



Elizabeth's Jamestown Colony Diary: The Starving Time (Book 2) **Arguments & Counter-Arguments**

The debatable issue for this project is:

Does Elizabeth become dehumanized at any time during the "starving time" of 1609 - 1610 in Jamestown?

These are arguments and counter-arguments – or, more precisely, claims and counter-claims – that can be used within the context of an argument-based activity, such as Refutation Two-Chance, on this text. Argumentative claims are indented once, and counter-claims that respond to those claims are double-indented below them.

Elizabeth does become dehumanized during the “starving time”

Elizabeth cannot feel close to her best friend Mary Dobson during the “starving time.”

This isn't true; Elizabeth and Mary remains friends throughout.

A person's friendships can go up and down – that doesn't mean that someone is dehumanized.

Elizabeth no longer feels a deep bond with innocent and helpless babies.

Elizabeth feels very passionately about Abigail and other babies even at the lowest points of the “starving time.”

Not everyone who doesn’t love babies they don’t know is dehumanized.

Elizabeth became completely obsessed by thoughts of food.

Almost everyone thinks of food a lot.

There are instances where Elizabeth is obsessed by food, but she also discusses a lot of other things in her diary.

Customs of civilization – such as keeping and loving pets – break down during the “starving time.”

Some customs may break down, but the vast majority of customs are maintained – for example, language, norms of behavior, belief in God.

Americans kill animals for meat, so it’s not a dehumanized act to kill and eat a dog.

The government of the Jamestown colony collapses in the “starving time,” which means the colonists (including Elizabeth) are living more like animals in the wilderness.

Jamestown lost its leader during the “starving time,” but it didn’t lose all of its laws, which means the government didn’t really collapse.

The difficulties that the Jamestown colony experienced makes Elizabeth’s and the other colonists’ reactions all the more human and inspiring during the “starving time.”

Elizabeth loses hope during the “starving time.”

This is only something she said at a point where she really felt low, which people do when they are feeling down.

If she really lost all hope she might have considered suicide, which she never does in the book.

Elizabeth does not become dehumanized during the “starving time”

Elizabeth does feel very negative emotions during the “starving time,” but she felt very negative emotions before the “starving time,” too.

There’s a difference between feeling angry or even hating someone, and the total despair that Elizabeth felt during the “starving time.”

Actually, Elizabeth is a very positive person, which changes dramatically in the “starving time.”

Elizabeth maintains her likes and dislikes of other people at all times.

This doesn’t mean that she’s not dehumanized: it’s what she does about her likes and dislikes that is so altered.

There are times during the “starving time” when Elizabeth is so obsessed by food that it isn’t accurate to say that she has maintained her same likes and dislikes of people.

Elizabeth discovers bravery in herself that she didn’t know she had.

It is less that Elizabeth is brave, than that she is desperate. She does dangerous things that she would never do if she wasn’t so ravenously hungry.

Elizabeth would have found her own independence even if there had been no “starving time.”

Elizabeth has limits on what she will eat, even at her hungriest.

Not true, she eats bug-infested bread and speaks sympathetically about people who eat raw bear and worms out of the ground.

Someone can become dehumanized – much less a person – while still having a gag reflex that prevents them from eating certain things.

Elizabeth’s virtues, such as her caring for others and her generosity, remain intact.

Elizabeth becomes too depressed and despairing to really care for others in Jamestown during the worst of the “starving time.”

Elizabeth doesn’t mourn her mother’s death especially hard. It seems more like just another person who dies that winter.

Elizabeth continues to plan and strategize to get her family and Jamestown through the “starving time.”

There are only fleeting moments of her planning. She doesn’t really stick to those plans.

It’s not clear what this has to do with dehumanization. Dehumanized people at other periods in history probably also strategized to escape their condition.