

Scenius at YOUmedia: Supporting and Sustaining Young People's Collective Genius

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Abstract: Building on a case study of a youth space situated in a public library in Hartford, Connecticut, This paper theorizes youth-centered spaces as “scenes” as a means to better understand designs for adult participation in youth-centered spaces by focusing on actions that support and sustain the “scenius,” or collective genius, of those scenes. Scenius suggests that we reconsider the ecology of spaces like YOUmedia that are communities of practice(s), that are social spaces, and that are spatially situated within larger institutional contexts. What I draw from scenius into the context of YOUmedia is a sense that there are agents of scenius whose hands may not be making, who hold power to support the community from the periphery, from the places and spaces in between.

Keywords: Mentorship, youth space, interest-driven learning, informal learning

“All these people that we call genius actually sat in the middle of something that I call scenius. Just as genius is the creative intelligence of an individual, scenius is the creative intelligence of a community....Intelligence is created by communities, by a cooperation of some kind.”

--Brian Eno, 2015

Theorizing designs for social and spatial justice in youth-centered spaces

Opportunities and spaces for youth to engage in interest-driven multimodal production have expanded in the past decade (Halverson & Sheridan, 2014; Ito et al., 2013; Magnifico, Curwood & Lammers, 2015). Learning sciences scholarship has addressed the spatial justice of opportunities for learning on-the-move (Headrick Taylor, 2017; Marin & Bang, 2018) as well as the learning potential of engaging in embodied exploration of spatial (in)justice (Rubel, Hall-Wieckert, & Lim, 2017). This paper adds to that scholarship a consideration of the spatial justice potential for youth spaces situated within larger institutional, brick-and-mortar structures such as libraries and schools, conceiving spatial justice in this context as the opportunity for young people of Color to have access to a valuable spatial resource and the opportunity to use that resource for their own purposes (Soja, 2014). This paper explores activity and infrastructures within and surrounding one such space, YOUmedia in Hartford, Connecticut, considering intra-actions of people, space, and things across a complex assemblage situated within a defined context, and how those intra-actions produced opportunities for youth to mean and make meaning, to see and be seen, to know and be known. In this paper, I will share how Hartford Public Library staff supported and protected a space of caring and creativity by their engagement at the periphery of young people’s activity network. Implications for research and practice include the importance of holistic, institution-wide commitment to protecting and activating youth-centered spaces in youth-centered ways.

YOUmedia Hartford is a space-within-space: a 3,500-square-foot room sectioned off from the rest of the three-story public library by its own doors and entry desk; a space with its own rules, norms, and feel, accessible only to youth and YOUmedia employees. Visitors to YOUmedia passed from the busy sounds of Main Street into a hushed library; then traveled up stairs to the second floor, and crossed a second threshold into YOUmedia, a boisterous, colorful space full of sound and movement. In this paper, I’ll explore the ways in which adults affiliated with YOUmedia, an interest-driven space for youth media production, played vital roles in enacting the youth-centered space for creativity and learning that YOUmedia was. I wish to consider how adults are both activators and sustainers of the space, as well as gatekeepers at the assemblage’s periphery: how did adults keep (the) space youth-centered while guiding, protecting, and serving YOUmedians’ opportunities to learn and form community within the context of a larger physical and social institution like a public library? I will begin this paper by situating YOUmedia as a particular kind of creative scene, defined by the “scenius” of its youth participants--a term coined by musician and artist Brian Eno and defined as “the creative intelligence of a community” (Eno, 2015). Then, I will describe a mentor’s embodiment of multiple supportive roles within and at the edges of the assemblage of activity in YOUmedia as a way of understanding possibilities in design for the roles of adults in youth-centered spaces.

