The Theodore H. White Lecture

with

E.J. Dionne, Jr.

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Joan Shorenstein Center
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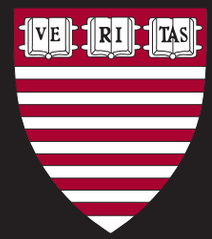

▪ PUBLIC POLICY ▪

John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

2006

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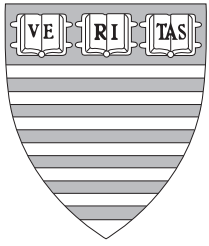

▪ PUBLIC POLICY ▪

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The Theodore H. White Lecture on Press and Politics commemorates the life of the late reporter and historian who created the style and set the standard for contemporary political journalism and campaign coverage.

White, who began his journalism career delivering the *Boston Post,* entered Harvard College in 1932 on a newsboy's scholarship. He studied Chinese history and Oriental languages. In 1939, he witnessed the bombing of Chungking while freelance reporting on a Sheldon Fellowship, and later explained, "Three thousand human beings died; once I'd seen that I knew I wasn't going home to be a professor."

During the war, White covered East Asia for *Time* and returned to write *Thunder Out of China,* a controversial critique of the American-supported Nationalist Chinese government. For the next two decades, he contributed to numerous periodicals and magazines, published two books on the Second World War and even wrote fiction.

A lifelong student of American political leadership, White in 1959 sought support for a 20-year research project, a retrospective of presidential campaigns. After being advised to drop such an academic exercise by fellow reporters, he took to the campaign trail and, relegated to the "zoo plane," changed the course of American political journalism with *The Making of the President, 1960.*

White's *Making of the President* editions for 1964, 1968, and 1972 and *America in Search of Itself* remain vital historical documents on campaigns and the press.

Before his death in 1986, Theodore White also served on the Kennedy School's Visiting Committee, where he was one of the early architects of what has become the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. The late Blair Clark, former senior vice president of CBS who chaired the committee to establish this lectureship, asked, "Did Teddy White ever find the history he spent his life searching for? Well, of course not, he would have laughed at such pretension. But he came close, very close, didn't he? And he never quit the strenuous search for the elusive reality, and for its meaning in our lives."

E.J. DIONNE, JR., is a syndicated op-ed columnist for *The Washington Post*. Before joining the *Post* as a political reporter in 1990, Dionne was a reporter for *The New York Times* for fourteen years, covering state and local government as well as national politics. He is a senior fellow in the Governance Studies Program at the Brookings Institution and University Professor in the Foundations of Democracy and Culture at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute. He is also a senior advisor to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and appears as a political commentator on "Meet the Press," National Public Radio, CNN and the "NewsHour" with Jim Lehrer.

Dionne has written several books, including the 1991 *LA Times* Book Prize winner, *Why Americans Hate Politics*. The book was a National Book Award nominee and was described by *Newsday* as a "classic in American political history." In 1996 Dionne went on to write *They Only* Look *Dead: Why Progressives Will Dominate the Next Political Era.* His third book, *Stand Up, Fight Back: Republican Toughs, Democratic Wimps, and the Politics of Revenge,* was published in May 2004. In 1997 the *National Journal* named him one of the twenty-five most influential Washington journalists, and *Washingtonian* magazine included him in their list of top fifty journalists in Washington, D.C.

Dionne graduated summa cum laude with an A.B. from Harvard College in 1973. A Rhodes Scholar, he went on to receive his doctorate from Oxford University in 1982.

MOLLY IVINS, a nationally syndicated political columnist, graduated from Smith College and Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. She began her career in the Complaint Department of the *Houston Chronicle*, and then went on to the *Minneapolis Tribune*, where she covered a beat called "Movements for Social Change," and became the city's first female police reporter. In 1976 she began to write for *The New York Times*. She started out as a political reporter covering New York City and Albany and eventually worked her way up to become the paper's Rocky Mountain Bureau Chief. Throughout her career, Ivins contributed to various magazines, including *Esquire*, *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *The Nation*, *The Progressive*, *Mother Jones* and *TV Guide*. Ivins was a three-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and wrote several books, including *Bushwhacked: Life in George W. Bush's America*, and *Who Let the Dogs In?: Incredible Political Animals I Have Known*. Sadly, Ivins died of cancer in January 2007, at the age of 62.

For thirty years DAVID NYHAN was a columnist and reporter at *The Boston Globe*. A graduate of Harvard College and a Shorenstein Fellow in the spring of 2001, Nyhan was a regular participant in Shorenstein Center activities before, during, and after his Fellowship. Nyhan died unexpectedly in 2005. In his eulogy, Senator Edward Kennedy said of Nyhan, "Dave was a man of amazing talent, but most of all he was a man of the people who never forgot his roots. . . . In so many ways, but especially in the daily example of his own extraordinary life, Dave was the conscience of his community." The hallmark of David Nyhan's brand of journalism was the courage to champion unpopular causes and challenge the powerful with relentless reporting and brave eloquence. In his memory, the Shorenstein Center has established the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

THEODORE H. WHITE LECTURE
NOVEMBER 16, 2006

Mr. Jones: Good evening. I am Alex Jones, director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. I want to welcome you all. But later, as I say, you will soon hear from E. J. Dionne, our distinguished White Lecturer for 2006.

But first I have another task to perform, which is an honor, but a bittersweet one. Two years ago we at the Shorenstein Center lost a great and much admired friend, David Nyhan. He died unexpectedly after he came inside to take a break from shoveling snow. Many of you knew David well, some of you did not, and I want to speak to him as we this year bestow the second annual David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

David Nyhan was a man of many parts: devoted family man, beloved friend, always boon companion. He was a big, handsome man with a killer smile, Irish eyes, and the rare power to light up a room just by walking into it. I've seen him do it again and again while he was a Fellow at the Shorenstein Center.

But tonight we honor David Nyhan the consummate reporter and political journalist, which is the role that occupied much of his life, and at which he could not be bested. David was a reporter and then a columnist at *The Boston Globe*, and his work had both a theme and a character. The theme was almost always power, especially political power, and also especially the abuse of political power by the big shots at the expense of the little guys. He loved politics. And he also loved politicians. As a group he respected them, felt that they were often themselves given a raw deal, and judged by a standard that was smug and sanctimonious, two things David Nyhan never was.

For David, politics was the way things got done, or the reason things didn't get done. He was a reporter's reporter when it came to rooting out the what really happened aspect of a political story, and he especially loved being able to debunk the popular wisdom. He was an aficionado of hypocrisy and cant, and at the same time was the first person to defend a beleaguered politician whose crime was that he was human rather than that he was corrupt.

But if politics was the theme of David's work, the character of that work was a mixture of courage and righteous anger, leavened by a great sense of humor and the ability to write like a dream. He relished a good, meaning a bad, fight with a political figure or perspective, yet had a knack of seeing beyond the surface of issues and the baloney to the heart of things, and especially to the reality of what was going on. I would love to hear what David would have to say about the Big Dig right now. He was

a self-avowed liberal and utterly not defensive about it. As a columnist at the *Globe*, he was a battler, a no-holds-barred advocate. But he always also was surprising his readers with his take on things because most of all, David Nyhan was his own man.

In his memory and honor, the Nyhan Family and many friends and admirers of David Nyhan have endowed the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism, to recognize the kind of gutsy, stylish and relentless journalism that embodied David Nyhan. His wife, Olivia, and many members of his family are here tonight, and I would like to ask them to stand.

(Applause)

Mr. Jones: This year the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism goes to Molly Ivins. Molly had departed *The New York Times* after a tumultuous six-year run when I arrived there in 1983. But in the newsroom she was a legend. The story went that what got her canned was that she referred to a community chicken-killing festival as a "gang pluck."

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: Abe Rosenthal was the editor of the *Times*, and though he was a great newsman—he'd been the editor of the *Times* who had insisted on publishing the Pentagon Papers—he wasn't known for an irreverent sense of humor.

The way I heard the story, and Molly has confirmed that it's so, he screamed at Molly—he on occasion screamed at everyone practically, certainly including me. Anyway, he screamed at Molly: "You won't stick your thumb in the eye of *The New York Times* ever again." It may be that Molly didn't get to stick her thumb in the *Times'* eye again in quite so robust a way, but she has made a career of eye-thumbing, and made it into an art form at which she is matchless. Last month a group of friends gathered in Austin, Texas, to celebrate her career, especially the part of it connected with the *Texas Observer*, the feisty newspaper where she was once editor. The gathering included a large helping of Mollyisms, as they are called. For instance, if his "IQ were any lower, they'd have to water him twice a day."

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: And there were also a selection of things which she had on what she called her own overrated list, which included Mack trucks, the FBI, and some other things that she can get away with saying but that I cannot. She can complete that list tonight if she chooses.

Molly graduated from Smith College, got a masters degree in journalism from Columbia, and then studied for a year in Paris. She describes her first newspaper job as that of sewer editor of the *Houston Chronicle*, which the paper thought was sort of a nuts and bolts city beat. She went from there to the *Minneapolis Tribune* as the city's first woman police reporter. After that her job, as she described it, was doing stories on militant blacks, angry Indians, radical students, uppity women, and a motley assortment of other misfits and troublemakers, which sounds like just her cup of tea.

Then it was back to Texas and the *Texas Observer*, to *The New York Times* to be the hairshirt of Abe Rosenthal. And following the gang pluck episode, back to Texas for good. Her syndicated column, which appears in more than 300 papers nationwide, is based at the *Ft. Worth Star Telegram*. In all that time she has repeatedly spoken fierce truth to power and undermined her targets by skewering them with humor even they often found funny. One of her best books is one known with the title *Shrub*, which is about a junior Bush.

She has recently been fighting cancer, but it has not stopped her, either from using her column to afflict the powerful, nor, I'm glad to say, from coming to Cambridge to accept the Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

As you might expect, the recent election had her in high dudgeon and great form. In her column on election eve she wrote,

> This campaign has been like getting stuck in Alice's Wonderland for three months. "There's no use trying," Alice said "one can't believe impossible things." "I dare say you haven't much practice," replied the White Queen. "When I was your age I always did it half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." Every time you turn around you run into the Jabberwocky or the Frumious Bandersnatch—Richard Perle in penitence—or some other equally fantastic sight. The great Skywriter in the sky is positively run amok with irony and has been splashing it all over the campaign like Jackson Pollock. . .
>
> Fortunately, it is not my duty to lend dignity to the proceedings, I do make it a rule to skip talk of sex, drugs and rock and roll. But when Mark Foley turns out to be the chairman of the House Committee on Missing and Exploited Children, you know you have to sit down like a tired dog and scratch for a while.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: It is my honor to present the Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism to that eye-thumbing scratching dog of a columnist, Molly Ivins.

(Applause)

Mr. Jones: Molly does have some things to say, but as I said, she has not been well, she is feisty as ever but she will deliver her remarks seated.

Ms. Ivins: I'll stand up for this part because I want to begin by saying what an extraordinary honor it is to receive a prize named after Dave Nyhan. I mean it really doesn't get better than that. If you are a professional journalist, to receive an award named after somebody who was just a fantastic triple hitter, great deadline reporter, watched him do it time after time. You know, just handing in those sheets one after another right as they were being dictated, it was really extraordinary. Not only a great deadline reporter, a great columnist.

And finally, I think more important than anything else, the kind of journalist who puts things in a framework so that it's not just one thing after another flashing by you, who, what, when, where, why and how, and on to the next one. This was a man who studied our time and our people. And it's just an extraordinary gift this afternoon, I really cannot tell you how moved I am by this.

I'm at a stage in my career where I am starting to get a lot of lifetime achievement awards, the word has gotten out that I have cancer and so they are really coming thick and fast. Lifetime Achievement for Southeastern Texas Women Journalists, and all kinds of exciting stuff. This is one that just means so much to me because Dave Nyhan was such a great guy. And I thank you.

I have been in the newspaper business since 1964, and during that entire time I have been told it's a dying industry.

Now I am going to sit down and talk.

(Applause)

Ms. Ivins: We're going to talk about what is wrong with newspapers. I have been in the newspaper business since 1964, and during that entire time I have been told it's a dying industry. Well, I don't mind being part of a dying industry, it's an interesting dying industry and it gives you lots of opportunities to laugh and learn and it hardly ever gets better than that. They actually pay you to go out and learn something new every day, what a deal, what a deal.

I don't mind being part of a dying industry, it really pisses me off to be part of one that is committing suicide, which is what we are watching newspapers across America do. And they are committing suicide because the people who own them are incredibly greedy. The rate of return for a normal single ownership town for a newspaper is around 20 percent, which is higher than the oil business is.

It has been discovered by those who watch such things that we are in fact losing both circulation and advertising. So then the question arises, what to do, losing circulation and advertising? Well, what you do if you are the kind of geniuses who write business plans for newspapers is you decide to make your product more boring, less useful, and altogether of very little point. It is really quite wonderful to watch people who supposedly know about money judge how to do these things. They decide that what we should do is get rid of the people who make the newspaper a decent newspaper, just start chopping them off a little bit by little bit and then everything will be better.

It is the silliest damn thing I've ever watched in my life. I don't know how many of you know a Florida writer named Carl Hiaasen, but he wrote a wonderful book about the newspaper business called *Basket Case*, which is about the elimination of the job of an obituary writer on a small

Florida newspaper. And I think it explains as well as anything I have ever come across why when you kill a newspaper the community dies. It also includes, to my absolute enchantment, I recommend it highly, I worked for ten years for a man named Tony Ridder, I didn't like him any better than I liked Abe Rosenthal—

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: There is a classically nasty portrait of Tony Ridder in this book. I have to say writers should take our shots where we can find them.

The trouble with, as you look at the newspaper business responding in this craven and stupid fashion to what they perceive as a threat from the Internet—I got to teach at Cal-Berkeley about eight years ago, and I would say that about 85 percent of my students then expected to practice journalism on the Internet. And I said, that's fine, of course you will, and it will be exactly the same problem, you will A: have to find out whether or not it is true; and you will B: have to put it in some package that is useful to people.

Now the big debate is about whether or not they have figured out if there is such a thing as a package that is useful to people, in other words, that provides all the information a newspaper does and is also somehow get-at-able, and one of the complaints about the Internet of course is you can't even figure out a way to put the classified ads in order, much less everything else that comes in a newspaper. I assume they will eventually get that, I mean I have nothing against new technology.

But I do think it is silly for us to make the same mistake we've made before. When radio was first invented it was predicted that newspapers would promptly croak. When television was first introduced it was predicted that radio would croak. What has happened as each new technology of communication comes on line, they seem to stack up side by side, complimenting one another in special ways, rather than be stacked on top of one another and bury each other.

I suspect that that is what is going to happen with the new technology as well. What I don't understand is why the people who own newspapers, aside from the fact that they are now run by 24-year-olds who work for Wall Street and have never been on a newspaper in their lives, why they seem to think that it's necessary to panic. They have actually figured out that circulation will decrease so that in the year 2027 there will be not one subscriber left; I think there probably will be a really grumpy old guy up in Alaska saying people are no damn good.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: If the absurdity of the response of the newspaper business is okay, that's a good laugh, Nyhan would like it. But there is, and I'm going to go ahead and sound all kind of windy and pompous, there is an importance about newspapers, they serve a need in a community. Our readers are not just consumers, they're citizens, and the conversation we have among ourselves as a democracy is really what this country is about. And

you can't have that conversation without information. I like to blame Rupert Murdoch. The first newspaper he bought in the United States was in San Antonio, Texas, and I am afraid that it's a grid that has spread far and wide.

And newspapers tend to be kind of like poker pots, when you're in a competitive newspaper situation both of you can go high, do high-end effective journalism, both of you can go low, or you can split the pot, kind of like *The Daily News* and *The New York Times* in New York. But it is interesting how easily the low end journalism catches on. Within a year of Murdoch's arrival in San Antonio was the beginning of a sleazy form of journalism that we hadn't been accustomed to. I mean we were accustomed to bad newspapers, but they were sort of bad in the sense of mediocre, flatulent.

Our readers are not just consumers, they're citizens, and the conversation we have among ourselves as a democracy is really what this country is about. And you can't have that conversation without information.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: Just kind of puddings, just apt to sit there and not do much. And within two years of Murdoch showing up they had a certain number of words—stab, rape, kill—they were almost all four letter words, and they had to be used in a huge front page headline at least ten times a month or the editor was fired. And of course they also discovered that adding really, as we say in the Texas legislature, heart rendering—

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: —photographs of small children who had been killed in automobile accidents and their little tiny tennis shoes being left by the side of the road. So the other papers in town took it up and the TV people took it up, this emphasis on blood and gore. And you could see the entire structure of the news of the community crumble into this kind of disgusting —. I remember one time they were really short of blood and gore, so there was this huge red headline that said: "Who raped and then beat to death Mrs. Hertz in church?" Well, it turned out I don't know, and they didn't either. It was an unsolved crime from the 1930s.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: And that began a really exciting series on great unsolved crimes in the history of San Antonio. And I do think in many ways what we have seen, particularly with television, is an effect of Rupert Murdoch, but I like to blame lots of other people too.

Obviously, we have reached a point that is almost pure insanity with the story of the *Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times*. The *Los Angeles Times* was really one of the most interesting papers in the country, and it was

doing something that I felt was particularly interesting—because there's been all this blah-blah-blah about community journalism in our field—which is that not only were they a great newspaper in the sense of covering foreign news, in the sense of covering national news, of having really, really fine journalists. But people thought it was silly at the time, and very L.A., where they make you sign a memo saying that if you ever went out to write about growing tomatoes in backyards, you would have to include several different ethnic groups, you would have to include your backyard Mexican tomato growers, your backyard Vietnamese tomato growers, and so on.

And more than most places, Los Angeles is a mixed bag ethnically. I think it's over 50 percent majority-minority, as we have learned to say in Texas. But the result was a newspaper that reflected the community in a way that you don't see in other places. And it became something that was not a special deal. What I'm pointing out, please notice that the Vietnamese grow tomatoes too. But it just took in everything, people got used to the idea that there were all different stripes, all different everythings around. That was one reason, I think, that it became such an interesting newspaper.

And you knew after the *L.A. Times* won five Pulitzer Prizes and the Tribune Corporation, the parent company, did not put a single one of them on the front page of its corporate newsletter, that they really didn't give a damn. And they really don't, and they have proved it again and again, finally firing Dean Baquet on election eve—what a brilliant move. And I think you see there the worst possible example of what happens when you let greed and Wall Street make all the decisions. And that is precisely what is happening to newspapers all over the country.

The *L.A. Times* won five Pulitzer Prizes and the Tribune Corporation, the parent company, did not put a single one of them on the front page of its corporate newsletter. . .

