Competition in philosophy is a feminist issue

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Abstract

The role of competition in philosophy is not just a pedagogical concern, but also a feminist concern. Competitive philosophy in schools is intrinsically linked to Janice Moulton's feminist critique of academic philosophy referred to as 'The Adversary Method'. She argues that dialogue that emphasises adversarial methods of argumentation promote dominant notions of masculinity. Many philosophers and educators argue that this traditional ideal of masculinity and the adversarial mode of communicating are problematic for a variety of reasons. There has also been a broad array of empirical research demonstrating gender differences in classroom dialogue, including girls feeling targeted by teachers and boys due to the culture established with competitive-type dialogues. There is a direct link between this research and the espousal of masculine Reason in education. More, this kind of Reason is one that is overemphasised in competitive dialogues, such as debates or competitive philosophy. There are three primary concerns for competitive philosophy. Firstly, that it disadvantages girls in particular by over-emphasising masculine attributes. Secondly, that it disadvantages all students, regardless of sex, by over-emphasising masculine attributes. And thirdly, that it undermines the values of the Philosophy for/with Children and the Community of Inquiry approach by, again, over-emphasising masculine attributes. Therefore, the concern for competition in philosophy is not just about pedagogy, it is about justice.

Key words

dialogue, feminism, gender, girls' education, Philosophy for/with Children, P4wC

Introduction

This paper outlines feminist critiques of philosophy and dialogue, combined with empirical studies on gender in the classroom, to detail the extent to which competition in the practice of Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC) espouses traditional and dominant gender stereotypes. As P4wC is a dialogic practice, we first need to consider how these problematic ideals of femininity and masculinity may be reflected in,

reinforced by, and/or challenged by different types of dialogic pedagogies. For example, it has been argued that dialogue that emphasises adversarial methods of argumentation and debate promotes dominant stereotypes of masculinity, which emphasise aggression, individuality, and a particular notion of rationality (Moulton 1983). As these behaviours are opposed to traditional notions of femininity, women and girls may feel excluded from, or marginalised in, such dialogues. It is important to note that such practices do not necessarily benefit boys either. For example, boys who do not fit in with traditional stereotypes of masculine ideals and will also feel excluded. Furthermore, some philosophers and educators have argued that this masculine adversarial method is epistemologically problematic because it is not conducive to the genuine community that scaffolds learning and the construction of meaning or knowledge, which is integral to P4wC (Bleazby 2013). We cannot respond to the use of such problematic approaches to dialogue by simply supporting girls to more actively participate in ways that more readily align with masculinity (Yates 1985). Rather, we need to challenge and deconstruct such ideals and dialogic practices to identify and implement more inclusive practices. This paper will first describe typical practice in Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC). This first step will be important to understand how P4wC functions foundationally, so that we can understand the impact of the addition of competitive elements to this practice. From there, we can analyse how the addition of those competitive elements to P4wC overemphasise masculine attributes in ways that are problematic.

Importantly, while this paper presents a theoretical analysis of how competition is aligned with masculinity, it will draw on empirical research that primarily distinguishes between students through the category of biological sex. When empirical data is recorded, it is often recorded as boys doing this and girls doing that. This makes it difficult to analyse these observed differences in ways that do not essentialise sex differences as innate. There are some progressive exceptions in the research, such as Yu, McLellan and Winter (2021) whose empirical research identifies four different types of girls and three different types of boys, generating an empirical analysis of variations within sex class rather than just across sex class, although this is not the norm. Therefore, in drawing on empirical research, it is difficult not to talk about girls and boys in a way that attributes behaviour to sex class because almost all empirical data has been recorded on this basis. For this reason, this paper will discuss what is typical of girls and boys, as observed through empirical data, and, at the same time, use that data based on sex class to discuss the theory about masculinity and femininity in a way that attempts to avoid attributing behaviour on the basis of sex

class. This paper acknowledges that this is a contradiction but sees no way around it if empirical data is to be incorporated into the analysis.

1. Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC)

Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC) is an educational practice that has existed for over fifty years (Lipman & Bynum 1976). There has been much development of this practice over those years and differences in the way it is practised exist today (cf. Murris et al. 2016). However, there are elements of the practice that are central in almost all styles and methods of P4wC that serve as the common thread that links this practice despite differences in the way it is implemented across the world. Two of these central elements will be relevant to foreground in this paper. Firstly, many practitioners aim towards the development of four central types of thinking: Critical, Creative, Caring, and Collaborative Thinking. These will be referred to as the four Cs. These are not hierarchical. All play an equally important role in the thinking for students in P4wC. Secondly, many practitioners use the pedagogical component of the Community of Inquiry (CoI). The CoI provides the structure in which P4wC takes place. The CoI enables a space for dialogue to happen in a democratic environment that is open to pluralistic ideation and fosters a sense of value and worthwhile contribution from each member of the community, even when their ideas are critiqued. The 4Cs are the kinds of thinking that develop through the pedagogical tool of the CoI: enabling Collaborative Thinking to occur through the democratic communal interaction; fostering respect for diverse people and ideas within the notion of Caring Thinking; allowing the open dialogic space to explore new possibilities and ideas in line with Creative Thinking; and applying a critical lens over the thinking and ideation within the CoI to foster Critical Thinking capabilities. These two elements—the 4Cs and the CoI—are fundamental to the way in which P4wC is practiced. This paper will argue that the addition of competitive elements to P4wC undermines both of these central tenets by emphasising masculine aspects of the practice at the expense of feminine ones, and that this disproportionately disadvantages women and girls.

The next question, then, is what are these competitive elements that may be added to P4wC. One common example of an event that utilises P4wC practice, but adds on competitive elements, is the Philosothon. The Philosothon originated in Perth, Australia in 2007, and has now grown both nationally and internationally with a number of Philosothons being created in the UK in recent years as well as all over Australia for the past 15 years. These events aim to develop the same kinds of philosophical thinking (i.e. the 4Cs), utilising the same pedagogy (the CoI) as more

standard practices of P4wC. However, this event is described as a 'friendly competition' (Wills 2012, p. 13), and incorporates distinctly competitive elements such as scoring, judges, and winning. In general, P4wC practice does not include any scoring, judges, or winning, so this competitive element is entirely an addition to P4wC practice. The Philosothon includes these competitive elements while also attempting to maintain both of the fundamental P4wC elements described above: developing the 4Cs within a CoI.

Philosothons purport to advance the same kinds of benefits that P4wC does, namely, developing a certain kind of thinking and disposition through philosophical dialogue; empowering students in engaging with ideas philosophically through developing the 4Cs as part of their thinking repertoire, which is best achieved through the CoI pedagogy. The challenge, broadly, for these kinds of events is thinking about the effect created by the addition of competitive elements to P4wC practice. This is the challenge that this special issue of the Journal of Philosophy in Schools seeks to address. This paper, more specifically, focuses on this challenge through the lens of gender. This paper argues that the addition of these competitive elements necessarily means over-emphasising masculine features of P4wC at the expense of feminine ones. This disparity in emphasis creates conditions in which, firstly, girls in particular are disadvantaged by over-emphasising masculine attributes. Secondly, that all students are disadvantaged by over-emphasising masculine thinking and dialogue. And thirdly, that this masculine emphasis undermines the values of P4wC insofar as both the 4Cs and CoI pedagogy are disrupted.

2. Gender and philosophy

How, and in what way, is gendered thinking, doing and being relevant to the discussion of P4wC and competition? This question requires an analysis of the ways in which thinking, reasoning, and philosophy in general have been criticised by feminist scholars for being gendered in ways that emphasise masculine notions of participating at the expense of feminine ones. This section will detail some of these critiques in order to, firstly, differentiate them from P4wC (i.e. P4wC does not fall into this trap of gendered thinking). Then, secondly, this section will argue that when competitive elements are added on to P4wC practices it does result in an activity that privileges the masculine over the feminine in ways that are unacceptable from a gender equality perspective and unproductive from a pedagogical perspective.

2.1 The dualistic notion of reason

In her seminal text *The Man of Reason*, Lloyd (1984) undertakes a feminist analysis of the history of Western philosophy, explaining how femininity has been partially constituted by its exclusion from Reasoning and Rationality (p. x). She states that 'the feminine has been associated with what rational knowledge transcends, dominates or simply leaves behind' (p. 2). Lloyd traces these ideas back to many of the key figures in philosophy (e.g. Plato, Descartes, Kant, Bacon); philosophers whose ideas have shaped modern Western understandings of knowledge. In general, the feminine has been more closely associated with nature and embodiment, while the masculine is associated with a disembodied, transcendental notion of Reason that supposedly delivers genuine knowledge of absolute truths. In modernity, it is the discipline of science that is thought to epitomise this notion of Reason. Thus, those who have described science as a discipline and method of establishing dominion or control over nature have also helped legitimise patriarchal thinking because scientific control over nature reflects male control over the females (p. 11).