Theoretical frameworks

In my study of YOUmedia, I have attempted to understand the possibilities for meaning making and opportunities to learn that are fostered by the assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of elements--human, material, embodied, affective--that comprise YOUmedia. In an effort to understand that assemblage of elements, I consider theories that articulate their intra-action, including sociocultural theories, connected learning theory,

Researchers in learning sciences have highlighted the sociocultural nature of learning in informal environments (Martin, 2004; Paris & Hapgood, 2002) as well as the importance of apprenticeship, mentorship, and guided participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003). Connected learning theory highlights the importance of networked, peer-supported learning (Ito et al, 2013) in informal, interest-powered contexts like YOUmedia. As an interest-powered connected learning space that provides resources for youth to engage in a wide range of practices, YOUmedia is a community of practices (plural) where the design leverages both peer-supported learning and mentorship to create opportunities for youth learning.

As facilitators of a youth-centered space, adults, called mentors by youth and in their job titles, intentionally de-centered themselves. Mentors did not always hold expertise in the practices that young people were drawn to, though they were expert resource-finders both within YOUmedia and across digital networks. Mentors worked to demonstrate caring, to uphold community expectations for an environment where people and resources are respected, and to broker communication and the upholding of respect for youth with the rest of the library staff that was not directly affiliated with YOUmedia. The learning, culture, and community that facilitated, surrounded, and was interwoven with the deep learning and meaning-making that happened among peers and across digital networks at YOUmedia all happened within a shared, physical space that was maintained and sustained by mentors and educators in coordination and collaboration with youth.

Because YOUmedia was a community of multiple practices, and because I wanted to better understand the nature of this semi-bound assemblage within *and distinctly apart from* a larger institutional context, I needed a theoretical way to describe YOUmedia as a place of youth-driven creativity, as a single community that fostered multiple sub-communities, and as a system within a larger infrastructure (the library) that both contained, supported, and stood outside of it. I came to think about YOUmedia as a scene--in the sense that a movement in art or poetry or music or fashion can be a scene (think, for example, of the 'beat poetry scene,' the "Atlanta hip-hop scene," or the "sneakerhead scene") because there were a group of people associated with YOUmedia who created many different things, or supported, celebrated, and appreciated others' creation of things, united by place, time, and a sense of belonging to each other. Scenes in this sense are often strongly associated with a place, whether it's an entire city or a neighborhood or a round lunch table in the Algonquin Hotel. Scenes are both communities of people who share a stylistic ethos and incubators of talent and innovation that produce memorable talents. YOUmedia Hartford had an ethos rooted in respect, care, and youth culture; it was a community of people who cared for each other and celebrated the success and production of some creative folks within their group.

Brian Eno is an artist and musical innovator; in contemporary music criticism, his name is mentioned in the same breath as avant garde composer John Cage and dada artist Marcel Duchamp (Morley, 2010; Frere-Jones, 2014). Eno has argued for the importance of recognizing the ecology of a creative scene. Eno's concept of *scenius*, or the genius of a scene, captures the simultaneous influence and production that takes place when "there's a whole field of things going on." Included in Eno's description of *scenius* is all the people in the ecology of a scene who facilitate things happening: the artists, sure, but also the patrons, the journalists, the landlords, the curators--all the people moving within and surrounding that scene that keep it alive. While these people may not be directly involved in painting on canvas or putting notes on a score, they are part of the scene by virtue of the ways that they protect and sustain it. These scenes do not exist without audience, without people around the scene with at the very least a tolerance for or tacit support of whatever new thing is.

Importantly for understanding space-within-space such as YOUmedia, Eno spoke about the vital role of people at the edges of a scene (e.g., landlords, shopkeepers, chefs, family members, audience members, curators, venue bookers, critics) in protecting that scene. Part of the *scenius* because it can not sustain itself without them, these liminal actors look towards the center of the scene and through their supportive movement within the scene say, what is happening there is good and I will use what power I have to support it. By taking up *scenius* as a way of thinking about the relation mentors have to the space and to the youth and activity within it, I'm thinking about adults operating in the literal (physical) margins of YOUmedia--they are at its doors, the people you need to pass before you can enter the space to make, play, and engage. They are also at the margins of the creative community that is YOUmedia in the sense that they are not the primary producers of YOUmedia: they don't make the music, video, fashion, art, and poetry that YOUmedia becomes known for. In maintaining a teen-centered space, adults at YOUmedia took care to keep young people's needs and voices at the center of their (the adult's) embodied actions within the space; as mentor Hannah described, they asked more questions than they answered.

