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EDITORIAL

Men are From Mars, and Women Too —On Psychological Gender Differences

NEWS BOARD

A board to keep the student body informed about their school and local community.

New Year, New Plans: Autumn Chats with SAC President Arsal Farook

by NEVETHA ARULLINKAM



Photograph: Sarah Rodrigues

This past June, Marc Garneau CI elected four members to the Student Activity Council (SAC). The SAC oversees student-related affairs, from handing out club budgets to hosting school-wide events. Among these was president Arsal Farook, who spoke to the Reckoner for this article. As SAC President, he is responsible for overseeing and supervising SAC activities.

Q: What motivated you to run for SAC president?

A: I believe that things happen for a reason. When I got the idea of running for SAC president, it just came to me on a random day. I was in Grade 10 at the time. I just woke up and I had this idea: What if I ran for and became the SAC president? As the days progressed and the months changed, I kept thinking about what it would look like to be SAC president. People would ask me about my plans for Grade 11 and I couldn't envision myself without being the SAC president. So in a way, I sort of manifested it.

As the year progressed, I also started observing SAC and the areas I could improve. I noticed that things weren't running as smoothly as they could have for reasons both inside and outside of SAC's control. I wanted to tackle problems associated with a

lack of passion, transparency, and communication. I started to think to myself: As SAC president, how would I deal with all these issues? There were several problems that plague MGCI, so how would I really come up with a solution to all of this? I sat and thought about this for a long time.

I came to the conclusion that the majority of the school's problems could be solved by students and students alone. You don't need a lot of teacher assistance to solve all the problems at MGCI. Everything that concerns you as a student can be solved. I want to make it easier for people to address issues that concern them.

Q: What problem(s) do you want to address as SAC president?

A: The main problem I want to address is the lack of communication between SAC and the student body. I want to have direct channels of communication and make it very easy for students to communicate with SAC so that if they have an event or initiative idea that they want to help run, they can reach SAC with two clicks or a quick QR code phone scan.

MGCI hosts many students with a lot of untapped potential, as I like to say. They have many ideas and exciting initiatives, but oftentimes, they just don't have the avenue to express them or to make them become reality. I want to make it easier for students to express themselves and their ideas to help support their fellow students.

Q: What long-term changes do you want to make/are you in the process of making from last year?

A: There's a lot that still has to be finalized from the school's administration team, but I want to incorporate in-class flyers as a method of communication. This would allow students to walk into their morning class and see a poster with a QR code that leads to many different resources. We also hope to allow other clubs to link their information, like a Google Calendar that details club meeting dates, to the QR code. I think that this is one of the best methods of communication that hasn't been implemented yet.

Q: What short-term plans do you/SAC have for the near future?

A: There's a Halloween spirit week coming up! It will run from 24 October to 31 October. We have many exciting activities planned, including a haunted house walkthrough and candy grams. Details on the event will be posted on our Instagram (@mgci.sac).

SAC is also planning a fun after-school dance called Fall Fest. It will take place in the school on 23 November from 5 pm to 7 pm. We are expecting to sell around 150 tickets.

Q: How has the role of president been for you so far?

A: It's been quite a bit of work. Most of my lunches are taken up with doing something for SAC. For example, I'm supervising and helping the Spirit Committee with the upcoming spirit week. But it is sort of fulfilling, because walking through the halls, you'll hear people whisper, "Oh, that's the SAC president." Some of my friends even stopped calling me by my name. The feeling of "oh yeah, I am the SAC president" can be kind of nice. So while this is a major responsibility and there's a lot involved in it, I like doing it and I really enjoy conducting myself as the SAC president.

Also, I'm really happy with the turnout for the SAC Selected Applications Process and am happy to report that all the positions have been filled with hardworking, passionate, and intelligent students with unique skill sets. I can't wait to work with them.

Q: What do you like to do in your free time, outside of being SAC president?

