

ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Neutrality As Advocacy: The Argumentative Dynamics In A State-Sponsored, 'Neutral,' Educational Abortion Video



The abortion controversy in the United States seems to be one of those enduring areas of public argument that both confound and intrigue the argument scholar. As the nature of the debate has shifted across time (see Condit 1990 and Condit Railsback 1984), so too have the sites of contest. While two apparently diametrically opposed groups have long dominated the abortion controversy (those favoring “*choice*” and those favoring “*life*”), areas for agreement seem to be opening up. While the elevation of the two ideographs of life and choice has truncated debate so that the ultimate question has been whether women’s choice to have an abortion, as narrowly conceived, outweighs the potential risk that a fetus is a human being (Condit 1990: 159), locations of argument are emerging that bypass this narrow debate. One example is found in the need for people from differing positions to work together on the development of state-sponsored informational videos. As a result of the Iowa State Legislature’s action during the 1996 legislative session, the Iowa Code was revised so that notification of the intent of a minor to obtain an abortion must be made to a parent or grandparent. In addition to such notification, the licensed physician performing an abortion is required to offer the viewing of a state produced video to the minor during the initial appointment relating to those services. As a result of this legislation, a committee was appointed by conservative Republican Governor Terry E. Branstad to develop the video. The end result of the committee’s work is the video “You Are Not Alone,” which is accompanied by a workbook and a physician’s manual.

The interesting outcome of the video production process is that while the committee was disproportionately filled with those from the anti-abortion end of the spectrum, the video has been well-received by abortion providers and roundly

critiqued by those who oppose abortion (*Des Moines Register*, November 26, 1996). Having viewed the video as a member of my local Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa community council, I decided to analyze the argumentative and visual structure of the video. I conclude that the video is an example of an attempt at neutrality that unintentionally functions as an argument for choice. Ultimately, I hypothesize that the need for consensus in the production of the video removed the grounds for anti-abortion arguments.**[i]** The rhetorical patterns, both metaethical and visual, of anti-abortion argument structure, as detailed by Randall Lake in *“The Metaethical Framework of Anti-Abortion Rhetoric”* (1986), would preclude any compromise, yet compromise was legislatively mandated. Additionally, because the video focuses on the decision-making process of the girl, it decenters the baby/fetus, again violating the basic structure (linguistically and visually) of anti-abortion rhetoric. At the point that compromise was legislatively mandated and agreed to by the committee, as it was in the case of the video, the entire argument structure of pro-life advocacy collapses.

This presentation offers an analysis of one of the most recent examples of attempts to place limits on abortion: notification and informed consent. While many of those in the pro-choice movement see those actions as attempts to further limit abortion access, the experience with the State of Iowa’s video offers an alternative interpretation – that the need for neutrality limits the persuasive power of anti-abortion arguments.

1. History

The planning behind the video, and the decision making processes used, warrant attention. Appointed by conservative Iowa Governor, Terry E. Branstad, the committee initially developed a vision statement. The committee decided to accept as its vision:

To produce a factual, age-appropriate, culturally diverse video and written materials from a balanced viewpoint for all options set forth in SF13; materials that are medically accurate, unbiased, and presented in an objective, empathetic, non-directive manner to assist the minor in the decision making process. (Report to the Legislature: January 8, 1997)**[ii]**

The committee also developed an outline based on the vision. The video was to cover three “options”:

1. “continue the pregnancy to term and retain parental rights following the child’s birth,”

2. "continue the pregnancy to term and place the child for adoption following the child's birth," and
3. "terminate the pregnancy through abortion."

It is important to note, here, that the term used is "pregnancy," not baby or child. Within each of these three "options," the committee wanted the following issues to be addressed: medical/emotional, counseling, financial, and referral to public and private agencies.

With a general description of the video in mind, the committee solicited proposals from vendors, ultimately choosing American Media Incorporated (AMI) to produce the video. After selection, AMI further reassured the committee that "the nature of their business insures objectivity" (Report to the legislature: September 7, 1996). Of course, the committee did review and make suggestions as the various drafts of the video script were developed.

When the video was released, the *Des Moines Register* showed it to six girls, one of whom was pregnant. While the girls' consensus was that the video needed more, they thought that it did a "good job of treating the options equally" (January 31, 1997). However, anti-abortion advocates who viewed the video thought that it provided insufficient information on the negative effects of abortion (*Des Moines Register: November 26, 1996*).

