

Entertainment's purpose, whether it be television, film or music, is to create a sense of enjoyment within its audiences, but the behind-the-scenes of media creation can be a negative space for women in the industry. In every aspect of entertainment, women face a double standard that is not always apparent in the finished product, but shines through in public and industry responses.

Women in the television and film side of the entertainment industry are subject to inequalities throughout every step of their career, but it's unfortunately a necessary evil if they desire success in media. In the beginning stages of a young actress's career, she is often seen as the sum of her appearance rather than performance accomplishments. Her success ratings are based on her appeal to her project's male audience.

In HBO's acclaimed series "Euphoria" up-and-coming actress Sydney Sweeney was granted her big break. Sweeney was given the chance to portray a complex female character, and did so beautifully. Her performance in the show's second season was so emotionally intense that she was awarded an Emmy for her abilities. However, reviews of her performance on social media seldom mention her character's exploration of friendship or romance, but rather they describe her sensual scenes or provocative outfits. The majority of Sweeney's male supporters are not interested in her amazing acting, but rather her conventionally attractive appearance.

While Sweeney is a current example of the sexualization of young actresses, the same phenomenon occurred for dozens of women before her. Actresses like Scarlett Johanson or Margot Robbie's talents are reduced to their presentation, and audiences value

THE MEDIA AND MEN: ENTERTAINMENT'S DISSERVICES TO ITS WOMEN

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their sensual scenes over ones of character exploration.

The film industry further pushes gender distinctions by presenting actresses with infantilized roles, where their character is portrayed as ditsy or desperately in need of the help of her stronger male counterpart. Think Margot Robbie's character in "The Wolf of Wall Street." She lacks intelligence and relies heavily on Leonardo DiCaprio's character, but her character is coined as a "dream girl." The entertainment industry has promoted to male viewers that men should be searching for a woman with no sense of direction, one that accepts that their purpose is to sit and look pretty.

The emphasis on a woman's appearance in the media is the silent killer for actresses entering their 40's. The second that first wrinkle or gray hair appears, an actress's commercial value decreases. Senior actors like Tom Hanks and Will Smith are still being offered consecutive mainstream roles while they are well into their 50's and 60's. Meanwhile, actresses like Jennifer Aniston and Julia Roberts have not been given a serious role since entering their 50's.

A man's tainted perspective of women is encouraged by all forms of media, but especially by the pornography business. Young men often begin seeking out explicit content in their adolescent years, when romance starts becoming an object of their desire. However, including pornography into a developing brain's regular consumption can change a teenager's perspective on relationships, and more importantly women. Women are no longer human beings, but rather sexual fantasies waiting to be explored.

Senior Sarah Chen has observed the unfortunate effects of pornography on the lives of women in media as well as her classmates, "It's disturbing to see the effect that media has on the portrayal of women—it's something I've witnessed a lot in high school with comments made all the time between males. The entertainment industry has normalized the sexualization of women including public figures, ac-

tresses and especially their own peers."

The image of a typical woman being attractive and created for the attention of men is heightened by pornography consumption, and reinforced by entertainment stereotypes. The women cast in films targeted toward a majority male audience are often alluring or seductive, so if men are rarely introduced to the true female experience on screen, why would they place any interest in it in real life?

Sexist scenarios are not limited to the television and film side of media; female musicians experience them too. Female artists must go to drastic lengths to keep themselves relevant in pop culture. In singer Taylor Swift's documentary "Miss Americana," she explained this musical phenomenon. "Female artists have reinvented themselves 20x more than male artists. They have to, or else you're out of a job. Constantly having to reinvent, constantly finding new facets of yourself that people find to be shiny."

Chen observed the gender-based double standard present in the music industry, "When have male artists like Drake ever been expected to "rebrand" themselves? They haven't because males, especially in the rap/trap/country genre have never had any expectations to change their look or music."

Musicians like Swift, Miley Cyrus, Madonna and Lady Gaga have been big names in music for years, but they are also continually doing things that force people to talk about them. They "ruin" their reputation so that people will have a reason to keep listening to their music and caring about their performances. While male performers are applauded for simply standing on a stage and singing, female performers are expected to choreograph dance routines and sudden outfit changes to keep audiences looking at them.

The media's continuous disregard of female talent and experiences further perpetuates gender disparity and encourages men to continue their disrespectful habits.

