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Examining Femininity and Oversexualization of Women in Anime

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Abstract

Anime has and continues to contribute to much of today’s popular culture. It is known for the display of gender fluidity, altering traditional views of gender and gender roles and its unique way of expressing women and their sexuality. From showing the essence of girl power in the hit series *Sailor Moon* to showing fierce female superheroes in *My Hero Academia*, anime has displayed many female characters in a progressive light. While doing so, there are still some setbacks due to the lack of character development and oversexualization of women in anime. From oversized breasts to skimpy outfits, the representation of women in anime appeal to a male fantasy by giving a false image of women throughout the media. Female characters have also fallen victim to being typecast as the sidekick or the hopeless romantic in love with the male lead. Common tropes, oversexualization and over use of fan service diminishes the female protagonist and the series itself. This paper will address the oversexualization of women in anime and how it is used to compensate for the lack of depth and character development.

**Keywords:** Fan service, Oversexualization, Character Development
1. Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, the love for Japanese animation known as *anime*, began and continues to rise, captivating both the young and young at heart. While capturing a wide range of viewers, it has also contributed to much of today’s pop culture. Ranging from clothing to comic books and from video games to famous memes being shared on social media, everywhere you look there is some reference to anime. With its heavy influence on pop culture, it has also transformed traditional views on gender, gender roles and sexuality. Boundaries were broken by showcasing sexually ambiguous characters, transforming traditional female roles and displaying women owning their sexuality. These examples can be found in shows like *Naruto* and *Inuyasha*. *Naruto* follows a young teenage boy who goes through trials to becoming a *Hokage* or leader of his village. As for the series *Inuyasha*, it follows a young girl and a half demon who travel in search of a rare jewel to stop the spread of evil. The showcase of sexually ambiguous characters are evident in both series. To depict strong and masculine women, they are often voiced by male actors. These women are also displayed by having manly physiques to give the impression of them being strong. While having a masculine physique, they are still dressed femininely to signify the viewers that they are still women. An example of this is shown in the popular series *Hunter X Hunter*, with the character Biscuit. In Figure 1, you see Biscuit dressed in a frilly tutu. From looking at the picture, you see her appearance capturing the essence of a young girl. Her tutu is pink, has puffy sleeves and she wears bows in her hair. Throughout many anime series, there are plenty of female characters that are dressed similar to Biscuit. These outfits stem from the aesthetic of ballet manga. Ballet manga play a major role in Japanese culture. It gets its influence from Western ballet costumes when worn during performances and is used to capture and portray a certain image of women and girls in anime and manga. Ballet manga and depicting
female characters as little girls play into the idea if being young and cute. Although portrayed as an innocent young girl, Biscuit is actually an adult. In the show, she reveals that she is a middle-aged woman. Why is a middle-aged woman still wearing the clothing of an eight-year-old girl? This is an example of how ballet manga is used to express that being young and innocent is not only aesthetically pleasing but being older and mature is less attractive and less appealing.

As for Figure 2, you see Biscuit in her masculine form. In the series, she often hides her true strength because of her looking “too manly”. When she displays her true strength, her body morphs. She becomes taller and more muscular. Once fully transformed, she simply looks like a man dressed in little girl’s clothing. Her voice is even deeper to depict how strong she is. Transforming into a man is an example of how strength can only be associated with men. In order for Biscuit to be seen as strong, she has to take on another persona, which is a man. While Biscuit is just one example, there are other examples that portray the opposite. As for feminine men, they have softer features and are voiced by women actors. And like Biscuit where she turns into a man to represent how strong she is, womanly men are depicted as female to show their softer side. While breaking many gender typecasts with the display of gender ambiguity and
androgyny, there are still some hinderances. These include the obsession of the use of the cute and adorable aesthetic shown in many *shōjo* anime and the lack of progression of the development of the female protagonist. These examples play a major role when examining the oversexualization of women in anime and how it affects the female viewer. Oversexualization or sexual objectification of women is commonly used through the media by showing cleavage, close up shots of short skirts in both anime and other forms of advertising otherwise known as fan service.

