Little Public Spheres
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This article develops the concept of little public spheres in order to understand young people's performing arts as a mode of civic participation and public pedagogy?. Little publics are, by definition, multiple and of diverse political orientation. Depending on the investments that constitute the little public sphere in question, little publics can be spaces very much aligned to social or political norms andhegemonic agendas. orhey can bespaces of resistance; or indeed conflicted political sites brought together around shared aesthetic or intellectual concerns that unite politically divergent communities. They are as heterogeneous as young people. In this article I develop the idea of little publics through the example of a youth arts event called the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge (REC). As I go on to explain, the REC is not a 'counterpublic' –not an oppositional space. In this respect it is emblematic of many youth cultural sites like sporting clubs or gaming cultures that can often recreate a given status quo. That is, little publics can be spaces of resistance but they do not have to be. As I will show, in order to constitute a little public, a group of young people need to author a text that calls an audience to attention: for example run a race that is witnessed, write a website that is published, sing a song that is heard. Little publics articulate the expression of youth voice in the many political tones it can have. I use the term 'little' to refer to young people's diminutiveness as well as to signify the small size of the public formed. The REC constitutes one possible example of what I call a little public sphere: I show how young people's involvement in the REC can be viewed as an expression of their civic voice, a complex voice which is contingent on context and has different political dimensions depending on who speaks.

Within this, I construct a strategic, interdisciplinary history for the terms public and popular pedagogy. This accountreveals art and performance as one way of articulating youth voice. As I will show, public agendas, such as those around health and wellbeing for youth coexist with the private practices of youth who articulate or resist these agendas in their practices of self. This is expressed in the dance communities showcased in the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge, offering one instance of the way the concept of little publics - spaces in which youth voices are heard - canprovide a forum for thinking about the relationship of the public tothe private in young lives, and to demonstrate young people's actions as expressions of their civic voice.

Little publics is my development of contemporary theories of counterpublics (Berlant 1997; Fraser 1990; Warner 2005), a body of literature I take up to further existing discussions of public pedagogy. To understand how cultural processes of learning are a part of youth arts practices and are also *affected by* youth arts performances, the term public pedagogy can be seen as offering an education-specific version of Habermas' (1962), Fraser's (1990), and Berlant's (1997) discussions of publics and counterpublics. John Dewey's (1927) concept of the public sphere as a space in which citizens assemble to respond to negative effects of market or governmental activities is also incorporated in my genealogy of discourses on the public sphere, because Dewey's public sphere is of a group of citizens drawn together as a means of protesting public political agendas alone. With Berlant, Fraser. Warner. Habermas and Dewey, then; I am interested in the multiple ways a young collective might express civic voice and the interweaving of public agendas with private practices as public pedagogy. Dewey briefly characterizes what he calls "little publics" as associations based on culture— religion, race, hobbies (arts and sport), labor, interest. This can be held as a starting point for the idea I trace with my notion of the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge as a little public, although, unlike Dewey, I want to suggest we take young people's actions in making little publics seriously, and recognise them as productive of aa form of citizenship constituted by the materiality of their arts practices . What begins as affect, style, and art practice effects modes of community attachment that can influence public sentiment and provide frameworks for policy and legislation. The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge offers an intersection of adults and young people's ways of generating affect and style through art and is one possible example of a little public sphere.

The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge

The REC offers an example of the complexity of many sites of youth culture. It brings together adult investments in what 'youth' activities should be with young people's tastes and decisions about what constitutes a valuable investment of their time. It also offers an example that is accessible to many readers as it is a large, competitive public performing arts event. The REC is a useful example of the tensions between commodification, capitalism and local school communities and everyday spaces of youth, which necessarily

comprisecorporate flows and acts of youth resistance and acquiesce. These are the tensions I want to call to our attention with the idea of little publics.

