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JE for Chapter 9

ENGL 400 - Rhetoric in Civic Life

Rhetoric brings together a group of people who forms a public that have

common interest. These public groups come together to have discussions,

conversations and arguments about different issues. This would create

a **public sphere**. “Haberma’s gives examples that these conversations started

happening in coffee houses.” (Rhetoric in Civic Life, pg. 168) I know several

people growing up that met early in the morning over coffee. I use to say they

were trying to solve the world’s problems. Each person had something to add

to the discussion those mornings, their different opinions.

1. There are many different kinds of publics. **Weak Public** is “publics whose

deliberate Practice consists exclusively in opinion formation and does not encompass

decision making.(Rhetoric in Civic Life, pg. 271, para.2). The counter to Weak public

is **Strong Public**. A strong public is “ publics whose discourse encompasses both

‘

opinion and decision making.”(pg. 271, para. 2). The weak public are the groups

together to discuss opinions and try to draw attention of the ones who can enact

laws and make change. This public would be the strong public like congressman.

distributing power within a public tends to vary and a **dominant public** tends to

emerge. “A dominant public tends to emerge, one that has the strength to translate

its beliefs into actions, affecting even people who do not share its beliefs. (pg. 272, para.5).

Some lesser publics (weaker) may get left out, not heard.

2. The opposite to a dominate public would be **counterpublics.** Nancy Fraser

defines it as: “ Parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social

group invent and circulate counter discourse to formulate oppositional interpretation

of their identities, interest and needs.” (pg. 273, para. 4). Counterpublics help to bring

about an argument over the issues and gives others a chance to think about them and

question what their beliefs are of that issue. It has them look at it from another perspective.

The book gives example of women and dealing with sexual harassment. They created

their public and brought their opinions and arguments to light. They shared a commonality,

 identity and what their needs were. They wanted a right to work harassment free. This

counterpublic became a part of a public sphere. “Counterpublics have two functions -

**Enclaved publics**, which are publics that conceal their anti-establishment idea and stra

in order to avoid sanctions, but internally produce lively debate and planning.” (pg. 275, para. 1).

The opposite is: “ **Oscillating publics,** are publics that exist to engage in debate with

outsiders and to test ideas.” (pg. 275, para.1). Publics also expand from within our borders

and emerges on international levels. Which these becomes expanded borders become

**Transnational publics.**

3. Publics have many influences such as, culture, where the power is and how they are

connected. We live in the digital age which expands the included many counterpublics.

The internet, twitter, social media are just a few examples. Rhetoric reaches vast

audiences and gives options for discourse. It can make or break a rhetor. Dana Cloud

argues: “that because the state, the dominant public sphere, and the economy are intertwined,

and the public sphere and state are often in service to the economy, one must challenge

all three through identity circulation (for example, by challenging racist, sexist, or class

constructions) and through a focus on the state structure as well as on the institutions

Of the economy (such as the banks and corporations).” (pg. 279, para. 2).

In conclusion, there are many different kinds of publics with the public sphere. Each public

has its on identity and their powers vary. Each public has different influences and voices

through discussion and arguments in order to persuade a change. The digital age has made

reaching vast publics of many different cultures. These publics work together to meet the

challenge by influencing the policy makers in order to have change happen.

Citation:

Palczewski Catherine Helen, Ice Richard, Fritch John, Rhetoric in Civic Life, 2016, 2012,

Strata Publishing, Inc.