COLLECTION PUBLICS ET CULTURE

LOOKING FOR NON-PUBLICS

Preface by Elihu Katz and Daniel Dayan

Edited by **Daniel Jacobi** and **Jason Luckerhoff**

Presses de l'Université du Québec

Extrait de la publication

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Edited by **Anik Meunier** and **Jason Luckerhoff**

The *Culture et publics* collection brings together original works on culture and its audiences. More specifically, it explores the field of cultural mediation, i.e., the analysis of cultural actors' professional practices, the methods they employ, and their impact on different types of audiences. All forms of culture are included, from live performance to heritage and museums. The word *publics* ("audiences") is deliberately pluralized to emphasize the collection's special interest in innovative forms of cultural mediation aimed at broadening access to particular forms of culture. In a museum context, the notion of cultural mediation obviously incorporates the concept of non-formal education, or in other words, the various forms of knowledge mediation that occur outside of school. These include the heritage–and museum–related mediation practices known as museum education.

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PREFACE

ON *PUBLICS*, *NON-PUBLICS*, *FORMER PUBLICS*, *FUTURE PUBLICS*, *ALMOST PUBLICS*, AND THEIR STUDENTS AND GENEALOGIES

Elihu Katz and **Daniel Dayan**

The central question of this book – the question of *non-publics* – triggers immediate curiosity. However, we ask readers to momentarily postpone the satisfaction of their legitimate curiosity and to accompany us for four brief prefatory explorations. The first situates Jacobi and Luckerhoff's work in the context of intellectual history and stresses the diversity of disciplines that have dealt with *publics*. The second compares different sorts of publics and equally heterogeneous sorts of non-publics. Inspired by media studies, the third focuses on audiences and raises a paradoxical question: Could we propose audiences as examples of non-publics? Finally, the fourth asks whether the status of publics is that of discursive form or observable sociation.

We shall then leave the floor to Luckerhoff and Jacobi and their collection of systematic and carefully argued essays, hoping to have offered some useful contextualizations to their provocative book.

1.
FIRST EXPLORATION: PUBLICS, NON-PUBLICS AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Several strands of research contribute to the important issues addressed in this book. One strand can be traced to Gabriel Tarde's (1898) proposal that the newspaper took "crowds" off the street and transformed them into "publics." "Publics," for Tarde, consisted of individuals reading about the issues of the day, forming opinions, coming together to discuss and, ultimately, act on them, notably by voting.

Following Tarde, sociologists at the University of Chicago proposed to distinguish not only between crowd and public, but between different types of crowds and the "masses." (Blumer, 1939). These efforts gave rise to the branch of sociology known as collective behavior, which addressed the dynamics of fads, fashions, rumor, scandal, public opinion, and the like. It seems as if mainstream sociology became uneasy about these unstable processes, and it is a good guess to say that communications research became the beneficiary of this unease.

Radically different definitions of the concept of *public* have since been proposed, ranging from people who are single-mindedly engaged, even for a short while, with an everyday issue or performance to individuals who are at least aware of each other, and/or estimate what similarly engaged others are thinking. Noelle-Neumann (1984), Price (1992), Herbst (1993), Dayan (below) and many others have grappled with this issue, sometimes echoing Tarde himself. But almost none of them have dealt directly with the non-public of the disenfranchised – those who do not take part.

Two notable exceptions are public opinion research and political science. While defying more sophisticated definitions of public, public opinion researchers are deeply concerned about respondents who say "don't know" or give "no answer." Although opinion pollsters do not use the term *non-publics*, they worry about them, at least for statistical reasons, especially those respondents who are not sure whether they will vote or not. As for political scientists concerned with the problem of non-voting, they come even closer to the problems addressed in this volume, from both normative and theoretical points of view.

More humanistically oriented students of audience also have a contribution to make (Butsch, 2008; Dimaggio & Useem, 1978; Livingstone, 2005).

