



Twenty-First Century Papers:
On-Line Working Papers from the
Center for 21st Century Studies
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Seminar and Speak-Out on the War in Iraq





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Seminar and Speak-Out on the War in Iraq

held April 17, 2003

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Editor's note: The following is a transcript, with minor corrections by participants, of a seminar on the War in Iraq organized by the Center for 21st Century Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, on April 17, 2003. The transcript is complete except for the remarks of Professor Carla Bagnoli (Philosophy) on the implications of the war for democracy, and a subsequent exchange involving those remarks, which we hope to include at a later date.





Participants gather in Holton Hall on the campus of the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee for the Seminar and Speak Out on the War in Iraq, April 17, 2003

Daniel Sherman: Good afternoon and welcome. I am Daniel Sherman, the Director of the Center for 21st Century Studies and a member of the History Department, and I'm very pleased to welcome you to this special seminar and speak-out on the war in Iraq. Someone asked a member of the Center staff recently how we had thought to do a research theme on war even before the war started, which made me, as a historian, reflect that we really have a huge challenge before us as historians every day. Many of you will know that we chose this theme a week after September 11th. I thought it was all supposed to be part of the same war.



I guess maybe it's encouraging that no one really knows this or at least whoever asked the question didn't know this. If we had been really perspicacious we would have scheduled a lecture on war in Iraq for sometime in March, but we organize our events usually about a year in advance so we didn't do that. We had a lot else going on this month, including a really brilliant talk by Alma Guillermoprieto last week on war in Columbia, another little war that we're involved in - the United States is involved in.

But I did think it was important given what everyone has been talking about and given our research theme and given the fact that we have at the Center both this year and in past years a number of people who have been thinking about aspects of war and aspects of American foreign policy and security that we acknowledge the relationship between our research and the headlines. And I'm very pleased that a number of our current fellows and several past fellows agreed to participate. What we thought we would do is have very brief presentations from the fellows whose names were on the posters or the flier that you received in order, and then open the floor up to questions and comments. If you have something urgent to say about a particular point that one of the speakers is going to make, please write it down because I would like to have these brief presentations first and then open things up. So, without further ado, we are going to begin with Terry Nardin, who was a fellow with the Center last year and who is a member of the Political Science department.

Terry Nardin: Thanks. My topic is "Moral Puzzles," and by that I mean to pick out from the debate about the justice and injustice of the Iraq war a few things I think are worth worrying about. There are lots of puzzles, but I'm going to talk about three of them.



The first is: Who can authorize a war? In the transition from feudalism to the modern European state, the idea emerged that only a sovereign could declare war. War - properly so-called - was not the prerogative of feudal warlords. It belonged to governments. John McCain invokes a version of this doctrine when he writes (in a *Times* op-ed piece defending the war) that Congress had granted the

president authority to disarm Saddam Hussein and that that was all the authority he needed. Opponents of the war insist that such authority must lie not at the level of the state making the war, but at some higher level. Had they been living in the Middle Ages they would have invoked the authority of the pope or the Holy Roman Emperor; today they invoke the U.N. There certainly is something comic since the U.N. has not authorized this war, in Bush's appeal to a "coalition of the willing" - or, as *The Onion* called it, the U.S.A.U.N. Presumably the authority of this new coalition of the willing trumps that of the old coalition of the unwilling, which is what the U.N. was. Let's reject this brazen American effort to undermine the authority of the U.N. But let's also take a closer look at this authority. Where does this magical U.N. authority come from? On what grounds can anyone claim that it is more compelling than the authority of the pope, the emperor, or the U.S.A.U.N.?

The U.N. is not an authoritative system of law, but an assemblage of states bent on making the organization an instrument of their separate purposes. In the rare cases in which the most powerful of them agree with one another, their aim is to impose an interest-based unity on all the rest. U.N. authority is problematic, as is all authority. If we step outside the discourse of law or morality or ideology - for these are the discourses of both critics and defenders of the war - we might notice that what we call "authority" is simply a delicate matter of current belief. If people think it exists, it exists. If not, it doesn't.

Perhaps the saddest implication of America's self-authorization in this war is that so many people outside the Bush Administration and - strangely enough - so many people outside the United States seem to believe that the authority of the United States is higher than that of the U.N. He who calls the shots reshapes the rules. Others grumble but defer. So that's my take on some of the problems of authority.

The second puzzle we have to deal with is this whole "last resort business." Shouldn't war be a last resort? *Yes*, says Bush. *We tried everything until there was nothing left to try, short of war.* *No*, say his critics. *We did not give peace a chance. We should have allowed the U.N. to maintain its pressure on Saddam Hussein, who was at last beginning to bow to this pressure, the inspections were not given sufficient time to work, etc.* As Michael Walzer argued at the Center's 9/11 conference on this campus last fall, taken literally, "last resort" would make war morally impossible. The reason is obvious: we can never reach "lastness," or we can never know that we have reached it. There's always something more to do: another U.N. resolution, another round of inspections.

"Last resort," in any case, is not a moral justification; it assumes the war is already justified, but this is precisely what is at issue. The indication of "last resort" by either side - by the war's defenders to trigger it, or by its critics to delay it - begs the question of whether or not the war is morally justified. So, looked at this way, the argument that the U.S. acted too soon casts a shadow on the anti-war position, as it is expressed in the slogan "Give peace a chance."

Peace here is an expedient, not a duty. And it is, furthermore, an expedient cloaked (as all expedients are) in hypocrisy. For, behind the U.S. resolution on Iraq, and behind the U.N. inspections, stood the threat of war. Had the U.S. *not* threatened to invade Iraq on its own, in defiance of the U.N., there would not have been support within the U.N. for restarting the inspections, nor would Iraq have let the inspectors back in. So the slogan of the peace movement should have been, "Give *threats* a chance." Why start a war when we might get the same result, at less cost, by rattling our sabers? This is a sensible position, but not, as such, a principled one.

And that brings me to my third puzzle, which is: What *are* morally defensible principles

for judging a war? My answer to this question is: the same old principles we used to judge any war. In other words, this war raises questions that have been familiar since the emergence of the modern European state. The history of the European - now global - system of sovereign states is a history of states preparing for war, waging war, or recovering from war. The need to maintain a state within this system of states has generated characteristic ways of thinking about how this end should be pursued. I'll talk about two of them.

The first of these is the idea of "reason of state," *raison d'etat*. This is the idea that because every government is the custodian of the interests of its state, it must be permitted to do whatever is needed to protect those interests. So, it is argued, a state may defend itself against armed attacks. A state may defend itself against a *threatened* attack, if that attack is both imminent and probable. In the jargon of foreign affairs, it may strike *preemptively* to thwart a looming catastrophe. It may even wage war to prevent enemies from acquiring the means to destroy it in the future. Expansionist powers - states that threaten other states - must be contained. The balance of power must be preserved. These are familiar arguments out of the European tradition of statecraft, and they illustrate a certain reading of the imperative of the existence of states in a world of states. In this world, in this way of thinking, war is simply an instrument of self-preservation.

