Community of Inquiry and Underserved Youth Engagement: A reflective account of philosophy and method

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Introduction: Arts education and inquiry

> Braidotti, when considering her early career, poses the following questions:
> How do we do justice to experiences that have no recognition in the language and practice of conventional wisdom, common sense and reasonableness? What is the appropriate way to express silences and missing voices? (Butler & Braidotti, 2010, p. 315)

In this paper we expand on the short answer "Art", including visual arts, spoken word, and poetry, dancing and tableau, by elaborating upon one aspect - processes of inquiry that at their heart value recognition and voice. We begin our account by providing a dialogic narrative case study that explores an artist's educational inquiry practice with underserved youth in British Columbia. Braided into the account are analytical reflections from a philosopher of education working in a UK teaching university. As we explore the phenomenon of giving expression to underserved youth voice, we go on to outline how Lin & Bruce (2013) address the matter. Their line is to wed critical theory and philosophical pragmatism in order to theorize inquiry with underserved youth. However, there are aspects that we find unconvincing because of unresolved tensions in ontology; tensions deriving directly from using Dewey without understanding contemporary developments in pragmatist scholarship. Our approach is to present an aspect of the work of the contemporary pragmatist, Colin Koopman, who sets out to emphasize transition, inquiry and transformation without necessarily locating agency solely in the individual. For Koopman sources of power and agency must be liberated from *within* contexts rather than imposed from outside as a form of utopian or dystopian scheme. This form of philosophy emphasizes action and a fluidity in the conception of 'who' is acting and is guided by an emphasis on meliorism, i.e. a justified hopefulness intending improvement in the situation at hand (Koopman, 2009; Garside, 2014). Such a reading has affinities with the new materialist stance of Hickey-Moody *et al.* (2016, p. 217), who argues that "young people's individual and group subjectivities *becom[e]* through [artistic] practices"[1].

Philosophical-artistic inquiry in a Canadian context: working with the underserved to combat epistemic and hermeneutic injustice

In our case study we interpret the notion of voice and injustice through Fricker's (2007) work on *epistemic injustice*. Fricker systematically conceptualizes how voice is not heard, recognized, or responded to by all parties in configurations of power[2]. Injustices can take the form of testimonial injustice where the testimony of a specific individual or group is ignored or not heard. Here the wrong is done to the giver of knowledge as they are simply unable to make themselves heard or have their concerns acted upon. The second type of injustice, and is central to understanding our dialogue, is hermeneutical injustice. Here speakers' claims about their experiences are almost insurmountably difficult to express as the linguistic and conceptual resources are not available within the discourses available to these subjects of injustice. We may say there are gaps or lacunae that deny voice so deeply that persons and groups, according to Fricker, are 'prevented from becoming who they are.'

We also aver that cultural and artistic excellence is central to any good notion of human flourishing. In the classical sense of flourishing as *eudaimonia* we know that life as the practical art of living well requires both an understanding and expression of the good. A post-humanist sense of flourishing is necessarily non-teleological and must emphasize and cultivate the capacity to articulate and then navigate fractured and discontinuous experience. In order to construct narratives of engagement with our future selves and a sustainable life on our future planet then those generating meaning in othered or underserved communities, who are alienated from self--replicating and perpetuating habits of powerful domination, must be able to start from their own situation and find resource and capability within those spaces and places.

The following narrative case study is formed from the words of one of the authors of this paper and concerns her work with indigenous youth in British Columbia. Aboriginal education in Canada, and in particular British Columbia, works with a variety of living theory concepts such as 'two--eyed seeing', 'wayfinding', 'and elegant sufficiency of ourselves' to revitalize indigenous peoples through processes of healing and emphasizing holistic wellbeing (Kelly, 2014; Kelly, 2015). Central to this are arts practices leading to a radical re-imagining of the self and the more--than--human, a notion that expands beyond the perniciousness of a colonial Western individualistic mindset. As Etherington states, narrative analysis treats stories as knowledge *per se* which constitutes 'the social reality of the narrator' (Etherington, 2004, p. 81; 2009). Woven into this account is an analytical structure that the other author has read into the account as a dialogic response to themes that will be elaborated upon in the next section of the paper. Presenting the case study in this way is a cartographic act (Braidotti 2010) and one that maps the co-construction of meaning and knowledge between the authors, without over-generalizing, in ways that are meant to be interesting and reflection-provoking for a wider audience. We begin with a descriptive outline of the DAREarts process.

