

EUPHORIA

The popular television series, "Euphoria", depicts today's youth in a shockingly dark light, but the question is whether this shower portrays the truth or not.

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Euphoria. A profound feeling of elation and happiness. A feeling many spend the entirety of their lives chasing. To feel euphoric is to encounter a pure sense of joy, untainted and somewhat divine, but the natural rush of Euphoria is not to be confused with the artificial, drug-induced feeling of happiness.

Sam Levinson, the producer of the popular and highly controversial Netflix series "Euphoria," conveys this brewing of drugs and party culture to numb the pain of one's everyday life. Through graphic content and aesthetic lifestyles, "Euphoria" proposes many debates over how the underlying message is told.

"Euphoria" first found its fans when it came out in June 2019. The show spotlights the life of a 17-year-old, Rue Bennett, and her struggle with drug addiction and mental health issues. It follows her and other characters depicting other insecurities that are common during the high school years.

The show hones

in on the issue of drug addiction amongst youth and the themes of discovering one's sexuality, casual sex, insecurities regarding body image, excessive party culture, the challenges between youth and adult perspectives, and more.

One may wonder why something as simple as a television show could have so much power over viewers. There are many different opinions on this series.

"Euphoria" is a raw depiction of today's rising generation, whether it be through social media, gossip and cancel culture, pressure to mature, or the normality of masking one's feelings of insecurity. Many

of these issues manifested within the past decade, so generally, those growing up in this bi-

zarre media-dominated world can find a more profound correlation with the characters and the addictions or weaknesses they represent.

"I think our generation relates to it ["Euphoria"] because it depicts something new and more accurate than other high school shows. The plot is more real and relatable," junior Fiona Hernandez said. "It also evokes emotion and sympathy for the characters."

Another reason people can reflect on their own lives through "Euphoria's" twisted and dramatic illustration of today's society is because of the diversity of the cast, whether it be regarding race or sexuality.

On top of the spotlight on sexuality and identity, each character represents a destructive addiction of some sort.

When interviewing senior Zoë Stephens, she put each character into context on the essential issues the characters represent.

"Cassie lost a father figure early in her life, which has made her search for male validation in her relationships. She always wants to be enough, but she never is and this drives her to a point of insanity... Rue is not a character who glorifies anything. She represents the fear, anxiety, and depression that teens may experi-

ence, and how coping with drugs is affecting her and everyone around her in absolutely negative ways. Jules portrays the difficulty and successes of finding your identity."

The topics in "Euphoria" are candid portrayals of the darkest parts of surviving the teenage years, but the rich and graphic content intertwined with enchanting color and "euphoric" scenes involving drugs makes people question whether it can be harmful to those watching.

In an interview The Hollywood Reporter conducted with Sam Levinson, the director addresses this and the horror it brings to adults, especially parents, who have watched "Euphoria."

"There are going to be parents who are going to be totally freaked out," he said. "It's a good insight into how hard it is to grow up in this time."

But some wonder whether the show is entirely accurate while portraying the difficulties of finding oneself in today's environment.

The second season's kickoff stirred some controversy over whether the show is genuinely relatable or not. To raise awareness of the inaccuracies of the show, the Drug Awareness Resistance Education program responded by stating that the series "chooses to misguidedly glorify and erroneously depict high school student drug use, addiction, anonymous sex, violence and other destructive behaviors as common and widespread in today's world."

Levinson does introduce heavy topics such as casual sex and severe drug abuse as normal activities, which inflict a feeling of un-



ease upon his watchers. Stephens

follows up by talking about the glorification of this series.

"I would say that this show romanticizes the modern teenager, whether it is the outfits, school, partying, severe mental issues, or lack of parental figures.

"The plot is more real and relatable. It also evokes emotion and sympathy for the characters."
-Fiona Hernandez

My mom has brought up to me articles regarding how Rue deals with her anxiety and depression and how it can be unhealthy for someone like me, who struggles with both of the mentioned, to see how she copes through drugs and dissociation."

The show depicts the lives of each character in the darkest possible light, which inflicts shocking hopelessness onto those following the series.

Zendaya, who plays Rue Bennett, addressed this distress before "Eu-

phoria" first premiered by saying, "Euphoria is for mature audiences. It's a raw and honest portrait of addiction, anxiety and the difficulties of navigating life today. There are scenes that are graphic, hard to watch and can be triggering. Please only watch if you feel you can handle it."

Because the show is most famous for its cinematography and vividly glamorized wardrobe, some viewers look up to the characters and aspire to live that lifestyle.

"Euphoria" is a representation of the loss and insecurity that spreads like a virus through young adults and the deprecating ways of dealing with emptiness. When younger viewers don't understand that, they see sparkles and sedation, which romanticizes the use of drugs and party culture.