Historians show how excluded citizens were ultimately invited into the noble courts to witness previously restricted performances, and how these paved the way for theaters and concert halls, which opened their doors to anybody who could afford the price of admission (R. Katz, 1986). This is where the non-publics of the arts came to prominence. Walter Benjamin (1968) thought that "mechanical reproduction" might enfranchise them.

Early research on radio anticipated Jacobi and Luckerhoff's interest in non-publics by some 60 years, but subsequently – and unfortunately – abandoned this missionizing. At the time, a group around Paul Lazarsfeld felt that the new medium might spur interest in reading and the arts among its mass audience. A good example is Edward Suchman's (1941) "Invitation to Music: A Study of the Creation of New Music Listeners by the Radio." Suchman compared devotees who were raised on classical music from childhood with those who discovered it on the radio. One major finding of the study was that the newly converted were far more likely to be men than women. Indeed, Suchman (later amplified by Susan Douglas, 1999) goes on to suggest that "radio tends to even out sex differences since it had made men more interested in music and women more interested in the news." Suchman also found that aspirants to upward mobility were among those who found radio music useful for their "anticipatory socialization."

In recent years, there has been a notable surge of interest and research in the publics and non-publics of the arts (Dimaggio & Useem, 1978; Katz, 1999). Bourdieu (1984) was one of the earliest to undertake this kind of investigation, from which emerged the concept of "cultural capital." Related research comes also from the direction of so-called "time-budget" research, a method pioneered in Eastern Europe (Szalai, 1972) and pursued by academics (Gershuny, 2000; Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2004; Katz & Gurevitch, 1976; Robinson & Godbey, 1999) and public broadcasting organizations such as NHK and BBC.

The present volume raises all the right questions: It asks whether there are different kinds of non-publics; why museum attendance has fared better than in the other arts; why museums "try harder" to justify their legitimacy; whether blockbuster exhibitions really enlist more regular clientele; whether the price of admission makes a difference in attendance; and – most difficult of all – whether modes of reception and interpretation vary with differences in socialization, other background variables, and individual values. (EK)

2.
THE DIVERSITY OF NON-PUBLICS: FORMER PUBLICS, FUTURE PUBLICS

Publics are far from constituting a monolithic ensemble, an obedient army marching in tight formation. By the nature of their concerns, they can be divided into at least three different types. First there are *political publics*, which could be called "issue-driven" publics after Dewey's model. Political publics are flanked on one side by *taste* or *aesthetic* publics, which are oriented towards "texts" or "performances," and on the other side by *recognition-seeking publics* for whom mere visibility tends to be a goal in and of itself (Dayan, 2005a, 2005b; Ehrenberg, 1986). Recognition-seeking publics (such as publics of soccer or popular music) use their involvement with games or performances to endow themselves with visible identities.

Aesthetic publics (the reading publics of literature, the active publics of theater, the connoisseur publics of music and the arts) have always been singled out as exemplary by theorists of the public sphere, and by Habermas in particular. Yet, despite their apparently privileged status, aesthetic publics have often been ignored, or analyzed as mere training grounds for much more widely studied political publics. Salons, for example, were initially celebrated before they came to be considered as mere antechambers to the streets. Interestingly the publics that tend to be most studied are political publics. Aesthetic publics have been often neglected. This is why approaches that pay more than a lip service to aesthetic publics, such as those of Jacobi and Luckerhoff, or Ikegami (2000), are so important.

Of course the three types of publics outlined above are ideal types. We know they often overlap in reality. But aside from overlapping or "morphing" into each other, they share an important dimension. Publics have careers. They have biographies. They go through different stages, including birth, growth, fatigue, aging, death, and sometimes resuscitation. We shall discuss the circumstances of their birth below. But let us first address the moments and ways in which publics fade or disappear and become non-publics.

First of all, publics can die a natural death. They can become non-publics because what brought them to life no longer exists or no longer attracts their attention. But we should also consider other, less consensual possibilities such as exclusion or suicide.