Also, by seeing YOUmedia as a scene, I'm looking at what happens there as occupying a different realm than what is occupied by many other spaces in the city, to schooled spaces or public spaces that might not celebrate

and support young people in holding space the way they do at YOUmedia. In this sense, the scene is in a marginal place, a place of resistance (hooks, 1990). This marginality, the marginality of YOUmedia's youth, is a site of resistance-- a site of radical possibility (hooks, 1990). And so mentors and adults at YOUmedia and at the library are working at and from the borders/edges/margins/periphery of this site of resistance.

Finally, I look at YOUmedia as a site of spatial justice and counter-spaces (Soja, 2013; Schwartz, 2014) creating youth-centered and youth-led spaces of care and support for young people's development while also connecting youth with tools to engage critically, agentively, and creatively with/for/about the communities they connect to. In addition to being a space that centered youth agency and identities, YOUmedia Hartford was also a space where Black and Latinx youth of Hartford had opportunities to learn, create, and as one mentor put it, "just exist."

Site context

YOUmedia at Hartford Public Library (HPL) opened in 2014; it is open for free to any teen (13-19 years old) with a Hartford Public Library card. It is one of the first three YOUmedia Learning Lab satellite expansions outside of Chicago. YOUmedia Hartford's doors open daily after school at 3pm and close at 8 pm; in the summer these hours are typically expanded, opening at 1pm, and on Saturdays the space opens at 9 am with what they call "The Breakfast Club," a free breakfast aimed at encouraging youth to come early and stay for the day at YOUmedia. The 3,500-square-foot space occupies most of the second floor of the main downtown branch of the library and features a digital recording studio, a maker area with work tables and tools, a viewing area, gaming stations, and a small stage and sound equipment for hosting open mic nights and talent shows. Updates to the space, including lighting, power, fast data connections, and modular furniture, were designed by a local architecture firm. The space is designed for hanging out, messing around, and geeking out (Ito et al., 2009) — the three ways identified by Ito et al. that young people engage with new media. The space is roughly divided into thirds. As a visitor enters, the first third is dedicated to "hanging out" space, with couches and chairs for lounging; the second third is for "messing around" at collaborative workstations equipped with computers; and the final third is a place for "geeking out," with a soundproofed recording studio, and professional-grade tools for tinkering, building, and engineering original designs.

It is a well-attended drop-in space: according to a program evaluation report (Hughes, Desai-Gellar, Nadathur, & Alsip, 2017) the average number of teens in attendance at YOUmedia Hartford on a given day in the 2017-2018 school year was between 70 and 80, but attendance of 100 or more was not uncommon. Over 40% of youth who attend YOUmedia Hartford stay there for more than three hours per visit. 84% walk or take a bus to the program with average travel times of between 15 and 30 minutes. The high attendance numbers and lengthy time spent at YOUmedia Hartford illustrates the depth of engagement of youth with the space (Hughes, Desai-Gellar, Nadathur, & Alsip, 2017).

YOUmedia Hartford primarily serves young people from nondominant backgrounds. 84% of youth attending YOUmedia come from Hartford neighborhoods. Survey data shows that 65% of participants are male; more than half are between 15 and 17 years old, with the remaining youth falling into an approximately equal distribution between young teens (13 and 14 years old) and older teens (18 and 19 years old). Based on surveys taken in the first three years of HPL YOUmedia's operation, 46% of youth attending are Black, 35% are Latinx, 15% are multiracial, and 4% are Native American/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian, White, or Asian (Hughes et al., 2017).

Data collection

I used case study methods to observe YOUmedia Hartford in the summer of 2018. Hartford was one of the first three of what is now 28 YOUmedia network cities, and its YOUmedia space has been open to teens since 2014. The YOUmedia network has been at the forefront of a national movement to establish youth-centered HOMAGO (hang out, mess around, geek out) spaces in public libraries. This site was selected because of its membership in the network. I observed in the space for over 90 hours. I took on a participant observer role, engaging with youth as I recorded field notes, video, audio on multiple audio recorders, and photographs. I conducted formal interviews with three staff members and with seven youth participants.

