

# Why i want a wife: essay samples

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



Written at the precise moment in relatively recent American history, the so-called 'women's liberation' movement occurred. The article associated with the fallout, or brilliant piece alluding to what the feminist movement criticized, a literary rant on wanting to have a wife and outlining the reasons why poses much fodder for contemplation. Judy Brady penned the article which appeared in 'Ms. Magazine' in 1972, having been later re-printed in 1990 by the same publication of 'Ms. Magazine.' This paper fosters an argumentative thesis that shall hold to three claims in connection to the main idea in this essay, which is: The women's movement encouraged the belittling of housewives, promulgating a devaluation of her contributions in human capital. The three claims attached to this essay and thesis argument include: (a) male and female were pitted against each other, (b) the women's movement created an 'either-or scenario' in which home-related tasks and outside-labor employment activities were diametrically opposed, and (c) the women's lib movement masqueraded as progress, instead of being viewed as a detrimental influence on keeping families together.

While it is true that the task herein does not condone a full summary of the Brady article, yet mention of its overall point is unavoidable. It appears that nobody will be able to read and comprehend what the article is saying without a stimulation to give an opinion about it. The functions of the housewife, or simply wife demonstrate the multi-tasking and often impossibly exhaustive work (in human capital) that married mothers at home do. The article makes no attempt to avoid the implications that a wife is expected to completely run the household, in carrying out duties to serve both husband and children. Judy Brady lists all the cooking, ironing,

attending to medical and dental appointment calendars, scrubbing the home clean, washing laundry, and with expectations to passionately fulfill all the sexual needs of her spouse. Furthermore, Brady names the admonition not to bother the husband “ with rambling complaints about a wife’s duties” (2). The sarcasm and irony in the tone is not missed. However, while the women’s movement has achieved a plethora of outcomes leaves no doubt that it belittled wives and promulgated a devaluation of her – and women generally – in terms of contribution to human capital. First of all, you may be wondering by what is meant by ‘ human capital.’

In the realm of common understanding and common knowledge (without need for erudite explanations) human capital is easily understood as the work that makes the world go round. Feeding and diapering babies, organizing the home’s food pantry, sweeping out trash and keeping the habitat as disease-free as possible, and so on. The daily tasks associated with the care of human kind, whether pertaining directly to the family or indirect participation by answering phones at a part-time job that assists the organization to function. Although it is true, and may be rationally argued, that a woman in the role of wife constructed a narrow setting for someone who may have an exceeding amount of talents – and intelligence – that might be applied to economic work outside the home there certainly was a tradeoff in terms of the quality of family life. The first claim then posits that because of the women’s so-called liberation movement in the 1970s, male and female were pitted against one another. Wives’ and husbands’ roles were forced into comparative categories. They suddenly shifted from being a team working as a functional dual-unit together to hostile enemies arguing

over the rights and values of territory.

Undoubtedly it is unfair to suggest that any of this negative fallout occurred instantaneously, or overnight, yet the fact remains that woman (and men) were both confused and challenged by the new feminist liberation-speak and agenda. The reason it is referred to as an agenda on top of being a socio-political movement is that certain outcomes implemented an entirely new era of how families would look, and function in the future. What was so wrong about cleaning the house, washing dishes, caring for the laundry, and having the incentive of knowing your children would gain a sense of direction and support by knowing the wife was home? You must admit that assuming the factor of a non-abusive home situation, that having a loving wife and mother managing the home and attending to all the household needs, almost seemed idyllic and ideal. Not every family was able to survive economically by having the wife to stay at home. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that those persons found in the lower socio-economic scale of life had no choice.

While it is unintended to leave the poorer, economically disadvantaged wives and families out of the main thrust of the discussion, each individual family was different. In some situations in the 1970s it was necessary for the wives of poorer families to perform part-time or full-time work outside the home. Usually, and it is safe to say, that these kinds of jobs represented traditional women's day-work in terms of gender roles in positions such as teachers, nurses, clerks, telephone operations and the like. Dr. Kathleen Kendall-Tackett in an article entitled 'Hearth and Home: The Fascinating History of Women's Domestic Work in America' makes rich and astonishing

observations about the matter. She posits that the so-called traditional role of women to be housewives came from the concept of how life was (or supposed to be) in the 1950s. Obviously, overall the concept embraces perfect harmony between the man and woman in terms of what their respective roles were. But once again, while it remains a firm belief of this writer that males and females were pitted against each other, a multi-dimensional of the historical reality is required.

In the article Kendall-Tackett acknowledges the difficulty of stress that working mothers have to deal with, who also are wives but not necessarily stay-at-home moms in today's modern world. Kendall-Tackett states " Many of the rules that tyrannize housewives are unconscious and therefore potent" (" Hearth and Home: Fascinating Women's Domestic"). The idea here reflects that women actually feel guilty about not being able to afford to stay home, and attend to their homes and husbands. Also, many of today's mothers are unmarried. Her answer and advice to women is not to let household ' technology' control you. In historical terms she is smart enough to recognize that the true ' traditional family' has its roots in the antebellum era during slavery times when prior to the Civil War, white " womens work at home had its greatest cultural support" (" Hearth and Home: Fascinating Women's Domestic"). Indeed that historical setting, in certain of economically abled homes and families, there must have been a certain security of knowing a warmth and reliability coupled with wives' domestication.

