



Originality is dead? I don't think so!

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OK. Pet peeve time.

I'm getting sick and tired of all the folks out there lamenting nothing is original anymore. Every time I turn around, someone is complaining that everything is a remake.

TV shows. Movies. Music.

It's all been done before – or so they say.

If this is you, just hold on. This is your lucky day. I'm about to demonstrate conclusively that originality is not dead. In fact, it's very much alive and well.

How do I know this? Because in just under fifteen minutes, I was able to come up with some totally innovative ideas that could revitalize the creative arts and dispel this vicious rumor.

So here we go. Pay attention.

Let's start with TV shows.

How about a show where we take a bunch of people who don't know each other and put them in an unfamiliar environment and then create some artificial drama by offering a prize for who can outlast everyone else?

Now there's something off the beaten path I'd be interested in watching.

Another show I'd like to see would be a drama set in a hospital or emergency room. The doctors and nurses could work to save lives while having affairs and stress-related sex with each other in various subplots.

Occasionally maybe throw in the threat of an epidemic, something requiring them all to be quarantined together. Imagine the possibilities.

Or perhaps a crime show in which a rogue police officer whose heart is in the right place engages in unconventional, outside-the-box methods? They could push the envelope but ultimately be proven right in the end. Wouldn't that be an interesting premise?

Even better. You could have a pair of police officers: one strait-laced and one wild and crazy type. Image the shenanigans they could get into while chasing down the bad guys.

The storylines are literally endless.

Moving on to the movies.

How about a saga where a computer or robot is endowed with AI, becomes sentient, and decides to take over the world? There could be lots of entertaining interactions as we humans strived to save the world from our own creation.

Better still, what about a movie set in a post-apocalyptic world in which only a relatively few people survive – and those people engage in all kinds of Lord of the Flies-type adventures characterized by backstabbing and power grabs?

In this scenario, you could embed moral lessons with sociopolitical overtones. Completely uncharted territory.

Another big screen epic I'd pay inflated ticket prices to see might involve a famous person who accomplished something really significant but has lots of flawed personal relationships and a questionable belief system.

Finally, how about a film where you think someone is a good guy all the way till the end, when you find out he's really a bad guy? It's been decades since I've gone to the theater and been hit with that kind of twist.

Honestly, why don't we make imaginative movies anymore?

Last but certainly not least, let's at least mention one of my favorite topics: music.

How about, instead of singing about love and loss and the challenges of living in the modern era, we have a few songs airing personal grievances with other artists or estranged family members? And what about a song or two showing how fame and fortune aren't all they're cracked up to be?

And here's a novel idea. How about moving away from lyrics and melodies being the main focus of a song and instead emphasizing production and visuals? Maybe throw in an autotune here and there if the artist can't actually sing.

Seriously, who wants to listen to someone drone on and on about unrequited love and the tragedies of life when we can escape to a world where ego and notoriety are obviously more important?

But getting back to the main point: See how easy it was?

In just a relatively short time, I was able to come up with some completely new and innovative concepts and themes that could revolutionize entertainment as we know it.

Remember this when some clueless person inanely claims nothing is original anymore.

God gave you a brain. Use it.



— *Aaron W. Hughey is a university distinguished professor in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs at Western Kentucky University.*