A: Outside of school, I'm an avid sports fan. My favourite sports to watch right now are baseball, American football, and Formula One. I just love reading about their histories and current events. I also like watching basketball, cricket, ice hockey, UFC, and soccer. Outside of that, I also like to travel. I've been to London, Brussels, Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, and Bangkok. I like looking at different people's cultures and the ways they interact, because I'm really interested in the way people evolve and engage and communicate with others. I also dabble a bit here and there with poetry in Urdu, but not too much outside of that.

Q: What would you like to say to the student body?

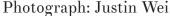
A: If you have something to say regarding SAC or anything in general, you can reach out to me on Instagram (@arsal4pres) or email me at arsal.farook@ student.tdsb.on.ca. A lot of the problems, issues, and things that plague MGCI can be solved by students themselves. The person reading this article right now could be that person. I'm sure everybody has their own ideas, initiatives that they want to do. So what I would like to say to the student body is act on those. The only person who has the power to make those come true is you. And if you ever need help from SAC or anything, you can always contact me at the socials I just listed before.

*Answers have been edited for clarity.

Getting to Know Mr. Langford

by ZAEEM MUSTAFA







Photograph: Shan Ali

Mr. Langford is a gardening teacher at Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute. He began teaching at MGCI in 2017, bringing an experience of 25 years of teaching to the school.

However, teaching was not Mr. Langford's first career. He began his professional journey in electrical engineering, and only later switched to teaching.

Mr. Langford's favourite part about his job in teaching is being able to talk to all the MGCI students. He loves being able to get to know and joke around with new students and teachers, taking great pleasure in interacting with the school community. He also loves constantly learning

new things in the school environment!

Other than teaching, some of Mr. Langford's primary hobbies are bicycling, and gardening. He enjoys nature and tries to spend as much time in it as possible.

One example of how this has manifested in the school environment is the new MGCI garden that was finished this year.

The purpose of the MGCI garden is to feed MGCI students. Every month, one thousand fruits and vegetables are harvested and given to students at lunch time.

Though the MGCI garden was finished this year, its journey began way back in 2018 by Ms.

Gunn, Ms. Carey, and Mr. Khedr, a parent volunteer. Ms. MacPhee built the raised beds. Then, in spring 2023, Mr. Simos and his students built a fence around the garden. In spring of 2023, the green industries students revived and revitalized the garden under the direction of Mr. Khedr. Finally, in the summer of 2023, Mr. Khedr and student volunteers tended the garden.

Having been a gardening teacher at MGCI since 2020, Mr Langford noted one memory about the garden that he would never forget: "I won't ever forget harvesting with all 4 principals and the many supervisors. I love seeing everyone get involved."



Photographs: Shan Ali



Crowds and Enthusiasm at the Metro Convention Centre University Fair

On 21 and 22 October, students and parents gathered at the bustling Metro Convention Centre for the much-anticipated University Fair. The event exhibited a wide range of higher education prospects for young ambitious students.

The Metro Convention Centre, serving as a hub of academic exploration, welcomed representatives from many universities, such as the University of Toronto, McMaster University, and York University. Aspiring students and their families immersed themselves in the wide range of programs, scholarships, and extra-

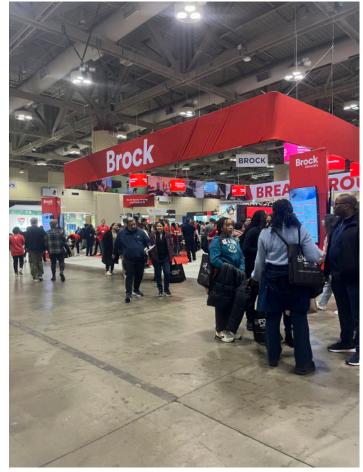
by MOHAMMAD HUSEIN

curricular prospects presented by the participating institutions. Committed delegates actively engaged with students, addressing inquiries and offering invaluable counsel. The majority of attendees consisted of high school students from different districts, accompanied by their parents and teachers, fostering a dynamic ambiance of eager learners. Spanning from 9 AM to 5 PM, the event offered a comprehensive platform for attendees to interact with admissions officers, faculty members, and alumni, acquiring invaluable insights into their desired areas of study.

