Opinion

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'Wuthering Heights' WAS NEVER A ROMANCE

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When my friend told me that a new film adaptation was to be made of the 1847 novel "Wuthering Heights" by Emily Brontë, suffice to say the English major in me was beside herself. But as I learned more about the nature of this remake, I grew increasingly wary. Much has been debated on the Internet about such issues as the casting of big-name actors Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi, the removal of racial identity from the story and even the significance of the quotation marks that surround the title. Yet there is one more thing that worries me about the upcoming film: the way it wrongfully portrays the story as a romance.

The marketing for the film has painted the relationship between the two main characters, Catherine and Heathcliff, as the pinnacle of yearning, unruly love and passion left to run loose. The official trailer claims in big, bold letters that the film is "inspired by the greatest love story of all time." It appropriates the quote "Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same." The film is even set to release the day before Valentine's Day. Regardless of any nuance the film eventually attempts to portray in the relationship, the way it has been advertised has already guided its reception.

Yet "Wuthering Heights" is not a romance at all. Rather, it is a work that exposes the worst of human tendencies: violence, hatred and all-consuming lust and attachment. Undoubtedly the most memorable aspect of the plot is the rocky relationship between the adopted siblings Catherine and Heathcliff, which is so tumultuous that it literally kills Catherine. Despite their genuine love for each other, their relationship should not be mistaken, and definitely not paraded as any sort of ideal.

Consider the reality of their love from the original work: Catherine gives herself up entirely, passionately professing "I am Heathcliff." After Catherine's untimely death – which, again, was caused by the stress of her love affair – Heathcliff cries out in a similar vein, "You said I killed you – haunt me then... I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!" Then, he takes violent, grief-ridden revenge on the entire family Catherine had married into – a spectacle that spans half the book. The story ends by saying that the ghosts of the two can sometimes be seen roaming the moors, a sign that even in death they do not rest.

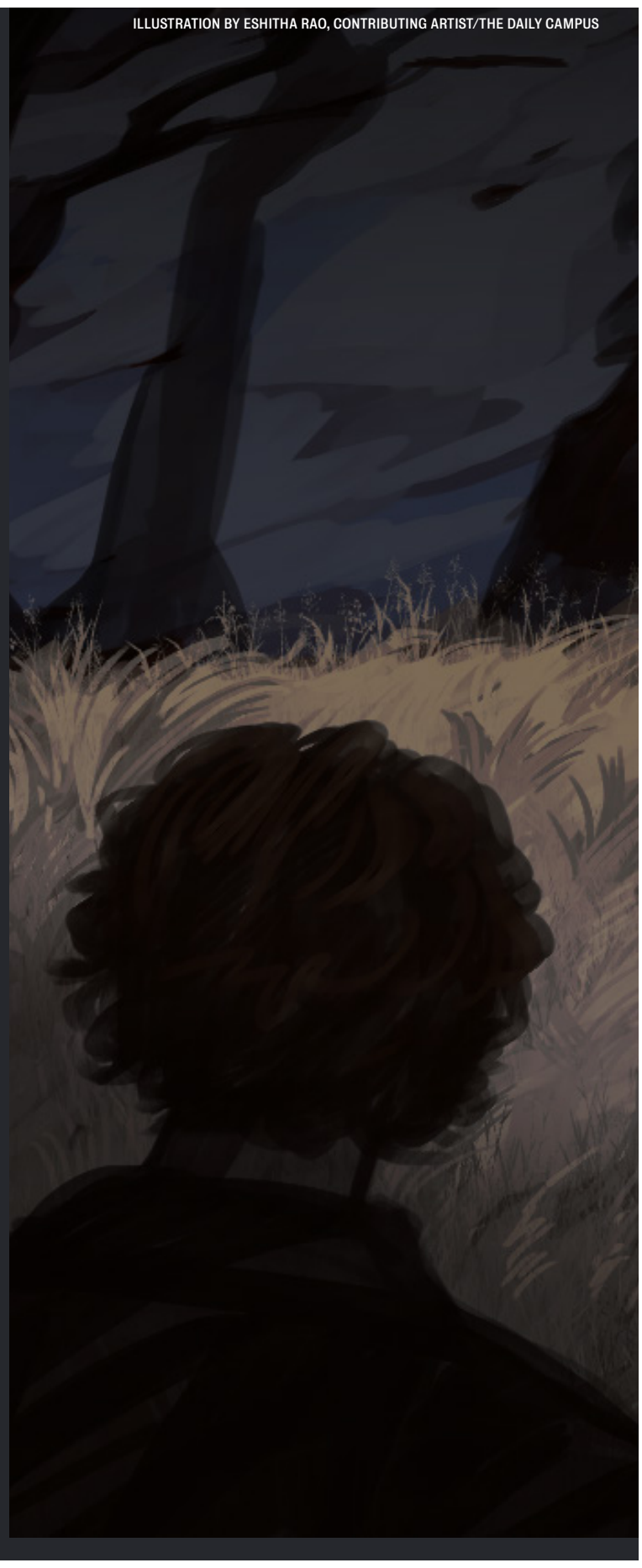
The Gothic nature of the novel further solidifies the dysfunction of their relationship. The mysterious and medieval abode, the presence of supernatural beings from the very beginning and the stormy, windy and wuthering atmosphere are all key tropes of the Gothic genre. It is clear that Catherine and Heathcliff embody the final and most notable trope: the damsel in distress who is held captive, literally and or figuratively, by the Byronic hero, a morally slant character prone to fits of passion and insanity.