To quote a prominent defense intellectual, "No one ought to expose himself to danger. No one ought to wait to be struck, lest he is a fool." The author of this wise counsel is *not* Richard Perle or someone like that. It's Alberico Gentili, who taught law at Oxford four hundred years ago. I mention this because this emphasis on preemption as the essence of statecraft has been a recurrent theme - you can find it at any period since the Renaissance, and before that among the Romans, and so on. So my point is that the policy of preventive war - which is now the official defense strategy of the United States - has very deep roots in international thought and practice.

Against this kind of thinking stands the idea of "just war," - the idea that whatever expediency may counsel, a war as justly waged only if it is consistent with a higher law. Looked at *pragmatically*, this law springs from the practices of states and their relations with one another. Just as the state system generates reason of state, it also generates the idea of system of states as being a family or society of some kind with some rules. States interact, their interactions become routinized. Those routines are practices, and these practices acquire a normative force that generates the idea of international law. So what you have is a set of rules that constitute the system of states as a society of some kind. And these practices serve as a *brake* on the wagon of "reason of state," but they're never more than a brake and they're often ineffective. Just war principles, in other words, presuppose the existence of states, and in this sense are *parasitic* on "reason of state."

What are these principles? I won't rehearse them, but they are things like: war must be for a just cause, it must be a response to aggression, it must defend the innocent, the state can defend not only itself but also other states, in exceptional cases the state may even defend the subjects of another state against the latter's tyranny (which is the idea of humanitarian intervention), and so on. These are the endlessly recycled just war principles. Every one of these arguments has been invoked in the debate over the Iraq war, and - I'm sure we've all noticed this - the number of reasons for invading Iraq include just about everything you could think of: defense, preemption, humanitarian intervention, all of the arguments are pulled in here. And these arguments are also used by critics of the war.

It's often said that we are in a new world in the aftermath of 9/11. There may be a sense in which this is true, but the *moral* debate is one that would be familiar to Gentili or, for that matter, to Thucydides.

Daniel Sherman: Thank you, Terry. It seems to me that since we're in the domain of political theory, it would be logical for Peter [Paik] to come next. Peter actually teaches Comparative Literature and Film, but he's one of the greatest polymaths I have encountered so far at UWM and I think we're going to see that in his remarks.

Peter Paik: Thanks, Dan. My presentation, which will be brief, actually should be titled (and I just came up with this today) "The Absence of Machiavelli" instead of "Plato Among the Warriors." Some of you may know that Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz was a student of Allan Bloom, and that in the novel *Ravelstein*, which is roman à clef by Saul Bellow based on his friendship with Allan Bloom, a character named Phil Gorman makes an appearance at the beginning of the novel, and - I'll just read to you a few passages - this is the character based on Allan Bloom speaking: "Colin Powell and Baker have advised the president not to send the troops all the way to Baghdad. Bush will announce it tomorrow. They're afraid of a few casualties. They send out a terrific army and give a demonstration of up-to-date, high tech warfare that flesh and blood can't stand up to. But then they leave the dictatorship in place and steal away. And, well, that's the latest from the Defense Department." And then, a little bit later on, Allan Bloom then gives sort of his assessment of Wolfowitz's character: "It's only a matter of time before Phil Gorman has cabinet rank, and a damn good thing for the country."



So Bloom himself was probably the most famous pupil of Leo Strauss, who is described - even among his students - as being the most hated man in American academia. And perhaps what makes Strauss so notorious is the kind of, first of all, the sort of cult of personality that is associated with him and also his overtures toward American conservatives. But also his doctrine of esotericism, which he said that he discovered in reading Lessing, that authors of the Enlightenment and also before the Enlightenment, had to mask their true ideas in order to evade persecution. And the figures that Strauss focused on in exploring this notion included Plato, Spinoza, and, of course, Machiavelli.

What is interesting, though, at the heart of this notion of esotericism is the idea that philosophy is a revolutionary activity, that the fate of Socrates is paradigmatic for the philosopher, and the interpretation that someone like Bloom gives the death of Socrates is that the philosopher must either rule - or be among those who rule through an alliance with the elite of the society - or be killed. That Strauss, in a sense, spent his career arguing against - in a very subtle way against - philosophical frankness. I have a hand-out here that some of you may have. It's taken from the introduction to his book from 1958, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. I just want to submit a very brief, I guess, Straussian reading of Strauss. In introducing his series of lectures on Machiavelli towards the bottom of page thirteen, Strauss has this to say about why it is important to study the ideas of a teacher of evil:

The United States of America may be said to be the only country in the world which is founded in explicit opposition to Machiavellian principles. According to

Machiavelli, the founder of the most renowned commonwealth of the world was a fratricide. The foundation of political greatness is necessarily laid in crime. If we can believe Thomas Paine, all governments of the old world have an origin of this description. Their origin was conquest and tyranny. But the independence of America was accompanied by a revolution in the principles and practice of governments. The foundation of the United States was laid in freedom and justice. Government founded on a moral theory, on a system of universal peace, and on the indefeasible hereditary rights of man is now revolving from west to east by a stronger impulse than the government of the sword revolved from east to west. This judgment is far from being obsolete. While freedom is no longer a preserve of the United States, the United States is now the bulwark of freedom. And contemporary tyranny has its roots in Machiavelli's thought, in the Machiavellian principle that the good end justifies every means. At least to the extent that the American reality is inseparable from the American aspiration, one cannot understand Americanism without understanding Machiavellianism, which is its opposite.

Okay, so far, so good. But in the next paragraph, we find this very curious passage:

We cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that the problem is more complex than it appears in the presentation by Paine and his followers. Machiavelli would argue that America owes her greatness not only to her habitual adherence to the principles of freedom and justice, but also to her occasional deviation from them. He would not hesitate to suggest a mischievous interpretation of the Louisiana Purchase, and of the fate of the Red Indians.

Now, what is interesting about the last sentence is the fact that he never revisits this passage in the course of his study. In other words, he doesn't offer what an unmischievous interpretation of genocide would be like. So I suppose this raises the question of whether Strauss, in a sense, is being prudent, and enacting a kind of deliberate gesture of critical disempowerment, perhaps the desire to spare the country that gave him refuge from the Nazis, from the acute philosophical analyses he directs elsewhere, against other nations and other historical contexts. Or are we to understand this passage in a more literal sense, that even as genocide and slavery are a part of the founding of the United States, American culture tends to be incapable of imagining that politics is to be practiced along the lines of Machiavellian principles? So that when the U.S. engages in preventative wars and overthrows democratically elected governments, it does so without the feeling that these are regrettable but necessary evils that reflect the ruthless and amoral nature of power politics, but rather with a sense that such deeds stem from a moral imperative, and thus not only serve a higher good, but in fact are good.

Part of a project of mine examines the intellectual foundations for the New Imperialism, neo-imperialism, exploring the ideological alliance between Christian fundamentalists on the one hand, and then the neo-imperialist thinkers of the New Right on the other. And I guess I'll just close by saying that the alternative to a Machiavellian politics is not a politics of virtue, but a politics of innocence, which, as Graham Greene so aptly demonstrated in *The Quiet American*, easily becomes a politics of the monstrous carried out by innocents who literally know not the

harm they do.

