(I want you to response to this)

Gender and popular culture are deeply intertwined and the relationship between them produces a considerable effect on society. Popular culture is one of the major forms in which people learn norms and values that are accepted by society. Therefore, it also plays an important role in the production of gender roles and values. These socially constructed ideas of gender are reinforced by popular culture forms like television, film, music, performance, magazines, comics, novels, games, fashion, and advertising. All these forms of popular culture represent the set of beliefs and values about masculinity and femininity in a given culture at a given time. One example that I can think of is the show Naruto: Shippuden, where Naruto is the main protagonist. This show tells the story of Naruto Uzumaki, a young ninja who seeks recognition from his peers and dreams of becoming the Hokage, the leader of his village. This show is gendered because it shows Naruto as the main character. Not only is the main character a male figure, but his dream is to become the leader of his village. This fits in with the typical definition of masculinity, to have power and be in control. Although this show does a good job of portraying women as strong and fierce there are several forms of gender norms portrayed.

One thing that I noticed about this particular show that caught my attention was the role of feminine characters. For example, Sakura, a female friend of Naruto, has superhuman strength. But unlike Naruto and many other male characters in the show her power is used in order to secure her survival to heal others. This gender difference shows stereotypical gender roles and values where the man is in charge of saving the world while the woman is in charge of making sure the male figure gets there. Also, in many cases, the women characters in this show are seen as more fragile and shyer whereas the male characters are portrayed as strong and invincible. So, even though there are many female characters that take an active role in this show, most of them are stereotyped to fit into societal norms of what it means to be feminine.

Another part of the show that I noticed highlights gender differences is the relationship between Sasuke and Sakura. When Sakura first confessed her love for Sasuke, she also begged for him to not leave the village, but for Sasuke, his journey of redemption against his brother was more important. This highlights major gender differences that seem to be considered feminine and masculine characteristics: females are often taught to care for the people they love. While males are taught to focus on their personal goals and to prioritize their needs above the needs of others.

(Also, response to this)

*For this discussion the popular culture genre I am picking is professional Sports. American sports, specifically advertising and accessibility to view them is heavily gendered.*

There is a distinct gendered nature surrounding sports and athletes who participate in them. Male centered sports are available to view on major networks and advertised nationally through the radio and television. It’s relatively easy to turn on the TV and find a men’s basketball game (whether college or professional), football, even soccer game playing on a major broadcasting network. If you are a Comcast service subscriber then you can even set reminders for these games to interrupt whatever you are watching. Rarely do I get suggestions from my “remote” to tune to a women’s game or that it might be something I am interested in because of my overall sports viewing history. If you don’t have cable, you are still able to find most professional sports on free major broadcasting channels during prime-time television hours. The majority sports available, if not all of them, are professional male sports. There are a few times during the summer in the morning hours you can catch tennis or volleyball on television on an affiliate broadcasting company (like the CW or PBS). The exception to our filtered exposure arises when it’s time for events such as the Olympics. This is broadcasted on national television companies and covers both men and women’s events across sports.

Advertising is the second way sports is heavily gendered. More often than not we hear or see advertisements for men’s sports both at the collegiate and professional levels. Even at the high school level men’s athletics are pushed more. When we do see advertisement for women’s athletics, they are strongly saturated with sex appeal and typically advertising something other than their sport. When you tune in to sports radio, typically they are giving a breakdown of all the male professionally played sports over that week or weekend. There might be a blurb about an achievement a women’s team made. Not only does this send a message that women are second rate athletes, it reinforces sexual objectification of women athletes and takes the focus away from their achievements. Advertising is such a powerful tool for persuasion it makes sense that minimal advertisement results in minimal interest. If advertising for women’s sports was on par with advertising for men’s sports there could be a greater interest in the athletic achievements and abilities of female athletes.

There should be a focus on the word athlete as well. We don’t refer to athletes as male athletes, but we often distinguish the difference when one is female. This makes the privilege of being an athlete gender dependent. If someone is a female athlete they are still privileged, but not in the same way a male athlete is. The professional sports genre has many layers of intersecting privilege and oppression that’s shape the individual experience for each athlete. The opportunities and recognition available to each athlete are dependent on their gender and continue to influence support and public interest.