

The disney princess effect: an argumentative analysis

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



Stephanie Hanes is a journalist who has taken note of the way that young girls are starting to become more sexualized and starting to grow up much faster. Hanes uses many rhetorical devices throughout her argument that make her argument convincing and authoritative, including approaches from ethos, logos, and pathos, as well as rhetorical modes. Hanes uses many rhetorical modes and devices to create a convincing argument that young girls are being hypersexualized much too soon in their lives. First, she establishes who the audience is within just the first few paragraphs: the parents of these young girls and toddlers. The purpose of her argument is to inform them of what is happening within this society and to show exactly how girls are being affected by the Disney Princess Effect. That is, that these children are experiencing too much sexuality and being taught how a woman should look and behave at much too young an age, and it seems to keep decreasing with time. Hanes effectively uses the style and organization of her argument to her advantage.

The whole article is set up as a problem-solution with headings to sort all of it out. There is a very prominent use of logos, as there is a very effective use of all kinds of statistics and research to support the claim. All of it is organized in bullet points so that it is easy to comprehend and view all of the information. For example, Hanes says, " The marketing group NPD Fashionworld reported in 2003 that more than \$1. 6 million is spent annually on thong underwear for 7 to 12 year olds," on page 510. Thongs are typically for much older women, and this just shows that younger girls are being purchased more " sexy" types of undergarments. Also, Hanes explores that girls that play sports in elementary school often stop playing those sports

later on. Page 511 quotes in a study done by the Women's Sports Foundation that, " 6 girls drop out of sports for every one boy by the end of high school..." Research from a Girl Scout study also revealed that " 23 percent of girls between the ages of 11 to 17 do not play sports because they do not think their bodies look good doing so." Sports are very important for young girls and Hanes is showing that due to the earlier exposure to sexualization of females and women that girls are becoming more worried with how they look than they are about being active and enjoying their youth.

Pathos is also utilized in Hanes argument. The article starts out with the story of Mary Finucane, struggling with her 3 year old daughter. All of a sudden, instead of being her usual bubbly, playful self, her baby had started to only want to wear dresses. One day, her 3 year old toddler sat on the front steps and told her mother that she was waiting for her prince. When brought up to other parents, there was no response but a shrug. It was starting to become the norm for other people's daughters as well, and when children are that young, they should not nearly be worried about finding their prince, when they have yet to even begin their own education.

Ethos is also evident in this argument. By referencing the story of Professor Brown and her then 16 year old daughter, Hanes shows that young girls should be kept aware of how they are being portrayed in media, advertisements, and even in entertainment. Professor Brown often stops during shows to tell her daughter that a female character is being poorly represented or to explain away a stereotype about women. Maya Brown also says that when her mother read to her as a child, she would change the

story to make the female character's role more important and more involved. It is an appeal to the ethics of parents to keep their daughters in the loop of what is real and what is false in the media, and when things are being portrayed badly. Hanes has a very effective argument. She provides ample evidence throughout the entire article, and appeals to more than just one part of the audience. She wants it to become more widely accepted to have your daughters still rough-and-tumble and creative when they are young, and ultimately leave the sexualization for when they are older. If they were older, they would be more capable of understanding what "waiting for my prince" is, and what it means to behave and think like a woman. Because Hanes used such a clear format for her argument, the audience is very clearly able to see her claim and her purpose for the whole thing. It is very important to her that these young girls are being taught the correct things and being viewed in the right light. Through her problem-solution set up of her argument, Hanes leaves her audience with a last problem with no solution. This then leaves her audience to find that solution within themselves. She essentially is asking for parents to find it within themselves to solve this hypersexualization. She says, "We can't just sit here and say, 'Oh the kids are so messed up... We must find that within ourselves.'"

In conclusion, Stephanie Hanes very clearly depicted her argument that young girls are being influenced heavily by what they are exposed to and should stop being exposed to things that are maturing and hypersexualizing them. This affects girls from all ages, toddlers to teenagers. Hanes does this

through her use of ethos, logos, and pathos, as well as her use of organization and rhetorical devices.