![Figure 2](image)

As a fan and avid watcher of anime, I have noticed that while the female protagonist is displayed as strong and independent, they are not taken as serious as the male protagonist. Although there are instances where the female lead’s strength is greater or equal to her male counterpart, their strength is often overshadowed because of her “dominant” attitude and her overly sexualized body. In *Inuyasha* and *Naruto*, both male characters are portrayed as strong and possess supernatural powers. As for the female leads, they are seen as the sidekick who follow the male lead as he progresses throughout the series. As a result, the female lead is not only a trophy but a stepping stone to better the male lead. They are also utilized as a prop to make the male lead more desirable. When examining the female protagonist, it is important to understand more often than not is that their sole purpose is to further the development of the male lead. Because of the common use of overshadowing and oversexualization of the female...
character, it diminishes the female character’s value. Such example is seen in the series *Food Wars*.

*Food Wars* a series that follows teenagers who aspire to be professional chefs who attend a prestigious academy to better their cooking skills. While learning to master their craft, many female characters, who are teenagers, are dressed in revealing attire. One of the main characters, Ikumi Mito, is dressed in short shorts and a bikini top (Figure 3).

![Image of Ikumi Mito](image)

**Figure 3**

Why is a teenage girl wearing a bikini and short shorts when training to be a sous chef? What message does this send to younger viewers? This is a perfect example of the oversexualization of the female body in anime and that there is emphasis on appearances. In my research I will be addressing the issues of oversexualization in anime and how it affects female fans and how they view themselves and others in the media. I will also identify how youth, innocence and oversexualization are shown in both *shōjo* and *shōnen* appeal to the male fantasy and are seen as the ideal examples of being feminine. The questions I will address are: What are the common tropes displayed for the female protagonists? Why is oversexualization of female protagonists coined as fan service?
2. Literature Review

Shōjo and Shōnen

Two known genres of anime are shōjo and shōnen. Shōjo is centered around romance or other personal relationships that is mostly geared towards the female audience. Shōnen is centered around action and is geared towards the male audience. While being two completely different genres, shōjo and shōnen both portray women sexually in different ways. “Originally, both girls and boys were called shōnen, which means youth”.¹ The shōjo culture developed from it portraying a certain image and theme, specifically appealing to young girls between the ages of twelve and seventeen. Common concepts and images associated with this genre are often glitter, flowers, magic and romance. “There is a certain conception of shōjo manga aesthetics, dominated by images of flowers, ribbons, fluttering hem skirts, and innocent looking girls with large, staring eyes”.² This aesthetic can be seen throughout famous anime such as Sailor Moon and Cardcaptor Sakura. Other series such as Fruits Basket and Kamisama Kiss, all display the romance aesthetic. They have a bubbly female lead that faces the turmoil of different relationships, both romantic and platonic. The images of flowers, ribbons and glitter are all a part of the theme ballet manga. During the Meiji Period, the concept of shōjo was originally used to educate or coach young girls on how to be the “ideal woman.” In “Layers of the Ethereal: A Cultural Investigation of Beauty, Girlhood, and Ballet in Japanese Shōjo Manga, Masafumi Monden explains how during the 19th Century the ideological purpose for shōjo was to educate girls under the slogan or concept of “good wife, wise mother” inspired by Victorian notions of

“true womanhood”. Costumes worn in Western ballet performances (tutus, puffy sleeves and ribbons) were used as influences when creating characters in shōjo manga. The use of ballet manga is also evident in Sailor Moon.

Sailor Moon is one of the most watched anime and is very popular among many age groups. This series follows a young girl and her friends who are warriors or “Pretty Guardians” who fight against evil and protect the moon. The colorful outfits and the title “Pretty Guardians” are examples of the girlish tone that is being set. Throughout the series, to activate their powers these sailor warriors change into their costumes or “uniforms” to defeat the enemy. During their transformation, their costumes are very similar to that of a ballerina. You could even say the outfits of the Sailor Guardians are somewhat similar or have the same influence to Biscuit in Hunter X Hunter. From the tutu skirts, ballet shoes and ribbons, it is obvious of the Western influence of ballet culture. Magic is also used as a source of their power. Like Sailor Moon and many others, the influence of shōjo and ballet manga are very evident in anime and Japanese popular culture. This can be seen in Figure 4. There is this hyper feminine ideal that is portrayed to many viewers. Besides the ballet-esque costumes, there is also the reference of women and girls being seen as frilly and sweet. Not only is this seen in television but also in many other forms of popular culture. In the article “The Desire and Disgust of Sweets: Consuming Femininities through Shōjo Manga,” Grace En-Yi Ting argues how shōjo culture and ballet manga correlate to sweet pastries and how they are seen as representation of femininity. Often times flowers, frilly things, candy and other sweets are often associated with young girls and women and more frequently in Japanese pop culture.