Publics can disappear because they have been made invisible, or because they chose to become invisible. Sometimes there is no public to observe because a given public is denied visibility. The media – midwives in other circumstances – become abortionists. Every day,

potential publics disappear down the drain of unrealized destinies. They become non-publics because they are made invisible. Sometimes, however, publics put an end to their own visibility. They are intimidated. They panic and turn into "marrano" publics. Like Harry Potter, they choose to don the mantle of invisibility (Dayan, 2005a; Noelle-Neuman, 1984).

Most of the non-publics discussed here tend to be publics that used to exist and exist no longer. But the temporality of non-publics also includes *not yet publics*, those that have the potential to exist as they linger in limbo, waiting to be born. Such publics – like Sleeping Beauty – await their prince charming (be it a text, an event, or a situation), and the kiss of life that will bring them into existence.

And there is yet another unexpected yet well-known form of non-public: the *audience*. Allow us to explain. (DD)

3.
FULL PUBLICS, ALMOST PUBLICS AND NON-PUBLICS: THE QUESTION OF AUDIENCES

Publics in general can be defined in terms of the social production of shared attention. The focusing of collective attention generates a variety of attentive, reactive or responsive *bodies*, including publics, audiences, witnesses, activists, bystanders and many others. Among these bodies, two deserve special attention, since, in many ways, they are constructed as antonyms. *Publics* and *audiences* fulfill different roles in the economy of social attention. They also differ in relation to the autonomous or heteronomous nature of their visibility

Publics are generally conceived as mere providers of attention, as responding bodies, willing or unwilling resources that seekers of collective attention can turn to for sustenance. Yet publics are not always mere providers of attention. Some publics themselves call for attention and try to control it. They are both seekers and organizers of the attention of other publics (for the issues they promote). Many publics thus have something in common with Moscovici's "active minorities." They act as "opinion leaders" on a large scale. Like the media, such publics are providers of visibility, or agents of deliberate "monstration" (Dayan, 2009). In comparison to these "full" publics, audiences, no matter how active, are still confined to the receiving end of the communicative process.

The question of attention is linked to the question of visibility**.** Full publics not only provide attention, they receive it. They need other publics to watch them perform. They are eager to be seen. They strike

a pose. Their performances may be polemical or consensual, but they cannot be invisible. Such publics must "go public" or they stop being publics. Not so for audiences. Audiences often remain invisible until various research strategies quantify, qualify, and materialize their attention. For audiences to become visible, one often needs the goggles of methodology (Dayan, 2005a).

Thus, if we use *public* as a generic term, and if we choose visibility as the relevant criterion, we can speak of two types of public. The first type – the *full* public –performs out in the open. It is a collective whose nature consists in being *visible*. One could describe it as "obvious." No matter how intellectually active, the second type – the *audience* – does not perform in public. It remains in the private sphere. If a collective at all, an audience is an *invisible* one. In reference to Barthes (1970), we could define audiences as "obtuse" publics (Dayan, 2005a).

Of course, we should not forget that obvious and less obvious publics are often composed of the same people. Publics easily become audiences and vice versa. They are not separated by some conceptual iron curtain, but rather by a stage curtain that separates – in Goffmanian fashion – public performance (full publics) from non-performance (almost publics, audiences) (Dayan, 2005b). In the political domain, full publics stop being audiences when their concern for an issue prevails over their engagement with the narrative that raised the issue, thus triggering public engagement. It is this "coming out" in public that transforms an audience into a full public. Of course, that same full public can revert to the status of a mere audience when other issues are concerned.

To conclude these reflections on publics and audiences, two points should be made. First, in contrast with full publics, audiences, which have been described here as "almost publics," "obtuse publics," or "non-performing publics," appear to provide an interesting example of non-publics. Yet it seems more constructive to describe them as another form of public. (After all, in many languages, *public* is a generic word encompassing all sorts of collective attention providers, including those generally understood to make up an "audience") (Dayan, 2005b; Livingstone, 2005). Nevertheless the distinction between full publics and audiences remains useful since it allows for further differentiating of actual non-publics from "non-audiences" (Fiske, 1992; Dayan, 1998).(DD)

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4.
A GENEALOGICAL VIEW OF PUBLICS: *PERSONAE FICTAE*, DISCURSIVE BEINGS, OBSERVABLE REALITIES

Speaking of non-publics presupposes, of course, an ontology of publics. Publics are at once discursive constructions and social realities. Must we choose?

