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The Philosophical Practice of the Community of Inquiry: A Feminist Transitionalist Account

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Table of Contents

Abstract	5
Ethics statement	6
Acknowledgements.....	6
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	7
1.1 My research questions.....	8
1.2 Inquiry beginnings	11
1.3 Early theoretical explorations	13
1.4 The weave	14
1.5 Contextualising my study.....	16
1.6 Researcher positionality.....	18
1.7 Tacit theory and practice implications.....	21
1.71 Tacit practice assumptions	22
1.72 Reflection in and on practice.....	22
1.73 Thinking together, thinking-together and meaning making.....	23
1.8 Chapter summary.....	24
Chapter 2: My feminist frame.....	26
2.1 Historical feminist influences	27
2.11 Simone de Beauvoir	29
2.2 Contemporary feminist influences	31
2.3 Care and relationality	36
2.31 Care and Col	38
2.32 Power relations and agency in Col practice	39
2.4 Integrated structure and research methodology.....	40
2.41 Thesis implications of the weaving metaphor.....	44
2.5 Feminist approach to literature	45
2.6 Chapter summary.....	46
Chapter 3: The Community of Inquiry.....	48
3.1 Philosophy for Children	52
3.2 Thinking together and thinking-together	55
3.3 Thinking for oneself.....	57
3.4 Self-correction, thinking together and Col.....	58
3.5 Col and regulative ideals.....	61
3.6 Col, education, children and behaviour.....	62
3.7 Sharp's feminist framing of Col	64
3.71 Caring thinking and emotions as judgements	65

3.72 The feminist <i>how</i> of Col practice	68
3.73 Col, value and valuing	69
3.8 The relational Col	70
3.9 Col summary	71
3.10 Implications of feminist framing of Col.....	72
Chapter 4: Pragmatism.....	76
4.1 First wave pragmatism and P4C.....	76
4.12 Dewey	76
4.13 Buchler and Peirce	79
4.2 Rorty's second wave linguistic turn	80
4.21 Foundationalism and post-foundationalism	81
4.22 Relativism	82
4.23 Hope and Meliorism: a brief historical introduction	85
4.24 Jane Addams	86
4.3 Contextualising transitionalism as a development of first wave pragmatism	89
Chapter 5: Transitionalism.....	92
5.1 Temporality and historicity	92
5.2 Meliorism as a directional pull	94
5.3 Development, progress, improvement.....	96
5.4 Implications of feminist frame on transitionalism.....	98
5.5 The relevance of transitionalism in Col	103
Chapter 6: Edifying judgement and P4C practice.....	108
6.1 Subject as topic or subject matter.....	110
6.2 Subjectivity.....	112
6.3 Subjecting to	115
6.4 Responsibilist relational philosophical practice	119
6.5 Subject as static or developing.....	120
6.6 Transitionalism and edifying judgement.....	122
6.7 Truth as reconstructive success.....	125
6.8 Judgement as field.....	126
6.81 The importance of practising as edifying practice.....	127
6.82 Meaning making as relational practice action.....	128
6.9 Ethical implications of edifying judgement and meliorism.....	129
6.91 Experience and edifying judgement	131
6.10 Edifying judgement and transitionalism's truth	131
6.11 Implications for Col practice	133

Chapter 7: Self	135
7.1 Self and transitionalism	136
7.2 Some feminist considerations of self.....	137
Thinking self	142
7.3 Narrative self.....	144
7.31 The dialogical self	148
7.4 Embodiedness and embeddedness of the feminist, transitionalist self.....	150
7.41 The developing self.....	152
7.42 Relations, sensitivity, noticing, being attentive	153
7.43 Implications for feminist, transitionalist integrated self in the Col.....	153
7.5 An integrated approach to the concept of self	156
7.6 Self and education.....	158
7.7 Transitioning self, Col and meaning making.....	162
7.71 Authentic intention as a form of meliorist practice.....	165
7.72 Authenticity, time, and PPCol.....	167
7.73 A feminist view of Col as integrated philosophical practice.....	171
7.74 Integrated feminist philosophical practice.....	175
Chapter 8: Integrated feminist transitionalist practice implications	179
8.1 The significance of my feminist framing of PPCol	179
8.12 Exposing shadows of structural masculinised power	181
8.13 Situated embodied selves, self-correction, transformation, transition	181
8.14 Making space for the ontological realm of Col.....	183
8.15 Belonging and unbelonging.....	187
8.16 The relational Col.....	189
8.2 The importance of transitionalism in PPCol.....	193
8.21 Development and Col practice	193
8.22 Development as a concept extended to communities and selves	194
8.23 The practice ideal of edifying judgement.....	196
8.24 Edifying practice	197
8.3 The educational significance of integrated PPCol	198
8.31 The weave: The integrated relational educational Col	201
8.4 Implications for future PPCol evaluation	202
8.41 Progress of Col practice	202
8.42 Shared responsibility for reflection	206
8.43 Methodological misalignment of evaluation practice	208
8.44 Aligning evaluation methodology with practice.....	209

8.5 Recommendations	210
8.51 Developing greater understanding of relational practice	211
8.52 Dispositional development	213
8.53 Stronger theoretical introduction.....	214
8.54 Developing an integrated evaluation methodology that better aligns with PPCol .	215
8.55 Importance of a feminist methodology	218
Manifesto	220
References	222

Abstract

This thesis explores the philosophical practice of the community of inquiry (PPCoI) using a feminist transitionalist frame. It reveals some traditional power structures that tacitly curate philosophy and philosophical practice within a masculinised domain. It uncovers shadows of traditional power, that when exposed, indicate inferences of outdated sexed exclusions, that are relevant to all persons minoritised as *Other*. In community of inquiry practice, a tacit power imbalance is most obvious when the practice is evaluated using empirical methods that exclude reference to the persons present as situated thinkers. When reference to practice is thereby minimised, dialogue is diminished by an analysis of transcribed, philosophical argumentation and judgement. This omission causes a distortional under-valuing of the practice *means* in relation with traditional philosophical *ends*. My feminist transitionalist frame presents persons in the community as situated, embodied, thinking selves, engaging in the temporal *practice* of philosophical reconstruction, where the historicist determinate contents mark this dialogic flow. In this practice, persons thinking together develop and refine their warrants, expanding their understanding through being attentive to alternative arguments. During shared thinking, persons may reveal them-selves as capable of development: as transitioning selves. My transitionalist frame highlights meliorism as a directional pull towards truer or better, edifying judgement. It confronts traditional academic delineations of epistemic from axiological endeavour and proposes that feminist edifying practice requires a porosity between these categories. It embraces the relational realm of thinking-together in philosophical inquiry, and its *ways of being* with others that are ontologically significant, and that contribute to making the practice more inclusive. The originality of this study rests in its unique frame, the exposure of tacit structures of power that influence conventional communities of inquiry and their evaluation, and in acknowledging the importance of the *means* of persons thinking-together; edifying practice in the onto-relational realm of PPCoI.

Ethics statement

This study was approved by the Bath Spa University Ethics Panel (Reference Ali GreenwellHall), on 16.12.2022. Should you have any concerns regarding ethical matters relating to this study, please contact the Research Support Office at Bath Spa University. researchsupportoffice@bathspa.ac.uk

Data and copyright

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis examines the philosophical practice of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) (Sharp, 1987; Sharp & Gregory, 2009; Lipman, et al., 1977; Kennedy, 2012; Lipman, 2003; Kennedy, 1994; Kohan & Carvalho, 2019; Gregory, et al., 2025) from a feminist situated position (Code, 1991; Allen, 1999a; Allen, 1999b; Beauvoir de, 1949; Code, 2020; Field, 1995; Griffiths, 1995; Lloyd, 1993) of transitionalist pragmatism (Koopman, 2009; Koopman, 2011; Koopman & Garside, 2019; Garside, 2013; Seigfried, 1991; Seigfried, 1996). Questions of theory and practice emerged as I engaged over twenty years as an educator, using the English application of Lipman and Sharp's Philosophy for Children programme. English philosophy for children practice established by Sutcliffe and colleagues in the 1990's, was developed by the educational charity, the Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERRE) (Sutcliffe, 1995-2007). SAPERE's aim was to develop a version of philosophy for children practice that was based in the Lipman and Sharp programme, but which was accessible to children in the English education system (Lipman, 1988; Lipman, 2003; Lipman, et al., 1977; Gregory & Lavery, 2018). I will call this English practice philosophy with children (PwC), because it uses a variety of resources as provocations, with a more limited reference to the P4C novels that are central to Lipman and Sharp's P4C programme (Murrells & Haynes, 1992; Sutcliffe, 1996; 1995-2007; Williams, 2016; Murrells, 1992; Fisher, 1996). I use the American spelling of inquiry throughout, consistent with its origin (Lipman, et al., 1977). During my educator practice, I learned to facilitate PwC sessions with children, young people and education colleagues using a CoI approach. As my practice became better established and I studied the theory more extensively, I began to question the way in which PwC presented CoI. In its simplest form, CoI was explained as a special sort of group, that met regularly, for the purpose of exploring philosophical questions together. At that time, it was introduced using a series of ground rules and expectations, that were established by the group in collaboration with their educator, with the intention of supporting the practice of philosophising together, and this provoked questions about hidden aspects of practice. It was further reading and study of P4C and, in particular,

Ann Sharp's elaborations on the concept of Col, that provoked this study (Sharp, 1987; 2004; 2007; 1994).

If, as Sharp cautions, the Col is complex, difficult to describe, effortful to establish, are there influencing phenomena present that, as yet, are unaccounted for, and if so, how could these be elicited? Questions of tacit, hidden or lost knowledge and practice began to emerge. These practice concerns led my initial literature searches, which coalesced slowly into themes. One was around the pragmatist philosophical theory on which Lipman and Sharp based their P4C programme. This gave rise to a sub-inquiry into caring thinking that did not wholly rest on pragmatism. Sharp's work intriguingly matured over her lifetime to reveal an increasingly important practice base, that of feminism. From this place, questions of practice, relationality, personhood and equality threatened to overwhelm my project, and it is from this untidy beginning, that my study came into being.

1.1 My research questions

My overarching research question asks if a feminist framing of Col elicits tacit theoretical phenomena? This question enquires into traditional structures of power that influence philosophy as a body of knowledge (Field, 1995; Lloyd, 1993). It raises further questions about the possibility of such structural power casting shadows over the concept of the Col, or its philosophical practice. I develop these questions most obviously in chapter 2, where I examine my choice of feminist literature, and in chapter 3, where I consider the relevance of this literature to Col. One of the most important outcomes of this group of questions, is the recognition of the importance of a feminist reconceptualising of the situated, embodied self as an acknowledged thinker. Situatedness and self are important concepts throughout the thesis, from my analysis of pragmatist thinking in chapters 4 and 5, through to chapter 7, where I explore the self as a concept, and its relations with the philosophical practice of the community of inquiry (PPCol), which in turn raise questions about its philosophical and educational significance. The feminist situating of persons as the producers of knowledge and judgement, contrasts with an established philosophical tradition of distancing the thinker from the production of knowledge. This dissonance has implications for a practice that requires children and young people to work together to

create better conceptual understanding, and to engage in the forming of better judgements, and it is this philosophical practice that I find problematic. The feminist proposal for greater equality between the sexes, and an exploration of what women have been perceived to have been able to do, or not be able to do, challenges a long-standing masculinised tradition with its associated social power structures.

Throughout the thesis I use the term sexed difference in preference to gendered difference because of this tradition, which I clarify in chapter 2.2. If pragmatist philosophy forms the context of P4C, and pragmatist philosophy has traditional theoretical origins, then can a contemporary reconceptualisation of pragmatism assist in bridging this conceptual chasm? I turn to Koopman's transitionalism as a possible theoretical bridge (Koopman, 2009; 2011), which offers a potential route to a better understanding of contemporary P4C practice, assisted by Garside's concept of 'edifying judgement' (Garside, 2013; Koopman & Garside, 2019).

My second group of questions builds on the first by asking about the relationships between philosophical theory, philosophising together as a Col, and tacit conditions that might influence the success of this practice? I explore Garside's work to extend ideas of the subject, being a subject and subjecting to power. I question the transitionalist concepts of temporality and historicity, development and meliorism that contribute to edifying judgement, from the perspective of a feminist situated subject, and ask how they assist in better understanding PPCol?

P4C, undertaken in the Col, is both a philosophical and an educational practice that Lipman and Sharp developed with the purpose of enhancing education (Lipman, et al., 1980; Lipman, 2003; Sharp, 2018c; Gregory & Laverty, 2018; Gregory, et al., 2025). They relate the practice of philosophising, using philosophical moves of reasoning and argument, to concepts in contexts that are familiar to children and young people. My exploration of Col raises questions about how Col has been understood, and I ask what a feminist transitionalist account might add? These educational questions comprise my third research question group. I use Biesta's account of educational purposes (Biesta, 2010), as a theory that offers a potential for connecting education with my feminist transitionalist account of the PPCol. If education requires that children acquire knowledge, learn to make sense of it, and judge its importance, then

how does PPCol align with this purpose? However, if the socialisation and subjectification purposes of Biesta's model matter, how do they feature in PPCol? Does Col present as a space of socialisation? And can Col assist in the subjectification purpose: that of becoming a student better able to conceive of herself, or himself as one capable of development?

In summary, my research questions philosophy, philosophical educational practice, and the concept of the Col from a feminist perspective. This inquiry into the tradition of philosophy, uncovers some dualities of thinking about the relationships between persons and the action of thinking that informs knowledge and judgement. It highlights a historical masculinising of the domain of philosophy, and questions structures of power that are considered by feminists as exclusionary. What becomes apparent during the inquiry are some shadows of this sexed imbalance of power, which may influence the theory and the practice that informs PPCol. The philosophy that is most influential in the background of Col is pragmatism, and I investigate contemporary developments in pragmatist thinking, that better align with a feminist framing of PPCol. In undertaking this inquiry, I explore some transitionalist concepts, including temporality, historicity, meliorism and development, that complement my understanding of third wave pragmatism. These contemporary themes influence Garside, warranting his claim that PwC in the Col can develop edifying judgement. My feminist inquiry into thinking, and the situated, embodied thinking self in the Col, examines thinking and meaning making as phenomena undertaken with others. Shared thinking has implications for the selves that undertake the thinking. It proposes that if thinking selves, practise thinking in relation with others in the Col, a reciprocal development of self may also be possible. In my analysis, I suggest this possibility of development of the self may be sensed as transitioning, a phenomenon that has the potential to develop in relation with others in the Col. In concluding that Garside's articulation of edifying judgement and the transitionalist adverbial form of truth are guiding principles for PPCol, I suggest that this complex, philosophical practice involving thinking together, meaning making and the forming of judgements requires regular, consistent and well facilitated practising. This edifying practice relies

on an integrated relational Col, guided by the ideals of truer, or better edifying judgement.

1.2 Inquiry beginnings

Initially, I looked to Ann Gazzard's three competing accounts of philosophy (Gazzard, 1996), in search of some clarity regarding the place of philosophy in the Col. She describes philosophy as *a pursuit*, as way of life that searches for better ways of being through searching for meaning, which seemed to accord with what I had read from Sharp at the time (Sharp, 1994; Sharp, 2004; Sharp, 2007; Sharp, 1987). Her second description of a body of problems and ideas from the past accorded more strongly with my reading of Aristotle and, amongst other more contemporary philosophers, Foucault, whom I read in conjunction with Allen, and Gramsci in particular (Broadie & Rowe, 2002; Foucault, 1977; Allen, 1999b; Allen, 1999a; Gramsci, 1971). Gazzard's third account I will quote here, because to me it was the closest I had encountered that complemented my reading of Lipman (Lipman, 1988; Lipman, 1991; Lipman, et al., 1980) at that time.

“Thirdly and more recently, there is a view that philosophy is a particular way of thinking most often cast as reflective thinking, something of a meta-discipline which makes possible the elucidation and critical appraisal of virtually any problem from any discipline” (Gazzard, 1996, p. 9).

Gazzard's categories combine to offer P4C a way of defining the philosophy present in the philosophical Col: the search for meaningful living, centring on philosophical subject matter with a long history, and reflective, intellectual engagement cultivating essential philosophical skills. Gazzard claims that *each account* is necessary, explaining why. What she doesn't do in her account, is organise these into a hierarchy of importance, preferring to elaborate each category, offering justifications for each.

Increasingly, I found that my reading was bridging a general interest in feminism and my work in philosophical inquiry, through Terri Field's article and subsequently Genevieve Lloyd's work, (Field, 1995; Lloyd, 1993), which centred around the concept of Col. Questions about power, authority, education and practice began to structure my inquiry around my personal PPCol and I became aware of the importance of bringing a contemporary feminist frame to my practice. In order to facilitate this

endeavour, I engaged more fully with the P4C and PwC (P4wC) literature on Col, and pragmatism which I knew to have been influential for Lipman and Sharp in their project of philosophy for children (Lipman, 2003; Lipman, 2008; Gregory & Laverty, 2018; Gregory, 2022), and which I will explore in chapter 3. It was important to situate the Col in its original context of first wave pragmatism, to understand the practice from within the founders' pragmatist context. The work of Peirce, James and Dewey were most prominent for Lipman and Sharp, with Buchler being Lipman's conduit to Peirce (Gregory, 2024). In chapter 4, I elaborate pragmatism, some of its central concepts, and their places in Lipman and Sharp's P4C programme development. I discuss transitionalism's strength in bringing together the concepts of experience and language, as the third wave of pragmatism's development in chapter 5. Koopman's elaboration of the concepts of development and meliorism, temporality and historicity assist me in better understanding some of the complexity of transitionalist philosophical practice (Koopman, 2009; Koopman, 2011; Koopman & Garside, 2019), which is more yielding to a feminist framing. In chapter 6, I explore Garside's reconceptualisation of P4wC using Koopman's theory and it is this thesis that explicates the importance of transitionalism as a bridge to understanding the philosophical practice of the Col better, and poses questions of subject, and practice that are developed in chapters 7 and 8. It is in my last two chapters, where having outlined the theories that make space for a concept of the situated, embodied feminist self, to become available, I begin to elaborate an integrated conceptualisation of self. I consider that if shared thinking, with the potential for thinking-together, is the work of a feminist Col, then the situated, embodied thinking selves that undertake this philosophical practice require an explicit representation in PPCol. I aim to consolidate the thesis in chapter 8, grouping my proposals around the themes of feminism and its transitionalist framing of philosophical practice. My frame provides structure for the Col, which becomes gradually established as the philosophical practice of the shared community progresses, making space for selves among others to work together on their shared project whilst becoming aware of themselves as thinking selves, with the potential to develop as their practice develops.

1.3 Early theoretical explorations

I considered pursuing an Aristotelian inquiry, after noticing strong connections between his ethics and the Col. It was possible to consider ideas of experience, through Dunne's contemporary Aristotelian account of *phronesis* and *techne*, which would offer support for Col as a form of practical wisdom, especially when viewed through the work of Gadamer (Dunne, 1993). Similarly, using Dunne's exploration of Arendt's neo-Aristotelian background, I might have progressed the thesis using her concept of *action*, and her claim that action discloses personhood, which influences Sharp. Likewise, Arendt's idea of *natality* and her insights regarding *visiting* are strongly visible in Sharp's work on the socio-political context of Col (Glaser, 2018). However, Sharp gives herself permission to look beyond Arendt's masculinised academic framework, and seeing enough value in her contemporary concepts, she does the work of unpicking them from the masculine fabric of an Aristotelian tradition. She renders Arendt's concepts as sufficiently contemporary to apply to her thinkers, as situated subjects. Sharp's eclectic style allows her to free the concept of agency from its masculinised tradition. She accepts that she and Arendt work within a field overshadowed by tacit structures of power in ways that my feminist frame does not. Eudaimonia presents as another possible companion to *phronesis*, however its inherent masculinised traditional origin positions it as equally incompatible with feminism. Contemporary reconceptualisations of eudaimonia as psychological *wellness*, or *happiness*, reduce its philosophical relevance and redirects its scope (DeHaan & Ryan, 2014; Diener, et al., 2018; Werder, 2024). Contemporary radical pedagogies of flourishing that have similar origins again present initially as congruent with my thesis, especially the principles of "Co-creativity (as a core Value), Courage (as a core Virtue) and Conceptual Insight (as a core Virtuosity)", which are claimed to "provide[s] educators with the conceptual tools for an effective and ethical pedagogy, nurturing the conditions for flourishing in and through education" (Mountbatten-O'Malley & Morris, 2025). However, on further examination, the language of *effective* pedagogy, and students as *learners* suggest influences of instrumental education that are contrary to Col (Sharp, 1987; Lipman, 2003), and which are misaligned with Biesta's educational purposes (Biesta, 2010; Biesta, 2020; Biesta, 2022). Whilst it

would be possible to argue that their analysis of education as *educere*, to lead out or draw out, in contrast with *educare*, to train, or mould (Bass & Good, 2004), aligns with the intentions of Col practice, foundations in an application of Wittgenstein's "self-work", restricts self-development to the development of the individual, and as such, does not present as a sufficiently robust or appropriate path of inquiry into shared philosophical practice undertaken by situated, embodied subjects.

I choose instead, to build on my feminist scholarship and apply it to early pragmatism, where Addams and Seigfried have begun the task of feminist critique (Legg & Hookway, 2021; Seigfried, 1991; Seigfried, 1996). Simone de Beauvoir's publication of the *Second Sex* in 1949 (Beauvoir de, 1949) initiated a feminist focus on the sexed inequality of western society. Her exposure of the idea that women were traditionally positioned by men, as Other, and one of a secondary order, ignited a resistance that sought to resist this attributed conceptualisation. I suggest that this is a theme that endures, especially where oppressions intersect (Hill Collins, 2017). Other-ness in the Col is a concept that Sharp resists, and one that she confronts through Todd and Levinas, asserting that as individuals, we need others to assist in the project of becoming responsible persons. If we do not engage with their vulnerability and suffering, we fail ethically (Sharp & Lavery, 2018, p. 124). The ethical significance of aspiring to a world where being female does not instantly mean one is a lesser being, is another important theme of this thesis. However, what is significant in my research practice is to be able to ask important questions about a practice that is overshadowed by a masculinised tradition, and to work from within a methodological frame that aligns with the practice under investigation. In order to align my inquiry with the PPCol that is the subject of my study, I situate it as a feminist inquiry.

1.4 The weave

In approaching my study using a feminist transitionalist frame, my intention is to build on Sharp's legacy and attempt to elicit tacit examples or implications of sexed inequality that have persisted despite her endeavour. In making this attempt, I wish to expose tensions that arise from historic inequality. Once explicit, these structures of power can be questioned and worked on to reduce their influence. Perhaps these power structures could be conceived of as false laminations of the frame, where a

structural glue has been applied too early, and where solvent is required to release the layering to accommodate the emerging equality. This feminist transitionalist frame on which our philosophical practice depends, affords structure, like the framing provided by the warp beam of a fabric frame. I resist using the term loom, because a loom is rigid and there is no flex to it. The frame of my practice is created as I laminate the feminist and transitionalist theory: the layers of veneer that lie together to strengthen it. Each layer will reinforce the frame, as it lies close to the previous one, dotted intermittently with soluble glue that can be released to accommodate any necessary shifts in tension. My metaphor reveals how precarious the practice is, resting as it does on an incomplete frame, with un-tensioned threads that are loosely woven. I will conceive of the Col as the warp of the practice fabric, the tensioned strands that provide structure for the shared weaving of our collaborative philosophical practice. Our warp threads, unlike a traditional weaving project, are gradually tensioned as the Col develops. The spacing between the relational strands becomes better regulated as the quality of the relationships of the Col become established. The shared meaning making and thinking provide the threads that will be twisted together into strands that will be woven between the warp threads, bringing texture and colour the weaving. These philosophical and educational weft strands are created by many, and the shared action of weaving the weft under and over the warp strands illustrates the development of a more disciplined shared practice of thinking together. As with any creative endeavour, revisions and improvements are essential, giving rise to the need to unpick and re-position early strands, when they are superseded by better arguments, stronger warrants, or more appropriate examples. What is essential in such a project is to recognise that the fabric relies on both warp and weft. In our Col practice, neither is superior to the other. Unlike a conventional weaving, there is no externally imposed pattern. Instead, as the Col becomes more robust and the shared thinking is better, there is a gradual tensioning of the threads within their frame, so that the textures and hues of the design begin to emerge. The frame, the warp and the weft have visible and invisible relations with the other. Each has functions for the whole, without which there would be no woven output, or integrated philosophical practice of the Col.

Philosophical practice, undertaken in the relational Col, once established and consistent I will call *edifying practice*, and it is this edifying practice within the Col that opens the space for selves to be seen and experienced as developing entities, which I call *transitioning selves*. My assertion is that to experience this phenomenon of transitioning, is an extension of Sharp's account of transformational practice, that enables individuals to release themselves (at least in part) from static, often externally applied finite bounded conceptions of self, and enable an agentic sense of self which is capable of developing. The idea of a developing self is enabling, motivating and emancipating. It is hopeful and embraces growth. It is experienced in *the now* and is a forward-facing approach to a person's place in an ever-changing world. In a world where social norms and practices persist in reducing children's agency in acquiring a sense of who they are and what they can aspire to, engagement in edifying philosophical practice undertaken in the Col should be available as an educative experience that empowers the thinking self to develop and evolve, with the potential to encourage growth throughout a lifetime. I conclude by considering the implications that this thesis has on the evaluation of edifying practice in the relational Col, from a feminist transitionalist perspective, and propose some methodological and practical suggestions for educator introduction to the relational Col. I consider some previously underacknowledged or tacit criteria that have emerged during the inquiry and propose that for these phenomena to be more widely recognised, evaluation methodology must evolve to represent their importance in edifying transitional philosophical practice.

1.5 Contextualising my study

I draw on my childhood experience growing up within a traditional paradigm of post-war parenting prevalent in middle class English families of the 1960s and 1970s, to bring context to my choice of feminist methodology. I lived within the boundaries of a deeply conservative interpretation of socially accepted expectations for girls and women of the time. Tradition was important to my parents; their experience of childhood lived during war time England, and the associated privations had curated their views. They saw value in the stability of stereotypical roles for men and women, and the associated responsibilities for each. Interestingly, I was encouraged to have a

career, but one that suited conservative social expectations for women of the time of making an appropriate marriage with the intention of having a family. By appropriate, I was expected meet an eligible, suitably educated man in the course of my studies, whose role would be to support his wife and provide for her as a mother. These opinions were commonly held by professional, vocationally oriented utilitarian middle class parents of the time in southern England where I grew up. One feature that I now recognise is the dampening of curiosity, which was instinctively directed towards me, as a curious girl. The prevailing female stereotyping that reinforced this notion was that a woman should defer to her husband in all matters, and while she may be educated, she should not show it. This was the context of my childhood: compliance was an unequivocal expectation, and resistance was discouraged. Having experienced this externally imposed restriction of curiosity, albeit the result of social conditioning, I wanted to offer children and young people in education an opportunity to learn to be curious, to experience other ways of thinking and being, to empower them in ways that may assist them to move beyond socially imposed limitations if they wanted to do so.

My young adulthood grew from those curated beginnings, which were intended to assist me in integrating into a social order which was rapidly changing, and which parents like mine found difficult to accept. I only began to learn to think for myself as I entered my independent years. I was unaware of either how encultured I was, or that I could claim ownership of my own thinking. It wasn't until I began my career in education that I became aware of feminist studies as a legitimate theory. It is not surprising, given this background, that a chance discovery of Philosophy for Children, through viewing the documentary *Socrates for Six Year Olds* (1990), was a moment that divides my life into two distinct phases: before P4C and since. My task of becoming an educator involved not only learning how to teach or become sufficiently expert in a subject specialism, but also how to learn to think, think well, think with others and think for myself. This learning to think required a significant element of *unlearning* of ways of being and ways of making sense. I also had to discern an emerging authenticity, claim it from the shadows and enable myself, as a thinking self, to learn to flourish.

1.6 Researcher positionality

I include a positionality statement in acknowledgement of the situated nature of my feminist research methodology. In making my researcher context explicit, I do not wish to approach this in the sense of a confessional statement but rather to locate myself as a researcher, with past experience which informs my research approach. It acknowledges that feminist methodology is generative; it is guided by the ideal of transparency, which is intended to offer an account of the influences that guide the research and the research practice. My context is that of a white, British, mature, female researcher with 20 years of educational experience in philosophical Col practice in English primary and secondary Alternative Provisions (APs) for excluded young people. I have chosen to use a feminist frame to focus on aspects of practice that may otherwise remain tacit, and to explore what I see as an area for development, the idea that thinking together in the Col as a practice guided by edifying judgement and transitionalist considerations of truth as the *truer or better*, can offer students opportunities to learn to make more considered judgements, and whilst doing so, learn about themselves as thinking selves.

“positionality is more than a static assessment of personal bias; it is a dynamic marker—that can deepen our understanding for how the context shapes and constrains people’s beliefs, their choices, and the far-reaching consequences of those decisions” (Piedra, 2023, p. 612).

What is most valuable about Piedra’s framing of positionality is her reference to the fluidity of the concept. It rejects the assertion of fixed labels, as do I, proposing instead that there is a reflexivity involved in scholarship that is prepared to examine researcher bias and in doing so, develop this as part of the scholarly pursuit. I am drawing from social work in my references because of the generative characterisation of positionality where specifying, interrogating and clarifying are leading principles (Jackson, et al., 2024).

Positionality is also cognisant of power as a concept that influences research (Thomson & Kamler, 2016), part of which Biesta identifies as “social power structures”, which hold authority over the way in which the research is interpreted or understood. His reference to critical theory is relevant because it recognises the power that is held

within education by the orthodoxy, and in this context, that of traditional research methodology, which can be distortional (Biesta, 2020, p. 17). In a data driven environment, expectations for conventional empirical methodologies are high. However, as already explored, if research methods do not align with the phenomena under question, then I challenge their use. I agree with Biesta when he calls for the development of theory to go beyond the interpretation of outcomes, and embrace “the *conceptualisation of the phenomenon* one wishes to investigate” (Biesta, 2020, p. 13). In this research, I explore conceptions of power and their social and educational implications and consider how power imbalances can undermine the development of a Col, if they are not identified and questioned.