Daniel Sherman: Thank you, Peter. Well, let's turn to the media now, which is probably more Machiavellian than anything. So we're going to have two people talking briefly about the media: David Allen, who is a Center fellow this year and teaches in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications, has been working on constitutional challenges to free press in times of war (a very timely topic), and Joan Dobkin, who is also a Center fellow this year and teaches in the Visual Art Department, and who has already created a piece that you can see on the Center website in response to the war, and particularly the war in the media.



David Allen: I think there are a lot of ways that we can probably attack this idea of critiquing the media in war coverage and things like that. We could talk, for example, about whether the idea of embedded reporters has made any difference in the kind of information that we're receiving. We could talk about sort of the video game quality of the images that we see on a nightly basis coming out of Iraq. We could talk about whether or not Peter Jennings is really the socialist that a lot of people claim he is, or at the very least that he's anti-American. Or we could talk about CNN's most recent revelations that it withheld information from Iraq that might have been critical for society to know, and a lot of journalistic critics are basically saying that this undermines the very foundations of American journalism and whether or not that's true.

And all of those topics are interesting and if anyone wants to talk about them more that's fine, but what I would like to focus my brief comments on is a topic that has been lost a little bit in some of the discussions about the war so far - and that is one of the things that I think is interesting - is that we have to realize that this war is the first major war that the United States has been involved in since the passage of the Telecommunications Act in 1996. And for those of you who don't remember - and probably many of you may not remember because it didn't receive much attention by the media - the Telecommunications Act in 1996 fundamentally changed the way that we regulate the media in the United States. It created a lot of different avenues and options for different forms of media to come together and create new alliances. It was supposed to be a very wonderful thing for democracy and create all kinds of new avenues, and it's had a lot of effects since 1996. Probably the biggest impact that we can see is a tremendous concentration of ownership within the radio industry in the United States. But it's still continuing to be felt in a lot of different ways as well.

I think one of the things that is interesting is that this loosening of the ownership requirements that was part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 has had a significant effect on the way that the media do their jobs. But perhaps even more importantly, it's had a significant impact on the values that underlie why the media do the things that they do. And that change, while I don't think it's necessarily a direct result of the war, the war has actually served to sort of magnify those changes, and perhaps only in a way that a war might be able to do. If you talk to people within journalism, I think they'll tell you - and they'll identify - that something fundamentally has changed. The public rhetoric, at least, also seems to verify that something has changed within sort of the practice of journalism to some extent. Not long ago, for example, when you asked journalists or media executives to explain what it is that they did, their public rhetoric was always laced with ties directly to democracy. And so you had a lot of phrases such as the press or

the media were a watchdog on democracy, or the job of journalism was to comfort the afflicted - or afflict the comfortable, or that they were supposed to represent the people's right to know. All those kinds of things oftentimes popped up in their public rhetoric. One can very clearly dispute whether that rhetoric ever actually matched the public performance of the media. At least I think we could take some comfort in the idea that the journalists actually adopted that as their rhetoric, that those claims were being made.

Today what we see is that many in the media don't even fundamentally - any longer - see those links to democracy as a justification for what it is that they do. Instead, today media executives seem quite comfortable explicitly claiming that their primary job is about making money, and that's primarily it. Let me give you some examples that have come up during the war that illustrate the things that I am talking about. I'm going to focus briefly on two of the largest media organizations in the United States: Clear Channel, which owns more than 1200 radio stations in the United States right now; and News Corporation, which (the CEO is Rupert Murdoch) owns Fox News Channel, the *New York Post*, the *Times* of London, and a lot of other media outlets as well. Both of these have very significant links to a conservative agenda in some respects. Both are very supportive, and make no bones about being very supportive, of the war.

And what's interesting to me is really, however, less their politics, which we can go back and media owners have always had some sort of political agenda. This is really nothing new that they have a conservative agenda that they are pushing. But what interests me is not necessarily their political agenda, but how they have come to justify what it is that they do. For example, when Clear Channel was (earlier this year, about a month ago now) criticized for sponsoring pro-war rallies around the country, John Hogan, Clear Channel's president and chief executive of the radio division told the *New York Times*:

I won't kid you and tell you that Clear Channel is above criticism. But the brush that has been tainting us as evil and mean-spirited and was some sort of onerous political agenda is one that I have a hard time getting my arms around. Clear Channel is purely a company that builds audiences through entertainment so that advertisers can sell goods and services. We're in the business of having the largest possible audience, not the most politically unified audience.

When I started graduate school about twenty years or so ago, the only people who were making this claim were the very avid Marxists, and media people used to say, "We don't do that, that's not what we do. We're not in the business of selling our audiences to our advertisers. That's not what we do." What we have now is a very open acknowledgment, and the media executives apparently have absolutely no problem coming right out and saying that, "That's what we do."

Another example. When Rupert Murdoch was asked whether the coverage of the war on the media outlets he owned reflected his conservative values, the *New York Times* reported him as saying that "his main responsibility was to his shareholders, he said. Although if a paper was not performing, that might include looking at its political slant." They quoted him as saying, "In the end, the buck stops with the chief executive. If you have an editor who wants to be a great hero and go against the public will and lose all readers, the shareholders are going to blame the chief executive."

After listening and looking at people like Hogan and Murdoch, you come away with a conclusion that this might actually be a very honest approach to what they are doing, and sort of

their honesty is refreshing in some respects. But I doubt whether it's actually any better for a democratic society. I think if you look at this, what you come away with is a feeling that understanding the media coverage of the war in Iraq really depends less on concepts such as embedded reporters and those other things that we were talking about, and far more about trying to understand that the media are trying to attract the right audience and sell advertising and increase profitability. If good journalism will do that for them, then they'll do it. If good journalism isn't going to do it for them, then they'll find something else that will do it for them. Murdoch, for example, has criticized the British news channel Sky News (Murdoch owns one-third of the interest of Sky News). And he basically says that he wishes Sky News would be more like Fox News. His quote is that, "I think that Sky News is very popular and they are doing well, but they don't have the entertaining talk shows. It's just a rolling half hour of hard news all the time." I don't mean to suggest by saying this that all journalists necessarily agree with Hogan and Murdoch. As a matter of fact, most of the journalists that I talk to and a lot of the journalists that I know openly find what Murdoch and Hogan are saying about what they do to be onerous. Still, I don't think there's any question, however, that they find themselves working in a system that seems to value entertainment and profitability far more than it values those connections and responsibilities to democracy. As Murdoch comes right out and admits, his main responsibility is not to citizens, it's not to promoting democratic discourse within society, it's about profitability, and his main responsibility is to his shareholders. I find that fundamental change to be sort of surprising and startling in many ways.

Joan Dobkin: Thank you, David. I will give a little background on my interests and intentions as an artist and then talk about my recent responses to the war on Iraq. I am interested in systemic power relations, particularly as they are manifested in language and in visual and material culture. These manifestations appear in legislative activities, government and corporate power, institutionalized corruption, promotion and perpetuation of elites, the relationship of wealth to power, media coverage, and in things such as: architecture, neighborhoods, monuments, furniture, and advertisements. I am interested in addressing social inequity in relation to the structure and manifestation of repressive power systems.