The REC started in Australia and is now global, corporatized and franchised: expanded to locations in Japan, New Zealand, the United Arab Emirates and Britain While the REC provides an assessment focal point for some secondary arts units in Australian schools, REC National champion teams go on to compete against each other in the "Global Rock Challenge." The REC thus speaks to local-global imaginations to the extent that it cites the genre of the high school musical (McWilliam, 1996), which articulates across the history of colonial schooling and is given life in numerous media texts. And, insofar as those who participate in the REC do so by choice, and that this choice is a performance of investment in the idea that art contributes to public good through enriching community life, the REC constitutes a little public . The REC website describes the event, stating:

> Rock Eisteddfod Challenge® events are produced by the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge® Foundation, a not for profit organisation. The event is a unique and exciting opportunity for schools to take part in a dance, drama and design spectacular where *the students are the stars*. Each year, the events are professionally staged in some of Australia's top entertainment venues. (Emphasis added, Rock Eisteddfod Challenge, 2011, para. XXX)

There is a discipline-specific model of arts practice underlying this event, which consistently produces performances that adhere to the genre of the high school musical/dance-cal?. More than this, in the REC, the idea that young people can "be a star" is explicitly concerned with teaching ways to be "healthy" and "active" citizens, an idea that is core to the organization of the competition[1][i]. This echoes Habermas' (1962) early characterization of public spheres as places that feature "competition among equals [in which] the best excelled and gained their essence—the immortality of fame" (p. 4).

The REC website cited above uses the trope of stardom as a mode through which it teaches 'healthy living'. The site has sections for students and teachers (as well as sponsors, ticket information and an "about REC" section). The student section features "get involved" and "healthy lifestyle" hyperlinks, which detail lifestyle strategies that help in becoming a "star." The teachers' section features "production tips" which link to genre-specific resources in costume design, set design, and lighting and clearly have been developed to furnish teachers with the know how to reproduce the look of the high school musical.

The teachers' section also features links to the online teaching resource website "Teacher's TV," in which classes are presented in video format. The videos are organized by levels of schooling (early childhood, primary, secondary) and subject areas (Arts, English, Health and P.E., Languages, Math, etc). Dance classes are displayed in Health and P.E. but not Arts, which largely features lessons on digital technology and music. These design features demonstrate the fact that the REC is largely a form of governance, within which dance and musical theatre are seen as ways of improving what is considered to be the health and wellbeing of the young people involved, rather than arts practices that extend young people's aesthetic vocabularies. The REC clearly sees itself as adding to the social value of young people through enhancing their health and wellbeing. The site explains:

> As part of the Global Rock Challenge™, nearly 300 Australian schools and 25,000 students compete in Rock Eisteddfod Challenge® and J Rock™ shows across Australia. Teams as small as 20 or as large as 142 students plan an eight-minute performance based on a theme of their choice and set it to contemporary commercially available music. *Students, teachers and entire communities work together* over a period of months planning and rehearsing, before competing against other schools at events in a 100% drug and alcohol free environment. (Emphasis added, Rock Eisteddfod Challenge, 2011, para. XXXX)

In facilitating conversations between adults, young people, and the wider community, the REC forcibly shapes young people's voices through conventions of genre as much as it facilitates young people's expression. Both of these outcomes: giving young people a voice, albeit a carefully crafted voice, and fostering dialogue between socio-economically diverse communities, align with Habermas' notion that conversations held in the interest of developing an understanding of public good need to be separated from the power of the church and the government. These outcomes somewhat "bracket" social status through the inclusion of socially and

economically diverse communities. Young people on stage at the REC are not equal to their teachers in terms of power, or influence, nor to their audience membersin terms of social status. However, performing - rather than speaking or writing - offers a social voice and a scale of dialogue not otherwise afforded to secondary students as a community.

The experiences of citizenship that accompany the formation of little publics of youth arts such as the REC are constituted through pleasure, disciplinarity (a theme I expand on below through a critique of social inclusion), and affective responses to broad social imperatives for young people to have socially readable identities. Berlant (1997), Warner (1992/2002), and Riley, More, and Griffin (2010) argue that experiences of pleasure need to be considered as forms of citizenship which can be as powerful in terms of shaping identity as a person's legal citizen status. Youth arts and school art projects are, in part, exactly such a pleasure-based citizenship. There is often great satisfaction in being disciplined enough to rehearse and perform, or make and show, a work.

In and out of school arts practices can be considered a form of public pedagogy[2][ii] –they are part of what Williams and Willis refer to as "common culture," (ref?) and they utilize formats that are publicly accessible. In making and speaking to very particular local-global communities, they constitute little publics. In the case of arts practices for youth run by adults, these little publics are often groups invested in "the power of the arts" to better society through including marginalized young people in "mainstream" culture and "adding value" to young people as social commodities.

