**Analysis: Annotate the text**

The class is divided into groups. Each group gets a stack of cards. The cards have short assignments on them which will require you to circle words, highlight quotes, write comments, etc. in the text found on the next page. Shuffle the cards and take turns drawing one from the pile. Complete the assignment on a printed copy of the text, before drawing another card. Your teacher can set a timer or a minimum number of cards to complete.

|  |
| --- |
| Circle 5-7 words that you don’t know. Look them up and write an English definition or synonym in the margin. |
| Highlight or underline examples of the use of pathos in the text. For each example, explain what emotion the writer is trying to stir in the reader and to what effect and purpose. |
| Highlight or underline examples of the way in which the writer is trying to establish and strengthen her ethos in the text. For each example, explain how this affects her credibility in the eyes of the reader. |
| Highlight or underline examples of the use of logic and reasoning in the text. For each example, explain how this strengthens her argumentation. |
| Highlight or underline a quote that sums up the main claim in the text and write an explanation in the margin. |
| Find three supporting arguments in the text that help support the main claim of the text. In the margin, comment on the effect of these supporting arguments. |
| Highlight or underline examples that tell us something about Karen Prior as a sender. In the margin, comment on the information and how this affects our view of her. |
| Find and circle 5-7 words or phrases that tell us something about her perspective on abortion. In the margin, explain the connotations of the words or phrases and the effect of this word choice. |
| Highlight or underline examples that sum up the intention of the text. In the margin, explain what the intention is and how the example supports this. |
| Circle or highlight at least three examples that tell us something about Prior’s style of writing. In the margin, explain what the example tells us about her style and to what effect. |

**I Prayed and Protested to End Roe. What Comes Next?**

Roe v. Wade’s reversal has elicited cries of anger and despair from those who feel a sense of dread for the future of women and the future of America.

I understand that feeling of dread.

As a pro-life advocate, I lament with those who feel they have lost a basic human right, as well as moral agency and hope for the future. But for me it is Roe that brought these losses.

Roe stripped from the prenatal child the right to continue to live and grow, safe and free from intentional harm. If you believe, as I do, that abortion unjustly ends the life of a being that is fully human, a life that exists independently of the will of the mother, is self-organizing and unique, developing yet complete in itself, then you will understand Roe not as a ruling that liberates but as one that dehumanizes, first the fetus, then the rest of us.

Further, Roe elevated radical autonomy over moral agency. Roe struck down the hope that is inherent in every human life, whether new or old, for as long as life remains.

Roe was an unjust ruling. I have always believed it would be overturned, as other unjust decisions by the court were, although I thought it would take longer. I rejoice that it did not. But of course it will take longer for abortion to become unthinkable, which is the real goal of the pro-life movement.

I joined the movement decades ago. My friends and co-laborers in the movement across the political spectrum have over the years established and worked in pregnancy help centers. We have opened our rooms and homes to women who needed them. We have educated them about prevention, alternatives, resources, employment, schooling and empowerment. We have offered help at doctors’ offices and abortion clinics. We have held baby showers, attended weddings, kindergarten graduations and legislative sessions. We have cried with those who regretted their choices, and we have cried with those who didn’t (but cried anyway). We have marched and protested.

And we took our cases to the courts, including the Supreme Court. Some of these cases, including one that I was involved in, were not centered on abortion itself but on our right to protest it. A federal district court attempted to limit pro-life protests by establishing buffer zones outside abortion clinics. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which eventually struck down one type of restriction and upheld another one.

Still, I was, like my fellow evangelicals, a Johnny-come-lately in a long line of people who have opposed abortion and infanticide and tried to defend vulnerable life.

Members of the early Christian church within the ancient Roman world rescued abandoned infants (often those who were female or otherwise deemed inferior) from certain death. In the 19th century, a newspaper created by prominent suffragists, The Revolution, published articles that called abortion “infanticide” and “child-murder.” The pro-life movement in America before Roe was dominated by Catholics who then generally skewed Democrat, and who fought for legal protections for the unborn and expansions of the social safety net.

Roe and its legacy radicalized those of us in the current movement. Legalized elective abortion was the consolation prize given to women in 1973 for the centuries of inequality and oppression that stemmed from their sin of not being men. While every mother and every father should want their children, our status as human beings at any stage of life should not depend on who wants us or whether we are wanted at all.

It is only when we inject into the issue questions of subjectivity (like wantedness) or religions (like ensoulment), existential ones (like sentience), theological ones (like human dignity) or sociological ones (like quality of life), that we find ample room for uncertainty and disagreement. These are important, enduring questions. But they are not questions upon which the basic, inalienable right of an individual life should depend.

The judicial fiat of Roe v. Wade jump-started the culture wars that have poisoned our political process and brought us to a place of polarization and unbridgeable division. Indeed, this division has been capitalized on by far too many pundits and politicians, for whom a position on abortion does not appear to be a sincerely held belief, but merely an issue they can (and do) leverage for votes or monetize for financial gain. Such betrayal casts a shadow on the overturning of Roe, which has been for me and many others a long-awaited event.

Even so, making abortion unthinkable might start with the law, but it won’t end there. For it is not only the supply of abortion that matters but also the demand. I lament the impoverishment of a social imagination that cannot conceive of a world in which women can flourish without abortion.

I think we will imagine it someday. Of course abortion, like all violence, abuse and injustice, will always be with us. But laws don’t only prevent - laws teach and form the ways in which we envision our world and the ways in which we can and should live with one another.

Since Roe, our culture has increasingly come to understand that it’s not merely “our bodies, ourselves” but also “our communities, ourselves.” Our bodies live and move among other bodies - whether for good or ill. We are our brother’s and our sister’s keepers, and it does take a village to become who we are. Thankfully, America’s romance with radical autonomy and rugged individualism is cooling. Roe gave our nation some of the most liberal abortion laws in the industrialized world and a high rate of abortion compared with that of many other industrialized countries, in no small part because of our individualist cultural and economic ethos.

Accordingly, in a recent Times Opinion essay, Patrick T. Brown acknowledged the need for “a broader vision of policy than just prohibiting access to abortion.” A post-Roe world, he wrote, “is one that compels a greater claim on public resources to support expectant mothers” and demands that we “take seriously the challenges that women and families experience not only during and immediately after pregnancy but also in the years that follow.”

The conservative think tank where Mr. Brown is a fellow, the Ethics and Public Policy Center, has developed a robust, holistic Life and Family Initiative aimed at protecting the lives of prenatal children and offering concrete support to the families in which they will be born. California’s Catholic bishops have also outlined a commitment to support women, children and families. And the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention has included in its 2022 public policy agenda a range of issues beyond its ongoing focus on abortion, including alleviating hunger and strengthening low-income families.

We can do better than asking women (and men) to choose between their children and themselves. I see the overturning of Roe as the first step in getting there. Then, to make abortion unthinkable, we must make it unwanted.

**©** *Karen Swallow Prior*

June 24, 2022 | Guest essay | *The New York Times*