

The Emergence of the Public



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Today's Itinerary

Print in its context
"News" and the public
The creation of languages



The Emergence of the Modern "Informational System"

Many, if not most, of the cultural phenomena of the modern world derive from [the 18th century] -- the periodical, the newspaper, the novel, the journalist, the critic, the public library, the concert, the public museum [*not to mention the dictionary and encyclopedia-- GN*]...

Perhaps most important of all, it was then that 'public opinion' came to be recognized as the ultimate arbiter in matters of taste and politics."--Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power*



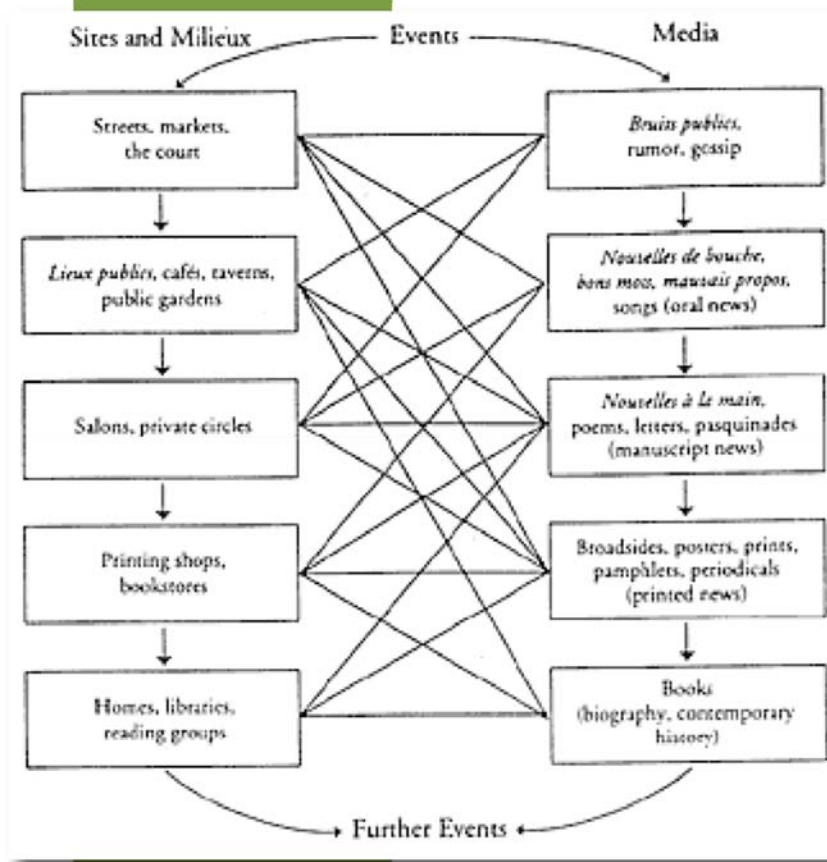
The doctrine of supercession: "Ceci tuera cela"

The archdeacon silently considered the giant edifice, then with a sigh extended his right hand toward the book that was open on the table and his left hand toward Notre-Dame, casting a sad look from the book to the church. "Alas," he said, "This will kill that."





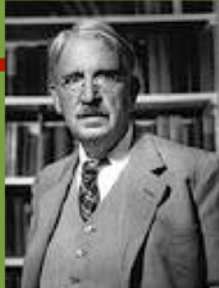
Print, Writing, & Orality



"It makes no sense, I think, to separate printed from oral and written modes of communication, as we casually do when we speak of "print culture," because they were all bound together in a multi-media system." Robert Darnton



What goes round...



Cf modern interaction of print/broadcast, intermediate oral forms...



"Vision is a spectator; hearing is a participator. Publication is partial and the public which results is partially informed and formed until the meanings it purveys pass from mouth to mouth." John Dewey





Coffeehouse Society

"The English have no settled Academies de Beaux-Esprits, as we have in Paris, but instead of such assemblies, the most ingenious persons ... meet either in places of promiscuous company, as coffee-house, or in private clubs, in taverns."--Abel Boyer, *Letters of Wit*, 1701





Coffeehouse Society: The "Virtuosi"

"Coffee-houses make all sorts of people sociable, the rich and the poor meet together, as also do the learned and unlearned. It improves arts, merchandize, and all other knowledge; for here an inquisitive man, that aims at good learning, may get more in an evening than he shall by books in a month... I have heard a worthy friend of mine ...who was of good learning ... say, that he did think that coffee-houses had improved useful knowledge, as much as [the universities have, and spake no way of slight to them neither."-- John Houghton, *Collections*, 1701



Knowledge and the "Virtuosi"



"[T]he reverence for antiquity, and the authority of men who have been esteemed great in philosophy ... have retarded men from advancing in science...." (Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 1620)



Accademia del Cimento, Firenze in Toren, sotto la protezione della
Real. Casa dei Medici nel Secolo XVII.

