



## Abortion

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

In an admirably clear manner, Lawrence Tribe explains why abortion has become such a divisive social issue. The struggle over abortion is so fierce because at stake is not simply differences of political opinion, but “a clash of absolutes, of life against liberty.”

Tribe, however, is not content with merely describing the clash—he wants to move beyond it. He exhorts his readers to use their empathetic imagination to comprehend both values—life and liberty. He makes his plea eloquently: “We must see the reality that ‘Roe’ and ‘Wade’ stand for if we are to move beyond the clash of absolutes. Giving voice to the human reality on each side of the ‘versus,’ keeping both the woman and the fetus in focus at the same time, may be the only way to avoid the no-win battle that mercilessly pits women against their unborn children and leaves us all impoverished losers.”

Tribe makes a genuine effort to rise above the fray and to provide a way beyond the clash of absolutes. Unfortunately, no neutral point of view is possible on this issue. Though he attempts to be open-minded, his own “pro-choice” position is crystal-clear. His central assertion that there is a “clash of absolutes” is not acceptable to readers with “pro-life” convictions. If abortion is the murder of a human being, then there can be no clash of absolutes: A human life is worth infinitely more than any so-called “liberty.”

Tribe’s book, therefore, will be illuminating to readers already on the pro-choice side, and perhaps to those somewhere in the middle. Those of the pro-life conviction will find it another exercise in pro-choice rationalization. Despite his intentions, Tribe’s book ultimately suggests that there is no way beyond the clash of absolutes.

### Copyright Notice

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:  
<http://www.enotes.com/abortion-lawrence-h-tribe-salem>