Therefore, the framing of the story as simply a passionate romance is mistaken and reckless. It's not just insulting to me as a Brontë enthusiast who appreciates the original subject matter; it's also true that with this remake, the warning of the peril of toxic love is being overwritten, and the violence within either discarded or romanticized. In our age, with increasing understanding and awareness of dangerous relationship dynamics, one would hope that we would honor the novel that has been exploring those themes since the 19th century. To neglect that aspect is to disrupt the legacy of the novel that taught us how not to love.

Now, of course, adapting any classic novel is a big undertaking. After all, to turn "Wuthering Heights" into a blockbuster movie is to reestablish the story's legacy. The director Emerald Fennell herself said the film is based on "a version [she] remembered reading, which isn't quite real." While that's not inherently a bad thing, it becomes one when it entails rewriting the novel's major themes which are of such great social importance.

Simply put, if Fennell wanted to tell another story, she could have just done that. Instead, the classic is being buried beneath this unbefitting adaptation. As far as I can tell, this film will be one which glorifies the kind of love that destroys us and corrupts the true meaning of a classic novel.

ILLUSTRATION BY ESHITHA RAO, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Is 3D Printing Good Now?

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For years, 3D printing has been quietly growing in popularity among engineers, tinkerers and artists. From its beginning in the late 1980s in the form of fairly unreliable resin-based SLA printers, to the surge in public consciousness in the 2010s with the rise of more popular and user-friendly models which first truly brought 3D printing to the consumer level, the concept has long existed in the periphery of technology culture as a promising but poorly-understood idea. For as long as the technology has existed, though, 3D printers have had the reputation of being temperamental machines that take up more time and effort than they return in value to the user. This reputation is not unearned. Most printers throughout the 2010s, especially those with quality and pricing aimed towards consumers, were extremely unreliable, with a tendency towards frequent print failures, technical glitches, component wear and "plastic spaghetti." More recently, though, a new generation of consistent, cheap and high-quality 3D printers has begun to gain attention and has begun to beg the question, "Is 3D printing good now?"

To understand what sets these new printers apart from their less reliable predecessors, it is first helpful to have a basic understanding of how 3D printers work and how previous generations often failed to work. The main idea behind 3D printing is the creation of three-dimensional objects by printing layers of certain materials on top of each other to create the desired shape. There are several methods for this, but the most popular is FDM, where a string of plastic material called filament is pushed through a heated nozzle where it is melted and then deposited onto a build plate. The heated nozzle draws these layers repeatedly until the specified shape is achieved. This process, though conceptually simple, proved difficult to perfect for older printers. Complex factors like structural vibrations, material quality, filament flow rate and others contributed to these difficulties and often necessitated hours of tinkering and experimenting to get a printer to produce a workable result. These complicating factors were made worse by the fact that many of these consumer grade printers were manufactured with cheap materials and often had hardware and software defects from poor quality control. These difficulty factors were the result of an effort to bring down production cost to a level that consumers could afford and combined to produce an experience that dissuaded new users from delving further into the hobby and exploring the full range of capabilities these devices had to offer. In fact, I was one of those users. I got my first 3D printer when I was around 12 years old, and though I was eventually able to print some fun models and projects, the overall experience filled with technical issues and print failures caused me to abandon the hobby until recently.

With few exceptions, these technical issues seemed as much an inherent part of the 3D printing experience as any other. That was until the recent rise of Shenzhen's Bambu Lab and the 2022 release of their X1 series. These printers quickly gained massive popularity in the 3D printing community for their high-quality construction, ease of use and printing consistency at a price point below any previous printer of comparable specs. Many of the seemingly insurmountable limitations that plagued previous printers were no longer present in Bambu's new suite of devices, with fine-tuned and intuitive software and tight quality control serving to nearly eliminate them from the printing experience. Beyond this, they achieved something previously considered near impossible, bringing 3D printing into the mainstream. Bambu had created an experience seamless and intuitive enough that everyday people who didn't consider themselves enthusiasts like users of the past could feel comfortable and confident enough to take up 3D printing. But Bambu didn't stop there. From 2022 onward, they continued releasing new printers with different capabilities at price ranges, filling market gaps. Through all this, though, they maintained their main advantage of consistent and seamless printing. This trend of increasingly cheap and user-friendly printers came to a head with their release of the A1 series of printers. These entry level printers looked to be an easy and cheap entry point for new and aspiring users and succeeded massively.

This new generation of high-quality printers has created a perfect environment for anyone looking to get into 3D printing, and having recently acquired a printer myself, I can confidently recommend taking advantage of it. The best part is that you don't even need to buy a printer yourself to experience all the world of 3D printing has to offer! The Storrs campus has printers available in makerspaces that are free for students to use. Innovation Zone in Werth, Innovate Labs in the business building and Maker Studio in the library are open to all students regardless of major. IShop in Castleman is available to students in the College of Engineering. Now is a great time to explore the opportunities of additive manufacturing, so my advice: Get printing!