

# "motherhood: who needs it?" an evaluation essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Feminism](#)



## **“ Motherhood: Who needs it?” An Evaluation Essay Sample**

While motherhood is not the stereotypical home making occupation that it was in the 1970's, it is still one of the most important roles women play in this country. In “ Motherhood: Who Needs It?” Betty Rollin openly expresses her negative opinion of motherhood. Throughout the essay Rollin elaborates on many reasons why motherhood is overrated in America. Rollin says that, “ The notion that the maternal wish and the activity of mothering are instinctive or biologically predestined is baloney.” She first touches on the subject of motherhood as a science. “ Women have childbearing equipment. To choose not to use the equipment is no more blocking what is instinctive than it is for a man who, muscles or no, chooses not to be a weight lifter.”

Rollin then refers to God as the cause of the “ motherhood problem”. “... the word of God that got the ball rolling with ‘ Be fruitful and multiply,’ a practical suggestion, since the only people around then were Adam and Eve.” Rollin quotes psychologists and doctors who support her theories, not ones who do not. She says that most mothers are unhappy, but do not admit it. Rollin rambles on throughout the essay telling how the motherhood myth is affecting the children and their mothers. She manipulates statistics to make them reflect her theory and does not give both sides of the argument. This essay while being outdated is full of fallacies and one-sided information influenced by the authors’ social points of view, which misinform the reader.

Rollin refers to an experiment using baby ducks as support for her thesis. “... baby ducks who lovingly follow their mothers seemed, in the mother’s

absence, to just as lovingly follow wooden ducks or even vacuum cleaners." This may be true but wooden ducks and vacuum cleaners cannot teach baby ducks how to swim, and how to survive. The previous is an example of a misleading analogy and hypostatization, which uses abstract concepts as concrete authorities using scientific experiments. The example is irrelevant and does not apply to Rollin's thesis.

Contraception based on religion is mentioned a few times in the essay. Rollin talks of St. Augustine, who she calls a "super moralist", and how he changed motherhood forever when he said, "Intercourse, even with one's legitimate wife, is unlawful and wicked where the conception of the offspring is prevented." Rollin then goes on to blame this belief and the Catholic Church for women not wanting to use contraception and preventing birth. Rollin is no pastor and she has no experience in religion so who is she to say what St. Augustine and the Catholic Church meant? She then says, "One could partake in the sinful pleasure, but feel vindicated by the ensuing birth." Rollin believes that sex is cleaned up by motherhood. Today, "most young people begin having sex in their mid-to-late teens, about 8 years before they marry. Teenage women's contraceptive use at first intercourse rose from 48% to 65% during the 1980s, almost entirely because of a doubling in condom use. By 1995, use at first intercourse reached 78%, with 2/3 of it condom use" (Sex and America's).

Most teenagers do not think about having babies when they're having sex. Young people are having sex these days for the physical feeling or because they think it's cool, and they are using contraception because they do not

want children at a young age. Yes sex causes a lot more emotional distress, but that's a whole other topic. " Steep decreases in the pregnancy rate among sexually experienced teenagers accounted for most of the drop in the overall teenage pregnancy rate in the early-to-mid 1990s. While 20% of the decline is because of decreased sexual activity, 80% is due to more effective contraceptive practice" (Sexual and Reproductive). The teen pregnancy rate only decreased because teens began to use more contraceptive, not because they thought they were sinning.

In one support statement Rollin says motherhood is a related cause of drug use. She tries to say that some children are " mindlessly brought into the world... who have to cope with all of the difficult and dehumanizing conditions brought on by overpopulation. That's not the only reason for drugs, but surely, it's a leading contender." Rollin obviously did not do her research to back up this statement. How does she know that children who are mistreated by their mothers do drugs? She has no evidence to back up her statement. This fallacy is an incomplete fact and causes the reader to easily misinterpret the information at first glance.

Another incomplete fact Rollin uses is about child abuse. She says, " The realities of motherhood can turn women into terrible people. And judging from the 50, 000 cases or child abuse in the U. S. each year, some are worse than terrible." Rollin neglected to say that men inflicted some of these cases. Rollin uses many of the statistics in the essay without giving the other side of the statistic. She uses questionable authority by quoting psychologists and doctors that no common person would know of. Rollin quotes a set of

mothers from Ann Arbor, Michigan. All of the quotes give a negative view on motherhood. Rollin failed to mention any positive responses she may have received.

Rollin uses the "bandwagon" theory to support her thesis. She believes society pressures women to become mothers even if they do not wish to be mothers. At the time she wrote this essay, Rollin was a feminist. During the 1970's feminism was a popular trend among young unmarried women. Although Rollin thought mothers were being influenced by society, she herself was being influenced by society in her political, feministic beliefs.

In a later article written by Rollin she responds to her essay on motherhood. "It was the start of the '70's and the women's movement was just taking hold. It certainly had taken hold of me. I even wrote an in your face piece dumping on motherhood." Rollin actually admits that she was caught up in the feminist movement. She supports her essay with this one statement:

The piece had some merit. I wrote about women who became mothers automatically, who perhaps shouldn't have; about the fact that there is a lot more to being a good mother than many women understood before they got pregnant. ...And, I said, if you found motherhood didn't suit you, unlike marriage, you couldn't and still can't divorce your child (Rollin)

Rollin realized in her later years that she took her own advice too seriously. She regretted not having any children. The essay was an emotionally charged, fit for the time way of expressing herself. Her words, however, were not timeless. Most women today take motherhood as a serious issue.

Although they may be too young when they become pregnant, most mothers learn very quickly what it takes to be a mother.

"Motherhood: Who Needs It?" is a socially influenced essay written by a socially influenced woman. It is easily observed that Rollin was an extreme feminist and all of her views were swayed towards the feminist point of view. To better the essay, Rollin should have added support for her statistics. Giving more views of both sides of motherhood would have strengthened the thesis. Since Rollin responded to her essay in her later years and realized that her writings were somewhat false, she gained some credibility later on. The one-sided view of the essay holds the reader back from seeing and understanding all aspects of motherhood, positive and negative.

#### Works Cited

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