The event's strategic timing in the fall, a critical period for university applications, enabled students to make well-informed decisions about their academic futures.

The Metro Convention Centre University Fair exemplified the collaborative endeavour dedicated to moulding future leaders. With knowledge as the guiding principle, participants left with renewed ambitions and resolve. As the event drew to a close, the prevailing sense of hope alluded to a bright future for the students who enthusiastically explored the diverse opportunities presented at this enlightening occasion.





Photographs: Annabella Pang

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A letter to my past self

by MAGGIE PANG

To myself of 10 years ago,

I am writing because I realize I let you down. I found your letter hidden between the 24th and 25th pages of a notebook I was about to throw out when I cleaned up the bookshelf after 13 months of procrastinating. The shelves are like six smiles now, ecstatic under the weight of 24 years' worth of crappy picture books and unpursued potential. Anyways, I just wanted to apologize.

To start off, I guess I'm sorry I don't have enough to buy a house in my bank account. I'm in debt. actually. I remember that time I? you? got in a fight with Clarissa because we couldn't agree on which job was better-environmentalist or conservationist-and we solved the problem by splitting up the days of the week. And we used to squat in a corner of the pavement, safely hidden from kids trying to bounce basketballs into an imaginary net on the moon and well-meaning supervisors (or I forget what we called them back then) telling us to get out of the shade and go touch grass. We never listened, though. We were too busy carefully balancing those Flexi rulers on delicate paper structures, too immersed in the architecture of the house

of Cheryl the cat. Anyways, well I don't even have a job, I'm still in school. I wake up to the same boring beige ceiling as always, with the stain from when the toilet upstairs leaked in the far left corner.

Sometimes, when I'm sitting in class and I'm 2 years older than most of the people there whispering excitedly about some event only the bright-eyed, bushy-tailed go to, I think about those horror stories you sat through, where Ivan at the store was there because he'd switched from engineering to cooking to political science and missed the tuition refund deadline every time (and you too can do that, just be like him and live in a basement where the only meaningful thing you do is play video games, why don't you? Stop being a burden and just be a purposeless potato, etc.) and how you'd grit your teeth as best as you could with newly tightened braces and swear to yourself you'd prove everyone wrong. You'd do more than succeed, you'd exceed even your own expectations.

When did I lose myself? Was it letting myself stare blankly out the window for hours on end, mind swirling with too many thoughts escaping from their emotional jail cell, convincing myself they were both valid and an unforgivable sign of failure at the same time? Or maybe it was the first time my grades slipped and kept slipping. Perhaps, it was that day in Anatomy of the Human Body when after a semester of zoning out 5 minutes into the lecture, eyes trained on the depressing, ancient wooden floor unseeing and meaningless terms hovering over my head like they expected to be understood, I realized this was too hard for me. and that even worse. I didn't want to know any enzymes, and that contradicting every principle I had ever gone by, I didn't care. I haven't felt the spark that interviewer said I, "had sometimes," in so long. The last book I read for fun was months ago.

And I'm sorry for letting myself get pressured into medical science and not marine biology, and for wasting all the hours of time you spent battling people convincing you your dreams and yourself were not pursuing by becoming one of those people, and for shutting down all my friendships out of doubt and paranoia, and for only being awake for 6 hours a day, and for wanting to be asleep most of that time. I'm sorry I gave up and let you down, okay? That's all.

SWALLOW PERCHED ON CATTAILS

by ZIXUAN XU

I ponder alone by the sulfur lake;
These are the waters I've tread.
The memories I've betrothed to you:
Were they pigments of a fake sky?
A tortured and meticulous lie?
Was that your hand in mine before?
Or, was I holding the burning shards that remains my hope for our future.
They spill across these gulfs of stars; and once, I saw them in your eyes.
The same eyes that fish for my truth:
I've known them longer than time, and yet, my heart is black charred.

I've kept that deep gaze until I learned that change can slip by like a wispy end of summer wind. Have I become a brash burden? Am I truly so hurt that I've hurt you? Are there others who you'd let hold your soul like I once tried to?

