

Mrs. Kirby

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“Cinderella and Princess Culture” Summary

In her article “Cinderella and Princess Culture,” author Peggy Orenstein asserts that in recent years society has experienced a dramatic surge in princess culture, and she explores the possible effects of such a trend on girls. Particularly through analysis of princess merchandising, Orenstein attempts to determine both the cause of the popularity increase and if such an infatuation is healthy for today’s young women.

Orenstein begins by using an anecdote revealing her feministic reservations toward stereotypical female characteristics, such as the color pink and princesses (670). Despite her dislike, Orenstein goes on to admit that today’s girls (and contemporary society in general) are enthralled by the princess culture. She points out myriad companies, such as Disney, Mattel, and Club Libby Lu, who have recently decided to market new lines of princess merchandise—and have reaped enormous profits. Despite the obvious demand for such commodities, the author wonders whether parents who allow their daughters to purchase these products are aiding in damaging their girls’ physical and mental health (671). On the other hand, Orenstein concedes that the princess culture may not be sinister, but instead it may represent a new phase of feminism: one where girls are so self-confident that they believe they can be both fairy tale characters and successful professionals (672).

Orenstein then interviews Andy Mooney, the head of marketing for the Disney Princess line. Mooney argues that girls truly desire to be princesses through personal choice (672). He

claims that there is no harm in adoring princesses, since girls eventually grow out of that phase and go on to become whatever they want (673). Orenstein admits that there is no evidence linking princesses and girls' self-esteem but still maintains that a fascination with femininity can eventually overwhelm girls and cause serious problems.

Orenstein, Peggy. "Cinderella and Princess Culture." *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*. Eds., Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen. Boston: Longman, 2011. 670-673.