

# ***a vow of accountability and empowerment***

presented by sarah patisaul to be used by all theatre professionals

Theatre is supposed to be a reflection of our society. How, one might ask, will that ever be possible when the ones who create such art aren't empowered by the very thing meant to represent them? The current **heteronormative white patriarchy** favors such a small subsection of theatre artists that it limits the stories being told and the audiences who are able to engage with such stories. In order to fully comprehend and solve this problem, we must look at each grievance individually.

1. There are four times as many male playwrights as there are female.
2. White people are being overrepresented on stage while Asian Americans, Latinx, and Native Americans are hardly being cast at all in comparison.
3. Nonbinary representation is nearly nonexistent.
4. Sexual harassment is considered not only common but **inevitable** by many female and gender-nonconforming theatre professionals.
5. A conservatory education is one of the most expensive degrees to pursue.

The discrepancy these grievances create is blatant. The **society of privilege** we have perpetuated outside of the theater is being reflected in a harmful way within it. Therefore, it is our duty as members of this society to **dismantle** those systems of oppression within our place of work and make a conscious effort to promote an environment where **ALL** feel empowered, not just the few.

I will lead this effort once I make it into the professional world by making sure to only support projects with viewpoints similar to mine and who are making ethical decisions in terms of casting, hiring, and writing. This also means I will work only where there is workplace equity whenever possible. In doing so, I recognize my influence in **inciting change** and will do my part to stop harassment culture, microaggressions, and other forms of racism and gender discrimination at the source. By **speaking up** against these things, discrimination becomes a personal matter in which we all must take responsibility. This is vital to the longevity of a movement towards equality as we all get a taste of what we're fighting for.

In dedicating ourselves to the continued effort of uplifting and empowering everyone in theatre, we are taking the necessary steps of making truly **representative art**. We are also making the workplace a safe and comfortable place necessary for fostering creativity. This should be the theatre community's highest priority moving forward for the sake of preserving not only its employees but its audience as well.