Rhetorical Pedagogy as a Postal System: Circulating Subjects Through Michael Warner's "Publics and Counter-Publics"

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During the past century, the linguistic turn in the human sciences and the anxiety over new communication technologies (radio, television, computers, satellites) focused intellectual attention on communication’s role in organizing the interaction between self and other. On the one hand, communication was given ontological priority and, on the other, communication was invested with a normative privilege. The ontological and the normative force of communication generates a strong political imperative to assert itself as the most democratic principle to guide human interaction. From this perspective, to recognize oneself as a subject who communicates is the first step toward the democratic reconciliation of self and other. The ability of communication to assert an ontological, normative, and political priority makes abundantly clear why, according to Briceland Chang, the “enemy of communication is indifference.”

Indifference is the biggest threat because communication is advocated as a pedagogy for the soul, and without one’s full attention to how communication cares for the soul, all is lost.

No concept of modernity escapes the force of communication. The public is no exception; it has been thoroughly reformulated as a problem of communication. Rhetorical studies is saturated with the “public,” for example, public speaking, public argumentation, public interest, public knowledge, public affairs, public communication, public sphere, public address, public discourse, and public philosophy. The public and its problems, to steal a phrase, are the central research questions of rhetorical studies. For this reason, Michael Warner’s conceptualization of the public demands serious attention. Yet his essay will come with some peculiar challenges to the received tradition. The primary challenge is Warner’s resistance to the vocabulary of communication to guide the relational norms and forms of a public. In so doing, no particular genre of speaking or practice of communication (debate, dialogue, rational-critical argumentation, conversation, reading) can be offered as the universal normative foundation for regulating, improving, and/or critiquing the problems and possibilities of a public. In this way, Warner is interfering with the moral pedagogy of communication studies and rhetoric to fashion the souls required for a public life.

A normative belief in the power of rhetoric to correct the soul of a citizenry damaged by liberalism, television, the market, technocratic reasoning, therapeutic discourse, and consumer culture transforms rhetorical scholars into moral entrepreneurs of public life. Whether a rhetorical scholar fashions his or her project on the normative terrain of a neo-conservative Platonist, an advocate of neo-Puritan political communication, a Ciceroonian civic humanist, an invitational rhetorician, a dialogic liberal, or a red Republican, communication becomes the technique for transforming the soul of citizens and society. Rhetorical studies is infused with the desire to advocate the normative capacity of communication to provide the foundation for public life. Although Warner’s
essay is thoroughly political, it promotes its politics without the moral entrepreneurship underwriting rhetorical studies’ desire to reanimate the public concept.

My purpose in this essay is not to defend rhetoric as a moral pedagogy; instead, I want to resituate it as a public pedagogy, that is, as a form of civics education, normatively required to attend to the discourses of a public. In so doing, rhetorical studies produces, circulates, and delivers communicative souls to the discourses of a public. In other words, rhetorical pedagogy is part of a public’s postal system. It assembles and transports economic, political, and cultural subjects through the institutional relays of a public. The recognition of rhetoric’s postal function offers a way to understand the material dimensions of public address, a dimension recognized and repressed by Warner’s vision of a public. In this essay I want to focus on Warner’s displacement of communication models to make visible the public pedagogy of rhetorical studies. In the second section of the paper I will use this communicative form of ethical self-fashioning to make visible the material significance of the postal system. The consequence of my paper is that a more abstract and material idea of a public is needed to account for how postal systems link publics with discourse.

Circulation, Communication, and the Norms of Stranger-Relationality

Warner begins his essay by stating that he is interested in outlining the type of public “that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation” (50). This opening gambit is offered as an alternative to the standard views that conceptualize the public as a people/community or as a concrete audience. Warner’s public is not simply an alternative way of imagining the organization of a public; its key characteristics are what make possible thinking about a public as either a people or an audience. “Publics and Counterpublics” performs a conceptual archaeology of the rules that have formed the idea of a public as an object of study and agent of history. Warner’s initial definitional move requires the reader to put texts, circulation, and publics together as an interactive unity.

For me, the peculiar place of circulation in Warner’s essay points to the relationship between communication and transportation; for example, communication and transportation share the idea of delivery. Transportation makes possible the delivery of persons, commodities, and material bodies, on the one hand, while communication delivers messages, letters, texts, and meanings, on the other. The interaction between communication and transportation is so taken for granted that increasingly we can deliver weapons of mass destruction as letters and messages as airplanes and “smart bombs.” As the recent events of 9/11 made visible, the interaction between communication and transportation enable the creation of a global (re)public of terror.