My feminist frame also exposes some of the shadows that remain from longstanding academic traditions of philosophy and education, that curate historical scholarship from within a strongly masculinised context (Lloyd, 1993). This necessitates an inquiry into the structures of power that are in place over time and legacies that may remain. The shadow metaphor is helpful in reminding myself that whilst there has been progress towards a more equal society where the advantages of sex are concerned, the past shadows the present time, leaving traces which are less obvious than the structures that created them. Code asserts that positionality is:

“a sophisticated elaboration of earlier feminist standpoint theories that argued for the possibility of developing a unified, authoritative construction of reality anchored in the experiences and socioeconomic positions of women” (Code, 1991, p. 317).

I understand this to mean that in a world where these experiences and positions are not articulated in words, or accepted as genuinely important perspectives on reality, that effort must be made to make them public, and by making them public, make them available for inclusion in the discourse of the time. To achieve the next degree of equality, these shadow experiences and positions require attention also because in exploring the origins of the shadows, it is possible to expose what remains of the structures of power that prevent viewing women as equally important as men. The significance of this exposure rests with the principle that exclusion from full personhood of any group because of a difference over which they have no control, is

not virtuous, it is an act of prejudice. As this thesis is a feminist framing of Col, my choice of position requires me to align with principles of meliorism or edifying practice, which are both inclusive concepts that promote equality of voice.

My context as researcher is also that of a reflecting practitioner (Schön, 1991). As a facilitator of Cols where participants and I are undertaking philosophical Col practice, part of my role centres on eliciting thinking together, clarifying and problematising meaning making, and relating this to the forming of judgement. Reflection on the implications of practice that may not be central to one's focus at the time, but which become evident after practice, is as relevant in research as it is in practice (la Velle, et al., 2000). These moments of meaning are augmented by reference to epistemic and political influences, which may be obvious to any reader, but implicit for the researcher by nature of being gathered over time, nuanced and ever evolving. As a researcher, I may be so familiar with these beliefs that they are *part of how I am*, and as such, they may be difficult for me to capture in words (Holmes, 2020). For example, my attitude to children in education is one of respect for their personhoods. All educators are responsible adults, and as such, they hold an authority of care in the educational setting, towards all children. There is an epistemic authority associated with professional teaching that accompanies the authority that oversees behaviour regulation. As an educator facilitating PPCol my stance is to reduce these conventional power relations between educator and child. This promotes student self-regulation and complements co-inquiry. I approach each child as a developing individual, capable of philosophical inquiry, meaning making, and judgement formation. This requires me to resist the urge to instruct, focusing instead on empowering children to inquire together, reviewing and revising their thinking as they encounter new perspectives. My intention is to listen attentively and attempt to understand what the child says in a manner that is openminded and respectful. My interventions are similarly guided by a will to pursue truth and edifying judgement, *with* the community, and not as a philosophical authority figure. My knowledge may help to organise the children's work, but it does not direct it. This stance is embedded in my practice. It illustrates the point that these *ways of being* may be so familiar, that they are subsumed within one's practice. What is important about this concept of positionality is that it makes

my research and teaching choices explicit. It offers opportunities to contextualise to my research; to locate it in relation to my past research, and to reflect on my dissatisfaction with the limited nature of past outcomes.

1.7 Tacit theory and practice implications

My feminist approach allows me to explore some *tacit or hidden implications for theory and practice* that arise from looking through the feminist frame at early pragmatism, which whilst it offers an alternative to the analytic and continental traditions, draws on a philosophical tradition that has largely been constructed by a male elite (Legg & Hookway, 2021). In exploring these implications, I will assert that the exclusion of women from the tradition of philosophy has permitted a continued representation of women through the male lens. This representation, by its exclusion of women, is biased and as such, is not reliable. I will draw attention to the traditional stereotyping that relegates women to the caring and nurturing role of home and family, as if it were distinct from the rational, clear thinking public role ascribed to men (Lloyd, 1993; Griffiths, 1995; Field, 1995). I will also investigate this tradition for its curation of the rational as distinct from the influence of emotion, and assert that in traditional philosophy, the concept of *objectivity*, using the *View from No-where*, (Metzinger, 2014) is problematic. It is a way of attempting to present a position of impartiality which over-claims. It maintains an imbalance of power, that preferences an erasure of subject from claim, that I assert is disingenuous, because claims are constructed by persons. It also subsumes any indication of women's voice in the masculinised rational construction, which is an erasure of womanhood. Even the bias itself is covert. I will explore pragmatism further in chapter 4, with a focus on the provisionality offered by fallibilism. I contextualise pragmatism within its historical context as first and second wave practice, identifying some important concepts of relevance in each approach, so as to present a background for looking in detail at transitionalism in chapter 5. Transitionalism acknowledges the importance of temporality and historicity in pragmatist thinking. It also extends a conceptualisation of truth, and knowledge, which assist in considering them as subject to development. This is the transitionalist background to Garside's concept of edifying judgement that I propose as a guiding principle, or ideal in PPCol. Transitionalism's concepts of

development and meliorism are strong influences on my research methodology, which aligns with the practice methodology used to account for my practice claims. By viewing transitionalism through a feminist frame, I assert that my inquiry methodology surpasses traditional alternatives because it does not rely on a pre-conceived structure, but instead is open to and directed by the findings of the inquiry questions. This is an emancipating inquiry, inclusive of subjects as researchers, and explicit in recognising the presence of subjects as selves in participant practice in the Col.

1.71 Tacit practice assumptions

My research approach aims to uncover some *practice assumptions*, which are currently tacit. In using the word tacit, I comply with Polanyi's proposal that "we can know things that we cannot tell" (Mead, 2007), that Catherine MacKinnon calls experiences that are "beyond what any theory has yet theorized", and which she suggests are available for theoretical exposure, with the hope of liberation (hooks, 1994, p. 75). Polanyi and MacKinnon are referring to aspects of experience that have been encountered, but about which understanding is not yet explicit. hooks adds that for women, there will be an accompanying anguish originating from sexism and exclusion, that is an additional emotional burden involved in this theorising. She considers that it must be courageously overcome to "chart new theoretical journeys" of liberatory, feminist struggle (hooks, 1994, p. 74). Experience that defies the immediate translation of a *sense of something* into words, must first be noticed, before it can become a focus for further inquiry. Noticing it marks it as something to return to. In reflecting on the *something*, after the event, I can dwell with it, with the idea that re-visiting it may elicit a meaning that I had previously not been able to construct. Noticing, dwelling, naming the sense of something, and giving the phenomenon an identity, requires a slowing of thinking. It necessitates a sustained focus on the phenomenon of interest, so that meaning that is unavailable *in the moment* of the event, can become possible after the event.

1.72 Reflection in and on practice

In making the distinction between the *in the moment* event and the reflection on it, I do not exclude the making of meaning in the moment. This is part of what makes Col

practice so important: the meaning making that is undertaken collaboratively, and or individually, and which can be associated with what Schön calls the artistry of reflection-in-action (1991). Meaning making and shared thinking feature as elements of PPCol throughout the thesis and are considered with reference to the temporal realm of practice and its complex relationship with historicity, in chapter 5. I consider reflection in relation to ancient Greek accounts of *aion*, *chronos* and *kairos* in chapter 7, in accounting for self and authenticity.

1.73 Thinking together, thinking-together and meaning making

Thinking together, thinking-together and shared meaning making contribute to my inquiry approach to the thesis and to the forming of judgements in PPCol, guided by the ideal of edifying judgement with particular reference to the concept of self, selves and transitioning selves. This inquiry was initiated by my close reading of Sharp's paper on self-transformation in the Col, which draws on Charles Peirce's idea of self-correction in trying to capture a sense of eliciting intellectual goods, and also their associated social, personal and emotional outcomes, which may be experienced by both communities and individuals, in what Sharp describes as a transformational phenomenon (Sharp, 2018b). During the research process, I have struggled to align Sharp's ideas about self-transformation with my observations of philosophical practice in the Col, in particular Peirce's assertion that the internal thoughts of the individual indicate a conversation between a "critical self", which Sharp calls the innovative self, and her "habitual self" (Sharp, 2018b). I shall argue that Sharp's idea of transformation initiates a potential for transition. Transformation indicates change, implying a difference in form. It points to a new openness that embraces developments, but transformation implies a single development and does not adequately indicate the potential for on-going growth. I will review the work of Koopman and Garside in relation to this concept and propose a new way to attempt to describe this lesser researched but important concept, with the aim of eliciting criteria by which empirical research may be directed at better understanding this inquiry experience. I elaborate thinking-together and Kennedy's discussion of the dialogic community in chapter 3.2 – 3.4, and the theme is significant in my proposals about

self, in chapter 7, building on the involvement of thinking-together in the pursuit of edifying judgement.

1.8 Chapter summary

In summary, this introduction outlines my thesis origins, my research context, and my research positionality. It introduces the metaphor of the weave, its frame and the inter-relations between the establishing of frame, warp and weft as sites of parallel development. It provides an argument for maintaining a pragmatist philosophical context for PPCol, whilst recognising the need for contemporary developments in pragmatism, that better align with a feminist inquiry. It offers an introduction to the three main research areas, which comprise questions concerning tacit theoretical phenomena that influence Col practice raised by using a feminist frame, the relations between transitionalism and Col practice, and the educational implications of accounting for Col using a feminist transitionalist frame, with reference to Biesta's model of educational purposes.

It situates the study within its feminist transitionalist frame, with its laminated structure, and cautions against this becoming too firm too soon. It introduces the loose tension of the establishing Col as the warp threads, wrapped around the frame. The relational warp threads that gradually accommodate to an increased tension provided by the developing relations between and amongst students, their subject matter and the educator indicate the gradual development of the Col. This warp fulfils guiding, structuring and supporting roles, that are as important as the weft of the educational and philosophical dialogue, woven by the participants. The frame, the warp and the weft are all subject to development, be that revisions, re-working, strengthening, or letting go of strands or threads that no longer convey sufficient clarity of meaning, or lack the credibility of appropriate warrants. I am building towards asserting that in developing the weaving, (as the evolving, fallibilist, meliorist, edifying practice), students learn to think well together. I will develop this idea to suggest that persons as selves, thinking-together, have the potential to develop in the shared endeavour of the PPCol, represented by strands of self that enhance the weft.

In the following chapter, I will outline my feminist frame, its origins and its importance methodologically, as a framework of greater inclusion. In setting the feminist frame for the research, I also make space for a feminist approach to PPCol. I will explore ideas of structural power imbalance, sexed bias, and phenomena that remain shadowed by outdated traditions, and which may otherwise remain tacit. I will assert that if unacknowledged, these shadows may unintentionally perpetuate unequal structures of power, that have implications for practice and selves in the PPCol. My feminist frame will identify reasons for proposing that first and second wave pragmatism can be superseded by a transitionalist practice reconceptualisation. This theoretical engagement will also elicit implications for future practice evaluation.

Chapter 2: My feminist frame

This chapter sets out the choices that support my feminist research frame including those that support my methodology. I begin with an overview of why feminist theory is important: to me as a woman, to my work as a facilitator of PPCol, and to my research inquiry. I continue with an introduction to some historical and contemporary claims made by theorists from the first and second waves of feminism. These claims comprise a recognition of intellectual parity between similarly accomplished persons of either sex or chosen identity. Intellectual parity prefaces my intention to expose structures of power that have previously prioritised exclusive masculine approaches, methods, and evaluation strategies. While the intention is eventual parity, I acknowledge that some of these power structures are so much a part of the tradition, that they may only be noticed by their shadows. I extend beyond considering exclusion based solely in sexed prejudice, to encompass exclusionary implications for other minoritised members of society. I discuss the concept of care because of its traditional association with women, and because of its importance in supporting the relational Col. I consider the significance of agency in PPCol and I consider how important it is for educators and participants to become alert to noticing potential exclusionary phenomena. I highlight the worth of developing a sensitivity to the relational indications of power that present themselves in the Col. I will assert that sensitivity is essential for the shared Col responsibility for development. I complete the chapter with an account of integrated methodology and a rationale for integrating my literature review, in contrast with the convention of presenting as a separate section.

My interest in feminism as a theoretical position in Col developed as I encountered Ann Sharp's writing on P4C, intuiting something that I was not, at the time, fully able to identify: her feminist approach (Sharp, 2004; Lavery & Gregory, 2018; Sharp & Gregory, 2018). Reading her introduction to the first feminist volume of *Thinking Magazine* (Sharp, 1994), I am left in no doubt about her frustration that philosophy remained dominated by men at a time when she was working so hard to change this view:

“It is a disappointment not to see more women’s names in the literature about children’s right to philosophical inquiry and the contribution philosophy could make in starting with an education that is often sexist and obsessed with information and reforming it into an education focused on the liberation of children, on critical, creative and caring thinking, on the development of personhood within a democratic setting” (1994).

Sharp expresses frustration with the slow rate of change whilst applauding the women across the globe who have made strides in establishing centres of philosophy for children. She makes reference to Catherine Young-Silva, and her pioneering work in Brazil, in posthumous recognition of her work. I suggest that Sharp’s dedication to sharing P4C through international conferences, seminars and workshops, resulted in seeding and nurturing what is now an established international P4C community. However, it also resulted in her unique contribution to pedagogy and philosophical practice being subsumed within a general concept of CoI, which is only now being re-examined as pioneering feminist practice (Sharp & Gregory, 2009; Sharp, 1994; Sharp, 1987; Sharp, 2004; Gregory & Lavery, 2018).

2.1 Historical feminist influences

My rationale for taking a feminist stance in framing this thesis, begins with Simone de Beauvoir’s argument against the othering of women, brought about by the ascription of an inferior status of women in relation to men, by structural phenomena pertaining to traditional masculinised power (Beauvoir de, 1949). My argument, which has roots in this second wave of feminism, asserts that whilst English law is now informed by greater equality between the sexes (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2024), that culture and society remain influenced by the legacy of masculinised power over women, and that shadows of traditional masculine power persist. These shadows are present in educational theory and philosophy, not as overt phenomena but as that which lingers, despite the progress of the recent past (Lloyd, 1993; Griffiths, 1995; Code, 2020; Fricker, 2007). I also assert that structures of traditional power are terms of exclusion for women, and minority groups defined by heritage, colour or ethnicity, social class, disability, and other minoritising features including intersectionalities between these apparently distinct categories. Intersecting conditions may align or conflict, further complicating their co-presentation. Resisting these structures is part

of the struggle for parity between persons. I have used the term subject, self and individual so far as terms for persons of either sex, as if they hold an equivalence of power. However, I recognise that this equivalence is sometimes affected by a historic imbalance, at a time when the default was male:

“men have claimed the category of Self or Subject exclusively for themselves, and relegated woman to the status of eternal *Other*” (Thornham, 2001).

My interpretation of Thornham’s claim is that the societal power held by men, over millennia, has been passed forward through generations, in part by the academic tradition. It is a tradition that is perhaps more obvious to women than men, because it is they who experience being the recipients of the oppressive conditions of this hierarchy. So, where she states that men claimed the category of self, I understand this to mean that within this power structure, men’s privilege has been accepted as normal, or even natural. Under these conditions, historically where the concept of self has been explored, it has been a masculine project, undertaken within a tradition which does not question this limitation. The proposal that men *relegated women* to the category of Other, infers a masculine willingness of action that may have been historically correct, but which is now anachronistic. What is important, however, is that Lloyd’s *Man of Reason* still influences the scholarship around subject and self and to that end, I shall situate my position within a second wave feminist frame (Lloyd, 1993).

To offer some context, I will briefly outline some originators of the early feminist cause. Moody-Adams describes Mary Wollstonecraft and Harriet Taylor Mill as examples of first wave feminists who embrace “the classical liberal conception of the self as an autonomous, selfsufficient, individual essentially independent of all contingencies” (Moody-Adams, 2000). These women worked at a time of male scepticism regarding women’s emotions and nervous energy, where it was expected that they would be disqualified from anything except for domesticity. It was generally considered that they were “incapable of dogged perseverance, unequal and uncertain in the power of using their faculties”, which Harriet Taylor Mill humbly accepts as a possibility. Her considered opinion proposes that given the opportunity for engaging in

purposeful thinking work, a woman's propensity for bringing thought to practice has worth.

"Women's thoughts are thus as useful in giving reality to those of thinking men, as men's thoughts in giving width and largeness to those of women. In depth, as distinguished from breadth, I greatly doubt if even now, women, compared with men, are at any disadvantage" (Mill, 1851 pp. 109-111).

Mill is attempting to create a space for women thinkers, at a time where there is no concept of a thinking woman. The idea that a woman can be a thinker, or that she might be able to be an independent thinker, is not yet part of the discourse. The sedentary rate of change between Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, published in 1792, and Mill's assertion in 1851, that women are in need of education, is indicative of this inequality of traditional norms.

"Let woman share the rights, and she will emulate the virtues of man; for she must grow more perfect when emancipated, or justify the authority that chains such a weak being to her duty" (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 133).

Wollstonecraft equates woman with man through emulation, because men at the time, are considered to be rational and virtuous, conditions that are not yet afforded to women. When women were not deemed capable of having agency, their testimony was not considered credible. I read Wollstonecraft and Mill in their context of building bridges intended to span that credibility gap, and in doing so, I notice their unequivocal assertions as deliberately unambiguous.

2.11 Simone de Beauvoir

Beauvoir's publication of *The Second Sex* moves feminism into its second wave, by elaborating what has previously been tacit in philosophy, that women deserve to be allowed to contribute to the way in which they are described (Beauvoir de, 1949).

Thornham develops Beauvoir's assertion that there is no category of *woman* (except as *Other*), by characterising the term *woman* as an accumulation of masculine ascriptions, that arise from fantasy. In making this radical claim, she is prefacing the development of feminism in 1970s Europe, with Woolf's argument that what is needed is "a revolution within language and culture as well as material structures" (Thornham, 2001). She proposes that this guides socialist feminists like Rowbotham to

seek to “transform ‘the inner world’ of bodily experience, psychological colonisation and cultural silencing, as well as the outer world of material social conditions” (Thornham, 2001, p. 39). Where Freudian psychoanalytic concepts of *penis envy* and women’s *passivity* were seen as worthy of revolutionary engagement by Millett and Greer amongst others, Rowbotham and Mitchell argued for “a revolution in consciousness and a historical analysis of women’s oppression within capitalism” (Thornham, 2001). The struggle was to put into words what may be seen as causes for this oppression, so as to strengthen resistance, and offer new ways of understanding sexed inequality. I do not intend to offer a response to Freud or theories of sex drives because whilst I have an interest in psychoanalytic theory, it is not the main focus of this study. However, the influence of the 1970 Women’s Liberation Conference, which was held at Ruskin College, brought a critical voice of social theory to the problem of inequality, which offered a broader social contextualisation.

The social theorists were concerned by ideas of enculturation, which rely on ideological forces that are not knowingly considered. They identify these processes as *tacit*, precisely because they are experienced, but are not cognitively available for consideration. Importantly, they are not named. They are difficult to identify and therefore difficult to question. They operate as hegemonies, in as much as the oppressed group is involved in perpetuating the domination, because they have normalised the experience of oppression, such that they reinforce it through their actions. It is the acceptance of this domination through *common sense* thinking, that asserts their consent (Thomas, 2010). Viewed as hegemonic, women’s inferior status may elicit information that can be useful in resistance, especially if what is *commonly accepted*, such as the *labour* expectations of women, (Arendt, 1998) becomes available for critique. This approach complements the work of the French second wave feminists Irigaray, Kristeva and Cixous, who sought “to explore ways in which language and culture construct sexual difference”, drawing on Lacan’s articulation of the *Symbolic Order*. This, Lacan argues, is a patriarchal meaning, constructed through binary opposites, where the masculine form is always privileged, for example man/woman, reason/emotion (Thornham, 2001). However, it is Code’s writing which most strongly resonated with my reading of Sharp, and this is unremarkable because

Sharp references her alongside Arendt, and Weil as sources from which she has developed her practice (Gregory & Laverty, 2018).

To recap, I present my research as situated within the broad category of second wave feminism, where Beauvoir questions the ascription of women as *other* by men, provoking the idea that women need to claim ownership for their being, so that they are represented by accounts created by women. This began an interruption of the accepted traditional hierarchy of masculine over feminine, that had been normalised over millennia. Arendt's labour, work, and action, categories offer a stark representation of the sexed nature of work, where women, restricted to the home, were most likely to be labouring, while men, with their lives situated in the public domain, were more likely to have access to action (Arendt, 1998). In choosing a feminist approach, I wish to move beyond these restrictions and work within a more equal environment made possibly by these early theorists.

2.2 Contemporary feminist influences

In this section, I outline the work of my contemporary feminist influences. I encountered Amy Allen's work on feminist theory having read Butler's ideas about power, and her theory of subjection (Butler, 1997; Butler, 2005), which Allen extends. She questions Butler's development of Foucault's theory of power. Allen argues that Foucault's is an incomplete account and that Butler brings the addition of crucially lacking ingredients, in particular the simultaneous consideration of "*both* the features of cultural domination in contemporary societies *and* the possibilities of resistance to and subversion of such domination" (Allen, 1999b, p. 65). What Butler does is open up a conversation about ways in which a woman *performs* her sex, recognising that if she complies with a strict adherence to social expectations, then she will likely "uphold heterosexist domination" (Allen, 1999b). However, if the woman's approach is contrary to this accepted norm, her actions are subversively resistant and as such, they point to new possibilities for women. Allen argues that for Butler, this resistance conforms to a redeployment of power. Her argument is complex and I don't have cause to rehearse it here except to say that Butler's concept of performativity is further questioned by Benhabib (Benhabib, 2002). She asks that if women are required to perform conventional sexed norms, where is the space for women to

decide how they wish to be, as persons? She also asks how *woman* can be accounted for by women as an original endeavour, and not as a resistance to what has been accounted for previously as *natural*? This raises questions about women's agency in normative terms, and it makes space for Allen to discuss the relations between *power over*, *power to*, with inferences of *power with*, which help her to develop her politics of power and autonomy (Allen, 1999a; Allen, 1999b; Allen, 2007). Allen's concepts of power are important in this thesis, because they will form part of my argument concerning *subjection* or *subjecting to*, power in the Col, in chapter 6.2 – 6.3.

Allen usefully draws on Foucault's ideas of subjectivation, as an ongoing series of experiences that cumulatively result in heterosexual norms, which are reproduced by societies that assert power over subjects. She aligns these societal structures with Althusser's concept of interpellation, where the addressing or naming of the hailed person, is an example of the disciplinary power over the other. Althusser's interpellation aligns with the idea of discourses, which Foucault asserts propose and apply his *regulatory principles*, as mechanisms of externally applied control; structures that exert power over others. However, she also brings agency to the fore in considering the much less discussed power of *resistance* to power over, that she associates with reading Arendt. She talks of Arendt's rejection of the idea that shared identity is the basis for solidarity, and proposes that for Arendt, "action in the political sphere always involves both appearing before our equals and revealing ourselves as unique, distinct persons" (Allen, 1999b, p. 105). Arendt's concern for sameness and individuality, forms grounds for Allen's ideas of *power to* enact, and *power with* others, as the action of solidarity. She clarifies that this does not have to be a solidarity of sameness, but can, and for Arendt *must* involve plurality. If I relate these forms of power to the practice of the philosophical Col, it is possible to view the Col as a space of solidarity, because of the shared goal of the search for truth, as *better understanding*, which I will consider more fully as the truer or better, in line with transitionalist pragmatism (Koopman, 2009; Garside, 2013) in chapter 5. However, this shared goal does not exclude individuals from thinking for themselves, as part of the shared project of thinking together, because the relation between community and individual is embracing; it requires participants to be able to work together and think

together with shared aims and ideals, in recognition that they will also be individuals with the power to think independently (Kennedy, 2000). It also requires the educator to resist the conventional *power-over* students that is associated with instruction. Instead, the educator role is facilitative. There is a subtle, but tangible role modification away from the authoritarian and towards the enabler stance, that is better articulated as a form of solidarity. The inclusion of *power to* and *power with* others, in Allen's model, addresses the reduction of student agency that may exist in other educational experiences, where teacher's ownership of agenda setting, classroom organisation, knowledge, and authority over method, may be experienced by students as absolute.

This brief introduction to my chosen modern feminist theorists is important in prefacing the concepts of power, subjectivation, subjectification and the cultural norms that reinforce stereotypical representations of women. These modern reconceptualisations should have become integrated within English culture, but, because of issues of performativity, outdated ascriptions of womanhood by men are still influential in the lives of women. Benhabib questions how it is possible to break out of these performances to open the possibility of establishing, as a woman, that *way in which I wish to be*, by narrating *my* narrative to contextualise those proposed by others (Benhabib, 2002, p. 7). She extends an idea from Arendt, about multiple narratives forming webs, which Griffiths develops in part two of *Feminisms and the Self* (Griffiths, 1995), and which contribute to the idea of having agency over *how I wish to be*, and *how I wish to represent myself*, as a concern not only for women, but for all persons, as they encounter life in contemporary England. Agency over establishing a sense of self, in relation with others in the Col, is as an under-reported phenomenon of the philosophical Col, but one which Sharp raises and that I explore further in chapter 7. I consider it to be important in reinforcing the feminist frame supporting the practice of thinking together and making meaning together. Agency contributes to the thread of self development, the reflection of self by others, and through the acknowledgement of responsibility and reciprocity.

Enacting agency and developing a sense of self are both promoted by regular engagement with PPCol, and I suggest that viewing practice through my feminist

frame offers a reconceptualisation of power, which assists with understanding both the idea of agency and self better. Where persons have experienced structural inequality, a phenomenon most associated with *power over*, regardless of its origins, I propose that PPCol has an emancipatory potential. All persons will have some prior experience of others in authority exerting power over them. Societally structured compliance, and the particular origins and intersections of these power structures, will vary meaning that experiences of disempowerment will manifest differently for each individual. Inevitably, some Col students will embrace their philosophical agency more quickly than others, and some will struggle to understand the concept. Structures of power will be present in any Col, adding an invisible but tangible dynamic, which will further complicate the dialogic experience. Self, structural inequality and systems of power are under-considered strands of Col, which require greater exploration and dissemination as part of developing even greater equality and inclusion. The links between agency and responsibility, agency and thinking for oneself, responsibility, and thinking-together, will be developed throughout the thesis. I consider the idea of acquiring and developing a sense of self, as an educational and philosophical development (Kennedy, 2000; Kennedy, 2006; Sharp, 2007; Sharp & Laverty, 2018; Sharp, 2018b), too important to be under-acknowledged in Col practice, in favour of more easily testable philosophical outcomes.

When considering the concept of self and the idea of a transitioning self as form of *becoming*, I must reference Rosi Braidotti's work in social theory, bridging continental philosophy and feminist studies. She acknowledges Gilles Deleuze and Luce Irigaray as significant influences on her work, alongside Genevieve Lloyd, whose contribution to feminist theory is vital in navigating traditional philosophy from a feminist perspective (Braidotti, 2024). Braidotti is a feminist whose definition of feminist work is important to me because she begins at a place where women "no longer recognise themselves as the "second sex", asserting that "A feminist could thus be defined as someone who longs for and tends toward the empowerment of other social practices and representations of her being-a-woman" and importantly for my work, the idea that "Men can be included in this strategy, provided they agree to critique dominant forms of masculinity" (Braidotti, 2011, p. 80). I accept her characterisations, and see them as

important in my feminist frame, as orientations, that originate from a parallel paradigm. The idea of transcending the outdated but still evident label of woman as the *second sex* is one that is motivational. I work for a greater equality amongst the sexes, and this intention is more than the work of women, which Braidotti also acknowledges. Where she discusses the critique of dominant forms of masculinity, I read her as meaning those which are stereotypically claiming strengths of dominance and power as a natural right, inferring violence or antagonism, to which I would add any sexed definition that pitches the sexes in opposition to each other. These are all assertions of power over others, which I view as destructive and regressive. Having acknowledged her importance in the feminist field, she is not a pragmatist, and her theories whilst aligning, as already noted, digress into posthuman studies, which are beyond the scope of this thesis. I shall, where appropriate, reference her work on becoming, and I expect to develop my understanding of her theories of posthuman feminism in future studies.

Throughout the thesis I use the term sexed difference in preference to gendered difference. This is a thesis that accepts that history has privileged the sexed status of men over women, and it is legacies of that construct with which I work, within the context of PPCol. Societal sexed power is a sufficiently complex phenomenon, and I wish to embrace the aspects which historically underpin contemporary arguments of sex-based inequality, whilst framing some of the feminist implications relevant for Col work, without further complexifying it by involving arguments of gender. My interest in the concept of gender will be the focus for future projects; this current study being a necessary preface to any future work that properly examines the complexities of gender and PPCol. In all theses the researcher is required to delineate the boundaries within which s/he can reasonably make progress, and so, whilst there are questions of gender that will arise, I will subsume them at this stage within arguments of sex.

To summarise, I have explored the concept of power as refined by feminists Allen and Benhabib. In raising power as a theme for this thesis, I relate it to ideas of agency and resistance. I consider some historical sexed based power structures, identifying their potential for over-shadowing contemporary PPCol. In the following section, I explore ideas of self that emerge as feminist themes because of their traditional association

with womanhood. Whilst they elicit criteria of attentiveness, receptivity and the embracing of vulnerability, which are all present in the feminist transitionalist Col, I will outline why the care of the Col is not one that I view as originating from Nel Noddings' conceptualisation (Noddings, 2012), but one that for Col, as originally outlined by Sharp, has a stronger base in the work of Lorraine Code (Code, 1991; Code, 2013).