"He Trafficks to all places, and has his Correspondents in every part of the World; yet his Merchandizes serve not to promote our Luxury, nor encrease our Trade, and neither enrich the Nation, nor himself. A Box or two of Pebbles or Shells, and a dozen of Wasps, Spiders and Caterpillers are his Cargoe. He values a Camelion, or Salamander's Egg, above all the Sugars and Spices of the West and East-Indies... He visits Mines, Cole-pits, and Quarries frequently, but not for that sordid end that other Men usually do, viz, gain; but for the sake of the fossile Shells and Teeth that are sometimes found there." (Mary Astell, *Character of a Virtuoso*, 1696)



Knowledge and the "Virtuosi"

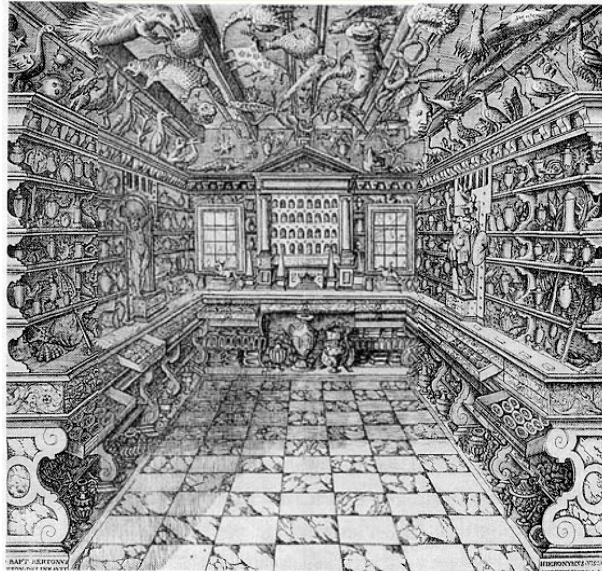
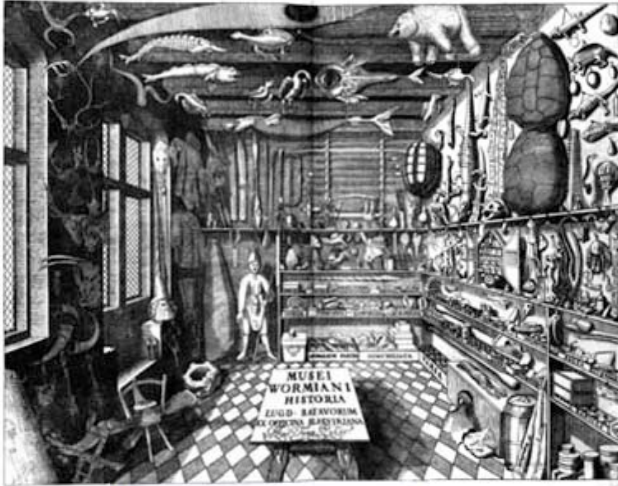


"I content myself with the speculative part of swimming; I care not for the practical. I seldom bring anything to use.... Knowledge is my ultimate end."