For Schlegel, "public" was not a thing, but a thought, a postulate, "like church." A similar awareness of possible reification is expressed by literary historian Hélène Merlin (Merlin, 1994), for whom the public stems from a *persona ficta*, a fictive being. Of course church – or, more precisely, the unity of church – is indeed a postulate. But any sociologist would point out that church is also an organized body, a political power, a land owner, and an economic institution. An ambivalence concerning the real status of publics, or as it was put recently, "the real world of audiences," lingers to this day (Hartley, 1988; Sorlin, 1992).

Yet, following Hartley's insight, it seems clear that publics – whether simultaneously or at different times – do belong in Popper's three universes: (1) publics are notions, ideations, or as Schegel puts it, "postulates"; (2) publics offer specific registers of action and specific kinds of subjective experiences; (3) publics constitute sociological realities that one can observe, visit or measure. Thus we might view publics as a process that combines (1) a *persona ficta* and (2) the enactment of that fiction, resulting in (3) an observable form of sociation. What this sequence suggests is the essential role played by the *persona ficta* – the "imagined public" – when it comes to generating actual publics (Dayan, 2005a).

A public is a collective subject that emerges in response to certain fictions. Thus, as John Peters remarked, a propos Habermas, 18th century publics emerge through reading and discussing newspapers where the notion of "public" is itself being discussed (Peters, 1993). Observable realities are born from intellectual constructions. A given *persona ficta* serves as a model for an observable sociation. What is suggested here is that the observable realities differ because the constructions that begot them also differ.

In the situation described by Peters, "public" belongs to the category of collective subjects that are imagined in the first person by a "we." As such, it is one among many examples of imagined communities, the most famous of which is, of course, the "nation" (Anderson, 1983). But publics are not always imagined in the first person. Only obvious

publics result from autonomous processes of imagination. In the case of other publics, imagination relies on heteronomous processes: the adopted fiction is often projected by outside observers.

Heteronomous processes, like autonomous processes, lead to observable realities. But they do not lead to the same realities. Different types of publics can indeed be linked to the professional bodies that produced them and to the professional or lay uses they allow. Thus the audiences of quantitative research could be described as the result of a demographic imagination. They are the version of publics that demographers construct. Similarly, meaning-making audiences could be described as semioticians' publics. They are produced by reception scholars, either for academic purposes (extending to the discourse of users' (readers or spectators) know-how gained in the analysis of texts) or for ideological purposes (rebutting Adorno's "great divide" and redeeming the "popular").

Both result in observable facts. Yet a demographer's audience and a semiotician's audience are quite different. An empirical object that consists in being counted is not the same as one that consists in being listened to. When demographers look at publics, they see age groups or classes. When semioticians look at publics, they see interpretive communities.

A last point concerning the type of public described earlier as "obvious" or "autonomous." While such a public may appear to be self-produced by its members, it is also modeled by the narratives of journalism, since, beyond the publishing of polls, much of journalistic production consists in what one could call "publi-graphy," the chronicling of publics. In a way, autonomous publics – whether political or cultural – are only autonomous up to a point. They are also children of the journalistic imagination.

What this genealogical analysis means is that different types of publics are born in the eyes of their observers. It is therefore essential to closely watch those who watch publics. Who is interested in publics? The question of *who* immediately translates into the question of *why*. Why should this or that *persona ficta* be conceived at all? What purposes do they serve? Publics often start their careers as a glint in the eye of observers. This glint is performative. Let us now turn to Jacobi and Luckerhoff and ask them: Why study non-publics? (DD)

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EDITORS' NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE WORDS "*PUBLIC*" AND "*NON-PUBLIC*"

Why did we choose not to translate "*public*" and "*non-public*" and to use the neologism *non-public*?