Now, before I depress everybody horribly, I thought I would talk about newspapers as entities that have important cultural pools, and that need to be kept intact. One is of course that newspapers keep alive the tradition of collecting news, little gems from the police blotter, and in any small town newspaper you'll find the police blotter, and it's really full of interesting things. Well, actually, often not very interesting things, "Dog heard barking, 6:00 a.m." But there are some gems, and the newspaper people are the only people in the world who save them.

There was one not long ago from Mill Valley, California: "Perp arrested, charged with disturbing the peace for playing a ukelele while wearing a penguin costume."

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: Now this is the kind of thing that should not be let go.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: And just to prove to you that it's not some crazy out in Mill Valley, we had one the other day, a small town in South Carolina, the perp was extremely drunk. And he had decided in his drunken state that it would be fun to screw a pumpkin, and so he did. And the police came up to him and said, sir, are you aware that you're screwing a pumpkin? And he said, damn, is it midnight already?

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: Now, the other thing that you find of course cherished in newspapers is great leads, great leads written but not printed, great leads written and printed. I've always been terribly fond of one that appeared in *The Odessa American*. It was a hot summer day in Odessa, which is definitely redundant, and some local mother rear-ended a sporting goods van, and the back doors popped open on the sporting goods equipment, tennis rackets and stuff spilled all over the street. And for every reporter who has ever written a weather story, I know you will enjoy: Golf balls the size of hail rained on the streets of Odessa on Tuesday.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: The most famous lead ever written and printed I believe is from Chicago, and you're going to have to help me, some of you here, it was the Leopold and Loeb case, and these two students of the University of Chicago had indulged in a thrill killing, and they had not been sentenced to death, but one was in the hoosegow and the other had promptly died. And the one who was in the hoosegow was also gay and he had approached a fellow prisoner who was not appreciative of his gesture who shanked him to death. And the lead was, "Nathan Leopold, a graduate of the University of Chicago, who should have known better, ended his sentence with a proposition Tuesday."

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: One I like that was never printed anywhere, and this often happens in sex ring stories—they usually tend to follow a certain pattern. Sure enough, the New Jersey State Police had uncovered a sex club, a clubhouse that contained whips and boots and spurs and all kinds of interesting paraphernalia, and this was duly reported. Then, as often happens in these stories, the second day they found a small black book containing the names of those who frequented this interesting establishment, and sure as a buckeye, the names of many people who were prominent in New Jersey society and political circles appeared in this book. So the second day lead, which went out over the A wire but never appeared anywhere was: "The names of the whipped cream of New Jersey society were found Thursday in a small black book."

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: I want to invite those of you, we are expecting E.J., he should be arriving, but while I've got the advantage of Molly Ivins, I can't resist having a conversation with her a bit about what she does and how she does what she does. But I want to open the floor to your questions as well.

There are microphones here, here and up there and there, if any of you have questions, go to the mic and I'll recognize you.

I want to ask, Molly, of all the things you've written that have made people really pissed off, what has been the one that has pissed off someone the worst?

Ms. Ivins: There are certain subjects that are guaranteed to set people off, abortion, death penalty, they run in a subject area. I have a collection called my best hate mail, but I have to admit my all time favorite piece of mail is a fan letter and it begins: Dear Ms. Ivins, you are the favorite writer of all us guys here on cellblock H.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: Up here, if you would identify yourself?

Ms. Raichle: Oh, my name is Marilyn Raichle, I'm a mid-career, and I have the pleasure of knowing Molly Ivins. And I would just like to say that of all the people I know, she is able to lambaste the rascals in our government and make us proud to be Americans in the process.

But I would like to ask you, you know the Texas politician, what do you think is going through George Bush's mind right now?

Ms. Ivins: I have known him for a long time, and I have tried not, over the years, to give in to hatred of George Bush, because the right wing makes so much of a deal of us disliking George Bush in a rather affirmative-action way. I do remember how much the people who hated Clinton with a livid passion just used to amaze me. I mean, just a good ole boy.

What is going through W's mind? Not much.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: George is just, he really thought this was going to be an easy deal and I think he is very upset about what's happened here. I think he had very little understanding of what it meant to be president or what he needed to know to be president. In fact, there is a lot of evidence suggesting he had very little idea at all.

I think that George's way is to get over hard ground as quickly as possible. I think he's just, oh good, if Jim Baker is going to come in and help, then let them take it and do something with it, because it has clearly not been looking good.

I thought it was kind of sad that they decided to blame Rumsfeld for everything. He's the only one who was ever any fun.

Mr. Jones: You don't find Cheney fun?

Ms. Ivins: No, Cheney is not a fun guy, although I have to admit, I was sitting there one Sunday afternoon and the phone rings and a friend of mine says Molly, are you watching television? I said, no. He said, I think

you should. Dick Cheney has just shot Harry Whittington. And I said, you know, I think I can do something with that.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: Yes, up here.

Mr. Eskey: Hi, my name is David Eskey, I'm a student at the college and I'm from Dallas, Texas.

Ms. Ivins: From where in Texas?

Mr. Eskey: Dallas, which actually voted Democrat in the last election. Is this part of a potentially larger trend in Texas politics?

I thought it was kind of sad that they decided to blame Rumsfeld for everything. He's the only one who was ever any fun.

Ms. Ivins: No, I'm afraid it's just the urban areas. If you look at the suburbs surrounding Dallas you still get almost twice as many votes as you get from the entire valley, which is the brown section of Texas. So we're better off than we were, just because the cities are turning black, that's true of Houston too. But you know, it's nice not to have all those horrible Republican judges around anymore, but no, I don't think it's a long-term future thing. In fact, I think Texas has jumped the shark, as they say, I think it has just gone off on a political toot that doesn't resemble anyone else's reality.

And of course we have Governor GoodHair the victor in this last election. Well, it was a hell of an exciting deal let me tell you, you couldn't make up your mind. There they were, all four candidates, and GoodHair has been governor for so long nobody can remember when he wasn't. And he was up there with his hair looking good. And Ms. Strayhorn, she talks about 30–40 miles an hour, with gusts up to 70.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: Terrifying experience. Then Kinky Friedman, the Texas Jewboy. Kinky kind of got overly invested in redneck humor towards the end of the campaign and offended a lot of people, which you would think it would be hard to do if you start out being Kinky Friedman with the intention of offending a lot of people. But it turned out to be possible. And then this nice gray man named Chris Bell, and damned if we didn't reelect old GoodHair.

Now let me explain, it's possible to make progress with Rick Perry as governor, he needed a new person on the state regulatory board, and chose for this purpose a former Enron executive, which didn't strike everybody as a great idea, but it struck the governor as a great idea. So he appoints this guy. And we don't have, in Texas, a sunshine law, we have kind of a partly cloudy law.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: But even under Texas law, if you get a major appointment like that then you've got to fill out a bunch of forms saying your finances and background, that sort of thing. So this Enron guy filled it out and the part on the form where you have to list any unfortunate involvement with law enforcement authorities had been whited out, the answer had been whited out. Now this was a pretty clever cover up but we in the press noticed it.

We don't have, in Texas, a sunshine law, we have … a partly cloudy law.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: So we went and found out that he had, while on a hunting trip a year earlier accidently shot a whooping crane, which is as we say in Texas, an 'in-dangered' species. He not only shot the whooping crane, he accidentally buried the whooping crane—

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: —and he had to pay a huge fine. So we put this in the papers, and Texas is a state full of hunters, and they're all sitting there going, "Son of a bitch, poor guy, he accidently shot a whooper—hell anybody could accidentally shoot a whooper." And they didn't give a damn. But we printed the next day, we stayed with the story, this is where relentless pursuit will get the young reporter ahead. He shot the whooper while on a duck hunt.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: Now the whooper is a large bird, a whooper actually runs to about five feet tall, your duck —. Now we've got a whole state full of hunters saying well, goddamn, this son of a bitch is too dumb to tell a duck from a whooper—

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: —and he was forced to resign.

(Laughter)

Mr. Oliver: Good evening, Ms. Ivins, I'm Wesley Oliver and I am a junior in the college.

My question is, how have you negotiated the reporter's need for some objectivity and maintaining some distance from the subject with the columnist's need to get close to the subject in order to provide analysis?

Ms. Ivins: That's a good question. And I have always, and don't do as I do, do as I say. The truth is the reason I have a lot of great political sources is because I like to drink with politicians.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: I have been, over the years, a serious beer drinker, and I actually like, like Dave Nyhan, I actually like politicians. And as a result I've just spent a lot of time hanging around with them. I did that when I was a police reporter too. I don't know whether it's the beer or the personality.

I think, in theory I believe along with the late, great I.F. Stone, that you must sit in your bathtub and want nothing from these people, you don't want to be invited to their dinner parties, you don't want to be invited to their backyard parties, you just want to do the reporting the way Izzy did, go into the records and read it all. I mean he really was just fantastic.

The truth is the reason I have a lot of great political sources is because I like to drink with politicians.

I mostly get my stories from people I know, and I'm not saying that's the right way to do it, that's just the way I do it.

Mr. Jones: Have you ever had to make a hard call between one of these politicians you really liked personally, but you just felt that you needed to—

Ms. Ivins: I'm sorry to say it's never been a hard call for me. I mean I would be perfectly happy to screw 'em.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: I do have some real good friends, have had some good friends who were politicians, one of them became governor of Texas. And that unnerved me so much that during the entire four years Ann Richards was governor I didn't ask her for anything, I didn't ask her for an interview or anything. I did ask her to speak once to a gifted and talented class from Dallas, but that was it.

Mr. Jones: Were you ever tempted to write a column that would have unleashed that Molly Ivins humor on Ann Richards?

Ms. Ivins: I'm not sure anyone should try unleashing their humor on Annie, she's pretty funny herself. No, and I have tried very hard to write about her objectively. I think now I tried way too hard and I wasted a lot of good material, but it never happened before, so what the hell.

Mr. Jones: Yes, ma'am?

Ms. Miller: Hi, my name is Kara Miller and I am a doctoral student at Tufts and I'm also a columnist for the *MetroWest Daily News*, which is in the Framingham area.

I just had a question for you about columnists, and I was wondering what you thought of the state of columnists today and Maureen Dowd's comment about women columnists in particular. Are there women columnists out there that don't get the attention—

Ms. Ivins: Every time I read one of those articles I sit there going what am I, chopped liver?

Mr. Jones: I don't think she said there were none, but—

Ms. Ivins: But it's consistently underrated and unmentioned, because we don't have outlets in either New York or Washington. And you still have a media concentration in both those places that influences national

coverage. And unless you have an outlet in one of those two cities, they've almost never heard of you, no matter how many papers you're in.

Mr. Jones: Is the Web something that would change that?

Ms. Ivins: I don't know.

Mr. Jones: Do you do online stuff very much?

Ms. Ivins: No.

Mr. Jones: Have you thought about blogging?

Ms. Ivins: No. I've got enough to do.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: Well how do you go about writing your column, just as, in terms of a craft, how do you go about it? I mean the Dick Cheney one was a gift, I guess, but they are not all gifts, you've got to find them.

Ms. Ivins: The old rule is you read seven or eight newspapers everyday, plus the Internet, and if you find anything that makes you laugh out loud or makes you absolutely furious, you've got a column. If you don't find any such thing, you're in deep trouble. And then you fall back on the file, great column ideas, truly great column ideas, really wonderful column ideas, and they are all horrible.

The old rule is you read seven or eight newspapers everyday, plus the Internet, and if you find anything that makes you laugh out loud or makes you absolutely furious, you've got a column.

So I do, it's almost a release for me now, I haven't tackled an issue in so long because we've been in a political season, and I can't wait to do some health insurance, medical health insurance, because there are a lot of ideas on how to solve that problem, but none of them include turning it over to the insurance companies, which they have come up with as the eternally perfect solution for all this.

That's the kind of thing that I love to just take after and drill them.

Mr. Jones: You talked about your stack of hate mail. I think a lot of people outside journalism don't realize that perhaps next to politicians, journalists probably get more hate mail than anybody.

Ms. Ivins: Yeah.

Mr. Jones: I save my better ones too. Have you been getting hate mail from the very beginning, or is that something that has come from your syndicated column? Did you just automatically act as a hate mail magnet from the start?

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: No, actually I don't think I ever thought that I was being particularly unkind or unfair. But I was writing for the *Texas Observer* when I first started doing opinion, and that will get you an audience of people

One of the things you should never forget about journalism is when you have done good, when you have nailed some skunk's hide to the wall, you should sit there and gloat over it.

If you put out a newspaper and all it said on its front was "guaranteed one good laugh a day," you would have a successful newspaper. I was for many years the daily chuckle editor. . . of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, and the rules were that you could not mention race, sex, politics, booze or religion, the only five funny subjects on Earth.

who agree with you. Although, *Observer* readers can be very picky, they're like *New York Times* readers.

Ms. Damon: Hi, my name is Anjeanette Damon, I'm a mid-career student here.

I was wondering if you have any advice: what should young journalists do to stop the industry from committing suicide?

Ms. Ivins: Well okay, that's the question that I've sort of been waiting for, I mean the young journalist who says forlornly, is it even worth continuing, is it even worth trying? Yeah, it really is. In the first place, it's a really great way to make a living, they pay you to have fun and do good. And you hardly ever get that combination anywhere else, get paid to have fun and do good.

And I think one of the things you should never forget about journalism is when you have done good, when you have nailed some skunk's hide to the wall, you should sit there and gloat over it a great deal. That's a big part of the fun. And those Washington journalists who say, well, yes, I know I caused him to resign, and I really feel bad about it. Oh, shut up.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: Look, we are going to need to invent some substitute for newspapers. Now I don't think that the Internet can do it, I don't think that as a medium it is organizable or warm and cuddly enough. Because the whole point is communicating.

We were talking about new columnists, I'm not sure we have any as good as those we've lost recently. Mike Royko was a columnist that defined an entire city full of people, they all know about the mayor, Royko says the mayor is doing this. Jimmy Breslin, in New York, defined the entire attitude of the working class of that city, mostly by reflecting it really well.

David, here in Boston. I liked what Teddy Kennedy said after David died, that there is

nothing better to start the day than a cup of coffee and a Dave Nyhan column, even if some indigestion comes with it.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: I think we're going to have to think of a new way to make community, and I think that, you know that fancy word that sociologists use for lack of connectedness, ruthlessness, I think it becomes more and more a problem in the society. And I swear to you, if you put out a newspaper and all it said on its front was "guaranteed one good laugh a day," you would have a successful newspaper.

Now I was for many years the daily chuckle editor.

Mr. Jones: The daily chuckle editor?

Ms. Ivins: Daily chuckle editor of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, and the rules were that you could not mention race, sex, politics, booze or religion, the only five funny subjects on Earth.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: And that is when I learned how important laughter is to people. If you just say to them, here is a whole section of the paper and it's about sports, that's not really a serious thing. Well sometimes, but —. We're going to have to invent it or reinvent it, we are often reinventing things at the newspapers.

We're going to reconstitute the stage a little bit, but before we do I want you to please join me in a round of applause for this gallant great lady who is sitting here, Molly Ivins.

Remember the peach sections? Were you around in the early '60s, when we all had peach sections?

Mr. Jones: Sure.

Ms. Ivins: They're back.

Mr. Jones: I think everything is going to be back.

Do you, let me ask you, you have made part of your trademark injecting humor into your columns, now how much satisfaction do you get, and do you know when you have really found something funny? Do you recognize it immediately? Are you wrong sometimes?

Ms. Ivins: Well yeah, I am. Russell Baker wrote a really interesting and important essay once about how easy it is to hurt people by being funny, and how careful you have to be, because you really can wound people. Basically we're talking about civilians, we're not talking about anybody in print or in politics. But I know that politicians have mothers and wives who love them, but that's not my fault.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: I mean no one held a gun to their heads and made them run for office.

Mr. Jones: Well, E.J. has arrived.

(Applause)

Mr. Dionne: How are you?

Ms. Ivins: I've been brilliant substituting for you.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: We're going to reconstitute the stage a little bit, but before we do I want you to please join me in a round of applause for this gallant great lady who is sitting here, Molly Ivins.

(Applause)

Mr. Jones: Theodore White was another consummate reporter whose passion was politics. He came to Harvard on a newsboy scholarship, went on to a very distinguished career as a journalist and also an historian. Indeed, Teddy White, as he was universally known, changed both political journalism and politics when he wrote *The Making of the President: 1960*, about the Kennedy-Nixon campaign. For the first time he raised the curtain on the sausage making side of presidential campaigns, and changed forever the candor and behind-the-scenes drama that is now at the heart of campaign coverage.

He followed that first book with three more *Making of the President* books, in 1964, 1968 and 1972. No one has yet matched those smart and ground breaking examinations of what happens and why in the maelstrom of a political campaign. And it is fair to say that Teddy White's heirs are the journalists of today who try to pierce the veil of politics, to understand what is happening, and then to analyze and deliver the goods to those of us who are trying to understand.

Before his death in 1986, Teddy White was one of the architects of what became the Shorenstein Center. One of the first moves Marvin Kalb, the Center's founding director did was to establish the Theodore H. White Lecture on the Press and Politics in his honor.

This year the White Lecture is to be delivered by E.J. Dionne, one of the nation's best and most influential political commentators, and very much in the tradition of Teddy White.

We have some of Teddy White's family here tonight, and I would invite you to stand and be recognized.

(Applause)

Mr. Jones: I personally came to know E.J. when we were colleagues at *The New York Times* and he was the wunderkind of political journalism, writing shrewd and lively stories and generally shaming the opposition, especially *The Washington Post*. He had also done absolutely stellar work covering the Vatican, as Catholicism is another of his consuming interests. As the Vatican bureau chief, his work drew raves and was described in *The Los Angeles Times* as the best in two decades.

A lot of us at *The New York Times* thought that E.J. was to the paper what Johnny Damon was to the Red Sox, a crown jewel. This being the big leagues of journalism, *The Washington Post* swept in and stole E.J. away, which not only stripped our team of an MVP, but gave a staggering edge

to our blood rivals in Washington. The move has been good for political reporting though and good for democratic governance, because the *Post* gave E.J. the opportunity to become a nationally syndicated columnist, and to allow his passionate but solidly grounded political analysis, allowed it to find an audience beyond the *Times*.

E.J. Dionne, Jr., Eugene Joseph, was born in Boston, raised in Fall River, and went to Harvard where he was Phi Beta Kappa. He was a Rhodes Scholar and has a Doctor of Philosophy from Oxford. His family background is French-Canadian, and as a matter of fact, his sister tells me English is actually E.J.'s second language, he was first introduced to life as a French-speaking child. And those of you who know his columns, know his Catholic roots of strong family values show strongly through his work, all of it, though he is a strong political liberal.

One of the things that is often highly overlooked in the highly partisan bickering of recent years is that there is a powerful liberal tradition in Catholicism, what might be called Dorothy Day Catholicism, after the crusading but devout Catholic who championed progressive causes in the 1930s, in *The Catholic Worker*.