Analysis

As this research is framed in understanding the focal activity as both part of and constituted of a rhizomatically entwined assemblage of parts, activities, and actors, I embraced post-qualitative methods of analysis (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Analysis took place through an ongoing process of engaging with theories, representing data in both written memos and visual display attempts, and engaging those representations with theory. Using this

cyclical process of engaging-representing-engaging, I was able to note where data and/or my representations of the data were in tension, dissonance, or resonance with each other. Noting and responding to these tensions through new representations led to new engagements with theory, and so forth, until I reached a point where theory, data, and representation resonated with each other with consistency.

Findings

In this paper I will take up the ways adults who were connected to YOUmedia were part of its *scenius*, a crucial ingredient in spite of/because of the space they gave to young people to occupy the center of creative activity in the space, by focusing on the practices and reflections of one mentor, Hannah.

“Kicked out for just existing”

Hannah was a Black woman in her early thirties with the kind of admirable personal style where when she complimented my earrings or my nail polish, I felt like I’d really achieved something in my life. Hannah was a self-described “library kid.” She had grown up in a town near Hartford, and had memories of afternoons spent in that town’s library. “There was a space for children, and a space for adults, but no space for teens...I got kicked out of the library a lot for just existing as a teen...so that’s what this [her work with youth] is grounded in.” I loved hearing Hannah talk to young people at YOUmedia. She asked young people questions that seemed to be so well thought out from every direction. Early in my observations, I sat nearby while Hannah helped a teenage girl cast on yarn to start a new project, looping the beginning strands around a pencil since all of the knitting needles seemed to have disappeared. The girl mentioned to Hannah that she had a boyfriend.

“Is he nice to you? Is he thoughtful?” Hannah asked.

“He asks one time what’s wrong,” the girl explained. Hannah listened, her hands rummaging in a box of yarn.

“What does that mean?”

“Like, if he asks what’s wrong, and I say nothing, that’s it.”

Hannah paused.

“And you want him to ask again?” The girl nodded. “I wonder how you two could work that out.” The girl was thoughtful, watching as Hannah began casting on a second “needle,” so she could teach the girl to knit.

“I could tell him what’s wrong when he asks. Or I could tell him I want him to ask more than once.”

Hannah nodded but said nothing more. She began showing the girl how to hold the needles to knit a row.

This kind of conversation was typical of Hannah-- she focused on people’s consideration for others (asking the girl if her new boyfriend was thoughtful). She also had a keen sense about when to exit a conversation. It reminded me of the moment when someone teaching a kid to ride a bike pulls their hands away. She had some sense that the young people were steady enough to go at least some distance on their own. And if they fell, she wouldn’t be too far away to help them up again.

In an interview, I asked Hannah about things that she thought helped make a good mentor. She told me,

It’s not having an agenda -- we have this philosophy of “meet teens where they’re at.” I’ll use the analogy of feminism. Everyone who comes into feminism has to start at 101 - not everyone is going to go from feminism to intersectionality on day one. Teens are the same way. In having conversations with young people, remembering that you are not trying to -- I think you gave me this verbiage-- you’re not trying to convert them to any ideology, you’re not trying to change or control who they are-- you’re really just giving them the advice, or the support, that you would give to anybody who was asking you a question. I think it’s really easy when teens have problems to want to jump to solving them. To want to make referrals and da, da, da, da, da-- and I’ve definitely done that. But knowing when someone is looking for a referral, and when someone is looking for someone to talk to. And like, you know, be open with, it’s a skill. That takes time. And you practice it.

The exchange about the boyfriend with the new knitter was a great example of Hannah having a conversation that was rooted in respect for a young person (centering the importance of considering the thoughtfulness of a romantic partner), offering what may have been new or reiterated perspectives (suggesting, through a question, that the boyfriend not asking what’s wrong more than once could be a problem the two could solve together) and letting the fresh perspective breathe by re-engaging with the work Hannah was doing before the conversation started (teaching the girl to knit). In even a small moment such as this, Hannah protected and sustained the *scenius* of YOUmedia to the extent that it was a space for young people to be cared about without being lectured, an interest-powered space where young people were expected to take the lead in setting agendas for their own learning.