KJM: The DAREarts[3] programme in Vancouver is a week-long, non-traditional, arts-based studio & leadership activities intervention. Preparation for the students begins with in-class introductions to the artist facilitators, exploring the themes for the arts-based week, and a highlighting of the DAREarts vocabulary. Additional pre-teaching is allocated to develop storylines in advance of the intensive week and this helps students perform when time is precious in the week itself. The students are introduced to some of the facilitators, who are visual / multimedia artists and dancers, as well as the core DAREarts values and principles. These values, an acronym for Discipline, Action, Responsibility, Respect and Reflection for Excellence are core in all subsequent endeavors

undertaken. The values are modelled and repeated throughout the week-long program. In the week itself, the immersion of the whole class has immediate benefits for the individuals who participate as well as the class, which engenders class cohesiveness.

> "When I consider transitionalism, I am reminded of a line of poetry valued by my co-author, 'Time present and time past\\Are both perhaps present in time future' (Eliot, xxxx). This echoes for me how my students (from a B.C. Elementary school) *move* into and reflect on the DAREarts intensive studio process, whose purposes are to provide long lasting transformation and growth."

DG: For me this resonates with a performative metaphor of the educator as cartographer. You describe a setting forth or journeying into a landscape and this requires commitment to hopeful connection. I also note the importance of the invitation and your respectful stance as you enter into relating with these children. You bring values with you, unavoidably, but own these values so that children have a chance to respond authentically and choose how they respond to the invitation. The approaches in this paper are concerned with initiating inquiry in a way that is purposeful without being instrumental and the former requires a fundamental commitment to openness. It echoes one of the underlying assumptions of new materialism, Barad's (2003: 815) insight that relat*ing* precede relat*a*, and in the process of intra-relating there can be 'agential cuts' that recognize or deny agency as a materialist interaction of matter and discourse. I read your practice as affirming and acknowledging the children's heritage as an essential part of their agency. Denying this heritage is to deny part of themselves by denying a whole apparatus of expression. Your approach to the classroom is more tentative and respectful since children's voices are heard and made space for from the outset.

KJM: With inquiry-based programs, such as DAREarts, the artists model and teach the leadership process that values discipline, action, reflections, responsibility, and a respect for excellence. Excellence is achieved through students doing their personal best; respect is integrally developed and recognized as students support the efforts of the group, as well, acts of responsibility ensure artist endeavors each day contribute towards the final performance. The product itself is not the main focus; the workshops are about the process and celebrating how far the participants have come by sharing their efforts at the end of the week with a wider community. Each day the circle opens and closes as students are encouraged to reflect on their learning, and to note these thoughts on sticky-notes to be gathered up each day as status updates. Action and the decisive ability to choose the expression of one's agency offers a profound gift for empowering the students. The ability for students to take ownership of the studio environment and its outcomes arises from encouraging their mindful commitment to the creative process.

DG: I read into these words an elaboration on themes of transitional becoming that requires a wrenching free by the students' from being positioned. I note how the circle is a practice central to indigenous cultural practice. I hear that their trajectory and velocity of possibility is committed to and connected with by the artists in a melioristic and open-ended way. For me it is also worthwhile to imagine how artists create value by an embodied *valuing* of those with whom they work. Drawing again on Barad (2003), one aspect of valuing *performing* one's voice over having it merely *represented* is that phenomena are *made* through the intra-action of matter (material processes) and instruments (the language and structures of recognition at play; the process of inquiring as community) rather than be

recognized by a sovereign self. Hence, intra-subjective space emerges from, rather than being prior to, bodies in motion aligning their trajectories.

KJM: Yes, this intra-subjective space becomes further elaborated upon by our Elder, in the talking circle. The talking circle creates a cohesive space with rituals that reinforce safety and celebrate the efforts over the course of the 4 days. Throughout the week, different artists and students take the lead and facilitate this process. All participants, including students, teachers, artists and volunteers sit in a unifying circle whose space allows for equality, where individual voices can be heard in a respectful environment and performative space. The circle creates a kindred experience that is both transformative for individuals and the group. "Our class came together as a team" a grade seven girl commented in closing circle of day four, bearing witness to the profound change she underwent compared to her group's habitually destructive/negative behaviors. As she changed, her clique changed too.

