

OPINION

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Fifty shades of abuse, not healthy romance



Dakota Johnson and Jamie Dornan star together in "50 Shades of Grey," released on Valentine's Day.

"You are mine, only mine," he whispers. "Don't forget it."

These words are anything but sexy. They are controlling, overpowering and downright creepy. However, in the eyes of many women across the globe this sounds arousing, sweet and passionate.

"50 Shades of Grey" has become a hit at the box office after the book sold more than 100 million copies. It's sad to see that this movie is portraying an abusive sexual relationship and telling both men and women that this is healthy, fun and endearing.

The movie is supposed to portray a BDSM relationship, which stands for bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism. Many people in the world use BDSM in the bedroom, and that is perfectly acceptable. However, what is not acceptable is when one person has more of a say in what it is they do.

"I don't think this movie correctly portrayed BDSM, due to the violations of the contract that they had put in place and the overall violence beyond a point of consent," said sophomore, peer health and wellness/consent educator Molly Anne Marcotte.

Along with the false interpretation of BDSM, the movie also showed signs of a one-sided sexual relationship. It gives viewers the impression that this is healthy and exciting.

"I think this is damaging for society to look at this and say this is what love is," said senior Camden Lambert.

This story really is damaging, giving viewers so many wrong perceptions. Our culture nowadays believes this is alright.

A particular scene in the movie truly shows how damaging this relationship is. After Grey gets off the phone from a business argument, Anastasia asks him to take her to his playroom to see how bad it can get. With his anger still locked up inside him, Grey takes this out on Anastasia, bending her over and smacking her behind with his belt.

This is not only cruel, but inhumane. Along with this, the movie also presents stalking as romantic. Anastasia herself is attracted to Grey even after discovering he tracked her phone. This jealousy and needing to know where she is at all times emphasizes Christian Grey's abusive nature.

Still, there are some who believe the movie helps younger adults in introducing them to different types of sex, and what types to avoid.

"Some people are not introduced into those type of things," said first-year Marcus Starr. "It kinda gives them an insight, something to think about, so they don't get caught up in anything like that."

While this may be true, many young girls won't always see it that way. The movie goes about introducing eroticism the wrong way, giving the young girls who watch it the wrong impression.

"I believe she was very naïve, and he took advantage of that," said Lambert. "He took advantage of the fact that she was young, and he had all this money."

Millions of women suffer from domestic abuse, 3-4 million women in the U.S. alone. It's disgraceful to be romanticizing and glorifying this behavior in films when millions of women go through this in real life.

To fans, Christian Grey is their fantasy. They want to be pleased and dominated the way Anastasia was.

In real life however, those women who have dealt with a Christian Grey say it's anything but their fantasy. The handsome looks, great style and charming smile don't dismiss the fact that on the inside he's psychologically messed up.

This movie creates a constant reminder for these women who have suffered domestic abuse. It gives off the message that they were wrong in believing this is abuse and that they should just forgive and go crawling back to their attacker.

Take away the glitz and glam of this Hollywood movie and you'll see the disgusting reality. Sexual abuse is not something to take lightly or twist into a romantic and kinky movie.

It's not something that should be used for entertainment purposes, so think twice before lending the book to your friends telling them it's a must read.

Letters from your black friend: #BlackLivesMatter

BY JORDAN CLARK '14
GUEST WRITER

The transformational shift for racial justice, recalibrated by the Black Lives Matter movement, is defined by co-founder Alicia Garza as "a call to action for black people after 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was posthumously placed on trial for his own murder, and the killer, George Zimmerman, was not held accountable. It was a response to the anti-black racism that permeates our society. It centers around those who have been marginalized within black liberation movements and is a tactic to (re)build the black liberation movement."