Hannah's approach of "meeting kids where they're at" extended to their compositions and creations, too. I had a conversation with Hannah after the first time I went into the studio with Cyrus and Key, two hip-hop artists in their early twenties, to hear their music, about how people perceive the value and worthiness of what young people make at spaces like YOUmedia--and how adults base that value judgement on its genre and content. In the studio with Cyrus and Key, Cyrus had paused before pressing play on a track he was proud of. He turned to me.

"Now, Miss, this may not be to your taste."

I laughed. "You don't know me!"

Key tapped him in the arm, "Yeah. She's from Chicago."

Cyrus played me the track. I could understand why he paused, though I hoped he knew I celebrate him making anything he felt called to make. While some hip-hop songs, artists, and subgenres have earned sanction from some adults in education spaces--particularly when that hip-hop directly engages in critical discourse--music that deals in pleasure or rage or drugs or conspicuous consumption doesn't get the same celebration (Low, 2007). Cyrus's opening lyric, "Told that bitch to back it up, turn it round and smack it up" fits into a category of hip-hop that doesn't often get the sanction of white, middle aged adults like myself. A little bit after I came out of the studio, I talked to Hannah. I told her about Cyrus's content warning. And I told her it did have me thinking about how some youth-created work is better received than others; she laughed that while she loved trap music, she knew what I was saying. She let me know that there were some "conscious hip-hoppers" who were around more in the school year, but then, after all, wasn't part of the point of YOUmedia that kids can make what they want to? And if they wanted to make trap music, who were adults to tell them that creation was any less valid?

This kind of protection for the young people and their right to learn and create on their own terms in YOUmedia's scene was part of Hannah's everyday practice. She met people where they were, and reminded others (like me) of the essential importance of their doing the same. She used her power as an adult, and her resources as a thoughtful, empathetic person, to suggest new tactics, to question old beliefs, or to offer a listening ear. This work, this care-full protection, is an essential component of the scenius of YOUmedia, and stands as a conscious counter-practice to what youth might experience outside of YOUmedia in the rest of the library, in school, or in culture more broadly. Through respect and care for individuals, Hannah protected and enacted "brave space" (her words for what YOUmedia can be when it creates a site of love and respect and encourages young people to make strong choices) for people to take creative risks and trust and support each other.

Activating critical engagements

Consistent with Hannah's approach to mentorship, she found opportunities to engage youth critically while still meeting them where they were and inviting youth to take ownership over critical conversations. Sometimes, Hannah took the opportunity to enter an ongoing conversation at YOUmedia and introduce a critical turn. This sustained and protected the scenius of YOUmedia by challenging ideas that eroded the community's broad guidelines of respect, while keeping youth at the steering wheel, driving that critical turn.

In early July 2018, a YOUmedia patron was playing the music of rapper Tekashi 6ix9ine from one of the video production computers. 6ix9ine, dubbed by Rolling Stone magazine "Rap's Supervillain," was a controversial figure; some vocal gamers across the room requested that the person playing the music turn it off. Someone poked their head in to YOUmedia and, hearing the music, clicked their tongue. "So this is what YOUmedia has become." The 6ix9ine fan persisted, playing one YouTube video after another. Criticisms popped up around the room:

"The music is good, the lyrics is stolen."

"He steals verses from unknown freestylers."

"He has way more money than you though, so."

A teen jumped on the small stage and cupped his hands around his mouth, "Hey Yo, everybody, Tekashi's music is trash!"

The conversation turned to rumors that 6ix9ine had gotten a girl pregnant.

"She's a porn star though," someone said.

Hannah, who had been shelving books to be removed from circulation, wheeled the book cart closer to the conversation and took a seat. "I don't know this person you're talking about, but what does her involvement in sex work matter to this conversation?"