Darling, as I drape my love below the docks I await your reply. I am a swallow perched on cattails, blowing by your wind.

Illustration: Shiloh Zheng

There the holy land Welcome to the promised land Land into rubble

A child cries somewhere tonight Rests against his father's stubble Cocooned and swaddled Somewhat overly coddled A child cries somewhere tonight Eyes shining and lips wobbled A new mother wakes and hobbles Milk is warmed and bottled A child cries somewhere tonight For reasons unknown to most Their parents rush to soothe For hunger, for warmth, for love For attention, or all of the above To me there is little worse Than crying children A sound so loud, a sound so innocent An uncontrollable occurrence A calling, an awakening To newly made guardians What parents wouldn't do To stop their child from crying How my mother pushed through crowds To find me when it was loud How mammals huddle together around Their young to protect them

A child cries here tonight Not for hunger or warmth Nor love or to mourn

In the Promised land A child cries over there tonight In the holy land

For a hobbling mom The stubble of a father Someone to push crowds

For it is so loud For a huddle to surround For stifling the shouts

Miles away tonight A child cries in Palestine Cry until they sleep

A Child Cries Somewhere Tonight

by SOHA SAKHIANI



Illustration: Zaid Azhar

The Stars Surrounding Us

by LADAN HASSAN

They are stars Brightening the path that I am soon to tread A long and arduous journey that often frightens me Guiding me into the unknown

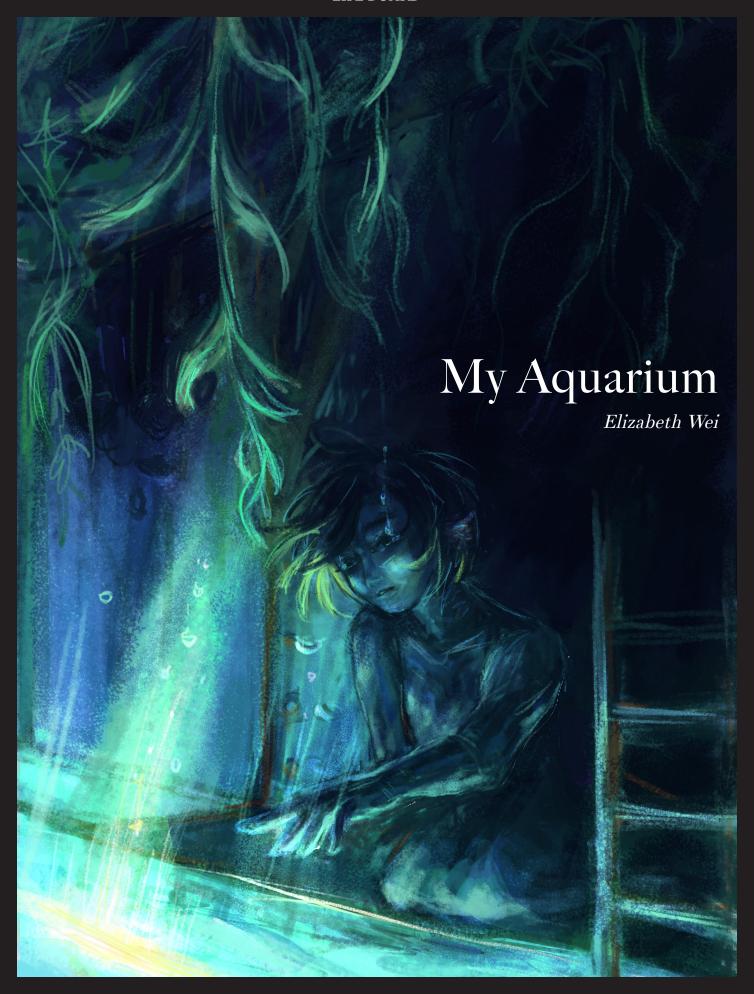
They are stars Allowing me to continue despite the setbacks I face Picking me up no matter how many times I fall Lending me a hand when the world seems to dim

