time!) if we had not revitalized it with our reference to real life needs and fantasies. But now our innovation has become a routine of its own, and we all know what to expect from the mouth of any radical: the same old standard-issue rhetoric, but now even more disheartening, for it comes dressed in the robes of our own hearts and dreams. All the talk about joy and seizing pleasure and desiring freely seems as stilted and forced to our ears today as the Marxist class struggle diatribes of twenty years ago. You can talk all you want about spontaneity and pleasure, but once you've written the word "passion" a thousand times in redundant, repetitive demands for immediate change, it loses whatever power and beauty it had to start with.

So what can we do about all this?

PRACTICE JOY NOW!

…chants the chorus of anguished anarchist robots. Well, exactly — and, at the same time, no, not at all! For heaven's sake, if it's passion you want in your life, the last thing you should do is make up more slogans about it. This little disclaimer is itself a pernicious little thing, just more *talking* about talking about life — put the paper down, stop conceptualizing, and get out there and do something *real*, something that escapes the claws of routine! No more expounding, rationalizing, glorifying…distrust any words or symbols that attempt to capture the things that make life matter — political pomposity above all! Words can only hold reality *by accident,* and then only for brief moments. Cornered by the inertia of our own rhetoric, we must finally take a stand against description — and *for* expression, but in action alone, the only place where it can be free and unburdened by the dead weight of ideology. That is to say — it is only sufficient to speak when, by speaking, you *are* acting. So unless you have hit upon a way to turn all this theory into actual life — throw this treatise aside![1]

— *Message courtesy of the CrimethInc. Action Faction*

[1] The treatise, of course, goes on from this point, undaunted, forgetful of its own demands, as ideology always does and is.

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