2.3 Care and relationality

Two main groups of relational theories of self begin to emerge in association with 20th century feminist theory. The first group focuses on women's relationships as caregivers, contributing to the dependant child's development, and with that their sense of self. Moody-Adams includes Held, Noddings and Ruddick as care-giver theorists, who make the case for difference between men and women based in sex and support ideas of nurture as a feminine characteristic (Moody-Adams, 2000). For Noddings, care is a moral action, that she develops into what she calls *care ethics*. She agrees with Buber when he states that "One should not try to dilute the meaning of the relation: relation is reciprocity" (Buber, 1923; Noddings, 2012), and develops her idea from what she calls natural caring, which she classes as present in "congenial homes, schools and work places", as a voluntary offering. Ethical care, by distinction, is "built of recollections of caring and being cared for. We ask what we do if we were at our caring best or if this other were not so difficult", and the action that comes from this thinking is "as if" action; the conduct that would be used were this to be *care in the natural context* (Noddings, 2012, p. 54). What I find interesting about this ethic of care is that Noddings associates it with attention, as attentiveness towards the other. Whilst I reject both the idea that care is natural *only* to women, and that it is natural to *all* women, her idea of *attentive care*, as a deep form of listening to the other with an openness that embraces vulnerability and resists interpretation, is compatible with Sharp's conceptualisation that informs caring thinking (Sharp, 1987; Sharp, 2004; Sharp, 2007).

The second group of relational theories recognises that experiences of care are (usually) part of the formation of selfhood within the childhood years, and in young adulthood. However, for them, friendships "are more fully constitutive of the mature

self than the ties of the family” (Moody-Adams, 2000, p. 256). Moody-Adams places Friedman and Code in this group, where both are interested in the *ongoing* development of self, as part of maturing into adulthood and beyond. There is a synchrony between this idea of self, and Sharp’s *ways of being* with others, based in a reciprocity of care that she infers in her characterisation of the Col. While the Col is not a friendship group, nonetheless, care is common in both contexts, in the forms of trust, respect, responsibility for vulnerability, and relations of openness to others. If there is also attentiveness present, on behalf of the listeners, and a consistent holding back of the pull to immediate judgemental reaction, then perhaps the Col functions as a community of care in similar ways to a community of friendship, in making space for selves to develop? Sharp raises the importance of the relational involvement of persons with others when she says: “Participants in a community of inquiry respond to each other as embodied, living individuals” (Sharp & Lavery, 2018, p. 125). Her emphasis on care is strong throughout her writing, especially when she makes the connection between care and personhood: “Care reveals our ontology; it is who we are” (Sharp, 2004). She builds on this idea of care and personhood to assert the link between persons, others and reality concurring with Arendt that “[i]t is through speaking to other persons that one becomes a person oneself. It is through speaking to others that the world is brought into reality” (Glaser, 2018, p. 220). This builds on the idea of natality as *birth of the self*, which Arendt associates with appearance as a political phenomenon. Each of these quotations could be associated with being with friends, and each offers support for Code and Friedman’s assertions that friendships are important in supporting the development of the self, in maturing persons. What I propose from this comparison is that *selves develop in conditions of care*, whether this be within a familial relation, a friendship group or a community of care such as the Col. However, if the community of care supports the development of meaning-making through shared inquiry, then I propose that when this is directed towards making judgements guided by the principle of edifying judgement and undertaken in the philosophical Col, then the ends are as importantly oriented towards developing selves, *means as ends*, as they are towards arriving at well-warranted judgements.

2.31 Care and Col

What care brings to the phenomenon of selves in the Col, is a sense of valuing all community members, valuing the provocation, questions arising, the practice of philosophising together, the idea of a shared endeavour of better understanding, and a shared intention of producing better judgement. Care underpins Lipman and Sharp's outline for caring thinking, and it supports the establishing of the Col, in particular through the shared practice of reflection and evaluation, necessary for its development. An under reported aspect of care in the Col is that it is both given and received. Care is extended towards others in the I-Thou relation (Buber, 1923) and towards what matters, in the valuational sense of *caring enough* about something to invest energy in contributing to the inquiry (Sharp, 2004). However, if care is being offered, then it will also be landing with others in the community as persons, in an ideal context as a *reciprocity of care*, and in relation to the building of the conceptual inquiry through attentiveness to what is spoken, distinctions made, the examples offered, the contexts previously unrepresented. Lipman describes this as affecting a person's self-esteem (Lipman, 2003), but I suggest that it has a wider validation impact. It affirms a speaker as worthy of the attentive listening of others. It infers that the speaker has important observations to offer. It validates what is said, even if this is subsequently argued to be inconsequential, because *at that moment*, it has the attention of the community. Perhaps least often mentioned is the care between selves in the Col that supports them while pursuing truth; where it is known that some views will be better warranted than others, and that those with lower levels of justification, will be superseded by better justified claims. Care, in this context, is shown towards peers whose ideas provided material with which to compare, even when they are not pursued. This care manifests in the valuing of *collaborative practice*, where the shared effort is celebrated, in contrast with a competitive alternative, where *the winner* is the individual that is applauded. This care can be experienced by all members of the Col, whether they contribute verbally, or through their attending to those who do speak. I have been told by children who do not feel ready to speak to the community as a whole, that being part of a community without being obliged to speak, has been instrumental in them arriving at a stage where they can bring themselves to speak. It

validates their being present, through valuing their attentiveness. I find this powerful testimony and worthy of our attention as educators.

I will elaborate care and caring thinking in chapter 3 when I explore Community of Inquiry and PPCol. However, I move on here to explore the importance of making power relations explicit, if we are to enact Benhabib's proposal for women having autonomy over how they are represented, and how they wish to live with agency, in refuting outdated masculinised ascriptions.

2.32 Power relations and agency in Col practice

Once the tacit power of traditional sexual domination of man over woman is fully revealed, the concept of power becomes explicit for a feminist reconceptualisation. The action of rejecting traditional hegemonic power, constructed as male dominance over females, is in itself a liberating action. For me and many other women, this rejection is associated with sensations of lightness, equivalent to a woman removing a weighted jacket that she was unaware she was wearing. It raises the prospect of self-definition as *power to change*, an active engagement with power as a concept which refers to one's own potential to enact power in one's own life (Allen, 1999a). If I bring this idea to the Col, the reconceptualisation is an empowerment of *self* over hegemonic norms. The sense of self-empowerment is not restricted to feminist oppressive experience, but available to any marginalised individual regardless of sex, if the conditions of the Col are sufficiently robust to enable the support of a quietened, or silenced voice. However, this is where the sensitivity of the facilitator is vital. S/he must be *good enough at noticing*, and *sensitive* enough to the possible experiences of exclusion that members of her Col may have experienced, *to hold* the community to make space for the marginalised individual to experience the *power to change*, to be seen and heard. *Welcoming* the individual and their previously quietened voice, is a community action of solidarity. It affords the individual a chance to be a *self-with-the-other-self* (Allen, 1999a; 2007).

As a researcher, noticing and sensitivity are essential if I am to elicit the tacit nuances of the relational Col. In the following section, I will make connections between my feminist frame and my choice of research methodology, which differs from convention

because I have used an integrated approach. I offer an introduction to my inquiry themes, and I orient my work as an experienced, situated female Col practitioner. I draw on feminist literature and methodology to offer an integrated structure that I propose is better aligned with inquiry practice than a structure borrowed from science and imposed for reasons of convention.

2.4 Integrated structure and research methodology

My integrated approach to inquiry methodology as a structuring device for writing (Thomson & Kamler, 2016; Lipman, 2003; Sharp, 2018d), draws on Kohan's insightful statement that method is a limiting rather than enabling concept (Kohan, 2023; García Moriyón, 2019). In this approach, I elaborate Thomson and Kamler's integration of research and writing as situated feminist practice, (Code, 1991; Griffiths, 1995) writing in the first person as an embodied female subject. I assert that principles of equality including those of testimonial justice (Lloyd, 1993; Fricker, 2007; Griffiths, 1995), are compatible, and indeed necessary strands of methodology, which align with a post-structuralist, responsibilist epistemic approach (Code, 1981; Code, 1996; Code, 1991; Code, 2020; Griffiths, 1995). I aim to resist historically imposed structures of power (Allen, 1999; Allen, 2007; Anyon, 1979; Baez, 2000; Bhopal, 2018; Hill Collins, 2017; hooks, 2000; Foucault, 1977), acknowledging that whilst shadows from these structures persist, my approach is a meliorative endeavour consistent with my concept of edifying practice. Where I depart from Thompson and Kamler's research methodology concerns structuring the written draft. I have found Hayot's uneven-U approach to structure invaluable for coherence and flow (Hayot, 2014), and have used it alongside a more conventional structuring device in editing spiral revisions (Kaufer & Geisler, 1991). My intention is to release my inquiry from the early limitations of imposed organisational structures, in particular traditional methodologies that conform to the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion (IMRAD) form (Sollaci & Pereira, 2004). My choice is based in the assertion that a rigid structuring at an early stage could limit my outcomes to those that could be pre-determined, disrupting the inquiry practice. I will assert that methodological flexibility is necessary for genuine theoretical, exegetic inquiry (White, 2011), where meaning emerges throughout the

inquiry, is not predictable, and which may be lost when using more conventional research forms.

To elaborate, I consider the practice of writing to be one which involves my thinking and writing capabilities as part of who I am, which is why a situated feminist approach is necessary. My inquiry practice is congruent with that of Lipman and Sharp, except that my provocation is not initiated by a philosophical novel. Instead, dissonances which have arisen during my practice as an educator facilitating philosophical dialogues in the Col form my provocations (Lipman, et al., 1977; Lipman, 1988; Lipman, 2003; Splitter & Sharp, 1995). This view is congruent with Thompson and Kamler's proposal that relations between the self, knowledge and writing are codependent (2016, pp. 131-132), and that self-formation is an inseparable aspect of research practice. They communicate what might rest otherwise as assumption; that theory, writing and self-formation are integral to each other, and that to attempt to distance the *self* from the practice would reduce its coherence. This proposal situates their approach within the domain of feminist research, acknowledging the situated researcher, her wish to write in the first person and encompasses the theme of emerging selfhood, as a transitional phenomenon which I assert, in relation to integrated feminist methodology, is a statement of researcher authenticity. I aim to represent my work with clarity and transparency, understanding that I, like all persons, cannot know what I do not (yet) know. Authenticity can only be applied to that about which I am cognisant. Inquiry is an exploration. It does not conform to conventional predetermined structures and in recognition of this, I propose a flexible, spirally reflective structure, that is inclusive, integrating my developing research propensity, with an openness towards possible findings, and a commitment to the transitionalist concept of truth (Koopman, 2009).

If research is associated with self-formation, the discovery of influences about which I have no awareness, or which appear as I engage in the reflections on my research findings will be welcome. I assert that a recursive inquiry, where I revisit my claims with associated reflection, and in relation to available literature, elicits criteria for consideration that may have been overlooked or *tacit* in other cycles of research practice. This iterative approach is consistent with Lipman and Sharp's P4C (Oyler,

2016), exhibiting a coherence between my research method and the practice of Col. I do not distance my *self*, because to do so may diminish the integrity of this co-dependency of self, inquiry and writing. I position my research questions within an inquiry cycle comprising questioning, reviewing literature, and connecting examples, where reflection and evaluation are equally applied to process and content: *thinking in and thinking about a subject* (Lipman, et al., 1980, p. 42). This inquiry cycle is undertaken using a Brunarian spiral approach (Parker, 2022), where further reflection leads to refinement, and the eliciting of factors that may previously have been overlooked. Parker's main concern is curriculum design; however, it is his highlighting of the *recursive* nature of *getting to know something* which is relevant here (Bruner, 1977). The idea of getting to know something is important because it captures the elusive nature of making meaning, leading to considered formation of judgements, while remaining open to the possibility of change, as the inquiry proceeds.

The idea of integrated practice where writing informs and is informed by the thinking, makes space for *being* while thinking, learning, refining, reflecting. This being, can be likened to Heidegger's idea of dwelling, of sitting with the idea and spending time in its space (Wrathall, 2025). However, if one is too remote from life and alternative theories, there is a risk of isolated thinking, which is unconnected to the world. Arendt advocates *going visiting*, as the antidote to this thinking in isolation. Sharp calls this:

“intentionally entering the worlds of different people with different views, listening attentively to their stories, trying to figure out the world view from which they are coming, and how they might see you and your perspective as strange” (Sharp, 2007).

Similarly, in integrated research practice, the reflections undertaken in isolation, become the materials which are contested when one goes visiting. This exposure of ideas to the scrutiny of others is revealing because as a self, I am not separate from my ideas. So, in sharing my ideas, I make myself vulnerable. I am obliged to balance the benefits of sharing ideas for scrutiny, with the potential risks that this scrutiny might produce for my sense of self. Perhaps, as the visiting will mostly be in relation with the supervisory team, this contextualises the depth of trust that is necessary in a good student-supervisor relationship.

I have attended to Thompson and Kamler's suggestion that the structure of the thesis be delayed until the argument is consolidated (2016, p. 131). I understand this delaying of structure as a mechanism by which a *thinking through writing methodology* is supported. If I am to learn to be an active researcher, I need to develop a voice. I require a supportive methodology within which to learn new ways of thinking, move away from a naivety of habit, towards a style which is analytic, assertive and justified and which does more than report (Thomson & Kamler, 2016). Undertaking this academic development requires me as a learner, to develop as a person, and become familiar with the inevitability of false paths of inquiry, the emotional implications they may evoke, as well as their use in redirecting my inquiry back to its main path (Gould, in Kaufer & Geisler, 1991). I have to let go of narratives of selfhood which may resist false paths as mistakes and create new ones that recognise their worth. If I am to maintain the thread of authenticity, this is integrated work: scholarly development with associated psycho-social reframing and growth. In Kennedy's *Five Communities* paper, he asserts that in the Col, participants "undergo a growth of reasonableness which is as much ethical, aesthetic, social, and emotional as it is cognitive" (1994, p. 8). My work as a doctoral researcher follows an inquiry methodology, with a similar intention for development. My community comprises my supervisor and my internal interlocutor's voice, and more widely includes my other doctoral supervision colleagues and academic colleagues, my Col practice colleagues, and at its widest, members of my community who bring a diversity and plurality of perspectives, which contribute to the inquiry. Community in the context of writing as integrated practice, has similarities to the Col in terms of the relationships of trust, and the pursuit of truth, with its inherent provisionality and claim for reasonableness. My research intention of aiming for edifying judgement (Garside, 2013), unites meaning making and judgement formation as both means and ends, embracing feminist themes that strive for authenticity for the female voice, which includes my *self transitions*, in a domain which has roots in the masculinised past.

Interestingly, Kohan (2023) advises against research method because of the risk that it is limiting, and crucially because it might close down a sort of evolution of curiosity that is necessary in inquiry. He discusses the problem of beginning, and his proposal is

that a beginning “is something that comes to our awareness after we began”, in other words, we only understand that we have begun when we reflect on it. He problematises the idea of method as *the how*, we do something, suggesting that this how, once identified as the chosen method for the educational undertaking, is likely to be *someone else’s* how. It is an adoption of method, that has worked for someone else for their purposes. What it is not is a growth or development of understanding of the specific undertaking that one becomes aware of, after the beginning, from an inquiry into the meaningfulness of something in the moment. The *now*, Koopman would assert, is concerned with the temporality and historicity of the inquiry (Koopman, 2009).

“it could initiate many things if researchers realize that they not only do not need a method in order to do research but that they must not have a method. For if they have a method, they are not open enough to what the research field might make them learn or think. Hence, with regards to research and education, having a method rather limits than anything else” (Kohan, 2023).

I am in agreement with this argument that imposing extant methods limits the research potential. I set out to learn more about PPCol and because I have used an inquiry approach, I am confident that I have contributed to Col research literature.

2.41 Thesis implications of the weaving metaphor

In my weaving metaphor, I have already presented the frame, warp and weft. In this chapter, I have introduced the idea of agency as reinforcing the frame, and selves, as largely unnoticed practice weft *threads of humanity*, supported by the warp of the Col. My inquiry practice as a researcher is similarly organised, using a frame that is open to refinement, and where the research questions offer loose but gradually tensioning warp strands, on which I steadily reveal the texture of the weft. My inquiry methodology is integrated throughout the introduction and is representational of a feminist structure that resists a prioritisation of masculinised academic norms (Thomson & Kamler, 2016). I propose that making links between inquiry as methodology and Sharp’s feminist work on self-transformation in the Col, shows that my inquiry aligns with the practice I am exploring; a recursive, reflective practice, originating with Peirce’s ideas of self-correction (Sharp, 2018b) and subject to revision. My methodology complies with a meliorist transitionalist “*practice of reconstruction*”

(Koopman, 2009, p. 17), that uses a feminist approach to revealing structures of power that are tacitly present in some philosophical literature (Code, 2020; Code, 1998; Code, 1991).

2.5 Feminist approach to literature

I have chosen to integrate the literature within the structure of the thesis. My rationale is based in a rejection of traditional imposed structure in preference for a more obvious unity between form and function (Thomson & Kamler, 2016). This idea originates in the field of architecture, where the function of the building needs to be a strong consideration when designing its form. Similarly, in building my thesis, using the spiral approach already indicated, I require a flexibility of form which facilitates my criteria for deciding on the relevance of available literature throughout. Thompson and Kamler cite Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Guggenheim Museum in New York, where the visitors enters a one-way route from the top of the building, reached by a lift and then descend an open spiral ramp, with the works displayed as one descends (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 2019). Having visited this remarkable museum, I can assert that the architecture is memorable for its facilitation of the connection between observer and exhibit as an experience of flow. I intend for my reader to be assisted in understanding the relations between literature and theory in each chapter of the thesis, so that the reader's progress mirrors the integrated Guggenheim experience. I bring feminist methodology and literature to a pragmatist practice and selected literature to make a foundation from which to develop a feminist understanding of transitionalism's claims of development, meliorism, temporality and historicity that have implications for considering edifying practice as an elaboration of the Col. To assist with following this *flow* of meaning making, I situate the reader within the flow of the argument, creating a sense of continuity. The textual explication undertaken in exegesis becomes meaningful because of its structural integration.

To recap, I use a feminist methodology as a way of situating myself as researcher within my field of practice, acknowledging the influences on me. I apply my observations from this perspective to a tradition that has roots in masculine privilege, to elicit theoretical and practical implications which may be otherwise un-noticed, assumed, or tacit, and by making some of these features explicit, I raise questions for

PPCol that may have previously been sensed but not verbalised. I propose an integration of methodology with structure that offers my research practice a freedom to preference genuine inquiry over limitations of structure, and which is organised around the inquiry themes. I assert that this offers an appropriate integration of relevant literature throughout the thesis, which assists with its flow. My integrated structure develops as the inquiry progresses, assisting reader accessibility. In my final chapter I identify some outcomes that will inform future practice and research and which I will investigate further and disseminate following completion.

2.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have situated my study within its feminist framework, and I have argued that this frame confronts traditions that are strongly influenced by masculinised structural power. I have made connections between the concept of care and that of relationality which are both themes that help to tension the warp of the Col. Care raises themes of sensitivity to noticing selves, and their inherent vulnerability. It raises the importance of attentiveness, receptivity, embracing vulnerability as features of Col that support the valuing of well-warranted argument that directs the weft of PPCol. I briefly outline some historical feminist theorists that I could perhaps liken to the master artisans that mentored my feminist frame makers, Allen, Benhabib, Code, and Griffiths, whose theories are sympathetic to those that Sharp proposes. I elaborate the potential for power relations to influence PPCol, making a connection between resistance and agency that I will develop in chapters 7 and 8. I have offered a justification for aligning my methodology with the feminist practice that orients this thesis, proposing that an integrated structure offers a better conformity with my inquiry methodology.

In chapter 3, I will outline the Col as a phenomenon that is complex and difficult to explain. These challenges assert tensioning influences over my developing warp strands. I begin by contextualising the Col within the Philosophy for Children programme origins. I will question assumptions associated with conventions of academic philosophy that propose a priority of philosophical ends over practice, as an example of a shadow cast by structures of traditional power. The chapter also explores some theoretical influences of importance for Lipman and Sharp, as the founders of

the P4C programme. I offer this as context for making assertions about Col and PPCol, and serves as developing entities in the Col. I reference Sharp's claim for Col as a space of transformational education, raising this theme in preparation for its development in chapter 7.

Chapter 3: The Community of Inquiry

The Community of Inquiry defies easy explanation; it is a complex relational phenomenon, and is the contextual home of philosophy for children (Lipman, et al., 1977; Lipman, 2003; Sharp, 2018d; Sharp, 2004; Splitter & Sharp, 1995; Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011; Cam, 2018). It is premised on the idea that children can think together, and work philosophically together on increasingly challenging problems, and that this is an activity of educational worth (Lipman, 2003; Bramall, 2013; Cassidy, 2006; Kennedy, 2000; Sharp, 2018c). Community of inquiry, as a term, is attributed by Lipman to Peirce, although Gregory points out that Peirce doesn't use the exact phrase. Instead, he suggests that it arises by association from Peirce's work on scientific inquiry (Gregory, 2022; Gregory, 2024). Peirce's theory of inquiry comprises five important elements, namely "anti-intuitionism, fallibilism, the belief-doubt-inquiry-belief cycle, the logic of inquiry and self-correction" (Gregory, 2022, p. 4). It is Peirce that names fallibilism as the understanding that all inquiry, and by inference, all knowledge "is susceptible to error". In making this assertion, he refutes all notions of "self-evident empirical or rational truths" proposing instead that thought is inferential. The idea of fallibilistic inquiry, where all products of inquiry are open for revision, is central to the work that Lipman and Sharp undertake in their project of pragmatism that is the philosophy for children programme. In offering children a forum within which to question everything, Lipman and Sharp present the unsettling educational proposal that certainty is chimeric, and that any stability that certainty affords humanity, is an illusion. If philosophical inquiry were to become a regular classroom engagement, then children would require a context within which to have sufficient security to think together, a *community of inquiry*.

Kennedy and Kennedy (2011) describe the Col as "One of the most notable pedagogical windfalls" that followed on from Lipman and Sharp's P4C programme development. My understanding of this assertion is that the Col, when well-established, can complement other more didactic instruction by placing the children's interest as the central justification for their development of questions. These questions direct the dialogue, developing what interests the children philosophically, and not the interests proposed by adults. Kennedy and Kennedy describe the Col as

“an intentional speech community”, including criteria such as stability of group attendees, regularity of meeting and the focus on philosophical concepts which are contestable, common, and central to life, and what it is to live life (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011). They make reference to Habermas’s “ideal speech situation”, intended for developing philosophical problems that emerge in dialogue, giving rise to questions of “intelligibility of a phenomenon”, the sincerity of the intersubjective engagement, and the “normative rightness” of the proposal under consideration (Rasmussen, 2019, p. 182). However, by identifying the speech situation in this way, they don’t make explicit reference to the idea of a co-existing *intentional listening community*, which is perhaps assumed here as a requirement. The Kennedys identify a “set of basic discourse rules” which boundary the practice, and one or more educator facilitators, who “act to clarify and to coordinate the emergent structure of ideas and arguments that the conversation generates”. Their characterisation of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) situates it as one of reconstruction, and identifies a set of philosophical moves such as “categorising, classifying and hypothesising, suggesting definitions, identifying and questioning assumptions, offering and evaluating examples, proposing counter-arguments, exploring and evaluating implications, summarising, restating and so forth” (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011, p. 266). These philosophical moves are intended to support participating individuals in acquiring a philosophical facility, for use in the dialogue context, that becomes available for internalising through the practice of *modelling*, by either the facilitator or another participant. They identify a pedagogical assumption of critical, meta-cognitive origin, that it is not necessary explicitly to teach the moves, because immersion will be sufficient. They suggest a Socratic origin for the practice, and interestingly a psychological and epistemic association with Mead’s claim that meaning arises from social interaction and is negotiated using language (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011, p. 268). They also propose an association with Vygotsky’s theory of zones of proximal development (ZPD), as a pedagogical foundation (Vygotsky, 1978). I suggest that this idea of immersion in practice, also foundational in experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), may be an example of the *implicit discourse rules*, that are asserted by the Kennedys, and that only the educator is likely to be aware of the implications of working in a group’s ZPD, if indeed a group can be said to have a shared ZPD.

Kennedy and Kennedy assert that concepts emerge and develop “as a result of both experience and reflection, and both transform and are transformed by experience” (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011, p. 272). This proposal is noteworthy because it infers a level of *participant authority*, that asserts or refines conceptual understanding. This may be contrary to much other more standard lesson delivery. It accepts that children are *making* meaning, instead of discovering it. This *reconstructive* aspect of the Col, with its *increasingly devolved student responsibility* is pedagogically significant because it establishes the Col as an environment of increasing *responsibility for practice*, that frames the thinking and meaning making of the community. Much has been said about the management of this responsibility, with Gardner, in particular, offering cautions against “letting go of the reins of power”, too soon, expecting children to be philosophically adept before they have learned the building blocks of argumentation necessary for development to ensue (Gardner, 2015). However, the Kennedys’ assessment of “problematization and reconstruction”, addresses the philosophical moves of the Col within a context of participant authority, with increasingly devolved responsibility (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011). They assert that the children’s experience can affect the conceptual meaning they establish as a reconstructive practice. This description endorses children as *agentic*, and the Col as a space in which agency can flourish. This accords with my understanding of Nietzsche’s educational philosophical influence on Sharp as “a dialectical process of moving from the stage of dependence to the stage of independence”. This, Oliverio asserts, is influential in her conceptualisation of Col (Oliverio, 2018).

These implicit conditions of Col, especially those that support the development of responsibility and agency are aspects of Col that have yet to be well-examined. I focus on David Kennedy and his Col exploratory work with Nadia Kennedy because they include examples of implicit rules or assumptions, as well as the more documented philosophical moves of P4C (Lipman, 2003; Gregory, 2014; Gazzard, 1996). What is important is that they propose the Col as an environment of reconstructive, agentic engagement, where participant authority over conceptual inquiry engenders participant responsibility, both for the product, the new account of the concept, and for the collaborative practice of arriving at the new understanding. This account of the

Col where students develop will inform my feminist transitionalist account, which I advance in Chapter 8.

While I have begun to outline the Col as a concept that originated with Peirce and his discipline of scientific inquiry (Gregory, 2022; Gregory, 2024), Col has also been co-opted by the literature of on-line learning (Garrison, et al., 2000) to describe the interaction between social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence as a communication medium. The practice Lipman and Sharp envisage when drawing together an account of Col requires the community to be physically present in the same room, able to see and hear each other speak and, crucially, to be able to read the non-verbal cues, expressions, body language and gestures used by any participant, simultaneously assessing their reception by others, as a collaborative endeavour. It forms the environment within which the philosophical argument of the dialogue is conducted. In contrast, the intention of Garrison and colleagues is to develop a text-based, asynchronous engagement, which is not reliant on face-to-face spoken communication (Garrison, et al., 2010). It uses four phases “triggering the event, exploration, integration and resolution” (Garrison, et al., 2001). Interpretation of the Col is used in this context to provide an “efficient means of studying large student samples” and is considered to address “an apparent need to provide order and a methodology to study a growing phenomena [sic] of online and blended learning” (Garrison, et al., 2010). This modified methodology bears no resemblance to the Col as used in this thesis, and is included here to illustrate *concept creep*, where Col is adopted for other purposes in other fields.

In summary, Col in the context of P4C, is complex, relational, philosophical practice. It comprises practice that relies on developing dispositions that are largely unobservable. Any such tacit phenomena raise questions about experience and language and the place of each in the Col. I include responsibility in this dispositional group, extending care towards others, pedagogical authority, participant receptivity, and attentiveness, as an enhanced form of listening practice. I will assert that the ethical engagement of the Col extends beyond the ethical demand of the philosophical provocation. It includes care for developing selves, as potentially vulnerable selves, and their emerging philosophical and educational growth. This care

for others includes a compassionate disposition towards shared development. Sharp and Lipman both identify empathy as a condition of Col, however they include it in their qualification of caring thinking (Lipman, 2003; Sharp, 2004; Sharp, 2018f; Sharp, 2007). Philosophical practice in the Col is contextual, and contingent and I will examine transitionalism in chapter 5, as a way to access some of these tacit phenomena that I propose are in need of explication. However, before I elaborate, it is important to explore the original context for the Col, and to this end, I will briefly summarise Lipman and Sharp's project of P4C.

3.1 Philosophy for Children

The Philosophy for Children programme was devised by Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp, alongside their team at Montclair State University, New Jersey, USA, in the early 1970's (Lipman, et al., 1977; Lipman, 2003; Gregory & Lavery, 2018; Sharp, 1987; Sharp, 1994; Sharp, 1987). They founded the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) at Montclair in 1974 (Gregory, et al., 2025), and developed a series of philosophical novels and accompanying practice manuals for the educative and philosophical purpose of provoking children's philosophical questioning and dialogue while working in communities of inquiry (Col). This Philosophy for Children programme is commonly abbreviated to P4C. Some members of the IAPC (notably David Kennedy), prefer to use the term Community of Philosophical Inquiry, (CPI) to emphasise the philosophy (of P4C) undertaken within the Col. Lipman and Sharp were a collaboration from the moment that Sharp arrived at Montclair in 1973 (Lavery & Gregory, 2018). Sharp's work however, has not always had the same exposure as that of Lipman, and when P4C first came to the UK in the 1990's, reference to Sharp's part of the collaboration was less apparent than it is now. Sharp's importance has been highlighted by the publication of the anthology of her writing, edited by Maughn Gregory and Megan Lavery (Gregory & Lavery, 2018). The original P4C curriculum was structured for children from ages 6-16 years, and the novels each have a style that offers children philosophical provocations, presented through the novels' characters in their dialogue. One strong benefit of the accompanying manuals was that that these provocations could be explored in the

classroom, even if the teacher had no formal philosophical education, ensuring a necessary level of rigour.

As noted in my introduction, my practice is based in early SAPERE PwC practice and has developed from it. In its earliest days, SAPERE relied on Roger Sutcliffe's English translation of Harry Stottlemeier's *Discovery* (Sutcliffe, 1996), where he re-contextualised the novel in the UK, used UK English, and included selected exercises from the manuals, to accompany each section. English philosophical practice quickly progressed to rely more strongly on the educator using children's literature, films, poetry, news articles, and artworks, as resources to provoke philosophical questioning, as proposed by Murris and Haynes in *Storywise* (Murris & Haynes, 1992), and the work of Sutcliffe and Williams amongst other contributors to *DialogueWorks* (Sutcliffe, 2025). Sutcliffe's PwC places particular importance on thinking together, which he frames as the model's fourth C, that of *collaborative thinking* (Sutcliffe, 1995-2007).