Sir Nicholas Gimcrack, in *The Virtuoso*, by Thomas Shadwell, 1676



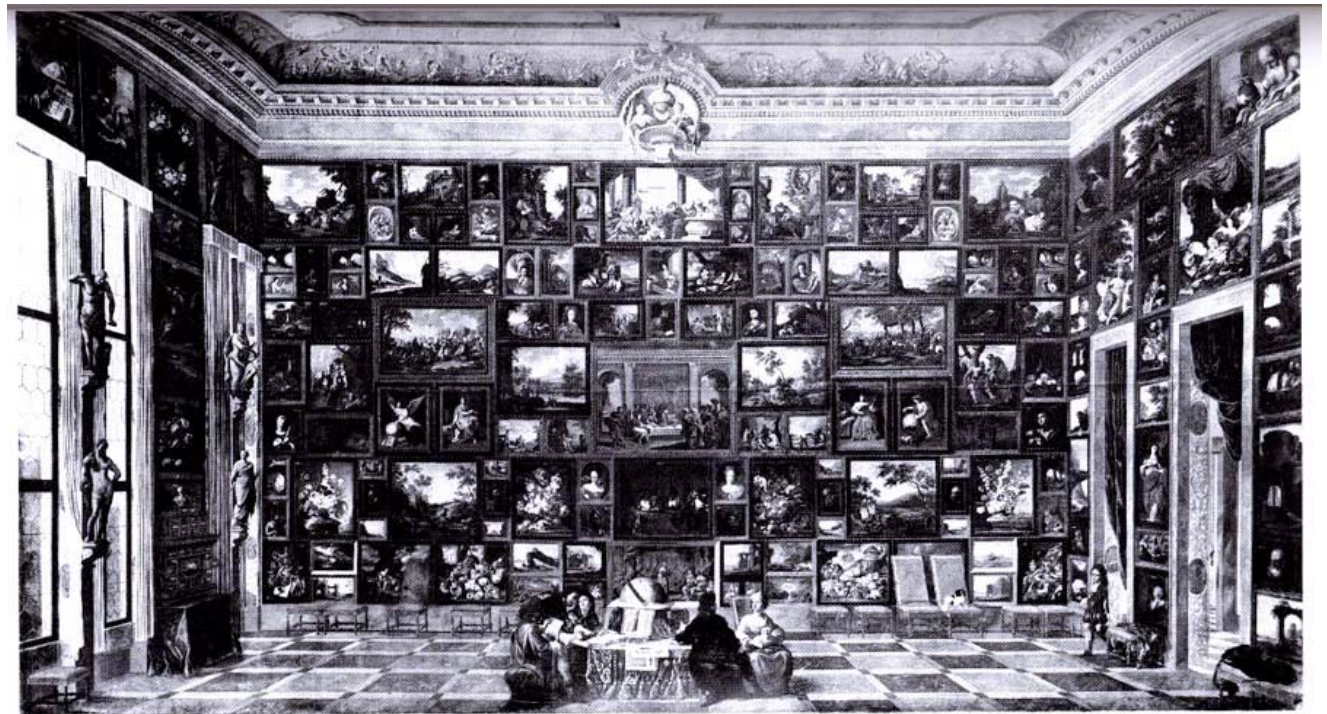
The "Cabinet of Curiosities" (Wunderkammer & Kunstkammer)



The Kunstkammer of Rudolph II was a carefully organized 'museum' articulated through an understanding of the world... Its contents were organised to exhibit a world picture, with objects that symbolised all aspects of nature and art, as conceptualized by the occult philosophers... This organisation depended on the concept of resemblance, where the objects and their proximities suggested macrocosmic/microcosmic links. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Organisation of Knowledge*