One of my goals as an artist is to create public artwork as a means of promoting greater discourse and reflection on the issues above. This is what I've been doing for the past few years - I wish to subvert or call into question repressive power systems by exposing the contradictory and disingenuous nature of messages sent to the public through the media and the frequently hidden intent of these messages. This is, in part, what we are talking about. In my work, I use beauty strategically to both seduce and engage. In some ways I am using the tactics of the media, particularly concerning their Iraq war coverage, to bring people into my work. I don't know how I can morally justify that, but I have. [Laughter] In my work at the Center, I have been exploring the language of aggression in social space, more specifically, the forces behind and the manifestations of power and conflict between and among groups separated by race and class.

My recent responses to the war on Iraq focus on media representations of the war, and I'd like to talk about *my* response, which I imagine was experienced by many. It was a very conflicted one, particularly because (being in a visual field) I kept looking at these beautiful and seductive images on the front page of the *New York Times* every day, and if you look at *Time*

magazine and *Newsweek* or television, you see images that are *so* seductive, beautiful plumes of smoke - yellow, orange, and dark blue. It's hard *not* to be attracted to that, and yet, at the same time, retain the knowledge of the horrors below. Mainstream media focus has been much more on "Shock and Awe" and much less on the resulting disturbing consequences on the ground and the complex consequences for our country.

My visual response, shown on the Center's website was to *re-present* the seductive plumes with text that emphasized the lack of critical discourse by both the media and its audience. I have many of the same questions and concerns as David about how the media makes its decisions and the kind of coverage that we are being offered. I find this coverage to be *so* disturbing in its lack of depth of analysis and its lack of discussion of the difficult questions surrounding this war.

At my mother's, this past weekend, we watched cable and CNN coverage of the war. They were showing live digital coverage of an embedded reporter accompanied by a few people from the Army. That moment-to-moment coverage held us so in its grasp, particularly because it was live with highly digitized images. The images moved very slowly and became somewhat abstract. It is very difficult, when watching these fascinating images, to maintain a sense of criticality. This is a big problem, particularly in television. These seductive images coupled with a serious lack of critical discourse on the war, most notably in mainstream media, have created serious and complex questions for our country. In my own work, I hope to address and make more evident some of these questions.

Daniel Sherman: And to finish up the formal portion of this little program this afternoon, we have someone who is truly - it has just occurred to me - a doctor without borders, [laughter] Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho, who has a medical degree from Brazil, but here at UWM wears the hat of a historian of the Ancient World. He very kindly agreed to talk on this fairly meaningless, but I thought somewhat resonant, title that I dreamt up: "In Mesopotamia."

Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho: Thank you. Thank you, Dan. My current INS label is adjustee.

Daniel Sherman: Adjustee?

Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho: Yes. [Laughter] About a week ago now the *New Yorker* published an essay by Isabel Hilton where she recorded the reaction of upper-class Iraqi exiles in Jordan to the bombing of Baghdad. The war had then just started, and the exiles were no sympathizers of Saddam Hussein. They confessed they hated the regime. They also told her how they loved Baghdad and could not bear to see the images of destruction. Hilton writes that one Iraqi man she interviewed countered those images by showing her a CD-Rom with pictures of mosques, riverside, walkways, palaces, and so on. "This one was bombed last night," he said, pausing at a picture of a domed and turreted building. And he continued, "Baghdad is so intense, so rich. Art, culture, music, it's all around. What hurts most is that the West has forgotten that we are a cultured people. Now the word Iraqi means terrorist." Another Iraqi, Betoal Khedairi - I hope I'm not doing too much damage here to the Arabic - writer put it this way, "You cannot imagine the internal dialogue I have with my 8,000 year-old civilization every time I sit down at my desk. We love where we come from. I grew up surrounded by art



and books of every kind. Now I am so angry I can hardly pick up my pen."

When Dan asked me to talk in the seminar, the war in Iraq - or at least the combat phase of the war in Iraq - was not yet over. And as an ancient historian, I intended at first to say something about the heritage of civilization in Mesopotamia. About where, in the words of Betool Khedairi the Iraqis came from. I thought I'd talk about the resilience of civilization in that part of the world over this stretch of time - 8,000 years - from the Sumerians to the Abbasids to the Ottomans and beyond. I thought I'd talk about its stubborn resistance, its grandeur. And above all, of its capacity to build and rebuild cities, states and empires in peace and after war.

But the relentless plundering and burning of the Iraqi National Museum and Library and other places, which in three or four days (the past few days) nearly wiped out the record of 8,000 years of civilization before the TV cameras and the eyes of dismayed audiences throughout the world, raised more pressing questions, for which I don't have all the answers, of course. First, why did this happen? Especially, why did this happen not once but continuously over several days? Why did it happen when the State and Defense departments had been forewarned of this possibility? And especially when (now everyone knows) the ministry of oil was kept intact? Did we forget that the Iraqis were a cultured people? Rumsfeld replied to these questions: "Stuff happens." But Article four, paragraph three of the 1954 Hague Convention for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict is explicit about the obligation of occupying powers (We can debate whether the United States is an occupying or liberating power). But in any case, it states that it is the obligation of occupying powers "to undertake, to prohibit, prevent, and if necessary, put a stop to any form of theft, pillage, and any acts of vandalism directed against cultural property." Although the U.S. has not ratified the Convention, its rules - the rules of this convention - codify customary international law. It is interesting to note that international rules to protect cultural property that inspired this Convention were an American innovation, and date back to the Civil War in this country (the Lieber Code of 1863).

Second, how do we talk about these events? In the past few days there has been a flood of declarations, statements, and pronouncements from all over the world condemning the plunder and demanding reparation. But what *is* the proper response to these events when placed next to the loss of life or the means of living for thousands of people?

Third and finally, how do we get about putting things back in place? I mean not only recovering stolen artifacts and books and reconstructing facilities, which I hope the U.S. will do though the recovery can never be complete. But beyond filling library shelves and display cases, how do we mend the shattered pride and dignity of a people, who after wars, tyranny, sanctions, disease and poverty had obstinately held on to their culture now recklessly and mercilessly liquidated before their eyes? That's it.

Daniel Sherman: Seven really thought-provoking talks in well under an hour. Do I run a tight ship or what?

Joan Dobkin: He threatened us.

Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho: He said five minutes!

Daniel Sherman: What I would like to do is just open the floor up and take comments, questions, whatever from people in the order that they raise their hands, and you can address them to

specific members of the panel - or not, as you wish. But I'm going to ask the panelists not to respond for a bit, just if there's something directed to you, make a note of it so we can get the conversation going. And if you raise your hand, I'll write down your name. Abbas and then Paul.

Abbas Hamdani: I have few comments to make. I really enjoyed all of the presentations.

