Independent Animation: Exploring the Fine Line between Inspiration and Imitation

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Abstract
I came into VCU hoping to eventually go into independent animation. The UROP opportunity popped up and it sounded great and I thought, “Hey, this is something that I’ve been wanting to do.” I read the book The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate (which is a children’s book that I’m basing my animation off of) as I was coming into school freshman year and I thought it would be great to do a project on it. So, I wrote up a proposal and people liked it!

Interestingly, given the choices between setting aside the trial judgment and finding in favour of Cummins; giving a different judgment; remitting the matter to the trial judge to be re-heard or ordering a new trial, the appeal judges adopted the first option setting aside Vella’s first instance win and finding in favour of Cummins. Despite the missed opportunity, Vella’s case does illustrate that determining whether the line from inspiration to copyright infringement has been crossed is a two stage process. The first stage is to determine if the designer has merely adopted the same style, concepts or techniques. If the answer is yes, then there will not be any copyright infringement. There is a very fine line between obtaining inspiration from a blogger in contract to imitating a blogger. That recipe looks familiar. I thought I read that topic last week by X Blogger. Hmm this is a tricky one! I totally agree with you that there’s a big difference between inspiration and imitation, but at the same time the line is pretty fine. What bugs me the most is not so much recipes being similar (any recipe you have has probably been done a few million times over by someone in the world already), but the writing and photos that go along with it.