The power of this deeply value-based political perspective is enormous, and often quite moving, as it's expressed in E.J.'s writing and commentary. For instance, in a column last month he was scorching in his anger, which is rather unusual, at the way liberals tend to sneer at the concept of family values for politically expedient advantage. In particular, he was outraged at the principal reaction among liberal democrats to the embarrassing Mark Foley scandal was so shallow. Foley, you will recall, had been accused of effectively hitting on young male interns as a congressman.

This is what E.J. wrote:

> "Right out of the box the widespread reaction to the Foley episode was that it would hurt the Republicans, with their base of Christian and moral conservatives."
>
> "Well, yes it will," he went on, "but the implication here is that those of us who are not conservatives might somehow be less affected by what Foley did. Excuse me, but I am a married father of three, and that is more important to me than the fact that I am a liberal. Our kids matter infinitely more to me and my wife than the results of an election, even an election we both care a lot about. Like just about every parent I know, I was horrified by this episode, because I couldn't believe that the politicians involved didn't themselves react first as parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles rather than as politicians."

That is what I consider vintage E.J. Dionne. He has been a frequent and outspoken critic of the Bush Administration, but with a sense of what might be called optimism, or at least without cynicism about the motives of the people involved. He administers what might be considered tough

love, and while he hates the sin, he usually cuts more slack for the sinner. His perspective and intelligence have made him a regular on "Meet the Press," National Public Radio and CNN.

He is a Senior Fellow in the Governance Studies Program at the Brookings Institution, and a Professor in the Foundations of Democracy at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute. His book, *Why Americans Hate Politics*, was winner of *The Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, and his most recent book is *Stand Up, Fight Back: Republican Toughs, Democratic Wimps, and the Politics of Revenge.*

His lecture tonight is entitled "The Making of Democracy 2006: How the New Media and the Old Media Could Live Together Happily and Enhance Public Life." As I said, E.J. is an optimist.

It is my honor to present this year's Theodore H. White Lecturer, E.J. Dionne Jr.

(Applause)

Mr. Dionne: I'm going to prove I'm Catholic, I feel very guilty after that introduction, I'll never live up to that introduction.

I always tell my wife I know my first two kids are mine, because they both arrived ten days late. So I want to apologize for being late, we were supposed to be in Boston at 3:00 and we ended up in Manchester at 6:00.

And I just want to salute my friend, someone I so admire, Molly Ivins, for keeping you here. The definition of life being unfair is actually having to speak after Molly Ivins. She is not only one of the world's most committed people, but also one of the funniest. I can't remember if it was you, Molly, or Ann Richards' joke, that gas has gotten so expensive that women are now carpooling when they run over their husbands.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: She may have stolen it from you. And one thing that I will not repeat to my son, who bless him, has followed me as a Red Sox fan, is that you compared me to Johnny Damon. My son actually has on his door a picture of Johnny Damon with the word traitor written across it. But I very much appreciate what you were trying to say with that one, Alex. And it was sure a lot more generous. I've been talking a lot about the election the last couple weeks. I always was optimistic about the judgement of the American voter, and it was much kinder than the one I received recently, which ended up, "now, for the latest dope from Washington, here is E.J. Dionne."

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: —so here I am.

What a joy it is to be here, there are so many dear, dear friends here, if I listed them all I would leave someone out and we'd be even later than we already are. But I do want to thank a few people. I do want to thank Walter Shorenstein, whom I've been blessed for knowing now for many, many years, and who last night celebrated the anniversary of this great center he did so much to create in honor of his dear, warm and talented daughter.

Marvin Kalb, the first director, put this institution on the map and did something far more difficult than getting Democrats and Republicans to get along. He got journalists and academics to get along. And you really don't know how hard that is, I could tell you some stories afterward. And to work together profitably and he did so because both worlds respect and admire his journalism and his scholarship.

And Alex Jones did one of the world's hardest things. You want to take a job after someone has failed, because then you can't help but look good. But Alex took over this place here from Marvin and he has done a magnificent job. Alex is brilliant and gifted, but, more importantly, and you can tell by how generous that introduction was, he is a very good human being and I am really honored to be with you, Alex.

And I just must mention family, first, Teddy White's family. It means so much to me that my friend David White is here with his wife Margaret. David has been a friend since we were in college together. And it is because of David, that I actually had the chance to have dinner with Teddy White, in their New York City home, while White was finishing *The Making of the President: 1972*. For me, a kid from Fall River who had been a political junkie since the age of eight, having dinner with Teddy White was like having dinner with Bill Russell or Carl Yastrzemski.

David and I also worked together as interns in the Paris bureau of *The New York Times*, in the summer of 1974. And if you want to roll on the floor laughing tonight, ask David later about the very hardest task of his journalistic career, having to transcribe an interview that Flora Lewis, distinguished journalist who hired us both, did with French President Valérie Giscard D'Estaing, who insisted that the interview be done in English, a language he kind of, sort of, spoke. Now I admire anyone who speaks in a second or third language, but imagine deciphering what the president meant when the tape recorder had him saying, I still remember David explaining this, the phrase was "constant moving change." That was constant moving change, we figured it out after several listens. David recovered from that to become a gifted writer of both fiction and nonfiction, and he is a very dear person.

Thank you, David, so much for being here.

Finally, I want to send my love to my sister, Lucie-Anne Dionne Thomas, and to her husband Drew Thomas, and to Bert Yaffe. Lu and Drew are both lawyers who have served their country for over a quarter century in the Navy, first on active duty and now as Captains in the Navy Reserve. I always have to salute them.

Lu, bless you for being the warm and responsible older sister to a spoiled younger brother. Thank you and God bless.

And Bert is my informal second father. I always tell my kids that I was blessed with having great parents, but was also blessed that, when my dad died when I was a teenager, I found a great second father in Bert, who has been in public service since he was a tank commander in Guam,

Bougainville and Iwo Jima and became, as I wrote in every press release on any subject for his valiant 1970 anti-war campaign for Congress here in Massachusetts, a "decorated Marine combat veteran."

I love you, Bert. Thank you.

I appreciate that Jeanne Shaheen, the former Governor of New Hampshire and the director of the Institute of Politics, is here tonight. There is the story of a paper in New Hampshire so proud to be first with the news that it boasted one day: "We were the first paper in New Hampshire to report the news that Governor Shaheen was about to resign. Later, we were the first newspaper to report to its readers that this report was utterly without foundation."

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: Now that story would not survive fact checking, but it is a nice parable on the wonders of journalism.

But we can be grateful that we can tell jokes about our politicians and our media. The dictator of the old East Germany Walter Ulbricht was said to have asked Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany if he had any hobbies.

"Yes," Brandt replied, "I collect the jokes that people tell about me. And what about you?" "Well," replied Ulbricht, "I collect the people who tell jokes about me."

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: And if you don't believe that, there was a man in East Germany who discovered that his parrot had flown out the window, he rushed to the offices of the secret police to say: "I want you to know that I absolutely do not share any of my parrot's political opinions."

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: What a privilege it is to be able to give this lecture in honor of Theodore White, one of the most creative and thoughtful political journalists in our nation's history. White is often criticized for having a romantic view of politicians. But he was realistic when it came to the general run of the breed. "By and large, more were grubby, shortsighted or cause-gripped people as they entered politics, cutting deals and paying with favors and honors for the money that financed them," White wrote in *America in Search of Itself,* in 1982.

But for White, that was not the end of the story. "A handful grew by experience to become larger people than when they entered, only the tiniest few survived the process to become men of state, worth remembering. It was this sifting process that fascinated me then, and fascinates me even more now." Now that very phrase, men of state, sounds almost antique today, but the idea that some men and women engaged in public service are worth remembering is still the right idea, even if it goes against the grain.

Yet White carries a larger burden than the accusation that he was a sucker for politicians. He has been repeatedly blamed for a style of reporting that has supposedly sent political journalism off the rails. White was

formally given credit for transforming American political journalism in Timothy Crouse's wonderful book *The Boys on the Bus,* an account of the campaign press' role in the 1972 election.

After White's first election volume, *The Making of the President: 1960,* Crouse argued, political reporting would never again be the same. White got into the back rooms of politics and described their workings in fascinating detail. He made clear that while there was a hidden campaign, its secrets could be discovered by a normal, if gifted, journalist willing to ask the right questions of the right people and go to the right places at the right time.

After White, it was impossible to ignore the snows of New Hampshire. Which is why, by the way, I knew exactly where to go when I landed in Manchester a little while ago. And the even earlier phases of electioneering that had, before him, received modest attention. It was even more dangerous for reporters to ignore the genius of particular political aides. White, for example, helped make famous the brilliant conservative operative and Barry Goldwater strategist F. Clifton White. In book after book, White described the shrewdness of certain strategists and the foolishness of others, and no self-respecting journalist would ever miss those stories again.

Albert Hunt, one of my favorite journalists, admired White, but he did capture very well how many journalists had applied White's legacy. The press gets so caught up in trying to report the story behind the scenes, Hunt wrote after the 1984 election, that major speeches or position papers of the substance of a campaign receive relatively little attention.

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Whole books, and good ones, have been written in reaction to White. After the 1980 election, Jeff Greenfield wrote *The Real Campaign: How the Media Missed the Story of the 1980 Campaign.* His point was straightforward, that the flow of ideas and the underlying political terrain had more to do with the results than all the inside moves of the inside strategists.

Working on the same premise, the conservative writer Richard Brookhiser wrote a book on the 1984 election called *The Outside Story,* the title itself a conscious rebellion against the growing journalistic tendency to tell, Teddy White–style, the inside story. Brookhiser's perfectly sensible idea was that if you wanted to understand what happened in 1984, you needed to look at what Ronald Reagan said and did and at what Walter Mondale said and did, in, of all places, public.

Now the doubts about White's legacy are an enduring refrain in post-election discussions of the press and politics, including at distinguished institutions such as this one. To pick just one example, John Buckley, the communications director of Bob Dole's '96 campaign, told [*The New Yorker*'s] Ken Auletta that he ascribed journalists' fascination with polling, campaign personnel and political processes to the influence of White's *The Making of the President: 1960*.

Now if White really is responsible for encouraging us to forget the importance of ideas, to ignore what candidates say in public and to disregard the central role that voters and their moods and convictions play in deciding elections, he would indeed deserve all the criticism he gets and much more.

But this is a dangerously misleading caricature of Teddy White and what he did. Yes, he did get us into those back rooms, he did help us to understand better how campaigns worked and to see that it was not all magic. What, pray, is wrong with that? But much of what White did was to attend to what politicians said and to set their campaigns in historical context. Paying attention to these parts of White's achievement is precisely what political journalism ought to do. One thing White knew for certain was that politics is more than a backroom game and politicians more than backroom dealers.

Thus, no one paid more attention to the words spoken in public by politicians than White did. His books are full of very lengthy quotations from campaign addresses. You will find few nine-word ink bites in them. More than that, White took the words seriously enough to ask all the time: What do these words mean? What is this politician trying to tell us? What are the implications of these words for the country?

Much of what White did was to attend to what politicians said and to set their campaigns in historical context.

White did something else with campaigns. He treated them as an occasion for describing the state of the nation. He assumed, correctly, that election years are occasions when the country takes stock of itself and Americans try to figure out who we are and where we are going. White demonstrated that journalists are foolish if they don't use campaign time as an occasion to ask bigger-than-usual questions and paint larger-than-usual portraits of our nation.

White's book on the 1960 campaign used that year's U.S. Census to describe the momentous changes in the country since the war, when America was transformed from a nation defined by its cities into a nation defined by its suburbs. His 1964 book took the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King Jr. as central participants in the year's political fights. White devoted many of his brilliant pages to trying to understand not just

how civil rights worked as a campaign issue, but why the civil rights struggle had changed the country and its people.

So if you take White seriously, it's easy to have arguments with him about his political views, about his judgments on particular politicians, about his vision of what America is, isn't and should be. It would be hard to find anyone who agreed with White on everything because his convictions were so particular, so rooted in his own reporting and so rooted in his own personal story.

But the simple fact is that if reporters today learned all the lessons White tried to teach about the potential richness of political writing, American journalism would get a whole lot better.

White demonstrated that journalists are foolish if they don't use campaign time as an occasion to ask bigger-than-usual questions and paint larger-than-usual portraits of our nation.

Now because I hold this exalted view of Teddy White, because I believe he was so gifted at spotting and describing large turns in American public life, I began thinking about what White would make of the new back rooms in American politics, the offices and kitchen tables of those Andrew Sullivan described as the pajamahadeen, the bloggers, and the other technological developments that have challenged the journalism and the old ways of doing politics.

What would he make of the fact that the two most powerful outside influences on my son James' politics, I say outside because I pray we parents still have some modest influence, the two greatest influences are Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. And I confess I don't mind that a bit. What would he make of the conflicts between the so-called old media or the so-called mainstream media, and the new media?

There is some hostility between the two breeds of communication and tonight, in the spirit of bipartisanship that everyone is talking about in Washington after the last election, I want to suggest that the two forms can complement each other and have already begun doing do.

If I may summarize what I have to say, I believe that it is absolutely essential to preserve the financial base that supports independent journalism, that pays for good, old-fashioned reporting and investigation that citizens, whatever their political views, can rely on. We need to support the courageous work of reporters in Iraq, Afghanistan and in so many other places where journalists take great risks to keep free citizens informed. Careful, accurate reporting takes a lot of time and a lot of money. We dare not lose this great work supported by our great media institutions.

But one can assert this and still welcome the work of the new media, of the opinionated bloggers and activists and even the talk radio and

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The new media forms are answering a great need that traditional journalism was not answering.

television shouters, some of whom I often disagree with rather emphatically. In my view, the new media forms are answering a great need that traditional journalism was not answering. Though as a consumer of blogs from left to right, I often get important and accurate information from them, they do not exist primarily to inform. They exist to engage citizens in the obligations and magic of politics. They draw people into the fight. They have made millions of people feel that their voices will be heard somewhere and, when aggregated together, can have a real influence on the outcome of policy debates and elections.

In fact, the opinionated forms of journalism are not new to the media or our public life. They take us back in our history to a time when most journalism was partisan and raucously engaged on one side or another in our political battles, sometimes even corruptly engaged. The current structure of the media is the product of the last great overturning of political institutions during the Progressive Era. We are now in the middle, I think, of a new revolt against the journalistic order. To understand how we got here, it's worth examining the last great revolt at the turn of the century.

From the beginning of our republic in the 1790s until the turn of the century, American newspapers were, for the most part, the organs of political parties. There was no ideal of objectivity. On the contrary, the purpose of the newspapers was to mobilize support for parties all year round. But during the Gilded Age, as the historian Christopher Lasch pointed out, parties got a bad name. Reformers who looked for professionalism, as against bossism, in politics eventually turned to seeking professionalism in journalism.

Walter Lippmann, one of the most influential journalists in American history, after Teddy White, of course, led the way to a redefinition of journalism's role and the journalist's responsibilities. The notion that newspapers should be objective rather than partisan was the product of Lippman's admiration for the scientific method, his skepticism of ideology, and, some of his critics would argue, his less than full-hearted faith in democracy.

Could democracy survive, Lippman asked, "when the manufacture of consent is an unregulated private enterprise?" He argued that "the quack,

the charlatan, the jingo and the terrorist can flourish only when the audience is deprived of independent access to information."

Lippmann scolded journalism this way:

> The cynicism of the trade needs to be abandoned, for the true patterns of journalistic apprentice are not the slick persons who scoop the news, but the patient and fearless men of science who have labored to see what the world really is. It does not matter that the news is not susceptible of mathematical statement. In fact, just because the news is complex and slippery, good reporting requires the exercise of the highest of the scientific virtues.

Who knew we journalists, we ink-stained wretches, were actually like physicists, biologists and chemists? But more was going on in journalism than a shift in philosophy. As Paul Weaver points out in his provocative book *News and the Culture of Lying,* Joseph Pulitzer, the great American press lord after whom our most prestigious journalistic prizes are named, revolutionized journalism by fully understanding its commercial potential. He not only helped move journalism away from political parties, but more generally away from public affairs as defined by the major public institutions of his day. As Weaver wrote: "Pulitzer was taking events out of their official context and framing them in stories with sharp dramatic focus that suggested intense public interest . . . He achieved this effect by incorporating into journalism the elements of drama, character, action and plot."

Now that sounds pretty good, but as Weaver argues that Pulitzerian journalism moved the craft away from politics again in the process it addressed, not the citizen and constitutionalist and partisan, but the private pre-political human being. Where the old journalism had invited its

They [blogs] exist to engage citizens in the obligations and magic of politics. They draw people into the fight. They have made millions of people feel that their voices will be heard somewhere and, when aggregated together, can have a real influence on the outcome of policy debates and elections.

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readers to step into, and renew their commitment to constitutional and political processes, the new Pulitzerian journalism was inviting people to turn away from formal institutions and focus instead on the community evoked by the storytellers of the newsroom.

One of the main effects of this change, Weaver concludes, was to transform newspapers from a reader-focused, reader-driven business into an advertiser-focused, advertiser-driven business. As Michael Schudson notes in his excellent history of American newspapers, "Most leading newspaper proprietors of the late 19th century were businessmen rather than political thinkers, managers more than essayists or activists." By being nonpartisan and objective, newspapers did not offend half or more of their potential audience.

Historian Michael McGerr cites Whitelaw Reid's loving description of independent journalism as "passionless ether," which inadvertently also suggested the problems caused by the decline of the partisan press. It was not much noted at the time that a decline in the press's partisan passions might also have negative effects on democratic politics.

However contested objectivity might have been as a philosophical principle, it did not come under sharp practical challenge until the 1960s. Journalism was no less susceptible than other institutions to the dissenting currents of that time. The critique of allegedly apolitical journalism that arose then is summarized nicely by Schudson. Journalists, in this view, were inevitably political, even if unwittingly or even unwillingly. He goes on:

> Their political impact lay not in what they openly advocated but in the unexamined assumptions on which they based their professional practice and, most of all, in their conformity to the conventions of objective reporting. In this view, objectivity was not an ideal but a mystification. The slant of news lay not in explicit bias but in the social structure of news gathering which reinforced official viewpoints.

Now if there was a critique of the establishment media from the left, there was also a critique of the liberal media from the right. Note that the left side is the establishment media and the right side is the liberal media. It began to take hold after Barry Goldwater's 1964 campaign. Conservatives have been enormously successful in getting editors and producers to look over their right shoulders, and it was not until the last five years or so that liberals and the left managed a genuinely effective counterattack, largely through the new media.