A teen boy responded, "Look, no daughter of mine is gonna do porn. If she does?" He made a kicking motion.

"But not your son?" Another teen asked.

"No my son, my son could do what he wants."

Hannah, still sitting nearby, listened. Another teen boy chimed in.

“That’s sexist.”

“Yeah that’s actually sexist,” another joined in, “Like, you making a choice just based on gender, that’s like sexist for real.”

As the conversation started to take this critical turn, Hannah moved the book cart back near the circulation desk and continued her work. Though she was gone-- and at the same distance as she was for the earlier part of the conversation-- the tone softened some. Someone suggested another rapper to play. Another teen asked the person playing 6ix9ine’s music how they could support him (6ix9ine had been previously convicted of using a child in a sexual performance, and was about to head to trial for violent gang activity). The young person responded, “Look, there is a difference between what I listen to on any given day, and what I listen to on a daily basis.” The shouts died down. A conversation started, where participants looked at each other and talked to each other.

Hannah asked a single question and made a bodily move to indicate that something these young people were saying didn’t sit right with her. She did not wait for the young people to answer her directly. A conversation emerged from her question and her proximity that placed criticality in the hands and voices of young people. She maintained the youth-centeredness of YOUmedia by doing less, by doing enough to ensure the space continues to be a brave space where creative possibility and equitable access exists for all people, and the safety and respect of others (people of Color, minorities, sex workers, LGBT+, women) is held a common core value. In a lecture (2015), Eno spoke about the interconnectedness of ecology in *scenius*: that there is no hierarchy, no one thing that can change without changing the whole. As with Deleuze and Guattari’s *rhizome* (1987), every element of the assemblage feeds and feeds off of every other element. Hannah’s work feeds the scene; her effect is palpable, but leaves control, leadership, and ownership to the youth, which is key to maintaining the *scenius* of a space that fosters youth-led interest-powered learning.

Influence/outfluence

One of YOUmedia Hartford’s strengths was its cultivation of a culture of care. Young people felt and exhibited for others caring, as evidenced by things like the community’s support for a participant after his best friend’s death; A young woman Kelly’s proclamation that she didn’t know where she would be without the support of Stacey, a mentor who helped Kelly get back on her feet and make moves towards having contact with her son again; and in the many everyday ways that young people and adults helped each other (i.e., carrying boxes, unpacking snacks, saying hello, asking after people’s families). One of its tensions was in its closures: in the fact that as a teen space, it is designed to be a scene with only temporary active membership, ending after a young person ages out. Mentors enforcing the age rule were in a position of telling young people they had a caring relationship with that those young people are no longer welcome in a place where they once felt very welcome. Still, in spite of this tension, one of the mentors’ roles in maintaining and protecting the “scene” was being gatekeepers at its borders.

It was interesting to me, then, that when I asked Hannah in an interview to share a memory of a successful moment of mentoring, she shared the following story, which took place outside the boundaries of YOUmedia with a young person who was too old to participate in the space:

I was leaving the other day, and I ran into a young person who used to come to the space. I asked them how they were, and the way they responded was robotic. And I asked, what’s going on, was everything okay? And they let me know there was some stuff going on with their partner, they had recently gotten married... they were thinking about getting a divorce. And we sat and talked. And at the end, I said, you know, this is one of those things where you’re going to have to keep talking about it until it’s resolved...I’m here, I’m always here. I’m here 40 hours a week. You know where to find me.

The next day they came in, and they gave me an update... and I suggested a book that I just happened to come across on Amazon called *Radical Forgiveness*. The book had religious overtones, the author switches back and forth between “Universe” and “God,” and I knew this young person was someone to whom religion was very important. And they checked the book out. And the day after that, they came by, and they said, “I’m only two chapters into this book, and already, we went on a date, we had a great conversation...” That’s success.

The success was that they have figured out how to resolve a problem. And they have figured out that there is a support system of people, and that being open and honest about your feelings can be beneficial. In terms of what we can tell funders about success? I would never tell that! Nobody’s gonna fund that work!