Warner advances four characteristics of a public: its self organization, its status as a relation among strangers, its personal and impersonal mode of address, and its constitution through mere attention. These interlocking characteristics reveal a fifth characteristic. For Warner, “a public is a social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse” (62). The importance of circulation constitutes the most significant challenge to rhetorical and communication studies. Similar to Derrida’s idea of dissemination, Warner’s focus on circulation complicates any effort to approach the discourses of a public through the lens of a communication model. For Warner, the emphasis on circulation challenges the assumptions of communication models to explore the idea of
a public through its relational understanding of self and other (speaker/audience; sender/receiver) and the norms envisioned for this communicative encounter.

Scholars who conceptualize a public through a communication model risk privileging a “single voice, single genre, even a single medium.” Thus, it becomes easier to miss the geographical dynamics of a public as a “space of encounter for discourse.” From this perspective, “no single text can create a public” (62); instead, a public requires the “concatenation of texts through time.” In Derridean terms, what is required for a public of discourse is citationality: a temporal and spatial landscape of textual cross-referencing. As such, publics always are made up of strangers putting texts to use in ways unimagined by their producers. The circulatory path of a public is potentially infinite, and the indefinite others to whom texts are addressed exist as strangers who do not know with whom they interact. Neither an actual addressee (an empirical audience, a known receiver) nor an implied addressee (an audience as persona or figurative effect of discourse) can exhaust the possible interactions among strangers made possible by circulating discourses.

For Warner, the context of interaction between strangers is too often imagined through the metaphors of communication. In light of the privileged role given to critical-rational argumentation in the formation of the bourgeois public sphere and our own disciplinary emphasis on deliberative rhetoric, dialogic invitations, co-operative and controversial modes of argument, and conversation, it is easy to recognize this trend to explain the context of a public as a communicative interaction. In my opinion, Warner is doing more than replacing one model of communication with another. John Durham Peters, for example, recently provided a powerful account of the failures of dialogic models of communication; he also provides a model of communication based on dissemination. What holds Peters’s choice of models together as a choice between communication models is his relational emphasis on communication as “the project of reconciling self and other.” Warner, however, is not taking part in a meta-debate over the models or the possibility of communication. For Warner, the mode of interaction “postulated in public discourse goes far beyond the scale of conversation or discussion to encompass a multi-generic life-world organized not just by a relational axis of utterance and response but by potentially infinite axes of citation and characterization” (63). As such, Warner’s notion of circulation supports Kendall Phillips’s argument that the “spatial metaphor of the public sphere fails to recognize the fluidity, multiplicity, and mobility of controversies.” At the same time, the idea of controversy is too close to critical-rational argumentation and fails to recognize Warner’s more multi-generic idea of public discourse.

To be sure, Warner wants to think of the public both as communication and more than communication; his is not an either-or choice, but the conceptual costs are high if the relational forms of communication take center stage. In other words, the idea of textual circulation outruns the ability of any communication model to offer an understanding of the path of public discourse as nothing more than a relational encounter between a self and other (sender/audience; speaker/audience). Of course, any effort to limit the power of communication models to explain the logics of a public will likely make it harder for Warner’s essay to circulate in the discipline of communication studies. The risks to disciplinary identity engendered by this essay are worth taking, however, if Warner’s essay provides new ways to think about the rhetoric-public interface.
Moreover, communication models are misleading for understanding the organization of a public owing to the importance of temporality. According to Warner, "for a text to be public," it is necessary to recognize the "temporality of circulation," and the temporality of circulation specific to publics is "punctual" (66). For a public of discourse to emerge, its discourses must be temporally self-reflexive about their own rhythms of circulation. For Warner, circulating discourses mark their punctuality by "regular and dated papers, magazines, almanacs, annuals and essay serials" (66). The punctuality of public discourse is oriented to the contemporaneous and to its future ability to circulate. For rhetorical studies, temporality is respected as a key capacity of a rhetorical citizen. The virtue of kairos calls on the orator to say the right thing at the right time. Rhetorical timing and appropriateness, however, are imagined as arising from a concrete situation. John Angus Campbell points to the determining role of the concrete situation: "[T]he knowledge possessed by the speaker who has timing and a sense of the appropriate is culled from many sources but it is finally based on, directed toward, and determined by the concrete situation."10