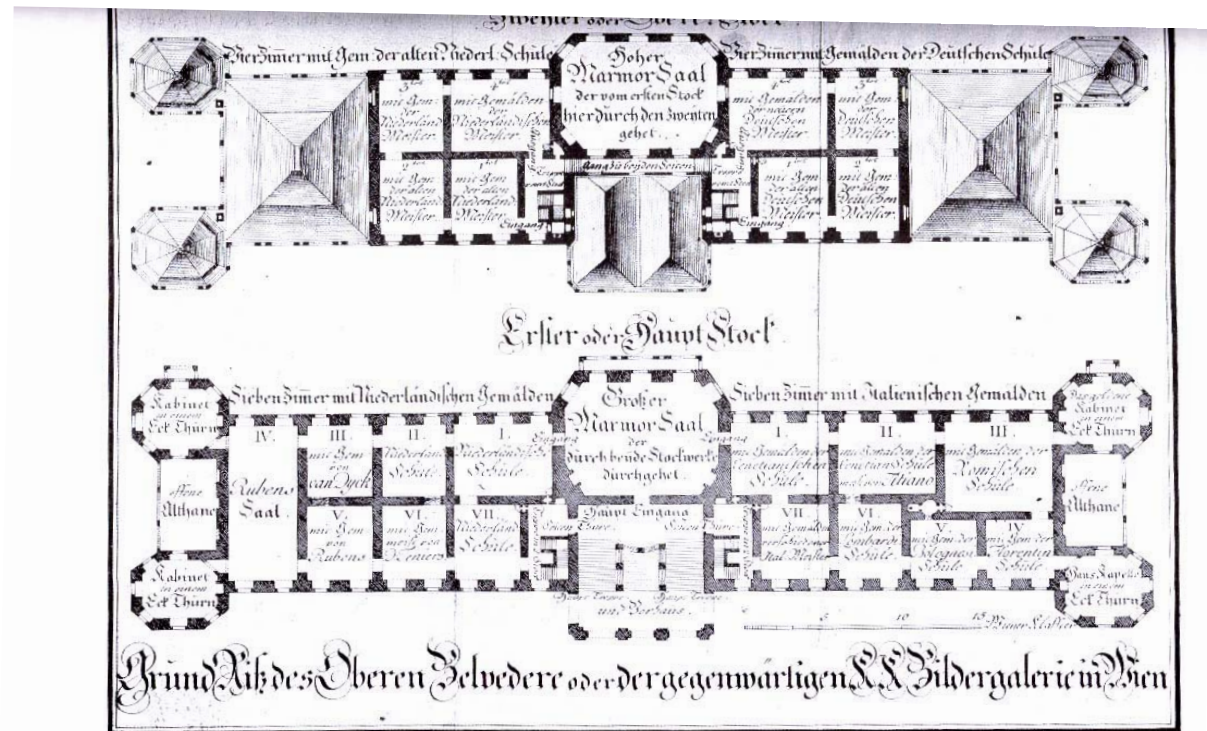
17th c. Galleries



23 *The Imperial Gallery in Prague*, by Johann Betschneider, 1714. The paintings are arranged according to the visual and decorative effect.



18th c. Galleries



29 Histories of Art were created in many of the galleries of Europe. This plan of the paintings gallery in the Schloss Belvedere in 1778, shows how the works were grouped by country, and within that, by date, by (geographical) school, or by individual artist. This is in marked contrast to the form of display shown in Plate 23.

Painting Gallery, Schloss Belvedere, Vienna, 1778



The Notion of the "Trésor"

Libraries, anthologies, dictionaries, in a word "treasuries" [trésors], alongside of encyclopedic collections, delimit a vast territory on which are cast the signs required for knowledge, the expression of identities, and communication among the members of the group.

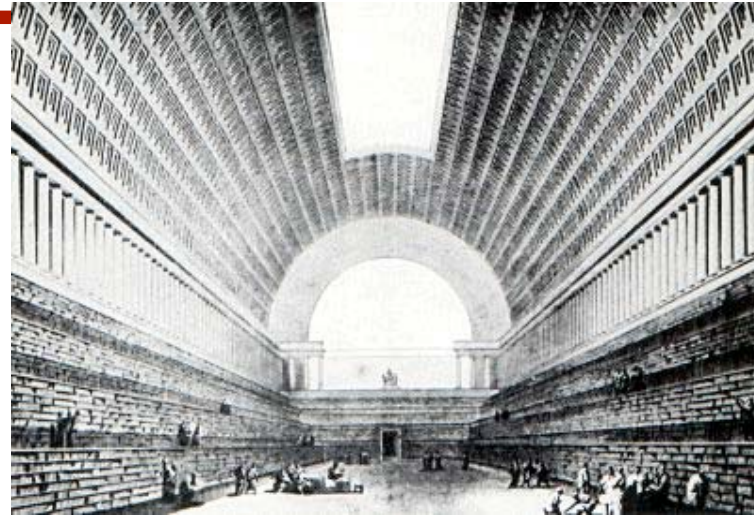
-Alain Rey, "Les trésors de la langue," 1986