To better understand the cultural logics at play in the little publics made by youth arts, or the ways that young people are called to express their voices through arts practice, it is useful to think through the processes through which youth performances are made. Part of the way youth arts in schools operate is by mobilizing young people's knowledges of popular culture and their everyday literacies. This utilization of popular literacies is democratic to the extent that young people from all classes possess popular literacies andtheir knowledges can be mobilized through the arts. The little publics created through youth arts performance such as the REC and other public displays of secondary arts curriculum are local, but they also connect to and articulate through global scapes of "youth art/s." Dominant cultural presumptions that the arts are good for young people, that they mobilize youth at risk for their own betterment and the good of society as whole, echoes in many youth arts practices, especially those that adhere to, rather than mix, particular genres. For example, the REC is based on the premise that involvement in the performing arts makes young people better citizens. By improving young people through involving them in art, the REC partly advances what it sees as a public good: it makes young people fitter and less likely to strain healthcare systems. It correspondingly contributes to the democratic functioning of society through giving young people a public stage for a voice that is shaped and articulated through performance.

Popular Literacies: A Means of Making Public Pedagogies

This democratic valuation of everyday knowledge has a history in British cultural studies that is not normally equated with discussions of public pedagogy, yet both scholarship on public pedagogy and early work from the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies are so firmly concerned with the use of popular cultural knowledges as a vehicle for democratic voice that it seems fitting to explore popular literacies here, as such everyday knowledges are a core means through which young people craft public pedagogies. Williams' (1958, 1963, 1965, 1966) work on cultural forms and processes as pedagogical, Hoggart's (1958) call to value everyday literacies and Paul Willis' (1977) discussion of how class is learned through culture and labor, each value everyday or popular knowledges (knowledges outside "the canon") as a way of democratizing education and involving those who might be considered on the "margins." Such means of employing popular literacies and cultural forms as a political strategy for engaging marginalized bodies, advancing calls for education as a democratic project and means of advancing "public good," later became core to the ideas of public and popular pedagogy.

A framework for valuing everyday and popular knowledge can thus be drawn from a conversation that began with Richard Hoggart's (1957) *The Uses of Literacy*, a text that John Hartley (2007) describes as having "set the agenda for a generation's educational and disciplinary reform" (p. 1). *The Uses of Literacy* offers an account of Northern working-class life in Britain, in which Hoggart reads "culture" as the experiences and habits of being part of "everyday" community life, as opposed to "popular culture" and popular (mass produced and widely

distributed) publications. As the fields of audience studies and new media studies demonstrate, with the rise of new computer technologies and producer-user (Bruns, 2006) media forms, the distinction between mass-produced and electronically distributed cultural forms and "ordinary" community life is no longer necessarily as useful as it may have been in 1957. The grounds on which such a distinction might be drawn have shifted. However, the need for educators to think through the importance of considering the classed nature of practices of literacy, and to value "everyday" literacies, endures. At the time, Hoggart claimed his focus on "ordinary" literacy was anti-Marxist (ie disinterested in collective action by the working class?), but to my mind it has clear parallels with Marxist? critical literacy theorists' calls to engage students with the language(s) of their community, state and world. While the contribution of Hoggart and Williams to conversations about cultural studies and education is worthy of a more extensive treatment than I am able to offer here, I want mainly to note that these thinkers mark one kind of origin for considering popular literacies as a way of engaging marginalized learners. Youth arts projects constitute an ideal vehicle for such a project as they work with young people's everyday tastes.

The REC is an example of a process of schooling that mobilizes texts from popular culture, a process that is partially grounded in young people's pleasures and tastes. Performances are set to popular music and, as I have noted, the event itself is modeled on the trope of the high school musical popularized within mainstream film. It offers one instance of learning via popular literacies and it makes little publics that are called to hear and respond to adult and youth voices expressing genre specific images of healthy young citizens.

When a young person is involved in composing a dance routine or a pop song, they are required to draw on their knowledges of, and tastes in, popular culture—although critical reflection on these tastes is not necessarily a constitutive feature of practices of composition. Working with and incorporating the popular cultural tastes of students from marginalized and excluded social groups thus becomes critical when working with students from socially disenfranchised or minority groups. School dance curriculum and many extra-curricular youth dance projects offer examples of the amalgamation of popular cultural forms into processes of teaching and learning. This inclusion of popular cultural forms in youth dance practices is not necessarily a process designed to enrich student's critical awareness of their own taste, as much as it is an example of an educational process that mobilizes student knowledge and student taste as *youth voice*. These aspects of young people's lives are core to processes of teaching and learning through the arts.

