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Eng 1A

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Final Summary and Response 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 Coronavirus Is a Disaster for Feminism"

explains why feminism cannot survive during the Pandemic. 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. Women are mainly affected by this crisis more

than men because women are more likely to take housework and childcare

responsibilities while men are expected to work and "bring home the bacon."

Each gender has a different role in society. While men are usually seen as

breadwinners, women mostly spend their time at home and do housework.

Women also are the primary caregivers both children and elders. As Lewis

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.

An outside text is introduced that the essay will engage with.

The author provides a clear thesis statement to close the opening (introduction) paragraph).

The first supporting argument: the unpaid labor of women under tradition gender roles.

mentions, “looking after” duty is on women’s shoulder. Then she adds “ all this looking after—this unpaid caring labor—will fall more heavily on women because of the existing structure of the workforce,” and she includes a provocative question 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 author intentionally uses this quote to express her frustration. At the same time, she implies that this existing structure is based upon the gender pay gap. We all are familiar with the reality that “women’s income is less than men’s” so this fact goes a long way towards explaining why women mainly stay at home and take caregiving responsibilities. It is a kind of survival rule that whoever earns less should stay at home. In this case, it seems like couples do not have many options.

The author supports her argument with evidence from the text, and provides analysis to tie that evidence to her argument.

Whereas the first support focused on gender roles, the second paragraph focuses on the particular challenges for parents during the Covid-19 epidemic.

One of the most challenging aspects of the Pandemic for dual-income parents is the school and daycare closures. These dual-earner parents should find a way to split children’s needs during the shelter-in-place. If they do not balance paid work and child care, both sides will feel the consequences. To emphasize these consequences, Lewis humorously says “Dual-income couples might suddenly be living like their grandparents, one homemaker, and one breadwinner.” Instead of splitting the housework, women take the role of “homemaker” so the author implies here that this regresses gender dynamics two generations backward. It obviously demonstrates that nothing much has changed over time and the mentality remains. While many couples are trying to find a middle way, others think that women have to suck it up and sacrifice their jobs.

Drawing on evidence from the text, this passage shows how gender roles relate to the challenges of Covid-19 for working parents and families.

The following paragraph cites a historical precedent for the Covid-19 outbreak as a basis for comparison.

In reference to school closures, Lewis brings up 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 these elaborations proves once again that not only coronavirus but also many other outbreaks have caused a disaster for feminism. Pandemics, in

This passage ties this observation about the Ebola outbreak in West Africa to a greater observation about Pandemics and gender roles overall.

other words, pile yet another problem on women who always face an uphill battle against patriarchal structures.

The author makes a personal note here, marking an emotional connection and reaction to the text.

I started reading her article with a feeling of frustration. While the main topic of the article is feminism, Lewis gives a couple of male examples from the past, such as William Shakespeare and Isaac Newton. She seems at times to attribute their success to their masculinity. They both lived in times of plague, demonstrating that despite all our progress, the human species is still grappling with the same issues. According to Lewis, neither Newton nor Shakespeare had to worry about childcare or housework. Even though her comparison seemed odd to me, she managed to surprise me that in over 300 years many gender inequities remain the same. This is actually very tragic. It is hard to acknowledge that

The author cites historical precedent again: this passage argues that the relationship between plagues and gender roles has not changed much in centuries.

women are still facing gender inequality in almost every area even 300 after the time of these great English thinkers. Assuming housework is the natural place of women without asking women if they want to do it is asking for too big a sacrifice. Since couples have the option to split the housework and childcare, why

The author uses a rhetorical question to segue into a new supporting argument, that "Women should not have to sacrifice their leisure time completing unpaid work."

should only women have to shoulder most of the burden? This is a question that I might never be able to answer, even if I search my whole life. It is unacceptable

that there is pressure on women to conform to gender roles, such as cultural settings and expectations. Women should not have to sacrifice their leisure time completing unpaid work. I agree with Lewis when she mentions the “second shift” situation. When we consider women’s first shift as their paid work, the second shift represents the time that they spend working in the home. In this case, there is apparently no shift for leisure time. Lewis also supports this by saying “Across the world, women—including those with jobs—do more housework and have less leisure time than their male partners.” Additionally, it seems like economic recovery is going to be long-lasting because of the Coronavirus. As a solution, if men and women have equal housework responsibilities, women may spend more of their time completing paid work. In this way, they can contribute to the economy while they are socializing. Especially after the Pandemic is over, we will need a greater workforce, so hopefully both men and women can equally participate in the economy.

The author makes a call to action near the end of the essay.

Much like the first sentence of the essay, the last sentence speaks to a greater, big-picture context: the need for equality in a post-pandemic world