

Gizem Gur

Eng 1A

Anna Mills

Summary Essay

Spread Feminism, Not Germs

COVID-19 is not the first outbreak in history and probably won't be the last one. However, its effects will be long-lasting. While the pandemic has affected everyone's lives in every aspect, its impacts on women are even more severe. Helen Lewis, the author of the *Atlantic Magazine* article "The Coronavirus Is a Disaster for Feminism," explains why the pandemic threatens feminism. Lewis starts her article with a complaint by saying "enough already" because, in terms of housework especially for child care, there has been an inequality since the past. This inequality has become even more explicit with the coronavirus outbreak. Women have to shoulder not only more housework but also childcare more than ever due to school closures. The pandemic started as a public health crisis and brought along an economic one. Lewis argues that the crisis affects women more than men because women are more likely to assume housework and childcare responsibilities while men are expected to work and "bring home the bacon."

Lewis supports her claim by pointing out that during the pandemic, the gender pay gap pushes women to take on caregiving while men continue to

The opening statement provides the essay's overall context: the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The followup statement introduces the essay's particular focus: the impact of the pandemic on women.

Early on, the summary names the author, title, and magazine that published the argument summarized.

The author provides a thesis at the end of the introduction with a clear overview of the main claim of the argument summarized.

The phrase "supports her claim" shows us that this paragraph will describe one of Lewis' reasons.

work outside the home. She writes, “all this looking after—this unpaid caring labor—will fall more heavily on women” because households depend more on men's pay.

To support this idea, she includes provocative questions from Clare Wenham, an assistant professor of global health policy at the London School of Economics: “Who is paid less? Who has the flexibility?” The questions express Wenham's frustration.

Lewis implies that this existing structure is based upon the gender pay gap, the reality that women make less money. She believes that couples do not have many options: it is a kind of survival rule that whoever earns less should stay at home.

Lewis blames the influence of old-fashioned ideas about gender roles for compounding the effects of the pay gap during the pandemic. Dual-earner parents must find a way to meet children's needs during the shelter-in-place. Lewis observes that women often are the ones who take on the role of stay-at-home parent. She

humorously notes, “Dual-income couples might suddenly be living like their grandparents, one homemaker, and one breadwinner.” Lewis sees this as a kind of

embarrassing regression. The gender dynamic has slid back two generations, showing that cultural beliefs about the role of the mother haven't changed as much as we might think. Lewis acknowledges that some families do try to split childcare equally, but she emphasizes that these are in the minority.

The author supports the summary with short quotes from the argument where the wording is important.

This paragraph shows how another reason, gender role expectations, combines with the economic reason to support the main claim.

The use of the word "embarrassing" suggests that Lewis is not just observing but making a claim of value. The summary reflects Lewis' attitude as well as her ideas.

The end of the summary notes how Lewis extends her argument by claiming that other pandemics will have similar gendered effects.

Lewis supports this with a historical example of another pandemic that disproportionately hurt women.

The concluding sentence reinforces the extended version of Lewis' main point in a memorable, dramatic way.

Lewis sees implications for her claim beyond the current pandemic. She draws a parallel to the effect on women of the Ebola health crisis which occurred in West Africa in the time period of 2014-2016. According to Lewis, during this outbreak, many African girls lost their chance at education; moreover, many women died during childbirth because of a lack of medical care. Mentioning this proves that not only coronavirus but also other outbreaks can be a disaster for feminism. Pandemics, in other words, pile yet another problem on women who always face an uphill battle against patriarchal structures.

This sample essay was written by Gizem Gur and edited by Anna Mills.

Annotations are by Saramanda Swigart, edited by Anna Mills. Licensed under a

CC BY-NC license.