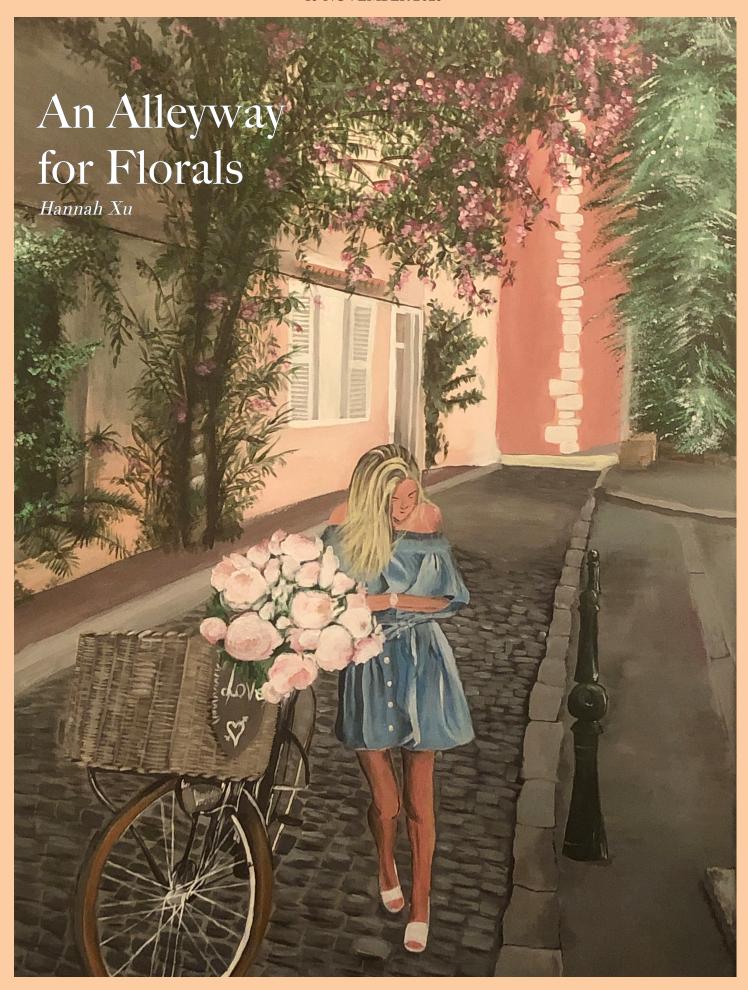
They are stars Farther than you can possibly imagine Yet lending light and warmth So bright sometimes it is almost hard to look

They are stars And someday I hope to be one too



Illustration: Yuewen Gao





EDITORIAL BOARD

A board that amplifies student voices through supported opinions.

Men are From Mars, and Women Too — On Psychological Gender Differences

by PATRICIA ZHANG

Then we say "you're acting like a girl" or "be a man," what do we mean?

Modern bigots and old philosophers alike claim that gender is the most significant divide. But psychologically, men and women are not different. Simone De Beauvoir, in her revolutionary work titled "The Second Sex," stated that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." Men and women have been conditioned by a multitude of societal factors to seem unlike each other. Additionally, if they were different, it does not pose any relevance. In this essay, I will prove that men and women are psychologically the same by drawing from multiple studies and refuting opposing arguments. Then I will explain how it does not matter if they were different, as giving it relevancy leads to discrimination and prejudice.

The billion-dollar question in this debate is, "Are women and men born different, or are they shaped this way by society?" Needless to say, there are apparent sex differences between those assigned male and female at birth. For example, a 2017 Stanford Medicine paper revealed that a man's amvgdala, a vital emotion center in the brain, is larger than a woman's and works slightly differently. In general, however, it is redundant to say that sex differences correlate directly to gender differences (in

this essay, I use the term "sex differences" to refer to biological differences, and "gender differences" to refer to personality differences). The role of biology isn't zilch, but it doesn't provide sufficient evidence to suggest that gender differences result from sex differences. An article published by Harvard Business School explains, "while there are (of course) biological differences between the sexes, social science has shown that men and women are more similar than different on a wide range of characteristics." Thus, we can't just halt the debate on the grounds of biological differ-