Youth arts practices and school arts curriculum are generally optional extra-curriculum activities for young people, which are not likely to succeed without young people's choice to invest in them. Further, at more senior levels, school arts curriculum subjects are selective areas of study, the pursuit of which obviously reflects youth taste and agency. Thus youth arts practices and curriculum utilize popular culture, but must also be considered *popular* to the extent that they are chosen. The articulation of youth arts practices and youth arts curriculum as either forms of disciplinarity or modes of activism ("education" vs. "schooling") are site specific and these processes occur simultaneously—both political slants on these forms must be recognized, as youth arts practices and curriculum create and promote particular forms of subjectivities and social relations. For example, The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge brings together young people's knowledges of popular commercial music and dance with teachers' perspectives on how they feel their students should present themselves and what they think youth arts should look like. Popular literacies—knowledges about dance moves, different bands, musical styles and their meanings—are core to the ways young people communicate about arts. They are knowledges that are central to how youth arts texts are composed. Yet teachers ultimately have a final say in the work that makes it to the stage and as such, the 'youth voices' created in REC performance pieces are partly performances of adult ideas about youth because the teachers are shaping, monitoring and censoring their student's work.

Popular pedagogy is a classroom-specific version of the strain of public pedagogy that is concerned with what popular culture teaches. Popular pedagogy is a term that refers to the classroom-based analysis and use of popular cultural texts. Kenway and Bullen (2001) use the noun to describe practices that involve the use of popular culture and ordinary knowledges in the classroom. To the extent that they are educational practices that involve the valuation of common forms of knowledge, popular pedagogies can be read as classroom based versions of early British cultural studies theorists' arguments that we need to value "everyday" literacies and knowledges (Hoggart, 1958; Williams, 1958; Willis, 1977) as a way of engaging students who are on the edge of schooling systems. As such, there is a relationship between the idea of popular pedagogy and the strand of public pedagogy concerned with critical analysis of messages in popular culture. Both lines of inquiry are

concerned with mobilizing roles that non-canonical knowledges and students' tastes and pleasures play in the formation of subjectivity and the production of belief systems. Both concepts read pedagogy in a liberal sense, as a culturally specific process of teaching and learning. In the different forms these ideas take, public and popular pedagogy draw on a history of critical education and are strategies for utilizing education as a form of social inclusion. Broadly speaking, I agree with the politics of these ideas. However, I want to critique the idea of social inclusion to the extent that it recreates a concept of a privileged group. Working with little publics as a concept opens out and activates the politics that the term social inclusion signifies, but does so in a way that shifts focus from including youth in a dominant paradigm to having the possibility of youth creating their own dialogic space which might speak back to a dominant paradigm, or might acquiesce. Multiple little public spheres can be conceived as living alongside each other and young people's inclusion in them is constitutive—it is required in order for them to exist.

As te Riele (2006) has shown us, the term "inclusion" privileges an existing social structure from which some youth are excluded. Although strategic engagement with discourses of dominant cultural forms is required in order to have a position of use in educational theory, the assumption of the hierarchy embedded in the idea of social inclusion brings with it models for thinking about young subjectivity to which I am opposed. These models are exemplified by the "at-risk" youth discourse, which constructs specific young subjects as deviant. As Kelly and Tait (date) show us so clearly, the "at-risk" youth discourse needs to be understood as a governmental strategy that reproduces select young people as deviant and thus in need of control. Youth art projects are often means of governance developed in response to such risk discourses. Similarly, as I explain above, REC performances become vehicles through which adult ideas of youth voice are shaped. Both discourses of youth at risk and the REC are largely ways that adults control young people, or ways youth choose to govern themselves. They are also ways of contributing to the "public" as a sphere and valuing everyday literacies as a way of engaging the socially marginalized in processes of schooling.