Models of Public Space: The Form of Collections, 1



Library of the
Escorial, 1543



E-L. Boulée, plan for the
Bibliothèque du Roi,
1785

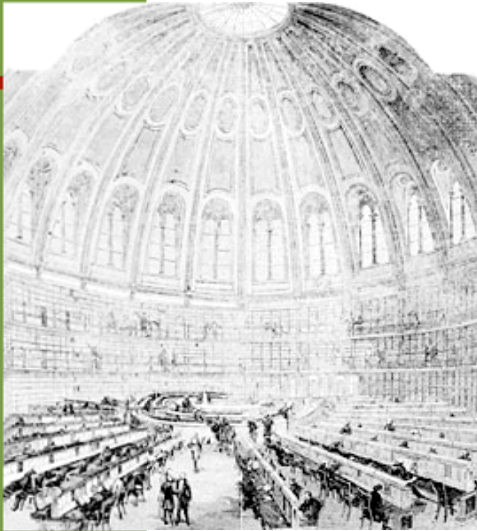


Labrouste, Bibliothèque
Ste. Geneviève, 1851

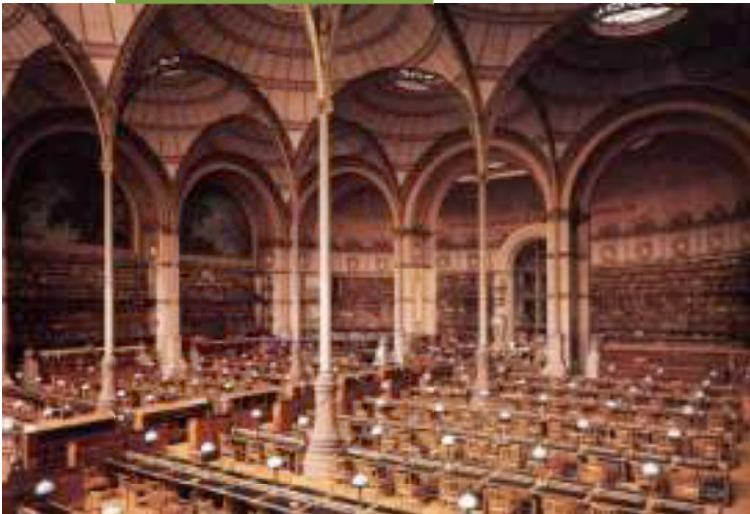


The Form of Collections, 2: The classical version

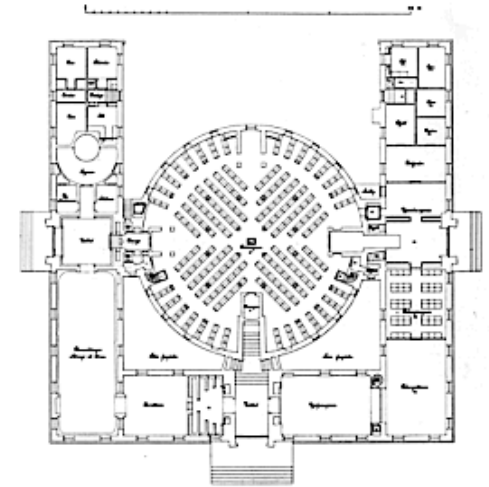
Smirke,
British Museum
Reading
Room, 1851



Pelz/Casey Reading
Room, LOC, ca 1898



Labrouste, Bibliothèque
Nationale 1868



Asplund, Stockholm City
Library, 1928



Coffee-Houses and Politics

The coffee-house society "a philosophical, or Political Club, where gentlemen came at night to divert themselves with Politicall discourse."

John Aubrey, 1665

Cabinets of Curiosities (Kunstkammer)



The Political Significance of the Coffee-House



Coffee and *Commonwealth* begin
With one letter, both came in
Together for a *Reformation*,
To make a free and sober *Nation*.
(Anon, 1665)