I share this case here, in a paper discussing the roles of adults in the youth space as protectors, sustainers, and activators of a scene, to consider the ongoing work that is taking place at the periphery of the space. At YOUmedia, young people might learn and progress through a practice, becoming expert filmmakers/musicians/designers/artists. Their membership in the *scene* includes that learning alongside the meaning produced by belonging in a space of caring. But their membership in the *space* involves an exit trajectory, bound as that membership is by participants' ages--they might rocket to the center of the space, becoming creators and producers and leaders, only to leave again. What happens, then, to their membership in the *scene*?

When Hannah encountered a young person at YOUmedia's edges--on the stairs outside its doors, as the library was closing-- as she left work for the day -- she continued the scene-sustaining work of caring. She acted out of a caring, human relationship that was forged in the context of YOUmedia but continued to exist outside of YOUmedia. She reaffirmed the scene membership of that young person--a membership that had changed, but retained some of its truth and meaning. Part of the scene of YOUmedia, at its best, is this sense of meaningful membership.

Implications: What might be unseen in the space in-between

I asked Derek, a 19-year-old Black YOUmedian, to tell me what someone might miss if they were walking by YOUmedia and just peered in the window. What's happening that someone passing by can't see? He told me, "Someone might miss that people in here, they're making really cool stuff. Like making music, and videos, and art. People might just see it and think it's kids being all crazy, but it's not." I asked him how he felt when he made things. "It feels good to hold something in your hands and think, I made this," he said. Finally, I asked him, does it matter that people miss that? That they might miss the creativity and the work that's taking place. "No," he said. "It doesn't matter."

Hannah was known at YOUmedia for not missing a thing. Even as she sat on the other side of a room, she would call out, "What did I just hear?" if she heard a young person utter a racist or homophobic slur. "Hannah's got ears for days," a teen called out one day, amazed that nothing seemed to slip past her.

Since Hannah caught nearly everything, I asked what she thought about Derek's answer about what people might miss about the space. She smiled, and affirmed what he said.

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| Hannah: | It can look like chaos. But if you look at what people are doing--Walking into a space and just seeing what their bodies are doing, and not seeing what their brains are doing. Or even the conversations that are happening. They may be using language or words that aren't acceptable to some, but there is deep stuff happening there. |
| Virginia: | They're loving to each other |
| Hannah: | They are so loving to each other! Even when they're flaming each other. There is so much love. |

I think the same could be said of the adults in and around the space--that if you look only at what people's bodies are doing, and not at what their brains or hearts or ears or words or feelings are doing, you miss an important part of what is happening. Seeing Hannah sit far away from a group she just talked to, you might miss that she's still listening but giving them space to own new ideas. Seeing another mentor signing out a video game controller for a teen, you might miss that he quietly asks her, "How's your sister?" and nods knowingly when she says, "You know, the same." Seeing a security guard walk through the space, you might miss that he smiles wide and greets each familiar kid by name, and introduces himself to new faces. They are so loving to each other.

A mentor-centered model for guided participation or community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) imagines a central space where the action and therefore the apprenticeship is: where rockets are launched (Azevedo, 2013), where bread is baked (Nielsen, 2006), where ships are navigated (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Scenius suggests that we reconsider the ecology of spaces like YOUmedia that are communities of practice(s), that are social spaces, and that are spatially situated within larger institutions, and especially that are spaces meant to be youth-led and interest-powered. That Hannah's mentorship was de-centered does not imply that it was unimportant. She was watchful without appearing to watch. She made an entrance, made a change, and then, seeing the seeds of that change take hold, made an exit. What I draw from scenius into the context of YOUmedia and spaces like it is a sense that there are agents who hold power to support the community from the periphery as well as from the places and spaces in between. For designers of youth-centered spaces situated within and apart from larger institutional contexts, considering the space as a scene and adults as supportive to the enaction of the scene--as opposed to being constant drivers behind the many actions within the scene--can open

up opportunity for flexible, evolving, diverse, and multidisciplinary assemblages of learners and activity that nevertheless maintain a persistent flavor and communal sensibility.

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