Making Little Publics: It Isn't "Voice" if Nobody Seems to be Listening

Schools and community arts organizations craft different kinds of audiences: in so doing they shape the little publics, or the small contingent publics, to whom youth arts speak. The role of youth voice in drawing together what I call a little public is crucial, as for my purposes I want to argue that little publics are, by constitution, spaces in which young people are heard. Recent research focusing on youth civic engagement has explored some ways youth voices contribute to public debate. For example, with reference to the context of young people's use of digital technologies (writing wikis, blogging, podcasting), Rheingold (2008) argues that community based processes of creating texts give young people a voice. Rheingold suggests that involving young people in the collaborative creation of texts that are displayed for public consumption not only shapes youth voice but also cultivates a sense of engaging with the public sphere. He contends that the acts of preparing a text for public consumption and engaging with issues of civic concern shape youth voices in modes of public address. Rheingold (2008) explains:

> Young people protest that "having your say" does not seem to mean "being listened to," and so they feel justified in recognising little responsibility to participate. … These trends suggest the importance of social scaffolding for any interventions involving self-expression—other peers in the class and the teacher must act as the first "public" that reads/views/listens and responds. … It isn't "voice" if nobody seems to be listening. (pp. 98-99)

A parallel argument can be advanced in relation to youth performances, which, I argue constitute youth voice to the extent that they are witnessed, or youth voices are heard. Rheingold (2008) goes on to explain that,

> If literacy is an ability to encode as well as decode, with contextual knowledge of how communication can attain desired ends—then "voice," the part of the process where a young person's individuality comes into play, might help link self-expression with civic participation. (p. 101)

Here, youth voice is classified as "the unique style of personal expression that distinguishes one's communications from those of others" (Rheingold, 2008, p. 101). The materiality of a young performer on stage or of the artwork or music they create constitutes exactly such a unique style.

Rheingold's processes of using digital technologies to craft youth voice involves negotiations between young people and adults; often these can be characterized by adults instructing young people to engage with issues of social concern. Youth arts processes, especially those employed in the REC and arts intervention programs for youth at risk, almost always feature the adult direction of youth and, as such, adults play a significant role in shaping what it is that "youth voices" say and the subjects on which they speak. However, there are exceptions to this rule—both in youth arts and in the practices of digital literacy to which Rheingold refers. Youth voice as articulated by youth arts is not always shaped by adults, but instances in which it is witnessed do always make little publics, as do those that are witnessed and shaped by adults – it is the act of witnessing that matters. Certainly some little publics are made by youth for youth, others by adults and youth for youth, others by youth and adults for adults and so on.

An enduring investment in notions of public good links scholarship on public and popular pedagogy to Habermasian notions of the public sphere and post-Habermasian theories of how publics are formed (Bruns et al., 2010). As I have intimated, there are major distinctions between the natures of the publics formed and/or addressed through various in and out of school youth arts projects. Thinking about youth arts as making little publics allows us to see that the contribution to the public sphere being advanced is not only small in scale, the public addressed is also very selective.

Habermas' (1962) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* brought a particular iteration of the idea of the public as a social sphere comprised of a critical audience into scholarly debate. For Habermas (1962), "The Public Sphere" is a democratic space that fosters debate among its members on topics concerned with the advancement of public "good" (p. 99). Drawing on Greek configurations of public and private spaces and modes of social operation, Habermas characterizes the public sphere as a space in which "citizens … interacted as equals with equals" (p. 4). While this space of citizenship is clearly signposted as a bourgeois arena, Habermas (1962) characterizes debate within the public sphere as socially inclusive, "as a realm of freedom and permanence" (p. 4). It is a space that, due to its access to economic and social resources, is separated from the power of the church and the government, as it is comprised of capitalists:(p. 23)

Within this, for Habermas texts the public read are not *necessarily* "scholarly" - notably, heh introduces the concept of the public sphere through discussing an actor performing for his audience (p. 14). He draws on German linguist Johann Adelung, who considers how different texts gather divergent publics by drawing "a distinction between the public that gathered as a crowd around a speaker or an actor in a public place, and the *Lesewelt* (world of readers)." Both were instances of a 'critical (*richtend)* public'" (Habermas, 1962, p. 26). The attention of audience is crucial here, then. Sites of performance or display—be they distributed or localized, constitute little publics as long as they draw audiences to attention.