Now consider again that phrase, "passionless ether." If there is a problem with traditional, just-the-facts-ma'am journalism and its twist-yourself-into-a-pretzel effort to appear nonpartisan or bi-partisan, it is that such journalism was in many ways demobilizing. Because journalists could not declare that they were Republicans or Democrats, liberals or conservatives, they often went out of their way, sometimes unconsciously

and unintentionally, to put forward a variety of ideas that actually drove people away from politics. You couldn't be partisan, so you said they were all crooks or liars. Or you couldn't be partisan so every once in a while, you could say, well, they are all good men and women. You couldn't be partisan, so you said there was no difference between or among the politicians, or alternatively, that they were all too extreme.

But pure nonpartisanship, in the sense of bending over too far to seem to be fair, can mislead reporters. Let me offer a couple of extreme cases. I hope no reporter ever wrote the sentence: "A spokesman for Mr. Hitler denied he was an anti-Semite." I hope no one ever wrote that. Or: "An aide to Mr. Stalin who asked not to be named said the Soviet leader in fact opposed building the Gulag." It's more important to care about what's true than to worry if someone will see you as too partisan.

Nancy Pelosi once said that she was always amazed the same voters could say that they didn't like politicians because they always fought with each other and because there were no differences among them. (Of course, maybe they were fighting all the time about things that didn't matter to that particular voter.)

My hunch is that this voter and millions like her were looking for something that neither journalism nor politics promotes enough: genuine argument. But what is genuine argument? In real argument, as the late historian Christopher Lasch nicely put it, "we have to enter imaginatively into our opponents' arguments, if only for the purpose of refuting them, and we may end up being persuaded by those we sought to persuade. Argument is risky and unpredictable and therefore educational." "Arguments are not won," Lasch noted, "by shouting down opponents." Rather, "they are won by changing opponents' minds, something that

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can happen only if we give opposing arguments a respectful hearing and still persuade their advocates that there is something wrong with those arguments."

Lasch referred back to debates during the 1920s between Walter Lippmann and the philosopher John Dewey. Dewey insisted, against Lippmann's skepticism, that democracy was a practical as well as a noble system of government. Dewey did so in part because he had enormous faith in the educational functions of free and open debate in a democracy. Where Lippmann believed that facts and information were more important than argument, Dewey believed, as Lasch put it, "that our search for reliable information is itself guided by the questions that arise during arguments about a given course of action."

The real issue confronting journalism in our time, I believe, is thus a paradoxical one. There is, on the one hand, a need to resurrect a concern for what's true, to draw clearer distinctions between fact and opinion, between information and mere assertion. At the same time, there is an urgent requirement that the media take seriously their/our obligation to draw people, as citizens, into the public debate, to demonstrate that the debate is accessible and that it matters. What is needed, in other words, is both a strengthening of the older professional ethic involving accuracy and balance and a new engagement with the obligations of journalists to democracy.

What is needed is both a strengthening of the older professional ethic involving accuracy and balance and a new engagement with the obligations of journalists to democracy.

For all of its shortcomings, the success of opinionated journalism on the radio, cable television and the blogs reflects a public thirst for debate and argument that goes beyond the confines usually imposed by conventional definitions of news. The lesson is not that all should copy their style of argument, God forbid, but that argument and engagement are very much in demand. For the established media, this will mean going back to the original debate between Walter Lippmann and John Dewey. The objective should be to salvage Lippmann's devotion to accuracy and fairness by putting these virtues to the service of the democratic debate that Dewey so valued.

In broad terms, the media need to help us recover as Lasch put it, the lost art of argument. I believe that if the old media do their jobs properly,

and the new media do theirs right, we will be able to draw on the best aspects of both Lippman and Dewey, to find the right balance between the thirst for accurate information and the hunger for engagement, between a journalism that tells hard truths even if partisans don't like them and a partisan media that sometimes tells hard truths about the mainstream media, yes, we too can get things wrong, and that assimilates real information into their passionate forms of advocacy.

Now let me be clear. In arguing that the new partisan media, from Captain's Quarters and Powerline to Bullmooseblog to Daily Kos, and HuffingtonPost and TalkingPointsMemo, among many others, in arguing that they are playing an important democratic role, I am emphatically not saying that they are any substitute for the old media. On the contrary, the old media are more important than ever in this happy, if sometimes angry, partisan and ideological cacophony.

I believe that if the old media do their jobs properly, and the new media do theirs right, we will be able to draw on the best aspects of both Lippman and Dewey, to find the right balance between the thirst for accurate information and the hunger for engagement, between a journalism that tells hard truths even if partisans don't like them and a partisan media that sometimes tells hard truths about the mainstream media. . .

I think *The New York Times*' brilliant literary critic Michiko Kakutani got it absolutely right 12 years ago when she wrote that "throughout our culture, the old notions of 'truth' and 'knowledge' are in danger of being replaced by the new ones of 'opinion,' 'perception,' and 'credibility.'" She argued that "as reality comes to seem increasingly artificial, complex and manipulable, people tend to grow increasingly cynical, increasingly convinced of the authenticity of their own emotions and increasingly inclined to trust their ideological reflexes."

In such a situation there are no arguments in the sense of an engagement over ideas and evidence but simply a clash of assertions. In this climate, said Kakutani, "the democratic ideal of consensus is futile." "We are witness," she wrote, "to the creation of a universe in which truths are replaced by opinions."

Now Kakutani points to a crucial aspect of the media problem. Many of the partisan arguments we experience on television and radio amount to set-piece blather. People play roles instead of offering real arguments. They can be indifferent to facts. They can engage in cheap ridicule and empty bloviation. One of the reasons Stewart and Colbert are so popular is

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that they so brilliantly poke fun at the junk that so often passes as serious political discourse. And Molly Ivins does a pretty mean job of that too.

And, yes, there is a problem when an increasingly balkanized information world in which partisans get more and more information from sources that reinforce rather than challenge their own commitments. It is also important to recognize that many of the new media are largely parasitic on the news gathering of the older media. I use parasitic in a descriptive, not judgmental, sense. With rare exceptions, and they do exist, the new media do not finance news gathering or reporting. They largely rely on the older institutions to support the reporting. They either use this work themselves, or criticize it or both.

At the same time, the new media challenge the financial base of the old news organizations. The older media themselves have been forced to challenge their own financial base. They have set up Internet operations which have yet to create revenue streams comparable to what these organizations earn from their older products, such as newspapers and network broadcasts. Yet these competing outlets within the same organizations can undercut the readership and viewership of their flagship enterprises.

So yes, I do think we need to pray that the old media find ways of navigating the difficult financial waters in which they now find themselves. But we should also welcome raucous argument because it is one of the gifts of a democratic republic.

Christopher Lasch again put it well. "If we insist on argument as the essence of education, we will defend democracy not as the most efficient but as the most educational form of government, one that extends the circle of debate as widely as possible and thus forces all citizens to articulate their views, to put their views at risk, and to cultivate the virtues of eloquence, clarity of thought and expression, and sound judgment."

If the media fail to nurture that educational spirit that ought to lie at the heart of democracy, what exactly is the point of what we journalists do? Journalism is more dependent upon the democratic idea than almost any other trade or profession or business because we journalists actually believe that people care enough about their society, their nation, their world to take the time to understand what is going on around them.

By what we do, we reject the idea that knowledge, and the right to make decisions on that knowledge, ought to be confined to an elite. It was once said that "status quo" is Latin for the "mess we're in." I think the media are in a bit of a mess in significant part because our democratic systems are in a bit of a mess.

But I prefer to end on a hopeful note: Let those of us in traditional journalism not shrink from the challenges of the new technologies, of the blogs and of the new opinionated journalism. Let us welcome those challenges and their potential contributions. If a dry or detached or apolitical press threatened to demobilize citizens, the world of opinionated journalism might offer new opportunities to encourage citizens to engagement, to action, and yes, to good citizenship.

The blogs in particular have developed an audience because there is a demand, as John Dewey would understand, for a medium that prizes commitment and engagement. That there is such a thirst for this may bother those who worry about excessive partisanship, but engagement is indispensable to democratic politics. And the proliferation of new outlets, the rebirth of what my friend Tom Rosenstiel has called the "pamphleteering" tradition, could democratize both politics and the media.

But yes, there is also an obligation not to confuse partisan media with independent media. There is an enormous need for information that is developed outside the confines of political struggles. Honest debate requires at least some consensus on what the facts are, and honesty, not obfuscation, where there is genuine confusion over the nature of the facts.

We need . . . to welcome the new partisan and participatory outlets while finding ways to nurture and improve independent journalism.

What we need, in other words, is to welcome the new partisan and participatory outlets while finding ways to nurture and improve independent journalism. The two are very different forms. They need not be enemies, even though they should and will correct and criticize each other. If we see one as an alternative to the other, we will be wrong analytically, and we will miss a great opportunity. If we see them as complements to each other, we arrive closer to answering Christopher Lasch's demand that democracy live up to its vocation of being the most educational form of government.

Because this is the Theodore H. White Lecture and because we are at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, I thought it appropriate to close with Teddy White's reflections of Kennedy, offered shortly after his assassination, and it appeared in a chapter in *The Making of the President: 1964*, which was called "Death and Unreason." White wrote: "The dogmas of his

antagonists made clear the quality of the protagonist. For John F. Kennedy, above all, was a man of reason, and the thrust he brought to American and world affairs was the thrust of reason. Not that he had a blueprint of the future, ever, in his mind. . . . Rather his was the reason of the explorer, the man who probes to learn, the man who reaches and must go farther to find out. . . . He was always learning; his curiosity was total; no one could come out of his presence without coming away combed of every shred of information or impression the President found interesting. . . ."

If we are lucky, we will see in the media world a balance between the two, the old media standing for fact, independent inquiry, courageous and expensive news coverage in war zones and in places such as Darfur, where the oppressed need witnesses and solidarity. The new media will encourage a passion for engagement and a commitment to the continuing work of democracy.

Now that is a remarkably good definition of what should excite a journalist, which in fact is exactly what Kennedy, briefly, was. I think there is in the country right now a thirst for reason and reasonableness. It is not a timid desire simply for peace and quiet, but, as White said of Kennedy, for the reason of the explorer who probes to learn and to reach and to go farther. If the voters said anything last Tuesday, it is that they want their country to think and act anew.

In that quest, we need both reason and passion. Reason without passion is lifeless. Passion without reason is dangerous. I think that if we are lucky, we will see in the media world a balance between the two, the old media standing for fact, independent inquiry, courageous and expensive news coverage in war zones and in places such as Darfur, where the oppressed need witnesses and solidarity. The new media will encourage a passion for engagement and a commitment to the continuing work of democracy.

One of Harvard's great teachers, the political philosopher Michael Sandel, has said that when politics goes well, we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone. Together, the new and old media might encourage us to seek that good in common by arguing together and reasoning together. The various media forms might find a good in common that they cannot know alone.

Thank you.

(Applause)

THEODORE H. WHITE SEMINAR
NOVEMBER 17, 2006

Mr. Jones: Welcome to the morning after the night before. The Theodore White Lecture evening is followed traditionally by this panel, in which we respond in a provocative and we hope interesting way to some of the things that were said the night before. This is not limited to what was said last night, but it is the point of departure and the idea is that we invite some very distinguished people to respond to what our speakers have said, and then we have a conversation amongst the panel for a little while, and then we open it to your comments and questions.

I think those of you who were there last night heard two very, very interesting statements about the state of the news business, effectively. Molly Ivins essentially said that the newspaper business, the one that she has been associated with for all of her professional life, is trying to commit suicide. E.J., when he delivered the Theodore White Lecture, did a very scholarly and very thorough examination of what Theodore White meant by what he said and what it means about political reporting. And he then linked that to the issue that is certainly on the minds of everybody in the news business right now, which is, what direction is news going to take? What is the future? Especially what is the future of serious news?

We have a panel that is very well qualified to address all of these questions and come at these questions from their own very interesting and singular perspectives. From my left, your right, the first of our panelists is Christina Martin, she is an Institute of Politics Fellow, former press secretary for Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. Next to her is Sidney Verba, the Carl Pforzheimer University Professor at Harvard and Director of the Harvard University Library. I do not need to introduce E.J. Dionne, Jr., the Theodore White lecturer.

Next to me, on my right, the indomitable Molly Ivins and next to her is Garance Franke-Ruta who is a Shorenstein Fellow this year, also a senior editor at *The American Prospect*. And finally, on the end, Jack Shafer, who represents new media but he also does so in the context of being someone who has a thorough grounding and understanding of the old media and he, in his editor-at-large position at *Slate*, has often taken on these questions of where the two meet and what they do together, who does what better and where it's going.

I'm very interested to hear what they are going to say and, Jack Shafer, if you don't mind, I would like to start with you.

Mr. Shafer: Fine. As a representative of the new media on the panel, I've got to say I didn't recognize myself in the portrait E.J. painted last night. He seems to think there is a special hostility between old media and new media, which he never really adequately defines, in my case. He appears to think that new media is bloggers, activists, Matt Drudge, Jon

I imagine most of the columns that E.J. writes begin with a Nexis search, a Google trawl, maybe a skimming of YouTube for a speech that he missed, minor surfing of his favorite blogs, and that's not all that much different than what the guy who writes in his pajamas might do before he writes his piece, except he might not be able to afford Nexis.

Stewart and the radio and TV shouters. As a new media guy, I want to go on record saying I have nothing against old media guys, some of my best friends have had distinguished careers in old media and I don't hold it against them.

I have a more expansive definition. If we can locate E.J.'s definition, I think mine will be a more expansive definition of new media, one that categorizes by technology that the maker uses to create his content, the computers, the database, the Web, the cell phones and, yes, the shoe leather to create stories—

(Laughter)

Mr. Shafer: As well as the technology that the maker uses to print or broadcast his content. Right now, the Web is the sort of dominant leading platform. And most of all, the speed with which the content moves from the creator's hands to those of the consumer. By my definition, almost everybody in the media today is a new media artist, no matter what platform is used to disseminate their work. I imagine most of the columns that E.J. writes begin with a Nexis search, a Google trawl, maybe a skimming of YouTube for a speech that he missed, minor surfing of his favorite blogs, and that's not all that much different than what the guy who writes in his pajamas might do before he writes his piece, except he might not be able to afford Nexis.

So it's my view that whether you are in the sandlots or the big leagues these days, you suit up pretty much the same way to play the game, nor do I sense the tension between the old media and the new media that E.J. describes in his talk. If there was a war between these two factions, I think it was largely resolved by the late '80s, when conventional journalists and all media companies conceded that the new media, that is computer-driven, computer delivered media, was identified as the future. All the big, old media companies funded their Web platforms very heavily starting in 1996, which happens to be the year that *Slate* was launched in efforts to be part of this brave new world.

I do, however, detect some tension between the old media and the new media, but it's the same tension that exists on a work site where union carpenters are itchy about working next to non-union bricklayers. What fundamentally upsets people inside any guild is the arrival of uncredentialed

interlopers, illegal immigrants if you will, working for little or no pay and taking what the guild thinks are their jobs. Instead of complaining about the new media or marginalizing them as parasites, journalists would be better off burying them with sheer excellence, better, smarter stories delivered with more urgency.

Instead of complaining about the new media or marginalizing them as parasites, journalists would be better off burying them with sheer excellence, better, smarter stories delivered with more urgency.

One last point, a rather long last point. E.J.'s pocket history of journalism, which I enjoyed, left out an important chapter that I think belongs in the discussion. A new book by American University Professor W. Joseph Campbell titled *1897: The Year That Defined American Journalism*, describes a similar sort of collision of journalistic paradigms from that year. It was the collision of the sensationalist/populist journalism of Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst with that of the less flighty Adolph Ochs and his recently purchased *New York Times*.

Earlier that decade, early in the decade of the 1890s, the Pulitzer and Hearst model of giving people what they were alleged to have wanted looked to be the future of journalism. Forgive me if I plagiarize one of my favorite new media writers—that would be me—

(Laughter)

Mr. Shafer: —as I draw on a review of *1897* that I wrote a couple of months ago. "In *1897*, critics cited Pulitzer's and Hearst's newspapers when they decried the decay of American journalist"—"Sound familiar?" The 1897 clash took place as newspapers reached their greatest historical popularity, 2.61 newspaper copies circulated within the average urban dwelling in 1990, compared to 0.72 in 2000. That number was even higher in dense urban areas, like New York, where sometimes a newspaper household was consuming four newspapers a day.

Ochs, restrained in impartiality, eventually bested Hearst's so-called Action School of Journalism as the most influential model. The negatives associated with Hearst swamped the positives, as others accused him of encouraging correspondents to send fake news, boost circulation with the sordid and trivial and deliberately rouse the rabble. Campbell cites, as one reason behind Hearst's downfall, this 1931 observation from Walter Lippmann, that yellow journalism is almost impossible to sustain in the marketplace. Lippmann said when everything is dramatic, nothing is dramatic. When everything is highly spiced, nothing after a while has much flavor. When everything is new and startling, the human mind just ceases to be startled.

The Hearst tradition of making everything dramatic lives large on cable TV and, yes, on the Web, where oceans of yellow journalism are disgorged every day, but yellow journalism still doesn't draw a fantastically large audience in the U.S.

The Hearst tradition of making everything dramatic lives large on cable TV and, yes, on the Web, where oceans of yellow journalism are disgorged every day, but yellow journalism still doesn't draw a fantastically large audience in the U.S. The "O'Reilly Factor," perhaps the yellowest of all yellow journalism in America, and cable television's most successful news/talk program, attracts an average audience of 2 million each episode, compared to the 10 to 13 million of each of the straight network newscasts.

So, while all the Cassandras wail about the falling newspaper circulation, I see the bright lining that the Web offers and that is that never has there been a larger audience and larger readership in the United States for quality newspapers. I believe the numbers at *The New York Times* are up to something like 11 million unique readers per day, it's phenomenal, and what that tells me is that, in the market-place, there is this great appetite for news.

I don't know if this signifies a thirst for the reason and reasonableness E.J. talked about at the end of his lecture last night, but I suspect that, as in 1897, our culture will muddle through in a diad of excellent journalism that we are all proud of and a chaser of sensationalism that we consume as a guilty pleasure.

Mr. Jones: The way I would like to proceed is to give E.J. the opportunity—did I just call you O.J.?

(Laughter)

. . . our culture will muddle through in a diad of excellent journalism that we are all proud of and a chaser of sensationalism that we consume as a guilty pleasure.

Mr. Dionne: Actually, there is a funny story about that. When I was on the editorial board or editorial staff at the *Washington Post*, we were discussing the O.J. case and one of my colleagues looked up and with great conviction said "I believe E.J. is guilty."

