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## **“Pro-Woman, Pro-Life”: Framing of the Anti-Abortion Movement**

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# “Pro-Woman, Pro-Life”

Are you Pro-life or Pro-Choice?  
Are you a feminist or not?

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Eng 371, Class Thesis  
Wilkinson College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science, Chapman University, Orange, CA

## The Project

WHO : Women participating in the Pro-Woman, Pro-Life discourse

WHAT: “Pro-Woman, Pro-Life framing of the Anti-Abortion Movement

WHEN : NOW

WHERE: The United States in the Abortion Discourse.

WHY: Prove that “Pro-Woman”— is a discursive strategy to appeal to women who are ideologically aligned with the Pro-Choice movement. No “feminist” would want to support a practice, such as abortion, that could physically or mentally harm women; therefore, Pro-Choice feminists and feminists in between Pro-Life and Pro-Choice are then left with the ethical dilemma of allowing other women to access a potentially dangerous, even fatal, procedure

HOW

Data

- Looking at editorial, news, and legislative data

Asking Questions

- When did “Pro-Woman” first appeared in the anti-abortion discourse?
- How it has been used to reinforce the Pro-Life stance?
- James Paul Gee’s theoretical tools help me analyze the use of “Pro-Woman” and argue how it builds and contributes to the Pro-Life discourse.



OR



OR



Objectives

- Ask questions of the pro-life discourse to understand how language is being used to serve the Pro-Life Ideology
- My project aims to investigate how the charged term “Pro-Woman” has been extrapolated to the Anti-Abortion Movement and argue the guilt-driven draw it has on all feminists.

## Methods

Significance – We use language to make things significant; we build significance through language.

Significance Building Tool – How are words and grammatical devices being used to build up or lessen significance (importance, relevance) for certain things and not others?

Identities – We use language to be recognized as taking on a certain identity or role. We build an identity here and now as we speak.

Identities Building Tool – What socially recognizable identity or identities is the speaker trying to enact or get others to recognize through his/her use of language? What identities does the speaker recognize for others? How is the speaker positioning others?

Relationships – We use language to build and sustain relationships with people, groups, and institutions.

Relationships Building Tool – How is language being used to build and sustain or change relationships in this discourse?

Grammar Tools for Discourse Analysis

Deixis Tool – How are deixis (words which depend for their full meaning on the context in which they are used; e.g., person - *I/me, you, they/them, s/he/him/her, we/us, it*; place – *here/there*; time – *now/then, yesterday/today*; things – *it, this/that*) used in this discourse to make assumptions about what listeners already know or can figure out? Are any content words taking on deictic qualities?

Subject/Predicate Tool –How is the speaker organizing information in terms of subjects and predicates? Are the verbs active? Being?

## Analysis

My analysis consisted of multiple passes over the literature that my corpus is comprised of. The data collection itself, though tedious, was nowhere near as difficult as synthesizing what I had collected into a broad interpretation.

Key
<b>Significance Pass</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How are words and grammatical devices being used to build up or lessen significance (importance, relevance) for certain things and not others?</li></ul>
<b>Identities Pass</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What socially recognizable identity or identities is the speaker trying to enact or get others to recognize through his/her use of language? What identities does the speaker recognize for others? How is the speaker positioning others?</li></ul>
<b>Relationship Pass</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How is language being used to build and sustain or change relationships in this discourse?</li></ul>
<b>Deixis Pass</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How are deixis (words which depend for their full meaning on the context in which they are used; e.g., person - <i>I/me, you, they/them, s/he/him/her, we/us, it</i>; place – <i>here/there</i>; time – <i>now/then, yesterday/today</i>; things – <i>it, this/that</i>) used in this discourse to make assumptions about what listeners already know or can figure out? Are any content words taking on deictic qualities?</li></ul>
<b>Subject/Predicate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How is the speaker organizing information in terms of subjects and predicates? Are the verbs active? Being?</li></ul>

Many of you will reject my stance, you may patronisingly pigeon hole me at best as a poor unenlightened female brainwashed by the patriarchy and at worse as an oppressive, medieval misogynist that hates my own sex.

