

# The newspaper, the public sphere, public opinion

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## **A very short history**

the concept of the public sphere

"blogs represent *passage to the public sphere*"

Jay Rosen, "Who Owns Journalism"

"How influential are bloggers"

Peter Daou, "The Triangle"

the history of the newspaper in England

towards public opinion



206

# public opinion

"It is certainly right and prudent to consult the public opinion. ... If the public opinion did not happen to square with mine; if, after pointing out to them the danger, they did not see it in the same light with me, or if they conceived that another remedy was preferable to mine, I should consider it as my due to my king, due to my Country, due to my honour to retire ... but one thing is clear, that I ought to give the public the means of forming an opinion."

Charles James Fox, 1792

# the public sphere

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"Three events ... mark the beginning ...  
[1] The founding of the Bank of England ...  
[2] The elimination of the institution of  
censorship ... [and] the influx of rational-  
critical arguments into the press ...  
[3] the first cabinet government ..."

Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural  
Transformation of the Bourgeois Public  
Sphere*, 1962/1989, 58

# state and civil society

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"Public debate was supposed to transform *voluntas* [the will of one or many] into a *ratio* [rational-universal] that in the public competition of private arguments came into being as the consensus about what was practically necessary in the interest of all."

Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public*

*Sphere*, 1962/1989, 82–83  
Newspaper - 4

# the press

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The first English newspaper,  
*The English Mercurie*, 1588.

George Chalmers,  
*Life of Thomas Ruddiman* (1795)

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, September 4. 1711.

THE Fall of the Stocks is now the publick News of the Town: I have been Arguing against the Madnes and Folly of the Day; that because they do not like the South-Sea Trade, will therefore sink the Value of their own Interests in the publick Funds: I pers'd you to distinguish between the South-Sea Stock, and your Debt upon the Victualling, Navy, &c. which stands secur'd upon a Parliament Fund; suppose all the South-Sea Project fail: in the Sea, your Debt is but 10 per Cent. the worse for it, that is, the Stock they are empower'd to Levy upon the Subscribers; Where then is the Reason of sinking that

Debt so secur'd, to 30 and 40 per Cent. Discount, when the Loans can be but 10 per Cent.?

The Fund settled is good, or it is not; if it is not, as before, the Parliament is oblig'd to make it good; if the Parliament is not good, your Banks, your Lands, your Lives are not secure, and of that I have said enough.

I come now to another Distinction, which indeed would be no Distinction, did not the Folly of the Age, and the Circumstances of this Stock-Job'd Town make us so — I distinguish between the Stocks, Funds, &c. and the publick Credit; I deny that

## of war and peace

1618-48, *Corantos*, etc

1621 *Butter & Bourne Newsbook*

1624 *Staple of the News*

1637 weekly public post newsletters, etc

1662 Licensing Act

1665 *Oxford Gazette*

1695 end of Licensing Act

1695 *Flying Post*

1696 *Post-Boy, Post Man*

1702 *Daily Courant*

1704 *Review*

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1709 *Tatler*

1710 *Examiner*

1711 *Spectator*

1712 Stamp Act

1713 *Guardian*

*Mercator*

*British Merchant*

# the size of the public sphere

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"Whereas the great Glut of News-Papers,  
that are of late publish'd on Saturdays,  
is grown almost as a common Nuisance ..."

– *British Mercury*, 1715

"All Englishmen are great newsmongers.  
Workmen habitually begin the day by going  
to coffee-rooms in order to read the  
latest news. I have often seen shoeblacks  
and men of that class club together to  
purchase a farthing newspaper"

–César de Sassure, 1726

# the size of the public sphere

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"On Saturdays during 1746 at least 45,000 papers were sold .... Allowing for the moderate estimate of ten readers per page ... a de facto readership of not far short of half-a-million."

Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole*, 190

[the population was under 700,000]

In 1780, estimated that 25,000 papers were produced each day.





ratio

## **Spectators, Observers, Tatlers, Guardians, Ramblers ...**

"Impartial Spectator..."

"An insatiable Thirst after Knowledge ..."

"I live in the World, rather as a Spectator  
of Mankind, than as one of the Species; by

which means I have made my self a  
Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant,  
and Artizan ... can discern the Errors in  
the Oeconomy, Business, and Diversion of

others who are in the Game..."

Newspaper - 9

## **Spectators, Observers, Tatlers, Guardians, Ramblers ...**

"I never espoused any Party with Violence,  
and am resolved to observe an exact  
Neutrality between the Whigs and  
Tories .... In short, I have acted in all  
the parts of my Life as a Looker-on ..."

