

DOUBLE STANDARDS

How two students have dealt with the expectations society holds them to based on their gender.

DO GUYS THINK MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL IN SOCIETY TODAY?



Aaron Rothkopf, 12

I feel like there are more opportunities towards men and I also feel like even during school elections or anything it's a lot easier to...not certainly be liked but to be acknowledged more professionally and it's really something that's hard to get over.



Owen Donnelly, 11

I think that there are still expectations that are placed on women and men—and they are different, there are stereotypes, especially in the south.

OFF STAGE

The audience watched intently as one of the few boys in the theatre took his place at the center of the stage. Surrounded by his primarily female castmates, **Colin Frick**, 12, felt self-doubt wash over him. Despite his love for expression and the art of theatre, he felt out of place.

When Frick was in middle school, he started to dabble in various forms of self-expression, eventually stumbling across theatre. His passion for theatre was unscathed until he got to high school.

"I felt like in high school people got a little judgier and there was more of a negative perception of kids who did theatre," Frick said. "I didn't think I fit in and I felt like it just didn't mean the same thing to me."

Along with the judgment of peers at school, Frick saw how gender roles started to take center stage, which ultimately resulted in insecurity and self-doubt.

"The perception I came to realize was like 'if you do theatre you are a sissy' so it made me self-conscious and paranoid. I didn't want to do it partly because of that; it was a pretty big reason," Frick said.

Frick's experience in middle school was what motivated him to continue doing theatre in the first place. Since he started at a younger age, he was able to acquire and fulfill roles without the detriment of unneeded pressure and expectations glooming over him.

"I had a really good experience and I got a really good role for the first performance I was in, and then over time I kind of like 'climbed up' and eventually got a role that was like two hundred lines long that I had to memorize," Frick said.

Stereotypically, theatre is not always viewed as a masculine extra-curricular activity, something Frick learned quickly in high school from his peers.

Though he enjoyed being a part of theatre, he was encouraged to try ideally 'more masculine' activities.

"I saw as more of my friends got into athletics that theatre just didn't seem like it was as important to me anymore—I wanted to do some of the things that they were doing, and so although (I was not affected) by anything someone directly said to me, I felt like over time it was just that the expectations changed for what you were supposed to be doing with your free time," Frick said.

Frick aspired to go into the acting industry when he was younger, prompting his decision to be a part of theatre. Due to the changes in gender expectations, his aspirations have shifted greatly.

"I wanted to be an actor and I thought having acting experience would be helpful. So, I had that in mind, but as time went on, I got more into journalism. I do feel like my life could have been a lot different had I decided to stick with acting as my main form of art," Frick said.

Over the years, there has been a multitude of efforts to create an equilibrium between primarily male and female activities, but the long-lasting stigma around theatre was a deal-breaker for Frick.

"I think the expectation is that you'll stop doing some of those things that are 'sissy activities,'" Frick said. "There were a few times when I felt like nobody necessarily said that but it was very much implied."

STAYING STEM

Over the loudspeaker, the announcement of the boy's tennis team's latest win resonated in the air. **Audrey Hood**, 10, listening with intent, came to the realization that the girl's tennis team hadn't even got recognition from the school for going to the state championship.

She began to see the imbalance in male versus female recognition; both at school and at home.

"If I want to go play tennis and it's all boys I get scared because I think 'oh they're going to be so much better than me' and I have a brother, so sometimes I feel like my parents look more towards him when it comes to athletics and things like that, and then they don't look at my accomplishments as much," Hood said.

On top of athletics, Hood has run into this problem in her academics as well. With her strong-suit being in maths and sciences, she has realized that there is a stigma around girls taking on stereotypically male career paths.

"I've seen that guys get more notice if they do school (activities) like being good at math then they get more recognition than girls do. I'm taking an advanced math class, (STEM,) this year, and there's probably only about two girls in my grade taking it, and then there's like six guys taking it," Hood said.

To avoid stereotypes and expectations arising, Hood thinks it is important to start teaching equal treatment from a young age, starting with the most influential people in a child's life; their parents.

"I feel like from a younger age people can equalize how they look at girls and boys, even parents can do that," Hood said. "I feel like that could be good for the future with (making) girls and guys (achievements) more equal."

Hood has hopes that girls of future generations will be able to defy gender stereotypes as she has previously dealt with.

"I would tell (other young girls) not to be afraid because (going into stereotypically male-centric activities is) really not that scary," Hood said.

Hood fell under the impression at a young age that there was a set of male-dominant and female-dominant careers that had to be followed. As she has gotten older and has grown into her own beliefs, she now knows her aspiration to go into engineering, despite how it is characterized as a male career, is valid and equally achievable.

"I want to go into engineering, which is more of a male dominant field and I feel like from young age girls are taught 'no, don't go into math and science, go into teaching or nursing' Hood said. "I feel like they should be taught that they can do just as much as guys can."

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Designer Olivia Potter
Photographer Emma Chadwick

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Krista Shumaker, 11

We've obviously made great strides in gender equality throughout the years, but in our current status, you can look at like statistics and you'll see that, although there has been those great strides towards full gender equality, we still have that systematic oppression against women in society.



Sophia Carson, 10

So I definitely think there are inequalities for both men and women because there are so many pressures—just like the gender roles that we have applied to men that is the patriarchy is essentially what I am talking about.

pictured: Andrew Bumgardner, 10
Sarah Browne, 11