In 2001, a study published by personality researchers Paul Costa, Robert McCrae, and Antonio Terracciano encompassed over 23,000 men and women from 26 cultures and had them fill out personality questionnaires. The outcomes showed that women tended to rate themselves higher in aspects such as agreeableness while men rated themselves as more assertive. When a somewhat identical questionnaire was released in 2008, similar results emerged. These studies, on the surface level, seem to prove gender differences. Yet, there's a significant flaw in this research design. Participants

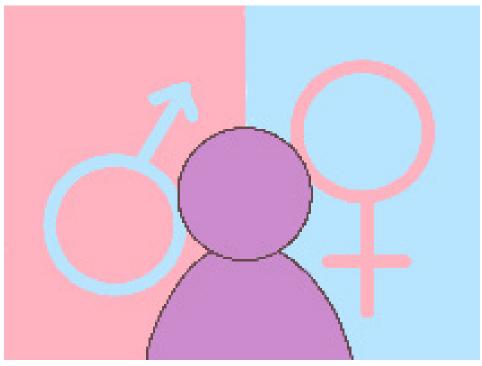


Illustration: Syeda Jaffary

were able to rate themselves, meaning that they could simply be providing answers that align with standard views of how women and men should act. Studies like these display how difficult determining noticeable differences are.

Comparably, research attempting to demonstrate gender differences in the Big 5 personality traits conscientiousness, (openness, agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism) has failed to make a substantial impact; only minor differences have been found, and only on the basis that these differences could be relevant because they are also self-reported. Suffice to say, it isn't fair to infer that there are differences for certain. On the other hand, many studies attribute men and women to being the same psychologically.

Janet Shibley Hyde, Ph.D. of the University of Wisconsin in Madison, discovered that males and females from childhood to adulthood are more alike than different on most psychological variables. Across dozens of studies, Hyde discovered that this is consistent with the "gender similarities hypothesis," which states that genders are more similar than dissimilar. Moreover, Hyde found that gender differences primarily relied on the context in which they were assessed. For instance, after participants in one experiment were told that they would not be identified as male or female and wore no identification, none conformed to stereotypes about their sex when given a chance to be aggressive. Oddly enough, the opposite happened - women acted more aggressively than men. Hyde's studies also analyzed gender differences over a period of time. The resulting conclusion suggested that gender differences fluctuate with age and are thus not stable.

Likewise, if men's and women's sex differences lead to colossal gender differences, where would transgender people fit into this argument? If, as researcher Paul Irving said, "men and women are almost different species," this excludes transgender people and instead creates a narrative that since men and women are so different, it's impossible for a man to become a woman. This promotes an inherent transphobia while ostracizing non-binary people. Yet, how exactly do men and women gain knowledge about gender differences? To answer this, I want to turn to philosopher John Locke.

An interesting part of Locke's philosophy is his idea of the "tabula rasa." The term "tabula rasa," coined by Locke, means "blank slate" in Latin. Locke had an empirical view of knowledge, meaning he believed that we begin as blank slates and gain knowledge through experience. How women act differently from men and vice versa is adapted purely by this concept of knowledge through experience. Furthermore, that kind of insight is a posteriori knowledge. A posteriori knowledge is information dependent on evidence or experience. This is in contrast with a priori knowledge, which is defined by philosopher Immanuel Kant as "absolutely independent of all experience." Gender differences are a posteriori knowledge, as they come from experience and evidence of the gender roles people must conform to, which will be proved in the following paragraph.