At first glance John Campbell's "concrete situation" and Michael Warner's "punctuality" would seem to refer to similar processes. At the very least, what Warner has to say about the ways that circulation organizes time would need to be thought of as a positive and negative constraint of the concrete situation that determines rhetorical action. However, Campbell's rhetorical action would take place in a particular type of public space and cannot be the model for understanding the organization of public address. Campbell's vision of the orator as capable of transforming the concrete situation from which s/he emerges is misleading because the "activity and duration of publics" moves beyond the concrete situation of a particular decision. For Warner, "a text, to have a public, must continue to circulate through time, and because this can only be confirmed through an intertextual environment of citation and implication, all publics are intertextual, even intergeneric" (68). Campbell's concrete situation is too concrete; it already presupposes the uses that addressees make of the discourses they might encounter (a decision). Thus, the rhetorical situation fails to provide a model for a public because in order to be public, discourse needs to keep circulating beyond its concrete situation.

Although the idea that publics interact as described through models of communication is misleading for Warner, they nonetheless provide a crucial component of our understanding of publics as agents of history. The sixth characteristic of publics is that they "act historically according to the temporality of their circulation." Different publics exist in different temporal logics, with the most political of publics being associated with the "temporality of the headline" and not, for example, the academic/intellectual "temporality of the archive" (66). The increasing speed demanded of new technologies circulating public discourse suggests the beginnings of a qualitative break with the forms of punctuality associated with the modern idea of a public. The modern forms of print and television, with their monthly, weekly, and daily news cycles and serialization are beginning to give way to an instantaneous and continuous 24/7/365 circulation of discourse. Warner leaves open to discussion whether the new temporality of the network society will bring about a fundamental rupture in the idea of a public. Yet we should register the ways that the network society disrupts the preferred temporality of rhetorical deliberation. As Hans Blumenburg suggests, the temporality of rhetorical deliberation attempts to arrest the speed of discourse so a judgment can be made about a particular event.11 Any exploration of a digital rhetoric will require a reevaluation of the preferred time of deliberation. Moreover, the different temporalities of communi-
cation technologies suggest problems for using particular forms of communicative interaction (deliberation, dialogue, conversation) as a normative model for organizing the interaction of a public of discourse. From my perspective, the problem of temporality points to the need to redefine the object of public address as a spatial encounter at differential speeds of circulation and durations of attention.

The sense that publics are agents of history offers Warner a space to rethink the political importance of publics. Because publics are ways for strangers to interact, they provide “an ethical disposition, a social imaginary, an extremely specialized set of formal conventions, and a temporality” (75). The norms of stranger sociability provide Warner with a political wedge to make social criticism possible; however, this offers a different political lever than that provided by understanding politics “as a field of interest-bearing strategic actors in a specific relation of power and subordination” (76).

To think of publics as interest-bearing strategic actors is one way to begin an ideological critique of the covert content of public address. For Warner, the political principle of public agents generates the tension between a public and the public, a distinction that makes possible arguments that “the public is essentially white, or essentially male” (77). Professor Warner, however, is after bigger fish.

The political dynamics of public discourse “goes well beyond any strategy of domination. The projection of a public is a new, creative, and distinctively modern mode of power” (72). A public exists as a modern form of power by creating the norms that organize interaction as a space of stranger-relationality. Once again we face the problems of conceptualizing the interaction of a public through the metaphors of communication provided by argument, dialogue, conversation, or reading. All these forms of communication provide particular norms of interaction, which produce and regulate discursive behavior. Like Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Warner’s essay supports the claim that speech genres can imply norms of behavior that discipline the public speech of women. For Warner, public debate and dialogue imply norms of sociability that tend to disembody interlocutors and make difficult alternative norms, perhaps more embodied norms, of stranger sociability. Finally, as others have suggested, the materiality of the forms of public address are likely to change what we take to be the norms of good public speaking.