"I have neither Time nor Inclination to  
communicate the Fulness of my Heart in  
Speech, I am resolved to do it in Writing;  
and to Print myself out, if possible,  
before I Die."<sup>10</sup>

# ratio

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"We had no such things as printed newspapers to spread rumours and reports of things, and to improve them by the invention of men, as I have lived to see practiced since."

Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Years*,  
1722

# quality

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"We shall only add, That as we pretend not to Infallibility: if by Mistake or Misinformation any thing should escape us that requires it, we shall think we owe it to the Reputation we aim to preserve, and to Ingenuity, to take notice of it as soon as possible."

*Daily Courant, 1729*

# quality

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"It must be granted that many of our Public Miseries and Dissensions may be ascribed to the abuse of the daily Vehicles of Intelligence, which are too often employed in the service of Faction ... But these inconveniences should not lead the Lovers of the Country to condemn the Liberty of the Press, but to guard against the perversion of this inestimable blessing"  
'The Examiner', *Morning Post*, 1780

R. Stoughton, Apothecary, in Southwark, having some Time since, by order of a Merchant, sent 50 Dozen of his Cordial Elixir to Sweden, has lately receiv'd Advice that Numbers of People finding it a great Preserver of Health, drink it every Morning: And further to assure it is so, hath a Certificate from thence, That (to the Person's best Knowledge and Observation) not one who took it hath had the Disease; and many are of Opinion it hath been of great Use in stopping the Progress of it. He hath also a Certificate from on Board a Ship at Jamaica, That after 6 or 7 of the Men died in 24 Hours of a Malignant Distemper, the Captain himself (fearing he should lose all his Men) gave the rest, who were seiz'd plentifully of this Elixir (which for many Years he took with him) and by God's Blessing on it, sav'd every Man after. He is not only willing, but desirous this may be publish'd for the Good of others. Few now will go to Sea or travel without it. The Certificates themselves any Gentlemen may see if they please.

Several Boxes are just now sent again into Sweden, and I hear the Czar's Physicians have order'd it into the Army. I wish some Merchants would send it into Denmark, it might do much good there, and large Profit to the Sender.

Just Publish'd (many Thousands of the former Editions having sold in a little time)

R. Martin's Seventh Edition of his Book and Second Edition of his Appendix, concerning Secret Diseases, both compriz'd in One Volume, with Amendments, and many hundred Additions: It being the last he will ever write; and it is presumed, contains as much any can write on that Subject, for the Benefit of Patients; all the Degrees and Symptoms, Ways of Contracting; certain Signs discovering, Nature, and Cure, being shewn: as also the Use and Abuse of Mercury; Mischiefs by Quacks, Effects of ill Cures; Seminal Weakness, and all other Secret Infirmities in

both Sexes relating to that Infection, &c. are from Reason and long Experience explicated and detected; necessary for the Perusal of all that have, or ever had the least Injury that Way, and value the Health and Welfare of themselves and Posterity; that Distemper, if not toally eradicated, proving dangerous as well as obnoxious. The whole interspers'd with Prescriptions, Observations, Histories, Letters, and Proofs of many remarkable Cases and Cures. By John Martin, Surgeon. Sold at his House in Easton-Garden; also by N. Crouch in the Post-Office, A. Bellesworth on London-Bridge, P. Varrane at Seneca's Head in the Strand, C. King in Westminster-Hall, M. Atkins in St. Paul's Church-Yard, Bookellers, and D. Leach in the Little Old Baily. Pr. Bound 7 s. 6d.

QUACKERY Unmask'd in 2 Parts containing, 1. Reflections of the 7th Edition of Mr. Martin's Treatise of the Venereal Disease. 2. An Examination of the Charitable Surgeon, The Generous Surgeon, The Tomb of Venus, and a pretended new Method of curing this Disease. 3. A brief Enquiry into the Ancient and present State of the Practices of Physick and Surgery; a full Account of Quacks; then (in a concise Method) is shewn the Cause, Nature, Signs, and Dangerous Effects of this Disease, various ways of Recovering, Symptoms first Discovering, and only Method of preventing its Infection; together with the best, most cheap, safe, speedy, easie and private Methods of Cure. As also the Cause and Cure of Old Glands in Men, and Weaknesses in Women. The Second Edition Enlarg'd. Sold by D. Brown without Temple-Bar, G. Straban, at the Golden Ball in Cornhill, and B. Barker, in Westminster-Hall, and by the Author, Dr. Spinke, at his House at the Golden Ball, 3 Doors in the Alley past the Sun-Tavern, in Milk-street near St. Dunstons Church. Price 2 s.