Certain non-francophone readers will no doubt wonder at the use of the word "*public*" and the neologism "*non-public*" in this volume, although these expressions have become quite common in Europe. "*Non-public*" was used for the first time in May, 1968, by those working professionally in the cultural domain in France. At the time, they were gathered in Villeurbanne at the head office of the TNP (French National Popular Theatres), and they used this notion in a very militant way to describe all those who were excluded from culture, and whom they considered to have a fundamental right to all cultural offers. In 1973, in his book *L'Action culturelle dans la cité*, Francis Jeanson reexamined the notion, this time making a distinction between the regular audience (*public*), the potential audience and the non-audience (*non-public*). For Jeanson, the expression *non-public* needs to be defined in relation to *public*, to which it is opposed as an antonym. He said in 1973:

> When I proposed the expression *non-public* to designate those who are excluded from culture I could not have imagined the surprising misunderstandings to which it would give rise for years to come. And yet, the efforts that I had to make to dissipate those misunderstandings allowed me to understand their very roots. For me, and, I believe, for many of my colleagues, the *non-public* was the vast majority of the population: all those men and women to whom society does not supply (or even refuses) the means to "choose freely." What we wanted was for this population to "break out" of its present isolation, to break free of its ghetto, by becoming more and more active in the historical and social contexts. We wanted this population to free itself more and more of the mystifications of all kinds that tend to make it, within itself,

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an accomplice to the very situations that are inflicted upon it. We wanted, from the very beginning, to turn cultural initiatives into an "enterprise of politicization,"[1] (Own translation)

In English, neither "*public*" (which might be understood as being "not private") nor "*non-public*" are easy to translate.[2] The problem was confirmed by several anglophone researchers with whom we discussed the question. Dr. Christopher Plumb, Temporary Lecturer in Museology from the Centre of Museology, University of Manchester, considers that "*public*" has several connotations and meanings, and that "*non-public*" has no meaning for anglophones. Jocelyn Dodd, Director of the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester also believes that English speakers would be perplexed by the term "*non-public*" and that it would make no sense to them. However, if we used the common words like "audience" or "non-spectators" to designate those who simply go or do not go to museum institutions or to the cinema, we would somehow miss the singularity carried by the notion of "*public*" and "*non-public*." We are fully aware that these terms might be irritating for a British reader, especially as they are found throughout this multi-author book but "audience" and "missing or absent audiences" simply do not suit because of their passive character. "Visitors" and "non-visitors" can only be used for museums, art galleries and festivals and do not suit the cinema, for which we would need to talk about "viewers," "spectators" or "audience." Furthermore, "participants" and "non-participants" are too vague and do not really capture the dimension of a collective and conscious act that the French term "*public*" evokes. So, even if we must leave our anglophone readers a little perplexed, we have chosen to keep the French expressions as they stand. They represent a particular notion that dates to a specific moment in history and, by its very singularity, seems to capture the real desire in France to democratize culture. Since the 2010 publication of this review in French, a more recent article has been written in English and published in the *Journal of Science Communication*, in which the author refers to "different kinds of publics: target public, public, non-public, potential public" (Van Roten, 2011: 2).

We would like to think that our Anglophone readers will bear with us, enjoy reading this work and perhaps even consider using this somewhat original linguistic creation in the future.

The Editors, Daniel Jacobi and Jason Luckerhoff

1. Francis Jeanson (1973). *L'action culturelle dans la cité*. Paris: Seuil, p. 30.
2. As we have chosen to keep the neologism of the French term *"non-public,"* it seemed logical to use the American homographic translation of the French *"public,"* which we know is not used by British researchers. We hope they will forgive us.

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The articles that make up this multi-author book were first published in the thematic volume of the review *Society and Leisure*. This particular volume was entitled "À la recherche du non-public / Looking for non-publics" (Vol. 32 # 1). The translation of these texts was made possible thanks to generous financial contributions from the Décanat des études de cycles supérieurs et de la recherche (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières), the MacDonald Stewart Foundation, Jason Luckerhoff and Daniel Jacobi.

