

Teens relate to HBO's *Euphoria*, not corrupted by it

Euphoria sees real world through eyes. emotions of teenagers.

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Nudity. Drug abuse. Pregnancy. These are just some of the topics HBO's hit show *Euphoria* presents through a teenage lens. Its uncensored nature is what has made it so popular among teens, yet concerning for adults.

After *Euphoria*'s second season premiered Jan. 9, critics of the show are louder now than ever.

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) wrote that the show "chooses to misguidedly glorify and er-

roneously depict high school student drug use addiction ... and other destructive behaviors as common in today's world". The statement isn't wrong, but D.A.R.E. disregards the fact that *Euphoria* itself is an exaggeration. Both teens and the writers know it, and having this knowledge allows the audience to distance themselves from the characters.

On the contrary, the situations the character's find themselves in are very real. The narrator, Rue, constantly cycling from getting clean from drugs and relapsing, and

the show's 'it' girl, Maddy, refusing to leave an abusive and toxic relationship, are both very real. Each character's emotions and breakdowns are critical to understanding the show. This is why the show works.

Euphoria is a teenage drama, one that shows high school students in a very vulnerable light. Despite the mature audience rating, the show is for teens. This is why all the characters are sixteen. The characters know each other because they attend the same high school. These are juniors, and I'm a junior, yet our lives are completely different.

Critics miss this. A non-drug addict isn't going to relate to Rue's character. Someone like myself isn't going to understand Rue at the level the directors want the audience to. Creating each character as an accurate depiction of teenage life was not writer Sam Levinson's intention - and if it was, it's inaccurate.

The characters themselves aren't supposed to connect with a general audience. Rather, each character has features that teenagers can find themselves in: whether its Kat's depression and indecisiveness, Cassie's nervous breakdowns or Jules' unique version of conquering masculinity.

Each are heightened versions of issues that many teens face on a daily basis, depicted in visual form. Despite this, the characters' experiences are unique to them.

This is why the depiction of Rue's addiction is necessary. If Rue's experiences are reflected within the audience, it resonates with them. D.A.R.E. dismisses the frightening nature of her situation. No teen is rushing to their dealer after watching the show. Rather, I've hesitated to take even everyday medicine, like ibuprofen, scared I'd become like Rue somehow. For the teens who can't relate to Rue, her situation scares them.

One depiction of this is in the last minutes of the season one finale when Rue relapses. The show was able to display the agony, terror and awful glory that accompanied her relapse, as she flailed around, half-conscious, barely clinging to life.

The creepy depiction of her succumbing to her addiction is one of the several aspects that makes *Euphoria* what it is: a cinematic masterpiece.

Despite this overall positive look on the show, there are a few things that D.A.R.E. and other critics address that are important to acknowledge. *Euphoria* loves its nudity, as every episode has prolonged

nude shots, scattered in various parts of the episode.

I can understand why Levinson may include these scenes, as shock value is another aspect that makes *Euphoria* so popular, but at the same time, it takes away from the scene.

When watching *Euphoria*, it's difficult to ignore these scenes, and their repetitiveness reduces its initial shock value. Not to mention the fact that these characters are in high school, so even if the nudity is included for rawness, it makes the scenes repulsive.

Issues such as showcasing teen drinking, child pornography, and prostitution, are other recurrent things *Euphoria* does unapologetically. After all, depicting the ugliness of teenage life is one of the things *Euphoria* does so well.

Overall, *Euphoria* is very popular, with an 87% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and 8.4/10 on IMDb, making *Euphoria* easily one of the most liked teenage dramas of the decade. The ratings reflect the show, since just enough is put in the plot, characters, and aesthetic, to keep viewers coming back.

With a third season out for renewal, audiences - myself included - are excited to see what else Levinson has in store for these characters.

A REMEDY FOR A BROKEN HEART

As the heartbreak expert herself, Taylor Swift, once sang, "I hate to make this all about me, but who am I supposed to talk to? What am I supposed to do if there's no you?" This line in Swift's song, *Soon You'll Get Better*, is something many people relate to, especially with Valentine's Day recently passing.

As spring approaches, everyone is focused on love, but what about those who aren't in love? Or are falling out of love? Well for most of those individuals, music has been a common coping mechanism for their relationship tragedies.

Listening to any sort of song after a breakup can help you let out all of your emotions that you're feeling. Whether those emotions are crying into your pillow at 3 am listening to Frank Ocean, or screaming the latest angsty pop anthem at the top of your lungs, it is clear that music certainly does help.

Compiled by Liza Pringle, Opinion Editor



Valeria Rosales (junior)

What is your favorite heartbreak song? "My favorite heartbreak song is 'Session 32' by Summer Walker."

Why is this your favorite? "I like this song because it talks about how the girl was more in love than the guy was, which is something a lot of people have probably experienced and relate to."

How often do you listen to this song?

"Right now I'm in a happy relationship, so I don't really listen to it very much right now, but whenever I'm going through a breakup or really anything, I listen to it to help me cope."

How does this song make you feel? "I honestly used to cry to this song (*Session 32*) a lot. It would make me really sad and emotional, but it helped cause it was super relatable. The song talks about throwing away his love letters and just other gestures that you do when you're going through a breakup."

Would you recommend others to listen to this song? "I would definitely recommend for others to listen to this song if they're sad, just because of it's relatability to most people's situations."

Molly Freeman (sophomore)

What is your favorite heartbreak song? "My favorite song to listen to when I'm upset is *Violent Crimes* by Kanye West."

Why is this your favorite? "I like this song because it allows me to just be numb and mellow, without getting too sad."

How often do you listen to this song? "It truly depends on how bad of a week I'm having, but typically I would say I listen to it once a week or so."

How does this song make you feel? "This song doesn't make me feel any worse, but it doesn't make me feel any better, it lets me sort of just be there and exist without spilling out all of my emotions."

Would you recommend others to listen to this song? "I think other people should listen to this song, because it's a good middle ground for when you're sad. It's not too sappy but it's not too uplifting either."

Victor Olivan (junior)

What is your favorite heartbreak song? "When I'm sad my go to song is *Jugaste y Sufri* by Eslabón Armado. It just hits a little bit close to home, and gets me in my feelings when I'm sad."

Why is this your favorite? "This song just hits a little bit close to home, and gets me in my feelings when I'm sad. I like to listen to this song when I'm going on a long drive, preferably in the rain. Listening to songs that you can relate to while you're driving is the best feeling in the world."

How often do you listen to this song? "I listen to this song around twice a week, because I relate to it so much."

How does this song make you feel? "This song is very emotional, it just makes me feel so sad."

Would you recommend others to listen to this song? "I would definitely recommend this song to others, because it's a great song to listen to when you're sad."