The stakes in Warner’s position require rethinking the notion of a counterpublic. Counterpublics are not primarily strategic actors attempting to persuade a dominant public of the benefits of their particular policies. The conflict put into operation by a counterpublic is a challenge to the norms of the dominant public’s modes of address. According to Warner “the discourse that constitutes [a counterpublic] is not merely a different or alternative idiom, but one that in other contexts would be regarded with hostility, or with a sense of indecorousness” (86). In this way, publics and counterpublics are more than spaces of persuasion; they are poetic-expressive forces that imagine particular worlds of stranger sociability. It is, for example, the heteronormativity of the dominant public that is threatened by the organization of a queer counterpublic. Warner writes that

Within a gay or queer counterpublic... no one is in the closet: the presumptive heterosexuality that constitutes the closet for individuals in ordinary speech is suspended. But this circulatory space, freed from heteronormative speech protocols, is itself marked by that very suspension: speech that addresses any participant as queer will circulate up to a point, at which it is certain to meet intense resistance. It might therefore circulate in special, protected venues, in limited
publications. The individual struggle with stigma is transposed, as it were, to the conflict between modes of publicness (86–87).

Thus, a counterpublic does not simply challenge the norms associated with communicative reasoning; it also challenges the ways that communication models generate norms of social interaction.

Warner argues that "counterpublics are 'counter' to the extent that they try to supply different ways of imagining stranger sociability and its reflexivity; as publics, they remain oriented to stranger circulation in a way that is not just strategic, but constitutive of membership and its affects" (87–88). Like Robert Asen, Warner claims that what is at stake in the meaning of the counter in counterpublic are discursive norms and practices. Yet Warner locates the norms regulating stranger sociability inside the very language ideologies that tend to underwrite communication models of interaction. Warner also moves away from strategic encounters of recognition and the inclusion/exclusion of counterpublics toward the world-making potential of counterpublics and the risks implied by the interaction between a counterpublic and the state. Once counterpublics begin to act like social movements and enter a relationship with the state, a moment of profound danger emerges. For Warner, this strategic encounter forces counterpublics to adjust to "the temporality of politics" and "adapt themselves to the performatives of rational-critical discourse." The danger in such strategic interaction is that a counterpublic might "cede the original hope of transforming not just policy, but the space of public life itself" (89).

Rhetorical Pedagogy and the Postal System of a Public

Although Warner offers good reasons for abandoning communication models to imagine the stranger-relationship of a public, I argue that the normative force of communication models allows for the transformation of rhetoric and communication studies into a moral pedagogy. In Foucauldian terms, a moral pedagogy is a mode of subjectification. A mode of subjectification is the process by which a subject recognizes him or herself as a subject. This is an ethical process in which the self encounters itself as a subject in a particular form. The goal of rhetorical studies is that the subjects of its pedagogy recognize themselves as public subjects. The communicative-moral telos of this mode of ethical subjectification is the reconciliation of self and other. In this section, I want to describe this moral pedagogy as part of the postal system of a public in order to reveal the need for a more material and abstract idea of the "public-concept."

Starting from Warner's emphasis on circulation, it is possible to rethink the materiality of public address as the presuppositions repressed by public discourse. To make these material presuppositions more visible, an extended passage from Warner's essay is worth citation:

The discourse of a public is a linguistic form from which the social conditions of its own possibility are in large part derived. The magic by which discourse conjures a public into being, however, remains imperfect because of how much it must presuppose. And because many defining elements in the self-understanding of publics are to some extent always contradicted by practice, the sorcerer must continually cast spells against the darkness. A public seems to be self-organized by discourse; but in fact requires preexisting forms and channels of circulation. It appears to be open to indefinite strangers; but in fact selects participants by criteria of shared social space (though not necessarily territorial space), habitus, topical concerns, intergeneric references, and circulating intelligible forms (including idiolects or speech genres). . . . Public discourse circulates, but it does so in struggle with its own conditions (75).
In the previous section, I pointed out that the idea of circulation allows us to imagine the ways that delivery unites the forces of transportation and communication. It might be fruitful to think of the “forms and channels of circulation” presupposed by a public as a delivery apparatus that makes it possible for strangers to partake actively in the circulation of public discourse. Derrida calls this delivery apparatus a postal system, and in the hands of Brianke Chang, the delivery apparatus of the postal system reaches the status of a principle. For Chang “the postal principle can be viewed as the medium of communication as such, the universal mediator that mediates all events of exchange within a given network.”