Terry raised very important questions, mainly about who can authorize war, and shouldn't war be the last resort, what are the moral principles, what is just war, all of that. But I really did not find him answering those questions as to what he really believed. And whether the U.S. action - to go to war - was properly authorized, whether it was the last resort, whether it was in keeping with the just war and moral principles. I was searching for an answer. It was a very scholarly presentation of all sides of the picture, but without commitment.

Carlos presented the devastation that has taken place of the cultural things like museums and libraries and things like that. One wonders, who did it? One can say there is in the news that it was an organized affair. There is in the news suggesting that probably some people locally may have done this thing. But who would want to burn a library? They are not looting books, they are burning the library. I mean, only those who really hate the Arabs or the Muslims could burn a library that has got Arab heritage in it. I have to make a question of that.

Lastly, I want to say about this entire preparation for the war, inspections were one half of the picture to undercut and destroy the capacity of Iraq to defend itself. Under threat all the time, and then last resort was not to listen to the inspectors but just go to war and finish the job. So that the war can be analyzed in two parts like that, and it was always under the threat of consequences. No one asked what were the causes, always talked about the consequences. No one talked about the causes that created all the problems in the Middle East. I would like people to think about the causes that led to situations like this, not just the consequences.

And, last of all, war against Iraq came as a climax to many unilateral actions that had taken place before. The Bush Administration, first of all, gathered a whole team of unilateralists, a team of Bob Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleeza Rice and Richard Perle advising on the thing. And they had targeted Iraq from the very beginning. And, in the meantime, 9/11 came and people were diverted to Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda, but then came back to Iraq. But, what I was saying is, it began with the Bush Administration opposing the IBM Treaty, withdrawing from the Kyoto agreement on environment, opposing the question of prohibition of land mines, opposing the international criminal court. Many, many unilateral things, withdrawals from all the international agreements. And then to cover it all up finally, make a scapegoat of Iraq, and attack it and proclaim great victory in it. What democracy will that establish in Iraq? We saw pictures of looting, and these looters and ruffians were the people who were jubilant, welcoming the American troops. The same people have now withdrawn, and now the mainstream is coming forward to say that we have occupied their country, that we are the aggressors. That is not pictured in the media so much as the jubilation that was shown in the beginning. The jubilation by the ruffians, by the proletariat, by the dregs of society, by looters, that was the jubilation. But there was no jubilation by the real mainstream of the Iraqi population. That's all I have to say, thank you.

Paul Brodwin: I have a question actually rather more focused on the presentations, particularly on Terry Nardin's and Dave Allen's presentations. My question - and it's all of course going to be about domestic politics, really. The question is, in general what possibility is there for an opposi-

tional voice in this debate? By that I don't mean a necessarily anti-war position, as opposed to a pro-war position. But what's the possibility for an opinion which doesn't presuppose or ratify the way that all the opinions are structured. Let me be specific here. In terms of David Allen's talk, you talked to some extent about the disappearance of public space in terms of the media. You know, media organizations are now just private corporations, the responsibility is to their shareholders, and your talk directly implied a narrative, an earlier time when there was a public sphere in which opinions weren't just the manipulated - or, I should say, carefully crafted - parts of a corporate strategy, something outside of private commercial interests entirely, simply represented by the media, not created or organized by them.

And in some kind of similar sense - or maybe only I see the similarity - in Terry's talk, Terry, you talk about the United Nations as not having any sort of true authority, implying that - not so much the no public sphere, but that there's no international space, there's only particular nation states, and in the sort of chaotic space between those nation states. You say that even the ethical justifications for war presuppose a strong nation state; even the United Nations, nothing more than an arena for powerful states to garner clients and try to enforce their own interests upon them.

So in the case of the media, you say, if there is an oppositional voice, where would it come from? One answer would be that it would just come from another kind of media. It wouldn't come from the *American Spectator*, it would come from the *Progressive*. But by the very logic that you talked about, even the *Progressive* magazine has its own market niche. So there's a sort of privatized, commercialized structure that is very difficult to escape. Suppose you wanted to have a point-of-view outside of a particular national agenda. Where would you stand to articulate the point-of-view, if not already within a nation? So the question again: What sort of opening we can find or articulate or theorize in, on the one hand, a creeping privatization of the public sphere in media terms, or, in a sense, the disdain for any sort of supra-national spirit. Thank you.

Bruce Fetter: In looking for a stance to address our current world question, which we have been discussing this afternoon, I wanted to suggest a seasonal trope. As a Jew and an American, I participated in a Passover seder last night, as I have for all of my childhood and adulthood, and I began to think about the role that the Egyptians play in the narrative. After all, each person is supposed to behave as though he or she had been redeemed from Egypt. And the fate of the Egyptians, as opposed to the pharaoh, is extremely troubling. They are despoiled, they undergo the Ten Plagues, and finally, their armies are killed in the Red Sea. And the question that occurs to me is: Do we not, as Americans, or perhaps also, particularly as Jewish-Americans, not find ourselves in the same position as the Egyptians who enjoyed the benefits of the enslaving of the Jewish people? And, the question is, are we particularly deserving of the kind of fate which the Egyptians had in the Jewish narrative?

Jerriane Hayslett: I'm a former journalist so I was very interested in David's presentation, and I was very aware of the direction that the media has been going, even prior to the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. I kind of date it back to when television news was no longer a loss leader and became part of the ratings game. But it's always been said that the news is the first draft of history. And if that is true, I would like to know if you and historians see a change or see that the ultimate history that is written in modern times, particularly about this war, would

be different than it would have been had the media's objective and goals and focus remained more independent and in the public forum.

Bill Turner: I'm Bill Turner, the assistant director of the Center for 21st Century Studies, and I was inspired by the early comment about the question of bombing libraries, which I don't think is the acceptable thing to do, but I do think it's important to keep in mind the point precisely that a lot of what happened to the Iraqi cultural institutions in Baghdad was precisely a matter of looting by the people of Baghdad. But that should take us back to this question of what we mean by democracy because, after all, one of the things that we do mean by "democracy" - or we refer to repeatedly in the tradition of the United States - is a distinction between democracy and mob rule. And I wondered if we could ask this in terms of the question about a culture of democracy. I would even really want us probably to insist on the distinction that Madison makes in Federalist Number 10 between a democracy and a republic - the fact that we have a republic, not a democracy - and ask about the implications of the looting of Iraqi cultural institutions by people in Baghdad for the project of instituting a republic and smaller government in Iran. And also ask about the news report that I saw recently, that apparently the nuclear-proof bunker to which the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence have been withdrawable underneath the National Archives throughout the Cold War apparently is no longer good enough. As I understand it, the Administration has actually moved those documents out of public view. Now, I embarrassed myself earlier while we were testing the microphones by cavalierly remarking that we should use the Preamble of the Constitution as a check and then was unable to recite it myself. [Laughter] But still, at the same time, I don't know that I necessarily need to see the original of the document in order to remember its principles and to want to defend them. When teaching the Constitution, I would always ask my students whether they thought it was really necessary - if all the rest of us had been vaporized in a nuclear war - to preserve the Constitution in a nuclear-proof bunker. [Laughter] But, when we're not apparently facing that particular threat, the fact that the Constitution has apparently been moved completely out of public view should raise serious questions about whether or not our own practices are really as consistent with the notion of establishing a republic someplace else. But also what the cultural differences are between the United States and Iraq that may or may not pose impediments to this project.