The translation was done by Claire Holden Rothman who is a Montreal writer and certified translator. Although most of her translation work is commercial and scholarly, her literary translation of Quebec's first home-grown novel, *Le chercheur de trésors / The Alchemist* by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé Junior, won the John Glassco Translation Award. Rothman's own publications include two story collections and the best-selling novel, *The Heart Specialist*, nominated for the Scotiabank-Giller prize in 2009 and translated into Italian, German and French.

The completion of the translation, and particularly the many hours of necessary discussion with each author, was carried out by Shayne Garde-Girardin, English for Specific Purposes teacher in the Department of Cultural, Media and Communication Studies at the Université d'Avignon et des Pays du Vaucluse in France. Shayne grew up in Zimbabwe where she studied and then taught both French and English. In France her teaching has taken her down the path into the world of social sciences. She discovered a passion for culture and its sociological dimensions, specializing in the translation from French into English of research work and articles in museology, exhibition and museum audience analysis, media and cultural sociology.

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INTRODUCTION
LOOKING FOR NON-PUBLICS

Daniel Jacobi and **Jason Luckerhoff**
Editors

How important is artistic or literary creation to the *public*? Are cultural quality and creativity in any way related to the nature of the target public? Why should the quality of art depend on the size of viewership? And what does being a member of the *public* entail? Is it sufficient to attend, witness or participate in order to be considered part of the *public*? What are the implicit conditions to be a member of the public – in terms of taste, knowledge of rules and deportment which, beyond simple know-how, define a relationship with a cultural sphere, whether the relationship be detached, eclectic or passionate? Is taste for artistic and literary creation spontaneous, or is it simply the result of intense and steady practice?

In the case of cultural heritage, what comprises the opposition between *public* and *non-public*? Is it the same as in any segment of high culture? What really differentiates *public* from *non-public*? Do members of the public feel they belong to a cultural elite? Is it possible to define the basic conditions of being part of the public? Are those massive crowds drawn towards major monuments in cities an indication of a burst of interest in culture?

For years researchers have grappled with the notion of *public*. Indeed, from a theoretical perspective (the opposition between production and reception implies specific research focusing on readership, listenership and viewership) and the perspective of media economy (audience measurement requires developing quantitative tools to control and measure audience size), the relevance of this type of research is self-evident.

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Immediately following the publication of Daniel Dayan's article, "*À la recherche du public*," appearing in an issue of Hermes (1993), researchers pinpointed the arbitrariness and very conventional aspect of the notion of *public*. In fact, the articles in this issue depict audience behaviour as a heterogeneous reception limited neither to the confines of compliant ratification of media content offerings nor to the plethora of attitudes and postures prevailing among those adverse to the media.

What is the thrust of the notion of *public*? How does an arbitrary heterogeneous aggregation of individuals of diverse origins manage to exhibit commonality and cohesion to the point of constituting a public? As a social entity, the public – so called, and rightly so because it does indeed exist in the here and now as participants in a cultural happening – is different from the rest of the population, which on the converse, is not present and not part of the happening.

Considerations of *public* with regard to high culture (theatre, museums and art exhibitions, classical music, dance, avant-garde films, etc.) are rather different. A long-standing debate over unequal accessibility to this sophisticated form of culture still prevails. The main preoccupation of culture experts has been to foster what has been referred to as the democratization of a form of culture that, in their opinion, is too often, and very unfairly so, reserved for the elite. In this vein, the Declaration of Villeurbanne (1968) written by Francis Jeanson in France introduced the notion of *non-public*, which has since been the subject of discussion and debate, dating back to 2001 in a publication in two volumes (*Les non-publics : les arts en receptions*, coedited by Ancel and Pessin, and published by L'Harmattan, 2004). Consisting of contributions from the symposium, *Sociologie de l'art* held in Grenoble, they address a sociological reality and empirical research, hence the shift from the notion of *potential public* to that of *non-public* entailing an imperceptible shift from a probabilistic to an investigable world (Fleury, 2004).