English PwC is distinct from the work of Catherine McCall, director of the European Philosophical Inquiry Centre (EPIC), with its methodology of Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CoPI). McCall situates philosophical responsibility for the direction of dialogues with the philosophical educator, resisting the IAPC idea that the inquiry is led by the interests of the children. Apart from this greater emphasis on the philosophical direction of the inquiry, McCall's practice is broadly based in Lipman and Sharp's IAPC pedagogy (McCall, 2009), and McCall authored her own materials for CoPI including the adventures of Laura and Paul (McCall, 2012). PwC in England has been linked with philosophy programmes such as those devised by the Philosophy Foundation, whose methodology is based in traditional academic philosophy and not in Lipman and Sharp's programme. It favours its own resources over those of IAPC, or other affiliated organisations (The Philosophy Foundation, 2024). I make specific reference to these programmes in my thesis, but I do not include either CoPI practice or that of the Philosophy Foundation in general references to English PwC because of their distinct methods.

Throughout my thesis, I wish to focus on the practice that I suggest is what makes P4wC distinct from using a traditional approach to teaching philosophy, or philosophical questioning and reasoning. For this reason, I use the term *the*

philosophical practice of the community of inquiry (PPCoI). Over the past 10 years, I have focused increasingly on developing sufficiently robust communities of inquiry, that function as communities of integrated philosophical practice and develop *dispositionally as relational communities*. While these distinctions may initially seem unnecessary, I wish to ensure that when I critique my PPCoI, the criticism is intended for my practice and likewise, when I make assertions based in the feminist transitionalist frame of my thesis, they relate specifically to my PPCoI. As feminist practice, it is situated and it makes no hierarchical divisions between *practising* and *producing* as philosophical pursuits. As transitionalist practice it is guided by development towards the truer or better (Koopman, 2009), and as edifying practice, it aims for edifying judgement as a practice ideal (Garside, 2013). I will elaborate transitionalist practice and the relations between edifying judgement and edifying practice in chapter 6. In making my distinction, I will reject assertions that PwC can be properly measured or philosophically evaluated by using traditional methods of transcript analysis and observation against externally imposed educational criteria. I also reject distinctions currently used in England, between *method* and *content*, and characterisations of pupils as *learners*. These distinctions may be used as a convenient form of shorthand; however, they maintain shadows of traditional masculinised conventions that resist claims of parity between CoI practice and philosophical ends. They also resist the feminist proposal of porosity between these categories as capable of influencing one another.

In the following section, I consider some important themes from P4C that assist me in developing my claims for edifying practice, situated within transitionalism; in particular, that thinking together has potential for philosophical and relational development, and that it is influential in learning to think for oneself. I discuss CoI as a space of self-correction, which is a claim that Sharp makes in her paper on the potential for self-transformation (Sharp, 2018b), which highlights the idea of *selves* in community with each other, and ideas of development associated with this. This leads me to consider the importance of regulative ideals in CoI practice as phenomena for greater consideration, their place directing philosophical practice, and their significance in meaningful education.

3.2 Thinking together and thinking-together

Thinking together is a term associated with the shared thinking of the Col, which I suggest is best related to early Col practice, where the community is becoming established. The focus is on children, young people, or students, learning to listen respectfully to the view of others, with increasing levels of attentiveness, and where openness to ideas different from those held by the listening individual is also underway, without yet being a reliable part of shared practice. I make a distinction between this thinking alongside other thinkers, as apprenticeship in shared thinking and thinking-together, which is qualitatively different. I make this distinction with reference to Kennedy's assertions about the "dialogic community", that evolves through minute adjustments, which he associates with Mead's proposal that "Every adjustment involves some change in the community to which the individual adjusts himself" (Kennedy, 2000, p. 43). I suggest that a step towards thinking-together in the face-to-face philosophical Col, with others engaged in the same project, can first be detected when something shifts in the quality of listening, the relations, the sharing of ideas, the trust present between participants. This shift points to an improved recognition of a *mutual concern for meaning*, and its *intentions*. An early indication that the community is progressing occurs when a participant asks a peer if what they have heard is what the speaker meant. This move indicates an increased trust in the community because the questioner *risks* the accusation of being pedantic, which may incur humiliation. The same prompt may have been used multiple times by the facilitating educator, to illustrate the importance of attentive listening, but it is the use by a student that illustrates a developing will to understand the other with compassion. It suggests that what has been said is sufficiently *valuable* that the listener wants to assure for themselves a clarity of understanding that previously had not been required. It is an indication of the establishing of a Buberian "I-Thou" relationality, where *the other* has a humanity of being that was previously unrecognised (Buber, 1923). This experience is an encounter with the other; a more profound form of thinking together, which, interestingly, has a parallel significance in Gestalt psychotherapy. Frederick Perls talks of individuals as subjects within the field, which in his psychological context is the therapeutic field (Bourgault de Coudray, 2022;

Perls, et al., 1951). In the Col the field is one of education, with the *figure* being the philosophical question or concept under discussion. What Bourgault de Coudray identifies as “phenomenological attention to experience” in the therapeutic field, Dianetti and Elvis describe—building on their scholarship of Weil and Sharp—as compassion, “the result of looking attentively at the situation in which the other finds themselves” (Dianetti & Elvis, 2025), in the educational field. In both the therapeutic and the educational context, it is the building of the relationship, a receptivity towards the other, which is characterised by attentiveness. Interestingly, Lipman and Sharp both use the language of empathy and empathetic engagement as one strand of caring thinking. However, like Dianetti and Elvis, I prefer the term *compassion*, because “attentive compassion arises when a selfless gaze is directed onto someone else’s world of experience” (Dianetti & Elvis, 2025, p. 11). I understand them to be focusing our attention on *the world of the other*, not exclusively on trying to *experience* that world from their own perspective. This maps well onto the Gestalt idea of *presence*, “an attentive orientation and openness”, which initiates what Dianetti and Elvis call confirmation. In Gestalt theory this comprises a “recognition of others’ uniqueness” (Bourgault de Coudray, 2022, p. 36), and experienced as affirmation, in the Col. What is important here is that the *relational realm* of attentive, compassionate listening, and a distancing of self-interest, is necessary if thinking together is to have the potential to become thinking-together. What is also significant is that this relational realm is substantial in both Gestalt psychology and Col education, which may be why some observers attempting an objective view of practice in the Col, misunderstand the collaborative and caring aspects of the Col for something therapeutic (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009), an argument that I develop with Garside in our rebuttal paper (GreenwellHall & Garside, 2025). Once the shift in listening has occurred, and attentiveness is an established part of the relational Col, it is possible to observe a complementary development in trust between participants, which may not at this stage be consistent between all participants, but which emerges over time. It is sensed as a phenomenon of increased security against what may be a common fear, that of ridicule. It is an indication that the Col is becoming more securely established, perhaps intuiting the shift in the community towards compassionate regard. The whole approach is centred on children working together as a community, establishing

respect for and trust in each other, an openness to what is proposed, and a curiosity about making ideas meaningful and relevant in their contexts. An educational outcome of established PPCol is that the children take on a growing responsibility for their relations with others, and the ways in which they communicate thoughtfully having listened attentively; they develop as increasingly compassionate, responsible persons.

In summary, I argue that thinking together is a prerequisite for the ideal of thinking-together, where there is an “I-Thou” relation between members where the humanity (and therefore vulnerability) of the other is recognised; and where a compassionate responsibility for the other co-exists with a sense of responsibility for one’s own thinking, and way of being, indicating a relational shift in the community. The first evidence of this possible shift may occur when attentive, compassionate listening is accompanied by increased trust in the community, where a student risks a perception of possible ridicule, to contribute to the dialogue offering something that *matters* to them. I notice the similarities between the setting of Gestalt therapeutic work, and the Col, and distinguish them through Col’s educational, philosophical focus, in contrast with Gestalt’s placement of the psychological challenge, expressed through behaviour, as the material with which it works. Criteria of compassionate attentiveness, distancing of self-interest, receptivity as an engagement with the I-Thou relation, reducing risks associated with vulnerability, an increased sense of security, prefacing greater courage in expressing curiosity, are all integral to thinking-together, which I will assert are part of PPCol and which contribute to increases in personal responsibility. I propose that these relational qualities are necessary conditions for selves to become apparent in PPCol.

3.3 Thinking for oneself

I turn again to Kennedy for his elaboration of thinking for oneself and with others, where he states that:

“individual self-correction is also communal self-correction, because any adjustment of an individual perspective is also an adjustment of the coordination of perspectives, which includes everyone’s perspective” (Kennedy, 2000).

This idea that if one is truly working as a community, there are connections that are inter-dependent, is underemphasised in Col literature, probably because it is a difficult assertion to warrant. I will draw on Todd (Todd, 2014), Oyler and Biesta (Oyler, 2024; Biesta, 2022b), to elaborate the relational community and inter-dependence in chapter 8. Kennedy's idea that an adjustment affecting one proposal has effects on others initially might sound problematic because it could be interpreted as the Col seeking consensus. To clarify, a Col has a *shared goal of progress*, as development, in this instance, towards better warranted and clarified meaning, and this progress will be individually mediated. However, this doesn't mean that every contribution has equal weight or is equally well warranted. What it does is bring practice to the fore, by requiring a discipline of consideration, which embraces *all* ideas, from *all* sources as potential material to assist communities in making progress: *practice as means and ends* (García Moriyón, 2019; Kohan & Carvalho, 2019). Importance is placed on *how* we make progress in the Col, as well as what we assert as our provisional judgement, remembering that judgement is open to self-correction by both community and individuals, *during* and *after* the communal inquiry. My primary focus is on PPCol as *the how* we arrive at better understanding, with its characteristic embrace of selves in collaborative action: elicited through feminist inquiry. This does not negate the importance of the philosophical judgement but is an attempt at redressing an imbalance between them as *ends*.

3.4 Self-correction, thinking together and Col

Self-correction in the Col is a practice that relies on Peirce's *belief-doubt-inquiry-belief* cycle. This cycle is predicated on the idea that doubting is an educationally significant undertaking (Houser, 1992). Lipman and Sharp build on Dewey's legacy as well as that of Peirce in promoting children's agency, through providing a place in the curriculum for children to ask their questions. Buchler, places significance on Dewey's idea "that students should not be treated as empty minds, but as active inquirers" (Dewey, 1952, in Gregory, 2024, p. 22). Lipman and Sharp bring Dewey's enabling principles of student agency together with Peirce's idea of scientific inquiry as a collaborative practice, by placing value on children as questioners. Together, they recognise the importance of encouraging children to resist traditional norms that place authority for

the asking of questions predominantly with the teacher. By positioning the children as the inquirers, the classroom must function differently. In a CoI, the children gradually assume responsibility for the questions they pursue, and the directions these inquiries take. This restructuring of educational practice requires the teacher to relinquish a traditional authoritative stance and instead embody a progressive, fallibilistic educational approach. In this simplified comparison between a traditional classroom, and a CoI, it is possible to notice the shift in the balance of power, with children assuming more responsibility for their pedagogical and dispositional engagement with each other, as increasingly direct interaction, in contrast with the regular pattern of being filtered by the mediation of the teacher.

A consequence of enacting Peirce's *belief-doubt-inquiry-belief* cycle in the classroom is the engagement of children in the questioning of what they think or currently believe. It is an explicit recognition of the plasticity of children's capacity to refine their thinking and an endorsement of it (Buttelmann & Karbach, 2017). I argue that children are better able to review what they think and revise it against the arrival of new information than adults, because they are regularly performing this function when they continuously refine what they are learning. A very young child learning English will often apply grammar rules appropriate for regular verbs to irregular ones, resulting in statements like "I didded it!", or "I maked it", which disappear as the child notices, through listening, that irregularities have other patterns. This is an example of self-correction based in observation of experience that I suggest is a developmental precursor to Peirce's idea of considered self-correction; a product of reflection combined with revision. Ann Sharp develops this idea as "the process of developing ever more comprehensive ways of seeing" which she attributes to arising "out of a desire to self-correct" (Sharp, 2018b). Sharp's addition of *desire* is significant. She is asserting that there is something generative about collaborative inquiry that enthuses children, exciting them sufficiently to want to improve. She puts some of this desire down to the opportunity that children have in the CoI to share their *stories*. By which she means the ways in which children come into contact with the experiences and contexts of other children, in comparison or contrasted with their own.

“These stories reveal their views and struggles and errors, their attempts to self-correct, to improvise and respond in unpredictable contexts, their ability to change their minds and take on new skills, new habits” (2018b, p. 53).

Col functions for Sharp’s children as a space of learning, and a space of learning about the *self*. Children learn about themselves and others as they engage in collaborative inquiry into philosophical concepts and questions. This thinking together, progressing to thinking-together in community with each other, involves Peirce’s practice of self-correction, which assists children to form *provisional judgements*. Sharp’s reflections on what she calls self-transformation in the Col arise from her observations concerning the concept of self-correction, and it is this work which prompts me to question the importance of collaborative work on forming provisional judgements as part of this process of self-transformation (2018b).

Their iterative revisions of Col practice indicate that Lipman and Sharp viewed it as an evolving phenomenon. Justus Buchler rejects Peirce’s semiotic approach, to develop his concept of *proception*, which Gregory defines as “an amplification of the concept of experience, encompassing everything a human being ‘assimilates’ and ‘manipulates’” (Gregory, 2024, p. 11). This description captures not only the material that arrives with the individual through their senses, speech, learning and experience, but also the work the individual does in making these *inputs* accessible as organised understanding. “As assimilator, the individual is a witness, a gatherer, a patient, a recipient of the complexes of nature. As manipulator, he is a shaper, a transformer, an initiator, an agent of these complexes” (Buchler, in Gregory, 2024). Buchler aims to establish the ways in which the individual makes better deliberative, interpretive responses, based in selections and exclusions which all coalesce in *judging*. Buchler’s formation of judgement is less about eliminating doubt, as it would be for Peirce, or resolving a problem, which would be Dewey’s motivation (Gregory, 2024), but rather arriving at a place where one has decided on the relative merit of one conclusion over another. Buchler’s product, *proception*, is the “acting, asserting and arranging” of human experience, which inform judgement (Gregory, 2024, pp. 14-15), the outcomes of the person’s considered thought. Lipman references Buchler on judgement stating that “every judgment, according to Buchler, is expressive of the person who performs it and appraisive of that person’s world” (2003, p. 268). This concept of proception,

with Peirce's self-correction feed into the PPCol, as *practice assumptions* and it is Gregory's 2024 paper, that elaborated Buchler's influence over P4C. I include these influences on Lipman and Sharp because I see them as contributing to the idea of edifying judgement that I will explore more fully in chapter 6 and in complementing ideas about self, in chapter 7.

3.5 Col and regulative ideals

For Buchler, it is through proception that the individual acquires the material which is then assimilated and manipulated to inform the judgement. Interestingly, Gregory asserts that it is Buchler's theory of judgement, also with three strands, that prompted Lipman to create his 3C model of thinking (2024, p. 15). Buchler's model describes three types of judgement, those that are *assertive*—either/or judgements, *exhibitive*—produced by arranging, shaping, manipulating materials and *active* judgements, which are about acting, doing, action as a form of conduct. These distinctions enable a sorting of judgement into categories, with each holding an equal importance. Whilst they can co-occur, they produce different outcomes. Similarly, Lipman asserts that caring or creative capacities are ways of thinking, and not ways of thinking about creativity or care. He does however make the distinction that caring thinking is "a guiding force that informs our action". It comprises what matters, what we value, and he associates *The good* as its regulative ideal (Gregory, 2024). Interestingly, for Lipman, the guiding force for critical thinking is *The true*, associating *The beautiful* as a guide to the creative thinking mode. Returning to Buchler, judgements are the products of *query*, and query is the practice of deliberate, reflective judgement, as distinct from unconscious or reactive judgements. The influence of Buchler's theory of query is evident in Lipman's writing about inquiry. The asking of questions forms the springboard for inquiry, which for Lipman, is best placed in community. I find it interesting that Lipman and Buchler consider that the community must be a place for both thinking together and thinking for oneself. Buchler notices the potential of self-transcendence as a product of judgement, whereas Sharp calls it self-transformation. Sharp attributes the potential for self-transformation to Peirce's idea that "To perceive oneself as a self is to recognize where we have gone wrong" (Sharp, 2018b, p. 55). What is important here is that she

identifies the potential for self-transformation resulting from communal, intellectual engagement as a result of reading Peirce, Buchler and Lipman and yet it is Sharp's immersion in *feminist ways of thinking* that is the impetus that helps her to articulate its importance in the community of philosophical inquiry. Sharp references bell hooks' cogent reflection that:

“there are aspects of our lived experience that are real and felt, but that remain inarticulate unless we can invent language sufficient to make them into objects of inquiry” (hooks, 1994 in Sharp & Gregory, 2018e, p.145).

When talking of *self* and *development*, and *transformation*, this is important because each term has a context in its related theoretical background and each defines a part of what is liberating about self-discovery in the Col. In chapter 7, I will return to this theme and introduce a further term for consideration, that of the transitioning self, that I will associate with Koopman's third wave pragmatism (Koopman, 2009; Koopman & Garside, 2019).

3.6 Col, education, children and behaviour

The Col is an educational concept that results in observable behaviour development; however, behaviour change is not what it aims to develop. The Col aims to develop some *ways of being*, and dispositions of increasing compassionate care, responsibility, trust and openness as means to developing better thinking, and meaning making that centres on a philosophical problem, with the aim of making better judgements. In contrast, some behaviour management practices may claim to improve children's listening and learning skills, through discouraging unwanted behaviour. They rely on “proactive” and “reactive” strategies, by teaching for expected behaviour, and use sanctions as reinforcing incentives (Bennett, 2020, pp. 62, 245). Bill Rogers approaches classroom relations via “behavioural leadership”, placing greater responsibility for children's behaviour with the teacher, through establishing consistent classroom routines (Tate-McCutcheon, 2015). He advocates awareness of rights and responsibilities, rules, and awareness of consequences, with the intention of separating behaviour from the child, as if the two are independent of each other. These psychological approaches do not begin with the child as a person, but instead, revolve around the visible behaviours exhibited by children in classrooms. They

propose that teachers' intervention can alter children's behaviour without reference to its origin. This approach, in my estimation, reduces the personhood of the child to a set of visible "behavioural conditions" (Tate-McCutcheon, 2015); it is disempowering of the child, centring responsibility on the educator. Likewise, an over-worked doctor may focus only the diagnosis when treating the patient, instead of seeing a person for whom the condition produces outcomes. Symptom management deals with the immediate apparent need but ignores the origins. Whilst classroom behaviour can be observed empirically, with alterations noted on repeated observation, this *symptom management* style, eliminates respect for personhood. In contrast, the Col functions as a *community of selves* where progress is slower, and responsibility resides with the children to establish trust in their peers, through a deeper form of listening, attentiveness, and shared responsibility for directing attention towards meaning, intentions of meaning and "making sense of things that matter". In locating "that item in a framework which is connected to something in our own experience, something which already makes sense to us" (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, ch.3), it is an educational approach that values persons as the makers of meaning. It has behavioural consequences, but these are not its primary intention. I include this brief segue into behaviour management in order to affirm that any use of behavioural outcomes as Col progress criteria would diminish the integrity of the intellectual shared practice and its potential influence on selfhood. They are inadequate albeit observable criteria that should be avoided as form of *symptom management*.

In contrast, to trust one's peers in the Col enough to share how something makes sense to you is an action of care. It is a gift given in good faith that it will be understood, and that if it isn't, a reciprocally caring clarification will be elicited. When this sharing of meaning is successful in assisting others to understand what they previously found unintelligible, then it motivates repeated attempts. In thinking-together that which used to be held internally is made explicit, it is shared with others for the purpose of creating better meaning for the community. In this action, there is a porosity of individuality that places thinking into a realm that can be shared, and which can be accessed by others—a space of thinking-together, where responsibility for outcomes is shared amongst the community.

3.7 Sharp's feminist framing of Col

Care, as a concept has traditional affiliations with femininity, which have been examined in chapter 2. It is associated with outdated sexed stereotypes, which arise from a traditional view of women as carers and men as hunter-gatherers. I am making a distinction here between the type of care that Noddings calls *natural caring*, or maternal care (Noddings, 2012), and a filial form of care. The care for the other and the care for the shared philosophical problem that is found in the Col has no familial hierarchy (Aubrey & Riley, 2024). Neither participants nor educator assumes a maternal role. In contrast, I understand care to be a type of non-romantic love that is expressed through the concepts of respect, trust and compassion working together.

“‘*philia*’ originally meant a kind of affectionate regard or friendly feeling towards not just one’s friends but also possibly towards family members, business partners, and one’s country at large” (Helm, 2021).

In caring thinking this affectionate regard extends beyond the inter-personal realm, influencing judgement in ways that bring humanity to critical thinking (Lipman, 1998). Lipman reminds us that children need to ‘discuss the concepts they care about’, as part of a fulfilling education and also to provide future citizens that care about the world (Lipman, 1988 p.14). This idea of a fulfilling education, one in which care is extended towards ideas, concepts, and questions that engage children and young adults in considering the world in which they live, is one that Sharp enhances, when she builds on Lipman’s idea that: “caring thinking is appreciative thinking, active thinking, normative thinking, affective thinking and empathetic thinking” by emphasising the relationship between valuing and living the *good* life. She talks of care as bound up with the choices one makes about what is important and valuable, distinct from what might otherwise be deemed to be trivial (Sharp, 2004). Her feminist claims inform her thinking, but I wonder about the readiness of her (mostly male) colleagues of the time, to embrace her ideas when she first presented them. Richard Morehouse considers Sharp’s “orientation to care”, as being “a part of our being, a part of what makes us human. Care reveals our ontology; it is who we are” (Morehouse, 2018). Sharp’s compassionate articulation of caring thinking acknowledges that when we make judgements, we allow community members some

insight into the *self*, because our judgements are influenced by our deeply held values (Sharp, 2004). This revealing of the self to others contributes to the idea that in Col practice, the vulnerability of the self requires a form of care that can hold the nakedness of the self: a shared responsibility, another *way of being*, a *how we are* in the Col.

3.71 Caring thinking and emotions as judgements

Sharp's *way of being* may be an example of an attempt to put into words tacit aspects Col practice which are yet to be fully articulated in words. In my early practice years, I intuited factors that were liminal, through a combination of noticing *how* relations were working or foundering, and through *being sensitive to* the words, manners of presentation, changes in breathing, fidgeting, behaviours associated with loss of concentration, sighs, glances, gestures, frowns or flinches, or were absent when I would have expected to notice them, such as eye contact, phatics, affirmative body language. These observations suggested that more was happening than the children's engagement with the topic of the dialogue.

"Emotions are judgments, but not inert judgments; on account of their evaluative content, they have an intimate connection with motivation that other beliefs do not; on the other hand, because they may not hook into the situation at hand in a way productive of a concrete plan of action, they are different from desires as well" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 136).

Martha Nussbaum makes connections between evaluative emotions and somatic sensations. To feel a sense of constriction in the chest in response to an action that threatens our safety, or that of another, particularly one who may appear vulnerable, may be a somatic response to an infringement of our sense of justice. It is sensed before we can articulate the judgement in words. Likewise, observing a compassionate response to another person in distress can be sensed as a rush of kindness. These corporeal sensations, in association with their immediate emotional responses, alert me to the *something*, that is evoking this response. The immediacy of the emotional judgement is what is so powerful. Making sense of this heightened emotional state is not instant. It requires attention and time and a capacity for reflection, in order to make the necessary connections and identify possible causes.

The ability to put sensations into words requires words to express what is being felt. It also requires a person to reflect on the way the body offers feedback on what is being sensed and what is being felt: the sensations are what one notices about the tension in the body, the rate of heartbeat, the body's temperature, as well as stronger bodily indications such as the feeling of a *pit in the stomach*, or a *stab in the heart*. What is being felt emotionally may be name-able, but often there is an associated bodily sensation of being misunderstood, misinterpreted, misjudged, ignored or overridden. The sensations are accompanied by feelings of *irritation, injustice, anger, rage or fury*. "As bell hooks (1994) has observed, there are aspects of our lived experience that are real and felt, but that remain inarticulate unless we can invent language sufficient to make them into objects of inquiry" (Sharp & Gregory, 2018e). Sharp and Gregory propose that education needs to address these sensations, and theories that recognise them, if it is fully to educate children. They draw on Weil's work in proposing a feminist philosophy to embrace the experiences of marginalised and under-represented persons. They include in this proposal a "treatment of some of the issues essential for any philosophy of personhood—including language, relationships, reasonableness, methods, self, attention, time, creative work and the good" (Sharp & Gregory, 2018e, p. 146). This acknowledgement of the need for a feminist approach to philosophy is important, because it indicates a move away from a tradition that excludes representation of emotion and sensation in intellectual work. In PPCol, where our students may be young children, a sensitivity to the emotions present within and around the dialogue is essential, because it offers space in which to reflect not just on how we think, but *how we are as persons when thinking together*. It builds a relationship between selves as persons in relation with other selves, their thinking and their thoughts—individual and shared, their emotions and what influences them, the bodily sensations that are evoked by this integrated experience, and their reception of the emotions and thinking of others in relation to themselves, which I will develop in chapter 8. These relations can only be validated as part of what it is to think and work together with others, if we are prepared to accept that traditional distinctions that have separated these strands of experience, validating some and negating others, have no place in better understanding what it is to think together in the contemporary Col.

Sharp elaborates that emotions are involved in caring thinking, because it is emotions that contribute to the *life worth living* (Sharp, 2004). It is here that her care for the individual and the community in relation to forming judgements is strongly evident. She discusses the importance of the emotions we show each other in communicating the judgements we make. She asserts that “It makes a big difference if I respond to the praise of a classmate for a leadership role with anger, sadness, jealousy or benevolence”, continuing that whilst the emotional intensity will fade over time, the implications of the emotional response vary between acceptance and rejection, feeling discriminated against or justly heard, proposing that “both my immediate and considered actions will likely hinge on how I judge the praise of my classmate in relation to myself” (Sharp, 2007). These ideas raise questions of self-in-relation-to-others and self as transition, alongside the facilitation responsibilities that each entails. At this stage in the thesis, these will act as signposts to chapter 7, where I elaborate the concept of self in the Col. When a child discovers that her sense of self is reflected back to her by the community, it raises questions about the place of self as *self-authenticated self*, in relation to *reflected self*. Transitioning self prompts questions about directions, from and towards, and the context in which these options are situated, including the idea of temporality, to which I will turn in chapters 4&5.

Sharp’s concern for education of the emotions centres on her observation that not all children arrive at the Col with enough emotional development to identify their emotions and name them, or use the ability to associate them with factors that may have elicited them. She also asserts that both reason and emotion contribute to judgement forming and “internalizing a dialogical methodology” (Sharp, 2007), something that I view as her way of making space for an internalised voice. She considers the Col as a space within which these processes may be accomplished, justifying this using the idea that she attributes to Peirce, that emotions are the “other side of reason”, and where each contributes to the other in the philosophical practice of the Col, which she calls “*a way of life*” (Sharp, 2007), and which I read as wider than a pedagogy. What strikes me as I re-read her paper, is her phrasing of the internal dialogical methodology, which contributes to self-transformation. It bridges Col and my feminist research methodology, because the old habits that become irrelevant are

rejected in her methodology as a dialogic way of life, just as the feminist methodology rejects the old habits of traditional form. In this way Sharp's enhanced understanding of the Col as a place for caring thinking to contribute to the *way of life* of the community, as the *how we are together*, has life enhancing potential beyond the school or institution and into the lives of the inquirers.

Morehouse describes what he calls the community of inquiry as a *pedagogy of care*, within which he places Sharp's theory of human agency. He asserts that this psychological perspective opens the idea of caring as "both method and a goal of a community of inquiry" (2018, p. 202). My experience of working in and with communities of inquiry has developed as I have become more acquainted with what I will assert is a feminist proposal, that caring thinking is the *ground*, where the *figure* of critical and creative thinking operates. Making this claim, supported by Morehouse's diagrammatic representation (Morehouse, 2018, p. 203), of caring thinking as the situation within which creative and critical thinking can flourish. I endorse the idea that for Col to do its best work, it must be "an environment within which [we] can grow emotionally as well as rationally, socially as well as politically" (Sharp, 2004). It is interesting to me to notice that Lipman's first edition of *Thinking in Education* (Lipman, 1991), offers only passing references to caring thinking. I cannot prove my assertion but suggest that Lipman and Sharp developed the idea of caring thinking in their collaborative practice at Montclair, as they established communities of students and children, and reflected on how and when they worked well. What began as a largely *unvoiced assumption of care*, in their early writing becomes more evident as they reflect more widely on the practice aspect of community. I mention this as an example of practice that is, at first, hidden: it is subsumed within what is done, such that it is not easily teased out from the complexity of collaborative practice and becomes available only over time, as threads become noticeable.

3.72 The feminist *how* of Col practice

My life as a woman has been a practical one, one where I have the responsibility of managing the *how* of living, which is integral to womanhood. It is an often-unnoticed phenomenon in a masculinised life view, because few men born before the 1980s in UK were involved with household organisation. Booking dental check-ups, preparing

the family lunch boxes, ensuring clean PE kit is in the bag, remembering the items needed for next week's family reunion, or an anniversary of a lost loved one for a family elder who may need a visit, are examples of this practical organisational realm. My point is that if one doesn't have to manage these practicalities, one is not likely to notice them. The P4C success criteria that are most easily recognisable, are those based in logic and reasoning expressed by participants. They represent a traditional philosophical focus. They emphasise *what we do*, with little attention paid to the *how we do it*. What interests me most about working with Col is in raising awareness of the importance of *the how* we work together, the relations between *how we are with each other*, and how these relations provide the infrastructure for becoming more able to arrive at better judgements, with stronger warrants, in collaboration with each other. Practice progress, developing attention, developing openness to what may initially seem unlikely or even wrong, being patient with slowing the pace to assist with greater discernment, testing ideas or examples and finding them wanting, these are also progress indicators. They are of equal value to more traditional substantive ends, because they establish ways of being that embrace humanity in practice. It is through this *valuing of others* and their ideas, the withholding of immediate reactions, the increasingly attentive listening, the embracing of pedagogical responsibility, that we enhance our understanding of ourselves, whilst engaging in the philosophical work of forming judgements as philosophical ends. This is what I think García Moriyón was attempting to articulate when describing Col practice as *means and ends* (García Moriyón, 2019) and what Kohan and Carvalho eloquently distinguish as methodological where "method and subject matter become mutually imbricated" (Kohan & Carvalho, 2019). These dispositions contribute to our shared philosophical practice, although they mostly reside within the tacit realm.