Over two and half thousand years ago, Plato (370 BCE/1953, s. 246a-254e) described reason and emotion as two horses pulling a chariot in different directions. The notion that these two human attributes are sharply opposed and often in conflict is still commonly assumed in Western epistemic ideals and educational practices today (e.g. see Boler 1999; Bleazby 2013, ch 5). While the emotions have long been associated with corporality, such as feelings, bodily needs and desires, Reason is conceived of as a faculty located in a 'disembodied' mind, which can both transcend the body and control its functions. Not only were Reason and emotion conceived of as opposites but, for Plato (1943), Reason was inherently superior to emotion. This account of reason and emotion influenced later eminent philosophers, such as Kant (1797/1964), Descartes (1641/1993) and Hobbes (1651/1968). For example, Kant (1797/1964) described the emotions as obstacles to reason and morality:

> The impulses of nature [the passions, emotions], accordingly, are obstacles within man's mind to his observance of duty and forces (sometimes powerful ones) struggling against it. Man must, therefore, judge that he is able to stand up to them and subdue them by reason. (p. 37)

In a similar vein, Hobbes (1991, sec 9.1) compared the passions with an unruly state and Reason with the civilised state:

> Out of [the state], there is a Dominion of Passions, war, fear, poverty, slovinlinesse, solitude, barbarisme, ignorance, cruelty. In it, the

> Dominion of reason, peace, security, riches, decency, society, elegancy, sciences, and benevolence.

Even when philosophers have acknowledged that Reason and emotion are connected and that the emotions have some epistemic value, Reason might still be positioned as superior. For example, Aristotle (2004) thought the emotions could be epistemologically and morally valuable, but a key function of Reason was to control and suppress the potentially dangerous emotions. The emotions are seen as dangerous because they may cloud thought with subjective interests and desires, making it harder for Reason to focus on objective facts and follow the principles of logic.

As feminist theorists have explained, the emotions have also long been associated with the feminine (Bleazby 2013; Boler 1999; Lloyd 1984). Even in modern times, it is a common stereotype that women are overly emotional and therefore irrational (Orr 2018). This is exemplified in common criticisms of contemporary women leaders, such as Hilary Clinton (Ross 2016) and Julia Gillard (Coslovich 2011). They can be criticised for not being emotional enough and, thus, not properly feminine but, also, for being overly emotional and, thus, lacking the rational capacities needed for leadership. For example, Gillard sometimes faced backlash over not showing enough emotion, and even for being childless, which was used to suggest that she lacked proper feminine emotions (e.g. maternal, caring instincts). But at other times she was criticised for showing too much emotion, such as by crying when talking about the victims of the Australian floods. Clinton was accused of being 'unstable, insane, and lacking the equilibrium required to be an effective president, partly because of her womanly emotionality (Ross 2016). Such criticisms are rarely levelled at men, where even overtly aggressive behaviour can be seen as not just acceptable but rational and evidence of their strength and competence. The common association of women and emotionality correlates with conceptions of the emotions as inferior to Reason, entailing that women are themselves regarded as inferior because they supposedly align with emotion rather than Reason.

2.2 Gendered account of philosophical thinking: The adversary method

Academic philosophy has been critiqued by feminist scholars for privileging a masculine perspective due to its adversarial practices. Philosophy is considered an elite academic discipline, largely because it is concerned with methods of good thinking and reasoning. As such, it has been described as the foundation for all other disciplines because without being able to think and reason, first and foremost, no

other progress is possible in any other discipline. However, it has also been argued that the kind of thinking philosophy has traditionally privileged reflects and reinforces masculine notions of thinking.

A seminal text on the gendered nature of philosophical thinking is Moulton's (1983) 'Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method'. Moulton argues that the adversary method is paradigmatic in philosophical reasoning (p. 149). This method involves exposing philosophical viewpoints and arguments to extreme opposition, whereby a defender will have to muster all the evidence possible to support their view against a real or imagined adversary. This method is justified by the claim that any 'position ought to be defended from, and subjected to, the criticism of the strongest opposition' (p. 153). And if that evaluation is not adversarial in nature, then it is assumed to be weaker and less effective (p. 154). This adversarial mode of philosophical inquiry is itself competitive in nature, and competitive philosophy activities will align, or at least be at risk of aligning, with Moulton's conception of the Adversarial Method of Philosophy. Moulton's argument is supported by reference to some canonical texts within philosophy, such as Alston and Brandt's (1974) introduction to philosophy, which describes 'the philosopher' as:

