Opinion

Photo of the Day |



Cows rest and graze at Horsebarn Hill on a cloudy spring day on Thursday, April 30, 2026 in Storrs, Conn. Horsebarn Hill houses over 200 Holstein and Jersey cows..
PHOTO BY ZACH MOLLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

‘House M.D.’ and unconventional love

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The love between Dr. Gregory House and Dr. James Wilson is one of the strongest pulls to the series “House M.D.” While it isn’t explicitly romantic, it needn’t be. As discussed in my Hannibal article, an overtly loving relationship between two men doesn’t require explicitly sexual scenes or implications. While the pair, like Hannibal and Will, are toxically codependent, they are an amazing representation for people who are unable to have or uninterested in “normal” relationships.

There are some people who are simply incapable of fitting into the confines of “normal” relationships, and others who don’t derive the same enjoyment out of them. House and Wilson don’t operate based on any social contract; in doing so, they’re able to be unapologetically themselves. This is especially crucial for Wilson, who is an extreme people-pleaser, unable to break the cycle of finding someone who needs him and ultimately leaving them. For House, this relationship is a sense of security and trust that he refuses to attempt with anyone else.

In each of their separate attempts at conventional love, the two men fail miserably. Only with one another are they able to be vulnerable, as they know the other won’t leave. That very fear of abandonment is the reason House is self-destructive in all of his relationships. Wilson shows his love by helping others, and as is well established, House is endlessly needy. Both are aware of this dynamic. House gets the security of knowing he’s the only person who can satisfy Wilson’s need to be needed, eliminating all risk of Wilson leaving him. This stability is shaken after the events of season four, but upon Wilson’s return to House’s life, it’s made abundantly clear that he’s there to stay. While this is obviously indicative of a rather toxic relationship, it works for the pair.

Wilson sees House for who he is. House works tirelessly to present himself as a selfish prick unworthy of love. Most people are satisfied with writing him off as such, but Wilson insists House is a good person. He sees behind House’s carefully curated mask. House is desperate to be seen and understood. While others have tried and failed to love House, Wilson is the only one who has succeeded. Their contrasting issues balance one another perfectly. Wilson’s obsession with human connection and House’s adamant opposition to it both seemingly derive from the same feelings of isolation. Wilson is also the only person who can verbally spar with House and at times surpass him. This is crucial for House as he’s clearly drawn to challenges and gets bored extremely easily. It’s also important since both men are rather manipulative. Although their intentions are generally good, they really shouldn’t be with someone who is easily manipulated themselves. As odd as it may seem, this form of communication is core to both of their ways of loving, even if it stems from a lack of 100% trust in anyone but themselves.

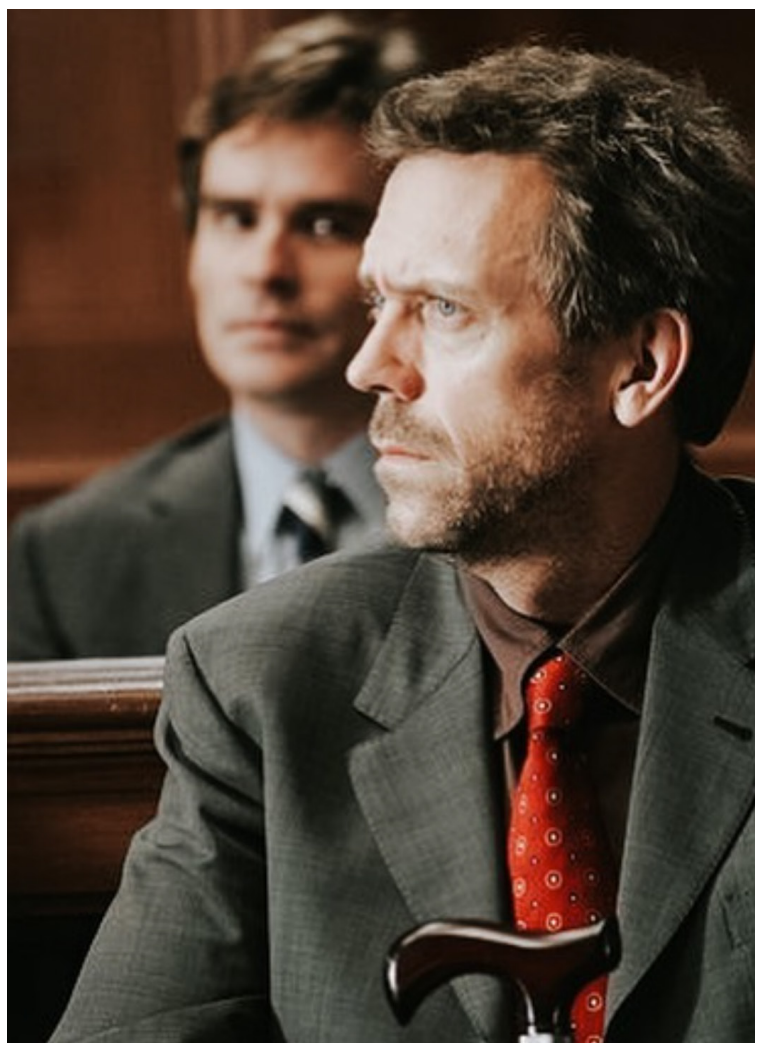
House and Wilson’s relationship is clearly imperfect, but so are they. They bicker like an old married couple but continue to choose one another time and time again. They accept the other exactly as they are, simply lucky enough to have found someone that not only puts up with their flaws but balances them. They have the same sense of humor, similar interests and a willingness to do whatever it takes to make the other happy (even if in a seemingly evil way). Their relationship has a mutually accepted recognition of how the other loves, what they care about, what upsets them and how to communicate.

The finale, as discussed in detail in a previous article, shows this love above all else. While both men are established as being deeply flawed, including in their relationship with one another, the deep care and love they have overpowers that. House sacrifices everything the show has revolved around, everything established as being what he lives for, all for five months with Wilson.

While some view the relationship as romantic or sexual, I don’t think it’s important either way. It’s wonderful representation for love that is just love. We can see love without the constraints of physical attraction, expectations based on romance or sex or any strong confines. They are very clearly soulmates, two people who have been unable to find anyone they truly connect with until meeting each other. Even if they aren’t romantically involved, their relationship takes precedence over their romantic relationships, rewriting our understanding of what relationships are important.

As someone who understands having my best friend be my soulmate, albeit not romantically, I am understanding of those who don’t read into House and Wilson’s relationship as being romantic. I am content with taking romance and sex out of some depictions of deep love, something that is rarely represented in media.

Some people can’t change everything about themselves to have these types of “normal” relationships. It’s nice to see people be truly, deeply loved despite being unable to “fix” themselves. The media usually loves to end a show with a romantic relationship at the forefront as the epitome of love and connection. Instead, House offers numerous interpretations of its central relationship, all of which offer hope for unconventional love.



House M.D. character Gregory House sits in a court room with James Wilson. The two characters have been interpreted by fans to have a romantic relationship. PHOTO COURTESY OF @HOUSEMDTV ON INSTAGRAM



House M.D. character Gregory House at the piano. The character had an unconventional approach to treating patients in the show. PHOTO COURTESY OF @HOUSEMDTV ON INSTAGRAM

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