2. Pro-Life/Anti-Abortion Rhetoric

Anti-abortion rhetoric needs to be analyzed in both its verbal and visual form. As Celeste Condit notes in her book, *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric*, "fetal pictures are persuasive" (79). Quite simply, Condit notes, "the fetus has an important substantiality that can be photographed. The meaning constructed from those pictures and that substance was not, however, a simple matter of natural fact" (79). Fetal images do not appear alone, but instead are framed through "complex rhetorical tactics that generat[e] a meaningful image of the fetus . . ." (79). The complex rhetoric surrounding abortion has its own form as well. As Randall Lake has noted in his many essays on the subject, a guilt and redemption pattern emerges.

Central to all of this work, too, is the word choice used to refer to the being/collection of cells inside a girl's/woman's womb that potentially will develop into a human being. As Kenneth Burke has argued, all language operates as part of terministic screens, which reflect, select and deflect our apprehension of "reality" (44-45). Within the abortion controversy, such terministic screens can be

seen in operation within the rhetoric of advocates.

For example, when the pro-life advocates use the term “baby,” they are clearly selecting a focus on a creature that is human, individual, distinct from another being and that can be held. Within pro-natal U.S. culture, babies are highly prized creatures that are presumed innocent and have strong positive connotations. Additionally, babies have particular relations to others. In particular, babies have mothers, not women. By using the term baby, the terministic screen selects a focus on the collection of cells as a complete and isolable human being. In so doing, it also deflects the context within which the baby exists, a girl or woman’s womb. In fact, in the visual images of the “baby,” the woman is completely absent. The girl or woman is deflected from recognition. Finally, the use of the term baby does reflect the way in which a pro-natal culture speaks of the collection of cells located in a girl’s/woman’s womb. It reflects the emotional attachment to babies.

However, when pro-choice advocates use the term fetus, a distinct terministic screen is put into place. Fetus selects a more medical, technical focus. Fetus is a technical term, and it is a term that brings into focus the context: a girl or woman’s womb. Fetuses do not have mothers. Instead, women carry fetuses. By selecting the more technical term and its associations, the individuality and isolability of the fetus is deflected. And, of course, fetus is an accurate reflection of the way in which the stages of gestation occur.

Babies have mothers. Babies can be murdered. Babies are warm and fuzzy (and usually smell good). Women carry fetuses. Fetuses cannot be murdered, but are aborted. And fetuses do not generate that warm fuzzy feeling, but more of the “oo-ick” feeling that gelatinous collections of cells usually do in biology classes. Central to pro-life rhetoric is the centering of the baby, and concomitant decentering of the girl/woman. This occurs on two levels: visual and metaethical. What follows is a more detailed analysis of both the metaethical and visual patterns of anti-abortion argument which decenter the girl/woman faced with a decision about her pregnancy.

2a. Metaethical Patterns

Randall Lake has provided two excellent analyses of the overarching form and content of anti-abortion rhetoric. He argues that as it paints a “moral landscape . . . the features of the human moral condition [are] presupposed by and depicted in anti-abortion rhetoric” (1984: 425). Part of this moral landscape is that “anti-abortion discourse relies explicitly and implicitly on theology and deontology for

the *content and form* of its arguments” (emphasis added, 1984: 426). The result is that “[a]nti-abortion rhetoric ultimately is grounded in alleged sexual Guilt; it victimizes women, and it posits childbearing and legislating against abortion as twin paths to Redemption” (1984: 426). Here, “[d]isorder generates Guilt” (1984: 428) with redemption occurring through victimage or mortification. Yet, with the video, disorder generates confusion, not guilt, and confusion is resolved through informed choice.

Lake’s arguments demonstrate that the form and content of anti-abortion rhetoric are of a particular type, which support the conclusions of the advocates. I take this argument in a different direction, arguing that rhetoric that does not conform to the form and content expectations outlined in Lake’s essay actually *work against* the conclusions drawn in anti-abortion rhetoric – the conclusion that abortion is immoral and that choosing to have an abortion is wrong. The “You Are Not Alone” video is one example of this.