In more pedestrian and less philosophical language, I suggest that the post office is one of those institutional forms and channels of circulation presupposed by a public. The post office is an agency committed to making sure that the addressees receive the texts addressed to them. If the sense of being part of a public is a relationship among strangers being addressed by similar things, then the post office makes it possible for discourse to offer itself up for attention. Is the post office necessary to find this discourse? No, but it contributes to the punctuality and the temporal rhythms of the publics that attempt to catch one’s attention through interpellation. The possibility that an address could be anyone’s address creates the uncanny recognition that what the post office delivers to one person could be delivered to all. Thus, strangers belong to a similar public made possible by the link with the post office as much as by any particular text delivered by the post office. Once we start giving material form to institutional relays like the post office, however, we face the problem associated with Warner’s first thesis, namely that a public is self-organized, and the agent of this organization must be “something other than the state.” It might be worth recalling Derrida’s statement at this point, “with the progress of the post the State police has always gained ground.” Once we accept the role of the postal principle, however, it is difficult to think of a public apart from its organization by state actors.

The organization of a public in and through discourse requires the help of the material forms of the postal system. For Warner a public is a spectral entity, a ghostly thing, a cultural form conjured up by a sorcerer who, at the same time, must repress its presuppositions. All of these material presuppositions point toward the postal dimension of public address. Yet such an approach to the materiality of public address is not, in itself, new, although it is often found in the institutional criticism of political economy. The problem with approaching the postal system (remember, this would include all the relays made possible by transportation and communication to circulate public discourse) from the standpoint of institutional political economy is that it is likely to reinscribe the economic interests of media institutions as the primary ideological consequence of circulating discourses. The effect of this move would be to transform the organization of publics into an epiphenomenal effect of the market. In such a world we are nothing, according to Warner, but the “peasants of capital.” Warner suggests that publics and markets interact in ways that preclude collapsing the one into the other. At the same time, it is politically prudent to remember that neo-liberalism also offers a set of norms to guide the social interaction among strangers as entrepreneurial/enterprising subjects maximizing utility. In a neo-liberal public, we are not so much peasants, as sellers of our own souls.

The norms regulating interaction among strangers generate an ethical disposition to guide the uptake of public discourse. This is the central point underlying Warner’s seventh thesis, that “a public is poetic-world making” (82). At the same time, Warner
reminds everyone associated with the aesthetic turn that publics encounter objective
constraints on the circulation of public address. With the idea of ethical dispositions in
mind, I want to move to the postal dimension of rhetorical studies. Rhetorical studies
attempts to assemble students as ethical subjects by delivering them to a public of
discourse. In a less authoritarian voice than that provided by Derrida, I might bend the
idea of state police toward the Foucauldian-inspired idea of cultural policy. As a
cultural policy, rhetorical studies attempts to cultivate the soul of the student through the
instruments, techniques, norms, mediums, and textual genres of public address. In so
doing, rhetorical studies works like a post office assembling and circulating subjects
capable of recognizing themselves as a subject of, by, and for a public. For this purpose,
speech genres often are invested with an ethical substance capable of generating the
norms of stranger relationality. Thus, speech promises the reconciliation of self and
other in the name of democracy. As Darrin Hicks points out,

Speech is no longer understood as simply the transmission of information, but the medium
within which the ethical self-government of autonomous individuals can be articulated with the
imperatives of democratic government. It is precisely this effort to govern through the
calculated reshaping of speech performance and the regulation of discursive space that defines
the recent translation of liberalism into the idiom of deliberative democracy.

The desire to assemble and circulate speaking subjects implicates rhetorical studies in
the material apparatus of a public’s postal system.

Rhetorical studies wants to produce students who are committed, not indifferent, to
the discourses of a public. If the enemy of communication and the moral pedagogy of
rhetorical studies is indifference, so, too, indifference is the enemy of a public. For
Warner, “public discourse craves attention like a child,” and the “modern system of
publics creates a demanding social phenomenology” (62), yet “a public is constituted
through mere attention” (60). The standard of “mere attention” implies a thinner ethical
subjectivity than that increasingly imagined by rhetorical studies. Yet the modes of
cultural literacy required for “active uptake” and participation may belie this thin public
citizen and suggest why a public is “a demanding social phenomenology.” Warner’s
material presuppositions of “habitus, topical concerns, intergeneric references, and
circulating intelligible forms (including idiolects or speech genres)” are some of the texts,
techniques, and competencies that rhetorical studies circulates through its position in the
public’s postal system. In this way, it hopes to assemble subjects who desire the
discourses of a public as much as a public craves new subjects for its discourse.

