

Opinion

The subversion of tropes

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“There is no such thing as a new idea,” writer Mark Twain said.

Though this quote may seem negative, it does raise an interesting point about the books, TV shows, movies and other media that we consume. Each follows a set plot that may have been regurgitated from another prior piece of art.

While writers and directors can come up with some differences that set them apart, cracks are shown through tropes that weave their way into these pieces for the sake of the story.

A majority of these tropes focus on romance, and though there may be others that try and branch away from this, they ultimately come back as an aid. Enemies to lovers, a common trope found throughout the media, often features a “bad boy” type of character. With tropes often serving as the primary marketing tactic in a new form of media, they become overused and indistinguishable.

In an effort to break away from the stereotype, writers will often try to subvert these tropes in an effort to shed a different light on characters, ultimately keeping viewer engagement.

The “bad boy,” though still troubled, is now an intellectual, such as Jess Mariano (Milo Ventimiglia) in “Gilmore Girls” — a love interest for bookish main character, Rory Gilmore (Alexis Bledel).

The “bad girl,” on the other hand, is revealed to be inexperienced, like McKayla Strawberry (Maika Monroe) in “Hot Summer Nights” — the primary love interest for the equally inexperienced Daniel Middleton (Timothée Chalamet).

While these subversions initially cured the

problem of overutilization, they eventually grew stale like their predecessor, becoming stereotypes of their own. Mason Thames’ character Miller Adams in the book adaptation of “Regretting You” is a prime example of this.

Though he comes across as a “bad boy” used for the main character to rebel against her mother, in actuality, he is a huge softie. He cares for his grandfather and becomes infatuated with his girlfriend. He doesn’t smoke, and he even chews on lollipops instead of a toothpick like we’d suspect.

The problem with this is that he comes across as inauthentic. We’re introduced to these subversions right off the bat, and have a hard time seeing him as anything else. We hardly have time to build up this idea of him in our head without getting the rug pulled out from under us.

This in turn can cause us to have a hard time sympathizing with the opposing viewpoint that sees him as a threat. While the character is supposed to come across as a rebel, the obvious facade that he’s put up as a shield makes his faux persona cringeworthy.

Another problem that comes with these subversions does not have to do with the characters themselves, but with the viewers. By being introduced to these two-dimensional yet seemingly multifaceted characters, we build up this new trope that we’ve been introduced to, and quickly accustomed to.

Since these characters primarily act as love interests for the main characters, we only see them

from a certain point of view, making their complexities stock. The reveal of Jess as a literary enthusiast and McKayla’s reveal as a virgin only act as plot points for Rory and Daniel to like them more. It feels more like something the writers cooked up than something that would actually happen to the characters if they were real people.

This expectation that our crushes fit the idealness we have in our heads is just unrealistic. Though our main characters get lucky by having their perfect significant other set up right in front of them, the writers fail to admit that sometimes people aren’t always perfect.

This writing decision downplays Jess’ trauma by

making it seem as if he is already fixed, and it paints McKayla in a negative light when she was portrayed as having had sex.

A more effective way to save these characters and still have them be considered love interests is to have them learn to be better people rather than secretly being one. Jess can win Rory’s heart by taking an interest in her hobbies, though he has no interest in them himself. This can prove he is trying to change, and help him figure out a gateway to express his feelings.

McKayla is portrayed as a sultry character who is still desired by Daniel despite him being portrayed as the opposite. Once she reveals the truth about her experience, it is then when he sees her as less of an enigma, and as someone who is more attainable, fitting right into the male gaze.

Daniel’s growth on finding out she is more pure than he imagined is not needed, especially given that he wanted to be with her in the first place.

McKayla’s portrayal as someone who has had sex shouldn’t be portrayed as negative, but rather normal. The writers made this decision purely for the audience, evidenced by how it hardly affected Daniel.

While this subversion of tropes is an attempt to create new ideas, it too has become unoriginal. The implication that people can’t grow or change is unintentionally harmful, as well as the male and female gaze that it feeds into.

Though coming up with new ideas is an impressive and admirable feat, we have to make sure they’re not half-baked, and that we are able to build off of them when need be.



cliches

ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

Bobcat Buzz



ILLUSTRATION BY EMILY KATZ

The Grove infiltrated by litterers

By **CAROLINE ALLEN**
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The Grove is Quinnipiac University’s newest residence hall designed to foster community through intentional and cutting-edge architecture. The process to live in the building includes a simple short-answer questionnaire and the determination to take action through a research project that students complete throughout the school year.

The reward for such work is access to The Grove’s facilities: modern, fully functioning kitchens and appliances, various study nooks and conference rooms, entire rooms dedicated to relaxation and massage chairs and individual bathrooms and showers.

If you couldn’t tell, I am a thriving Grove resident. During the nearly two months I’ve spent exploring all my building has to offer, I’ve only found one issue. It would appear that students who do not live in The Grove often visit and use the facilities intended for residents.

I’m all for having friends over to watch a movie or to swing on the hammocks outside The Grove, but my main issue is when students from other dorms find their way into our building on their own and have no respect for the space.

I would love to hang out in The

Grove’s massage room, but I’m deeply discouraged by the litter left on the floor and across the seats of the room. The trashed tray of decomposing chicken wings and discarded utensils do not make me feel overly welcome.

Almost every day when I trudge to one of the nearby bathrooms, shower caddy in hand, equipped with my shower shoes, I have half a mind to turn right around. I find personal belongings, left by outsiders, abandoned on the sink counters and torn-up toilet paper decorating the bathroom floors.

There is an alarming disrespect for other students’ homes here. It’s obvious that the majority of students using these facilities don’t have any interest in keeping them clean, nor do they have any respect for the custodial staff. The most concerning fact is that some of these shared spaces, like the massage rooms, are not cleaned by staff and nobody seems to notice. It is not their responsibility to pick up the tray of chicken bones left in the corner and it will sit there for days on end. It is our responsibility to clean up after ourselves and to keep these spaces decent for everyone to use.

When I hear friends expressing their excitement over our building, I’m more than happy to invite them to play foosball on the third floor or to bake cookies

in our kitchen together.

The problem is when my fellow residents tell me about the other students they let in the building. Usually, they take their “everything showers” in our bathroom and leave. I feel these non-Grove residents don’t share the same respect residents should for our home. Why would they? It’s not like they live here and share the responsibility to keep it clean.

Unfortunately, I’m not even sure how this issue could be fixed. You can’t persuade adults to care about their cleanliness habits on a random Wednesday. Each of these special rooms in The Grove are already locked behind Q-Card-activated doors that only Grove residents should be able to access.

The solution might be announcements made by RAs threatening consequences until Grove residents stop letting their friends use our spaces without responsibility. I hate to say it, but taking away privileges to those facilities, even for the whole building, might be the only way to inspire students to clean up after themselves.

While I wait for the entire Grove population and beyond to realize they left their moms and maids at home when they moved to college, I’ll have no choice but to continue to avoid our ruined spaces.