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: First of all, Jack is one of my favorite new media writers too. I guess a couple of things. I was very alarmed, you know, you describe Molly as funny and you describe me as scholarly and thorough, which sounds like a synonym for boring.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: I tried to talk so fast that I was hoping you wouldn't notice last night.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: Let me sort of talk about where I agree with Jack and where I suppose we have some difference. First of all, it does a disservice to compare O'Reilly to yellow journalism—it does a disservice to yellow journalism.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: I think that's sort of unfair. And I agree with him when he talks about the reaction to the new media is to uncredentialed interlopers and all of that, and one of the reasons I wanted to give the talk the way I did is because I think that's a mistake in reaction to the new media as somebody who is from the old media but is now in the opinion world and consumes all of these things with as much eagerness as just about anybody. And obviously it's impossible to disagree with him when he talks about better or smarter stories as the essential way for the so-called old media to survive.

By the way, I still don't like any of the terminology. If somebody could invent better terminology in the course of this discussion for both, I think it would be a great service. Jack is also right that, in a sense, we are all new media now, it's like Nixon who said we are all Keynesians now. There are probably more people now who read me online than read me in the paper, *The Washington Post*. It may be the case that more people read me online than might read me in the collection of the newspapers I'm syndicated to.

And a lot of people come to columns I write because someone else out there has either praised or attacked it and has created a link, and sometimes one can tell if one is being pushed or criticized just by how much the column gets circulated around, so all of that is true. When I talked, I was focusing on opinionated journalism, and a blog, like Daily Kos, is different from washingtonpost.com, newyorktimes.com, or "Captain's Quarters" on the right is different, and I was trying to draw a line there.

Slate is actually an unusual product because it was, from the beginning, something like older media, a combination. It was online but provided many of the things that regular journalism provides, plus old-fashioned opinion journalism ranging along the lines from sort of *The Atlantic* or *The New Republic*. There was something about *Slate* that does not fit what I was talking about in terms of this particular distinction that I was drawing.

What I wanted to defend is a style of mobilizing opinion journalism that really sits partway between journalism of opinion, on the one hand, and really good, old-fashioned political mobilization on the other. We could come to an agreement on which sites come closer to journalism and which sites come closer to mobilizing entities that aren't really all that far from what political parties do, and many of the sites who do that are proud of it.

And I wanted to defend their function, but I just want to close by repeating something you said last night when we were talking late into the night, which is you are not worried about defending opinion, you are

worried about defending the tradition of old-fashioned, difficult, expensive reporting, and I agree with that. Opinion is easy. Opinion in some ways is, in a fundamental sense, cheap compared to the old-fashioned reporting, and so the reason I tried, in my imperfect way, to bring these two things together is I think we should value the opinion stuff more than we in the old media tend to do, but we need to figure out ways of defending old-fashioned reporting.

I see a great deal of importance for what we are calling new media today because that is my echo chamber.

And can somebody please figure out how to make the Web pay as much as the old-fashioned, physical newspaper? Jack's right: there are more readers out there than ever who want this information, but we haven't figured out a model where online newspapers pay anything like what the old newspapers did.

Someone said it takes 100 Web readers to make up for one lost physical newspaper reader. I don't have any reason to doubt those figures, but even if it is 50 to 1 or 20 to 1, that's a real problem that we haven't solved yet.

Mr. Jones: Christina Martin?

Ms. Martin: Okay. I have to say that I'm going to come at this from a slightly different angle, which is that of a practitioner, and I agreed with a great deal of what E.J. had to say last night, and I also agree with Jack that, at least from where I stand when I'm practicing political communications, the playing field is leveling between what we are calling new media and newspapers. And in my mind, they are always going to exist because they complement one another. And when I tend to think about them, I think about the topic or the issue I'm rolling out and whether or not there is a certain medium that's more favorable to that, as well as, on occasion, whether or not the brand of that medium brings me some credibility or the policy I'm about to roll out—some credibility that's going to help later on in life.

So if we are rolling out a long, in-depth policy, I tend to, at least if I were on Capital Hill with Gingrich, want to do a long, sit-down interview which works better when there is somebody from the press corps who is actually there in person, and print typically is the way to go on that front and allows us to have a longer discussion. Now, at that same time, my roll-out plan isn't going to end there because I see a great deal of importance for what we are calling new media today because that is my echo chamber.

So, at the same time I'm planning the one big interview, I'm also concurrently worrying about what I can feed to the new media, both in terms of the fact that there are certain entities out there that are going to help build support for this policy and help fortify the argument, there are others that may oppose the policy who are going to find the holes in my

argument much faster, and the faster they can identify those holes, the faster I can move to try and shore them up. So, to me, they are complements and I need both to do my job well.

If anything, so much of this discussion is focused on newspapers. I'm starting to think about newspapers less, to borrow a phrase from television, less as networks and more as programming, and starting to really stop and think about, okay, who is that newspaper's audience? What does an article in that particular newspaper bring me? So they are becoming part of a master plan where I am thinking about who from radio, which columnist, which television programs, and which newspapers and which new media work. And that recipe changes depending upon what it is I'm rolling out or what it is I'm trying to do damage control on.

Again, they are a complement. If I get a bad story in *The New York Times* or something, instead of waiting for the next *New York Times* to come out to try and correct that story or to try and revisit our positioning on it, I now have new media where I can act much quicker or almost instantly to start to either correct the message, to put out new facts to fortify what was misunderstood or even, which is more Internet and less new media, the opportunity to give people the chance to witness the news. And I think we are going to see more of that because I think readers are also becoming wiser or more skeptical—you can take your choice of words on that one—and are looking for the opportunity to verify some of what they are reading in publications right now.

So new media also offers them a chance to go back and try and find the same facts or the same take on a story in another entity or the ability, through YouTube, or maybe the political sites or any number of sites, to actually watch video of the news event. A recent example of this—which also would have applied to Bob Dole—was Kerry's botched joke, and lots of written coverage of that, lots of television coverage of that, but not necessarily an opportunity for many Americans to watch the entire joke in context to figure out was it a joke that went wrong or was this actually a mean-spirited statement. And I think we are going to see a little bit more of a desire to witness news, which the Internet offers us too.

Just to keep this short, since we have so many other panelists, the one thing I will tell you, as I mentor some young journalists and on occasion some older journalists, is I also think we are reaching a day and age where content is king and it doesn't so much matter where the content is going to run, and let the business entities work that out. They need to be worrying more about their personal brand. We are always going to need good writers, writers who have a reputation for being fair, for doing sound research, for a well reasoned opinion and that, in time, it may become the name of the reporter or the journalist that's even more important than the publication.

And so many people, particularly the young ones right now, are worried more about writing for the right newspaper and a little bit leery of going the new media route, or more worried about, if they are going the

Content is king and it doesn't so much matter where the content is going to run . . . let the business entities work that out.

television route, which talk show is going to do me in and which is going to actually fortify my career? I think people need to think a little bit more about the content of the work product right now and a little less about the outlets. Let the outlets, which has a great deal to do with Wall Street and a little less to do with journalism sometimes, sort it all out.

Mr. Dionne: I agree with a lot of that. There are two things that came to mind as Christina was talking. The first is one of the fascinating things about the new media is it's obliterating old distinctions. For example, the distinction between print and television. One of the reasons I enjoy highly partisan Web sites one way or the other, especially during political campaigns, is that they pick out either statements embarrassing usually to the side opposite them or political advertising that I would have missed. And that if you can spend a lot of time on YouTube, you can, if you are looking for information from a particular campaign, click on their Web sites and see all their ads, but these guys will post this interesting stuff almost instantly.

Now what is that? Well it's print until you get to the televised part, and so I think that's going to be interesting. What are these products? And now you are seeing *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* post interviews with their correspondents, so suddenly *The New York Times* online is a kind of television show or something we used to see as television. I have no idea where all this goes, I just know it's going to keep going that way.

Opinion writing. . . tends simply to repeat existing talking points.

One distinction that I tend to draw is opinion writing, including in the new media that tends simply to repeat existing talking points. One of the fascinating things about being able to consume so much media in a very short time is you quickly figure out where someone has come up with an original argument, and it may actually reinforce it. If Newt Gingrich makes a particular proposal, somebody can support Newt Gingrich in a thoroughly original way, then that becomes interesting to read. And then you discover, when you read on five different outlets almost the identical argument, you learn pretty quickly that somebody is simply repeating talking points and you just kind of want to get on the e-mail list of the original memo so you can read the talking points fresh and not have to read them five times, done five different ways.

Mr. Jones: Thank you.

Sidney?

Mr. Verba: I was very taken by Alex's statement that we should be interesting and provocative and then I heard E.J. talking about originality. It made me very nervous because I was reminded of one of the most famous reviews of a book in the social sciences which began that this is a book with many interesting and original ideas, the problem is that the original ideas aren't interesting and the interesting ideas aren't original.

(Laughter) (Applause)

Mr. Verba: So I hope I will be original or interesting, maybe provocative, I don't know. I will talk—

Mr. Dionne: I thought he was going to talk about my talk there for a second.

(Laughter)

Mr. Verba: I will talk, as we have been told to talk, from our own perspectives. I will talk from the perspective of a social scientist who studies American politics. Comparing it to journalism, I think they are faced with very similar basic issues and E.J. talked about them very strikingly last night. Journalists are supposed to deal with more current issues, social scientists are supposed to think more long term—there is a certain truth to that, it's one of those false dichotomies. Many journalists think very deeply over the long term, many social scientists are incredibly superficial, the one real big difference is that you guys tend to write better than we do.

Some people in my field feel that if you write too well, you really can't be a serious social scientist.

(Laughter)

Mr. Verba: I don't think that's really true. But what is the job of both the journalist and the social scientist? And, again, to give a false trichotomy, there are three things you want to do, one, you want to give objective observations, you want to tell the facts like they are carefully, and precisely and correctly. Secondly, because facts don't speak for themselves, you have to interpret them, you have to put them in context and say what they mean. And third, especially if you are dealing with a field, as I deal with and as the people in this room deal with as journalists, politics, you've got to think about the issue of where are we going? What do we want to do?

There are issues of values. I do "objective studies" in an area in which everyone including myself has passionate views about what should be done. Well how do you put that together with the facts, with the interpretation of the facts, to make something that is a good product, either as journalism or scholarship?

Let me talk from the branch of social sciences in which I work, which is essentially systematic surveys of the values and actions of the American public. That puts the issue most strikingly because part of the job is to explicitly and objectively say what it is that the American public thinks. What is it that the American public does? But it also is an area in which I'm talking about the deepest values that people have and that I have, and how do you deal with this? So there is, I think, close to a science of the

study of what I do and I use, as many journalists use these days, social surveys and social surveys can approach being a science, there is a science of sampling where you can tell if you've got a bad sample or a good sample by looking at statistics of the sample.

There is not quite a science for other parts of surveys, like question wording, that's more of an art but you can, if you have been in the business a long time, tell a clearly biased question from an unbiased question, so you can get fairly accurate views of what you are measuring, which is what people say in response to questions.

It becomes a little less clear if what you are measuring is what people think because that's something else, but you can get fairly good science using social surveys, and newspapers these days do a much better job than they did in the past, in part because there are so many out there. There is the challenge of institutions like the Pew Charitable Trust, which does a very careful nonpartisan survey, and so the information they print in terms of the responses they get is usually, I think, quite accurate. It may be overwhelming, we don't need as much, but it's there.

The next step is of course that surveys, don't talk for themselves, the next step is what do you select and report? Does the public support the war in Vietnam [Iraq]? The answer to the question is that 45 percent say yes. Do you write that up as a full 45 percent of the American public is supporting the president now or less than half of the American public, only 45 percent, is supporting the president right now? Exactly the same fact, the interpretation is quite different, this happens in all sorts of fields.

I have a student who is just finishing up a paper looking closely at what the polls said about the United States going to war against Iraq from about the six months before we went to war, and it turns out that all the media that he studies ranging from Fox News to CNN, which he says is the other end of the spectrum on some of his measures, use the same kind of data. They don't have different figures, they don't even use questions that necessarily bias in one direction or another, the write-ups are fundamentally different because you can choose between simple questions, Do you favor our going into war with Iraq?, to qualified questions, Would you favor going to war with Iraq if the U.N. was not supporting it?

And depending on which one you look at, you can say the public is fully supportive of the war, the public only has qualified support of the war. You can also find questions that say the public don't have support of the war, so it becomes very difficult to figure out exactly how you report it. Nevertheless, I think that social scientists and journalists, in their objective role, have an obligation, one, to get the facts right, and two, to try to interpret them in as balanced a way as possible. That is not easy, to determine what is balanced, what's balanced to me is things that come out looking like I like them to look, etcetera, we all interpret balance. The reader also is an active participant, but that I think is the obligation.

The next stage becomes very complicated and it's what E.J. talked about when he talked about objective journalism versus editorials, columns and the like and how you make that distinction. In political science, that becomes a very important part of the enterprise. Journalists quote people like Teddy White, social scientists always only quote either de Tocqueville or Max Weber.

(Laughter)

Mr. Verba: Max Weber, who wrote very, very sensitively about the difference between politics and science, once famously said that science tells us everything except what to do and how to live.

(Laughter)

Mr. Verba: And this is true, that you could understand the world and you nevertheless bring to it your values, your preferences, your passions, and policy. If you want to have intelligent policy, it has to be a combination of both. You have to know what it is you want, but you have to understand the world to figure out what it is that you can get and how do you get it. So social scientists have to play some role and journalists have to play some role connecting those two. And newspapers, if done correctly, it should be in separate pages, clearly labeled, social scientists should be very careful—we put it in the last chapter.

Journalists quote people like Teddy White, social scientists always only quote either de Tocqueville or Max Weber.

I have had long discussions with my students about how you teach political science. I teach these courses on the American public's views on very controversial issues, abortion, stem cell research, war, peace, economic equality and so forth, and I have views on the subject, the students have views on the subject, you can't keep it out of the classroom, but how do you keep, which I think you should, political preaching from the academic pulpit? And I think that is absolutely something that has to be done, my colleagues do not all agree with it.

Interestingly, I think more of my colleagues in political science agree with that than my colleagues in the humanities, as to what it is you should be saying in terms of political values toward the students, but you try to keep it separate. I try to keep it separate by trying to hide what I believe so that my students don't know, they guess by the end of the term . . . they can just tell by looking at me.

(Laughter)

Mr. Verba: But nevertheless, if we have a discussion in class on some issue where I know most of the students are on one side (most of the students at Harvard are pro choice and not pro life, but some are pro life). I always then have them discuss things, have some students say, well, why

do you think the pro life people hold the positions they have? And we read about that and so you try to get an open discussion, which is absolutely crucial and one of the things the press and everyone else should do.

So I don't know exactly how you draw the line, but I must say I get very nervous at the fuzziness of the line, that it's difficult to tell what is honest, objective fact, and what is tilted facts and what are opinions that have no facts behind them. And I'll put on my other hat and say that that's also a problem that comes up when one is dealing with the Internet, printed newspapers and with my other job, which is director of the Harvard University Library, where libraries try to take all the stuff that the scholars and the journalists do and say and put it away forever so that people can find it and learn what the world was really like.

One of the things that makes me nervous about the Internet is there is so much information out there, often mislabeled as coming from the Kerry campaign or the Bush campaign when it really is not, that it's just giving people a wrong notion of what is going on in the world.

What we try to do in the library is label things so that at least you know, not that it's true or false, we don't have a checklist in front of every book, but you know who wrote the book, when it was written and is it the real copy of the real book. One of the things that makes me nervous about the Internet is there is so much information out there, often mislabeled as coming from the Kerry campaign or the Bush campaign when it really is not, that it's just giving people a wrong notion of what is going on in the world.

And though I am a great consumer also of political fiction, it also makes me nervous because so many people believe political fiction because it's written even better than the journalists write, that it's got to be true because it says it so eloquently.

Mr. Dionne: Thank you.

First of all, Sid is one of those people you actually can read with pleasure in his social science and I have done that for years. And just a side point on that, I actually think a lot of social scientists, by a process of self-marginalization, a desire not to engage with the issues of the moment, actually created a huge opening for a lot of journalists. I think, for example, of my friend Tom Edsall, where journalists end up being the popular social scientists because some social scientists ceded the field.

Todd Gitlin wrote very interestingly about how many on the academic left completely took themselves out of the standard political debate, particularly through deconstruction, and just gave up on real politics, and as

Gitlin put it, great, we got the English Department, they got the White House.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: And I recently was in Ohio and was sitting down with this wonderful guy who was an academic in the humanities, had become very, very active in precinct politics, the most old-fashioned kind of politics. And I told him this story and I said there is a huge problem with all these deconstructionists, and he just smiled and said I used to be a deconstructionist, and then we went on from there.

Secondly, I can't resist—you were talking about polling. Norm Ornstein, who many of you know, was the polling director for Comedy Central.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: If you can imagine that, and he always tells the story of the very first poll question they asked, and they would have people, if you called a certain 900 number, and you paid 75 cents and you could register your opinion, and the first question was, would you pay 75 cents to give your opinion on one of these televised polls?

Journalists end up being the popular social scientists because some social scientists ceded the field.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: Hundreds of thousands of people called and 97 percent said no, we wouldn't pay 75 cents to register our opinion.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: The only other thing I'll say is that there is this fascinating question about where you draw the line between journalism and social science, you know, is it just that journalists do it fast and social scientists do it slow? Or is it that social scientists take lots of time because they want to have higher sort of threshold for what counts as truth, and journalists do it in a different fashion?

The book I found many, many years ago that was so helpful on this was Edward J. Epstein's book *Between Fact and Fiction* and the subtitle was *The Problem of Journalism.*

And he talked a lot about how do you interpret the fact that when most reporters are doing something, they are writing stories. Well what does story mean? And I think it goes back to what we were talking about regarding Pulitzerian journalism with plot and drama, but the very framework or a story shapes the way you present information, what you are going to put in and what you are going to put out. I think in the end a lot of journalists are frustrated social scientists and a lot of social scientists are frustrated journalists.

Mr. Jones: Thank you very much.

Garance?

Ms. Franke-Ruta: Thank you. It's really a pleasure and an honor to be here this morning and have a chance to respond to E.J.'s thoughtful lecture yesterday. There is a whole generation of younger journalists in Washington who are inspired by his example and his unique generosity of spirit, which I think we saw in the lecture yesterday, in particular in the way he manages to find not just a way of threading the needle in a negotiation between extremes but actually trying to knit them together.

I wanted to start off by picking up on the idea of the pamphleteer in E.J.'s speech because we sometimes forget that the last great era of highly opinionated pamphleteering in America was followed by the passage of the Alien and Sedition Act and that the ambivalence about not just partisan but highly inflammatory and pointed speech is also part of American history, along with the support for it. But also, because in looking into the idea of the blogger as pamphleteer in preparation for today, I found a little intellectual history that is really I think just too much fun not to share with this audience in particular.

The ambivalence about not just partisan but highly inflammatory and pointed speech is also part of American history, along with the support for it.

Mr. Jones: She also blogged on it, by the way.

Ms. Franke-Ruta: Yes, and I blogged on it then because that's what blogging is, it's basically constant self-scooping, among other things.

