

# Is more opinion right for the Gray Lady?

New York Times Public Editor Arthur S. Brisbane has recently commented on the New York Times' decision to replace its Sunday Week in Review section with a new Sunday Review section.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/03/opinion/sunday/03pubed.html?\\_r=1&ref=thepubliceditor](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/03/opinion/sunday/03pubed.html?_r=1&ref=thepubliceditor)

While Brisbane says the new section is “a work in progress and will evolve,” it seems the Times apparently is defining more opinion as “progress.” But is it? It's one thing for the news media to critically analyze something, to see what makes it tick, to weigh the pros and cons, to possibly see where Aristotle's “golden mean” might reside. It's something else when the media chooses opinion over careful, reasoned, well-sourced news analysis.

The direction Times has chosen clearly is i

n step with much of television and cable, be it in news spun by Fox personalities or Steven Colbert's satires. But might our national conversation be less divisive were the Times to devote more, not less, focus on analysis? Do we really need more opinion in a time where our two major political parties – to say nothing of the tea party – are drowning out each other in non-ending waves of partisan blather? And giving the Times more space for first-person pieces likely will bolster the political right's contention that the gray lady is at heart a partisan, liberal rag.

Perhaps the Times new Sunday focus will prove beneficial to its financial bottom line at a time when the media all are struggling to be profitable. But whether or not the nation's bottom line will be strengthened as its premier newspaper

increasingly focuses on opinion, is entirely another issue.