

INSTRUCTIONS- Please make all edits in the editing feature located in the top right-hand corner. We are looking for both grammatical edits as well as comments on direction and voice, which you may leave using the comment function.

PLEASE DO NOT MAKE EDITS BEFORE DOWNLOADING YOUR OWN COPY

Maybe it's my own kind of existential crisis my own frustrations with where my work has fallen short. Perhaps its the nature of going to a school well-regarded for art, surrounded by people pushing themselves to be *artists*. Or, it might just be the nature of art itself. To be a thief in art means your doing it right. At least that's what Picasso, Oscar Wilde, or any handful of remembered artists would insist. "Talent borrows, genius steals," "Good artists copy, great artists steal," "There's nothing new under the sun."

God, even the quotes are stolen!

Before anyone can stand on their own, anyone must first learn to imitate. You want to be a writer? You read. You want to be a painter? You study brush-stroke form technique. You want to make music? You have to learn chords. There's a framework in which all work sits, a baseline. To immerse yourself in the foundation is grounding yourself to a world that is built by those who've come before you. Once you've established, you ease your way in to a genre, a subcategory, a area in which you'll only ever be compared to other artists by your practice in iteration.

There's always going to be work that's ridiculed for being a blatant rip-off of something that already exists. Outside the iron door's of the fine art world, we see it in what we consume daily: music videos, streetwear, beats, that girl from high school's poetry that you definitely saw on tumblr three years ago there's never been a critic soft spoken on plagiarism, who holds back when dissecting parts until they can attribute each to a separate origin. But if you do it well you're home free. You'll admit to your sleight of hand in interviews, and you'll accept all the praise that comes with it. You'll mask your pull in words of admiration, "I've just really been digging *so-and-so* lately," "I've been reading a lot of this, *not so obscure writer*" "Have you ever heard of that person you definitely interviewed last month? Yeah, her! She's great!"

Often want to fall into my tendencies of being cynical towards the mechanisms of creating, to openly ridicule work that I have definitely seen before, that bores me, that screams so loudly of a pseudo-intellectualism that it fills me with rage. It's disheartening. It makes me never put my name on anything again. In despair, I'll lay in bed and map out a life where I pick up accounting, as if I didn't have to take Algebra twice in high school.

Aristotle claimed that imitation is inevitable, because the sheer *act* of art is sole the byproduct of human emotion. There is nothing more raw more natural than how we feel he argues that if you don't see the obvious repurposing of the work, then you're not looking hard enough. What then becomes a point of contention is how we craft that emotion and how we decide to share it with others. Not the feelings themselves. I want to believe that the rate at which we ingest culture has changed, that it has become frenzied, that the market is heavily oversaturated, that maybe the problem is that there's too much art, too much feeling.

I don't want to hate what I do. I'm terrified of pursuing a future that is devoid of meaning, that falls away, that's forgotten and untouched, that is nothing but a bad copy anyone can take a picture, design a graphic tee, upload beats on SoundCloud, start a blog, splatter paint. The medium in which creators can produce work are seemingly endless, and the scale in which we are able generate media for others to consume is something I don't think any Greek philosopher could have ever fathomed.