The invention of the notion of *non-public* and, on a wider scale, the issue surrounding *non-publics* have given rise to much debate: Target of advertising campaigns, communication research subject, object and essence of public policy, this notion refers to something that doesn't exist (Ethis, 2004) and "attests to a hierarchical categorization. . . of *publics* as good or bad" (Pérez, Soldini, & Vitale, 2004).

In other words, identifying and considering a small group as a *public* is tantamount to declaring the rest of the population a non-public (even though the latter constitutes a larger segment of the population). *A priori*, *non-public* should basically be defined as that portion of the population, that despite having the possibility of enjoying cultural offerings, does not partake of them in any way, shape or form. The notion of *public* encompasses its opposite on the other side of the coin: the *non-public* (Jeanson, 1968).

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The term *non-public* is a default designation. The harshness of the negation is equalled only by its absurdity: all those in charge of cultural apparatuses know that the main source of the public is the non-public. The transition from one status to the other appears therefore to be arbitrary, based on some sort of decision. On the other hand, is it possible to be considered a somewhat potential public without ever attending any cultural event? In this regard, it is worth noting that for a number of years, professionals in the cultural field have been using euphemistic adjectives such as *deprived*, *marginalized and excluded*, etc., to designate these publics, giving the impression that this form of exclusion was effected against the general will of concerned parties to rank among the cultural elite.

However, if the notion of non-public is antonymic, it is certainly not ancillary. If the public's authority matters, then far from being some irrelevant occasional gathering of individuals, the public appears as a vibrant group that distinguishes itself from the rest of the population through its tastes or practices. The public is a public in the true sense only because it differentiates itself from those who are both detached and disinterested. A member of the public would therefore be a conscious, consciously satisfied individual, claiming membership of the cultural audience.

However, for this opposition to be fully functional, it should be borne in mind that it is based on two unspoken assumptions: the culture being referred to and the conditions that define what a public is. First, a word about culture: does mass culture (movies, television, variety shows) with its general appeal and its capacity to garner huge audiences also generate a *non-public*? It probably does, but very little attention is paid to this phenomenon. The notion of *non-public* is mobilized mainly with regard to high culture, a culture that is not readily accessible, that is made available by merit, and requires a long period of cultural acclimatization (art history, literature, archaeology, classical music, opera, dance, architecture, historical monuments, natural heritage, and so on).

The *non-public* is not so much a group of non-participants but individuals blatantly incapable of appreciating a culture that is unfamiliar, even foreign. They cannot become a part of the public due to the significant disparity between their own culture and the more sophisticated culture of which they know nothing. For over a century, the popular education movement, in its initial project to bring public and culture closer together, has emphasized this cultural gap, which even today justifies the necessity for cultural mediation policies. The near-militant voluntarism of the active players in cultural mediation engenders certain expectations: following a large investment in cultural creation, is it not justifiable to aspire to reach the largest possible audience?

In this book, nine researchers from France, Quebec and Mexico tackle these questions through both qualitative and quantitative contributions dealing with various cultural sectors in which the question of *non-publics* remains unanswered.

Julia Bonaccorsi, Associate Professor of Information and Communication Sciences at the University of Paris-Est Créteil, provides a theoretical review of the concept of *non-public* which players in cultural institutions deploy to circumscribe their action. Thus, she suggests that we consider the non-public as political as well as sociological mediation. She posits that the non-public is a sign, a fixed form that effectively evokes some sort of cultural history.

Hana Gottesdiener, Emeritus Professor at the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense and Jean-Christophe Vilatte, Associate Professor at the University of Nancy II are both members of the Centre Norbert Elias, Équipe Culture et Communication at the Université d'Avignon et des pays de Vaucluse. They compare the sociological and psychological approaches in order to better understand the factors preventing people from visiting art museums. More specifically, they focus on behaviour variations within socio-demographically homogeneous groups. They present the results of three studies: an analysis of detailed interviews, a survey by questionnaire, and the development of a measurement index for the analysis of relationships between self-image, image of visitors, and attendance.

