Teens relate to HBO’s Euphoria, not corrupted by it

Valeria Rosales (junior)

What is your favorite heartbreak song? “My favorite heartbreak song is ‘Session 32’ by Sumner 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.”

Molly Freeman (sophomore)

What is your favorite heartbreak song? “My favorite song to listen to when I’m upset is Violent Crime by Kanye West.”

Why is this your favorite? “I like this song because it makes me feel sad, and I listen to it when I’m feeling sad.”

How often do you listen to this song? “I listen to this song whenever I’m feeling sad.”

How does this song make you feel? “This song makes me feel emotional.”

Victor Olivan (junior)

What is your favorite heartbreak song? “When I’m sad my go to song is ‘Session 32’ by Sumner Walker.”

Why is this your favorite? “This song doesn’t make me feel any worse, but it doesn’t make me feel any better, it lets me sort of process my feelings.”

How often do you listen to this song? “I listen to this song around twice a week.”

How does this song make you feel? “This song is very emotional, it just makes me feel 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.”

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. 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.

Staff Writer

Hidaya Fatao

Nudity. Drug abuse. Pregnancy. These are just some of the issues that HBO’s Euphoria sees real world through eyes. If teens are to relate to HBO’s Euphoria, it is important to acknowledge. Criticisms of issues that many students are going through is real. Each character’s experiences are unique to them.

On the contrary, the situations the characters 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 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 teen life was not writer Sam Levinson’s intention - it was, it is 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 it’s 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 frightened nature of her situation. No teen is rushing to their dealer after watching the show.

Rue, 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 fell, failed, and utterly clung to life. The creepy depiction of her own 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 shots are normally filmed in high school, so even if the nudity is included for ravnness, it makes the scenes repetitive.

Issues such as showcasing teen drinking, child pornogaphy, 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.