DG: For me this relates to temporal form and historicist practices that we shall see to be at the heart of Koopman's work. A transitionalist situation has form and material circumstance, and what you describe is the centrality of a safe yet transformative space. I read in your words that there are three aspects to the space: the affective, the conceptual and the technical. The affective aspect concerns the emotional space where it is made possible to feel and to express what is often excluded and marginalized from common classroom work. The conceptual safe space is made possible by the comfort of artists in playing with ideas and possibilities that transmits the idea of permission to the students. Two aspects that come also from your words and that relate to the conceptual is that of elaboration and communication. The final necessary condition of the safe space is the importance of technique since (melioristic) intention is not sufficient in itself. There are strong parallels for me with the community of inquiry experienced as philosophy for children (P4C) practice. The emphasis on different types of *thinking* caring, critical, collaborative and creative reflect the safe spaces made through your artistic practices. But there are limits to thinking. Pietzner's recent doctoral work reminds us of the emphasis that Lipman laid upon the product of inquiry (Pietzner, 2014), but in this paper it is our position that disembodied judgements are dissociative and alienating; It is this that gives rise to what Dewey criticized as the spectator theory of knowledge (Coulter and Weins, 2004) where our knowledge is good for nothing (or know-thing perhaps). This troubling passivity of knowledge is challenged by third-wave pragmatism.

KJM: Yes, there is strong resonance between DAREarts and P4C pedagogical practice. The DAREarts program carefully constructs a program that builds collaboration over the course of the week where the sharing of responsibility for self-efficacy is given over to the students. Over the course of the week, this co-constructed practice deeply engages the student participants to call upon the leadership techniques they are exposed to that will over time be part of the transitionalist place Koopman speaks of, where future relationships to future selves and future worlds illustrate the impacts of a hands-on program.

Co-construction leads to claiming our voices: within the workshop a Salish performer and artist recounts his poignant experiences as a youth, his choice of not speaking, to not have his voice heard, his need to be electively mute until he was 18 and how then the arts provided the means for his liberation. Through dance and drumming the gift of his becoming was fully actualized and

epitomized by the eagle dance, an autobiographical event that presented points of affinity for the youth and inspired the artists in attendance. Other mentors who have graduated from the DAREarts program also shared their personal accounts, building solidarity. Over the course of the morning the young students became eaglets, preparing to sing, dance and fly. The Eagle is closest to the Creator, in Salish culture, and epitomizes wisdom, loyalty and strength. The youth soar forth into a landscape charted mutually.

DG: For me the theme of transformational experience is particularly strong. At the beginning, no one could have specified this as a learning outcome nor could this be planned for. Instead, a trust is required that the resources required for transformation are inherent in the situation and can be accessed through meaningful encounters with one another, in a safe space. There is a trust in one another and confidence that what one has at-hand is sufficient to find the way. Becoming eaglets is not just a metaphor but a genuine transformational experience that is accessible to young children but gets denied to us as we become older. The gift of the Salish Dancer is to free us to become children again and that allows us to move forward with our growth once we are wrenched loose from our positions.

KJM: The practices are an embodied inquiry with individuals immersed in the fullest practice of becoming. As part of engaging holistically, we encourage active minds and bodies each day through rigorous exercises in movement, dance, drama and creative thinking. Through these exercises, the students get hands-on experience building animation sets, writing scripts, drawing and painting, playing instruments, shooting video and photography, creating lyrics and performing movement and dance. The students have control over the creative process and are encouraged to take ownership of their cooperative learning in the studio at all times. Then, they create artworks and their own performance pieces that are a direct product of their self-exploration and artistic interpretation of what it is to be an Eagle and the DARE values. They are expected to communicate their ideas and collaborate with their peers as they complete their artworks.

Students reflect, communicate their point of view and insights as they progress through the DAREarts program on a status update board where students can 'post it' note how they are feeling about their progress and what they are learning about themselves and their peers. Through social media, the comments are tweeted to say Listen to the Voices of Youth.