> the sceptic, the man [sic] who questions basic assumptions and concepts … challenges comfortable common-sense assumptions … with a sharp eye for distinctions, and a quick wit for objections. He is more adept at tearing down than at building up, and he delights in reducing his interlocutors to confusion. (pp. 9-10)

This hyper-critical element forces philosophers to work within a scheme that requires them to tear down and criticise ideas; that requires them to constantly think of objections and counterexamples; and that requires them to attempt to undermine any and all ideas that are presented for evaluation, including their own. Given the under-representation of women in academic philosophy (Easton 2022), Freidman (2013) describes 'perhaps the most important and pervasive feature of philosophical practice that could be alienating women: the adversarial style of philosophical dialogue' (p. 27). She goes on to delineate the adversarial method in philosophy as consisting of objections and counterexamples to which the best responses are refutations, then more objections and counterexamples, in a cyclical motion of unending competitive attacks where 'all that matters is the gladiatorial skirmish' (p. 28).

Moulton (1983) recognises that the method reflects masculine stereotypes. She argues that, as such, the use of this method in philosophy specifically disadvantages women.

For one, the adversary method espouses a positive view of aggression, such that aggression is positively related to concepts such as power, activity, ambition, authority, autonomy, competence, and effectiveness (p. 149). As Hundleby (2021) states, 'if people assume that success requires aggression, then discussants must appear aggressive in order to appear competent at arguing' (p. 3). However, this positive view of aggression may only be the case for men because this is reflective of dominant ideals of masculinity, which emphasise domination, control, an individualistic notion of autonomy, and pure Rationality (as opposed to emotion, empathy, care). This is not the case for women, as femininity is traditionally associated with passivity, affectivity, and a communal, caring orientation and, as such, even when being only mildly aggressive or critical, women can seem unusual and unnatural (Moulton 1983, p. 150; cf. Hample et al. 2005; Kukla 2014; Olberding 2014; Rancer & Dierks-Stewart 1985). As Hundleby (2010) explains, this is not just the case for women but it also applies to many other groups of people:

> Women, people of colour, or those with only basic education face special difficulties with the Adversary Method. The Method enforces oppositional norms associated especially with masculinity in the culture of the global North, and contrasts with norms of femininity, as well as with styles of reasoning in other marginalized groups on both a local and global scale. (p. 297)

Freidman (2013, p. 28) similarly suggests that the aggressive nature of the adversary method creates an atmosphere that is inhospitable for anyone who has not been raised to fight or enjoy combat. This is more likely to be women because conflict, combativeness, and aggression are traits more associated with traditional masculinity and therefore likely to be viewed positively in boys and negatively in girls. Al-Tamimi (2009, p. 1) agrees, stating that women are socialised to think and act differently, often rendering them less comfortable engaging in this form of argumentation. Al-Tamimi (2009, p. 2) suggests that women tend to use politer forms of argumentation and, thus, methods that are infused with aggression and hostility put women at a disadvantage. Hundleby (2021) also suggests that the adversary method may 'marginalise women's patterns of communication and discount social norms of femininity' (p. 2). Patterns of communication for women often reflect 'distinct values of intimacy, connection, inclusion, and problem sharing' (Burrow 2010, p. 247). These patterns of communication are in conflict with the adversary method of philosophy. Al-Tamimi (2009) suggests that, currently, traditional philosophical methods are still so infused with aggression and hostility that philosophers may 'ignore ways in which one may

argue without being hostile' (p. 3). Rooney and Hundleby (2010, p. 198) state that even when women adopt adversarial strategies, their authority is still undermined because they are transgressing feminine politeness norms. This means that females are placed in a lose-lose situation: to not be masculine enough for philosophy, or to not be feminine enough for the gender role associated with their sex. This is consistent with the experiences of many of the women in the study of Belenky et al. (1997) who describe this dilemma in formal educational settings in general, not just in philosophy. Indeed, Freidman (2013, p. 28) makes a causal link suggesting that the relatively low number of women academics in philosophy departments may be explained by the pervasiveness of the adversary method.