3.73 Col, value and valuing

Sharp identifies value as an individual empowerment criterion. It is an assessment of importance, arrived at through reflection on experience, once it has been raised as a criterion of critique. By using this phrase, I am making another distinction, that of acquired values and considered values. Children are raised within their various homes or care environments, which are imbued with a set of values that surround the child,

like the air that she breathes. These values are established during infancy and are adhered to out of unconscious habit. The habit is established by the caring adult(s) through the use of praise or disciplines of one sort or another, associated with approval or lack of it. I have observed children having a moment of understanding, an *'aha' moment*, in the Col when they come from a family background that adheres to a set of values that varies from the class norm. I remember a child commenting that *kindness is just what you do*, and watching another child look aghast, because this view was not held in his family. It transpired, over time, that kindness was *seen as weakness, a form of giving in to the demands of others* in the second child's family. The dissonance of meanings was so great that it took time for him to make sense of these conflicting positions. It raised questions about parental authority, school values, and how schools, children and families can work towards shared understandings. For child two, the experience featured as an empowerment because he became aware that he could question the concept critically, and arrive at a conclusion based in his inquiry, and independent of his home beliefs. However, it was also a moment of insecurity. Child two, until this moment, had accepted what he was told at home, unaware of his critical abilities or that he might apply them to his own circumstance. I offer this example to illustrate the complexity of introducing children to the concept of caring thinking, because it may lead to conflicts of loyalty as well as the benefits of thinking for oneself.

3.8 The relational Col

To be offered a space and place within which critically to analyse what other people have to say is both a gift and a burden. The gift of thinking with others and building on ideas and meanings contrasts with the unnerving experience of having one's values challenged or finding them lacking. For Sharp,

"It is caring thinking that is responsible for the fostering of a "relational consciousness" in children. Rather than viewing things atomistically, the caring thinker tends to focus on the relationships between things - and this results in a deep understanding" (Sharp, 2007).

In embracing the idea of establishing relationships between persons in the Col and what they are thinking about, I read Sharp to be preparing the ground for something

further. In focusing her caring Col on the idea of experiencing a sense of relational consciousness, she is making space for her early-stage Col of individual thinkers who share their thoughts together, to progress towards thinking-together. I consider this relationality to be a strong feature of her work in highlighting the importance of the responsibility of the self, towards the *other*, that she develops using Levinas' idea of receiving the other, as an ethical relation and one which has transformational implications (Sharp & Lavery, 2018, p. 124; Todd, 2001). I will be developing ideas of relationality in chapter 8, with reference to Christopher Higgins' pedagogical relations (Higgins, 2011).

3.9 Col summary

In this chapter, I have offered an introduction to P4C as a programme established by Lipman and Sharp, with reference to Peirce, Buchler, and Dewey's influence over their conceptualising of the Col. I present a brief account of thinking together as a precursor to the ideal of thinking-together, and make some connections between self-correction, ideas of proception, and ideas of reconstruction. I highlight agency and participant responsibility as important and under-represented features of Col, while charting the presence of possible assumptions that result from shadows of traditional masculinised structures of power, and I have dwelt with the idea of caring thinking as a space where relations between selves, others, and topic materials are developed. In raising the idea that masculinised thinking traditions can overshadow how practice outcomes may be limited to intellectual products, I begin to argue for a better representation of the relational philosophical practice that elicits these products. I have proposed that the relational Col, can be assumed within the idea of the procedural realm, implying an inferior status in relation with the philosophical realm, and assert that care in the form of compassionate attentiveness, is not sufficiently overt as part of Col practice. I begin now to set out a path for reconsidering these concepts from a feminist perspective, placing emphasis on *the how*, the philosophical practice that is relationally, socially and emotionally underpinned, that affords the community the potential to make better warranted philosophical judgements.

3.10 Implications of feminist framing of Col

hooks' observation is significant in my inquiry, because she identifies an absence of feminist criteria, a paucity of words with which to express them in traditional theory and a translation need, for making them accessible (hooks, 1994; 2000, p. 112). This can be traced to the dominant masculinised paradigm of philosophy, codified in the language of logic and reason, which leaves little room for phenomena that do not conform to that structure. By structure, I refer to what Lloyd calls the history of reason, where in ancient Greece maleness is associated with "a clear, determinate mode of thought," and "femaleness with the vague and indeterminate" (Lloyd, 1993, p. 3). Beauvoir is more scathing in her assessment of power relations over the millennia: "History has shown us that men have always kept in their hands all concrete powers; since the earliest days of the patriarchy they have thought best to keep woman in a state of dependence; their codes of law have been set up against her; and thus she has been definitely established as the Other" (1949, p. 171). Whilst the pragmatists are modern enough to include women in their ranks, notably Jane Addams, she appears in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy as part of the second generation of pragmatist thinkers as "*a friend of Dewey and the originator of social work*", rather than as a philosopher or pragmatist thinker (Legg & Hookway, 2021). hooks might speculate that this referencing is an example of the structural legacy of philosophy, where even now, some citations are influenced by the way in which the woman was characterised in her lifetime. I gain a sense that Gregory, in his paper on Buchler, includes reference to an interview between David Kennedy and Lipman, as an affirmation of Sharp's rightful place as co-creator of the P4C programme. In this interview, Lipman "credited Sharp with the idea of reconstructing the Peircean/Buchlerian concept of community of inquiry into a model of educational practice" (2010). It would be possible to read Lipman in isolation from Sharp and come away with the sense that P4C was his own individual project. Gregory's presentation ensures Sharp's partnership in the P4C programme is properly credited. Sharp's endeavour to introduce P4C as widely as possible as an education for democracy and inclusion could otherwise mistakenly be seen like Addams' development of social

work: practical work undertaken by women, casting them as peripheral, rather than as central thinkers in their domains.

hooks' assertion that vocabularies are yet to develop, in order to capture the experiences of womanhood in terms that are meaningful, draws attention to Catharine MacKinnon, whose proposal is as relevant as it was when she made it: "we know things with our lives and we live that knowledge, beyond what any theory has yet theorized". She continues that "Making this theory is the challenge before us" (hooks, 1994, p. 75). For hooks, theory is liberatory, a way of talking about lives which bring the *actions of womanhood*, to the words that describe them. This idea of the actions of womanhood, the ways of being, the sensitivities of listening, the making of meaning are all part of hooks' project, but her big theme centres around women's pain. "There are moments in my life when I feel as though a part of me is missing", writes Patricia Williams, reflecting on being objectified as *property*. Later in the essay she states that she is surprised at catching her reflection in a window and seeing a "whole person looking back" (hooks, 1994). She is seen only *as a fraction* of who she is. The pathos of these words is immediate: she has experienced being the *object* which excludes experience of being her *self*, to such a degree that when she catches sight of the woman she is, there is a dissonance which she finds hard to reconcile with the reflection of her, as a woman. Her pain is in the inertia of *not being fully seen* as a person. She is showing, through that vignette, the powerlessness that is bound up with being viewed as less than she is. To be viewed as less than, is diminishing. It is an application from the Other, of how one is: an ascription of worth as assessed by the Other and based in the assumptions they make about one's importance. What is most detrimental, is that it is attributed from outside the self, to the self, and that it infers stasis, as if this will persist throughout life as an enduring condition. Educational philosophy has a tradition which has prioritised men, and while this influence has been re-balanced by laws of equality, shadows remain from the tradition that tend towards prioritising the criteria associated with rational thinking, minoritising *practice* as somehow less worthy. I will develop this line of thinking when I consider the evaluation criteria that have been used in P4C research in chapter 8.

It is through reading hooks (2000; 1994; 2010), and Hill Collins (2017), Crenshaw (1989), Bhopal (2018), and Benhabib (2002; 2018), that I appreciate the significance of intersecting oppressions and the amplification effect of these cumulative disempowerments. My feminist educational frame is concerned with viewing all persons as persons of value, persons with the potential to grow and develop as individuals with agency. However, if agency has not been an experience of childhood, if it has been limited or curtailed by those in authority, it is possible to enter the education system believing that agency is a concept for others, which is not applicable to oneself. This is relevant for all persons, dependent on their past experience of authority. Likewise, it is not restricted to persons from minority cultures or heritages, but it is often more noticeable from a position of difference. If agency is an individual's "capability of doing" or acting, it implies that there is individual ownership over the capacity to "have acted differently" (Raithelhuber, 2016). Agency is then influenced by those who hold power over the child, legitimate or otherwise, known or unknown, consciously identified or not. The Col may be the educational space within which a child or young person confronts perceptions of agency, or their personal lack of agency. This can be a profound discovery and one that can place the individual child in a space of turmoil. I include this observation because the implications are not only educational, but involve psychological, emotional and social consequences. Resulting vulnerabilities may be felt as insecurities or manifestations of rage, they may be externally manifested through behaviours and attitudes that require sensitive noticing from the educator, and care beyond the immediate moment. Such vulnerabilities may also remain tacit. Self-discovery is not always comfortable or clear cut. It can become growth or something much more destructive, often depending on how the educator responds and shows care for the individual as well as the community. The presence of power in relation to Col practice should not be ignored. It may cast shadows over the credibility of evaluation criteria. It may limit the available language or experience that is considered reliable within the philosophical arena. It may restrict the agency of a member to contribute verbally, through inhibition that arises from associated fear or vulnerability. Power structures may be tacit in Col literature, shadowing practice and/or theory. In using a feminist frame, it is possible to expose these hidden threads of prejudice, and in exposing them, attend to the limitations they enact.

In summary, the Col as the educational space of philosophical inquiry, is a nuanced concept. My description of it through a feminist frame tries to reveal how power, especially in the form of tradition, can have tacit practice implications unless facilitators make efforts to expose these to scrutiny. The Col is a space for children and young students to share and develop their thinking together, and to develop a set of dispositions that enhance their philosophical practice whilst sharing a goal of better thinking about questions that arise from their consideration of a philosophical provocation. Arrival at a place of better judgement and/or a clearer picture of the problem under consideration indicates one form of progress. However, if we are to evaluate the PPCol for progress, the dispositional development of ways of being together, thinking together, meaning making and progressing towards more edifying judgement are of equal importance to the solely traditional philosophical outcomes, because they facilitate the judgement forming process. In addition, there are experiences of self, that occur in collaboration with others in the Col, and which offer the self a potential for development, that can inform a broader, more representative account of development over time. In this way, feminist reconceptualisation of situated practice can enhance the recognition of philosophical development of the Col and its evaluation.

In the following chapter, I will turn my attention to the pragmatist history that supports Col and P4wC, and which offers a theoretical justification for practice. The aim of the next chapter is to explore some themes of first and second waves of pragmatism and to offer an account of early pragmatism as a base from which Koopman develops his ideas of transitionalist pragmatism. I assert that in approaching Col from a transitionalist position I can better elaborate PPCol using a feminist approach. It is the combination of a feminist and transitionalist frame that assists me in better accounting for practice.

Chapter 4: Pragmatism

This chapter contextualises my study of the Col as philosophical practice most strongly influenced by the early pragmatists, John Dewey, Charles Peirce, and William James, alongside their colleague George Herbert Mead, who is usually described as an early psychologist, and whose legacy will be examined in chapter 7, in relation to the concept of self. I include Jane Addams as a further figure of importance in this early pragmatist programme, with particular reference to her concept of lateral progress. I offer a brief account of Richard Rorty's second wave theory, with its focus on language, which is such a strong component of the philosophical dialogue of the Col. I will account for some arguments that critique pragmatism, including foundationalism and relativism, and offer an introduction to hope and meliorism as concepts that complement early pragmatist theory in contextualising Koopman's transitionalist third wave. The chapter gives a context for my selection of transitionalism as a contemporary form of pragmatism sufficiently robust for a feminist framing of themes that I consider important in PPCol.

4.1 First wave pragmatism and P4C

I begin this section with a short introduction to Dewey's theory. I will make connections between some of his themes and their significance in the philosophical practice of the Col. I wish to consider education as experience, and P4C as the meaningful development of habits of thinking, and collaborative discursive opportunity, which I see as integral to the progressive agenda of Sharp and Lipman's growing recognition of the importance of the Col as the space for this philosophical education to flourish. I revisit Peirce and Buchler's ideas about judgement formation in relation to P4C in the Col, which I will contrast with Koopman and Garside's ideas in chapters 5 and 6, as pragmatist developments of significance to the PPCol, which I subsequently position within a feminist transitionalist frame.

4.12 Dewey

Education, for John Dewey, is a matter not only for children, but for democratic society as a whole (Dewey, 1938). His progressive proposal is based in the idea that experience drives education, but that not all experience is educational, with some

being mis-educational (Dewey, 1938). He is concerned with the quality of the experience, as generating some sort of inquiry or curiosity response in the student, a way of contributing to a meaningful life. He asserts that experience should be humane, considering individual freedom and the concern for others. It should be modifiable, to form positive habits, and active in developing future educational attitudes. Habits are “dispositional structures, motivational sets, cognitive schemata, regular response structures with their variety of thresholds”, which are integral to the educative experience (Kennedy, 2012), and on continuity and interaction, Dewey offers the following:

“What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations that follow” (Dewey, 1938, p. 44).

For Dewey, as for Lipman and Sharp, pragmatist ideas of fallibilism and provisionality contextualise judgement formation temporally, maintaining the worth of the provisional in relation with meaningful living. These principles of developing curiosity, creating questions, the gradual induction into a philosophical way of being, with an increasing emphasis on collaborative attempts at judgement formation, guided by pragmatist accounts of truth and good judgement, all feature in the practice that Sharp and Lipman develop as P4C (Lipman, 2003; Gregory & Laverty, 2018).

Kennedy characterises Lipman’s Col as “grounded... in the concrete lived experience of oral dialogue and rigorous mutual and self-interrogation” attributing Col practice as “an affective and social process of collaborative concept-construction”, with Deweyan origins (Kennedy, 2012). It brings the interests of children to collaborative, discursive practice, within which the cognitive and affective life of the child becomes increasingly intentional, rather than arbitrary:

“Intelligent activity is distinguished from aimless activity by the fact that it involves selection of means—analysis—out of the variety of conditions that are present, and their arrangement —synthesis—to reach an intended aim or purpose” (Dewey, 1938, p. 84).

This proposal implies an empowerment of children in making these selections, responsibly organizing their thinking, which accords with the idea of the diminishing

pedagogical authority of the facilitator in the CoI (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 149). It resists what Dewey sees as the traditional imposition of the adult's knowledge or judgement on the child, and offers a radical development of:

“philosophy as an invitation to truth-telling in the form of collaborative epistemological, ontological, aesthetic, ethical and moral inquiry, and social problem-solving” (Kennedy, 2012, p. 11).

This proposal of experience as a catalyst for inquiry underpins the idea that an individual arrives at “declarative propositions”, which Garside asserts for Dewey are “intermediary means in the practice of inquiry”. To progress towards judgement requires deliberation: a first stage being to “make appraisals of the situation” as statements that can be contested, and which infer that some form of change will be the outcome of this process (Garside, 2013, p. 65). This practice elaboration places emphasis on the shared engagement of evaluation as philosophical endeavour. It delays the premature arrival at judgement, making a space for curiosity, creating a place for questioning, placing responsibility with the community for increasingly accountable proposals. Dewey's pioneering effort of dialogic inquiry underpins Garside's development of edifying judgement (Garside, 2013).

To undergo educative experience for Dewey means to grow or develop (Dewey, 1916, p. 43), where habit forming is a flexible adaptation which is always in the process of revision. Habits, for Dewey are cumulative; each having implications for modifying what has gone before, and for enhancing a sense of continuity in thinking development. In *Experience and Education*, Dewey outlines his theory of *purpose*, requiring students to make observations, reflect on their prior experience and what they learned from it. This involves reviewing the opinions and experience of others, (with more/different encounters) and using these significant observations and considerations to inform their judgement making (Dewey, 1938). Dewey sees interaction between persons unequivocally, stating that “the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself” (Dewey, 1896). Later in chapter 6, I will re-visit the idea of progress through Koopman's transitionalism, which he associates with development. Its character is on-going rather than a static “grown-up-ness” that Biesta

associates with a fixed state of adulthood. This contrasts with the “*how I am, that is, the question of how I try to relate to and coexist with the world external to me*” (Biesta, 2022). It resonates so well with Sharp’s ideas of the self as an evolving entity (Sharp & Lavery, 2018).

4.13 Buchler and Peirce

Lipman was exposed to phenomenology, psychoanalysis, social theory, psychology and sociology during his education, in conjunction with the canon of philosophy that contributed to his thesis on aesthetics. He drew on these influences either in clear, obvious ways, concerning Dewey and more discretely Peirce, mediated by Justus Buchler that we know about from Lipman’s autobiography and Maughn Gregory’s scholarship (Gregory, 2022; 2024; Lipman, 2008). Buchler’s theory of query is not restricted to the action of thinking but permeates all judgement formation. He includes judgement that is intellectual as well as that which has bodily or worldly origins, stating that “Query is the genus of which inquiry is a species” (Buchler in Gregory, 2024, p. 18). This representation enables the reader to consider inquiry in its various forms as only a part of what Buchler calls the formation of considered judgement. It opens possibilities for judging that appear to be of an emotional, spiritual or somatic origin, which align well with the idea that caring thinking, in its capacity as valuational thinking, is what nuances the rational logic of pure reason, tempering it according to context.

“For Buchler, then, judgment-products may be actions, assertions, or contrivances, and in either case may be conscious or subconscious, instantaneous or protracted, reactive or reflective (query), and in the latter case, are motivated by a spirit of interrogation, are susceptible of reason, and may provide conditions for knowledge” (Gregory, 2024, pp. 19-20).

Buchler’s judgment-products are best represented in Lipman’s work on caring thinking, providing a starting point for categorising the thinking that arises in these judgements. Sharp’s article *The Other Dimension of Caring Thinking* begins with a reference to Lipman’s work on establishing categories of caring thinking as “appreciative thinking, active thinking, normative thinking, affective thinking and empathetic thinking” (Sharp, 2004, on Lipman, 2003, pp. 261-271). If we map these thinking descriptions onto Buchler’s model for judgement making, they broadly

corelate. The connection between active thinking and the product of action, guided by the thinking is clear. Likewise, appreciative thinking may contextualise thinking to the particular action it evokes, and normative thinking might provide a valuational implication for the direction of that action, the degree to which it is enacted, and warranting it from multiple directions in not dissimilar ways to Aristotle's qualifications for ascribing virtues (Broadie & Rowe, 2002). Lipman quotes Buchler as he describes active thinking to remind us that: "Every judgment, according to Buchler, is expressive of the person who performs it and is appraisive of that person's world" (Lipman, 1991, p. 268). I hear echoes of this when reading Sharp's reminder to her reader that what one values is evident from what one says: it reveals the self to the other (Sharp, 2004). This substantiates Peirce's theory of self-correction exhibiting selfhood (Sharp, 2018b). This ontological paradigm of the Col is one which receives much less attention than the epistemic or ethical, and one which may be more strongly elaborated when I apply the feminist framing.

4.2 Rorty's second wave linguistic turn

Koopman describes Rorty's neo-pragmatist linguistic turn as an exit from the errors of classico-pragmatism. What it does is to enable the neo-pragmatists to move away from the first wave pragmatist central concepts of consciousness and experience, to focus instead on language as the primary organisational concept. It brings into the open is the recognition that first wave pragmatists were not sufficiently well equipped to overcome claims of foundationalism. What it doesn't mean is that they were foundationalists; only that the repertoire of anti-foundational practices was not overt in their work. I will elaborate this later in section 4.21. He explains that the linguistic turn should be understood as methodological in nature; his intention is to ensure that Rorty's methodology is understood as "*the way we proceed* when we engage in philosophical practices of reflection, argumentation, question, and answer" (Koopman, 2011). Rorty claims that it is the linguistic turn that enables contemporary philosophy to critique traditional epistemology, and as already noted, move away from foundationalism.

"Rorty takes Quine to show that perceptions do not enter into us one at a time, but rather as part of complex webs of theory and practice such that any

perception is always bundled together with many other perceptions as well as many other beliefs” (Koopman, 2011).

If I read sense data to be inseparable from belief, then I am in a position to critique empirical claims as potentially flawed, when they do not allow for these perceptions. Koopman problematises empiricist claims for evidence-based warrants regarding knowledge, which Rorty establishes through his reading of Quine. In proposing that Rorty’s work questions empirical and rational foundationalism, Koopman clears a way forward for his project of transitionalism. He also makes space for reference to melioristic and cultural influences in the epistemic project. I understand him to mean that for meliorism to have effect, a person must hold the belief that better outcomes could be possible. These ideas must be able to influence the thinker sufficiently to question *what is*, and ask *what might be*? In this thesis, I align my thinking with Koopman, Sharp and Garside, who each take a stance that is predicated on the proposal that Koopman calls meliorism, Rorty terms edification, from which Garside develops edifying judgement, and which Sharp calls normative thinking. Koopman asserts that pragmatist themes of fallibilism, antiauthoritarianism, meliorism, and transitionalism all indicate anti-foundationalism, which he acknowledges is an ongoing contemporary pragmatist project. To make sense of these arguments, I offer accounts of the concepts of foundationalism, relativism, hope and meliorism, as clarifications, before returning to the project of transitionalism and its relevance in Col.

4.21 Foundationalism and post-foundationalism

Foundations are structures, usually considered to be stable, secure and unmoving. When used with reference to the concepts of knowledge and truth, these foundations were traditionally considered to be constant and certain and to have “a positive epistemic status”, so that they could act as knowledge “without depending on any other beliefs for this status” (Hasan & Fumerton, 2022). The regress argument exposes the presence of basic beliefs, which are used to support other beliefs, but which are themselves not justified. These basic beliefs may be warranted by sense experience. Pain is often used as an example, where the experience of sensing the pain is accepted as sufficient. In this example the pain is sensed, and one makes sense of the sensation by sensing it. There is a circularity to this accepted *given*, which is problematic. Givens

and foundations are rejected by post-foundationalists, who having examined the claims of foundationalist structuralism, have questioned these basic beliefs and found them insufficiently warranted. The apparent stability of basic beliefs provides an appearance of certainty that post-foundationalists question. If the basic beliefs are unstable, then they cannot result in certainty. However, in stepping away from the established path of traditional foundations, the post-foundationalist faces the boggy ground associated with relativism.

“It is almost received wisdom in recent philosophy that there are no foundations of knowledge, no grounds exterior to ourselves that guarantee the truth of our factual claims, and no supra-human warrant for universal truths in the realm of ethics” (Blake, et al., 1998).

What I see as important for my project of philosophical practice in the Col, is the recognition that this freedom from foundations does not suddenly liberate meaning, judgement, or knowledge, from constraint, but rather it situates the constraints as intrinsic to the criticality of the dialogue within which we form our provisional judgements, rather than as extrinsic givens. We enter the process of creating our *road less travelled* (Frost, 1995), which is provisional, open to revision, and influenced by the possibility that ground can shift. To reject foundations opens pragmatism to claims of relativism, which I will now explore.

4.22 Relativism

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy offers the following introduction:

“Relativism, roughly put, is the view that truth and falsity, right and wrong, standards of reasoning, and procedures of justification are products of differing conventions and frameworks of assessment and that their authority is confined to the context giving rise to them” (Baghramian & Carter, 2025).

I consider relativism in the context of post-foundationalism, to be the product of the erasure of what used to be considered certainty. If there are no absolutes, then our quest for truth becomes more complex, and the claims made can be questioned in relation to their context. There is a shift away from the search for *the truth*, which infers a single, complete entity, towards *truth*, which is an ideal and which may require revision over time and given new information. Claims of relativism, rely on a traditional inference of *certainty*. This implies that there is something universal with

which the relativist position may be compared. I suggest that the origins of these universalist claims reside in a foundationalist tradition that has now been superseded. I view relativist claims that arise from sophistry, as disingenuous and they are beyond the boundaries of this thesis. Those that are authentic concerns, however, require our genuine attention. In a world without absolute certainty, the arguments for truth become nuanced. They become normative in their intention, searching not for *the truth*, but for the best justified, most edifying truth possible for the moment, or *the end of the inquiry*, as James would assert (Capps, 2023). A post-foundational practice must be subject to critique, especially from those who can expose contextual detail that may have been assumed. In my context of the Col, the shared goal of inquiry, accompanied by a genuine will to become increasingly critical within a caring community, means that when communities are forming judgements that are subject to claims of relativism, these claims can then become the focus for continued inquiry. In other words, the search for truth is a pragmatist proposal, recognising that this quest is fallible. The value is in the quality and relevance of the warrants. If progress towards truth, guided by edifying judgement are way markers for clarity and improved meaning making, then these principles are also available for critique and revision. Importantly, working within the paradigm of fallibility, communities are encouraged to revisit their claims and warrants with increasing openness to revision, which I view as a measure that recognises the challenges posed by genuine relativist critique.

A problematic assumption concerning Col practice, often made by educators new to philosophical inquiry, is that there *are no right or wrong answers*. The false inference behind this assumption is that an expression of personal choice is sufficient to indicate a philosophical response. Perhaps this arises because an introduction to philosophical inquiry practice might familiarise young children with making choices and offering reasons to support the choice as a pre-philosophical exercise, before moving on to consider choices and reasons in terms of their relations, and to evaluate better from less good reasons used to justify claims. If the novice educator is not yet sufficiently aware of this necessary evaluative development, they may make such a claim with an accompanying expression of relief. The sentiment, however, is not about reason use, or justification, but about an associated potential for disruption, expressed through

challenging behaviour, that may occur should conflicting claims be expressed. The educator is the behaviour manager in the classroom as well as the dialogue facilitator, and these roles sometimes conflict. In conventional lessons, disagreement may be seen as a threat to classroom conviviality, and likely to provoke dissenting behaviour. In wishing to reduce the space for disagreement, with its potential for associated behaviour management challenges, educators new to working philosophically with their classes may attempt to foreclose the possibility of dissonance. Their assertion of moral relativism is often an indication of their conflicting roles of classroom management and facilitator of potentially challenging dialogue. They experience a conflict between making sure all voices are heard, and maintaining classroom behaviour codes of conduct, where behaviour management is prioritised over philosophically rigorous evaluation. This prioritisation is usually driven by fear of disruption, or concerns about unfair practice. Gardner's distinction is helpful, because it infers the importance of justification, which is a strong part of her later argument.

“The fact that everyone has something to say that is worth listening to, does not mean that everything that anyone says is worth hearing” (Gardner, 1996).

What she proposes is that there is a conflict present between the need for a child to be heard and assessing the validity of what it is that the child wishes to say. As long as the warrants for all claims are verbalised and become subject to scrutiny, then this novice relativist *anything goes* assumption can be replaced by a developing understanding of the importance of reviewing the reasons offered in support of a claim. The placation of *agreeing to differ*, interferes with the exploration of the reasons used to support the opinion, and the pursuit of meaning. It indicates a lack of continuity between the educational and social ethos of the school. It is less about relativism and more about the ethos of classroom behaviour. What is interesting to me is that a degree of relativism is present as soon as we begin to consider context. Similarly, this arises when our examples provoke examination of nuance. This leads me to conclude that whilst it is important to defend against broad relativist criticism, work within a post-foundationalist paradigm that encompasses a fallibilist approach to meaning, truth and value, is a form of acknowledged relativist practice.

4.23 Hope and Meliorism: a brief historical introduction

In introducing meliorism, it is necessary first to consider hope, which has been present in the broad history of philosophy, as well as the Western tradition, for millennia. In ancient Greece, *elpis* has a place in myth, notably with the story of Pandora, where it has been variously interpreted in the positive as an indication of the possibility of salvation, or as a comfort in times of need (Bloeser & Stahl, 2022). However, associations between hopefulness and wishful thinking counter this positive view with inherent negative implications of a potential to *over-hope*. In Greek philosophy, Aristotle considers a hopeful disposition to be “a bold attitude”, and associates it with bravery, whereas he states that: “The coward, then, is a kind of person who lacks hope, because he is afraid of everything” (Aristotle, 2002, III. 7, 1116a2-3). Hope is also associated with being an impetus for pursuing noble ends; ideas about hoping well and the normative implications of hoping also relate to ideas of moral luck. If we leap forward to the enlightenment era of Kant, the general consensus is for a non-cognitive treatment of hope as a concept. Kant is not similarly dismissive, proposing that hope is an “unexpected offering of the prospect of immeasurable good fortune”. He later refines his approach significantly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to include the question: “For what may I hope?”, which he asserts is an accompanying fundamental philosophical question alongside those of “What can I know?” and “What should I do?” (Bloeser & Stahl, 2022). Kant’s association between hope and goodness, more specifically “the highest good”, affords him the opportunity to consider hope as bound up with ideas about God and the pursuit of a moral stance that may extend beyond life as we know it. Modern scholars of Kant have proposed that hope, for Kant, may have been a stronger influence in education “because it warrants us in thinking that we are able to set and achieve ends, even in light of imperfection and vulnerability” (Dineen, 2020, in Bloeser & Stahl, 2022). This educational interpretation is relevant in meliorism, for hope underlies the creative move, which is the springboard for thinking about possibility, especially alternative possibilities for the better. If we take another leap forward to the pragmatists, while James associates hope with faith and thereby religion, Dewey sees hope and hopefulness as underlying conditions for democracy, making links between persons, values and actions as determiners of ethical progress.

I read Dewey's hopefulness as implying the potential for development when the educative experience has meaningful connections with the students' prior understanding. This reconstructive approach to education, risks distorting or rendering null any potential educational growth if connections are not adequately established, or if misaligned connections occur. Dewey's use of the growth metaphor is aspirational. I see connections between his uses of growth with his emphasis on formative evaluation, ideas of responding to change when change is unpredictable, and the ongoing nature of learning (Dewey, 1938; Dewey, 1916). Dewey's reconstructive themes of growth via accommodation and transformation, eloquently described by Shaker as "the consummate open-ended transformation" are hopeful in their type (Breault & Breault, 2005). They contribute to the meliorism that Koopman develops, and which informs Garside's edifying judgement. However, it is important to consider hope in relation with the otherwise under-represented early pragmatist Jane Addams, before continuing to third wave pragmatism.