DG: This is another affirmation of the space which is fluid and matter-full. The recurrent themes of the physical, conceptual, affective and technically saturated practice are here in abundance and resonate with the intensity and commitment of a P4C inquiry by an established community of inquirers. CI and art engagement are not the same thing since they differ in their emphasis on reasoning and artistic practice. However, common to both are in interest in expression for broader purposes concerning identity and transformational change as well as a need for technique and execution. In my response to your words, spoken and written, I read into them what is of value in Koopman's transitionalist pragmatism, the anti-essentialism of new materialism, and what is common to both of them - a commitment to challenging the systematic marginalization of underserved youth through recognizing their voice and making spaces for its performance.

KJM: The artists and educators that work for DAREarts play an integral role in guiding the students through free thought and free expression. They teach them, in a very distinct way, how tapping into their creative side can make them stronger and more confident and can reveal who they truly are and what they truly want in life. DAREarts educators and artists help students spark that fire inside that will help them move through life no matter what comes their way. Vancouver's DAREarts leadership models is inquiry based learning in that there are multiple outcomes possible, purposeful play where attention is focused on painting, dancing, acting, creating musical compositions and poetic verse, giving artistic license to the youth to have an authentic and inter-subjective experience. The DAREarts pedagogical philosophy that underpins the whole week is fundamentally student-centered and empowering. By students teaching their peers what they have learned, they are empowered to become leaders, not followers, and ignite change — in their own lives and in their communities.

During the final performance, one student stood alone, spot-lit, reciting the phrases created through the spoken word workshop. A powerful message that both embraces and claims ownership of the experiences which have metamorphically valued the other. It is the duality of intent that allows deep transformation. Witness each member's words:

> Feelings are wild animals.
> When sorrow is like a purple mountain you feel you cannot climb.
> When life feels like an ice cream cone, melting around you.
> If I were an eagle I could be soaring down to the horizon line, always watching on the way,
> Not worrying about depression day after day.
> I wish I was the mighty eagle, flying with God, careless about my appearance,
> Tuning out the embarrassments, conquering all isolation, laughing at suicidal thoughts,
> Not overreacting at my loss.

The Community of Inquiry as transitionalist phenomenon

Two common ways for arts education to be conceptualized is as either inquiry or research (Sullivan, 2010) but little is written about it as a community of inquiry (CI) or emancipatory education. Visual culture arts education (Hernandez, 2000, 2007) is increasingly being used to promote inclusive education practices, such as challenging deficit narratives around immigrant populations (Hernandez, 2015). Karpati et al. (2015) also argue that `visual culture groups act as powerful student communities for auto-didactic and peer initiated learning'. Sclater and Lally (2013) identify the 'significance of creative practices … to support a range of wider educational aims, including those relating to social justice and the development of young people's own authentic voices.' They also recognize how Garber (2004) notes the importance of visual culture, and arts & design education in Social Justice Education. This manifests as 'helping students to develop their `voice' [but this] actually requires educators to develop a deeper understanding of the array of contexts that young people find significant'. An interesting example is in the context of working with "underserved youth" and Lin & Bruce (2013) see art education instrumentally as a means to 'foster engaged citizens by encouraging youth to see how social, cultural and political forces shape their experiences' (p. 337). Art does this by fostering learning through art as an alternative site of counter-hegemonic struggle against reductive accounts of human experience; the authors term this perspective

'community inquiry' and to conceptualize the approach draw upon Dewey's philosophy of art and sociopolitical theory and his 'inquiry methodology'. What is interesting and novel about this approach is marrying together two distinct philosophical traditions - critical theory and pragmatism.

As part of the work in drawing on both traditions, first, Lin & Bruce (2013) analyze and then make a distinction between a community and the state of consensus, coherency or unified social entity and in their work attempt to find a balance between the individual and the social. Furthermore, they challenge the idea that art interventions are a *sufficient* condition to enable underserved youth to productively respond to their struggles. They do grant that art can and should play a vital role in fostering engagement as a *form of democratic practice*. It is the concern of the authors to value a move away from an individualistic focus on learning to a community inquiry approach that fosters growth from real-life issues. They draw upon the model of inquiry established in Dewey's *Logic: Theory of Inquiry* (1938) and make reference to the broader figures in the pragmatist tradition to justify a dialogic space and collaborative activities. Hence, community becomes not just a containing or hosting space but an enactive or performative space. We note that these considerations of teleology and purpose, where neither individual nor collective can claim to be ontologically *a priori*, are at the heart of debates about subjects and their knowledges in Philosophy for Children and philosophical community of inquiry (Splitter & Sharp, 1995; Lipman, 2003; McCall, 2006; Kennedy & Vanseigelheim, 2010; Biesta, 2011; Murris, 2016).

