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ELLIOTT THINKSHEETS
309 L.Eliz.Dr., Craigville, MA 02636
Phone 508.775.8008
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You can detail what went on when you were **awake**, & even, if you set your mind to it, when you were **asleep**. But what goes on with you when you are **neither**? "Going into it" (sleep), a guided fantasy may become a dream: "coming out of it," what does a dream become? or if not a dream-extension, whence whatever it is that becomes?

Whatever it is--however you lasso it with a name--I know it when I see it in classics. In the intoxicating rhythms of the Qur'an, which is more music than philosophy. In the rushing torrent of the Mahabharata as it flows into the blue lagoon of the Gita. In Emerson's so-Enlightenment-captive ESSAYS, & Kierkegaard's so-Enlightenment-free PHILOSOPHICAL FRAGMENTS....

....&--infinitely lower!--my Thinksheets, almost all of which have been born in that strange, nondream-nonawake time just before I can say "I'm awake." Take this one, eg, born a few minutes ago, at 5:04 a.m. (The birth metaphor doubtless comes from yesterday having come upon my birth announcement in my father's file on me.)

This Thinksheet birth-time at least partly accounts for the open, exploratory, episodic, mosaic quality of the Thinksheets. Or maybe my peculiar-particular mind just works this way throughout the 24 hours--naturally, or through formation from my having so long taken seriously what goes on with me in the peculiar-particular, nonsleep-nonawake time that hits us all every day we don't die in our sleep. Thinksheets are Willis doing his thing as prayer & in the hope of helping free at least a few others to do their thing. (This I read yesterday in an ex-student's letter: "You are a master teacher on how to set your students free--to not be God--to always point to God." Whether or not her attribution is correct, she has stated my conscious goal.)

COURAGE, THE MOTHER OF HOPE

How do you go about trying to help someone who feels hopeless? Someone who's stopped looking for work? Someone who sees the future as "all downhill from here on"? Or a people--say, the USA, or the former USSR--who are more in fear of than in hope for the future? One thing you can do is to midwife courage, on the conviction that everybody is always either pregnant with it or the parent of it..... One way to get at this is to look at the dimensions of courage.

Physical courage I need say little of, except that it accounts for much of the excitement of the just-finished '92 Winter Olympics. Mind-over-matter risking of bodily harm. A metaphor for all passionate engagement with life. The courage to face inevitable, self-inflicted pain of body. In the sports mix are two subsidiary forms of courage: (1) **endurance**, the courage to pick yourself up & try again; & (2) **competition**, the courage to face the possibility of losing.

Intellectual courage has inceptive & perfective forms. The inceptive form is the courage of curiosity in face of dread, the dread of the unknown-unexplored. Perfective courage is the courage of a sustained curiosity, persistent mental openness, when the dread materializes into threat, the interior threat to one's paradigmatic composure &/or the exterior threat from one's fellows, personal &/or institutional.

Columbus, like him or not, is a model of physical & intellectual courage combined. We need him now as Euramerica faces daunting difficulties. I'm appalled that the American intelligentisia, including liberal clergy, are using the quincentennial to focus on his flaws rather than his strengths. Sure, he should have shown intelligent compassion for the primitives he falsely called "Indians." Sure, we should show intelligent compassion for them. But what are the prospects that the current maudlin "multicultural" concern for them will benefit them? Will it help them toward the courages they need?

One of the courages primitives then & now need is intellectual courage. Face it, folks: a factor, perhaps the main factor, in primitives' remaining primitives is their cultures' sustained opposition to sustained curiosity. My point has definitional weight: *civilized* societies encourage, or at least do not effectively frustrate, the curiosity drive which is a distinguishing characteristic of our species. A *primitive* society such as Columbus encountered suppresses curiousity, punishing those of its young who, by divine gift (we would say), exhibit curiosity to an outstanding degree. Yes, I am blaming the victim. To the extent that the victim is self-victimized, the victim will be either blamed (which is healthy) or "identified with" (which is sick, sentimental, & sustaining of the "oppression").

