Teenagers represented in the media

Media

Teenagers used to be the forgotten group in society. The ones who are stuck between being " cute kids" and " responsible adults." But all that's been changing over the last twenty years or so, as the media realizes that teens are slowly getting a voice in society, but are these changes good or bad?

The media represents teenagers in a very conventional way, stereotyped by their appearance, sex, andpersonality. Different varieties of media are meant to do different things. Some of the media's many roles are to display the truth, make the viewer aware and to entertain. Most of the media presents an inaccurate and negative portrayal of adolescents today according to their appearance, sex, personality and age, among other things.

Most teenagers in the media are represented as attractive, confident and white, which may make teenagers feel pressurised to fit in with the medias representation of them and so if they don't fit these categories making them uncomfortable with their own bodies. I think the media should have a wider variety of races, looks and personalities to show teenagers they don't have to have fit in with the typical image of them as shown in the media.

The media highlights the exciting events in teenagers lives, e. g dancing at parties, getting drunk, spendingmoneyand generally having a good time, but they don't always show the more depressing parts of teenagers lives such asbullying, exams, insecurities etc, which seems more important

There are many TV programmes today that focus on wealthy, glamorous lifestyles of teenagers that come form extremely privileged backgrounds, many people enjoy these programmes as it gives them a chance to escape from the reality of their own lives and see it from other peoples. Although

some other programmes look at the more realistic lifestyles, where teenagers have to work hard and don't just have everything handed to them on a plate, many people watch these as they can relate to them and understand where characters are coming from. Although in all these lifestyles the teenage characters do go through many dramatic, emotional experiences and events.

A lot of the media shows teenagers partying every night, always out and getting up to mischief e. g. taking drugs, having fights etc. In Skins, a teenage drama, a character called Effy sneaks out her house in the middle of the night, burns a bus, goes out to a deserted warehouse, where she takes various drugs with boys and finally ends up in a party at a random person's house where she collapse from a drug overdose. Later her brother finds her, she is then rushed to hospital and ends up moving school; this all happens in the space of a few days. In reality most teenagers' lives are a lot more boring, dull and uneventful, for example they generally spend most of their time studying, using the Internet at home and watching TV etc.

Often their characters are exaggerated as well as events and situations. In a lot of teenage dramas the characters are unrealistic for example in the TV series Eastenders there is a teenage boy, Stephen, who is evil and manipulative, he turns his own sister against theirfamily, while everyone thinks he is kind and good, in real life teenagers are not like this, they aren't as controlling or manipulative.

Although teenagers are represented positively in many parts of the media, programmes such as the OC show characters like Marissa and Ryan acting

kindly and maturely e. g. when Marissa sees a man being mugged, she comes to help him and calls the police this shows she is caring and responsible, which is a positive image of teenagers in the media.

In conclusion Teenagers in the media are shown in lots of different ways, often as being a problem to society e. g. controlling, rude and disrespectful, this is shown in soaps, dramas, movies and news, it gives out a very negative image on teenagers, which isn't always fair. Teenagers can be represented positively, helping the community and being polite and social although this is not usually the case. Mainly teenagers are shown in a negative way and their characters and dilemmas are not realistic.