Moving on to consider the role of the Arts (p. 339-340), the authors take the position of Dewey in *Art as Experience* (1980) where art, or rather the communicative capacity for relating to art, 'offers an avenue for participation in the public sphere', which emphasizes the collective relationship over individual authorship (p. 339). It is in the relationship to collective meaning-making that the individual, as an artist, integrates both difference and commonality in their experience and the experiences of others. Paradoxically it is by facilitating the individual voices of underserved youth that the collective voice can also be articulated; art in this instance catalyzes productive power and social action. After considering a number of their own projects, Lin & Bruce (2013) conclude that artist and audience need to reconsider their relationship, as it is evermore crucial to consider relationships to reality rather than objects (conceptual or discrete). Second, they argue that serving the underserved requires emphasizing strengths rather than needs. This approach builds on Noddings' (1989) relational attitude that sees the relation as more basic than the individual (Lin & Bruce, 2013, p. 343).

Third-wave Pragmatist critique of Lin & Bruce

We agree with the value position in the paper that places arts inquiry in a critical social context but we part from their approach in two ways. First, in our understanding of the account of agency underpinning critical social engagement. Despite Dewey's intention to move away from a self-world philosophical dualism, his account of subjectivity, like those that precede him, remains a figurative one. Second, we note that contemporary developments in pragmatist philosophy raise considerable doubts over what Sellars termed 'The Myth of the Given', i.e. the role of the aesthetic as 'given' directly to consciousness without mediation by normatively-laden language (Koopman, 2009). We begin by examining in more depth Dewey's understanding of inquiry that underpins the pragmatist elements of Lin & Bruce's commitment to democratic modes of intersubjective relating.

For Dewey, the subject is in a non-dualistic and naturalistic relationship with its environment. Since there is a continuous flow of information between organisms from the environment then transition, best articulated in the *Logic* is fundamentally a move from the indeterminate to the determinate. Dewey's (1938) thinking on judgement in the *Logic* is highly significant; part of the 'Later Works' series, this volume devoted to the one topic is indicative of Dewey's mature and settled thoughts on the subject.

According to Nagel's introduction, at the heart of Dewey's theory of inquiry is an innovation in the theory of judgement. For Dewey, judgement is the settlement of an issue that has been subject to inquiry arising from a break in previously untroubled behavior. It is a problem-solving mechanism and Dewey intended to show that to speak of logic and logical forms as a distinct way of understanding is severely limited and does not warrant the full use of the term 'judgement'. Instead propositional understanding and unwarranted positions should be treated only as proposals, hypotheses, assertions and appraisals and are only a part of the judging process (1938, p. xvi; ch.1). Full judgement is constructed *through inquiry* and is arrived at when logical forms (ideational matter) accrue to subject-matter (that brought to attention) when the latter is subjected to controlled inquiry (p. 105). As Dewey describes it, inquiry is a directed or controlled transformation of an indeterminate situation into a determinedly fixed one. To do this there must be two operations acting in a functional correspondence - the ideational/conceptual subject-matter, and techniques and organs of observation (p. 121). There is thus a unity where *neither ideas nor empirical data is privileged over one another* as proving fundamental to the generation of meaning. Dewey is clear that in this view of the construction of judgement, 'construction' refers both to the act of construction and the structure that results from the act. Only the subject-matter of judgement is existential and its substantial character is *logically* not *ontologically* determined. In other words the world is not *found* but *made*. And for it to be an existential subject the conditions of inquiry must be satisfied (pp. 129-30). The following quote exemplifies Dewey's anti-essentialism:

> It is a form that accrues to original existence when the latter operates in a specified functional way as a consequence of operations of inquiry. It is not postulated that certain qualities always cohere in existence. It is postulated that they cohere as dependable evidential signs. The conjoined properties that mark off and identify a chair, a piece of granite, a meteor, are not sets of qualities given existentially as such and such. They are certain qualities which constitute in their ordered conjunction with one another valid signs of what will ensue when certain operations are performed. An object, in other words, is a set of qualities treated as potentialities for specified existential consequences. Powder is what will explode under certain conditions; water as a substantial object is that group of connected qualities which will quench thirst, and so on (p. 132).