It's ironic. Right now, eco-romanticists are turning this primitive defect into a virtue without seeing the defect. Yes, "civilizations," by the technologies resulting from sustained intellectual curiosity, have been bad news to the biosphere--in China, in Araby, in "the West." But the way to "a sustainable

world" is not by a romantic return to primitivity (with its low potential for eco-damage) but rather by the opposite, an increase in the application of intellectual courage to the planetary problems we all face.

Spiritual courage, like intellectual courage, has two dimensions. The first is to stare back into the fierce eye of God, or however you may want to put the double seeing, both to see the Other & to see oneself as the Other sees one--with radical honesty, without excuses--to know what God looks like through the eye of faith, & to face what I look like in the eye of God. This vertical experience of "the Mystery that causes us to tremble & holds us with fascination" (Rudolf Otto's *mysterium tremendum et fascinans/fascinosum*) soon fades if it gets no social reinforcement (declaration of commitment, + +/- feedback from the hearers of one's testimony). Today's diary entry of ½ c. ago reminded me of 30 who showed spiritual courage, "coming to the invitation to acceptance of Christ as Lord & Savior" after I'd preached at them for 55" in a college-age gathering in Chicago's First Presbyterian Church--& I often remember how hard it was for me to do that when I was 17. Dangers in the appeal for evangelical commitment? Of course, but fewer than the failure to make the appeal....Churches should be "support groups" strengthening members' spiritual courage & comforting them when they come wounded from the wars with "the world, the flesh, & the devil."....The rewards for definitive commitment are peace, strength, comfort, joy, communion with one's fellow-warriors (yes, "Onward, Christian soldiers!"). The loss when the horizontal work of spiritual courage (witness in church & world) is left undone is spiritual blahs & flab & indecision (1K.18.21: "Why continue to limp between two opinions?"). Mainline religion need look only to itself to diagnose its spiritual malaise. It's been long on (feminine) nurture & short on (masculine) challenge to spiritual courage.

Moral courage, the courage to name good & evil, right & wrong, & to take the consequences of right living for the good, can be, often is, preached as a religion in itself. Mainline religion tends to offer this not as a supplement to, but as a substitute for, spiritual courage....Another aspect is moral fiber, willpower + resilience: "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."....And the humility to confess, repent, forgive, make restitution.

The Thinksheet title seems to promise an exposition of how courage is "the mother of hope." Not my intention. Rather, I invite you to think of the **hopelessness**, the passionless dead-end, when human beings have passed up the challenge of physical or intellectual or spiritual or moral courage.....

.....which brings me to **passion** as the energy of courage. I've just come in from helping split wood with a hydraulic ram. What a model of controlled, persistent passion! It'll groan & grunt on the big logs, but it never (well, almost never) says die. (Yes, it's also a metaphor for stupid, bullheaded folly; but that's for another day.)....Energy is the fuel of passion, & passion is the motor of courage...."Passion" has the same root as "patient," & it suggests suffering by being acted upon (as "the Passion" of Christ); but our passions need not be ungovernable, beyond our control.

In THE WAY OF THE SACRED (Dell/74), Francis Huxley uses drunkenness to illustrate passion out of control (p.265): Human beings have a propensity "for getting drunk, both literally and metaphorically." We "can get drunk with glory, power, ideas, lusts, and religious certitudes as easily as...with alcohol." We enjoy working ourself up into a passion "for the feeling of life it gives." Intensifiers of passion are (p.276) "solitude, danger, expectation, and pain."

The shaman incubates passion till it bursts forth in what the community takes to be spiritual power. The visionary has dreams & nightmares full of passionate intensity. Early Hebrew prophets were ecstatics. Says Moses (Num.11.29), "I wish the Lord would give his spirit to all his people and make them shout like prophets!" Dionysos, god of wine, victimized Orpheus (for worshiping Apollo, god of intellection) & Pentheus (for opposing the cult of frenzy). Blake: "If the fool would persist in his folly, he would become wise"--but also "Hell is for those who follow their energies" rather than reason.