4.24 Jane Addams

Jane Addams is the first-generation pragmatist who is now most associated with meliorism. Hers is a radical meliorism, given the defining feature of the term radical as "challenging existing power structures" (Hamington, 2022). Interestingly, she was largely overlooked for her philosophical work during her lifetime, in favour of her social activism, and the establishment of Hull House as a social settlement (Abbott, 1952). Her radical meliorism was directed at social progress, not in the sense of a few breakthrough cases, but for what she termed "lateral progress", an insistence that progress had not been achieved until the social gains acquired by the few were extended to a wider, more representative group (Hamington, 2022). She was viewed as an agent, practically enacting the theories of her male pragmatist colleagues, Dewey, James, and Mead, and it was not until the 1990's that the depth and breadth of her original work was properly explored. She is an example of a woman of her time, characterised by the men in her field, and thus seen as one of the *under-workers* (Code, 1991), that support the male theoreticians. Her application of lateral progress was evident in her work in support of worker's unions, where her interest was not in the competition between unions, but that the whole group should benefit from

improvements in conditions. However, it is probably most well-known in her work at Hull House where her application of care ethics was in opposition to “principle-based and consequence-based ethics”, because these “did not adequately address the richness of the human condition”. She asserts instead that they “bracketed out emotions, relationships, temporal considerations, reciprocity, and creativity to focus on immediate adjudication of moral conflicts” (Hamington, 2022). As a statement of its historical period, this assertion would likely have been dismissed by those colleagues who viewed emotions and relationships to be firmly contextualised within the realm of the feminine, and as such, of no concern in philosophy. I refrain from exclusively classifying these colleagues as men, because the hegemonies of the period ensured that most women were socialised into acquiescence. If I relate these concerns of radical meliorism, and in particular lateral progress, to Ann Sharp’s elaborations of care and caring thinking, it prompts me to ask again to what extent Sharp was still considered by some of her colleagues to be an under-labourer, albeit in a historically more enlightened time? I also infer a connection between Addams’ activism and Sharp’s commitment to lateral progress, when Sharp insisted that she worked internationally and published in lesser-known journals, as a means to broaden the diversity of access to philosophy for children.

Addams took care to be an advocate for “social awareness and engagement”, which were founding principles that afforded her a base for the concept of care, as she understood it. Her work as a public philosopher was seen as the beginning of what later became the practice of social work. She, however, saw it as “a grand epistemological endeavour”, which was not dismissive of what it is to be human. This insistence on humanity, cooperation and social cohesion suggests the contextualising of her epistemic project (Hamington, 2022). Her resolve regarding care indicates an axiological implication. She positions her meliorism as an integration of human value with the politics of societal development, in opposition to the convention of a perception of objectivity, which was still prevalent in traditional philosophy. I see her as an early feminist proponent of a meliorist pragmatist epistemic effort.

In summary, hope as a concept has a lengthy history and has been associated with ideas of salvation and comfort, whilst also being considered as a possible contributory

feature of wishful thinking. Aristotle associated hope with bravery and a normative aspiration, but it is not until the enlightenment that hope is again reconnected by Kant, with epistemic effort, albeit within the context of religion. What interests me are recent interpretations of Kant, which makes stronger connections between hope and the idea of the normative domain of possibility. This epistemic aspiration is developed by the pragmatists, and in particular Addams. Her work, although overshadowed in the past, identifies the exclusion of that which is associated with *the feminine*, from pragmatist thinking on meliorism, developing what she terms *radical meliorism* to encompass social, relational, emotional and values-based conditions that contribute to her work in care ethics (Hamington, 2022). Her establishment of *lateral progress*, as an evaluative criterion is of particular interest, because she insists that for development to be claimed, it must be for a representative group and not only an indicator of individual progress. She claims that it is not sufficient to assert that social progress has been achieved if only a minority of the community is positively impacted. This has implications for evaluating progress in the philosophical Col, lending support to the practice of thinking together as collaborative meliorist effort, with the shared goal of better understanding, guided by edifying judgement. Addams raises the feminist concern of exclusion and the sex based imbalance of power, which Seigfried extends as she makes connections between pragmatism and feminism (Seigfried, 1996; Seigfried, 1991). These connections also align with Sharp's focus on caring thinking as an encompassing category within which creative and critical thinking can be practised (Morehouse, 2018). This brief overview of hope and its companion concept meliorism, prepares the way for my engagement with Koopman's inclusion of meliorism as a core principle of transitionalism in section 5.2.

In this chapter, I have considered some pragmatist influences on the founders of P4C and situated them as either first or second wave thinkers, including Jane Addams, who as a woman is often associated with her male colleagues, but who rarely features for her own contribution to development, that she terms lateral progress. I have briefly explored the presence of experience as central to first wave pragmatism, with language being the focus for second wave pragmatism, offering some background to Koopman's project of uniting them as no longer in opposition, but rather as

complementary concepts. I have outlined foundationalism and the idea of foundations to support claims of pragmatism being anti-foundationalist and anti-givenist. This raises the potential for asserting relativism, which I situate in the context of past claims for certainty. I have offered a brief exploration of hope and meliorism as philosophical concepts that are integral to transitionalism, considering them from an earlier philosophical context before relating them to Sharp's ideas of the Col as a place of potential transformation.

As the feminist pragmatist Charlene Seigfried claims "pragmatism needs feminism", to contribute to its project of inclusion, because it enhances the intended pluralist context using "women's situated experiences" (Seigfried, 1996, p. 37). I read her to infer that these were previously excluded, as a condition of conforming with social norms of the time. Her claim is one of extending inclusion, and one of recognition of the situatedness of persons contributing to understanding experience that "influences the formation of attitudes and purpose", and also "has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had" (Dewey, 1938, p. 39). If excluded, pragmatism's intentions are diminished. It is from within this context that I approach my overview of pragmatism. I position the complex sensations that accompany making progress in the Col as *integrated experiences*, arising from thinking with others, experiencing judgement forming, whilst also involving emotions, and values. When experienced at the same time, these defy conventions of classification: they are examples of what hooks identifies as inarticulate experiences, for which we need new terms.

4.3 Contextualising transitionalism as a development of first wave pragmatism

Koopman's work on transitionalism builds most obviously on the first wave pragmatists John Dewey, Ralph Waldo Emerson and William James, alongside Richard Rorty's endeavour in bringing attention to the linguistic turn associated with second wave pragmatism (Koopman, 2009). His intention with transitionalism is to reconceptualise these opposing prioritisations by proposing a third way. I note that Koopman is circumspect in his project, framing his concern as that of the "epistemological dimensions of classicopragmatist experientialism and neopragmatist

linguisticism” (Koopman, 2009, p. 75). He offers a defence of classical pragmatism against claims of givenism, using the historical context within which this first generation of pragmatist thinkers worked. He suggests that Dewey’s primary *had* experiences, and the reflective *known* experiences were attempts at making these epistemic and ethical roles specific “without describing primary experiences as givens capable of functioning as epistemological or moral foundations” (Koopman, 2009, p. 79). However, he also notes that Dewey elaborates that “perceptions are not raw givens but are rather mediated forms established by and as ongoing transitions” (Koopman, 2009, p. 84). Koopman proposes that neither Dewey or Peirce could clarify that if inquiry and its terms are mediated by transitions, then objects and perceptions are not givens but “on the way as mediated mediations between projecting actions and their eventual outcomes” (Koopman, 2009, p. 85). What he elicits is a consideration that anti-givenism is not sufficiently present in Dewey, James or Peirce explicitly because the assertion of givenism is a product of contemporary times. He prefers to cite Bourdieu’s proposal that if a person has an understanding of the immediate familiar world, then it will have been acquired through the language and structures within which this action occurs. Koopman quotes Bourdieu in suggesting that explanation requires the historically situated available practices, skills and beliefs, “the instruments of construction that he uses to know the world are constructed by the world” (Koopman, 2009, p. 89). This analysis aligns with his proposal that historical situation needs to be acknowledged and that contemporary concepts such as givenism should be avoided in retrospective critique. In making this clarification, Koopman builds a foundation for distinctions to be made between historical situation and historicity.

In the next chapter, I will introduce Koopman’s third wave pragmatism, on which Garside builds his concept of edifying judgement, and which I will extend to include the idea of edifying practice, as a way of contextualising transitionalist PPCol. Briefly, Koopman’s third wave pragmatism questions the exclusivity that occurs between first and second wave paradigms. First-generation pragmatist thinkers centre their theory around the concept of experience, whereas, second-generation thinkers reject the primacy of experience in favour of language, which they suggest is strongly associated

with meaning (Koopman, 2009). Transitionalism bridges this divide using temporality, historicity, development and meliorism, which are concepts of interest in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Transitionalism

Colin Koopman defines transitionalism as third wave pragmatism, which he characterises as the bringing together of earlier forms, that differed over their choice of central concepts (Koopman, 2009). His view is that language and experience are both important, alongside ideas about the time and space within which knowledge and judgements are shaped. He proposes that truth has emancipating potential, and is related to hopefulness through meliorism, but that “truth articulates past to future and so is not applicable until the contents of that articulation can be investigated” (Koopman, 2009, p. 114). This chapter will clarify some of his thinking about these key claims of transitionalism. It prepares the pragmatist framework for Garside’s development of P4C using a transitionalist reconceptualisation, and offers context for his concept of ‘edifying judgement’ (Garside, 2013).

5.1 Temporality and historicity

Central to transitionalism are two connected concepts: temporality and historicity. Koopman describes them with regard to experience, where he characterises the flowing-ness as temporality and claims that historicity represents the “actual ways in which experience flows” (Koopman, 2009, p. 15). He argues that I can know that something flows by having experience of the order of events. Temporality encompasses the flow in part by sequencing what came before or afterwards, whereas the historicist phenomenon refers to the location of the experience within its context. “Temporality captures the structural relations of transitions, as happenings, and historicity captures the actual situated occurring of transitions” (Koopman, 2009, p. 15). What is pertinent to our philosophical practice in the CoI is that our dialogues, like those on which Koopman focuses, are located both in time and in history, but “are also themselves constituted in their entirety by practical content that is itself historical and temporal” (Koopman, 2009, p. 16). Garside describes the association between temporality and historicity as an inter-relationship, because “both concepts imply one another”, describing temporality as the “*form* of transitionality itself, whilst historicity is the *determinate contents* through which transitions occur” (2013, p. 118). This inter-relationship indicates a connection that brings the two terms together neither in parallel nor in sequence, but rather as an association of mutuality. Garside elaborates

the temporality of edifying judgement by stressing that it cannot be atemporal, rather that: “it must be of its time and have a position on what that time is” (Garside, 2013, p. 128). For a practice to be situated as flowing within a temporal realm, means that this temporality can be considered as field in the Gestalt context: it provides a term to describe the sense of *in the now*, that Koopman outlines. However, as Garside identifies, this field must be able to flex to encompass the process of edification, which requires a slowing of time, a revisiting of ideas, and an iterative building of arguments, “in time and across time” (Garside, 2013, p. 128). For a Col to work well, community members must be immersed in the shared thinking work. The relational work of focused thinking together, centred on the exploration of shared meaning leading to a place of understanding, immerses the community members in practice. There is an awareness of purposeful action that transcends what it is to measure the passing of time. Community members experience the flowing-ness through the flow of the argument, but aspects of the argument, the examples, the connections, the reasons under discussion raise awareness of moments within the dialogue that act as signposts to the flow. It is the locating of these moments that indicate the historicity of the practice, the *determinate contents* of the flow.

Koopman remains with the example of experience to elaborate temporality and historicity. He describes historicity as the way in which I can know that transitions have happened. So, transitions have a temporal structure, a movement or development, which constitutes the flow and historicity’s purpose is to mark how it flows: the situated occurring of transitions. He claims that Dewey viewed inquiry as transitional, “a matter of moving an organism out of a problematic environment into a more stable situation” inferring that the change is meliorative (Koopman, 2009, p. 55). He also proposes that “transitionalism focuses on knowledge, ethics, politics, and critique as temporally structured and historically situated”, and this is where greater elaboration is required for creating a congruence between transitionalism and my inquiry. I read him to mean that the transitionalist philosophical dialogue comprises its temporal flow, and that moments of critique, reason, example, correction, mark the historicist moments that locate this experience. I question the idea that the most important constraint is the framing of ethical or political knowledge. I suggest that the epistemic

endeavour of inquiry, as a practice of judgement and a search for truth, is also constrained by historical limitations. In particular, my feminist methodology rejects the masculinised tradition of philosophy that prioritises the rational realm of philosophical inquiry. In resisting this realm, I also resist the exclusion of the situated subject that is the embodied thinker. It troubles me that a contemporary practice could continue to be constrained by such shadows of structural power, that are only made explicit when one examines the exclusionary methods of its evaluation.

5.2 Meliorism as a directional pull

As with historicity and temporality, hope and meliorism are strongly connected concepts. Koopman makes the following proposal: “The central idea of meliorism is that a philosophically robust conception of hope can function as a guide for critique and inquiry”. The way in which this form of hope contributes to pragmatism is in the *making progress* through the reconceptualising and refining work that orients and reorients the “epistemic, ethical, and political realities in which we find ourselves flowing” (Koopman, 2009, pp. 16-17). Koopman calls this a *travelling*, and this indicates that there is purposeful movement. The movement is towards the *better end*, a transitional “philosophical practice of reconstruction”, which he characterises as successful if it resolves a problem encountered in our practice (Koopman, 2009, p. 17). Whilst the aim of the better end is acknowledged, I interpret the *means* as hopeful too. However, this is not an unfounded optimism that Koopman calls upon. His hope is based in “the thesis that we are capable of creating better worlds and selves” (Koopman, 2009, p. 19), which he considers to be a union of humanism and pluralism as a hopeful quest for *possibility*. He references James’ pragmatist view that “our energies and efforts can make a definite contribution to the realities we inhabit” (Koopman, 2009, p. 20). I consider this to be vital for PPCol in our social and political context of 21st century, where children and adults are asking if there is anything that can purposefully be done to initiate positive change for the world and the people in it. Meliorism is a pragmatist alternative to pessimism or apathy. It enables thinking about *possibility*, and this can be seen in dialogues between children in the philosophical Col, where their energy and enthusiasm for *envisioning a better world* gives them a sense of agency as they create proposals for positive change.

Koopman also builds on William James' pragmatist reconceptualisation of truth as "human action in potent phase" (Koopman, 2009, p. 21). He relates truth to the meliorism that is due to intrinsic efforts and energies, where "Truth understood melioristically, is an improvement resulting from our work" (Koopman, 2009, p. 22). If I apply this understanding of the concept to Susan Gardner's assertion that inquiry is guided by truth, I find a nuance that I had previously missed (Gardner, 1996). I had originally placed her concept of truth within the context of pragmatist better understanding, which captured its historical developmental characteristic, but lacked an overt reference to meliorism.

"properly speaking, in order to be said to "inquire," one must not only inquire about *something* (more will be said about the importance of maintaining focus later on), one must also make some progress - at least if such progress is possible" (Gardner, 1996).

She is clearly indicating development when she cites having a "substantially clearer picture of the topic under investigation", as a criterion of progress. She also claims two further warrants, that progress towards truth is vital in reinforcing Col practice, and that it is also required for the development of "skills and habits of mind", which she views as fundamental to philosophical progress, and acquired in Col dialogue (Gardner, 1996). Her immersion in pragmatism informs her writing. She describes practice, and the idea of improvement, as arising from effort, which I read as her affirmation of James' idea of human action. Gardner is articulating meliorism through the context of Col, with regard to developing practice as intentional action, assisting the development of thinking, listening, and speaking, in more philosophical ways.

Interestingly, she attends to the concept of truth in her subsequent commentary (Gardner, 2015), asserting that if a person does not know the logical processes required to evaluate a truth claim then they cannot become confident in their justifications, or detect relativist claims accurately. She continues that:

"we are justified in viewing a claim as true only if the reasons and/or evidence that support the claim are not faulty (local sufficiency) *and* that there are no superior competing claims (global sufficiency)" (2015).

This reads as an analytical description of truth, and it is not until Gardner relates this to children working in the Col making claims of truth based in logic, that I can view it as complementing the meliorist intention. The progress in truth claims can be viewed as an improvement resulting *from* human action, which is dependent on the application of philosophical tools that are available to the students. Koopman's addition is a sense of the *continuity* of the human action, in the idea of transitions as reconstructions.

His development of James' practice of possibility, positions transitionalist meliorism as an approach that can critique past ideas and assist in their development as a continuity of thinking, rather than an overthrow; a conception that "occurs at the confluence of old and new" (Koopman, 2009, p. 22). When applied to truth, meliorism is a way of proposing improvement initiated by human engagement. This is not just an epistemic position, but one augmented by value. Koopman clearly acknowledges that for James his pragmatism "co-locates truth as simultaneously epistemological and axiological" (Koopman, 2009, p. 21), and I associate this with both Sharp and Garside's work on philosophical dialogue in the Col. Sharp best expresses this in her work on caring thinking (Sharp, 1994; Sharp & Gregory, 2009; Sharp, 2007; Splitter & Sharp, 1995; Gregory & Laverty, 2018; Morehouse, 2018), and Garside builds on transitionalism and in particular meliorism in proposing the concept of edifying judgement (Garside, 2013).

5.3 Development, progress, improvement

Development is a key theme for Garside and he endorses Koopman's pragmatist proposal to resist static judgements of truth, in favour of considering them in the adjectival or comparative sense of "truer and better" (Koopman, 2009; Garside, 2013). In this way, Koopman draws attention to the dynamic, melioristic quality of truth which is more obviously open to revision. "Transitionality suggests temporally mediated development, whereas change suggests temporally mediated difference" (Koopman, 2009, p. 13). Garside elaborates that this is a "working from old to new, from past to future," and in doing so, transitionalism "treats truth as a *dynamic process with temporal duration*" (Garside, 2013, p. 117). This assertion is in part influenced by Garside's reading of Dewey, where he reiterates Dewey's idea of

judgement being “a *moment*, not in the sense of a point, a moment in time, but a conceptual point of difference that marks out a temporary point of reference” (Garside, 2013, p. 73). So, it has to occasion attention to be noticed. However, when he uses the term *figurative judgement*, he does not limit the term to the *figure as subject*, doing the judging but opens it to the “ethical and politically *interested* process of judging” (2013, p. 41), which places emphasis on both the action of judging and the inferences implied by the act. This elaboration of figure and figuring contributes to my understanding of the process as transitional. However, if the flow is towards the *better* or *truer*, something else is also at work.

A developmental flow, towards the better or truer poses questions arising from traditional distinctions between the epistemic and the axiological such that Garside agrees with James and Koopman that “truth as improvement is both epistemological and axiological” (Garside, 2013, pp. 117-119). This agreement rests with the idea that it is not enough to view development as dynamic, or temporal, without indicating the direction of development. This is where Garside begins to bring the meliorism of Koopman together with the idea of figuration. If I view Garside’s account of the meliorative, as figurative, then the focus is on the judging, and not exclusively the subject doing the judging. The deliberation of judging, or forming judgements thus released from the individual, becomes available to the plural; the community, supporting his figurative claim, which opens space for dialogue. It builds on Koopman’s account of development because the valuational impetus of development becomes available as a shared phenomenon. It remains aligned with Koopman, because valuing enables development to qualify as improvement, in contrast with change, which represents difference only. The effect of this is to position transitionalist inquiry as a meliorative practice.

This refining of the idea of development as temporal, with a meliorative flow is relevant to my practice in Col because it endorses the fallibilist, pedagogical proposal that guides philosophical dialogue in the Col. It places emphasis on the deliberative work that is undertaken, the action of forming judgements, which is shared philosophical work. There is a step which I see as vital in this flow, which is that of *meaning making*, which Garside acknowledges, but passes through in his wish to

maintain focus on judgement. I consider the shared endeavour of meaning making in the Col to be a vital part of inquiry. Splitter and Sharp extend Dewey's idea that meaning is established when connections are made, that to make meaning "is to locate that item in a framework which is connected to something in our own experience, something which already makes sense to us" (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 71). Interestingly, in their footnote, they endorse the normative component of thinking about meaning in life with reference to the term *worthwhile*, that implies meliorism. I read this as a reference to the search for the *Good life*, which is a theme that permeates much of Sharp's writing (Gregory & Laverty, 2018). This interpretation of meaning making, with Sharp's normative intention, with its meliorative inference, contributes to the forming of judgement that Garside goes on to define as edifying judgement. What is important about Col meaning making practice is the engagement with others, and ideas expressed by others, such that meaning formation is no longer an internal reinforcement of one's prior beliefs, but a *space of encounter*. It interrupts the stability of what one used to think, providing an opportunity for self-interrogation, alongside interrogation of the warrants of those contestations. Meaning making provokes questions. It is a *space of potential* for new ways of thinking and is therefore a space for learning about the self, as one conceives of it, in combination with the reflections one receives from others.

5.4 Implications of feminist frame on transitionalism

The idea of working with what is available and being aware of the limitations infers, but doesn't articulate, ideas about the historic curation of knowledge, ethics and politics by those with the advantage of structural power. Koopman calls on the melioristic hope of his chosen group of Emerson, James, Dewey, and Rorty, when proposing that transitionalism with its temporal structure can enable the development of successful epistemic and ethical forms, given sufficient effort. His emphasis on working within the political, ethical and epistemic "resources already available to us within a given situation", and being cognisant of the historical and temporal restrictions that constrain this effort, is a characteristic pragmatist recognition of the situatedness of judgement formation (Koopman, 2009, p. 14). What is not present explicitly in his argument is an overt acknowledgement of the sexed bias of the time in

which his exemplars worked. Instead, he situates his concepts as emerging from a historical field, which he accepts is limited. My suggestion is that these constraints should be better articulated; named for their exclusion, most obviously, but not limited to the grounds of sex. What his work does is to bring to the reader's attention the flowing-ness of transitions alongside their situatedness both in the context of the historical and the placement in the moment, offering a *view from where we are* in contrast to a *view from nowhere*. What requires further work is the recognition that Koopman's 'we' is overshadowed by philosophical tradition, and therefore, it is not explicitly representative of all persons.

I question Koopman's placement of temporality and historicity within the realm of reconstruction, because of his assertion that "purposive transitionality and the temporal structure of practice are neutral fields" (Koopman, 2009, p. 14). Initially, I considered that his general reference to *constraints*, while not including specific examples, could infer a lack of awareness of structural sexed bias, which I question. How could a practice that recognises that progress and decay are both possible, and which is an intellectual engagement with epistemic, political and ethical reconstruction take place within a proposed context of neutrality, given the history of Western philosophy's rejection of the female voice over millennia? The pragmatist tradition is situated within the structural power relations of its time, originating around 1870 (Legg & Hookway, 2021), which are strongly biased towards a scholarship of masculine dominance. This field is curated by the structural barriers in place that quieten the voices of women as well as persons whose heritage comply with criteria of minoritisation. As such, the neutrality to which Koopman refers would exist within a wider field, which is one of exclusion. Were this to be accurate, I might level the accusation that Koopman's assertions are subject to historical structural exclusions and are therefore not credible. However, I will nuance my response following deeper reading.

My earlier reading of Koopman centres on what he means by proposing that *purposive transitionality* and the *temporal structure of practice* comprise *neutral* intellectual fields, within which ethical and epistemic progress can be attempted. Initially, I understood this to mean that a practice that aims for neutrality can occur within a

wider context of constraint as long as the constraint is acknowledged. A more accurate reading places the *deliberative practice* of transitionalism within the neutral field. By neutral field, I read Koopman in his meliorative mode to mean that the flow of the experience and its manner of flow, its structural transitions and its specific ordered situation occur temporally, and as such, the neutrality to which he refers, is boundaried by the intention of the community to aspire to a neutrality of hierarchy and authority; a neutrality of individual will, in deference to a shared, collective aim for the meliorative *end*. Koopman acknowledges the historical contexts that influence judgement formation. He acknowledges the constraints of context and then proposes that working within a neutral deliberative community could assist with purposeful development given these constraints. In making this proposal, there is a hopefulness that is directed towards reconstruction. He indicates a will towards improvement despite historical constraints but falls short of identifying any specific constraints. His meliorism is historically situated. It accepts that given better conditions, from which I infer more equal access and credibility to all voices, transitions can occur, and they can be generous ones, which indicates to me a sense of greater openness than I noticed in my earlier reading.

“Melioristic hope thus suggests a philosophical practice that is both fully situated amid the transitions in which we find ourselves and rightly confident that we can, through our effort, see these transitions through to better futures” (Koopman, 2009, p. 18).

What interests me is the congruence between Koopman’s revisionist approach to pragmatism and contemporary feminist themes. He may not explicitly have acknowledged the almost complete erasure of women’s voices in the early pragmatist canon, but this is likely to be because it is not central to his transitionalist venture. In *Pragmatism as Transition* (Koopman, 2009), he is modernising the pragmatist project and opening it up to practices that are often associated with feminist intentions, such as the acknowledgement of the situated subject, situated knowledge (Braidotti, 2011; Benhabib, 2002; Allen, 2007; Griffiths, 1995), the importance of hopefulness in approaching development (Griffiths, 1995; Code, 1996; Code, 1991), and the idea that judgement and knowledge are concepts that are not adequately captured by the language and theory of the necessary and sufficient criteria of justified, true belief

(Ichikawa, et al., (Fall 2024 Edition); Griffiths, 1995; Code, 2020). Koopman acknowledges Jane Addams, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Cornel West, as contributing members to the wider project of pragmatism (Koopman, 2009, p. 40). These citations confirm the inclusion of women and Black scholars in his wider frame of pragmatist cultural criticism, and his bibliography recognises sufficient numbers of contemporary female philosophers and cultural critics to support the suggestion that he is cognisant of feminist interpretations and critique of the pragmatist project (Koopman, 2009, pp. 245-267). However, In raising the importance of historical constraints and remaining general in his assertions, I choose to read Koopman's account of transitionalism as inclusive of the minority voice, but potentially subject to some of Seigfried's claims that women, (and by implication persons from minority ethnicities), are obliged to *read past* specific structural inequalities, when philosophers work within contexts that do not explicitly acknowledge their presence (Code, 1998b). As a woman, I am obliged to read past the implicit bias that is characteristic of historic Western philosophy, but reading Koopman, his citations and references support a hopefulness for a more inclusive practice in his transitionalist project.

Before concluding this section, I must question the practice of transitionalist philosophical inquiry itself, as a potential source of constraint. The irreducibly historical content of our philosophical inquiries, which Koopman accepts is the material that shapes the inquiry process, has been arrived at by historical means. If we accept that history has curated epistemic practice, then this opens inquiry as practice to scrutiny, because a practice that originates within a structural power imbalance, in this case one where women are historically exempted from epistemic work, fulfils Miranda Fricker's criteria for being influenced by *social power* (Fricker, 2007, p. 13). The social power at work in historic inquiry has restricted the endeavour of epistemic work to those who are considered to be able to think rationally. As Fricker elaborates, this limitation occurs through masculinised societal power that associates women with intuition and emotion, believed at the time to render them incapable of reason. Code's work on credibility assumptions supports this assertion, proposing that Darwinian theory helps to reinforce Victorian stereotypes, by referencing "typical female behavior", as if it is natural. She explains that:

“Confirming evidence is selected from the data so that stereotypes are reinforced, yet the possibility that the gender differences thereby confirmed might be observationally, ideologically constructed rather than natural is not considered” (Code, 1991, pp. 228-230).

What is significant here is that because it is possible to observe differences in the knowledge that men and women can demonstrate, this does not correlate with their relative intellectual ability or inability. Instead, it confirms only the stereotypical expectations of the era. In an earlier paper, she proposes that differences of knowledge held by men and women “can be attributed to socialisation rather than to differences in cognitive capacity” (Code, 1981, p. 269). Code uses the example that men are more likely to be socialised to learn about jump-starting a car, whereas women are more likely to know how to mend torn clothes. Her point is that these differences are the result of schooling and as such, influenced by stereotypical expectation, and not the result of any natural cognitive distinction. However, empirical data collected by observers who are unaware that these influences of societal expectations curate the performance that the researcher observes, will arrive at erroneous ends. Similarly, if researchers are unaware of their personal structural biases, they will make their report from within these limitations, which results in an appearance of neutrality, but where results are subject to confirmation bias (Mynatt, et al., 1977).

To summarise, the project of transitionalism highlights the importance of temporality and historicity, meliorism and development, as strong features of third wave pragmatist thinking that seeks truth in the adverbial form. This theory is congruent with PPCol except for its claim of neutrality, which is problematic because the theory builds on an exclusionary tradition that remains subject to shadows of sexed exclusion. This shadow of social power resists the inclusion of women as capable of rational philosophical thinking and it is resistant to ideas of situated, embodied thinkers. Whilst Koopman makes allowances for situated thinkers, his intention for neutrality may still be compromised. In the next section, I begin to make connections between transitionalism and PPCol, which are necessary for viewing edifying judgement as a Col practice ideal, and for asserting the importance of meliorist development as a practice principle. In addition, it offers a philosophical base from

which to assert that PPCol is guided by a transitionalist conceptualisation of truth and that meliorism may usurp the idea of Col as a space of normative pedagogy, where normativity could be associated with conformity to taught values and attitudes that promote students' acquisition of views and values "in a desired direction", rather than development, which Straume associates more strongly with the "pluralistic tradition" (Straume, 2025, p. 36).

5.5 The relevance of transitionalism in Col

My reading of Koopman's transitionalism, asserts that our development as persons is not separate from our educational development. In his support for James' meliorism, he asserts that:

"Truth is human action in potent phase. Truth names our power, our success, our accomplishment—contrast this to a concept of truth as an external force bestowing its blessings upon us" (Koopman, 2009, p. 21).