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There are also references to sweets in many Japanese clothing and cosmetics. Today you see many young girls who purchase lip gloss in a tube shaped as a sort of pastry item or a pencil pouch that is adorned with cupcakes or other puff pastry items. Both are examples in how shōjo culture has become mainstream and is seen in more than just manga and anime. The issue with this is the idea or fantasy of women being soft, sweet individuals who are simply capable of being the “good wife” or sweet innocent young girl. As mentioned earlier, shōjo culture was introduced to educate young girls on how to grow and become the ideal wife. This was because of the main goal for a woman being married and starting a family. Although marriage is not portrayed as the goal in many manga and anime, romance and finding a companion does play a significant role. Monden states that shōjo culture demonstrates 3 virtues: affection, chastity and aesthetics.\(^5\) Shōjo anime and manga is centered around romance and other personal relationships and all have a common theme of being drawn into “sweet indulgence” (romance) and other aspirations. Flowers, glitter, sweets and ribbons all correlate with one another because of it leading back to romance.

\(^5\) Monden, 252
In *shōnen* anime, women are portrayed as more edgy. Instead of flowers and frilly skirts, the female characters’ dress is more revealing. As mentioned previously, shows like *Naruto* display that break the traditional female gender roles. Others such as *My Hero Academia, Hunter X Hunter, Dragon Ball* and *One Piece* are all popular *shōnen* anime. Unlike *shōjo* where romance is the main theme, *shōnen* appeals to the aesthetic of action and adventure. While both genres attract fans with fantasy, magic, action and adventure, the role and display of women is different. Instead of the innocent, girly image, female leads are seen as “sexy” or “badass”. Unlike tutus and ribbons, there are short shorts, large amounts of cleavage and other types of revealing clothing. While there is some *shōnen* anime that have strong female leads, they are often seen as the love interest towards the male lead or the sidekick to better the development of the male lead. Also, they often have little to no character development which is compensated with their looks. With this, we must look at the cute aesthetic and obsession with youth and innocence.

**Cute Aesthetic**

The cute and adorable aesthetic is a major part of Japanese society and pop culture. This aesthetic is called *kawaii*, which means cute translated in English. In many anime and manga, cuteness is associated with women and young girls. As mentioned earlier, referencing women to sweets and other forms of cuteness, displays the epitome of femininity. In the west when you think of something cute, it is often referenced to a child or child-like behavior, whereas in Japan cuteness is seen as the *ideal* form of femininity and is only connected to women and young girls. Because of this, there is a false image of women which can become an issue. In Erin O’Flaherty’s paper ‘Do *Kawaii* Aesthetics Disempower Women’ explains that the idea of *kawaii* is pervasive in Japan and is shown throughout manga and anime. She states, “*Kawaii* thus forms
an ideal femininity— a way in which females can be considered attractive by males. “6 With the overload of adorability and presenting the image of women only being cute and soft, gives the notion that in order to be considered attractive, you must be young and “cute”.

In many shōjo, the main characters are often young school girls or adult women who possess child-like behavior and features. School girl outfits, big eyes, long hair and other doll-like features are just some examples. O’Flaherty states that it is just on the margins of girlhood and womanhood, “the shōjo seems to dignify the girl who never grows up.”7 As stated in the introduction, the character Biscuit, although a middle aged-woman, she is portrayed as a young girl wearing bows and a tutu. Her character is an example of the fixation of being young and being able to appeal to younger viewers. Being young and the notion of never growing up is what appeals to not only a younger audience but the male fantasy. The idea of being cute, child-like behavior, doll-like features and girlish innocence has become the ideal femininity that makes the character more attractive.

Oversized breasts and short skirts are not the only ways in which females are oversexualized. The excessive use of cuteness and girlish innocence is another method of sexual objectification. Being seen as young and innocent is limiting and gives the idea that women are somewhat viewed as children because they are seen as weak and codependent. As for shōnen, it is the opposite. Shōjo displays girlish innocence and cute content whereas shōnen displays racy, sexual content. To understand oversexualization of the female character, we must first consider the female role and how oversexualization stems from having lack of depth and little to no character development. Unlike the characters in shōjo, shōnen has a different spin. Although action themed, and possessing bodies of adult women, the female characters in shōnen are still

6 Erin O’Flaherty, “Do ‘Kawaii’ Aesthetic Disempower Women?” p. 2
7 O’Flaherty, 3-4
dressed as young girls. Some examples are them being dressed in school girl uniforms and having child-like facial features but presented as grown women. This demonstrates how although they are physically adult women, the idea of being a young girl is still present because of the school girl uniform and child-like facial features.