The tabula rasa is essentially the famous nature vs nurture debate in psychology, showing how our awareness of gender roles being a posteriori knowledge relates to the psychology of men and women. Our a posteriori knowledge paints our blank slate, our tabula rasa, with a particular schema about how men and women should act. This idea relates to De Beauvoir's "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," which means that biologically girls aren't born

women but grow into them sociologically. It is neither nature or the sex assigned at birth that defines a girl or woman. In contrast, it is her emotional experiences and her a posteriori knowledge. Maltz and Borker proved this in 1982, with their research which showed that the games children play contribute to introducing children into masculine and feminine cultures. For example, girls playing house promotes personal relationships and having a family. Boys, conversely, tend to play more competitive team sports. This would go on to affect them as they grew up, their childhood games affecting their adulthood views.

been established women and men are psychologically the same yet appear different via socio-cultural influences. Then, where do we go from here? Should we acknowledge this or not? Despite the ubiquity of the "Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus" story, there shouldn't be importance to any dissimilarity or similarity between men and women. If men and women were as different as popular media would continue to suggest, bringing these differences to the forefront would lead to continuous, everlasting prejudice.

We can examine this using a hypothetical. If we were to conclude that different races were psychologically different (thev aren't), then we would set roles for the various races. For example, if one race seems psychologically weaker, we would set the norm for that race to only work in specific fields. These norms lead to associations, prejudice, and discrimination, "that race can only do light work." In the generations to come, anyone of that race who wants to step outside of that norm will instantly face ostracism for not adhering to the common heuristic of what that race should be doing.

The hypothetical isn't exactly

far-fetched either. Women have consistently and constantly been denied opportunities and success, and only in the 1920s could they even vote in America. This results from similar circumstances as our hypothetical scenario and proves that if we give any differences any big meaning, it'll lead to common misconceptions and stereotypes.

Throughout centuries men and women have slouched underneath the weight of gender roles. These norms are also clearly harmful. In her book "The Feminine Mystique," Betty Friedan analyzes the idea of the feminine housewife popularized in America around the 1950s. Through anecdotes and statistics, she uncovers the truth beneath the facade that "every woman should want to be a housewife." In the book, it is revealed that during the mid-1950s, 60 percent of female students terminated their personal education before they became "undesirable" in the marriage market. Marriage, however, didn't make these women happy, and Friedan spends chapters explaining the inner turmoil some of these picturesque housewives faced.

The problem of women being nearly twice as likely to be diagnosed with depression as men can't be solved by realizing that men and women are different. However, it can be helped by pushing for equality and rejecting social norms that may affect women developing depression. This should be done regardless if men and women are different. Gender roles obviously don't only affect women, but focusing on gender differences will not let us understand inequality but enforce it.

Contrary to the idea that mindsets based on a patriarchal society die out within one generation, intergenerational ideals of men and women have been passed on subconsciously for years. As children become aware of their "place" in society and develop their a posteriori knowledge, it's hard to fight against the flow, and anyone who repudiates to fit into predetermined molds will nevertheless be sucked in or heavily scrutinized. Alongside this, when gender roles emerge, so do media portravals that emphasize them.

On the other side of this coin lies a different vet similar argument. Men and women are not psychologically different, nonetheless, this also shouldn't matter because if we say that they are already the same, it will create a lack of a push for gender equality. Putting so much emphasis and so much meaning on the baseline of "we are all the same" will not do anything to solve the ongoing oppression of women. Only acknowledging the current condition will cease to make an actual change without continuous actions against gender norms.

Thus differences or similarities are not important. Giving relevance to differences or similarities will not help us progress as a society and leads to negligence of personal identity. Providing meaning to the parallels also gives meaning to the differences, and in its entirety, the differences between men and women shouldn't be focused on. As proved before, concentration on dissimilarities leads to gatekeeping of jobs and opportunities. It is not logical to focus on the differences between men and women rather than focusing on gender equality as a whole. Fundamentally, the point is that regardless of similarities or differences in gender, all genders deserve to be equal and treated the same way.

When we say "you're acting like a girl" or "be a man," we mean the act as a specific schema of a girl or a man based on preconceived stereotypes. Innately, despite some sex differences, there are no major gender differences, as proved by researchers such as Hyde. Gender differences are verisimilitude and amass from societal priming. Children learn gender roles as they grow up, making it empirical knowledge that appears through nurture. We shouldn't give these peculiarities or parallels attention as they fundamentally don't matter in pushing for gender equality. Let's not need to notice differences or similarities and instead forge a way that is independent of these so that we can say "be yourself" instead of "act like a role."

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