But I first heard the idea of the blogger as pamphleteer in 2003 from a young fellow by the name of Matt Stoller, who was a class of 2000 Harvard graduate, who was at the time somewhat ambitiously trying to convince retired General Wesley Clarke to run for president by creating an online grassroots movement to draft him into the presidential race which was in the end successful. Since then, Matt has moved on to running My DD, which is My Direct Democracy, one of the largest political sites on the Internet on the left, which is partially funded now by New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and which has been extremely active in fundraising and advocacy work, retaking the House of Representatives most recently.

I thought perhaps this idea had come from Matt, since he's the first person I had heard it from and since he had been looking at Professor Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* around that time, which is something that he had been thinking about in his own blogging work. But actually the comparison, which E.J. noted, was first put forward in Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel's 1999 book *Warp Speed: America in the Age of the Mixed Media Culture*, describing Matt Drudge as a gossip pamphleteer, only made it into the popular imagination on account of a very

sharp mainstream media analyst in a way-ahead-of-the-curve 2002 *New York Times* piece, "The Ancient Art of Haranguing has Moved to the Internet, Belligerent as Ever."

But the first real mover behind the idea was actually a man most of us have never heard of, a fellow named Dan Bricklin who wrote an essay in April 2001 about pamphleteers and Web sites. Bricklin is sometimes now known as the man who saved Blogger, which was the software that has made so many of the new media actors possible.

So, taking us all back then to E.J.'s speech, what I would like is to move us forward from the idea of new media actors as these anonymous outsiders with revolutionary or at least reform-oriented political intent—the pamphleteer—to what they are increasingly becoming today, which is professionals, where you have the bloggers now bringing in enough money that they are hiring staff and paying them or planning to pay them quite nice salaries. They are being paid by political actors and by nonprofit organizations.

And my question here is what if some of these new media actors really are not interested in being the next Tom Paine or the next I.F. Stone but are interested in being the next Lee Atwater?

I spoke with or rather was instant-messaging with one of the top liberal bloggers after the election and he said that this election cycle had made him realize that he had a gift for putting together negative frameworks, tying together bits of information in such as way as to destroy someone's character in the public mind and that this was his gift.

What if some of these new media actors really are not interested in being the next Tom Paine or the next I.F. Stone but are interested in being the next Lee Atwater?

Mr. Shafer: Who was he?

Ms. Franke-Ruta: I can't say. But I just thought, you know, well, that's interesting but, you know, that's not what journalists set about trying to do most of the time, most of the time, in any event. And I think that there is this sort of very fuzzy edge right now between political activity that occurs in text and journalism, and I wonder if you could talk more about that.

Mr. Dionne: I think that is a great point. One of the things that I worry about online is disclosure of what are people actually doing because it's clear a lot of the political sites are really, they are political actors, primarily, they are not journalists by any definition I think any of us can agree on, even though journalist is a fuzzy word. And particularly when bloggers get involved in fights within their own party, I am always curious if they are reflecting a strong opinion about a particular fight or if in fact they are reflecting where the money to support them comes from.

And given that they are political actors, in principle, there is nothing wrong with their selling their services to someone, but I think there is some burden and I don't think you'll ever enforce it by law, although you might in terms of campaign finance law, but I think there is some burden on them to tell us exactly which interests are they representing, are they personal, or are they financial or is there some happy combination of the two for them.

Secondly, you raised Tom Rosenstiel. Tom and also Bill Kovach, formerly of Harvard and *The New York Times* and a lot of other places, have talked about a journalism of assertion versus a journalism of verification, and they developed this during the Clinton scandal where I remember if you ever went on any of those crazy opinionated shows, which I kind of enjoyed doing, particularly Keith Olbermann, what you would discover is that there would be new allegations all the time about Clinton and occasionally you would get into a discussion where someone said, well, it's been reported that X happened, and in fact no one had any idea that X happened. In fact there was a good case that X didn't happen, Clinton hadn't done this particular thing, and the host, not Keith, would say, yes, but let's assume it happened, what would that mean?

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: And it was a very peculiar way to carry out any kind of political discussion. You were off to the races on an allegation that turned out to be flatly untrue, and I think that this rightly bothered Tom and Bill and that's where they came up with this distinction between a journalism of assertion and a journalism of verification.

Tom has added a really interesting new one. I told him now part of his job is to produce one new kind of journalism every year, and he was talking about the rise of a journalism of affirmation, and that a lot of people come to various forms of opinion mostly to get their views affirmed and they enjoy reading certain writers or watching certain TV shows because 95 percent of the time those folks that are part of a particular community of opinion and people can find each other and it's partly because they want the comfort of someone sort of telling them you are right about this.

Now, up to a point, there is a value to a journalism of affirmation. I have a dear friend I have known for many years who is very, very smart and I have told her that she often tells me what I think. By that, I did not mean that she tells me what I already believe but rather that she reaches a conclusion that I probably would have reached myself, if I had thought hard about the issue all the way to the end, and so there can be a value to a journalism of affirmation because sometimes I think I also enjoy people who tell me what I don't think, which is I watch them take another train of logic and realize that's a train I never want to get on.

But again, it's one of the challenges of this opinion journalism world because you have to hope, and one of the reasons, for example, *Slate* is a lot of fun to read is because on any given day there will be a mix of things

that sort of affirm you, and challenge your view and force you to rethink it, and that's one of the good things about opinion journalism. Generally, I think some of the more opinionated political blogs that fall into the category Garance talked about, some do it well and some simply affirm you in your view. And as for the last, it's very clear to me that his vocation is not to be a journalist but to be Lee Atwater, and he would probably be very good at it, though let us remember Lee, at the end of his life, had certain questions about what he had done.

Up to a point, there is a value to a journalism of affirmation.

Just a last point, Lee Atwater was one of those people—there are likable rogues and there are unlikable rogues—and the problem with Lee Atwater was he was a likable rogue.

Mr. Jones: Molly Ivins, you've been listening to this, what's your take?

Ms. Ivins: Well, in the first place, I feel as though I am walking in the middle of a fight and I still can't figure out what it's about.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: The new media and the old media sit around occasionally pissing on one another and if you are slow and clumsy and pompous, then I guess you are old media, and that's MSM, mainstream media. It's such an odd expression. And then of course if you are real quick and nimble on your feet and you're a blogger, you are part of the new media. I think that's a silly discussion, I see no reason for there to have been any competition or difference in the first place. I think that new media/old media complement one another wonderfully and I am delighted about everything about it, except for the people whose presence in the discussion is to say shut up, you're dead.

They are the people who own newspapers and that's what I'm concerned about, and the people who own newspapers seem to be perfectly willing to strangle them in their entirety, even though they are making 10 and sometimes even a 20 percent rate of return. The fact is that to the extent that it takes an enormous financial infrastructure to supply news from difficult and painful parts of the world, which is one function of a newspaper. We are really in deep trouble because of the owners of newspapers, not because of the new media.

And so with an especially affectionate salute to Tony Ridder, I would like to hear from the rest of the team on that.

Mr. Jones: Thanks, Molly.

I would like to focus on one particular aspect of what has been discussed and that is Sidney Verba's focus: Is the future one in which the kind of objectivity that has been, at least in the mainstream media, held up as totally the object of purpose for much of the 20th Century, even though, as you said last night, in the 1960s, that began to be challenged, but it's still been held up as the essential way of approaching most news of verification.

If you are slow and clumsy and pompous, then I guess you are old media. . . if you are real quick and nimble on your feet and you're a blogger, you are part of the new media. I think that's a silly discussion.

Is that something whose time has really passed and to what end? Sidney Verba, you used the word objective repeatedly.

In journalism circles, especially in sophisticated journalism circles, and you know, big cities, the Northeast and so forth, objectivity rolls off journalists' tongues with a kind of sneer, in many cases, and some people of course describe it as simply impossible, dishonest, facilitating, you know, misleading information and as inherently flawed. Is that a good enough reason to abandon it? Is that something whose time is passing because the people who are going to be the main consumers of news, the young people especially, simply don't want that kind of news and don't want that kind of news reporting?

Mr. Verba: I think it is a real danger that it is passing and that would be, I think, a terrible thing. I think there was a time way back when people talked about a clear line between fact and value and that was what you really had to abide by. Then it became clear that there was a more sophisticated view, that facts and values sort of intertwined and it was very hard to find pure facts that were uncontaminated by what people's values were.

. . . it takes an enormous financial infrastructure to supply news from difficult and painful parts of the world, which is one function of a newspaper. We are really in deep trouble because of the owners of newspapers, not because of the new media.

That then transmogrified in the academic field into what E.J. was talking about, deconstruction, postmodernism in which there was no difference. They suddenly came out with what they thought was insight that no one had ever heard before and that is when someone says something, they are not necessarily trying to give you objective truth. It's based upon all sorts of things in their heads, as if Marx and Freud had never existed and that social scientists and journalists didn't know that. We know that so obviously, but they then led to this notion that it doesn't really matter what you say, there is no such thing as truth or objectivity.

The fact that there is difficulty in finding objective facts and that you cannot say that there are perfectly clear facts about the social world because there are alternative facts that can be brought forward doesn't change the fact that we ought to do our best to try to

distinguish opinion, values and the like from that which is a description, an analysis of how the real world works.

Mr. Jones: I want to ask you to pretend for a moment that you are the editor of a major newspaper and you are instructing your corps of reporters who are going out to do the work that you think they ought to be doing. What are your instructions to them?

Mr. Verba: That's a difficult question to ask in the abstract, and in a way, I've always felt I teach in a field in which it is easier to give that answer. In my field, if I'm teaching someone how to do quantitative social science research, I can teach them fairly well this is what you do. If I'm teaching someone how you go into a town and see whether people are happy, whether there is conflict among the members of the town, it is harder to give a precise set of instructions of who you talk to and how you listen—

Mr. Jones: I don't mean that, I mean what you are saying, I want you to go out there and this is what your mind set should be.

Mr. Verba: You mind set is to report as clearly as you can what is going on in the world, what people are saying, and insofar as you think that what they are saying is not what they mean because of a disjunction between what they say and their actions or because what they said earlier, you want to report that as clearly as possible, no matter whose ox is gored and which way it comes out, and I think good journalists try to do that.

Mr. Jones: E.J.?

Mr. Dionne: Well just three quick things, one, part of this is a peculiarly American discussion because we all know that European journalism, British journalism, Italian journalism, certainly from my experience, do not draw quite the same sharp line as we do in terms of sort of fact, opinion and analysis. I'm not sure our line is as clear as we pretend it is, but theirs, they don't have it. I remember when I was a student in England, it was Nixon's last year and I shared a house with a bunch of people and I insisted that one of the papers we get is *The Guardian* because I just loved the way they skewered Nixon every morning on my door step.

The fact that there is difficulty in finding objective facts and that you cannot say that there are perfectly clear facts about the social world because there are alternative facts that can be brought forward doesn't change the fact that we ought to do our best to try to distinguish opinion, values and the like from that which is a description, an analysis of how the real world works.

And it was actually a very good newspaper in the sense that I learned a lot of things in *The Guardian*, they had very good reporters, but it's a different style than ours, and so I think that's just something to bear in mind. Having lived and worked in Europe, it struck me that there were costs and benefits to both ways of doing things. When I was in Italy, there were some very good newspapers but some of them were so opinionated and also sometimes they were written in code, and especially if it's not your first language, coded stuff is really hard to get, that you often had to read several accounts in order to figure out exactly what happened, and I don't say that disrespectfully, it was just a fact.

The second story I want to tell is the difference between being a reporter and being an opinion writer, and I had this wonderful experience where there was a character in Michigan politics called Pete Secchia, who is a big supporter of the Bush family, and I had met him during the 1988 campaign when he was working very hard for the current president's father. And I had gone back to Michigan the night before my column came out. Instead of covering the South Carolina primary, I flew ahead to Michigan, which was where the next primary was. And at 2:30 in the morning, George Bush was giving a speech at a hotel in Grand Rapids and there is Pete Secchia, who is a very, very warm, fun guy to talk to, and he sort of greeted me warmly and said what the hell has happened to you? You've become this real left winger, you used to be so reasonable.

And I said, well, in those days, I was a news reporter, you didn't actually realize how fair I really was being to you in those days. And I do think it is possible to have a set of norms in your head about what this, to quote a phrase that is now a little bit soiled, what "fair and balanced" actually means. The third thing I want to say is I wanted evidence. This is a new book by Rajiv, how do we pronounce his name? Chandrasekaran?

Mr. Jones: Anyone authoritative?

From the floor: I think it's Chandrasekaran.

Mr. Dionne: Thank you.

This is a really amazing book. It's called *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone,* and it is a devastating critique of how Americans went into Iraq without any real plan, preparation, but it's not a political polemic, it is built entirely on reporting. He did not go into this book to write an attack on the Bush Administration, he did the very courageous work of spending time in Iraq under very difficult circumstances from the day we invaded, actually before we invaded.

And he ended up, through the marshalling of evidence, and it's wonderfully well written as well, to make what is a far more powerful critique of our policy in Iraq than someone might have written if they had set out to write a polemic, because the sheer marshalling of fact upon fact based on good reporting ends up being far more effective an indictment than if someone had written a polemic.

And now where does that fit into this? I just say thank God, and this goes back to your point last night, that there are still people doing that kind of old-fashioned, wonderful reporting, and it ends up having a political effect, even though that is not necessarily the intention of the writer.

Mr. Jones: It's persuasive in a different kind of way.

Well, Jack Shafer, who do you, what's your view of this?

Mr. Shafer: This being what?

Mr. Jones: This being the whole question of whether the idea of striving for objectivity is a worthwhile thing, journalistically, in any significant way.

The sheer marshalling of fact upon fact based on good reporting ends up being far more effective an indictment than if someone had written a polemic.

Mr. Shafer: Yesterday afternoon I went over and spoke at MIT to the Knight Fellows. MIT has this Knight Science Fellowship Program where they bring science journalists from around the world to come and study. It's basically their version of the Shorenstein, only it's based on science.

And one of the things we talked about was that what distinguishes science from practically all other fields is that if you walk up to a physicist, or a biologist or a psychologist today and say, will everything that you believe to be true and reflective of the way that nature operates be thrown out the window in 100 years, a scientist will say absolutely, that there is no firm bedrock upon which you can rely on truth.

But if you talk to somebody in politics, or somebody in religion or to somebody who believes in rock and roll, they'll think that these things will exist as they hope for them to exist forever. And what distinguishes science—and I wish that more journalists practiced as scientists—is that it's a system of conjecture and refutation. I believe that most journalists, if they are really honest, would confess that they begin most of their stories with some sort of opinion, with some sort of hunch. They don't observe, observe, observe, observe and then say this man is a genius or an idiot or a criminal, they have some sort of hunch, the way that a scientist has a hunch.

And if they are really honest and fair about what they do, if their conjecture turns out to be misguided or mistaken, they don't run the story or they run a story that would run counter to the original conjecture that they had. In this sense, I think that opinion journalists and what we call objective journalists who practice at the highest levels are basically using the same methodology. They have a strong conjecture, they assemble evidence to try to push their conjecture over the top and they know that the more available their argument is to refutation, the higher value it will have for most of the people who are consuming it.

Most journalists, if they are really honest, would confess that they begin most of their stories with some sort of opinion, with some sort of hunch.

Good reporters are just like coon dogs, so, this is so easy. What you do is you send them out in the woods and they hunt out all kind of critters, they go underneath rocks, and they find something big and smelly, they tree something and then they make a great hurrah, and it's just wonderful. And when they come back, what you say to them is "good dog."

Mr. Jones: Does anyone else on the panel, Molly?

Ms. Ivins: Are you an editor?

Mr. Shafer: Not currently, I'm a recovering editor.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: Since I have such a low opinion of newspaper management, as you will gather, as an editor, I have a different opinion too. You had said what do you tell reporters when you send them out. Reporters, good reporters, are just like coon dogs, so, this is so easy. What you do is you send them out in the woods and they hunt out all kind of critters, they go underneath rocks, and they find something big and smelly, they tree something and then they make a great hurrah, and it's just wonderful. And when they come back, what you say to them is "good dog."

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: Good dog. And then they run off in the woods and they hunt twice as many critters and they tree twice as many possums, and it's so simple.

Mr. Jones: Now we've got the solution, the good-dog solution. Yeah?

Mr. Verba: Would it be rude if I just tell a story?

Mr. Jones: Sure.

Mr. Verba: It reminded me of this, about the nature of real knowledge. I was told once a story of a philosopher of science speaking to a group of MIT professors, physicists, and he asked them how many of them believe that 50 years from now we would still think it true that the speed of light was a constant, and half of them raised their hands, which means that half of them thought that 50 years from now a major building block of physics would no longer be held to be true. He then asked them how many of them thought that 50 years from now we would still believe it to be true that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, everybody raised their hand.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: Christina, Garance, do you want to chime in here?

Ms. Franke-Ruta: Well I think one of the things that's happened in recent years in this very highly partisan charged political environment, is that it's not as much even the conclusions that people reach that are seen as partisan but the questions that they ask. And so the mere fact of asking questions of certain individuals has become perceived to be a partisan act now because to be a true conservative means to not ask questions, certain sorts of questions. Therefore, if a member of the media just asks questions of certain people in the administration, that's seen as engaging in a certain kind of partisan behavior.

Ms. Ivins: I want to stress that maybe it's a problem that the press has with saying that George Bush lies, and *The Washington Post* is getting to be notoriously funny for it.

Mr. Jones: In fact it was *The Washington Post*, as I recall, the White House correspondent at the *Post*, who, essentially did say, list a chronicle of lies that the president had, as far as he was concerned—

Mr. Dionne: I think this was Dana Milbank's piece.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, that was. Then of course he was horribly punished for that by the White House, but why do you think there is this incredible convention against saying of course this is an obvious lie. I mean, in fact you may present information that refutes it, but without saying this is the truth and this is not, is that part of objectivity? Or is that opinion?

It's not as much even the conclusions that people reach that are seen as partisan but the questions that they ask.

Mr. Dionne: Well, the reason I threw in that "spokesman for Mr. Hitler denied he was an anti-Semite," line last night was because of where you draw the line in terms of what nonpartisan journalism is. That there is a danger of people bending over so far backwards in any given context, and I tried to put it in a particularly jarring context, that you end up reporting flat untruth just in the name of appearing to be balanced, and so I think there is always a fear of this.

This is a very weird time. I can't remember this degree of partisanship. I don't even remember it being quite this partisan in the Nixon years. But one has to go back to that to find this kind of division in the country. Now maybe we are now less divided because there is a new consensus forming on the other side. I just wonder if we are going to be having conversations of this sort—it's like the scientists—five years from now? Will we be talking about a lot of the things we are talking about or will the whole political discussion become somewhat less heated with new policies, new president and so on?