Using Lake’s writing from “Order and Disorder in Anti-Abortion Rhetoric: A Logological View” (1984) and “The Metaethical Framework of Anti-Abortion Rhetoric” (1985), a number of form and content markers may be discerned. First, moral absolutism, in the form of a clear delineation between right and wrong, is a necessary component of anti-abortion rhetoric. In content, this is reflected in rhetoric arguing for only one moral position, and in form it is reflected in the presentation of only one option: “life” (Lake 1986: 480-81; 1984: 426). In part, this deontological approach reflects the a priori recognition of moral truths, but such an approach also is necessary because of the moral condition of human beings, which composes the second element.

A second characteristic of anti-abortion rhetoric is that human beings’ moral condition is always in question (Lake 1986: 487-90). For anti-abortionists, we cannot assume human beings will make the right choice, either because they are lazy or evil, and, hence, their choice must be guided, forcefully if necessary. Again, this is reflected in form and content, where only one choice is presented as acceptable and other options are rejected out of hand.

Finally, anti-abortion discourse is typified by the rhetor speaking for the “unborn” (Lake 1984: 434). In order to humanize the fetus, and in order to appear to be arguing for the fetus, and not against the woman, anti-abortion rhetoric often has the speaker speak as or for the fetus. This centering of the fetus, and decentering of the woman who is faced with an unwanted pregnancy, focuses audience attention primarily on the right of the fetus to life, and deflects attention from the rights of the woman to have reproductive autonomy. In many ways, as

demonstrated in anti-abortion advertising, the woman is absent, and the fetus/baby is foregrounded. The context of the fetus/baby is irrelevant, since its humanity is not at issue.

A more detailed analysis of anti-abortion rhetoric points to the content and form inconsistencies between the video and the rhetorical landscape of pro-life discourse. To develop this, I again turn to Lake's description of that rhetoric:

Opposition to abortion is said to be based on the fact of the humanity of the fetus and the rule that it is wrong to take an innocent human life. In contrast, abortion can be defended only on utilitarian grounds of convenience, i.e., that the child is "unwanted" and would be a "hardship" for its mother. However, anti-abortionists warn, once utilitarian considerations are accepted in the place of hard and fast rules, humanity will become merely a matter of "definition," and society will be enabled to deprive any "unwanted" person or group of life without compunction. (1984: 430) Not only are the argument types distinguished, but a "clear preference for deontological over teleological ethics" emerges in anti-abortion discourse (Lake 1985: 480). To clarify the rhetorical

implications of this approach, Lake notes that "[d]eontological ethics tend to emphasize the threshold between absolute right and wrong; teleological ethics more overtly acknowledge gradation of right and wrong . . ." (1985: 481). However, when a range of actions are presented in the video, all as equally valid, then one clearly falls into an issue of gradation, which act is more good or more bad, as opposed to an issue of threshold where one determines what is right or wrong. Additionally, in anti-abortion rhetoric, one comes to understand a moral absolute not through the reasoned processing of information, but through intuition (Lake 1986: 494). With deontology's emphasis on rules, it encourages a belief in moral absolutes (1985: 485), yet no moral absolute is presented in the video.

Compounding the anti-abortionists approach to morality is their view that "humans are at best weak, selfish, and callous, and at worse maliciously immoral" (Lake 1985: 487). If human beings are weak, then providing them options is a bad idea because they will simply take the option that is most convenient. If they are malicious, then allowing options not only is a bad idea, but one must instead actively punish immorality and provide incentives for moral decisions. Such an approach would predict that, in the "Alone" video, the arguments for abortion would be merely utilitarian and the arguments for adoption or keeping the child

would be deontological. However, when adoption and keeping the child are lumped together in the pro-life advocacy, adoption also becomes untenable, since not “wanting” a child who might be a “hardship” is the same reason abortion is sought. In fact, one finds utilitarian arguments highlighted in all three segments of the video.

Within the anti-abortion moral landscape, there is not choice but life, a position that the video contradicts with its form when it includes a range of options. Lake writes, “The anti-abortionist view of the human moral condition is characterized by a belief that abortion is an abomination, that its continuance will eventuate in general moral collapse, and that the only path to recovery is to reaffirm the original moral sense by renewing our adherence to the moral law against abortion and by bringing the positive law into line with the moral law” (1984: 430). However, such absolutism is absent in the video. Instead of being able to replicate the guilt-victimage-redemption pattern of descent/ascent rhetoric, the video paints a landscape of confusion resolved by choice, thus privileging the choice ideograph.