I infer from this statement that for Koopman, truth is constructed by persons through their action. I consider this to be vital in viewing philosophical dialogue in the Col as a practice where there is potential for *a self to transition*, initiated by thinking together with others in the relational Col, with a shared meliorist philosophical goal. I bring my *self* to the inquiry, and it is my *self* that does the thinking. I show my vulnerability in community with others as I work towards making meaning together, where I accept that I cannot individually create the sophistication of meaning that we can construct together. I bring a responsibility to work towards forming judgements that can be rigorously examined and improved. Another aspect of my responsibility is the acceptance that I may be wrong. When I can view this being wrong as the grounds for development, then I engage in a transitional experience from which I and my community can develop. I assert that being involved in this transitional engagement in the Col can offer community members opportunities to observe others in transition, and that the relations amongst and between members who share the intention of progress, are part of what *holds* the community through transitions. However, development requires the community to have sufficient relational robust-ness for selves to trust in the practice enough to be prepared to be vulnerable. It also requires that community members have acquired some dispositions necessary for the inquiry

practice to be possible. For example, I cannot develop a disposition towards open-mindedness without first working on my tendency to make assumptions using the *short-cuts* that function in general thinking (Uleman, et al., 2008; De Houwer, et al., 2019). This work is internal. It is not visible and until it is established as part of my practice, there are no obvious behaviours that can be examined, that indicate its explicit development. Expressions of development may appear to indicate change through specific language use, but terms can be *taught*, and used, without correlating authentically to the thinking work to which I refer. Authentic development is internal although it will usually have been initiated by an external event—in the context of the Col probably by introduction by the facilitator—through reflecting on a key moment from the shared dialogue. Internal dialogues examining the worth of open-mindedness, its value to the community, its consequences, the possible detrimental influences it may have for self and or others and its influence on the wider world may all be part of the internal life of the self. I propose that this internal development is a phenomenon of transitionalism that involves the psyche. Much of this development is not articulable in words, corresponding to vague bodily sensations of change, or internal disruptions: *phenomena without names*. As communities become better established, more trusting and more open to others, the changes that originated as internal work can be seen as a series of *willingnesses*. A willingness is an overt expression of intention. It can be seen, for example, when opinions conflict and the community takes time to explore the conflict, where in other settings outside the Col individual children might try to *win*. The collaborative will for *better understanding* is in opposition to a competitive will to assert dominance.

A willingness involves cognitive and affective effort, and in the Col there is a relational implication. The effort associated with withholding the impulse to assume that one knows what another person means may make sense on an intellectual level, but it confronts psychological short-cut patterns creating internal thinking and emotional work. The psychology of assumptions and biases is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is a field which acknowledges that there are theories of processing that “all draw upon a broadly similar distinction between two types of mental processing”, which they assert are variously implicit, and not known to the individual (Bowes, et al., 2020).

What is important here is that in learning to become more aware of one's own assumptions, with the intention to become more open-minded towards the testimony and warrants offered by others, the thinking work undertaken cannot be externally examined. However, shifts in listening behaviours, attentiveness, and question asking, may offer indications that work has been undertaken.

This is relevant in a transitionalist Col because development infers an alteration that positively influences understanding. It also infers a recognition that there are associated individual self-developments that enable this educational progress. There is potential for a widening of the material a person is prepared to consider seriously. It is a widening because what may previously have been dismissed by default assumption, can be revisited, and if found to have been dismissed by assumption, may become available for consideration. It is also a widening influence on a person's sense of the credible spokesperson. In my experience observing early stage Col with primary school aged children, some children speak with an authority that indicates they have been listened to before. Other children show agreement with these characters, apparently endorsing their credibility even when what is said is questionable. Another group of children remains largely quiet. We cannot know the reasons for these observable behaviours, but as the Col develops, and the topics under scrutiny change, speaker hierarchies can be observed to alter, over time flattening out. The credibility criterion originally focused on assertive individuals, gradually shifts towards evaluating the credibility of *what is said*, with decreasing credibility associated with the speaker. My point is that development in the Col becomes a shared community phenomenon. However, what may seem to be progress for one child might suggest regression in another. To learn to think together takes time, and in early stage Col there may be no indication that it is happening because there are no consistent observational criteria that offer consistently correlated outcomes. Potential indicators of development are context sensitive and may indicate development differently between persons. As children who didn't contribute verbally begin to speak, the inquiry work becomes shared among a greater number of children. Conversely, children who contribute more to early sessions learn that their voice is one among a larger group. In relinquishing such status, they may display acceptance, resistance, and sometimes

disruption. These phenomena are as important to the community's development as the quality of the dialogues, because of their influence on the shared practice of thinking together. As the quality of the listening, especially listening for meaning becomes evident through the reduction of repeated statements, and the increase in comments that build on the work of others, the community develops.

The relational practices at work during Col formation make way for the development of the philosophical argument, the dialogue, and the forming of provisional judgements, which I propose is the shared achievement of the community thinking together. This doesn't mean that there are no individual contributions, but rather that the shared goals of better understanding, collaborative meaning making, and provisional judgement formation are principles that assist with the growth of the community and its individuals. What attracts me most to Koopman's theory of transitionalism are the central themes of "melioration, improvement, development and growth", in contrast with what he calls "mere change" (Koopman, 2009, pp. 12-13). I understand each of these concepts to be relevant to the philosophical work of the Col, and to the persons engaged in that shared philosophical work of thinking together. In making this assertion I am building an argument for the development of *transitioning selves*, in community, whilst they engage in the intellectual practice of philosophical dialogue as transitionalist practice.

To summarise, in this chapter I have explored Koopman's concepts of temporality, historicity, meliorism, and development, and his contextualisation of truth in relation to provisionality and fallibility. I have reflected on implications that arise from my feminist frame, questioning Koopman's claim of neutrality on the grounds that structures of traditional power shadow transitionalism's history. I have proposed that a transitionalist Col is capable of development, but that criteria of development are often tacit. They cannot be evaluated through empirical observation because of their dispositional character. They require independent and shared internal dispositional work, that may manifest in various behaviours, where multiple interpretations are possible. I assert that development may explicitly be identified, but that it may also be associated with vague bodily sensations or internal disruptions that are as yet unnamed; an example of hooks' *somethings* (Sharp & Gregory, 2018e, p. 145). I

propose that willingnesses as attitudes or dispositions can involve intellectual, affective, and axiological endeavour, and develop as part of *relational philosophical practice*. These dispositional developments, when undertaken as part of shared practice, form an infrastructure that is largely invisible, but which is essential for the transitionalist Col to become a space for selves to think in relation with other selves, enhancing the possibility that selves can transition as part of this practice.

In the next chapter, I will build on this outline of transitionalism, situating Garside's concept of edifying judgement within its transitionalist frame. He contextualises edifying judgement using the practice of PwC undertaken in the Col. I will explore some themes that contribute to his concept, most notably about self as subject, subjecting and subjecting to as relations of power, and reframe these within a context of feminist education. I will propose that edifying judgement is better understood as a practice ideal, and that if it is to be an ideal, edifying practice requires amplification.

Chapter 6: Edifying judgement and P4C practice

Garside opens his thesis by proposing that lacunae of judgement are present in education and that these require attention:

“It is a philosophical problem because of ontological, epistemological, ethical and political dimensions that cannot be addressed solely by empirical work. It is an educational problem because one of the purposes of education, common to all contemporary approaches, is the cultivation of the capacity and the ability to form judgement by educational agents in educational contexts” (Garside, 2013, p. 7).

He draws on Aristotle, Kant and Dewey in building his historical background to judgement, augmented by Rorty, so as to ensure that the linguistic turn is brought into consideration, before then building on the work of Colin Koopman, with regard to temporality, historicity, meliorism and hope. He agrees with Koopman’s *bridging of the divide* between experience and language, endorsing it as a more integrated pragmatism, better suited to philosophical inquiry of the present day. Garside develops his theory of edifying judgement by putting aside the empirical demand, as Rorty does when rejecting the idea of essence, so central to the “Platonists, Kantians and positivists: that man has an essence — namely, to discover essences” (Rorty, 2009, p. 357). Rorty is persuaded that the hermeneutic approach of Gadamer is pertinent to the idea of “remaking ourselves”, through our engagement with ideas and persons. What I find helpful is the conceptualising of Bildung as education which involves self-formation in this hermeneutic approach because it replaces the idea of essence with development. It recognises education as being much more than the acquisition of knowledge, which is so strongly associated with the older philosophical tradition. There is a liberation involved in this re-conceptualisation which brings attention to “the way things are said”, the making of connections, between ourselves and culture or cultures, histories, or divisions between disciplines. Rorty proposes that:

“edifying discourse is *supposed* to be abnormal, to take us out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings” (Rorty, 2009, p. 360).

In embracing this idea of self-formation, as self-development, through his reading of Rorty, and Koopman's proposal of judgement as a transitional concept, Garside positions his theory of edifying judgement firmly in the post-structural paradigm of third wave pragmatism.

His context is philosophy for children as practised in the English school system (PwC). I am interested in the dimensions of practice that Garside identifies as ones that cannot be addressed solely by empirical work, because in making this proposal he opens the way for theoretical development, and arrives at his proposal of edifying judgement as a meliorative pedagogical proposal. Both the concepts of edifying judgement, and meliorism's influence on pedagogy, have a significant role to play in contextualising my developments of edifying practice, and the transitioning self in philosophical dialogue undertaken in the Col.

The concept of edifying judgement formation is appealing to me as an enrichment of Lipman and Sharp's normative proposal. It is based in the idea of conceptualising transitionalist practice as a way for children to make progress by thinking together about concepts and questions in increasingly philosophical ways, and thinking about themselves in relation to these questions, and *to the world*. It offers a space for creative thinking about life, and how life could be better for all persons in the world. It offers space to imagine what part each of us can fulfil in this meliorative endeavour. However, what is not strongly emphasised by Garside, are the resulting implications for selfhood, arising from an attempt at edifying judgement formation. I am minded of Higgins' pedagogical triangle (2011) when I read the following from Garside:

"First, judgement is a subjective phenomenon and in thinking about educational judgement we are being asked to think about the subjects at the heart of education: the academic subjects, the forms of subjectivity recognised and ignored in classrooms, and the subjecting to which allows the topic of power to enter into the analysis" (Garside, 2013, p. 15).

Garside uses Braidotti to reinterpret Biesta's educational categories, introducing a *de-territorialising* of the idea of subjects and subjection in education, that she attributes in part to Deleuze. What this does is present previously anchored ideas as "becoming-nomad"; available for other analysis and critique, crossing between disciplinary

boundaries and their conventions (Braidotti, 2011, p. 66). Garside points to three forms of subject in the above quotation about judgement, and I will elaborate each form, as I agree that each has implications for philosophical practice in the Col.

6.1 Subject as topic or subject matter

The first form, the academic subject or topic may, at first glance seem uncontentious. The subject matter under consideration in the Col is broadly philosophical, and participants work together on philosophical judgement formation from this starting point. However, as already outlined, this philosophical practice and the approach to conceptual understanding have a traditional academic history, with attendant exclusionary structural influences. The academic subject of philosophy, with its associated methods of reasoning and inquiry, is the product of a mostly white, male, academic elite, educated within an academic tradition that favours a masculine social hierarchy. Code makes a helpful distinction between Peirce's scientific method, which is important in conventional pragmatist inquiry, and what she calls *responsibilist* epistemology. She asserts that Peirce sought to approach "the truth", as "the same and only truth", in his scientific method. In her responsibilist epistemology, Code contrasts Peirce's reliabilist approach founded in certainty, with her assertion that:

"a knower/believer has an important degree of choice with regard to modes of cognitive structuring, and is accountable for these choices; whereas, a "reliable" knower could simply be an accurate, and relatively passive, recorder of experience" (Code, 2020, p. 51).

This assertion equates with agency; the knower has a *responsibility* for her choices regarding the structuring, the organising of her approach to what is knowledge, and her judgement about what is true. Whereas the reliabilist relies on an *assertion of accuracy*, without being personally responsible for understanding the context within which the ascription of reliability occurred. If the subject, as individual, is educated to work as if he were able to step out of himself, and to consider that his reasoning is unaffected by who he is, he may choose to believe that in taking a reliabilist approach he is being scientifically objective. My assertion is that whilst this *distancing of self* from reasoning is essential in, for example, pharmaceutical scientific inquiry where certainty is highly desirable, it remains an *ideal* rather than an achievable stance. If

one cannot access the biases that have been acquired over a lifetime of exposure to culture, they are not available for inquiry. Cultural influences are not universal and so they may persist, if only as shadows. In scientific inquiry, the intention is to aim for the greatest certainty possible. A certainty of means upon which to base predictable and universal ends is required, such that any theory can be empirically tested, and will predictably arrive at the same end when repeated. A drug that is manufactured according to such a process needs to be empirically tested for the reliability of its effects, before being prescribed for use across a population. In such inquiry, where the intention is to arrive at irrefutable ends for the purposes of universalising products, a reliabilist approach offers the closest attempt at objectivity possible. However, I assert that it is still fallible with regard to legacies of structural dominance, and cultural bias, that are hidden because they were acquired through experiences that defy analysis. Examples of drugs that are now known to require different dosing protocols for men and women are pertinent here, where sex differences are responsible for this development (Shan, et al., 2023). These different protocols exemplify assumptions of bodily equivalence that were not initially exposed. They became noticed because of adverse effects experienced by women over time and were subsequently investigated.

By contrast, in transitionalist philosophical inquiry, the community's shared aim is to arrive at *better* judgement guided by the ideals of edifying judgement, and pursuit of truth, within a fallible pragmatist paradigm. If one accepts that the philosophical intention is to elucidate greater understanding, and if one also accepts that shared thinking is integral to this end, both means and ends differ from the scientific project. An inquiry into new ways of conceptualising understanding about abstract and complex concepts is an investigation. It is an attempt at looking differently, to see if this new way of making meaning offers supplementary awarenesses that can then be subjected to scrutiny. The strangeness or *abnormality* of thinking in Rorty's account of edification is an opening of possibility, a creative attempt at reviewing possibilities that may previously have been overlooked (Rorty, 2009, pp. 365-388). Braidotti would call this reinvention or devising a new theoretical style, one that is more embracing of *transdisciplinarity* (Braidotti, 2011). The philosophical search is one of widening dimensions. This development may be included in an initial phase of a scientific

project, but ultimately the scientific focus is on the narrowing down of possibilities, to arrive at an end that is empirically consistent. In the Col, the emphasis on what *may be possible*, extends what it is to make a judgement, because one has to consider what may have previously been ignored or overridden in the rush to arrive at a justified end. A scientific inquiry requires consensus if the empirical data generated are going to yield a consistently accurate, predictable outcome. Whereas a philosophical inquiry does not aim for consensus. Its means are collaborative, but its ends are subject to individual consideration, with the implications of value, context, and responsibility as potential arbiters. Thus, judgements about concepts and meanings should be disentangled from the search for scientific knowledge. They require a specific methodology, and not one imposed from science, with its quest for certainty.

To recap, I assert that the concept of *subject matter* has been curated by a masculine hegemony, which arises from a tradition of exclusion. Traditional philosophy, with its masculine past, is not immune to prejudice, or implicit bias, as the rationalists may imply, and this casts a shadow of bias over the subject, in a way that should be acknowledged, in order for the biases to be examined. Biases that are assertions of personhood, made by assuming that all persons approach the world in the same way as white, educated, usually middle-class men, are exclusionary structures. They disadvantage women and other minority groups and should be questioned. The questioning of such structures of exclusion is an action directed towards greater equality. Such questioning is the responsibility of all participants in the Col, and essential in the education of facilitators of the Col.

6.2 Subjectivity

Garside's second category of subject involved in judgement is what he calls "forms of subjectivity recognised and ignored in classrooms". In introducing this group, he acknowledges that some forms of subjectivity are deemed acceptable in the classroom context, and importantly, some other forms are, in his words, ignored. By making this assertion, he implies that there are exclusionary forces at work which are responsible for determining what is and what is not acceptable. This is the work of politics, community and individuals. The political influence is the result of education

policy; standard requirements to which schools are obliged to adhere. These standards must be met and must be evidenced during statutory inspection (Department for Education, 2021). The community influence on recognising subjectivities in the classroom, is outlined in the school's statement on values, ethos and vision. It identifies the guiding principles of conduct that the school wishes to promote, and in doing so, describes what exemplary conduct comprises, setting pupil expectations. By implication, it also identifies what will not be accepted or acknowledged as acceptable by anyone working within the school. This is supported in the school's published behaviour policy. The individual responsibility for the recognition or ignoring of classroom subjectivity rests primarily with the class teacher in primary school, the subject teacher in the secondary sector, and colleagues with whom they collaborate. The teacher in England, has an obligation to follow the DfE standards and school ethos as already outlined, but their professional autonomy within these boundaries will guide their approach to classroom expectations. If we view these pieces of legislation and guidance alongside Biesta's purposes of education, *qualification*, *socialisation* and *subjectification*, we see a correlation between the recognition or rejection of subjectivity, in both the socialisation agenda, and in student subjectification (Biesta, 2010). What is important about these restrictions of subjectivity is that these two purposes are often in opposition to each other. To be socialised, one learns to fit in to the "norms and values" of the social or cultural environment, whereas to individuate, or become a subject,

"might perhaps best be understood as the opposite of the socialization function. It is precisely *not* about the insertion of "newcomers" into existing orders, but about ways of being that hint at independence from such orders, ways of being in which the individual is not simply a "specimen" of a more encompassing order" (Biesta, 2010, p. 21).

Before I continue with the relation between subject and socialisation, I need to elaborate what Biesta calls *becoming a subject*, because one could assume that a subject in this context, is an arrival at a point of maturity that is finite. As we have seen, Garside has problematised Biesta's model using Braidotti, who views subject formation as an on-going process of becoming, where the development has no finitude (Braidotti, 2011). In this assertion, we agree. A strong theme of my thesis is a

feminist assertion that the development of *self* is part of what it is to be a person, and is not limited by arriving at a mature state of being. Koopman's theory of development, temporality, and historicity, make space for such an evolution. Similarly, when Griffiths elaborates authenticity, she asserts the need for any claim to be referenced to past social interactions: "we may act authentically in the present, but, if so, that authentic, spontaneous, immediacy is in fact rooted in time" (Griffiths, 1995, p. 176). I develop authenticity as a criterion of the developing self, in chapter 7.

Returning to Garside, I understand his focus on judgement formation to be associated with individuation within the socialisation of the Col. He argues that thinking is not equated with individual performance, but with the collaborative task of evaluating competing claims, by the community thinking-together, as shared practice, for the benefit of the members. The idea of thinking-together is a strong thread of his work on edifying judgement formation, because it re-conceptualises the common assumption that thinking is exclusively an individual act. Thinking-together illuminates the idea that an individual can 'self-deceive', and following Arendt, use language to camouflage or obscure conscience (Garside, 2013, p. 16). In the well-facilitated, established Col, this deception is open to questioning by the community, and the ensuing inquiry can elicit meaning that might otherwise have remained hidden. Recognition of the possibility of self-deception, or even intentional deception, is an explicit quality of edifying judgement. Likewise, aporia arising from genuine competing claims are made explicit, and are made available to all as puzzlements for the community. In other words, they become the inquiry *subject matter*, for collaborative engagement. For this shared thinking to be possible, students need a sense of belonging in the community, with the attendant trust this implies. They also need to experience being *listened to attentively*, where any immediate pull to judgemental interpretation by listeners is suspended, and replaced by an *openness to possibility*, which is, in itself, a socialising function of the Col. This socialisation is contrary to the socialisation into a regular classroom norm, because thinking in the regular classroom is largely considered to be an individual act, and therefore value is placed on owning ones' opinion. This is reinforced by the English testing and examination regime, which is applied individually, to assess individual knowledge and understanding. Where the

classroom environment is competitive, an antagonist, debating emphasis may be observed, that resists revisions and supports defensiveness. Col socialisation embraces individuation *within* the community as a *space of potential for growth*. What is so important is that the shared goal of better thinking-together about the specific topic, focuses the shared effort on the *topic*. In doing so, it makes space for authenticity to emerge. A student with a strong sense of the value they bring to an argument, will exhibit features of self that inform that view. Reflection on progress must therefore include the shared endeavour, as means, including a review of what has been learned about *ourselves* as developing selves, and the progress on the topic as ends, if this integrated approach is to offer students an understanding of practice development.

6.3 Subjecting to

Garside's third subject category of is what he calls *subjecting to*, which highlights the importance of implications of power, in the formation of judgement. I have already considered the power of the state and its regulation by the Department for Education, and the power of the school ethos and the individual teacher. What I have not yet considered is the power that an early-stage community might afford to a student who has a high credibility index within the class, or a student who asserts authority over others by making demands of them. Judgements formed by these early-stage communities, if overly influenced by a demanding student, or group of students, cannot yet be classed as aspiring to the ideal of edifying judgement, because coercion is involved. The judgement is influenced by persuasion and is not the product of a community that is yet able to engage in thinking-together, with a shared goal of development. The power differential involved indicates a correspondence with what Allen terms: "the ability of an actor or set of actors to constrain the choices available to another actor or set of actors in a nontrivial way". Interestingly, Allen makes a distinction between her definition of *power over*, and that of Thomas Wartenberg, because she omits the term 'strategically' (Allen, 1999a, p. 123). She acknowledges that on occasion, power may be exerted unintentionally. This is relevant to my observations of early-stage, establishing Cols, because in these groups *unintentional* power may cause some children to perceive others to be more powerful because of

their class, gender, heritage, ability, or sexuality. In these cases, it is the often *tacit* perception *by others* that creates the *power over* dynamic, not the exertion of the individual or group with the power advantage. Indeed, in these cases, it is likely that students are unaware of anything except a vague, sense of *a something*, that they are not able to put into words. This sensing of an unnamed phenomenon may indicate emotions acting as “a form of knowledge that has to be educated” (de la Garza, 2018), which Nussbaum might call emotion acting as judgement (Nussbaum, 2001), and which hooks cites as real experiences that are felt, but for which we, as yet, have no name (Sharp & Gregory, 2018e, p. p145).

In the previous example, there is an implication that the subject or subjects acquiesce and accept this *power over* relation. An experienced facilitator will recognise this occurrence and is likely to pause the inquiry in order to work through this exposure of *power over*, as a practice focus. In more experienced communities, I have observed the phenomenon of resistance to the assertion of *power over*, which interrupts the persuasion. By *holding the space*, I mean that s/he supports the community to stay with the unsettling sense of dissonance, attend to the quieter or quietened voices, and by doing so, enable them to be heard. S/he can pursue the practice agenda by sensitively making explicit the tacit presence of *power over*. In doing so, s/he opens space for understanding a potential resistance within the community. Allen asserts that “interest in resistance emerges out of the need to understand the power that women exercise specifically *as a response* to such domination” (Allen, 1999a, p. 122). I have observed resistance from persons perceived as having less power, towards those with more power over others, not only as a sexed phenomenon, but also as a more general one of oppressed towards oppressor. This resistance is a form of agency. It usually occurs as a collective phenomenon, and only rarely as a piece of individual action. In the developing CoI, its emergence indicates a levelling of power differentials, and an indication of an emerging *collective will* towards the shared goal of improvement. When resistance is collective, it is a form of solidarity directed towards the exposure of a coercive force. Once identified as a coercive phenomenon, the *noticing of* power over others can become a focus for inquiry practice development. This is an example of flexible philosophical practice, where the community pursues an

important, emerging phenomenon as the focus for inquiry, before returning to the original topic of the philosophical dialogue. Importantly, if exposed as something which is influencing the inquiry, it can be named. This action makes the phenomenon explicit, and available for future recognition. Similarly, *resistance* to a *power over* claim, once noticed and named, can become explicitly identified should it occur in future. This emancipating force of resistance, directed towards those who exert power over others, is an example of Allen's concept of *power to* (Allen, 1999a; Allen, 1999b). As a collective phenomenon, this emancipatory shared power *with others* enables the Col to become more aware of coercive influences. It can become an enabling feature of a Col, if well-facilitated, and sensitively acknowledged. Under these conditions, it can widen the range of voices enabled to contribute. It is my intention that feminist theory be brought to the Col not as a sexed phenomenon, but one that promotes the *noticing of tacit power relations*, and the potential for *resisting such implicit power structures*. When students become able to notice power relations, they are enabled to share the responsibility for making them explicit, and by doing so, make them available as inquiry material. It is an educator responsibility to notice and interrupt any tacit power imbalances. If s/he does not do this, the community is unlikely to develop competency in attending to such imbalances. Quietened students will remain silent. Power relations will remain tacit. An educator who fails to notice or intervene in such power relations, contributes to a negation of sufficient trust in practice or peers to learn to think-together.

I propose that the action of acknowledging power relations within Cols is necessary, but often tacit. It can help to determine when a Col is maturing enough to engage with more challenging questions. When a community is sufficiently robust that it can detect relations of power that may be over-influential on the making of meaning, or the formation of judgements, and is then able to examine the relation as one of *persuasion* meeting *resistance*, it experiences a qualitative shift in inquiry practice. However, Addams' concept of *lateral progress* is significant here in asserting that this should become a distributed, not isolated development (Code, 1991). If thinking-together as practice becomes more widely distributed on observation and through participant feedback, the formation of judgements within the Col can be seen to rely

on greater number/variety of participants. If the community can function with an awareness of potential future unequal power relations, it has shifted in maturity towards a well-established Col. This is a defining quality which I propose can be used as an evaluation criterion in future project reviews.

To recap, Garside identifies three groups of subject involvement in judgement, and I have elaborated each. I assert that subject matter, whilst apparently uncontentious, is not immune from the Western masculinised tradition and as such, should be viewed as problematic. If it is epistemically framed using traditional criteria, it implies that subject matter is unchanging. In viewing it thus, there is a neutralising of the subjects' choices informing their characterisations of judgement. It is only a recognition that subjects create judgements that opens the space for nuance and context. Where subject individuation is concerned, Biesta separates this from his category of socialisation, whereas I agree with Garside that in the Col the relational-philosophical practice of the community informs socialisation. It makes space for selves to develop, as a complementary part of philosophical practice with a shared goal of better judgement formation. In addition, I assert that the Col offers space for the developing self to experience transitions between how they were and how they wish to progress. I will develop this idea further in Chapter 7.

When we then consider selves as *subject to* potential power relations in classrooms, we are reminded of the political, community and individual power influences exerted over students, schools and staff working within schools. In the Col, tacit relations of power also exist between and among students, and between educator and students, which correspond to those described by Allen. I propose that these often tacit, power relations require careful, sensitive recognition, initially by the educator. In doing so, s/he can make them available as phenomena for inquiry and raise awareness of their implications in the collaborative practice of forming judgement. I consider the noticing of power relations to be an under-explored feature of educator practice, and one which is a limiting factor in achieving a sufficiently well-established community that is able to engage in increasingly challenging philosophical thinking-together. I also consider that inattention to localised or structural power in the Col may result in educators making partial, *ends only* conventional claims for progress. This prioritising

of ends over means, ignores benefits associated with the means of Col practice, which I suggest undermines practice by eliminating it from evaluation.

6.4 Responsibilist relational philosophical practice

A frequently encountered educator concern, when colleagues first begin to establish communities of inquiry with their students, is a fear that in empowering students to question, teachers may lose their professional authority, resulting in chaos. This concern surfaces often when students devise rules to support collaborating with others, and guidelines to assist students in feeling included and respected as persons within the community. This collaborative endeavour is a form of political action: a redistribution of power. The teacher no longer assumes total classroom authority, because s/he is beginning to empower students to be more responsible for their actions and conduct towards each other, and increasingly responsible for their judgement formation. What this doesn't mean is that the teacher relinquishes full responsibility for maintaining relationships, or responsibility for respectful conduct between and amongst students (and staff). It is an initial, gradual move to indicate that an incremental increase in student responsibility for self, actions and relations is beginning. It prefaces a thoughtful, measured dissemination of responsibility to each community member, proposing that they represent their thoughts and ideas to others considerately. Likewise, when listening to others, they develop a greater responsibility for listening attentively. In taking on these responsibilities, students are making space for a *thinking pause*, as an active resistance to the urge to re-act. They are becoming responsible for slowing the pace of talk and by doing so, making space for dialogue to grow. This change of responsibility levels takes time and careful facilitation. What matters is that this transition is undertaken responsibly by all. Any incident that is contrary to the principle of increasing student agency can be raised as material for inquiry, contributing to developing an inclusive practice community. I agree with Sharp when she states that establishing the Col is complex, and that it takes time and effort from all involved (Sharp, 1987; Sharp, 2004; Oliverio, 2018; Sharp, 2018c). This is where, in my experience, distinctions can be made between philosophical practice in the Col and engaging with philosophical questions and reason formation in the classroom. I assert that what may appear to be social practice, to an external observer,

is more than that. Its flexibility in including practice challenges as material for inquiry, augments the social practice. It requires the community to extend their philosophical thinking to include *inquiry into practice*, as inquiry into the means by which the judgement is formed. It requires us to re-examine the ways in which we arrive at our judgements and the ways in which we might make better, truer judgements. It is *relational philosophical practice* that develops out of an understanding that practice as means is as important to evaluate as the judgements that are formed by the Col. It is dependent on the relations between and among subject as topic, subjects as inquirers and the educator for its integrity (Higgins, 2011). These relations are further developed in chapter 8 and so, for now, I propose that these complex relations are essential if communities are to be established securely.

6.5 Subject as static or developing

My experience in using Col as a practice with children excluded from mainstream education has alerted me to be sensitive to the idea that subjectivity is considered to be static by some educators and much education policy. Children arrive in schools for excluded children for many reasons, but what these children share is an experience that has ruptured their sense of belonging. Mary Healy associates this with “being seen as separate, unwanted or different from the group” (Healy, 2020, p. 125). Another commonality is associated with displaying a set of behaviours that have been externally correlated with disruption and/or failure to learn within the mainstream school curriculum. These behaviours are *symptoms* of the much more complex set of coincidental causative conditions; however, it is the behaviours which may more frequently be identified as problems. These behavioural symptoms are named and applied to the individual, as if they form a diagnosis. By this mechanism, the subject acquires a label, examples of which are naughty child, disruptive influence, unteachable young person. Just like other labels, for example, good girl, or able student, labels are likely to be seen as a fixed, inferring a static nature of subjectivity, that I contest. Whilst a label for consumables has an *end date*, labels that children acquire in school tend to endure. My experience of one of the most successful aspects of pupil referral unit culture is an overt insistence that persons can and do change, and that this change is a development towards something better. I now identify this ethos

as one that embraces transitionalism: it recognises and celebrates the concept of progress as an improvement, which promotes an ethos of continual development of students as persons. This ethos rejects outdated static notions associated with labelling sets of behaviours and applying them to individuals. In its resistance to these limiting structures, growth can be welcomed and supported and assumed as on-going. Col is similarly embracing as practice. It encourages development of the community as capable of thinking-together, and of selves as beneficiaries of this experience.