Antony (2012) describes this issue as relating to stereotype threat and the reinforcement of gender schemas. Stereotype threat often occurs for women who work in areas where women are generally considered less capable than men. Stereotype threat manifests as a 'self-stigmatising anxiety' that can degrade women's performance and reinforce the gendered schema that women are less able in that position (p. 231). Reaffirming Moulton's position, Antony (2012) agrees that philosophy may present specific opportunities for gender-schematic assumptions about women's capacity to contribute (p. 234), as 'philosophers are notorious … for their pugilistic style of discourse' (p. 238). This style places philosophy in a category of occupations where 'the criteria for good performance require a worker to act in ways that violate norms of femininity' (p. 237).

The potential impact of the adversary method on women also resembles Fricker's (2007) concept of epistemic injustice. This involves discrediting a person's knowledge contribution based on their membership to a certain social group (e.g. women). Of particular relevance is a specific type of epistemic injustice that Bondy (2010) refers to as 'argumentative injustice', relating to harm done by devaluing or discrediting a person's credibility within the process of arguing. Argumentative injustice may involve either an underestimation or overestimation of a person's credibility. In philosophy, those who argue within the paradigm of the adversary method may have an inflated credibility, and those who fail to adhere to the adversary method may suffer a deflated credibility. As has been discussed, it is more likely to be women who do not participate within the adversary paradigm, and so who are more likely to suffer this deflated credibility and thereby be disadvantaged in philosophical discourse.

3. Gendered practice in education

Previous sections have discussed how masculine ideals of thinking can be privileged within the paradigm of academic philosophy. Turning now to students and the school environment, there is a question as to the effect of the addition of competitive elements to P4wC on students with regards to masculine ideas of thinking. While there is no known research within P4wC specifically on this topic, we can turn to empirical research on classroom discussion in general, as P4wC is primarily a dialogic practice.

Over the past forty years, there has been an abundance of empirical research consistently showing that girls and young women are often excluded and marginalised within certain kinds of classroom discussion. Numerous research studies have found that boys dominate classroom discussions by having a disproportionate share of talk time. This has been shown to be the case in many different parts of the world and with different age groups, as well as at different times over the past forty years (Aukrust 2008; Blair 2000; Bousted 1989; Collins & Johnston-Wilder 2005; Dart & Clarke 1988; French & French 1984; Galvin et al. 2013; Howe 1997; Keogh et al. 2000; Julé 2005; Menard-Warwick et al. 2014; Swann & Graddol 1988; Yakushkina 2018). Interestingly, boys dominate discussions despite the fact that girls, on average, have greater linguistic skills, both in international standardised tests (ACARA 2018; OECD 2019) and in non-academic social situations (Eckert 2000). Boys have also been found to dominate discussions regardless of topic (Dart & Clarke 1988; Leman 2010). Research shows that when students have less verbal participation and ask fewer questions in class, this may reduce the quality of their learning experiences and academic achievement in various ways. Therefore, boys' dominance of classroom dialogue can harm girls' learning and achievement (Chin & Osborne 2008; Hofstein et al. 2005; Martinho et al. 2015; Neer 1990). The environment in which a discussion takes place will impact on the participation of students, and when that environment reflects dominatant notions of masculinity, such as a competitive discussion, then girls will be at greater risk of non-participation and poorer learning outcomes.

Girl's lower self-confidence can inhibit risk taking or make them more cautious, which can impact participation in competitive classroom dialogues. Girls have a tendency to self-consciously limit their response to conventional moves. They play it safe in classroom discussion rather than taking risks with their thinking and input because of lower confidence levels that infect their thinking with the idea that they do not want to be exposed as 'incorrect' (Glasser 2007, p. 219). Burgess (1990, p. 91) suggests that girls' achievement, self-esteem, and willingness to take an active role are particularly endangered in mixed-sex environments, while Howe (1997) similarly asserts that mixed gender groupings are 'associated with reduced talk, social withdrawal,

resentment and male dominance' (p. 55). This is supported by others who claim that girls feel more comfortable taking risks and making mistakes in girls-only discussions (Davies 2005).

The way students are positioned in competitive dialogue matters. Baxter (2002, p. 7) observes that 'effective' speech is not constituted by assessable oral or social skills, but instead seems to be more strongly related to the extent to which particular students are positioned as powerful. This has repercussions if girls are consistently being positioned as less powerful in discussions, and girls are likely to be positioned as less powerful if the criteria for the quality of their input is related to how competitively they assert themselves. If the extent to which a speaker is deemed effective is partly attributable to their position of power, and girls are positioned as powerless far more often than boys, then girls are consistently losing out in their capacity to impact classroom discourse, whether that be effecting change by argumentation, contributing an alternative perspective, or producing a new idea. If girls fail to be seen as effective speakers in classroom discourse, they lose their meaning-making ability and epistemic equality and are reduced to only being supporters of others' ideas.

