

Creativity Is In Short Supply

✘ It seems like every time I turn around, someone is remaking a movie or a tv show. Superman, Batman, Charlie's Angels, Bionic Woman, Hawaii Five-0, the Green Hornet, and The Munsters, to name a few. The original 1933 King Kong is one of my husband's favorite movies and "creative" Hollywood has already made two hideously bad remakes. If they're not remaking something, they're using the same formula you see time after time in movies, particularly in adventure movies. Actually, I wouldn't mind seeing a remake of the 50s television shows, Father Knows Best or the Donna Reed Show, where men were depicted as educated, hard-working, respected members of their families instead of the low-achieving buffoon types commonly seen in sitcoms today.

So where is the creativity? Over the Thanksgiving holiday, we were discussing the lack of any novel ideas coming out of Hollywood and my nephew presented us with the following scenario and challenged us to guess whether the story was from Stars Wars or Harry Potter. He called it "theStar Wars/Harry Potter paradigm." (I'd like to thank him for writing it all out for me because I'd never be able to repeat it here on my own.)

It's the story of a young boy, orphaned at a young age by a mother who died for him. He lives with his aunt and uncle who do not appreciate him. He longs to break out of the life he leads and is forced to work for his aunt and uncle. He meets an old man who has magical, mystical, supernatural powers that tells him that he himself has those same powers. Coincidentally, this very same man was the one who hand delivered the newly orphaned baby boy to his aunt and uncle's house in the first place. The old man takes him away from home and will teach him how to use his new found powers. Meanwhile, an evil force (pun intended) is threatening everyone and the main villain, who also has the same magical

powers as the boy and the old man, has a very close connection to the young boy. Along his journey, the young boy meets two people who would become his best friends – a male and a female. Eventually, the old man is killed by the villain and the young boy and villain have their inevitable clash.

Now, I hadn't seen Star Wars in over 30 years and I was never into the Harry Potter series, but even I could see the similarities.

My nephew pointed out the striking parallels: Harry Potter/Luke Skywalker. Dumbledore/Obi Wan Kenobi. Voldemort/Darth Vader. Ron Weasley/Han Solo. Hermione Granger/Princess Leia. Vernon and Petunia/Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru. Lilly Potter/Padme Amidala.

With a few minor plot differences such as the redemption of Anakin/Darth Vader at the end, the themes are the same. He concluded that both stories were loved by so many people because they're basically the same story even though Star Wars came out in 1977 and the first Harry Potter book was published some twenty years later.

So, as I said, "everything old is new again." It just seems like there are very few original ideas.

When you look at the highest grossing films of the 2000s, the majority are prequels, sequels or remakes. I'm not sure what it all means. I, myself, would like to see more successful movies with original themes, but I must be in the minority because I've only seen about five of the movies on the highest grossing list.

I see a startling lack of creativity in the movie industry as compared to the music industry when you consider there are only eight notes and there have been millions of songs written.

While I may not always be aware of patterns and formulas in

movies and television, I definitely notice the re-making of clothing styles– they're basically the same style, just called something different today.

The most obvious to me are 60s bell bottoms; now they're called wide leg or flared. Hip huggers from the past are called "low-rise" today. I have to say that I don't ever remember seeing muffin tops the way I do today even on young women. I'm sure it's because women in the 60s would never have worn something with rolls of skin spilling over their waistbands. Shoulders pads so popular in the 40s, were the rage in the 80s – I'm waiting for their return any day now. Platform shoes were popular in the 30s, 40s and early 50s but achieved their height in popularity in the 60s, 70s and 80s. They're back. Pea coats popular in the 60s are stylish today. I hadn't seen the 60s bodysuit until recently.

Winged eyeliner popular on movie stars like Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe is popular again. Today's slim-fit suits for men look very similar to those worn by tv stars of the 60s like Gene Barry and Tony Franciosa.

Well, maybe there's not much you can do with a pants leg or a man's suit, except add a button here or there, so the styles just get recycled every few decades. But I expect more from the pinheads in Hollywood. But, then again, if someone is willing to see the 11th Halloween movie, maybe Hollywood is just making what the public wants to see.

I just don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.