By assembling a student-subject, a process that is always unstable and marked by
failure, rhetorical studies delivers the student to public life inside and outside the
classroom. It is part of the postal relay presupposed by circulating discourses. Rhetoric’s
ethical forms of stranger-relationality can be offered as alternatives to neo-liberalism;
however, they also can supplement the capacity for judgment required by neo-
liberalism to produce entrepreneurial subjects capable of maximizing utility. There are
no guarantees as to which path to public discourse students will follow as they leave the
classroom. If we understand rhetorical studies as a relay in a postal system, even the
most orthodox of Marxist rhetorical critics are engaged in the production of forms of
cultural literacy they hope will transport students to the party. As a postal system, the
materiality of public address can be registered by the ability of rhetorical studies to
produce a “standing reserve” capable of attending to the discourses of a public.
Conclusion

The postal system of a public points to the material structure of Warner’s idea of a public of discourse. The postal system delivers discourses in the “forms and channels of its circulation.” It transports subjects through its institutional relays, and it also can offer a civics education in cultural literacy so the subjects of a public can engage the discourses of a public. Publics and counterpublics need postal systems to circulate bodies, texts, and forms of cultural literacy. Postal systems also help in the production and circulation of the norms of stranger sociability. The postal system of a public of discourse need not go through the state apparatus, but the state occasionally pays attention. Warner’s essay outlines the dangers of the encounter between a (counter) public and the state and suggests the need for the production of non-statist postal systems. My promiscuous reading of Derrida’s postal system as a material force should not be understood as reinscribing a dual ontology of the public as a space of discourses and institutional relays, whereby the one determines the destination of the other. A public is a material accomplishment made possible by the linkage between a postal system, discourses, and norms of interaction.28

Notes

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3 The desire to escape the power of communication to generate the ontological, normative, and political foundations of modernity motivates Grossberg’s attempt to dis-articulate the study of culture from the circuits and metaphors of communication. See Lawrence Grossberg, Bringing It All Back Home: Essays on Cultural Studies (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).


7 Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event Context.”

8 John Durham Peters, Speaking Into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 8. His emphasis on the relational axis of communication prompts him to valorize “touch,” which seems to contain the more radical implications of dissemination and to deconstruct the intersubjective ontology embedded in communication as an encounter between self/other; sender/receiver; speaker/audience. For Peters, the institutional history of the post office, in particular the “dead letter office,” demonstrates the efforts to regulate and tame the dissemination of ideas, commodities, and immorality. See pp. 165–176 for his discussion of the post office.


12 The quotation is Warner’s, for a feminist criticism of the public sphere as essentially male, see Cindy L. Griffin, “The Essential Roots of the Public Sphere: A Feminist Critique,” Western Journal of Communication 60 (1996): 21–40.


15 For an example of the ways that feminist rhetorics attempt to destabilize the link between decorum and embodied subjectivity, see Melissa D. Deem, “From Bobbitt to SCUM: Re-memberment, Scatological Rhetorics, and Feminist Strategies in the Contemporary United States,” Public Culture 8 (1996): 511–537.


17 For a parallel argument about the possibilities and dangers of studying and representing the norms of “outlaw


22In an earlier essay, I claimed that the ethical dimensions of rhetoric now occur at the level of the world-making potential of rhetorical practices, not at the epistemic level of correspondence between words and reality. See Ronald Walter Greene, "The Aesthetic Turn and the Rhetorical Perspective on Argumentation," *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 35 (1998): 19–30.


27The phrase “standing reserve” is Heidegger’s and gestures toward the role of modern technology (*technè*) to turn nature, including humans, into a standing reserve to be put to work for a mechanized present. See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 283–318.

28My idea of a public as a material accomplishment linking postal systems, discourses, and norms of interaction, is perhaps, an unsatisfactory way to translate Gilles Deleuze’s reading of Foucault’s diagrams or apparatuses of power as a *dispositif*. See Gilles Deleuze, "What is a Dispositif?" in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), 159–166. In *Malthusian Worlds: U.S. Leadership and the Governing of the Population Crisis* (Boulder: Westview, 1999), I suggested that one form that a *dispositif* might take is a "governing apparatus" consisting of discourses, institutions, technologies, and populations dedicated to improving the welfare of a population.