Girls tend to more often utilise collaborative speech over disagreement. Girls tend to use acknowledging moves compared to protest moves (i.e. greater use of supporting interlocuters in dialogue over disagreeing with them; Saunston 2007, p. 316). This can be seen in the research of Broughton (2002, p. 19). As she focusses on one particular adolescent girl in her research, Broughton notes that the girl becomes quiet and loses her voice when among her male friends but feels free to act spontaneously without fear amongst her female friends. The student herself reflects that she had allowed herself to be constructed by others, and subsequently performed a public self that conformed to their expectations. These are specifically gendered expectations that society has: she is expected to act feminine. Fisher (2014) also focusses on girls fitting a profile whereby they present as shy and reticent in the classroom but reveal loquacious personalities in interviews with the researcher. It was noted that no boys fit this profile, only girls in the study. Moreover, Collins and Johnston-Wilder (2005) note the disproportionate number of girls compared to boys who have spent whole days in school not participating in the kinds of talk that their teachers see as central to learning. These examples link to the idea of the classroom being a representation of the outside world. And if that outside world has particular notions of what gender is for girls, they may be influenced in the classroom to perform in a way that meets that society's or classroom's expectations of gender. A competitive environment in the classroom is one that typically espouses masculine notions of thinking, knowing, and

communicating that will often disadvantage students who do not fit within the assertive, dominant, and individualistic notions of traditional masculinity. This kind of competitive environment further disadvantages girls in school and can be observed in the empirical research presented here.

Empirical research suggests that boys tend to prefer competitive environments more than girls, and girls tend to prefer collaborative environments more than boys (Charness & Rustichini 2011; Gneezy et al. 2009; Hogarth et al. 2012). This is suggested through the research suggesting that boys are more likely to engage in adversarial, points-driven activities where they can win, and girls are more likely to engage in cooperative, social activities where they can connect. Competitiveness has a strong impact on students' willingness to challenge or disagree with other students or the teacher. Martino (1996) demonstrated that in classroom discussion boys continually feel the need to compete with one another and to assert their masculinity, which is supported by other studies showing that boys display other traits associated with masculinity, such as dominating talk time (Aukrust 2008; Blair 2000; Collins & Johnston-Wilder 2005; Julé 2005; Keogh et al. 2000), pursuing powerful positions in the discussion (Howe 1997), interrupting more often (Baxter 2002; Leman 2010), and using protest or disagreement more (Saunston 2007). In a study of US third grade children, girls adopted a negotiating role in group work, while boys took a competitive approach (Cook-Gumperz & Szymanski 2001). With boys tending to be more competitive than girls, boys are more likely to challenge or disagree with others, while girls' tendency toward collaboration makes them more likely to be agreeable and less likely to challenge others. Coates (1993, 1996, 2003) observes that girls' main interactional goal is the establishment and maintenance of social relationships and equality, whereas boys' is the exchange of information and status building. Bleazby (2009, p. 72) asserts that girls are in fact less likely to challenge, critique, or disagree with others. The collaborative discursive style typical of girls is in conflict with the competitive and confrontational approach of boys. Boys tend toward the competitive nature of giving the best reasons, challenging each other's reasons, and essentially winning the battle of giving the best response in the discussion. Girls tend toward a less competitive and more collaborative approach which focusses on building upon all ideas and input from individuals in order to come to a communal output. Boys' competitiveness in providing the best reasons and responses may alienate girls from participation by disallowing or diminishing the collaborative atmosphere of the discussion and turning it into a competitive one. Indeed, research from Booth and Nolen (2009a, 2009b) suggests that girls in mixed-sex environments are risk-averse

and shy away from competition compared to both boys in general and girls in single-sex environments. Streitmatter (1994) states that 'females are more at-risk for not successfully competing in our dominant culture than are males' (p. 166). When a learning environment is overly competitive, girls are comparatively more likely to not participate and feel disengaged. This hyper-critical challenging aligns with many of the gendered concepts presented earlier in this paper. This includes the adversary method of Moulton (1983) which espouses tearing down arguments as the epitome of rationality and reasoning and also the critique of knowledge by Belenky et al. (1997), who criticise what they describe as separate knowing, which involves individualistic, rigorous, hyper-critical thinking which attempts to be objective by excluding emotions and personal experiences. This research provides empirical evidence for the theoretical idea that over-emphasising masculine thinking will disadvantage girls.