> *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* maintains an ongoing discussion of the relationship between different viewing publics and textual forms. This line of inquiry later inspired a scholarly field on media and their publics. As a crowd assembled to watch a performance of Hamlet, or any audience came together to view a performance text, a localized given public might be quite small. Different textual forms (newspapers, journals, plays and so on) thus operate as "public organs" (Habermas, 1962, p. 2) that configure distinct critical publics. In their multiple forms, little publics are both virtually mediated (through the internet, new media) and physically located (neighborhoods, schools, arts groups, sports clubs). A constitutive feature of any given public is a concern with advancing a common good (p.24)

An investment in some iteration of democratic ideals and thinking about society is thus a constitutive feature of a "public" and certainly lies at the heart of the reasons why the REC is presented as something that is 'good' for young people. The REC supposedly makes healthy young people that are good for society and presents the opinions and/or tastes of young people for the benefit of society writ large. Such investments have been problematized implicitly by critiques of the masculinist state advanced by Nancy Fraser (1990), but remain implicit in the different ways young people express opinion through art, and in which adults encourage youth to be a certain kind of person through art.

In her now famous response to Habermas, Nancy Fraser (1990), argues that marginalized social groups are excluded from any possibility of a "universal" public sphere. She contests the suggestion that such a space, as it currently exists, is actually inclusive. For Fraser, marginalized groups form their own publics: "subaltern

counterpublics" or just "counterpublics." These groups speak back to, or critique social investments which further the interests of the bourgeois, who Fraser characterizes as "masculinist" through stating: "[w]e can no longer assume that the bourgeois conception of the public sphere was simply an unrealized utopian ideal: it was also a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule" (p. 62). For Fraser, the notion of independent "citizens" is masculinist because in order to function in the public sphere, one must rely on a certain level of domestic (private, usually female) labor. Warner (1992) also critiques Habermas' notion of "the public" for excluding marginalized bodies in ways that require a disavowal of the embodied nature of social difference. Youth arts in and outside schools often include and speak to marginalized bodies (O'Brien & Donelan, 2008). In so doing, they assemble publics who extend beyond the social category of the bourgeois. Through creating performances that articulate young people's voice in social contexts, youth arts make some little public spheres of resistance ('counterpublics'), but many little publics are moderately mainstream performances of civic investment such as the REC, which shapes and presents healthy young citizens for collections of community members. Performances articulate youth voice through embodied style as a performance of taste, which are a form of social commentary and critique. Through calling an audience to attention, youth performances create "affective and emergent *publics*" (Bruns et al., 2010, p. 9) which are "structured by affect as much as by rational-critical debate. Such engagement can occur in and through popular culture … and everyday communication … By decentering more formalized spaces of rational debate" (p. 9).

Along with a clear conception of a dominant cultural position, the idea of *counter*publics requires an investment in some kind of political or cultural opposition, an investment that is not necessarily aligned with the nature of youth arts activities in and out of schools. It seems to me that in order to understand the values espoused and the nature and extent of democratic work undertaken in youth arts projects in and out of schools, we are better off thinking about multiple little publics than counter publics (small spaces of resistance) and publics (majoritarian spaces of political consensus). As Berlant (1997) shows in *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*, and indeed as John Dewey (1927) foreshadowed in *The Public and Its Problems*, citizenship is a creative process that requires subcultures. Thinking through little publics allows for the articulation of discrete forms of citizenship that articulate through belonging to, and participating in, youth arts subcultures, which effectively constitute little publics when they create a work or text that calls an audience to attention. Subcultures have divergent relationships to the broader legal public sphere and articulate through style— those performing musical theatre in concert halls do so in order to occupy a very different place in public life than those listening to rap music in their bedrooms, or dancing at a rave. The differences in such communities are flagged by the multiplicity in and of little publics.

Considering the little publics that youth art/s create, and to which they speak, is a line of inquiry that allows the discursive positions young people assemble through art to be read in relation to broader narratives of youth produced by popular media. It positions events such as the REC as legitimate sites of cultural inquiry and sources of knowledge about the lives and opinions of young people. It seems to me that explicit considerations of the process of public making—and associated experiences of citizenship—that are effected and affected through youth arts practices offer ways of better understanding the civic voices of those who might not have the knowledges to participate in more formal civic settings for articulating youth voice. The communities that young people create (and to which they belong) through practicing in and out of school youth art/s are obviously influenced by the pedagogical effects of popular media texts such as those discussed by Williams (1958, 1966). As such, considering the little publics created by youth arts texts and practices should be a focus for scholarship on public pedagogy.

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[1] Kenway and Bullen (2001) also argue that the REC is a form of popular pedagogy.

[2] The concept of little publics I develop is specific to a broader theoretical project of thinking through the lives of young people. The idea could also be developed to consider civic spaces configured around adults.