Rutger van Dijk: For Peter - your talk made me think of the national security strategy that the Bush Administration put out like five odd days after Bush went to the U.N. to raise the issue of disarmament in Iraq. I guess a two part question - or maybe three part: Have you read it? And if so, who does it remind you of the most, of these people that you refer to in your talk - Paine, Machiavelli, or Greene? Because at the end I seem to hear a suggestion that maybe you thought that Greene was the most applicable American theme. And, as I read the document, that doesn't strike me as a correct reading of the intentions and the worldview of this Administration; they're far from innocent. "Innocent" is not a word I would use to describe what the Administration believes the United States should do around the world.

Greg Jay: Well, one question kind of following up from a couple of other remarks is about where a knowledge of history lies in the creation of an oppositional voice about Iraq and what has occurred there. Those of us who suffered through the Vietnam War remember that a consensus arose among many people that the mistakes of the war were partly due to a massive and

willful ignorance on the part of Americans and the American government about the history of Vietnam, and an almost belligerent sense on the part of Americans that history doesn't matter - we don't need to know those things. There's so much about the history of the Middle East that we don't know, that's not a part of the public discourse on the Middle East. I doubt that many Americans know anything about the role that Britain played in the colonial politics of the Middle East and why their involvement in this war would be viewed by Arab people as such an insult. I know we are in a History [Department] conference room, so I guess I want to know what especially the historians think about what the role of historical memory might be in creating an oppositional understanding of this war. And is it, finally, always trumped, then, by the narratives of the media, which seem to be so ahistorical and sensational.

Daniel Sherman: Okay. We've got a lot of questions/comments on the table. We'll start responses with Peter Paik.

Peter Paik: Machiavelli makes a very interesting point that countries that are difficult to conquer actually turn out to be easier to rule, whereas countries that are easy to conquer turn out to be quite difficult to rule.

Daniel Sherman: I think that's already quite evident. [Laughter] Carlos?

Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho: In response to Abbas first, I liked your comment very much. I don't know if the looting was an organized affair. The news coming out of Iraq is just so fuzzy. I've been flooded with e-mails and all kinds of reports from what happened. For some time CNN didn't even show the images, and then there's this flood of images from all over the place. So I don't know about that; I haven't heard anything about being an organized affair. But certainly there were a lot of desperate people who knew there were treasures being kept in those places and they would have some sort of value on the market, obviously. The question of who did it is a difficult one to answer from what we hear and see right now.

In response to Bill [Turner], about, I think - maybe you want to repeat your question - I think the looting, whether the looting of the institutions of Iraq has implications for some of the democracy in Iraq. Is that what you are saying?

Bill Turner: Right, because the original comment was saying something about the dregs of society being involved in the looting, but in democracy everybody gets to vote, and so this begs the question, and I wonder if - going back to what Carlos [Galvao-Sobrinho] was just saying too, that maybe the other thing here we want to talk about is not so much democracy as constitutionalism, because Hitler was elected but then he suspended the constitution. And what really needs to happen - it seems to me what needed to happen - with Saddam Hussein was restrictions on his power. The problem with him was that he had unrestricted power, and that's what a constitution is - at least theoretically - supposed to solve. Now whether it's solved in our case or not is another question.

Terry Nardin: I guess I have to apologize for leaving people unsatisfied, but it was quite obviously a deliberate strategy on my part not to be a pundit, not to take a position, but rather to make the debate that we're having a little more complicated. Of course what people do is they have a

position and then they seize on a principle to try and rationalize it. I'm trying to suggest that all of the principles that are being used are deeply problematic. And Paul [Brodwin], I was not expressing disdain for the U.N., which is an institution that I admire, *but* I would argue that its claim to authority is problematic, as are all claims to authority. You know, if you're an anarchist you think there can be no such thing as a claim to authority. So that was my strategy, and I think that in defense it really does go to the question of *How do you have an oppositional voice?* I don't see an oppositional voice being a left wing voice. I see an oppositional voice being a voice that escapes the conventional categories in which the political fate of our time or any time is carried out.

So I'm illustrating a kind of critical thinking, not in the sense that you take some principles that you absolutize and then apply in order to criticize. Instead, you look at the principles that are commonly invoked and you problematize those principles. You ask *If we seem to be in this recurrent, endless left-right cycle, how do you think your way into another intellectual space from which you can criticize the whole debate?* Some people think the just war theory is the antidote to reason of state. What I am suggesting is that they are "enemy brothers" in the discourse of the modern European state. And that one way to get out of that is not simply to *use* the old just war or reason of state categories, but instead to *problematize* them. Maybe there shouldn't be "states" whose interests are so compelling and whose defense justifies so much violence and suffering. And so forth.

I just wanted to make a point that some of the principles that are used on both sides are deeply problematic. And if you actually look at the U.N., it's a weird organization with a weird charter, one that has nothing to do with respecting the rule of law. The countries that set up the charter, which is basically a treaty, did not pledge themselves to respect international law; they pledged themselves to create the conditions for the future respect of the law. It's very Machiavellian. It could involve overthrowing countries, it takes us back to Romulus and Remus. It's very Machiavellian because Machiavelli makes a distinction between governing within a system of law and setting up a system -- a founding. And founding is always an act of violence, whereas governing, properly speaking, is rule-governed. Strangely enough, although the U.N. charter is often thought of as a legal document, it is a founding document and it really sets up a great-power condominium, it leaves it to the Security Council to do anything it wants to maintain what the Council deems to be peace and security. I don't have any disdain for the organization because of that, I'm just saying that internationalists tend to say, *Well, we violated the U.N. Charter.* Actually the question of whether our actions were or were not authorized under the charter is itself very complicated. If you think that it was *not* authorized, then you move to the next level: *Well maybe this is not such a bad thing.* Why should we give unquestioned authority to a condominium of great powers? Anyway, that's the kind of question I wanted to raise with my remarks.

David Allen: I think the questions about the creation of public space and those sorts of things - I think those are vitally important questions. In my comments I didn't mean to imply that I thought there was some sort of wonderful historical period where we should return to that was perfect journalism. In many ways I think we could probably make the argument that what we're getting today is probably no better or no different than what we were getting in 1960. Walter Cronkite has come out and said that he thinks that war coverage right now is as good as it has ever been. So he sees this as not being necessarily all that important - or all that different.

I think it is vitally important for us to understand as well that the media are part of the

society in which they are embedded, which I think goes a little bit to Paul's [Brodwin] comments - about those kinds of comments. Historical studies of the Vietnam War for example, examine that myth of - the idea that - the media caused public opinion to turn against the Vietnam War when they started showing dead bodies. And historical studies have shown that the media were actually rather late in turning against government policy and they only turned against the establishment when it was safe to do so, when public opinion - or they perceived that public opinion - had turned against governmental policy in that regard. And so the question becomes very difficult. How do we create that public space for those different kinds of voices?