Thinking that is traditionally aligned with masculinity at the expense of the feminine is also detrimental to all students, regardless of sex. Traditionally feminine notions of thinking and communicating are characterised as emotional, intuitive, and communal thinking while masculine ideals are characterised as rational, abstract, and individualistic thinking (Bleazby 2013, Cixous 1981; Plumwood 2002). Empirical research from this section shows how girls often seem to have internalised these gendered ideals in how they perform them in classroom discussion. But these persistent gendered expectations are detrimental to all, regardless of sex, because they force a person into a narrower framework for contributing to thinking and communicating (i.e. a masculine framework).

This masculine framework is even more narrow for girls than boys. For girls, feminine modes of thinking, knowing, and communicating align with their gender roles and allow them to fit in more with the gendered paradigm of their community. However, at the same time, those same feminine modes of thinking, knowing, and communicating are devalued in a community focussed on producing knowledge. As Belenky et al. (1997) explain, this means that if girls align themselves with what is perceived to be normal or ideal for their sex, they are also aligning themselves with a lower academic status position because femininity is devalued. Conversely, if they utilise masculine forms of thinking, knowing, and communicating, that are associated with high status knowledge and communication, they will be transgressing traditional gender norms (i.e. entering the masculine domain). Such transgression is often met with social exclusion and marginalisation. Therefore, for girls, but not for boys, both adherence and resistance to gender norms produces negative outcomes.

These gendered norms are those stereotypes associated with either masculinity or femininity. If boys are expected to be assertive, aggressive, and competitive then that behaviour will be tolerated more by the teacher. And if girls are expected to be passive, quiet, and concede ground then that behaviour can be expected to play out in reality. These expectations make it harder for girls to contribute equally, and also for boys to listen and accept contributions outside of their own aggressive and competitive view. This can only be exaggerated when the environment or context of learning is established as a distinctively competitive one. While this may be unavoidable for certain kinds of activities for which competition is inherent to the activity (e.g. sport or debating), for an activity such as philosophical discussion, where competition is not an inherent part of the activity, the extraneous inclusion of competitive elements adds unnecessary equity issues in addition to pedagogical ones.

4. Competition in philosophy

The previous section described the empirical research suggesting the ways in which the interactions and participation of girls in classroom discussions tend to differ from that of boys. Here, the discussion will turn to reasons why this might be the case and the effects that this may produce. This ties together the use of competitive elements within P4wC as a form of privileging masculine ways of thinking to explain why these empirical observations persist in classroom discussions, and why they should not be allowed to encroach on P4wC.

In a P4wC context, this privileging of masculine ways of being will be seen as girls more often contributing to the Caring and Collaborative Thinking aspects of the community of inquiry, and boys more often contributing to the Critical and Creative Thinking aspects. This is because of the association of Critical and Creative Thinking and boys with masculinity and Caring and Collaborative Thinking and girls with femininity. Critical Thinking is associated with masculinity because it reflects masculine notions of Reason, individuality, and the abstract. Creative Thinking is also associated with masculinity because it reflects masculine notions of production and authority. Caring and Collaborative thinking relate to feminine ideals of emotion, community, and the contextual. While all four are important in a holistic sense for students in a community of inquiry, they fall into traditional gendered notions of knowledge. This is important to recognise because the addition of a competitive element to P4wC pushes that activity towards those masculine ideals that would privilege Critical and Creative Thinking as more important. These masculine ideals being overprivileged not only disadvantages girls' participation and contributions,

but it also distorts the values of P4wC and Community of Inquiry which is built on all four kinds of thinking working holistically.