Judgement has a direct existential importance, over and above representational importance, since its concluding objects emerge from the process of inquiry, or put another way the process of inquiry produces conclusions. Nor is this the end of the matter. The finality of judgement means that it is an individual situation but one that may always be open to further inquiry since each situation is part of a wider field or domain of understanding that can move from being untroubled to troubled given other information.

It is Koopman's (2009; 2016) argument that this latter direction, the move from resolved to unresolved is undeveloped in Dewey's work but it is precisely this aspect which needs greater emphasis when engaging with critical practices and situations - what Lin & Bruce termed counter-hegemonic practice. When we consider the CI as in transition from determinate to indeterminate then this creates an interesting set of issues for analysis. Koopman terms his third-wave perspective on pragmatism as transitionalist pragmatism or conduct pragmatism. Transitionalism is described as a philosophical *temperament* that focuses on ideas, concepts and things as part of and constitutive of transitional processes (p. 11). This working from old to new, from past to future, treats truth as a *dynamic process with temporal duration* rather than a static quality holding either momentarily or eternally. Extending this idea to ethics changes our focus onto the process of improving living rather than evaluating the correctness of isolable acts (p. 11). Hence, it is more meaningful to speak in terms of truer/better rather than true or good. What Koopman is trying to get us to accept is that pragmatism in general, and transitionalism in particular, is concerned with processes of justification and inquiry; he is concerned not for 'epistemic or moral rightness but *melioration, improvement, development and growth*' (p. 12, my italics). In order to make his argument Koopman states firstly that transitionalism is a figure or lens for drawing together a range of complex concepts such as temporality, historicity, evolution, development, process and event. Here I follow Koopman and present his sketched clarifications of the relationship between some of these key terms.

First, transitionality is not mere change (p. 13). The former is temporally mediated *development* whilst the latter is temporally mediated *difference*. Temporally mediated development is a purposive activity whilst difference implies only undirected change. The former is central to pragmatism and indeed inherits a Kantian legacy where thought is regarded as thoroughly purposive and directive of activity. For example, a rolling boulder does not develop, it does not transition between states according to purposes unlike humans and humming birds who might 'strive towards the glory of the sun' (p. 13). Koopman is making a fundamental distinction here between purposive, developmental activity that develops for better or worse, that is activity that is fundamentally normative or evaluable. At its crux all human endeavor depends on whether purposive transitions result in definite improvements or definite *degenerations* (melioration or decline) (p. 13)[4]. On the other hand, there are situations which are comparatively continuous, ongoing processes of activity. This consideration ought to be borne in mind when we consider that for this form of pragmatism it is not necessary to specify in advance the shape of success in its transitions. Koopman, I think, is not too concerned to over-specify in the manner of Dewey's *Logic* since a key issue for Koopman is that the emergence of new futures is not fully determined by the structures of old pasts. In other words, the future is radically underdetermined by the past in that the future develops out of the past without merely rehearsing the old and that purposiveness can be strictly delimited in advance. Koopman states (p. 14) that purposive activity sets up a field of possibility where both progress and decay are possible.

Moving on from purposiveness, Koopman then examines the inter-relationship between temporality and historicity. It is an inter-relationship since both concepts imply one another and are both aspects of purposive change. Temporality is (p. 15) the *form* of transitionality itself, whilst historicity is the *determinate contents* through which transitions occur. Koopman then goes on to indicate how there is a growing interest in pragmatic meliorism but that it still remains to be spelled out how, precisely, meliorism contributes to pragmatism. The keyword for Koopman is hopefulness

and he claims that the philosophically robust conception of hopefulness is meliorism. Furthermore, he identifies hopefulness as consisting of a combination of pluralism and humanism. By pluralism he means that the realities we inhabit are many and contingent, what he calls the pluriverse, and by humanism he means the idea that humans make definitive contributions to this pluriverse. In another description of meliorism he states it as the capability of creating better worlds and selves. Koopman then goes on to draw on James (pp. 19-22) to delineate meliorism from mere optimism/pessimism which he regards as the conventional positions in mainstream philosophy. Definitions of these terms are made through the common relationship to 'salvation' and truth where optimism is a belief in the necessity of salvation, pessimism the belief in the impossibility of salvation but meliorism focuses on the possibility of our creating the world's salvation whilst being willing to live without assurances or guarantees. Meliorism therefore stands in contrast to mainstream optimistic/pessimistic attitudes since it no longer regards truth, as external authority, as having any emancipatory power.