The changes that have happened sort of in this corporate structure where we are today - you're absolutely right that that's been going on for a long period of time. I think the Telecommunications Act accelerated the process because it actually allowed the larger corporations to own more and more and control more and more. And I suspect, for example, if we put limits back onto the media ownership in the United States, Clear Channel would get out of the media business because it's not profitable for them; they have no undying interest in - or love of - journalism. They're in it to make money, and that's what they're doing. Where I think what the Telecommunications Act and other acts like that, movements like that have fundamentally changed things is - what we've seen is - that a small group of people, I think, are able to control or to dominate the public discourse within society.

I've never lived in a city such as Milwaukee where two people seem to be able to dominate what is on the public discussion and what the public discourse is about. Charlie Sykes and Mark Belling just dominate and determine - seem to determine - what we talk about in Milwaukee. I mean, it's an incredible amount of power. I've never seen that demonstrated in any city where I've ever lived before. Then you throw in the Rush Limbaughs and the Glenn Becks and those sorts of things. And so that I think has fundamentally changed. I do think that the stories have gotten shorter and there's been more of an emphasis on the video snippets and those sorts of things which are sort of lacking of content and lacking of information. I'm not really sure what they're telling us.

But then to move to the next part of this, which is Well, how would we change that? How do we do that? Which sort of is what Paul [Brodwin] is bringing up. I think it's a really fundamental and a very difficult question. I suspect that more corporate ownership is not the way to accomplish that. I think we have to find ways to break that up. I think the Internet is allowing some of those sorts of things to happen. For example, I am able to have access to a large amount of international media that I was never able to have access to in 1991. And so that is helping to some extent. But we still do have ways in which... One of the problems, if we look at it, is basically feeling that we have to rely on the mainstream media or the professional media for information. I don't think that we're ever going to get there because the very nature of being a professional means that you're limited by the ways you can tell stories, the types of information that you can tell. And that has very significant impacts and influences on the public sphere and the way that information is presented in that public sphere.

What I think we need to try to figure out ways to do is to allow people to express themselves in that public sphere however we try to do that. Habermas has really suggested that the fundamental change of journalism in democratic societies was when we started referring to writers as journalists, and it ceased to be a literary activity and became a professional activity. What that did was it set off a certain classification of people as being privileged enough to present what the story was. And so the journalists today are really less of the public sphere than

the people of another time might have been. Maybe we need to go back to your point, Paul. I think maybe what we need is to find a way to go back to that time where... Blogging is an example of some of that that's going on. Tying in some of the blogs on the Internet has been a wonderful resource, I think, for the dissemination of those voices.

Daniel Sherman: I just want to jump in here. There are other historians in the room who may want to respond to Greg Jay's comment as well, and in part this picks up on something that Terry [Nardin] said. I think historical memory is really a double-edged sword, it has at least two edges. This isn't to deny all the responsibility that historians have at all levels of education to teach our fellow citizens more about the outside world. Although it's a complicated endeavor that we can't do on our own. I mean, I think the decline in language instruction at the secondary level is almost more serious a problem than the decline in the teaching of history.

My impression of the way historians have responded - and they have responded profusely and actively and sometimes hysterically - to the war is that they are in part haunted by the historical memory of precisely the oppositional movement that you have alluded to in your question. That is, the moment of the sixties, the moment of the Vietnam War, the moment in which it seemed as though a broader media and a broader intelligentsia was kind of leading public opinion, which may or may not have been true. I tend to think that the role of the intelligentsia at that point was exaggerated, but I'm not an expert on this. And I'm afraid that a lot of why historians and other intellectuals - a lot of the ways in which we have reacted, with the addition of blogs and Internet petitions and all these other kinds of things that cram our email on a daily basis - they are falling into fairly familiar patterns and that, as a friend of mine who was organizing a panel at the annual meeting of the OAH (the Organization of American Historians) said, and this is somebody who is the editor of one of the major American history journals, "Not that anything we do will make an iota of difference."

I would be much more inclined to place emphasis on the importance of our teaching about Iraq and about the Middle East and simply trying to broaden the horizons of our students (and I know that's the core of what you've been doing in the Cultures and Community program), rather than worrying about - but also being conscious of the way our memories and our nostalgia for a counter-cultural or an oppositional moment may actually hamper what we do now.

Markos Mamalakis: I would like to come back to Bill Turner's question. In the Federalist Papers -- at least as I read and understand them -- republic is a *res publica* in the sense that it is not just a procedural democracy, which can be sustainable or non-sustainable, but also substantive -- with the two combined creating sustainable democracy. For example, we talk now basically about having a procedural democracy which is not substantive, and therefore may not be sustainable. In the Federalist Papers, the checks and balances, among others, move democracy towards a *res publica*, which combines procedural with substantive, and, therefore, we have a sustainable democracy.

Now, in our discussions here, and in the public discourse, we are talking about a variety of different concepts, and I think this is very important in teaching history. We talk about "nation building," "civil society building," we're talking about "organized society," "constitutional society," we're talking about "procedural" versus "procedural *and* substantive," sustainable democracy, we are talking about values. And actually, all these concepts have to be put into a framework such that we know the extent to which heritages differ - because essentially each

nation has a different heritage in terms of democratic rule, in terms of societal rule, in terms of - I do not have time to mention all important notions. What you have here is you have this tremendous variety. Germany in 1945 had a very distinct heritage of all these components than either Japan then or Iraq now. And we are talking, in the case of Iraq, about establishing a civil society to an extent that was not necessary in Germany or Japan in 1945.

And, I think, unless we really address the fundamental issues, i.e., first of all have a very clear cut framework within which we can distinguish diverse conceptions of democracy and society, and second, focus on the collective services giving rise to *res publica* as sustainable democracy, we cannot really understand sustainable democracy as we have in the United States. Whether it is a preemptive strike or something like that, to use the military exportability example, replacing one military structure by another is not synonymous to civil society exportability. So, I think the discourse is still at its infancy. Historians can make a major contribution by identifying the historical evolution of diverse heritages and, then, others, including economists like myself, can make objective, partial contributions. These could be integrated, in the neutral way, to formulate a comprehensive strategy to solve the problems of the Middle East. I think that, implicitly, by trying to be politically correct, we deny the existence of severe social problems (of civil society) in the Middle East, which must be corrected. And the Arabs themselves recognize this.

If civil society is not established, you cannot have sustainable democracy. People looting and destroying may or may not be ruffians, but such behavior simply is incompatible with, and cannot be permitted to exist in, civil societies. The question to be answered is, Why does such behavior exist *anywhere*? There are many answers. The Federalist Papers provide valuable insights because they implicitly -- not explicitly -- relate sustainable democracy to civil society. These concepts need to be made explicit, more so now than ever before. Thank you.

Philip Shashko: We mention here history a number of times: historical memory, knowledge of the area. Here we are, the mistake we're making right today. This meeting should have been held in January or earlier since we know something about these problems. Maybe that can prevent it instead of now talking about this.

Markos Mamalakis: Better late than never.