Allies from around the world have joined in Black Lives Matter, taking charge to not just stand in solidarity, but also to investigate the ways in which anti-black racism is perpetuated. As #BlackLivesMatter took into the streets, varied adaptations of the movement rose — BlueLivesMatter, LatinoLivesMatter, AsianLivesMatter, VeteranLivesMatter, DisabledLivesMatter, AllLivesMatter — and in light of the recent Chapel Hill murders, MuslimLivesMatter, have been born to express support, outrage and hurt regarding different unique causes.

However, black has been removed from the conversation, homogenizing the call to action, pushing for unity at the expense of taking a moment to understand the concrete differences in context, experience and oppression. Specifically, stand-your-ground laws and the killing of unarmed black people are becoming increasingly normalized. The justification for lethal violence in the name of self-defense is reserved for those who have a publicly recognized self to defend. Each grand jury decision emboldens the acceptability of police brutality and validates continued assaults on black bodies. Those whose lives are not considered to matter, whose lives are perceived as a threat to the life that embodies white privilege, can be destroyed in the name of that life.

Black Lives Matter specifies the conversation. By using #AllLivesMatter, legitimate race grievances are shut out, leading into a different kind of racism, pretending race isn't a factor.

Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor, professor at Princeton University, claims that by arguing against the expansion of the Lives Matter Movement, we reduce solidarity, treating politics as property, whereas we should aim to "understand the connections, intersections and overlaps in oppression and racial exploitation as a way to build, broaden and strengthen the movement." For other marginalized groups, the black liberation movement has always been a source of inspiration and framework for the oppressed around the world and this country.

Here, #BlackLivesMatter was born from a racial injustice felt by a people who cannot, and should not, be molded to fit another people's struggle. Solidarity is important, but we cannot risk co-opting entire movements. The pattern of violence against black people is unique within America. This is not to belittle or undermine the injustices other minority groups experience but rather to uplift them by not equating the struggles of various groups, recognizing that these are multifaceted, complex issues that cannot be simplified or toned down with #LivesMatter tacked on the end.

That said, nothing is wrong with saying, "Latino lives matter," "Muslim lives matter," "Disabled lives matter," and so on. However, when they are used the same way as #BlackLivesMatter to evoke the same concept, it leads towards an unproductive result, explaining unique struggles of separate communities. Selective, intentional language assists in uplifting all social movements.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Thank you for celebrating and encouraging diversity

For this year's Black History Month, the Multicultural Education Department and Brothers and Sisters in Blackness worked to celebrate black history in Greensboro and nationwide. These groups organized the Element poetry slam and presentations by professors. We should express gratitude to everyone involved in organizing February's events, specifically Director for Educational Initiatives & Partnerships Jada Drew '07 and Assistant Director for Multicultural Education and Latino Community Coordinator Irving Zavaleta '08.

While we as a college have been focusing on the work of the MED, other groups and individuals have made great efforts to celebrate diversity, as well. This year was the first year Guilford College created gender-neutral housing. We have more gender-neutral bathrooms than ever before. In the years to come, Coordinator of Housing Operations Maria Hayden '06 plans on incorporating gender-neutral housing into all dorms rather than just the basement of Shore. While we still have a long way to go, we at The Guilfordian would like to recognize the efforts of the housing department, LGBTQQA Coordinator Parker Hurley and all those involved in making Guilford a more gender-inclusive place.

Student organizations on campus have also been standing up and taking action. After the recent events in Chapel Hill, students from the Muslim Student Association, Guilford Conference of Religious Observance, Hillel and Students for Justice in Palestine came together and organized a vigil for the shooting. Soon after, GCRO president and junior Laura Todd began organizing a panel with MSA and Hillel on islamophobia and anti-semitism. We would like to thank these student groups for helping our community heal and for banding together at a time when our community needs it most.

These students, faculty and staff at Guilford College help us remember that while it is important to grieve for those whose lives were stolen based on their gender, race or religion, it is also important to recognize that there are still cultures to celebrate, still people to honor through working for change.

We reach out to the Guilford Community and ask you to join us in recognizing those with a commitment to celebrating diversity through positive action.

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