You will ask, “how can you be both pro-life and pro-women?”

To you my position appears irreconcilable.

But I ask you, how can you be both pro-choice and pro-women?

To me this is the false dichotomy.

Abortion is a tool of male oppression.

These words are not my own but I do subscribe to them when abortion is used not to save women’s lives but to control them.

These words were penned by our feminist foremothers, Susan B. Antony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who put it quite eloquently when they said, when women have been treated for so long as property it is degrading that they should treat their own children as chattels.

First wave feminists were adamantly opposed to abortion, it was perceived as the ultimate exploitation of women.

The very roots of the feminist movement are indeed pro-life.

Abortion enables men who disrespect women to continue their objectification, to see them as play things that they can use and discard at their leisure without any accountability on the man’s part.

There are women worldwide owed billions in unpaid child support as fatherhood is becoming more and more disconnected.

Women pay the price when men are not taught, or do not face up to, their responsibilities.

**Deixis Pass**

- How are deixis (words which depend for their full meaning on the context in which they are used; e.g., person - *I/me, you, they/them, s/he/him/her, we/us, it*; place – *here/there*; time – *now/then, yesterday/today*; things – *it, this/that*) used in this discourse to make assumptions about what listeners already know or can figure out? Are any content words taking on deictic qualities?

Last week the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, putting abortion law in the hands of the states. And just like that I’m now raising two teenage girls in an era many of us worked for, prayed for, but never thought we’d actually live to see.

Though there are many reasons to be discouraged by all the uncertainty in our country right now, this unequivocal victory for life is also a victory for women. It gives me as a mom every reason to be hopeful and optimistic for my girls’ future.

TO BE A FEMINIST MEANS TO BE PRO-LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Pease). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Ros-Lehtinen) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at one time or another we have all seen the bumper sticker which reads: “Pro-Women = Pro-Choice,” and it is presumed that feminists and defenders of equity and rights for women are defenders of abortion.

But in fact, what most feminists do not wish to acknowledge is that the early suffragists who are responsible for today’s women’s movement actually were staunchly pro-life.

Over a century ago, Susan B. Anthony tirelessly campaigned for suffrage for women’s employment rights and for the abolition of slavery. She voted illegally, took part in the underground railroad, and yes, Susan B. Anthony, a member of the feminist movement, opposed Abortion.

- “presumed” implies a broad level of ignorance in making such an assumption.
- “do not wish to acknowledge” lends feminists a hypocritical persona. As if they all a) do in fact support in abortion and b) purposely ignore the past of women’s movements in order to fit that agenda
- “staunchly” evokes a non-negotiable sort of stance that fits the strong female perception that many have of the early suffragettes.
- “tirelessly campaigned” — once again, this image of a hardworking, resilient advocate is made significant.
- “a mother of the feminist movement, opposed abortion.” In this example, we see how

In The Revolution, the radical women’s paper which she published, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Anthony strongly editorialized against abortion. She referred to the bloody act as child murder and infanticide, and addressed its root causes in women’s oppression and in the abdication of family planning. She argued that laws pertaining to abortion victimized women while absolving men of all responsibility.

## Interpretation:

Based on my research, the ideological underpinnings of this discourse appear to be rooted in patriarchal values, dated abortion practices, and misogyny.

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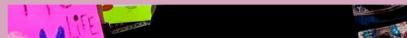
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### I Authored Mississippi's Abortion Bill. Here's Why. | Opinion



Why I'm a pro-life feminist

### Raising my daughters after Roe v. Wade, sharing that pro-life equals pro-woman

The Supreme Court’s decision on abortion is personal to me as a pro-life mom of two teenage girls

### BEX'S STORY – I AM A PRO-LIFE FEMINIST

### TO BE A FEMINIST MEANS TO BE PRO-LIFE

Pro-Life is Pro-Woman

Life Issues Forum: Pro-Woman is Pro-Life

Women Deserve Better Than Abortion

Pro-Life Laws Protect Mom and Baby: Pregnant Women's Lives are Protected in All States

Thank you to Dr. Jan Osborn for your constant inspiration and support.