

TANGENTS...

BY THANE ... THE PROSPEROS... POST OFFICE BOX 190, EL MONTE, CALIFORNIA

VOLUME II, ISSUE 22

Copyright, 1962

Dear Student-Friend,

Several letters, telephone calls, and newspaper clippings sent me by students prompts me to write this Tangent. It is in reference to the case of Mrs. Sherri Finkbine that has not only occupied the news for several weeks but has elicited a lot of editorial comment and sermons as well.

The question put to me is what is an Ontologist's or Translator's position in reference to abortion? I don't believe the question is that simple nor do I think there is a direct or simple answer. The question is not one of abortion, pure and simple, but must include the specific factors of this case and the individuations of both Mr. and Mrs. Finkbine and their children must be considered.

There have certainly been a lot of opinions expressed by many people from jurist through sensation-seeker, that will utilize anything to get into the lime-light.

It seems to me that there are other questions equally important as abort or not to abort in this case, such as, the matter of the merciless publicity given to what was surely a very personal matter. To say nothing of the Finkbines' own spiritual wrestling with their conscience for they were forced to decide not only if abortion is murder, mercy killing, or something else, but run the risk of having a child that might hate them all their lives!

In reading all the clippings that have been sent me, I've noted little

mention of the responsibility of the pharmaceutical and medical professions that "experimented" with thalidomide by using it on many women throughout the country, some of which, besides Mrs. Finkbine, might have been pregnant. While thalidomide has not been advertised on TV, I am sure there are many similar drugs ballyhooed and sold without prescription that can be equally dangerous in individual cases. So, I think there is a serious indictment of American style advertising involved.

Even more appalling is the privacy of the Finkbines' being exploited by a sensational press that invited public judgment in a matter that John Q. Public isn't slightly capable of judging. Trying, judging and sentencing by the public through the press is akin to lynching and often judicious courts will change the hearing of a case from one place to another to avoid such a miscarriage of justice. Often a judge will remove himself from the bench when he feels he is disqualified by his own or the public's bias.

In the matter of the Finkbines, the press throughout the world let John (which should be Jerque) Q. Public pass judgment. This is a gross abuse of the universality of mind as communication. Two clippings from widely separated newspapers show what I mean.

A few weeks ago when visiting Bob and Gale Sherwood in Las Vegas, one of the local papers carried the story of an interview with a used car dealer that certainly passed judgment

on the Finkbines and I am sure it favorably impressed many, probably bringing a lot of business to the used car lot. This man, the father of several children, urged the Finkbines not to abort, saying he would adopt the child at birth if it were deformed. His opinion was this: Any human conceived should have the right to see the light of day, regardless of how monstrous!

A Honolulu paper carried this item: "The following story presents the real question concerning abortion:

"A doctor in a poor section of town was approached by a mother-to-be about having an abortion. They discussed the fee. 'I have two fees; one is \$400,' the doctor said. The woman gasped, 'That's too much.' The doctor continued: 'The other fee is \$2.98. But it works this way. You continue the pregnancy and when the baby is born you give me \$2.98 and I'll buy a hammer and you hit the baby in the head.'"

Do either one of these ideas have a bearing on the Finkbine case?

It is well-known that the beleaguered and belabored couple had to travel halfway 'round the world in following the dictates of their conscience. The UPI reports from Stockholm, "Mrs. Sherri Finkbine, Saturday, underwent an abortion to lose the baby she feared had been deformed by the drug thalidomide.....Her husband, Robert Finkbine, said physicians had told him the foetus showed clear signs of damage. "Now we know," he said. "Now we know beyond any doubt that we were right in insisting on abortion."

On August 27 the UPI reports from Chicago that Mrs. Finkbine told newsmen at O'Hare Field, "I'm quite relieved. I feel 200 thousand percent assured that it was the right thing to do. My friends will understand my motives. Those who don't are not my kind of friends."

Of course the Finkbines' opinion may not solve the real question raised by the case, but there is a group of

people whose opinion should be heard before the verdict is brought in. Paul Coates writes of this group in this manner:

"In the fright and furor over monstrosity births caused by the drug thalidomide, almost all sides have been heard from. Almost all, but not quite all.

"The question of whether it is ethically, morally, or spiritually right to abort a woman who has only a 50% chance of delivering a normal child has been argued by the theologians, physicians, jurists and laymen. But there is one voice that has not been heard.

"At least, I never heard it, until this week, when I received a strange letter. Quite a volume of unusual, poignant mail crosses my desk. But I never recall ever being so deeply touched by anything as I was by this letter from a Los Angeles woman:

"This controversy going on at the present time about whether to go ahead and have a malformed child or terminate the pregnancy has my dander up.

"These mothers who say, 'We love the child and it will have everything we can possibly give it,' are wrong. I agree with Mrs. Finkbine, who is trying to have an abortion, for she is thinking of the child's feelings.

"You know why I feel so strongly about this?

"I am deformed, and I know what I am talking about.

"If I had anything to say about my birth, I certainly would have decided upon an abortion of myself without any scruples.

"Has anyone considered the child's point of view? It is the one who must suffer with operations and all the pain that accompanies them....the jibes of other children, the sly glances to see what is the matter with that person that he looks so different...Isn't he

a freak!

"The more intelligent we are, the more sensitive we are, and these lame and deformed people who swear they have gotten over being stared at are plain liars. There is no such thing as getting over a deformity. Take it from one who knows.

"I know the hell of being left out ...I know the lonesomeness, the feelings of frustration, the trying to live a normal life, with always that gnawing feeling at the pit of my stomach that I'll NEVER, in this life, be like other people and be able to do the things they do and enjoy all the lovely things there are to enjoy.

"Oh, we can look at the beautiful sunsets and appreciate the lovely flowers and try to be glad we're alive....while all the time deep, deep down, we're resentful and wonder why we are the ones selected to go through life as freaks.

"This is strong language and I know many people would rise up and deny that their deformities bother them the least tiny bit. Rot!

"So let these mothers who talk of the joy this darling bundle from heaven is bringing them, even though it has no hands or legs, put themselves in the child's place and see how they feel.

"No, they couldn't. Because no one can imagine in the slightest what it is like to be deformed if they are physically perfect. It is impossible.

"....I don't think I've ever told anyone what I am telling you.

"I have lived 50 years with my

deformity and am known as a pretty good egg...witty, fun-loving and compassionate.....that's the outside appearance.

"But inside I've always felt I got a pretty raw deal, just having to live all these years pretending I was enjoying myself. I have to set an example!

"How can she BE so happy, the poor thing!' It's easy. Just LOOK happy. That's all that's necessary.

"Oh yes, I've considered God and talking to Him and feeling perhaps SOMEONE has to be an example. . .but no soap.

"I look at myself and start feeling frustrated all over again.

"It isn't self-pity, either; it's just that I don't like how I look, and how could I expect anyone else to?"

* * *

Of course this does not answer the original question put to me: What is an Ontologist's or Translator's position relative to abortion? Nor does it really answer the question in the special case of the Finkbines. But it is the expression of an individuation that should be heard.

I'd like to know what YOU as a student of Ontology and Translation feel our platform should be. Write me at Box 8366, Waikiki Station, Honolulu 15, Hawaii, and I'll publish those opinions, or translations that I receive that I think will be helpful in this matter.

I've also been asked, "Thane, did you translate this? You always tell us to translate everything."

I certainly did. Did you?

Aloha Blessings,

Thane
Thane

Waikiki
August 28, 1962.
TAN II - 22, (1-3) 3