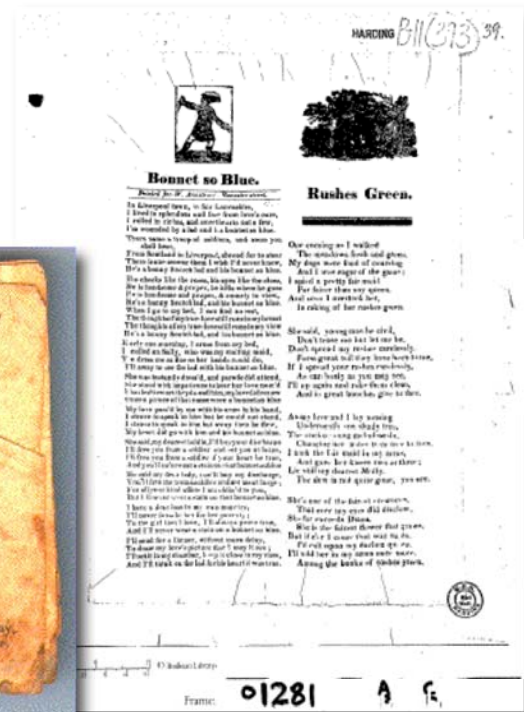
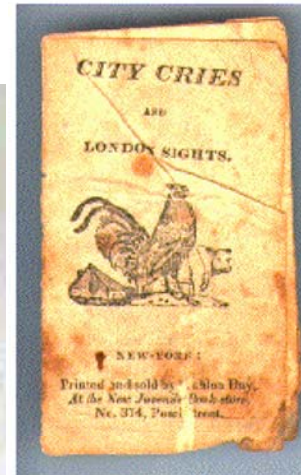
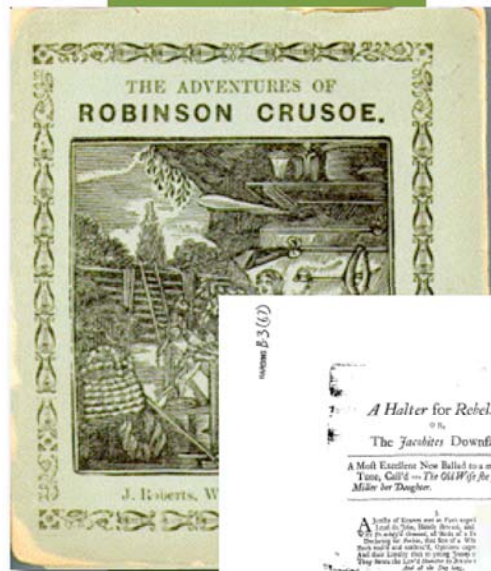


"The King complained very much of the License that was assumed in the Coffee-houses, which were the places where the boldest Calumnies and Scandals were raised, and discoursed upon by a people who knew not each other, and came together only for that Communication, and from thence were propagated all over the kingdom..."
Earl of Clarendon, 1666



New & Expanded Print Forms

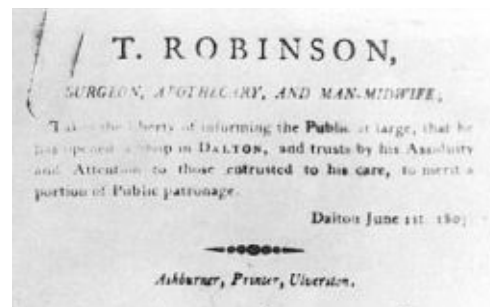
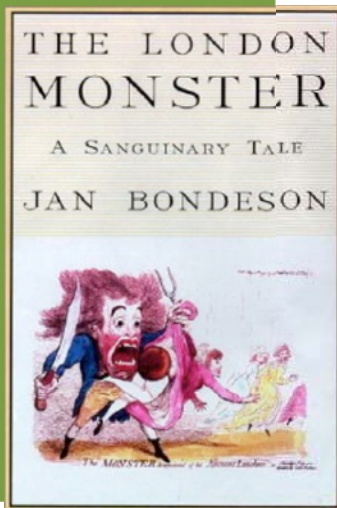
17th-18th c. see rise of chapbooks, broadsides, ballads, almanacs, pamphlets, etc.





Expansion of Print

Also: earliest printed handbills, labels, posters, handbills, forms, indentures, receipts, etc.





The Rise of the Periodical Press



"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 Rise of the Periodical Press



1695 -- abolition of the Licensing Act
1702 -- appearance of the Daily Courant,
1st sustained daily newspaper in England
Printed on one leaf, with blank side (like
earlier news-letters) for insertion of
handwritten additions.



The Rise of the Periodical Press



1709: the *Tatler* first published by Richard Steele, under the pseudonym Isaac Bickerstaff
1711: Steele and Joseph Addison found the *Spectator*, with contributions from various members of the "Spectator Club."

Circulation around 3000, but Addison estimates (improbably) that each edition is read by 60,000 Londoners





cabinet government



cabinet papers

London Gazette

Review

Examiner

Post-Boy

Mercator



in-house journalists

Defoe

Swift ...



Growth of Printing

Licensing Act permitted only 20 printers in England. By 1724, 75+ printers in London, 28 in the provinces; by 1785, 185 in London.



Economic Shifts

And what can we expect that's brave and
great,

From a poor needy Wretch, that writes to eat?

Who the success of the next Play must wait
For Lodging, Food, and Cloaths, and whose
chief care

Is how to spunge for the next Meal, and where?