The other formal and content element of anti-abortion rhetoric that is not replicated in the video is the technique of speaking for the “unborn.” As Lake explains, while many of the other practices linked to sexuality can be seen as “victimless,” “abortion appears to be an act with a victim, the fetus” (1984: 434). The result is that the anti-abortion rhetor can “claim to speak for the unborn rather than only against women” (1984: 434). However, in the “Alone” video, young girls speak for themselves concerning each of their choices, and no one positions him or her self to speak for or as the fetus. Ultimately, anti-abortion discourse is “intransigent [and] uncompromising” in that it:

assumes a deontological, legalist, intrinsicist, and absolutist theory of ethics in which right and wrong are measured by conformity to extant moral rules. Such rules are necessary to impose moral obligations on humans and, thereby, guide behavior that, absent the rules, would revert to a self-centered, evil state of nature. As universally valid measures of right and wrong, the rules must not be compromised under any circumstances. (Lake 1985: 496)

2b. Visual Patterns

Quite simply, visual arguments are central in anti-abortion advocacy. While Celeste Condit (1990) agrees with Kristin Luker’s (1984) assessment that visual images do not change people’s positions, they can “justify, integrate, and activate their beliefs. The images intensify commitment, motivate the believers to work for

the cause, and give them reason to believe that they can persuade others” (Condit 1990: 80). Rhetorically, anti-abortion visual images “replace narratives” while pro-choice images “summarize narratives visually” (81). As Condit explains: Like narratives, visual images provide concrete enactments of abstract values and thereby allow a different kind of understanding of the meaning and impact of an ideographic claim about public life. They help “envision” the material impacts of abstract policy commitments. Images therefore provide a useful form of grounding for the acceptance of an argument. (81)

In other words, the rhetoric described by Lake would call for images that represent redemption, purity and innocence - all of which the fetus as baby do. According to Condit, fetal images operate metonymically (where a technical name is replaced by a different name that stresses a quality), metaphorically (where an identity is noted), and synecdochically (where part of an item is substituted for a whole) (82-9). In anti-abortion discourse, this means that baby is substituted for fetus, that the fetus is a human being, and that if part of the fetus is fully human then all of it is. The images support the centralization or selection of the fetus as baby in the advocate’s terministic screen. Images of the “baby” create the impression that the fetus is separate from its context - a woman or girl’s womb. This move of creating an unattached fetus is what Rosalind Petchesky and Barbara Katz Rothman have called the fetus in space (Petchesky 1997: 137). Its context within, and connection to, a woman is deflected.

Petchesky argues this move is central to anti-abortion discourse: “The strategy of antiabortionists to make fetal personhood a self-fulfilling prophecy by making the fetus a *public presenc* addresses a visually oriented culture” (1997: 134). In her analysis of the *Silent Screa* and of billboard advertising, Petchesky concludes that the “abstract individualism . . . effac[es] the pregnant woman and the fetus’s dependence on her, [and] gives the fetal image its symbolic transparency, so that we can read in it our selves, our lost babies, our mythic secure past” (137). This move toward abstract individualism is one that is intensified by the present use of ultrasound technologies because “[t]reating a fetus as if it were outside a woman’s body, because it can be viewed, is a political act” (139). Quite simply, “The ‘public’ presentation of the fetus has become ubiquitous; its disembodied form, now propped up by medical authority and technological rationality, permeates mass culture. We are all, on some level, susceptible to its coded meanings” (143).

Barbara Duden (1993) makes a similar argument when she describes the visual

iconography associated with anti-abortion rhetoric as “the skinning of woman’s body” (19). In a particularly detailed analysis of the famed *Life* photographs taken by Lennert Nilsson, she argues that “the managed image has become a precondition for sight” (17). In fact, instead of considering Nilsson’s work as photographs, she argues we should assess it as photogeny because the object he was recording, the early stages of the human embryo process, were created through a process that “assemble[d] in visual form digital measurements of an object that cannot be perceived by the senses” (25). And, by delving within a woman’s body, this process “skins” her. She is made absent, and the fetus becomes the focus.

How, then, does Petchesky propose we respond to fetal images? Since “[i]mages by themselves lack ‘objective’ meanings” and, instead, “meanings come from the interlocking fields of context, communication, application, and reception,” (146) it seems that the images can be recoded. Petchesky’s first call is to “restore women to a central place in the pregnancy scene” (147). Instead of showing the disembodied fetus as baby, show the women’s bodies in which the fetus is located or from which the baby came. This, interestingly, is precisely what the “You Are Not Alone” video does. While images of fetal development initially were going to be included in the video, they were not and, instead, were located in the workbook that goes along with the video (*You are 9-11*). In the workbook, the fetus in space scenario is recreated, but the video overlays this with images of real girls who are faced with a decision about their pregnancies.