Examining Female Character Development

Oversized breasts, revealing clothing, and the fetishization of girlish innocence is not the only issue when it comes to the female portrayal in anime. The significance in their role is also confined to two types of female characters. One type is shy and innocent who has or develops feelings for the main character, while often portrayed as weak or the sidekick. Another type is the hyper sexualized character who is just as or stronger than the male counterpart but is overshadowed by her sexuality and attitude. One of example of this is found in two female characters Hinata Hyuga and Sakura Haruno from *Naruto*. Throughout the series you see each character develop into their own but become stagnant. Granted, the series is centered around Naruto Uzimaki and his journey, but it is frustrating to fans seeing female characters continue to be stuck in the same stereotypical roles. Although coming from a line of strong, fighting ninjas, Hinata is portrayed as shy and very soft-spoken, while being in love with Naruto. Throughout the show she struggles to become stronger and further develop her skills. As she learns to develop her skill and is shown in different fight scenes, she is always seen as the damsel in distress. The role of the damsel in distress is often used as a technique to motivate the male lead to be stronger and to be seen as a hero to other characters. This is shown throughout several episodes when Hinata is engaged in combat.

Figure 5 display two photos of Hinata. On the left is Hinata from *Naruto* and on the right from *Naruto Shippuden*. *Naruto* is the series where we are introduced to both characters Hinata
Hyuga and Sakura Haruno as young children. *Naruto Shippuden* is where we follow up with these characters as teenagers who have become recognized ninjas. On the left, by looking at her body language, you can see that Hinata is portrayed as shy and soft spoken. On the right, you see her matured and has become a recognized ninja. While becoming a recognized ninja, in both shows Hinata is still seen as shy and needs help when in battle.

![Figure 5](image)

As for Sakura, her character is portrayed differently. While Sakura slowly develops into her own character and is later seen as an equal opponent, she was often displayed as dead weight and not having her own storyline or backstory. While engaged in battle she was not seen as a damsel in distress but seen as a weakling for not even attempting to engage during fight scenes throughout the earlier seasons. In Figure 6, you also see her mature between *Naruto* and *Naruto Shippuden*.

![Figure 6](image)
For us to examine oversexualization we must first consider the role of the female protagonists. We must look at their contributions to the plot and overall, their significance. Hinata and Sakura are just two examples of how many female characters are portrayed in several different anime. When comparing male and female characters, it is common that the female characters are either overshadowed or simply go unnoticed. Some characters’ sole purpose is to further develop the male character to give the viewer the idea that he is stronger than his female counterparts. As mentioned earlier, more often than not, there are many female leads who are stronger than the male counterpart but have their abilities overshadowed because of their loud and dominant attitude, over sexualized body or simply presented as a love-struck teenager who is obsessed with the male lead. An example is the main character Usagi Tsukino, known as Sailor Moon. She is the leader of the Pretty Guardians and is also the Princess of the moon who holds great power. Although having this great power, both fellow characters and viewers see her as annoying, childish, irresponsible and boy crazy.

Throughout the series, Usagi is always shown either obsessing over a new crush she has in school or running from her responsibilities as both a teenager and fighting crime as a hero. There have also been circumstances where she is saved by a masked hero named Tuxedo Mask. There are other incidents where Sailor Moon and the other Pretty Guardians had to be saved by Tuxedo Mask simply because Sailor Moon was not holding her weight on the team. Her character is just one of the types of female characters that are often portrayed in various anime.

While looking at female character development and role significance, we must also look at the issue of hatred and neglect of the female character. Unlike the male character, the female character is often neglected, resulting in the lack of character development. “If you get past the overall oversexualization of female characters in anime the main argument for anime’s “hatred
of women” is the staggering lack of character development arcs. Even for stories with girls as the primary characters, the characters often do not experience development and are acted upon instead of acting.”

Referencing back to \textit{Naruto} and Sakura’s character, unlike her male teammates she was not given a backstory, no depth or further development. While she matures in \textit{Naruto Shippuden}, throughout \textit{Naruto} she works harder than both Sasuke and Naruto just to barely reach their skill level as they began to further their training. Sakura and other well-known female characters often fall to this neglect resulting in them being disliked by fans, both male and female. With neglect and lack of character development, many female characters fall to the common tropes such as being seen as a prop for the male character and being victim to the display of fan service.

