

THE CONTRARIAN ANALYST AS POSITIVE THINKER

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Henry VIII was 100% wrong in accusing Catherine of Aragon of not giving him a son: as we now know (the offsprings' sex is father-determined), the truth was that he failed to give her a son, so ignorantly tried for a son with a string of other women. The 1/2c.-old movie farce of all this, with Chas. Laughton as H.VIII (a VC one of my sisters owns), conceals the horror of the human misery caused by, this bio-error. What present horrors in our groaning world will future knowledge reveal to have been tragedies only of ignorance? And what present horrors exist only because present knowledge is not used--because of unavailability or concealment--to relieve the sufferers? And how can we now improve the delivery system of such knowledge (vis-a-vis, eg, human sexuality, biospheric pollution, desertification, biopsychology, transcultural communication)?...Knowledge mavens who trouble their heads over such questions read the world, in this regard, with contrarian eyes, assuming (as a perpetual working hypothesis) that every situation is worse than it would be if (1) some pertinent unknowns were known and/or (2) some existing knowledge, of which the situation is deficient, were present & active. These knowledge mavens are not just contrarians, "agin it"; they are contrarian analysts of a particular sort, asking what knowledge is being left out & why....The God maven is another type of contrarian analyst--sensitive to, and indicator of, the absence of God in the consciousness of participants in a situation (Ps.10.4 TEV: "thinks God doesn't matter"). ...Another type of contrarian analyst is the resources/power/suffering maven, perpetually raising consciousnesses vis-a-vis power's maldistribution of resources as cause of unnecessary human suffering....All these & other categories of contrarian analyst exist both as insiders (to institutions & traditions) & as outsiders (to institutions & traditions). I am both....Except in the rare case of the misanthropic contrarian analyst, all who practice this peculiar & generally unrewarded occupation do so out of a positive life-orientation, as a via-negativa form of life-affirmation (I hesitate to call it "positive thinking" only because of the Coué-Peale connotation of the phrase). All grant that the evil is the enemy of the good: we press that the good, when resistant to improvement, is the enemy of the better, the still better, the best. We are moved by a satisfied dissatisfaction, a contented discontent, bidimensional gratitude for Kingdom come-&-coming. What that's important to truly human life is being left out, & why, & how can it be included? How are truth, love, goodness, beauty being here-and-now dis/honored? And language: how is it being here-&-now abused, & to what antihuman effects? (Many of my Thinksheets wrestle with instances of this last question.).... "Contrarian analyst" of the God-maven type = the biblical prophet, who, seeking the call society to God-centering, endeavors to "take every thought captive & make it obey Christ" (2Cor.10.5 TEV). It would be boring if every Thinksheet explicitly did this, so I find myself often struggling to say something in a nonreligious way though inwardly I'm grasping it, it's grasping me, in the language of Zion....Because of the character of the biblical God as truth, righteousness-justice, love, the biblical contrarian analyst (prophet) cannot be only God-maven, must also be knowledge maven and resources/power/suffering maven. Eg, Flannery O'Connor, whom I quote (in the Thinksheet immediately previous to this one) as calling herself "a God-conscious writer," was keenly concerned about truth, human sensitivity, fair social arrangements (and worked hard against sounding so pious as to turn off her secular readers)....It's obvious that this biblical prophet (1) must stand outside society, to cry against in order to be for, and (2) must stand inside society, cannot withdraw from society, in order to speak & act against on behalf of. Violate (1) & you have not a biblical prophet but a conformist, a sycophant; violate (2) & you have not a biblical prophet but a philosopher or mystic or (in Jos. Sobran's sense) "alienist" (not the earlier sense, a specialist in mental "strangeness"; but in the dropout sense, the rejecter of "the system" as essentially evil, corrupting, unjust, hopeless-irredeemable--but neo-pious, self-righteous, hypocritically, in false innocence, lacking self-criticism but bitterly critical of civilization, its foundations and not only its institutions). This a secular or neo-religious ("New Age") practitioner of contemptus mundi, contempt for "the world," society-&-humanity here-&-now. The all-too-real fictional image in my mind for this is Allen Wheelis' Fallbuck Wheeling, black-leather-outfitted, roaring around on his bike, conversing "only until finding something rotten underneath."