With the video, the fetus as baby, unconnected to a woman, is absent. And, so too, is the centralization of the baby. Young women play the central role in the video as they talk through the difficult *choices* they have made. The redemption is not in giving birth, but in making a decision. Both metaethically and visually, the video enacts choice, and instead of justifying, integrating, and activating anti-abortion beliefs, the video justifies, integrates and activates the value of choice.

3. *The Video*

Quite simply, in all ways the video violates the rhetorical characteristics of anti-abortion discourse. Metaethically, it presents an informed and considered choice between options as the way to resolve the intense confusion felt by pregnant girls. Moral absolutism is eschewed and, instead, information is held as inherently helpful to the decision-making process. As the vision statement of the committee indicated, the goal was to have “materials . . . presented in an objective, empathetic, *non-directive* manner” (emphasis added), not to present a single

moral absolute. With the emphasis on empathy, the moral condition of the girls was not questioned. Instead, the video highlighted girls' abilities to make good decisions, ones that in retrospect the girls could still feel good about. Because girls who had actually made choices spoke for themselves in the video, and because the video narrator was a girl herself, girls are central as content and visually. In order to examine the metaethical and visual rhetorical patterns that led me to these conclusions, a more detailed analysis of the video follows.

As part of the deliberations, Carol Hinton, the coordinator of the Iowa Department of Health's Decision-making Assistance Program, met with the committee. In one meeting (10/9/96), she indicated that she understood "that the whole thrust was to assure that minors knew that there were options and that there is support for whatever option is chosen." Clearly, the charge of the committee, and its own decisions, heavily influenced the rhetorical and visual format of the video. And, remembering Lake's description of the argumentative form, the video clearly violates pro-life patterns. It presents multiple choices as equally valid, not just one as morally acceptable. The ability of the girls to make a decision is not questioned but, instead, girls are reassured that they can make a good decision. And, finally, the fetus is not spoken for in the video; we hear the voices of girls/women, not the voice of the fetus.

The video is divided into three sections. The first section is titled "A Choice: Abortion," the second "A Choice: Becoming a Parent," and the third "A Choice: Adoption." Clearly using the rhetoric of choice, the video creates the impression that the choice itself is the final outcome. Using the metaphor of a kaleidoscope, the young female narrator explains:

Have you ever looked through . . . a kaleidoscope? I always think it's kind of neat, the way everything is all jumbled up, and then you move it just a little bit, and everything just falls into place and makes this real cool design. And sometimes, you know, life can be that way too. Especially when you have to make a difficult decision. Things can seem confusing at first; you might feel angry, depressed, relieved, scared or you might not want to admit what is happening. ("You" video) With this metaphor, confusion is not resolved by one particular choice, but by the exploration of all the options and the making of any choice.

The video goes to great effort to reassure the minor that making a decision that is informed will provide some relief. As the narrator explains, after she talks to people she trusts and then "thought everything through, I make a decision that's

right for me. Anyway, doing these things doesn't make the decision any easier, but I usually feel better knowing that I've thought everything through to make a choice that works for me." Here, relief/redemption comes not from making a decision proscribed for you by others, but by making the decision on one's own. And, the possibility that a range of choices are acceptable, determined by the conditions and experiences of the individual, is highlighted.

Within each section, the video also highlights the experiences of an actual girl/woman who made each of the decisions. In other words, the girls/women are centered visually by the video. They appear on the screen, talking for themselves. For example, the abortion segment opens with a discussion of the medical and emotional issues involved. It closes with the comments of a woman, Audre, who underwent an abortion as a minor. She explains:

Well I feel that having an abortion was personally the right decision for me for a lot of reasons. First of all, though I felt I was a fairly mature teenager, I was well aware and insightful [sic] enough to realize that I was not emotionally ready in any way to have a baby. And I certainly was not mentally or financially ready to have a baby. I was also fortunate I never regretted it . . . I never was upset about it or cried about it. It was just a decision I made and it was said and done and that was it and I went on with my life and as I look back, I'm grateful at that because I did get to go to school and I did have a child when I was financially and emotionally ready and that turned out to be a positive experience instead of a negative experience because I was ready at the time. Again, the issue of choice is highlighted. The realities of the girl are made central to the decision to abort. And, she is the image that fills the screen.