Koopman discerns the constant theme of transitionalism as latent in all of the early pragmatist writers as well as Rorty. In James he see the first account of pragmatist philosophy setting out as a practice to reconstruct the situation in which it finds itself rather than timeless contemplation of eternal verities. Instead of truth standing in objective relation to humanity that then needs to be found, revealed and of which the consequences are necessarily emancipatory, James sees truth as something *happening* to an idea. If we consider, as Koopman (p. 20) does, the verb forms 'becomes true' and 'is made true' we get this sense of truth as a species of improvement rather than inert state. Not only is the adverbial and processual aspect of truth emphasized but the fact-value distinction that is arguably core to the western philosophical tradition collapses; truth as improvement is both epistemological and axiological. On this account, truth does not stand removed from human plurality, it is not a power extrinsic to human action, rather truth is how we free ourselves actively, not how we are made free passively (p. 21). Koopman claims that not even interpreters sympathetic to pragmatism have quite grasped this point or in other words 'truth is not powerful in itself but the name for our being powerful' (p. 22).

In this paper what we wish to establish is a critique of Lin & Bruce's use of pragmatist thought. They are right to emphasize a performative reading of the community of inquiry but first-generation pragmatism does not contain the conceptual resources to warrant this claim. Dewey's work on inquiry focuses on the production of individual judgements. A CI may be a valuable form that facilitates the production of such judgements but the CI in itself does not produce knowledge at the level of intersubjective let alone intra-subjective understanding. Whereas the ontological openness to form, matter and purpose that is the feature of third-wave pragmatism provides a much firmer set of justifications for the type of practices that Lin & Bruce envisage.

This ontological openness has strong affinities with new materialism but a discussion of this is beyond the scope of this paper. We would also add that it is our understanding that the problem of how to use arts practice educationally, in ways that do not replicate existing modes of domination and repression, is also relevant to critical theorists': 'discourse ethics' (Allen, 2010). For example, a distinctive feature of 3rd generation critical theorists is a concern to move beyond the rationalism (and the rationalist subjectivity) of Habermas (and by extension over-rationalistic conceptions of CI) in order to stress "the contextual, the ethical, the particular, and the concrete as crucial aspects of

moral-political deliberation (Allen, 2010, p. 132)". Additionally, Medina (2010, p. 303) considers what was referred to earlier as the 'enactive and performative' and argues that:

> The issues we are confronted with as speakers are whether a legacy of use is worth maintaining and in what way the received use should be modified and how. In any performative chain in which we participate, we should ask ourselves: what are the transformations that are needed in this chain, if any? And how can they be produced?

We end by agreeing with the implied position in Lin & Bruce (2013) that holds the site of educational-artistic engagement is a location of moral-political deliberation, but we add also a place of performative disruption. So far we have shown how we disagree with the implied unity of selves and the possibility of dialogic engagement as presented by Lin & Bruce. Our position is that the figurative account of subjectivity should be criticized for ascribing too much credence to the notion of the sovereign, uniform and constitutive subject who judges. We agree with the premise of Braidotti (2010) that 'the nonunitary subject is ubiquitous' and the implications that has for our practice are posed as a question: 'How might [a] nomadic subjectivity as artistic practice allow us to consider political and ethical mattering in indigenous arts education contexts?'

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Endnotes

1 A more developed treatment of the relationships between Koopman's conduct pragmatism, Braidotti's figurations of the nomadic subject and cartography, and new materialist writing inspired by Barad will be

found in articles in production for *Educational Theory* and two forthcoming Special Sections of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (2018/19).

[2] In P4wC research, Murris (2016) has pioneered the reception of Fricker, Barad and Braidotti through Murris' treatment on the posthuman child.

[3] DAREArts is a Toronto-based charitable arts and youth NGO with reach across Canada. http://www.darearts.com/index.shtml

[4] I pause here to note that Koopman does not to my mind adequately differentiate the situations and contexts where on the one hand we might consider matters discreetly, as part of momentary evaluations or episodes.

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