Printed for and sold by John Baker at the Black-Boy Pazer-Neester Row, 1711.

support

"All the public papers now on foot depend on advertisements." – Defoe, *Review*, 1705

"Some regard is likewise to be paid to posterity. There are men of diligence and curiosity who treasure up the Papers of the Day merely because others neglect them, and in time they will be scarce. When these collections shall be read in another century, how will numberless contradictions be reconciled, and how shall Fame be possibly distributed among the Tailors and Bodice-makers of the present age."

Samuel Johnson, *The Idler*, 20 January, 1759

# the wall

## editorial/advertising

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"Mr. SPECTATOR.

Several of my Friends were this Morning got together over a Dish of Tea in very good Health, though we had celebrated Yesterday with more Glasses than we could have dispensed with, had we not been beholden to Brooke and Hellier. In Gratitude therefore to those good Citizens, I am in the Name of the Company, to accuse you of great Negligence in overlooking their Merit who have imported true and generous Wine, and taken Care that it should not be adulterated by the Retailers before it comes to the Tables of private Families or the Clubs of honest Fellows. I cannot imagine how a SPECTATOR can be supposed to do his Duty, without frequent Resumption to such Subjects as concern our Health"

[Steele, Spectator, Friday April 25, 1711

**Messieurs Brooke and Hellier Merchants in** Lane near Bread-street, having experienc'd that their new natural porto and Viana Wines do give such universal Satisfaction, they encourag'd further to accommodate the Town, and give Notice they resolve to retail the entire Cargoes of the Sophronia and Galies just arriv'd and landing, consisting of 300 Pipes of new and white Oporto, and 20 Pipes of red and white Anadea Wines (being the only Wines of these Sorts in Merchants Hands) in the several Vaults and Taverns following, viz. in Freeman's-yard in Court under the Crown-Tavern in Breadstreet, under a front House in Salisbury-Court in Fleetstreet, under Mr. Rymes a Furrier against May-pole in the Strand, and at the Horn-Tavern in Palace-Yard Westminster, and there is now open'd other Vaults, viz. in the Tavern-Yard against Billingsgate, in the middle Street in the Buildings, and under St. James's Market-house; also on Tuesday the 18th Instant will be open'd the Green-Dragon Tavern in Gray's Lane in Holborn. Note, The Prices of the abovesaid Wines in the Vaults, the new natural red and white Oporto and white Viana at 18 d. per Quart and 17 l. per Hogshead, and the new red Viana at 15 d. per Quart and 13 l. per Hogshead; and in the said Taverns Oporto and white Viana at 20 d. and red Viana at 16 d. per Quart. Note, The new white and red Anadea Wines are at 2 s. per Quart and 20 l. per Hogshead, and to be had only in the aforesaid Vaults in the York-Buildings, and under St. James's Market-House.

**T**HIS is to give Notice, That Messieurs Brook and Hellier of London, Merchants, who do now give such general Satisfaction in Retailing their New Natural Portugal Wines in the said City, (being the best that have come from Portu-

## ARTISEMENTS.

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gal for many Years past) have for the more effectual supplying the other Parts of the Kingdom, caus'd Ships to Sail directly from Portugal to the following Places, where they are Arriv'd with the like Natural Wines, being the only New Wines that are now there, or can Arrive this Season; which Wines are to be sold by the following Persons, in the respective Places, viz. By Mr. Barth. Avent in Plymouth; Messieurs James and John Arnold in Portsmouth; Messieurs James Wakeman, and John Negus in Portsmouth; Mr. Joseph Taylor of Wysbich in Lynn Regis; Mr. Crowle in Hull; Mr. Jos. Stone in Gainsborough; Mr. William Proffor in Newcastle upon Tyne: Note, the Price, viz. The Viana Wines at 14 l. per Hogshead or at 5 s. 4 d. per Gallon, and the Oporto Wines at 16 l. per Hogshead, or 6 s. per Gallon.

Printed for and sold by John Baker at the Black-Boy  
Pater-Noster-Row. 1711.





# the wall civil society/state

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## **Oxford's papers**

*London Gazette*

*Review*

*Examiner*

*Post-Boy*

*Mercator*



# the wall

## civil society/state

### **Oxford's men**

Defoe

Swift ...

### **Karl's men**

Armstrong Williams

Maggie Gallaher

Jeff Gannon ...