In the "becoming a parent" segment, the segment opens not on the health risks to the girl/woman associated with pregnancy, but on the risks to the fetus. The girls are encouraged not to smoke or drink, to eat well, and to employ good prenatal care. Only then does the video discuss the risks of pregnancy to the girl, but those risks are minimized. The video explains that good prenatal care can make the risks of childbearing relatively similar regardless of one's age. After a discussion of the other medical and emotional elements, the video shows Cindy, who explains:

I feel it was a really good decision because I have a lot of fun with my daughter now. . . I'm really glad that I did decide to make that decision. She's a part of me and she'll always be a part of me and it gives us a lot of sharing time together and

things to do.

After these comments, the narrator explains that, “Just like abortion, choosing to have the baby and become a parent isn’t always an easy choice to make and there are others who should be involved in making that decision.”

The final segment, “A Choice: Adoption,” is one of the few places where the fetus is referred to as a baby. The segment opens with the narrator explaining: “Carrying the baby to term and placing the baby for adoption is another one of your options.” The legal elements, as well as emotional and medical, are discussed. And, like in the other segments, this one closes with the comments of a girl/woman who made this choice. Paula reflects on her decision this way:

I have gone on to establish a career for myself, a very good career. And, I think within my situation, having a baby and a child to take care of, it would have been harder to accomplish those goals . . . I read a lot about adoption and I also read about parenting and I just decided that, for me at the time, adoption was the best thing to do. Again, the girl/woman is made central, and the unique conditions of her life are noted.

The video then concludes with a review of the decision making process, which includes:

- * Gather as much information as you can.
- * Then, consider the impact your decision is going to have on your life and others involved.
- * And talk things over with at least one person you really trust, someone who can help you put things in perspective.
- * And, then, when you’ve really thought everything through, make a decision that’s right for you.

Choice is offered, the girl is made central, and, hence, the video does not model anti-abortion discourse either visually or rhetorically.

4. Conclusion

In many ways, the “You are not alone” video, in form and content, departs from the descent-ascent pattern inherent within guilt-redemption rhetoric and it also does not foreground the fetus. In terms of the moral pattern, it does not see childbirth as the solution to a descent into promiscuity, but instead sees moral absolution in the making of an informed decision. Its content offers three paths,

each equally possible and presented as equally acceptable. Its form enacts choice by offering three choices as neutrally as possible. Redemption is not found in making a particular decision (i.e. not to abort), but in any decision at all. And, the fetus is not spoken for. In fact, young girls are presented as important and valuable, and as capable of making a wise choice. And, it is the young girls who are continually foregrounded, with no images presented of the fetus.

However, this does not mean the video is unproblematic. At any point in which state intervention in a pregnancy occurs, one has to ask what is left of the girl or woman. Again, Barbara Duden's work is useful here. After watching a counseling session in Harlem for an immigrant who was pregnant, she concludes: Actually, the better the counseling, the more authoritatively convincing are certain modern ideas: that prenatal procedures are good, that pregnancies can be classified, imply risks, demand supervision, impose decisions, and require a large bureaucratic apparatus to arrange one's passage through the maze. What kind of woman remains after these notions are internalized? In what sense is it possible to call this being a woman? (1993: 26). While pro-choice advocates might be relieved that informational videos do not replicate the rhetorical patterns of anti-abortion discourse, concern should still arise because the videos continue the management of pregnancies in ways that are relatively new, relatively unseen, and relatively damaging as Duden points out. After viewing this video, one might ask: What type of girl is left once she is convinced that prenatal procedures are good (as discussed in the adoption and parenting segments)? What type of girl is left once she is convinced that pregnancies demand supervision, impose decisions, and require a large bureaucratic apparatus to arrange one's passage through the maze (especially since, for minors, medical professionals, state health officials, officers of the court, and family service employees are all involved). While what is left after the video may be a girl capable of making a choice, for what, for whom, and from where is the choice being made?

NOTES

- i.** As noted in the January 8, 1997, report to the legislature, the committee used a "consensus building process . . . to determine the content of the video and written materials." As a result of this process, the committee gave unanimous approval to the final products on January 7, 1997.
- ii.** The phrase "objective and empathetic" replaced the word "unemotional" in an earlier draft of the vision statement (Report to the Legislature, September 7,

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