Even though Kendall-Tackett makes good points about the deep historical roots of female domesticity being found in the antebellum years, she

suggests that the decline in these culturally valued outlooks occurred between 1865 and 1920. She advances her claim by stating that the gradual shift in domestically valuing the wife began to surface in literature wherein numerous examples no longer exemplified the woman (at home full-time) as a symbolizing “ the moral center of the family and the culture; mothers were seen as the problem” (“ Hearth and Home: Fascinating Women’s Domestic”). Having said that, how could one argue with all the benefits that Brady outlines in the all-encompassing duties that a modern wife provided? In either case it is clear that the women’s liberation movement further pitted men against women, in a confused kaleidoscope of each gender’s expected roles in society.

The second claim, that the women’s movement in the 1970s created an ‘ either-or’ scenario regarding a demand to choose which was more important, outside employment or household domestic-related tasks, is close to the first claim – but obviously distinctively different. Perhaps the battle or tension between whose work was more important functioned as a symptom of the problem of growing hostility, and role changes, between men and women. Whereas even the women of a lesser economic status had to work outside the home, they generally also were responsible for all the domestic chores as well. Whereas the role of wives’ domesticated work, being appreciated as a valuable contribution to human capital, the women’s movement put the framework of their argument as a matter of ‘ choices.’ Even if poorer women worked in or outside their homes due to economic need, they still believed in family and in a husband and wife being married – and working co-functionally as a team.

It is this view that supports the claim that women's domesticated tasks began to be negatively compared to a man's traditional role of engaging in economic labor outside the home, to – as they say – bring home the bacon. It appears as though two threads of influence are at work in this concept, weaving a new fabric of a wife's domestic role in her home as an exclusive domain. Kendall-Tackett point out the two identifiers as the industrialization of labor-saving devices, and consumerism attached to women's drive to work in the outside labor force. Suddenly women were 'awakening' according to the women's liberation agenda, and now they would be able to have more choices, cuter clothes, and even perhaps purchase their own automobiles (of course, after getting their husband's permission and possibly helping to pay off his car note first). In a strange way, perhaps women began placing less value on their domesticated tasks in an effort to seek more ways to create an independent life for themselves – apart from husbands and children. It appears that household chores began to be demeaned. Perhaps one reason why is because the "labor-saving devices eliminated the need for domestic help" for those who could afford it, creating a reality of how handy devices could make cleaning jobs easier, in the midst of the lure of what luxury more money could bring.

Beyond the argument that men's outside work began being weighed against the value and importance of wives' domestic tasks and duties, Kendall-Tackett makes an observation that since the household tasks were made more convenient, wives were basically stupid and did not need (or have) intelligence to get domestic duties done. She also posits that suddenly wives (women in general) had begun to be dictated to by "the army of experts,"

telling them “ how to cook, raise our children, and run our households” (“Hearth and Home: Fascinating Women’s Domestic”). Also women from other cultures and immigrants, were being told to abandon the ‘ old ways’ and adopt the newer, better, modern styles of caring for their family and implementing those supportive tasks. While it is true that women could begin to take advantage of scientific advances, nevertheless their roles and importance in the domesticated home-life corresponded to new beliefs of dwindling worth.

The third claim is that the women’s liberation movement sort of functioned as a smokescreen. The movement masqueraded as progress instead of driving a wedge between the family’s husband and wife, weakening the family structure. As a detrimental influence the movement served to dilute the family structure. By not keeping it together with the wife’s exclusive absence and involvement in the world of outside pursuits, be it education or in the sphere of economics and labor, the movement allowed families’ structures to be much less cohesive. Obviously there have always been social problems of drunkenness, physical abuse of violence and such, but the family had a real semblance of being united and working together. It seems that while the article in ‘ Ms. Magazine’ by Judy Brady demonstrates how much value wives’ duties entail who stay at home, simultaneously she expresses a certain undertone of scorn for the traditional gender roles of women. While Brady makes starkly valid, and cogent points regarding the mountain of tasks wives do as unappreciated, the connotation is that she may want to exchange or reverse the roles with the husband who works outside on a job. It is difficult to impossible to speak for Judy Brady, but the



fact that she also notes reasons for wanting a wife is that a wife can also work at a job. It is almost like having a live-in slave, is the point. While being responsible for helping with the children's homework, doing ' his' typing, entertaining guests, and assuming " the complete responsibility for birth control, because I do not want more children" – it seems like having a wife is an ideal situation to make one's life easier (2). Overall the women's movement did belittle the woman's role as wife.

It seems like Brady is revealing that the under-appreciation of wives marks an unprecedented selfishness which nearly devalues a woman's existence altogether. If wives only function to serve and are treated or perceived as tools of supporting the interests of a ' mate' and nothing more, except of course as a sexual instrument of pleasure there is not much else one can say about how Brady feels about the situation. The passion and clarity in her observation poses a serious problem if women are truly, as a group, are widely perceived in the culture as ' less-than.' More than anything, the article provides a sharply critical look at how society and men and women feel about each other, and the importance put on the family unit. In today's world some may be more concerned about being able to purchase luxury items, rather than regarding the health of the family social unit. However, the situation is much more complex than that given the state of a global economic recession and a financially struggling population.

## **Works Cited**

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