Philip Shashko: But that's not the point. This is too late. This is too late. Because -

Markos Mamalakis: Historians would say it's never too late, you know.

Philip Shashko: That's what you think. The problem is, we talked about exporting, or growing - evolving democracy. Are we more intelligent than the people in the past? The Roman Empire imposed its will. The Mongols imposed - sacked Bagan. Are we that different? We talk about looting. Go to the British Museum, go to the Louvre, go to the Hermitage. Who looted those goods? People from all over the world have to go there to see their works. It's nothing new. When the UNESCO came out with requests, this and that, scholars said this... We bypass the United Nations. Why even listen to the UNESCO? We're not even members of UNESCO since 1985!

Daniel Sherman: We've rejoined.

Philip Shashko: Well! So these are problems, these are issues. We're talking about very lofty ideas. But in practice you need action. Without that nothing happens.

Peter Paik: I think maybe this kind of speaks to what you are saying, but also I want to provide something of a response to Ruud [Rutger van Dijk] as well. I guess what I'm a little bit surprised by is there isn't more discussion about the possibility that the democratization of Iraq is meant to fail. This is an idea that Slavoj Zizek brings up in a recent issue of *In These Times*, that the Administration walked into this fully knowing that this would trigger - I mean, again this is his hypothesis -- that the Administration went into this fully knowing that this would trigger a world-wide Islamic jihad. In other words, from the Administration's point of view, it's in a win-win situation: if democracy works in Iraq then Bush can take credit for it. If not, then it gives the Administration more leeway, so to speak, to establish stronger police measures.

Philip Shashko: Or to attack Syria, or North Korea.

Peter Paik: Or, yes.

Paul Brodwin: Just a comment indirectly related to the discussion of democratization. In 1990 I was a consultant with the Organization of American States as an election observer in Haiti, and that work of mine in the OAS was part of a broad hemispheric - OAS and the United Nations - move to democratize Haiti. So I would like to issue a plea to historians not necessarily for the grand study of national or civilizational heritages, although that might be important, but for a much more fine-grained analysis and teaching perhaps of what is the international bureaucratic and technocratic apparatus that has been in place for about fifteen years to democratize post-totalitarian states. There is an apparatus, and people at the U.N. are part of it. This is a sort of floating world of consultants who go from country to country, and there are people who know about how to run an election in a country that has not had democratic elections for twenty years. There are people who know about how to run a constitutional plebiscite. There are techniques and apparatuses and discourses and policy manuals that are out there. This is the world that is out there, and is going to put its fingerprints on the next stage of our intervention in Iraq. So surely there's a history of the present that needs to be exposed.

Daniel Sherman: Maybe in an ethnography. Maybe it's something an anthropologist should be writing.

Paul Brodwin: Partially, sure. Actually the face-to-face interactions when you run an election are quite important. But then it's also a matter of history and political theory and totally novel global arrangements with novel workers, actually. That's another historical piece that I think should fitted in here.

Rutger van Dijk: Peter, these guys are cynical, but I don't think they're that cynical. I really recommend that you read that national security strategy document that's out of everywhere. You may not agree, you may feel there's a difference between theory and practice in this administration, but I think - it's a serious document, it's a rich document, it's a serious attempt to think about

the post-World War world, especially post-September 11th. And in the past couple of weeks, months they suggest that - at least in certain cases - this administration may actually mean what it says. It doesn't have to be a complete lie; it deserves serious consideration. Where you come out of course is up to you, but...

Peter Paik: Okay. Well, I will take your advice and read it, but let me just say that in Straussian philosophy there are always two theories: one theory for the public, and one theory for the inner circle. Also, another point I wish to make is that perhaps my presentation didn't address this notion of elitism as strongly as I should have in that when I'm bringing up Alden Pyle and the politics of innocence, what I am referring to is the indifference to Iraqi suffering. Certainly our policy makers know that innocent people are suffering, but their attitudes are perhaps a bit more detached or - let's say - cavalier. But certainly this is an irrefutable element that is off the map, so to speak.

Rutger van Dijk: In the way the war was raised?

Peter Paik: Um hmm.

Terry Nardin: I think the point is about their moral insensitivity. I mean, why wouldn't a government be sorry instead of saying, *It's not our business, stuff happens* and so on? That seems to be a devastating comment on their self-conception. I don't like people like that. [Laughter]

Daniel Sherman: Well, you know, to go back to the looters, I watch CNN in the gym. This would be an interesting study, all the ways people make excuses for watching CNN - I really don't have cable at home. [Laughter] In the gym this morning, there was Wolf Blitzer interviewing someone - who looked vaguely familiar - about the looting of the museum and the burning of the library, which are two quite different events, as Abbas pointed out. The person being interviewed turned out to be the Director General of UNESCO, obviously an impartial source since the United States is famously hostile to UNESCO. But the direction of the questioning was very interesting, it was very much about Wasn't this all planned beforehand? Didn't these people really know what they were doing? Didn't they know which treasures to go to? And I think that's why actually the question of who did this and why is the wrong question. Because I think the important question is Carlos's first question: How did this happen in the first place given that the Administration had detailed maps and charts, not only of archaeological sites, but of places like the museum. And the museum in Baghdad is not the only one that was looted. Museums have been looted throughout the area -

Abbas Hamdani: Most were in Basra and -

Daniel Sherman: Right.

Abbas Hamdani: - near Tikrit also.

Daniel Sherman: And the fact is, Phil, that these conversations were taking place well in ad-

vance of the attack, that this kind of information was available, and the moral responsibility - as well as the responsibility under international law, as Carlos pointed out in his presentation - was the responsibility of the United States. [Reads from newspaper clipping offered by Philip Shashko]: "The head of a U.S. presidential panel on cultural property resigned in protest at the failure of U.S. forces to prevent the wholesale looting of..." and it's cut off, "treasures from Baghdad's antiquities" was there. But this was a media moment that summed up, and then Wolf Blitzer concluded this interview with sort of a pious Well, I sure hope you can recover those things. It's a tragedy and Thanks so much for being with us. Greg?

Greg Jay: Doesn't this go back to the problem of moralism in the rhetoric that justified the whole war in the first place? That what the inner circle believes - which they do pronounce in public quite extensively - is in the evil character of the peoples that they have attacked - and that includes their culture and their civilization - which as Christian crusaders, they have no respect for - they have no value for. I don't underestimate the degree to which the coup that took place in Florida which runs right through all of this is a coup of Christian absolutists who have a Manichaeian view of the globe and whose insensitivity is not based only on oil politics, but on the deeply felt sense of ethno-religious cosmic superiority. To many of them I think that the destruction of these pagan temples of knowledge is a good thing. It makes way for the new mission of the missionaries to come. It helps us connect right back to the Crusades, which we know that Bush himself used that word early in all of this with what people once said was naïveté, but which I think expresses the deep conviction of the Christian right who are so deeply behind this war.

Daniel Sherman: Our technical person has to pack up the equipment at this point, but we don't have to stop talking. So if there were people who were shy about talking when the microphones were here, you will soon have the opportunity to talk without them.