I have a hunch that the conversation will change and that there is something peculiar about the polarization that President Bush has created and that we, somebody sitting here five years from now, will be saying quite different things than at least I was saying last night.

I have a hunch that the conversation will change and that there is something peculiar about the polarization that President Bush has created . . .

Mr. Jones: Christina, what's your take on this?

Ms. Martin: I personally would go back to the point of objectivity and I think there is a need for unbiased, objective reporting, free of opinion, and that America has gotten skeptical because of the politics and the polarization that's gone on, because of the war and the arguments surrounding it, because of media coverage, which is also being blended with entertainment, and for the first time ever, I'm starting to see people who are actually reading two articles to try and figure out what the real story is.

Most of my career, I've read at least six newspapers every morning and never thought anything about it because I walked away with what was the germ of the story and could separate the wheat from the chaff, as we say in Kansas. But what surprised me most recently is, when I was home in Kansas City talking to my 66-year-old mother, who is not the most tech-savvy woman in the world but now has a computer that she is very proud of because it still runs on analog, and she is actually going to blogs to verify what she has read in the *Kansas City Star*, so she is starting to question that.

She is also starting to do it with what she saw on the ABC Evening News or on the local evening news, she just wants to know that there is someplace else to go to get just the numbers or just the facts without the words. And a lot of times we dismiss what we are calling new media here as being where most of the activists and opinionated material is going to exist, and there is a lot of it, and it is great for that and the Internet is big, and broad and worldwide, there is also a place in it for objective reporting.

Mr. Dionne: In fact, the beauty of this new media, whatever it is, is that somebody who reads a column can immediately click on the speech that the writer is writing about and I think the so-called old media is more and more including links so that somebody can fact check you using your own column, and I think that's a wonderful discipline on everybody.

Mr. Shafer: When I write, I like to link to primary data, but if I'm citing primary data, I'm like the scientist, I'm trying to say, look, I think these results, my views, my conclusions, are so rock solid that I'm providing you with the data, you go back to this data and see if you don't arrive at the

same results or refute them. And sometimes, you know, really sharp readers will say, Shafer, you absolutely blew it, you misunderstood the data set or whatever original material I linked to and often, in real time, they'll correct me.

Mr. Jones: Christina, can I ask, does your mother go to the Web after she sees something on television that she doesn't agree with or is it—

Ms. Martin: No, my theory is that it would be something that she disagreed with and you know, on several trips home, watching her do this, I realized it was just articles that interested her. I mean it could have been on tulips and she was still looking for verification.

Mr. Jones: I would like to open this discussion and invite you to raise your own questions and issues.

Mr. London: My name is Bob London from the new blue State of New Hampshire and I'm a public official, was a student editor at American University, *The Eagle*, tenuously associated with the American University back in 1970 during the Nixon Era. And I'm very disappointed, I am, with Molly. My wife is a Texan too, so I've got some very close ties to the yellow rose. But I'm very disappointed with the death of journalism, I think it's dead, I think we are at a wake. I think if we haven't smelled the flowers, we should shortly.

Somebody can fact-check you using your own column, and I think that's a wonderful discipline on everybody.

Mr. Dionne: I don't think we are at a wake. Even though I love Molly's line, I don't mind working for a dying industry, but I don't want to work for an industry that's committing suicide. That's a wonderful Mollyism, which I have probably garbled a little.

But there is still, I don't mean to be Pollyanna-ish, there is some amazing journalism out there. If you looked at sort of what an enormous number of reporters have done in Iraq over three years under very trying circumstances, I mean there are still a lot of people out there trying. There are a lot of news organizations that are still willing to spend a whole lot of money to produce real information written in an engaging way or broadcast in an engaging way for lots of people.

National Public Radio is thriving, which I find, by the way, an interesting model for the future, maybe what we are going to need is a not-for-profit model where, not that you don't have revenue, but that you just reinvest all the revenue into the news. I would love to see a newspaper try that to see what would happen. It would be a business enterprise but the primary purpose of the revenue would be to support the reporting.

The last thing, just talking about this distinction between fact and opinion, and there was a wonderful man called Peter Milius, who was an

editorial writer at *The Washington Post*. He was also an editor and a really good reporter, and he died some years ago at age 61 of cancer. And the brief time I wrote editorials, Peter once told me there were many editorials that he thought of as news stories disguised as editorials, which is exactly the opposite of what you normally expect. Because Peter was an excellent reporter, he particularly cared about budget issues, he cared about housing, poverty, a whole bunch of subjects that the paper itself wasn't covering that much. And there were times that Peter wrote editorials simply to get certain facts into the newspaper about a particular issue or a particular controversy and it was a wonderful way to get things into the newspaper that other editors weren't interested in.

And I don't know where that leads us, but I've always found that I think about that a lot because sometimes good opinion writing, is often, maybe even almost always, rooted in some kind of good reporting, and so, that's where, as Jack said right at the beginning in his critique of me, it becomes harder and harder to figure out where these lines are actually drawn.

Mr. London: The *Concord Monitor*, only covers Concord, a Democratic city, and it doesn't get wide circulation of the state. There are about 1.4 million people in New Hampshire but there are a lot of towns, Nashua, Salem, Portsmouth, which I live near, and the coverage there is terrible. And there is no journalism, no reporters being hired.

Ms. Ivins: Big states, little states, believe me, it's across the board. State House reporters have been cut all over the country, entire bureaus have been shut down, bureaus have been halved, this is everywhere, it's what we are looking at when I talk about the suicide of the business.

From the floor: I'm from Pittsburgh and the *Post Gazette*, our paper in Pittsburgh, I don't know, had a $10 or $20 million loss this year. So I was surprised about Molly's statement about the profitability of newspapers. So I wonder if you all could address, nationally are newspapers making money or are they, like the *Post Gazette,* losing money?

Mr. Jones: I cannot speak to that with authority but I know that, for instance, the newspaper that has gotten most of the attention relatively recently has been the *Los Angeles Times*, which is owned by the Tribune Company, the Chicago Tribune Company. They are not satisfied with how much money the *L.A. Times* produces but it produces, John, correct me if I'm wrong, hundreds of millions of dollars of profit every year.

Mr. Carroll: $240 million this year.

Mr. Jones: $240 million. Now that was not enough, that meant that they were so insistent on cutting costs by getting rid of news staff that two editors and two publishers have quit over it. On the other hand, every newspaper situation is somewhat different. There used to be a day when the newspaper business was a no-brainer way to make that 20 percent that Molly talked about. You could barely miss, it was like there was nothing else in town, you had a monopoly and you got a lot of money.

Now, with this new technology, there is huge pressure on the traditional forms of revenue, advertising and circulation revenue that newspapers depend on, and the response in many corporate-owned newspapers has been to cut costs in order to preserve those profit margins. The fact that Pittsburgh is losing that much money frankly astonishes me in the sense that they are generating money but they are operating in such a fashion that they are losing money and that is something that most newspapers of course can't do for long, newspapers aren't commercial enterprises. Who owns the Pittsburgh—

From the floor: The Block family and they are a chain.

Mr. Jones: But they apparently have, for whatever reasons, they have justified to themselves doing something that puts the newspaper into the red while they are going through a rough patch. To me, that's something quite admirable. I don't know that there are many other newspapers or families that would do that.

From the floor: Circulation peaked for that paper in 1979 and it has been going down ever since.

Mr. Dionne: As has the population of Pittsburgh.

From the floor: Yeah, right.

Mr. Dionne: Dave Shribman is the editor of that paper and is a great journalist by any standard I can think of, and he has been struggling to try to keep that paper doing lots of reporting, doing all the things. I suspect he has not cut his State House bureau or, if he did, he couldn't stand doing it. And so, yeah, I agree with Alex that the *Post Gazette* is actually an admirable story but I sure hope they figure out how to make enough money to keep going.

There is huge pressure on the traditional forms of revenue. . . and the response in many corporate-owned newspapers has been to cut costs in order to preserve those profit margins.

From the floor: Since this has become so much of a business, is there a lot of pressure on newspapers now to tone down their editorials or to slant them so as to please the advertisers?

Mr. Jones: I would say that what you are seeing is that newspapers are increasingly going to be like local television and local television goes out of its way not to take on any policy questions, or political questions or anything else that's going to make anybody mad. They do sports, they do weather, they do traffic accidents, they do crime, they are not about policy, they are not about politics and I think that that's not altogether true everywhere, but I think you see newspapers in response to a lot of things, moving in that direction, at least that's the way it seems to me.

From the floor: So then who is going to be left to give us opinion?

Mr. Jones: Well there is going to be plenty of opinion, you're going to be swamped in opinion, but what you are not going to have is much reporting.

From the floor: I mean valid opinion.

Mr. Jones: Well the point is that opinion, as E.J. said, is based on this core of reported news and as that core erodes, the opinion may be less and less valuable and may be less and less informed.

Tom Patterson?

Newspapers are increasingly going to be like local television. . .

Daily journalism is about reality on the margins, it's about what's different about today as compared with yesterday, and that's a very selective and sometimes distorting view of what's out there. . .

Mr. Patterson: I was just wondering whether any of you think that either the old media or the new media might develop somewhat of an answer. There is no full answer to this, the problem that Lippmann talked about relative to journalism—and I'm going to use the restless beacon metaphor for it—that daily journalism is about reality on the margins, it's about what's different about today as compared with yesterday, and that's a very selective and sometimes distorting view of what's out there and there are just endless examples of the consequences of that.

We can go to the last week and John Kerry's statement, but one question you might ask about that is why in the world is that thing on the front pages for three days? And with one side hoping it doesn't divert the voters' attention and the other side hoping that it does, it's like being at the Super Bowl, and you're in the last two minutes, and it's tied, and one team is driving, and a fight breaks out in the stands and suddenly the camera focuses on the fight in the stands.

So I think the question always about daily journalism is the ability to see it whole and see it steady. I think that the Web gives journalists a little more room, a little more cushion, and I'm wondering if any of you think that some of this problem could be resolved or in some ways answered through the bloggers who in fact do stay on message for long periods of time.

Ms. Franke-Ruta: I think you are quite right about that. If you look at *The New York Times'* most e-mailed list of stories versus *The New York Times'* most blogged list of stories, the blogging list is always the most serious stories, it's always foreign policy and politics and breaking national news,

whereas the most e-mailed list often is, you know, recipes for macaroni and cheese, for example, or opinion pieces or things from the style section that might have something to do with what people want to write on their blogs versus the kind of things that they just send to their friends as a gas by e-mail.

But I think there is definitely a sense in which the new media is also doing a really wonderful opening up of what used to be this small world of information where you had a small number of insiders who are fighting for a small news hole, and now there is an opportunity for a lot more people, sort of a mass insider perspective in a way where it's a much less mediated world, even though there is a lot more media outlets. There are fewer people guiding them, and then the bloggers come in and they act as curators in a giant data dump that's out there and guide people through it a bit.

Mr. Dionne: I think the Kerry story would be a great story to write a paper or a study of. On the one hand, I wasn't at all surprised that story took off because the Republican Party, knowing it was in a hole in the election, pushed it as hard as it could and it was rather effective but, in the end, not all that effective. The voters themselves took in the information and seemed to say this really doesn't have anything to do with this election in the end.

I was on the road when that was breaking and my sense is the Kerry story was played quite differently in different places partly depending on what they say the Republicans did with that. Rick Santorum, knowing that he was in real trouble and desperate to change the conversation, was doing everything he could to make the Kerry story the central story.

In the end, the story went away largely by Friday, Fox News continued to push it but that's what they do. And so, in the end, I actually think some combination of the voters and the media system looked at that story, you know, and if you were a Democrat, you would have certainly felt it was overplayed because, my God, Kerry messed up the trajectory of the last part of the campaign. But in the end, the campaign came back to what the campaign was about and the Kerry story kind of dissipated.

I'm curious what Christina thought about what went on in that period.

Ms. Martin: I thought it was diversion at a time when the party could use a diversion. I mean I never thought for a moment it was going to change the outcome of the election. I thought the House for months and months was already lost. I can't blame the party for working with what it had because there wasn't much out there.

(Laughter)

The bloggers come in and they act as curators in a giant data dump that's out there and guide people through it. . .

Ms. Martin: I actually think what helped keep the story alive was the picture of the troops holding up their sign to Kerry. I think that also added humor to it, which gave more life to it. What I can't understand for the life of me is why Kerry just didn't apologize sooner for it, just said it was a botched joke, because the only true damage done in my mind was to Kerry. I mean, it gave the Republicans something to talk about, but not much, but we didn't have much to work with at that stage of the game either.

For the Democrats, I never thought for a moment it would hurt anybody in their races. The only person I think it might not have helped is Ford, but I think things were going to work out the same way regardless of that.

Mr. Dionne: By the way, for the first day, I totally shared your frustration, but that came more from my opinion side than my journalism side because I said, my God, that's not what the campaign should be about but, in the end, I think it didn't work, it probably wasn't going to work.

Ms. Martin: I don't think they ever really meant for it to work, I just think it gave them a hook to at least talk about supporting troops rather than war, which is different, that is an entirely different argument. I don't think anybody thought that that one line joke that was I truly believe a botched joke was going to change the outcome of—

Mr. Shafer: That an experienced politician, knowing that he has a national forum, tells a joke and botches it I think says a lot about the politician and I think it's extraordinarily news worthy. Is it a one-day story? Is it a two-day story? A three-day story? I won't argue with that, but I think that if you didn't already have a strong opinion of John Kerry, that probably helped you arrive at a strong opinion.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: That was nicely put.

Mr. Mokray: My name is George Mokray and I am a media conglomerate. I am a diarist on "Daily Kos" and I have my own blog where I do video blogging as well, and so the barriers of entry are very low these days.

(Laughter)

Mr. Mokray: The quality may be better though.

The last two diaries that I did on "Daily Kos" were about the interview Deval Patrick had in the Sunday *Globe*, which I thought was very interesting, and my notes on a book called *The Brass Check* by Upton Sinclair, which is a study of American journalism from 1919, and my notes from that book are on line at "Daily Kos" and they include the idea not only of a nonprofit newspaper, but also the story of the municipal news of L.A., Los Angeles, which existed for about one year and I—

Mr. Jones: Promotion aside, what's the question?

Mr. Mokray: Well, in the Deval Patrick interview, *The Boston Globe* asked him what are you going to do to keep up the energy? And Patrick said it's not about energy, it's about an actual movement and an actual network and you guys, you newspaper people, come up to it and then shy

away from it, you don't understand that what is happening is a movement. So, for instance, on "Daily Kos" now, there are groups of people who are adopting committees in the House and in the Senate to study them and to bring the information forward to that community, which is now probably close to 150,000 people who are actually logged in and do diaries.

So there is a possibility of close examination of legislation at least happening from the grassroots on up, from interested people saying this is my issue, I'm interested in homeland security, I will adopt the homeland security committee, and I will follow what they do through C-SPAN and anywhere else and publish it to not only to a wider group but a smaller group which is also interested in the homeland security committee.

That an experienced politician, knowing that he has a national forum, tells a joke and botches it says a lot about the politician and I think it's extraordinarily news worthy.

Mr. Dionne: I agree with the assertion that what's going on out there in some of the blogs is a kind of movement and I think that it is about organizing people for particular purposes, and that's one of the things I was actually—

Mr. Mokray: You missed my point.

Mr. Dionne: Which was?

Mr. Mokray: The point is not that the movement is happening through the blogs but that the movement is happening through politics.

Mr. Dionne: But the blogs are helping to organize the movement.

Mr. Mokray: Exactly, but politicians like Deval Patrick, Barack Obama, Howard Dean are different kinds of politicians because they are no longer talking about polarization, they are saying let's have everybody come to the table, and they may even be smart enough to keep a seat open for Elijah.

Mr. Jones: Marvin?

Mr. Kalb: I was wondering if I could raise a question which is very much in my mind and has been sort of intensified after listening to E.J. last night. How is journalism today making this democracy any better? Whether we talk about the new media or the old media, whether we call a journalist a commentator or not, how is the whole product improving the way we live, the way we govern one another? I have a feeling that anybody who has been around journalism for the last 50 years has to have the feeling that we are now in very difficult straits, how did we get there?

What are we trying to do to get us out of this situation? How could it somehow get better? And one of the things that Sidney was saying before struck me very forcefully, and that is this whole idea about approaching a story with a preconception about what you would like the story to end

with, and Jack Shafer was suggesting that in defining how a reporter would go about approaching a story, that you have a certain idea in mind, then you seek the evidence to support the idea. If you come up with the evidence, you write your story, if not, I presume you don't write the story.

Mr. Shafer: Correct.

Mr. Kalb: But I can tell you that's not the way I was raised and I would like to raise that as an issue. What are the fundamental problems today in journalism? I think one of the fundamental problems is that journalists are no longer seen as people who provide evidence, news, straight, objective data, but rather they are there to tell people what they think. Everything is what you think, not what you really know, and is it possible in this new age to get back to that more old-fashioned concept? I don't know, it may very well be that it's gone. But if it is gone, what impact is that going to have on our capacity to govern ourselves? That's essentially my question and concern.

How is journalism today making this democracy any better?

Mr. Dionne: Do you want to start on that, Jack?

Mr. Shafer: Okay. Are we in the democracy racket? Are we, do we exist? Do we report stories in order to advance democracy? Many journalists might think so, when I sit down to report a story and write it, I don't think about will this serve democracy or not. Democracy, as we've seen in some places, can lead to despotic regimes—

Mr. Kalb: But, Jack, forgive me, is there no sense of responsibility for what it is that you do write? Is it just some—

Mr. Shafer: That's a completely different question.

Mr. Kalb: It's part of the same issue.

Mr. Shafer: I don't really follow you.

Mr. Kalb: Oh, okay.

Mr. Jones: E.J., did you have a comment? Yeah, go ahead.

Mr. Verba: I was going to throw out a very general concern that's been spinning around in my head which is connected to this. I think the issue that I've been pushing is, is there is a kind of objectivity? You go in and you try to find out what's really right. That maybe it's fading, as you say, but as E.J. pointed out and as we all know, there once was a press in the United States that never followed that and was really partisan on either side, and the question that's been spinning around in my head is this general distinction which can be stereotyped, but it's the distinction between the American way of running legal cases and the French way of running legal cases.

In the United States, we believe in an adversarial system where lawyers don't come into the court to find the truth, they come into the court to plead for the defendant or to plead for the plaintiff, and they go out of their way to make the opposite cases as much as possible. In

France, supposedly you have a judge who is in a sense a scientist, who goes out to try to figure out what are the real facts, and that is kind of a distinction, in a way, one can make between politics and science.

So my sense is that the right model for clashes of opinion in a democracy for editorials is you want lots of openness with people taking opposite views. What you are talking about is something that's quite different from that, which is people going out, as I have been arguing and I think we agree, trying to find what the truth is, which is of course very difficult. The residual question is, is there a way in which to be a servant of democracy in the journalistic side of the social science side, where you are looking for the truth, you want more clashes of opinion? Is that the way in which we get at the truth?