\textbf{Fans and Fan Service}

Sex Sells! Throughout many television shows and movies, sexuality has played a major role in increasing sales and views from fans. Throughout the United States, sex has been used as a marketing strategy to sell everything from food to promoting upcoming movies. Sexual innuendos or references we see in anime have some similarities but are completely different. These references are known as fan service.

From skimpy outfits to having up-close shots of shorts or breasts, fan service is a common method in appealing to the anime fanbase. Fan service are features such as these are used draw in the audience. This is often used in regards to the female character. “This phenomenon manifests itself in the form of sexualization (usually female) by using the

metaphorical camera and framing a shot to draw attention to and focus on such tasteless attractions such as cleavage, underwear, skin and more.”

Throughout many series, the implying or references to sex is so common that it has become quite over the top and is shown through both male and female characters. Some may ask, is the use of fan service necessary? What is too little or too much fan service? Why is it used? “Many anime uses this tactic as a re-occurring trick to draw in their audience using fan service as a supplement or substitute for the plot of the show”. Sometimes too much fan service is seen as unnecessary and diminishes a series’ value.

One issue with fan service is it being called “fan service”. Why is the oversexualization and exploitation of women and their bodies seen as a service to keep fans interested in a specific anime series or movie? “Anime is a very economically-minded medium, meaning that the primary goal of producing anime is to make a profit, and, like any such medium, its first and foremost priority is supplying its consumers with whatever it may be that they desire.” When making and advertising anime, it is important to listen to what fans want. By giving the fans what they want, views increase and by views increasing, so do sales. I agree that in order to make money, one must give people what they want, but to what extent. When does it become too much? Just like myself and many other fans, fan service can be overwhelming when trying to enjoy a new series. In order to obtain the opinions of other fans and their views on fan service, I followed a Reddit post on said issue. What most of these comments had in common was that fan service could be overwhelming and could be either good or bad depending on context.

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10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
Comment posted by bubudog1 was the most pertinent because they mention the character Mineta from the series *My Hero Academia* (Figure 7). He is presented as a young, horny teenager who is constantly looking up girls’ skirts, cleavage, and is always trying to “cop a feel” throughout the show. He is never taken seriously because of him being so focused on the opposite sex.

Granted, it is not only the female character that is objectified. There are some male characters who are also exploited. They are admired by other female characters, often times shown wearing no shirt and are just portrayed as the guy mysterious guy who everyone is in love with. Fan service and objectification applies to both male and female, but it is an issue when it is one sided. When you think of anime and oversexualization, it often references the female instead of the male.

3. Methodology

For this project, mixed methods were used while conducting my research. A survey of five questions was given to a total of twenty-two participants. These participants consisted of
both male and female anime fans between the ages 18 and 32. The purpose of this survey was to compare the opinions of how female characters are portrayed from both the male and female perspective. Two questions that I focused on were: 1) How do you think women/female characters are portrayed in anime? 2) Do you think they are over/hyper sexualized?

**Data Analysis**

After reviewing the responses, I was surprised at how several of the participants believed that women were either oversexualized or used as common tropes. Some responses were: Stronger than normal anime characters, but sometimes falling to typical tropes in regards to backstory; Very sexual, clothing often revealing; Sexualized with skimpy clothes, portrayed in erotic poses, camera angles on their body parts and sometimes touched or sexualized by male characters; Anime has always used fan service to cater to male viewers. After examining each question and response, many of them shared similar comments stating that women may be portrayed as strong but are still in need of saving or used as props.

I also examined which anime each participant believed to be their favorite. The choices were *Food Wars, Kill La Kill, Fairy Tail* and *Seven Deadly Sins*. These four shows were chosen because of my familiarity with them and wanting to see if other fans shared the same opinions towards said series. While conducting this survey, I also reexamined each series to take note of which displayed the most fan service and to compare my observations with those who participated in the survey. What these four shows have in common is the oversexualization and the lack of development for the female characters. 5 people voted for *Seven Deadly Sins*, 4 for
*Kill La Kill, 5 for *Food Wars* and 7 for *Fairy Tail* making it the fan favorite because of it receiving the most votes.