There are ways to mitigate this shift due to the competitive element, but they are insufficient. Competitive philosophy activities can attempt to balance aspects of (masculine) Critical and Creative Thinking and (feminine) Caring and Collaborative Thinking through measures such as creating rubrics or point systems that award points in equal measure to all four kinds of thinking. Indeed, this is what Philosothons attempt to do, scoring students at the 2019 Australasian Philosothon in equal measure across three categories of critical, creative, and collaborative thinking (Australasian Philosothon 2019). However, there is a cultural shift in the activity and a mindset shift in students that undermines this kind of mitigation. This cultural shift moves philosophical communities of inquiry from a purpose of contributing to a collective endeavour to collaboratively discuss and engage in communal critical analysis of philosophical ideas, to a purpose that involves winning and providing 'better' responses than competitors. This shift necessarily results in a mindset change in students, who are now aware that they are being judged and awarded points. That knowledge impacts their mindset going into the dialogue. The other members of the community of inquiry are now no longer simply co-inquirers with a shared goal and purpose, but they are competitors, and at least part of their purpose is to defeat and outscore others during the inquiry. With competition being associated with notions of traditional masculinity, the addition of competition to an activity will push students' mindsets towards other masculine ideals. Easton (2022) posits that 'competitive norms may lead to women performing less well in philosophy than they might otherwise do' (p. 51). In practice, this may look like students becoming more assertive and dominating as they attempt to fight to win points for their specific contribution, where in a non-competitive environment they may be content to let others push the discussion forward because everyone has a shared communal purpose, and they can achieve the communal purpose of making philosophical progress without asserting themselves. It also may look like students being more primarily focussed on Critical and Creative Thinking rather than Caring and Collaborative Thinking. This is because Critical Thinking allows them to assert dominance in showing their critical aptitude at the same time as showing the failings of others' ideas. Creative Thinking also allows them to be dominant if they are successful in having their specific idea taken up in the discussion. In contrast, Caring[1] and Collaborative Thinking, even if there are points

[1] Caring Thinking is excluded from the Australian Philosothon scoring criteria, but is generally conceived as important in P4wC broadly.

awarded for them, are the kinds of thinking that will enable and empower others to gain access to the dialogue, and, in competition, to gain greater access to being awarded points. This is counter to the mindset of 'winning' the dialogue by maximising your point total and minimising the 'opposition' point totals. Even if you score points for caring and collaborative thinking, you are simultaneously putting your opponents in a position to score points as well. Whereas for critical and creative thinking you are able to score points by tearing down others' ideas and positioning them in ways that will not get them points. It is through this cultural and mindset shift that masculine modes of philosophical dialogue are promoted when competition is added and, subsequently, all students are disadvantaged from a pedagogical perspective, and girls in particular are disadvantaged in how they are able to access such a masculine discussion.

Easton (2022) posits that competitive philosophy events can actually be beneficial for girls despite these gendered notions. The reasoning for this is that these are often marketed and experienced as 'friendly' events (i.e. not combative like debating), that they reward stereotypically feminine attributes such as collaboration, and that they punish stereotypically masculine attributes like dominating. Therefore, these competitions are a beneficial space for girls. However, while this might accurately suggest that these kinds of competitive philosophy events are better than the combativeness of academic philosophy, it does not justify the inclusion of the competitive element in itself. If K-12 competitive philosophy events are beneficial for their inclusiveness towards girls because of the friendly, collaborative, and non-combative environment, then it stands to reason that non-competitive K-12 philosophy events will be even more beneficial because they likely to be more friendly, more collaborative, and less combative. So why include competition? For example, the Victorian Association for Philosophy in Schools (2022) runs Philosophy in Public Spaces (PIPS) events, which utilise a similar Philosophy for/with Children and Community of Inquiry style to Philosothons, but without any competition (no judges, no scores, no winners). Competitive philosophy events in their present form may be better than academic philosophy in terms of inclusiveness, but they still require a justification for why any competitive element is necessary at all. This paper suggests that the inclusion of any competitive element is not justified, therefore these competitive elements should be removed.

Conclusion

In response to the specific question of this special issue: 'What is the place for competition in philosophy?', the answer presented in this paper is simply: none. The addition of competition to philosophy necessarily includes the privileging of traditionally masculine notions of knowing, thinking, and communicating. These masculine attributes specifically disadvantage girls in these activities by privileging ways of being that do not align with the gender role associated with their sex. Moreover, these masculine attributes more broadly disadvantage all students because it pushes them towards a more masculine approach to philosophical dialogue. And finally, the privileging of masculine attributes undermines the value of the Philosophy for/with Children and Community of Inquiry approach. This approach is built on a holistic interaction between Critical, Creative, Caring and Collaborative Thinking that students are expected to demonstrate in order to make progress in philosophical dialogue. While competitive philosophy activities can attempt to retain all four of these kinds of thinking by awarding points for each, the culture of P4wC will be changed and the mindset of participating students will be changed in a way that privileges those masculine ways of thinking, knowing, and communicating over feminine ones.

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