Rosaire Garon, Associate Professor in the Leisure, Culture and Tourism Department at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and former coordinator of the Survey on cultural practices of Quebec, proposes a new perspective on the arts and culture public in Quebec and the United States. Based on the observation that, over the past few decades, cultural happenings of a more classical nature occur less and less frequently, this chapter demonstrates how cultural practices have evolved and identifies which social groups have experienced the most rapid changes. Garon draws on data from the Survey on cultural practices of Quebec and the Survey on participation of Americans in the arts.

Daniel Jacobi, Emeritus Professor and member of the Culture & Communication Laboratory (Avignon) and Jason Luckerhoff, Assistant Professor in the Letters and Social Communication Department at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, seek to provide a clearer understanding of what denotes a member of the public. They examine the implicit conditions that differentiate the two factions, even among active participants. Based on two case studies, taken from recent surveys conducted in Canada and abroad, they investigate the opposition between public and non-public and attempt to redefine the rather tenuous boundaries.

Luz María Ortega Villa, from the University of Baja California, Mexico, demonstrates how people with preferences far from the culture considered "high" or "sophisticated" are actually publics of another form of culture offering. Hence, the concept of *non-public* can be applied only because they are not publics of a certain high culture. This article identifies the individuals considered non-publics and examines the promotional strategies applied to the cultural products favoured by those who are not interested in high culture. This prompts the author to consider non-publics as social agents capable of inducing society to reflect on this issue.

Michaël Bourgatte, Doctor of Information and Communication Sciences and member of the Culture & Communication Laboratory at the University of Avignon, questions whether the public of avant-garde movie theatres can at the same time be considered a non-public of cultural and artistic films, since theatres designated for such films also screen commercial films. The author conducted two surveys in several avant-garde movie theatres. He points out that the category of non-public is a socio-discursive construction used indistinctively to categorize a group that does not patronize certain venues. He suggests that the affordances of a venue should be dissociated from actual artistic enjoyment of those in attendance.

Jacqueline Eidelman, Research Associate at the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) and Representative of the Heritage Branch of the Ministry of Culture (Department of Public Policy), demonstrates that the debate between partisans and opponents of free access often takes an ideological turn. In her opinion, the most widely held view is that introducing free access will interest only the existing public. It is thus implied that it has little to no impact on the audience democratization process. Analyzing a study of museum attendance over the past fifty years and the changes that have occurred in the sociological composition of publics, Eidelman affirms that the introduction of free access to fourteen French museums and national monuments in the first half of 2008 did in fact have an effect on the composition of publics "towards cultural democratization."

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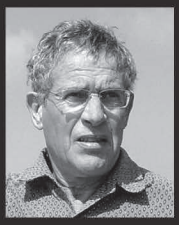
COLLECTION PUBLICS ET CULTURE

Edited by
Anik Meunier and
Jason Luckerhoff

"Non-public" was used for the first time in May, 1968, by those working professionally in the cultural domain in France. At the time, they were gathered in Villeurbanne at the head office of the TNP (French National Popular Theatres), and they used this notion in a very militant way to describe all those who were excluded from culture, and whom they considered to have a fundamental right to all cultural offers.

In this book, nine researchers from France, Quebec and Mexico tackle these questions through both qualitative and quantitative contributions dealing with various cultural sectors in which the question of non-publics remains unanswered. In fact, the non-public is not so much a group of non-participants but individuals blatantly incapable of appreciating a culture that is unfamiliar, even foreign. For over a century, the popular education movement, in its initial project to bring public and culture closer together, has emphasized this cultural gap, which even today, justifies the necessity for cultural mediation policies. The near-militant voluntarism of the active players in cultural mediation engenders certain expectations: after a large investment in cultural creation is it not justifiable to aspire to reach the largest possible audience?



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