![Bar chart showing the survey results](image)

**Figure 8**

I was astonished at fans selecting it as their favorite and their reasoning behind choosing it.

Along with the survey, I also viewed episodes of *Fairy Tail* to examine the use of fan service and oversexualization of the characters. I took note on how the main characters were viewed from both the participants in the survey to how they are viewed by other characters in the show.

Unlike the others, while the female characters were objectified throughout, many fans felt that *Fairy Tail* displayed the best character development. One response was that the women are strong and fairly independent and that it reflects their physical and inner strength and how it demonstrates their growth from past events. Another response was that the female characters are given depth and complexity; there are certain tropes that are employed at times but *Fairy Tail* does a good job of incorporating different women into the story. *Food Wars, Seven Deadly Sins,*
and *Kill La Kill* received little to no response. Personally, I was expecting more feedback on *Food Wars* or *Seven Deadly Sins* because of its popularity and heavy usage of fan service.

There are several uses of fan service in *Food Wars* and *Seven Deadly Sins*. The heavy usage of fan service is used as comedic relief but can also be seen as unnecessary and uncomfortable for viewers. While seeming to be a kid’s show, there are several sexual innuendos throughout *Food Wars*. Throughout the show when the characters are tasting each other’s dishes, if a dish is delicious, the character is shown having an orgasm. If the dish is to be exquisite, the characters not only have orgasms but are shown enjoying their food in an erotic way. Some female characters are shown naked while being covered in food to express how appetizing that dish might be. This is shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

![Figure 9](image)

In Figure 9, you see the character Megumi Tadokoro who is covered in honey. This is an example of the innuendos seen in many anime. To demonstrate Megumi’s love for a dish, she is half-naked and draped in honey for exaggeration. In Figure 10, we see other characters who are naked after eating.
When looking at *Seven Deadly Sins*, the development of the female characters is little to nonexistent and showcase the common trope of the damsel in distress. There are also several scenes where the male lead Meliodas groping the female protagonist Elizabeth Liones. One example is shown in Figure 11. Following the survey and evaluating each response, I concluded that although there is usage of fan service and oversexualization of the female character, some fans take this with a grain of salt. Although it can be unnecessary and seen as a prop, many believe that fan service and oversexualization can be used when put in appropriate context.
Conclusion

Japan has become the staple of cute culture and has transformed it into a global phenomenon that appeals to anime fans both young and old. With the use of magic, adventure and fantasy, anime continues to grow its fan base. Unlike many Western cartoons, anime has altered the view of traditional gender roles and gender fluidity. We see the breaking of traditional gender roles in *Sailor Moon* by young teenage girls fighting crime by night while still living normal teenage lives. Gender fluidity and androgyny is seen in shows like *Inuyasha* and *Naruto* in both male and female characters. Anime has made countless efforts in showing diversity throughout many shows by not only having women fight crime and be super heroes but also by expressing their sexuality and owning their bodies. Even though there has been much progress, it has come at a price. Many female characters have fallen victim to common tropes used throughout many series and has been oversexualized due to creating images that appeal to the male fantasy and obsession with being young, cute and innocent. It has also brought on the issue of what is considered feminine and what is considered masculine.

After conducting my research, I have found that there is no grey area. Femininity and masculinity are both exaggerated when used to represent certain characters. When looking at the female protagonist, she is either seen as a sex symbol whose strength is overlooked because of her being a sex symbol, or a soft-spoken little girl who is also overlooked because of her sole purpose being to better enhance the male lead. By femininity being associated with tutus, bows, glitter and little girls and masculinity being associated with men and having a strong, muscular physique it gives a false narrative. By associating femininity with innocence, ribbons, glitter and tutus, it gives the idea that all women associate themselves with this. It has also given the idea that masculinity is associated with being the hero, saving the girl and being seen as the most
wanted is only applied to men. Oversexualization does not just affect female characters, but male characters as well. There are many series that display the objectification of the male character such as *Fairy Tail* and many others. While male characters are over and hypersexualized, it is very uncommon unlike the female character.

Anime has been very progressive to showing women in action. From *Sailor Moon* to *My Hero Academia*, it has been shown that women in anime can be strong or possibly stronger than their male counterparts. Due to common tropes and oversexualization it can be difficult to recognize and appreciate them. Commonly seen as weak and sex symbols, it can be very discrediting. As a result of this, their strengths are not only overlooked but given a false image of women in the media.
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