John Oldham, 1679



The "Age of Authors"

The present age... may be styled, with great propriety, the Age of Authors; for, perhaps, there was never a time when men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profession and employment were posting with ardour so general to the press...

Samuel Johnson, 1763



Economic Shifts

Modern notions of intellectual property, publishing, authorship, etc.

Cf Oliver Goldsmith, 1761, "The Distress of a Hired Writer":

"that fatal revolution whereby writing is converted to a mechanic trade; and booksellers, instead of the great, become the patrons and paymasters of men of genius... Can any thing more cramp and depress true genius, than to write under the direction of one whose learning does not extend beyond the multiplication-table and the London Evening-post?"





Economic Shifts

But Goldsmith adds:

For my own part, were I to buy an hat, I would not have it from a stocking-maker but an hatter; were I to buy shoes, I should not go to the taylor for that purpose. It is just so with regard to wit; did I for my life desire to be well served, I would apply only to those who made it their trade, and lived by it.





Economic Shifts



Writers (ostensibly) freed from direct dependence on patronage. Symbolized by Samuel Johnson's rejection of Chesterfield's patronage:

Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?



DR. JOHNSON IN THE ANTE-ROOM OF LORD CHESTERFIELD.



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Cf Johnson's def of *patron*:
"One who countenances, supports or protects. Commonly a wretch who supports with indolence, and is paid with flattery."

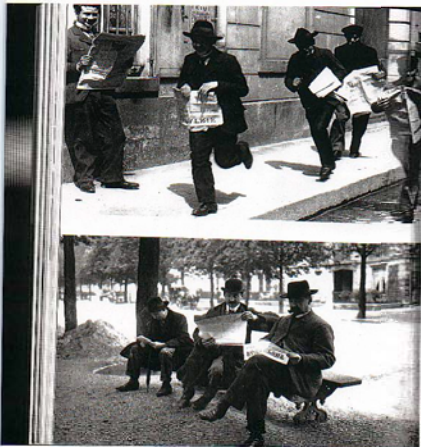


Print and the Creation of "Imagined Communities"



[Britain] has become a nation of readers. --Samuel Johnson, 1781

The newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life...creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations. --Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.





Emergence of the Public

"[In the late seventeenth century] . . . a new cultural space developed, ... a 'public sphere' in which private individuals came together to form a whole greater than the sum of the parts. By exchanging information, ideas, and criticism, these individuals created a cultural actor -- the public -- which has dominated European culture ever since. Many, if not most, of the cultural phenomena of the modern world derive from [this period] -- the periodical, the newspaper, the novel, the journalist, the critic, the public library, the concert, the public museum... Perhaps most important of all, it was then that 'public opinion' came to be recognized as the ultimate arbiter in matters of taste and politics."--Tim Blanning, *The Culture of Power*



Defining "the Public"

public, n.

Am. Her: The community or the people as a whole. **2.** A group of people sharing a common interest: *the reading public*.

OED: The community as an aggregate, but not in its organized capacity



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Occurrences in major newspapers, 2005:

<i>American people</i>	2660
<i>American public</i>	1350 (1:2)
<i>Iraqi people</i>	940
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cf. ?*The medieval British public*.



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“The press created the public”: G. Tarde





Publics and "Public Opinion"

End of c. 17 (Britain): emergence of new social domain independent of state and private life: new role for "public opinion" to replace and complement authority of state. "Mediates between society and the state" (Habermas)



Publics and "Public Opinion"

"By 'the public sphere' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion -- that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions -- about matters of general interest." Jürgen Habermas



Social Background: Who were the public?

"the Town":

"a class of comparatively educated and polished persons, large enough to form a public, and not so large as to degenerate into a mob, distinct from the old feudal nobility, and regarding the life of the nobles with a certain contempt as rustic and brutal, more refined again than that class of hangers-on to the Court, of merchants and shopkeepers stamped with the peculiarities of their business..." Leslie Stephen



Coffeehouse Society

"The coffee-house... admits of no distinction of persons, but gentleman, mechanic, lord, and scoundrel mix, and are all of a piece, as if they were resolved into their very first principles."
Samuel Butler, 1667





The emergence of a public discourse



"Rank and privilege" in theory set aside, and discourse becomes ostensibly impersonal:

"...when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or emnity with the author, I must depart from this situation; and considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being and my peculiar circumstances." David Hume, 1757



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Cf modern sports-talk radio



Publics and "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