One of the fundamental problems is that journalists are no longer seen as people who provide evidence, news, straight, objective data, but rather they are there to tell people what they think. Everything is what you think, not what you really know, and is it possible in this new age to get back to that more old-fashioned concept?

You always say, you know, so and so has said this, and then you go out to find, even if there is only one person in the country who holds the opposite point of view, but other people disagree and you give it almost equal weight, which sometimes is distorting. I don't know where this is all leading, but there is a different way of looking at how you get to the truth, one is by fighting it out by partisans, and the other is by looking for the objective truth, and I think that helps understand what I think of as the difference between what journalists should do, and what editorialists should do and what politicians should do. Politicians and editorialists fight it out and journalists, objective journalists, should do what you are saying, so I would agree with you—if they are not doing it, that's wrong.

Mr. Dionne: I didn't hear Jack saying the same thing, so you can adjudicate whether we heard you right. What I heard is most journalists go into a story with a hypothesis about what happened that's not necessarily a political assumption. My favorite instance of this, because it was such a fun story to do, when I was in Italy, the Archdiocese of Turin named a group of exorcists and so the whole, Italian press was full of stories with headlines like: Does the Devil Live in Turin? And, you know, one could have a lot of assumptions about why was this the case, were there more satanic cults in Turin than somewhere else?

And so I went up to Turin and knocked on the door of—and Turin, you should know, is the most rationalist, bourgeois town in all of Italy and

they are very proud of how rational they are—this priest, who is this spokesperson for the Archdiocese, and he says this story is ridiculous, you know what happened? Here is what happened, there were satanic cults around Italy, the Vatican sent out a memo and asked all the dioceses of Italy to name exorcists, and we are so efficient up here that we were the first ones to do it and now we are getting all this publicity for being the home of the devil.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: Well it was a fun story, I actually met an exorcist who really made me believe, when I finished talking to him, that he actually had confronted the devil, but that's another story.

(Laughter)

There is a different way of looking at how you get to the truth, one is by fighting it out by partisans, and the other is by looking for the objective truth. . .

Mr. Dionne: Though I couldn't prove that objectively. And so that's what I think Jack was talking about in terms of hypothesis, not that you come in absolutely convinced of one point of view when you are doing a news story. On your other point, I worry about what you are talking about in the sense that Molly has spoken of which is cutbacks in a lot of basic forms of journalism, particularly for state capitals. The death of the UPI is one of the great tragedies because the AP and the UPI used to at least compete over covering state capitals and produced a lot of news.

That's one of my pet peeves too, but Molly and I both like state legislatures for various reasons, so I worry about that. But in terms of actual journalists out there doing the kind of work that one admired now or would have admired 30 years ago, God, I still think there are a lot of those folks out there. I mean this book I have next to me I think is one of many examples of that.

Ms. Ivins: I think they are frustrated and angry. I sometimes go and talk to the IRE, the Conference of Investigative Reporters and Editors, and not that any of us would make tacky generalizations about our colleagues, but investigative reporters really are a strange bunch, and they are kind of like badgers and they like to do things like read old annual insurance company reports. And all over the country, they have less and less to do, they can't get the time and the room and the space to work, and that's the thing about investigative reporting is that it takes time, you can't go out and do it in one or two days, and I think this is yet another example of journalism killing itself.

Mr. Jones: Yes, ma'am?

From the Floor: Hi, thank you.

I have a question for E.J. Dionne about his many wonderful columns about the Catholic Church and politics so, to the extent that my question has anything to do with old or new media, it's really old media.

(Laughter)

Floor: And those columns that you write are really encouraging for people who find that their progressive social values not only are not in conflict with their Catholic religion but are mandated by their religion. And so my question for you has to do with two things that happened in recent days and one is the Council of Catholic Bishops deciding that, whatever it means, they are going to turn inward and the other is that a liberal Catholic woman is now Speaker of the House. What do you think that may mean for this intersection of the Catholic Church and political progressives and the conflict that has been there in recent years?

Mr. Dionne: Well, thank you, that's very kind, it is very, very, very old issues.

After this election, I came home and was pleased to report that the Catholic vote had moved the other way and had gone 55 percent Democratic, after a long period of slow decline from '96 to 2004, and it shows what propaganda or religious instruction my kids are subjected to. My son said "55 percent, that's not good enough, Jesus talked all the time about the poor, why is it only 55 percent?" There is a struggle going on inside the church and there are sort of two kinds of intellectually coherent camps. One is that camp which we think of as mostly liberal Catholic who see the social justice teachings and mission of the church, Catholic social thought, as primarily about a set of policies toward the poor and the other camp led by people like Father Neuhaus, and George Weigel and others, who are, first, I think more conservative on those issues in general, but second, who believe that the core commitment of the church now should be on the life issues, so-called, abortion, stem-cell research and also gay marriage and the like.

And I think that's just a big argument that's happening in the church. And then I think there has been a shift from the '80s where, in the mid-'80s, the bishops were putting out—the letter on nuclear war and the letter on justice and the economy—that's a very different focus, a kind of Cardinal Bernardin focus is different from what you are seeing now and I think this is an ongoing battle.

The thing that worries me, and this is far afield from our discussion, but not entirely, is that a kind of party spirit is invading all of the religious institutions, and then I can be as guilty of that as anyone, again proving I'm a Catholic feeling guilty about it.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: There is a C.S. Lewis line that we don't look to the gospels for what we should think about various political issues and we ransack the gospels in support of the position of our own political party, and I think

there is a lot of that going around on all sides. And you know, on the one hand, liberal Catholics have been arguing for ages that the church should be engaged in the public square, so why should I knock that when my conservative friends do it? On the other hand, I think that people may sometimes fool themselves where it's their party position or their ideological position that's primary and they are simply trying to rationalize that within the context of their own faith.

I don't think that's new, but I think it seems to be very sharp now.

Floor: The other thing that progressive Catholics will do is remain silent, that people like Nancy Pelosi, and Anna Eshoo and just a number of different progressive Catholics stay so quiet about the fact that they are driven by their religion.

Mr. Dionne: Well that's changed I think. I think 2004 created a crisis where those voices are no longer silent. Karl Rove, to his credit, understood that Catholics were a critical swing vote and did far more to organize Catholics, over a long period of time, than liberals and Democrats did, and it wasn't until '04 that the progressive Catholics and Democrats, independent of that, realized that you can't leave this all to the Republicans. If they are the only people organizing, they are going to do really well, so you've seen the development of a whole lot of different progressive religious organizations, including a number of Catholic organizations.

And you have that letter organized by Rosa DeLauro, signed by 55 Catholic Democrats in the House, pro-life and pro-choice, which whatever, you can argue about sentence by sentence in that letter, it was a very important statement that said we are here, and I think that had an effect, so I think there is now less silence than there was, but I—

Ms. Ivins: E.J.?

Mr. Dionne: Yup?

Ms. Ivins: What I want to know is how come the Catholics get all the attention.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: We think the Evangelicals get all the attention, you know?

Ms. Ivins: The Catholics get all the attention, and you know, Episcopalians are really quite interesting.

(Laughter) (Applause)

Ms. Ivins: Episcopalians believe in good manners and being able to hold your liquor, and I submit that both areas—

Mr. Dionne: Catholics believe the second.

(Laughter)

Ms. Ivins: —massive improvement to civilization.

Mr. Jones: Richard, did you have a comment?

Mr. Parker: Yeah, I'm one of God's frozen people, so let me join the discussion.

(Laughter)

Mr. Parker: I would like the panel to think about the problem they have posed in a different way, which is not in this dichotomy of fact and opinion but rather in the world of competing factual frames. And to give you a simple example, if I invite an economist in to describe the group of you sitting at the table, her description will be different from a sociologist's, his will be different from a psychologist's, historian will be different.

Karl Rove, to his credit, understood that Catholics were a critical swing vote and did far more to organize Catholics, over a long period of time, than liberals and Democrats did. . .

Each of them legitimately can claim factuality about his or her description and the issue is not fact or opinion in this case but a negotiation of competing structures of factuality. And I think that's what journalism is engaged in most often and most frequently what we complain about when we complain about journalists engaging in opinion is, in fact, that journalists are raising different sets of facts to the fore. Now they do so because they live in communities of moral meaning, and one of the responsibilities imposed on them by editors, or self-imposed, is to recreate that community of moral meaning.

E.J. sits here and talks about democracy. Well, you know, maybe Jack is right, maybe there is no relationship between journalism and democracy, I think there is, I think there ought to be. Part of my moral community requires that I believe that.

Now I think that the other missing piece that would benefit this discussion would be to talk about three Cs, career, class and community because I think that we haven't talked a lot about how internal values related to journalistic careers imposes boundaries to what is and is not reported.

We certainly don't talk well about class in American journalism, and I think that the absence of that is always felt by Americans from different moral communities, different backgrounds, different classes, different careers, but they don't find it expressed in the journalism of today very well. It's not just that the CBS News anchor now has better legs and we know it than Walter Cronkite had. I mean Marvin's got great legs, but I mean Walter's legs versus Katie Couric's, I mean it's just light years.

(Laughter)

Mr. Parker: That's one of the problems with contemporary journalism is that we know more about the anchor's legs than we used to 40 years ago. But the other is that we don't actually allow a debate about moral communities in a way that would be healthier and we have allowed journalism to take on the detritus of human life. I mean I open up *The New York Times* on a daily basis and am weighed down by the fact that far more words are

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spent on arugula or the latest merlot tasting in a given issue of *The New York Times* than there is on Iraq or, on a Thursday, it's on electronics goods choices. I mean the gap between the publishing function and the news function of journalism it seems to me has collapsed in powerful ways and the press is more a trumpet of consumption than it is a carrier of the virtues and liabilities of democracy.

Mr. Jones: Before anybody responds to that, I also want to get Phil's question and then we'll merge them.

Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Cavanaugh: Well I'm not sure that they are going to merge, but we'll give it a try. Thanks, Alex. My name is Phil Cavanaugh, friend of the Center, and I should introduce myself to Bob, I'm currently a resident of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and a neighbor of John Tabor, the editor of the *Portsmouth Herald* and friend. And I got there via San Francisco and Washington, D.C., so we've been on parallel tracks.

I would like to return to the issue that Molly has been raising over and over and over again and that is either journalism is an industry that's committing suicide or at least dying. I have the sense, because I spend a little time hanging around here, that there is real concern about the mainstream industry dying or in terrible straits.

Two questions, really, is there any quantitative research that says here is what the mainstream media thinks about its industry, whether it is living, dying or committing suicide? The second part of that, is there any quantitative research that says how much the mainstream press has written about its own demise and/or suicide? And my question really is, is the mainstream press really hoisted on its own petard if it is dying?

And if 30, 40, 50, 60 percent of the people involved in it believe it is commiting suicide, can it save itself? Or is your fate really left in the hands of the bloggers, who the mainstream ought to be wooing if those are the only people who can actually talk about it in a way that would be consistent with the magnitude of the issue and its impact on our democratic system?

Mr. Jones: I think I can't answer the quantitative question authoritatively, but the only thing I know that has been attempted in that regard is what the Tom Rosenstiel organization has, which is now like an annual survey of the state of the news in which they do try to quantify things. Does anyone know of any other kind of—

Mr. Shafer: I'd like to take a shot at the—

Mr. Jones: Sure.

Mr. Shafer: I think that the daily newspaper has been dying a long Spenglerian death since 1920 when radio arrived. If you look at the number of newspapers, individual newspaper titles published, if you look at things like I was talking about when I was addressing my remarks to E.J.'s talk, the penetration per household, this has all been declining very slowly and in an ordered fashion as new media has, new media being radio, which knocked the socks out of a lot of newspapers in the '20s, the motion picture, television, radio, the Web. I like to say the newspaper, yes, it's dying—so am I—but I also think that I'm going to live many healthful, productive years and I think the newspaper industry is going to live very many productive years before it vanishes, if indeed it does vanish.

We don't actually allow a debate about moral communities in a way that would be healthier and we have allowed journalism to take on the detritus of human life.

So how long has the newspaper industry known this? If you look at Leo Jaffee's work, you'll see that, in the '60s, there were huge mobilizations inside the newspaper industry saying we are losing readers, we are losing advertisers, they were hysterical about it in the 1960s, so it's not like this event or this news has just arrived on their doorstep in the age of the Internet.

Mr. Jones: I want to give everybody a chance to speak briefly. We are over time, so make your comments quick.

Garance?

Ms. Franke-Ruta: On this particular topic?

Mr. Jones: Or whatever.

Ms. Franke-Ruta: Well, I think one of the things that's happened with the new media in particular that has been interesting is it's sort of a rebellion of the sources where they are trying to just represent themselves in the world, rather than engaging in mediated representations, and I think that's been a particularly interesting thing. With regard to the question of internal values of journalism, I do think that that is a very, very interesting question because there is a bit of a buzzocracy and I think the Web might encourage that because it's

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so quantifiable, you can actually see what people like and you can see what they value, and there is a real pressure to give people what they like and what they value online, and that might actually wind up working against continuing to produce those very, very important stories, though not that many people read, or value, or want to link to or talk about.

Mr. Jones: Christina?

Ms. Martin: I guess my take away thought is that I don't understand the gnashing of teeth over the death of the newspaper. I agree, I don't think it's going anyplace in the near future, it is losing some ground. If you are a practitioner, it's not necessarily at the top of your list, but it's always on your list, you've got to address it, you've got to cover it, you've got to work with them.

What I don't understand is why there isn't more conversation about grooming and producing more good journalists and less concern about where they are published, whether it's electronically on the Internet, whether they end up in television, whether they end up in print, whether they end up writing books, there are so many different mediums.

I worry more about the lost art of good writing, the lost art of sound reasoning, the lost art of excellent research and it seems to me that, moving forward, while the business side figures itself out, we need to put more attention on the up and coming generations.

Mr. Jones: Sidney?

Mr. Verba: It's hard to figure out what to say after such a wonderful conversation. Let me be extremely personal and say my view of the newspapers, which comes, as I wake up in the morning, it used to be the best time of life for me because I love to sit by myself—my wife sleeps later—with a cup of coffee and read *The New York Times*, which is the particular newspaper that comes to my front door. I find that exercise much more depressing than it ever has been in my life and it has nothing to do with the quality of *The New York Times*, it has to do with what's going on in the world.

And I find that there is an awful lot of investigative reporting of very interesting topics on health, on the insurance industry, much more than I thought existed in the past, and fairly good, wide-ranging reporting on things like Iraq which leave me, as I say, depressed.

One last point, I think the point that you made about the frames that different disciplines have and that's a very more general point, exactly what I talked about in terms of interpretation. That's a really deep way in which we talk past each other because people have either different ideologies or different intellectual views of the world, and that really structures a lot of what goes on.

Mr. Jones: Molly?

Ms. Ivins: Well I was thinking about Bartlett and Steele, the great investigative team, as an example. There is no place for Bartlett and Steele anymore. After the Philly paper collapsed in terms of quality, they went with *Time* magazine for a couple of years, which gave them some freedom and room to write, but it's not the right context for them. You can't get everything you need to know about a big, complicated subject like health insurance in two and a half pages of *Time* magazine.

Mr. Jones: And, finally, E.J.?

Mr. Dionne: Three quick points, one, just on the crisis of the industry, Jack is right. I see it in terms of the price of *New York Times* stock, which I accumulated in significant numbers because the *Times* had an excellent employee stock plan. I sold some of my *New York Times* stock to buy a house and it's very depressing that I didn't sell the rest, even though I am still proud to own it.

Why there isn't more conversation about grooming and producing more good journalists and less concern about where they are published. . . I worry more about the lost art of good writing, the lost art of sound reasoning, the lost art of excellent research. . .

So I think everybody knows there is a financial crisis going on in this industry and even if there isn't, if Wall Street thinks there is, there is and it has all kinds of effects, and we are just going to have to figure out how to deal with that and hope that the industry itself figures out other ways to make money to keep supporting the reporting.

Second, on class and merlot, which are probably closely connected at some level, although actually red-wine drinking has now been democratized, which makes me happy—

(Laughter)

Mr. Dionne: I've always thought that the bias of mainstream journalism is a class bias and that it contains the biases of the educated upper-middle class, which means I always joke that the two things you don't want to be are a union shop steward or an Evangelical preacher because, on the one hand, there is probably a tilt on the social issues that's liberal but a tilt on the economic issues that's something other than liberal, whether you want to call it middle-of-the-road or conservative, I just think that's the bias.

We talk past each other because people have either different ideologies or different intellectual views of the world. . .

If we can only fix what's going on in the world, people will enjoy newspapers more and then the industry will thrive.

But on the merlot issue, back in the late '70s when Abe Rosenthal started what we derisively call the "having" sections of *The New York Times*, I dissented from my friends because I covered Albany and I knew for absolute certainty that what I did every day, and enjoyed and thought was socially useful, covering the state government, didn't make the paper a dime directly. I mean there were some people, a handful of junkies who read it because they liked that coverage. My view then was if having a living section and a home section will make money for the paper and support all this other reporting, I don't care how much of it there is, as long as it doesn't eat into the rest, and so I think the issue is the balance of that.

And my last comment on Sid Verba's wonderful story about reading the newspaper, if we can only fix what's going on in the world, people will enjoy newspapers more and then the industry will thrive.

So thank you very much.

(Laughter) (Applause)

There will be plenty of news on merlot, and there will be crime news and sports news and weather news, and probably lots of opinion. But what may be gone is the social responsibility part that has led them to invest a lot of money in a very expensive kind of journalism that does make democracy happen and protects it.

Mr. Jones: I want to make just one comment about what Jack Shafer said about the newspaper industry, you know, dying a Spenglarian death since 1920. I think that he is right of course about the decline in circulation, just in terms of the role of the media, of the newspaper. But over all that time, the thing that has remained intact in those newspapers that did survive was a genuine sense of a social responsibility, it was not just about money, at least not at most newspapers, they had a sense of their obligation to the public and that was shown mostly in their coverage of news in Albany and places like that, instead of taking all the money for themselves.

What I see happening and the thing that's in jeopardy is not the newspaper industry. The newspaper industry is going to save itself, but it may save itself by turning into something it has not been before, which is something that has very little to do with this kind of news. There will be plenty of news on merlot, and there will be crime news and sports news and weather news, and all kinds of

other things and probably lots of opinion. But what may be gone is the social responsibility part that has led them to invest a lot of money in a very expensive kind of journalism that I think is the kind of journalism that does make democracy happen and protects it.

I want to say how much I have enjoyed this, how proud and pleased I am to have been able to make an award to Molly Ivins and to E.J., and I want to thank the rest of this panel for this very interesting conversation, it has been terrific. Thank you all very much and we are adjourned.