

Black Women's Non-Representation in the Media

By Layla Grant-Simmonds

After people get to know me, I have heard, "I thought you were 'aggressive' 'mean', or 'unapproachable'. All I can assume is that this is connected to how black women are portrayed on T.V. Black females are often represented as misfits or aggressive. Most classic or popular shows and movies don't have black girls as main characters. There are very few movies where black girls and women are main characters who are positively portrayed with their feelings being valued. People believe what they see on T.V. We can not compromise, therefore, how black females are represented in the media.

The number of non-white performers that win awards is small. If we're only talking about black women's statistics, then they're even slimmer. There are too many talented black women who don't get credit for their achievements. For example, when Beyoncé lost to Adele for best album of the year at the Grammys in 2017, Adele made a tribute to Beyoncé saying, "The way that you make me and my friends feel, the way you make my black friends feel, is empowering." Along with, "I can't possibly accept this award ... I'm very humbled and I'm very grateful ... but the artist of my life is Beyoncé. And this album to me, the Lemonade album, is just so monumental." People concluded that Beyoncé didn't win because she is black. The hashtag #oscarssowhite is bringing attention to how Oscars tend to be given to white people, even if they don't deserve them.

Black female characters in the movie *The Joker* were underappreciated. Even though that was the point, this is still not how black women deserve to be represented. In this movie, people see black women being treated badly without them claiming their respect, people will believe that is how they should be treated. Having black women poorly represented or even absent from representation in the media causes negative bias.

We can do something. Support more *Ebony* magazines. Watch shows that support black women. Listen to music, read books and go to exhibits made by or that supports black women. Watch movies with black leads, support black people more on social media. Make it so that the next generation of black girls doesn't have to wonder where the representation of people like them is. Make it so people won't assume they are aggressive or angry or unapproachable. Make media accountable to all of its consumers and especially black women and girls.

Sources

[NYT Friends Article 'Friends' Is Turning 25. Here's Why We Can't Stop Watching it. These Female Showrunners Changed the TV Landscape. Now Their Shows Are Ending In Joker, Black Women Are Visible But They Are Not Seen](#)

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achievers. Certain people, for example white men, aren't discriminated against, so they don't notice the problem.

Support more ebony magazines. You might not know it, but there are many companies, organizations, and more that do not support black women. All you have to do is watch shows like that to support black women. shows and listening to music, made by or supporting black women. Watch more shows and movies with black leads, support black people more on social media.