The idea of *forms of subjectivity*, requires further consideration. By using this term Garside alerts his readers to the ways in which subjectivity can appear differently to the self and others in given contexts. That some forms will be accepted in school and others will be ignored, proposes that there is a structural power at work in schools and classrooms, that results in hierarchies of subjectival acceptability. I understand this to be what Garside calls his third judgement consideration of *subjecting to*; the determining of what is to be accepted and what should be ignored and, crucially, by whom. My childhood experience of traditional teaching required that I be compliant with all school rules, spoken and unspoken. Infringements were punished with verbal derision and disdain, enacted by a person in authority, and intended to coerce the individual child in front of her peers, and *control* her behaviour and through that, the other pupils. Intimidation was normalised: it was experienced as legitimate authority involving threat, humiliation and/or isolation. It was an effective method of control, but simultaneously a destructive form of restriction that limited intellectual engagement. While overt coercion or being *subject to* this type is no longer considered good practice, the requirement for children to be socialised into the ethos of the school remains. As with many improvements in teaching, there remain shadows of *old ways*, which take time to be fully eradicated. If we consider the modern concept of school ethos, restrictions of individual behaviour may infer a lagging shadow of coercion, albeit for good intention. Spontaneity in responding to a question for example, may be repressed by teachers citing the need for opening greater opportunities for all children to engage. However, repression is experienced by some more than others. Displays of physical energy are corralled into games, PE and playtime, reducing children's repertoire of immediate responses to each other,

preferencing verbal and gestural options over more excited alternatives. The consequence of restrictions of this type may be seen institutionally as helpful to behaviour management, but these repressive practices reduce the range of school or classroom behavioural acceptability in ways that can snuff out the spark of excitement in learning for some, and perhaps many children. In contrast, in PPCol, the intention is for the *individuals* to learn to regulate their urge to speak. In doing so, the *responsibility resides with the community and its individuals*. It resists structures of *power over others*, promoting a sense of power to self-regulate with the help of others in the community.

This section has emphasised the importance of subject, subjects and the power relations that are at work in curating subjects in classrooms. It has also noticed the potential for power relations to influence philosophical practice in the Col, and the potential shadows of power that might be at work. In exposing these influences, I make them explicit. Once explicit, it is possible to notice them better, because they are no longer noticed at the intuitive level. Similarly, in taking a responsibilist approach to the relations of the Col and observing the importance of the relational practice paradigm, the concept of relational philosophical practice becomes explicit. This relational philosophical practice may appear to be social, but for its willingness to subject the practice itself to philosophical inquiry. By making the practice of the Col available for the same degree of inquiry as the subject matter, the social paradigm becomes philosophical. This feminist inquiry opens new avenues for exploration beyond the scope of my thesis; most obviously it asks questions of research methodology, where what is under observation cannot be viewed by the observer. It presents questions about trusting participants to evaluate changes in ways of being, that arise from learning to think-together, listen with increasing attentiveness, resist the urge to react and respond responsibly, with the aim of making increasingly edifying judgements.

6.6 Transitionalism and edifying judgement

Garside identifies edifying judgement as a situated development of figurative judgement. It tends towards development, in contrast to the more static inference associated with standard figurative judgement. In edifying judgement, persons

undertake the action of judging and arrive at the product of judgement, “a figuring out of something (a set of affairs, a puzzle, experience) that is given *without* the figure and arrived at *within* the figure” (Garside, 2013, p. 115). This overt spatial location of judgement-making within the figure, sets it aside from traditional theories that assert that judgement can be arrived at in isolation from the person doing the judging. It is congruent with Code’s responsibilist approach, which although directed by her towards knowing, I have re-focused on inquiry and by implication, forming judgements (Code, 2020). What Garside then does, is to develop Koopman’s metaphor of field:

“When judgement is treated as a field, the emphasis shifts from what judgement *is*, with all its concomitant problems of the philosophy of presence, to what judgement *produces*” (Garside, 2013, p. 116).

I understand this to mean that we can situate education within the field of judgement and in doing so, enrich its means, through the involvement of meaning-making and philosophical practice in the Col. This is liberating for both the students and the educator. It introduces an explicit phase of practising *making sense* of what is the focus of the lesson, which in the Col will be the question or concept under consideration, but which in a science lesson might be the way they make sense of photosynthesis for example, or in an English lesson, the implications of metaphors in literature. What judgement conceived of as field enables, is the facilitation of better *understanding*. Lipman asserts that

“The outcomes of critical thinking are judgments”, and elaborates that “A judgment, then, is a determination—of thinking, of speech, of action, or of creation” arriving at the assertion that “critical thinking is *thinking that* (1) *facilitates judgment because it* (2) *relies on criteria*, (3) *is self-correcting*, and (4) *is sensitive to context*” (Lipman, 2003, pp. 209-212).

Garside’s edifying judgement elaborates Lipman’s definition by emphasising the situatedness of edifying judgement, and by focusing on the transitional implications of the shared endeavour of constructing ever more nuanced, evolving meanings, which are normatively engaged, and which aim for the *truer* or *better*, but nonetheless fallible outcomes. More specifically, he embraces Koopman’s consideration of whether “purposive transitions result in definite improvements or definite degenerations” in a future where development is not limited to “merely rehearsing the old” (Garside,

2013, p. 118). I understand this to mean that the thinking that informs this judgement formation is not pre-determined, but neither is it random. It is an extension of Lipman's critical criteria, situated within the temporal and historicist realm: the thinking work is action, this action is temporal, its historicity, as its determinate contents, is enmeshed in practice. The forming of judgement is focusing on and influenced by the temporo-historicist practice. Considered in this way, these determinate contents are also the locus for meliorist consideration, which in its intellectual hopefulness is oriented in the direction of improvement, recognising that it could result in decay or regression. So, while the intention is towards improvement, there is recognition that when this is not achieved, that there is still worth in the practice. This resonates with Dewey's assertion that truth "names a form of success in which we reconstruct problematic situations into ones that are more secure" (Koopman, 2009, p. 23).

Edifying judgement brings additional conditions to the Col because the judgement formation process is viewed as a "way of engaging with the world and self" (2013, p. 146). This accords with Sharp's assertions that:

"Communal philosophical dialogue is a process designed to bring about a slow shift over time into a new way of being in the world, one characterized by awareness, curiosity, cooperation and patience, absorbing the wonder of what it is *to be* in this world" (Sharp, 2018b, p. 50).

Whilst Sharp talks of transformative education, I will argue that the transformation that she identifies, through the medium of fallibilist self-correction, which over time becomes a *way of being* in life, is about the embracing of development, such that the self is experienced as open to a series of transitions. Following on from this transformation, which indicates an alteration of the form of the self, I propose that the growth of self and an individual's sense of self as development, within the Col is better articulated as a series of *transitions of being*, which are made noticeable to community members who have experience of regular, well-enough facilitated thinking together, in Cols guided by the melioristic intentions of edifying judgement. Transformation indicates an altered way of being that enables transitions to occur. It indicates a change in form. To view oneself as a transitioning self enables

development as an evolving phenomenon. I will elaborate this theme of transition in chapter 7, with regard to the development of the self in the Col.

6.7 Truth as reconstructive success

The idea of truth as reconstructive success, within a context of meliorism, proposes that truth is processual. It infers ideas of generative practice, as opposed to searches for what might already have been considered as possibilities. This aligns with one of Lipman and Sharp's central considerations, that meaning-making is an important part of what inquiry asks of students. That is, to bring ideas into attention, to examine them and try to make connections between what they as students already understand and this new and as yet unintegrated idea. Koopman's idea is that in this reconstruction, participants in inquiry move from insecure to more secure understanding. The claim is not that the ensuing judgement is *true*, but that there is progress towards the *truer* position, which is more securely warranted. Garside's edifying judgement embraces these generative constructions and adds a normative emphasis through the inclusion of meliorist intention, and through the emphasis on development as movement, from one position to an improved next. In feminist terms, what I draw from this account is that an understanding of *The Good* that Sharp proposes, is encompassed within this meliorist proposal.

“Only by seeing ourselves as bearers of cherished experiences can we become attached to beauty, respect, justice, and other forms of the good” (Sharp & Gregory, 2018e, p. 149).

As part of the reconstruction that is meaning-making, she includes the idea of *seeing ourselves* as bringing experiences to this meaning-making process, which are taken seriously. In constructing the sentence around the idea of being a *bearer of cherished experiences*, Sharp proposes an equality of contribution, between those who hold greater institutional power over those with less, which is *felt* as a recognition of the worth that persons, as selves, bring to inquiry. To clarify, when working in a philosophical Col with the guiding principle of edifying judgement, selves need to *feel/heard*: that what they have offered is a valuable contribution, (provided it is relevant), even when its relevance is contrary to the direction of the inquiry. I suggest that this experience of contributing to the dialogue and being received as worthwhile, is an

emancipatory experience. It is accompanied by sensations of worth, which contribute to the development both of the inquiry, and the transitioning self.

Koopman and Garside emphasise what Sharp asserts, that making meaning is an endeavour that is enhanced by the collaborative thinking approach of the Col. They also support the idea of reconstruction using the term development. Sharp infers a valuing of persons in her work that endures in Garside's work, and which I propose has implications beyond the axiological realm, into that of the ontological.

6.8 Judgement as field

In transitionalist pragmatism, the conceptualisation of *judgement as field*, offers space for students to experience learning as a "*dynamic process with temporal duration*", a development from a past state towards one which encompasses something new (Garside, 2013, p. 117). This experience of education contrasts with much of the schooling that children undergo, where they report learning to retain information for the purpose of passing tests. In schooling where the focus is on memorising and repeating what has been remembered, in a format that maximises the chance of scoring a high grade, against the marking scheme, there is little space for deep understanding. I remember with sadness a student I taught telling me that she enjoyed working in the Col and found the meaning making practice exciting, but that she was going to work through the GCSE syllabus for each subject, with the exclusive aim of scoring high marks, for which she stated that she didn't need to understand any of it. When I asked why understanding didn't matter, she immediately replied that understanding the material took too long, and it made no difference to her grades. She added that sometimes her grades had fallen when she had understood a topic, because she could see more than one possible way to answer the question. Interestingly, this same student flourished in higher education, and she asserted that this was because she was practised in meaning making. For her, the practice had not been forgotten. It had been dormant during the exam phase of secondary schooling. This anecdote is just that, the testimony of one student, but I suggest that it may be indicative of the dilemma of many secondary school pupils within a schooling system that is driven by an *ends focused* curriculum. Such instrumental schooling takes account of method *only* if it produces the expected answer. Where the *means* to the

end is complex, as it is in the philosophical Col, ends focused assessments are of little value, because they do not evaluate the process by which the student arrives at the end.

6.81 The importance of practising as edifying practice

This transitionalist theory of *judgement as field*, within which I have positioned inquiry as practice, also helps to contextualise Koopman's account of meliorism as an expression of hopeful progress. However, as with all progress, if it is to be genuinely acquired, by which I mean established as practice that can be repeated in different contexts, focused on different concepts, and arriving at plausibly justified outcomes, which have been tested and refined, then it requires a cycle of introduction, practice and reflection on practice, refinement and consolidation of those refinements. If development of this meliorist type is to become established, then space is needed for this growth to occur. Koopman's account of practice comprises a purposive human endeavour that leads either to improvement or decline. What Garside reiterates is that because practice in the Col is both collaborative and inquiry led, the end is not and cannot be known in advance (Koopman, 2011, p. 13; Garside, 2013, p. 118). Garside also includes a contextual aspect to this practice, which adds another layer of complexity to the practice. What I see as under-emphasised in this theoretical examination of melioristic development, involving both the temporal *form* of transitionalism and the historicist engagement with "determinate contents" (Garside, 2013, p. 118), is that this practice *requires practising*. It is not a set of skills, that can easily be deconstructed into divisible units, because it is an integrated, complex, intellectual, social, relational engagement in inquiry, which is best understood on reflection. It is predicated on a set of community principles that grow and develop with the community, and again, these are not easily itemised. One reason for this is that the Col relies on persons making relationships that are sufficiently robust, to support the transitioning selves that comprise the community. In this way, I view edifying judgement as a *practice ideal*, something to which we aspire, rather than a phenomenon that can be expected as a regular practice achievement. In considering edifying judgement as a practice ideal, I make space to consider the regular and

sustained practising of relational philosophical practice that aspires to meliorism and edifying judgement, which I call edifying practice.

6.82 Meaning making as relational practice action

Koopman states that transitionalism makes a distinction between development and difference, the former being “purposive activity”, the latter “undirected change” (Koopman, 2009, p. 13). As previously stated in Chapter 4, Garside refers to the adverbial inferences of *true* and *better*, in which Koopman bases his transitionalism as indicators of development. But he, like Koopman, recognises that whilst one can intend to pursue development in philosophical inquiry, it may not result in the intended development. It may fail, because the epistemic criteria of better clarity or greater conceptual understanding are not met. This idea that a pursuit of improvement doesn’t result in an arrival at a state of cognitive improvement is worthy of further thought, for it recognises the worth of attempting development but not arriving at an intellectual end that can be acknowledged as such. In making this acknowledgement, I draw attention to the importance I place on the *action* of the practice attempt at making progress, even though in this instance, the inquiry end does not fulfil the criteria for progress. I strongly resist the idea that it may be dismissed, especially if the dismissal is associated with the instrumentalist criterion of *wasting time*. Where educative experience arrives at an impasse where improvement looks unlikely, I suggest that a feature of meaning making, perhaps less often acknowledged, is the identification that progress has stalled. It calls for space, for community members to be present with the discomfort and the insecurity that is likely to accompany such moments. The presence of discomfort is an aspect of developing educational experience which can easily be *rushed through*, often by a direction from the facilitator, out of anxiety or inexperience, to reflect on the reasons why this might be. In an education system that otherwise values the summative over the normative and assesses mainly the result, with occasional recognition of method, a practice that accepts that making progress is not a linear process, that it may explore ideas in ways that do not elicit progress, is a bright star in an otherwise clouded night sky. It asserts that striving and not arriving, or even striving and regressing is a worthwhile endeavour, provided that there is sufficient reflection on the shared relational practice

undertaken, alongside the cognitive experience. Ensuing discomfort, perhaps disappointment, sometimes anger or frustration may accompany this perceived lack of progress. Each emotional state present may assist in revealing some relevant feature, that can assist with the understanding of this apparent lack of progress. Development, in this example, may be more about associating emotional experience with aspects of learning that can lead to growth of the self in terms of self-understanding, in contrast with growth associated with arriving at an improved clarity of meaning.

In the Col development is sporadic and its relationship with *selves in transition* is complex. If progress is only associated with improved ends, then I do not see it as a suitable account for what I observe in developing Cols. By this I mean that inquiry is effortful. It requires attention at a level that needs gradually to be developed, before it can be sustained. To be perplexed and not to find a way forward is a worthy experience, although it can generate frustration. Perplexity stimulates the curiosity that ignites the next inquiry. I argue that to have inquired and not to have made intellectual progress, is part of the practice of philosophical inquiry that may be undervalued when only the *ends* are evaluated. If we view the inquiry as both means and ends, we can make sense of this apparent lack of progress by collectively reviewing our practice, thereby re-examining the moves we made and their outcomes. It is an inquiry into practice, an example of where meta-level analysis in inquiry is indicated (Gregory, 2014), the outcome of which is a greater clarity of process. Viewing progress on *practice* as integral to Col development, reveals what may be attempted in our future work together. I argue that this reflection on practice, even given no progress on question or concept, illuminates areas of practice development that are ends in themselves, because they open new inquiries. The implications for selves in transition will be explored in Chapter 7.

6.9 Ethical implications of edifying judgement and meliorism

Garside also considers that philosophical inquiry's meliorative quality may not be sufficient for the judgement to be edifying. An attempt at edifying judgement may fail, because it may not result in judgement that passes ethical scrutiny, even when the intention is present. The meliorism that influences Garside to describe judgement as edifying involves "a motivational force, almost a righteous indignation, that the world

can be improved whilst holding on to the contingency that acts as a bulwark to hubris” (Garside, 2013, p. 125). I associate this motivational force with Sharp’s description:

“Communal philosophical dialogue is a process designed to bring about a slow shift over time into a new way of being in the world, one characterized by awareness, curiosity, cooperation and patience, absorption in the wonder of what it is *to be* in this world” (Sharp, 2018b, p. 50).

While Garside sees the meliorative influence on edifying judgement as a *motivational force*, I suggest that this may be more readily recognised, by a student who has undergone the shift that Sharp describes, as an experience of *being absorbed in the wonder of what it is to be in the world* (Sharp, 2018b, p. 50). My point is that what Garside asserts as a force, may be acquired as a disposition, which is more accessible to persons who have become sensitised to the importance of such a phenomenon, and may be less *noticed* as a motivational force by persons without experience of Col practice. However it is acquired, once established, the motivational influence of edifying practice is experienced as an *imperative*, a compelling will to strive for the *better or truer*. Once this becomes evident through the language used, the values exposed, and the intentions proposed in the Col, a shift in focus from self, towards self-in-community becomes an observable phenomenon.

Garside develops Koopman’s reticence concerning ethics and transitionalism. He agrees that “the ethical life is better approached as taking part under conditions of contingency and uncertainty than under conditions of necessity and certainty” (Koopman, 2009, p. 155). So far, this fits with themes of pragmatism that he has previously discussed. What he asserts this proposal underlines, is the refusal of transitionalism to systemise ethics, in accordance with traditional associations with absolutes. In making this move, Garside opens the transitionalist re-construction of ethical life, to a meliorism that I have already discussed, as a motivating influence. I conceptualise this as a *move of emancipation*, away from the voice from nowhere. It embraces the relations between subject as situated within context, and subjects, as situated persons thinking-together, making ethical judgements that are contingent, and that are made with the acknowledgement of uncertainty, a characteristic that the tradition sought to eliminate. This emancipation, as freedom from the desire for

universals, should not be characterised as an endorsement of unfettered relativism, as I have heard argued before, because what it does is to enable examples occurring within similar contexts, to be compared for parity. This contrasts with those that do not offer any flexibility pertaining to contingency. For example, recent English laws now recognise coercive control, as a legitimate influence in crimes where previously it was not admissible. This gives rise to the recognition of previously unacknowledged contingency, which has had opened a previously tacit context of some (usually, but not exclusively) men's propensity to over-controlling their partners.

6.91 Experience and edifying judgement

My work aligns with both Koopman and Garside, in considering ethical life to be situated and contextual. This consideration is also congruent with Seigfried's use of Dewey's phrase "the indispensability of context for thinking", which she references to *The Quest for Certainty*, in his later works. Context resists the "negative effect of the epistemological eclipse of experience" (Seigfried, 1996, p. 144). Seigfried also questions the assertion that women and men view moral reasoning from sexed perspectives, citing Gilligan's "women emphasising care and men justice" (Seigfried, 1996, p. 202). Her question arises from the empirical nature of the assertion, which I understand in the context of Code's influential inquiry into empirical data use, as already described in chapter 5.4 (Code, 1991; Code, 1981). Seigfried cautions against generalising from specific observations, where coercion may be contextual (Seigfried, 1996). This complements Garside's concerns that judgement is *subject to* power structures. I extend this to the descriptions of women by men, using observational data collected by researchers unaware of their sexed bias, or from subjects who are subject to sexed dominance. It prompts questions about how children are socialised into sexed roles, and what can be done to expose these outdated socialisations.

6.10 Edifying judgement and transitionalism's truth

I consider the importance of Garside's concept of edifying judgement resting as it does on the idea of transitionalist truth as significant. In developing his idea of truth Koopman accepts James' reconceptualisation of "something happening to an idea", and which Garside explicates as deriving from the *latent* transitionalism that Koopman asserts over the early pragmatists (Garside, 2013, p. 119). If something *becomes* true,

there is an implication that transitionalist truth functions as a form of development, “as a species of improvement”, as Garside terms it. The idea of truth as improvement, resists the idea that truth can be constant or fixed, because if it were, it could not *become* anything else. This *becoming true* infers movement, towards something better justified; for it to conform to ideas of development, it must be a movement from a state that could be called *less true* to one that is *truer*. This aligns with pragmatism’s central theme of fallibilism: the understanding that change might alter what is conceived to be true now, when new information, theory or judgement criteria arise. Garside’s next move is the one that informs the rest of this thesis, and that is to put into words the following:

“Not only is the adverbial and processual aspect of truth emphasised 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” (Garside, 2013, p. 119).

I will begin with the idea that truth as improvement is both epistemic and axiological, which confronts the traditional idea that these are delineated realms with strong boundaries. Garside’s articulation of this porosity is bold. It is well supported in transitionalist theory, but it rejects millennia of philosophical history. It rests in the idea that human action is the situation of *truth as development*. Simply put, this theory rejects the attempt at objective rarefaction that traditional theory asserts. Instead, it acknowledges that the truth claim is asserted by a person, a subject, and that it is not possible to fully remove the subject from the truth claim. Truth, in this formulation arises as part of what it means to be human, an intrinsic and not an extrinsic phenomenon. This assertion makes way for his affirmation of Koopman’s idea of the processual aspect of truth that Garside describes “as a species of improvement” (Garside, 2013, p. 119). Hence truth cannot be an application to self, a way of making someone free, because it is not external to the self. It comes from *being* and therefore he can state that it is how *we can actively make ourselves free* (Garside, 2013, p. 119).

I see the *action* that Garside identifies as a development of Arendt's concept. Arendt traces action back to Aristotle's ideas of greatness as residing "only in the performance itself", with its relation to *energeia*, or "actuality", which "exhaust their full meaning in the performance itself" (Arendt, 1998). Viewed from a position of transitionalism, her statement equates with action having both temporal and historicist qualities. She elaborates that if the end in itself occurs during the performance, then the means is also the end (Arendt, 1998, p. 206). If I situate the performance as a philosophical dialogue in a Col, where the outcome is the arrival at a better justified end, then this would equate with action as both means and end, because the deliberation as practice is the temporal action and the arrival at the improved justification equates with the historicist *determinate contents*. In this example, I could then agree that the truer position has been arrived at by way of *being*, as long as being is a necessary condition for thinking. If I follow this to Garside's conclusion, then action in the Col can be contextualised as situated, because the thinking that informed the deliberation could not occur without being embodied. In this example his conclusion holds, that the freedom that arises from truth is not external to the self. I acknowledge that Arendt asserts that action occurs within the public realm, and she considers that education is not part of that realm. This is a line of inquiry that I will pursue elsewhere, because it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

6.11 Implications for Col practice

In this chapter, I have elaborated themes initiated by Garside's categories of subject, subjectivity and subjection. My elaborations have revealed greater clarity concerning the influence of power, be that political or cultural structures of power. I have also raised questions about local forms of classroom power between children or students within their establishing communities, and which may arise in Col practice that have previously occasioned less attention. I have made connections between edifying judgement and Code's responsibilist practice that have implications for the developing PPCol. Code highlights some assumptions, particularly those where assertions of sexed preference are made on grounds of empirical study, where I consider the evaluation method to have been circular and reinforcing of sexed norms. I have drawn attention to the importance of the relational practice realm in supporting

philosophical practice development, which I see as necessary in creating a space for the transitioning self to flourish through the shared thinking and meaning making of the Col. I extend Garside's concept of edifying judgement asserting that it is through repeated shared meaning making and thinking practice, as edifying practice, that we create space for edifying judgement to be an ideal of Col. I propose that there is a socialisation, specific to the Col, that makes space for subjects as selves, resulting in Sharp's educational transformation that opens the way to viewing Col practice as *a way of being* in contrast with *having* a set of possible tools for thinking. I then propose that once participants conceive of themselves as capable, thinking beings, they then become able to consider themselves subject to development, as transitioning selves. I have begun to elicit ideas of responsibility, attentiveness, self-regulation, authenticity, becoming aware of possible self-deceptions, and noticing structures of power that I will develop further in the next two chapters. Additionally, I have proposed that emancipatory experiences in the Col require educators to develop sensitivities, ways of noticing, and confidence to intervene in practice ways of being, in addition to the interventions more commonly associated with philosophical clarity if PPCol is to be well regulated.

Chapter 7: Self

In this chapter, I will explore some theories that compete with each other for primacy in elaborating conceptions of self. I acknowledge that self is a contestable concept and one which can be viewed as part of a complex of concepts pertaining to identity, character, personality, connections, relations and for some persons a sense of individuality. I will consider some possible accounts of self and selfhood, with the intention of clarifying how they may contribute to understanding the self as a developing concept, the transitioning self. I will propose an approach to the concept of self, capable of progress as being important in bringing together ideas that may extend transitionalist ideas of development to the PPCol and to the selves involved in that practice. From there, I will make connections between practice and persons that assists in conceiving of the self as a site of transition.

Self is disputed as a fiction by those who take a reductionist view, because for them only bodies are verifiable and therefore what matter. In this conception, experiences happen to bodies, and a person has a body that has the experience of thoughts. This idea signifies a concept of identity that makes no distinction between body and identity or distillations of the concept into any further specificity. Following this idea, if (like with the Ship of Theseus) we replace each part with another apparently identical part albeit new, then the person would remain the same. But Parfit asks, "Is it correct to call that person me?". His query raises questions about the inconsistencies that can be held around ideas of identity and personhood (Parfit, 2011). He concludes that what is more important is the question of what we care about, and whether a replica of a person identical to myself would have the same concerns, especially with regard to those I love. He warns about our conceptual worlds and reality being confused, leading to ambiguous assumptions and warns that we can become misled by these errors, especially when related to the word "I". These concerns are important, but reducing the idea of personhood to mere existence precludes an understanding of self in relation with others, a self that is relevant in the Col. When I assert that I understand something about what I am and how I act, verbalising a series of interactions between my thinking, my actions and inclinations in an internal monologue, I need a mechanism by which I claim this process as part of *how I am* as a

person. I cannot translate this into a bodily function like digesting food or menstruating, even though brain function contributes to the physiology of chemical and electrical brain activity, I cannot reduce my thinking to this alone. In asking myself how then I should approach the concept, I will begin by focusing on the self in the context of the transitionalist Col, with a further refinement of self as a feminist concept, because it is the potential for development of self, and the possibility of philosophical practice in the Col impacting on the self that guides this exploration.

7.1 Self and transitionalism

As I have already outlined, transitionalism is a re-conceptualising of experience and language as central pragmatist concepts. It can accommodate to the idea of flux, where the philosophical notions of concept, sense and action are all subject to development (Koopman & Garside, 2019). Within this framework, concept is associated with language, where sense maps more closely to experience, and action is what is undertaken in the *doing* of philosophy. As Koopman and Garside explain, action flows through time, it is not a constant but a phenomenon of change. Transitionalism prioritises a particular type of change; one which improves or develops what went before. They extend the transitionalist endeavour by identifying it as “a philosophy of conduct” and elaborate that “what matters *most* for pragmatism is neither experience nor language, but rather action” (Koopman & Garside, 2019, p. 736). This is a bold claim, that relates to Koopman’s intentions for transitionalism, stated in his introduction to Pragmatism as Transition:

“I seek to loosen pragmatism up so that it can do even more work and do that work better. I want to open pragmatism out to opportunities and potentialities yet underexplored” (Koopman, 2009).

What is relevant to the concept of self in the Col is the idea of development as purposive movement, the constant revisioning of educational experiences as a journeying through time. In transitionalist thinking experience is subject to *reflective appraisal*, including, but not restricted to self-correction (Sharp, and Peirce in Sharp, 2018b). If reflection on educational experience is part of this opening of pragmatism to as yet underexplored potentialities, then PPCol as a space for such appraisal of experience could be the site of such development, a development of the thinker as

self. For development to be accessible as a concept on which one can reflect, as a self, a translation of sensation and experience into language is necessary, and this is where I see the importance of conceptualising the self as one where the narrative is involved. I accept that not all experience can be represented in words, nor for that matter can all sensations. However, what including a narrative conceptualisation of self affords is a raising of conditions which previously remained tacit. These conditions can contribute to a sense of agency, via the means of making our selves more understandable, that prefaces Marya Schechtman's account of the narrative self (Schechtman, 2011). However, if Col is premised on relationality, then a narrative account alone will not offer a sufficiently nuanced conceptualisation of self, because it doesn't take account of the social interaction inherent in social-relational accounts. In Mead's model the self as "the "I", is an instance of individual reaction to the "generalized other", as part of the more comprehensive "Me", "and it is spontaneous in terms of it being entirely open and uncertain even to the person herself until it has taken place" (Kuhler & Jelinek, 2010). Mead's account resonates with Sharp's relational proposals, complemented by her reading of Levinas and Weil, and with which I am sympathetic (Sharp & Laverty, 2018). Importantly for this study, any account of the self in the feminist transitionalist Col must be seen through a feminist frame for it to be appropriately situated. With this in mind, I need to make space for the occurrence of experience that is not yet articulated in words, but which may be sensed and which may make a contribution to self as experience, another of the tacit *some things*, yet to be named. To this end, I will make some observations drawn from feminist theory, and others from narrative self theory, before relating these to PPCol.

7.2 Some feminist considerations of self

In support of my attempt at conceptualising self as a way of offering a situatedness for my thinking, I turn first to Lorraine Code as someone who can offer a ground for this assertion. She proposes that a viable self is:

"always embodied and situated — always gendered, raced, and otherwise multiply identified — and details of their specificity and positioning are germane to understanding how they are, as human selves/subjects, thrown together and thrown into a complex, rich, challenging, often intractable world, both human and other-than-human. Taking subjectivity into account is crucial

for making viable epistemological and moral-political theories and acting according to their principles” (Code, 2013, p. 717).

In comparison to the claims of early feminists, this is a long way from the unified, autonomous, self-sufficient, unambiguous characterisation that they proposed. However, as already stated, Wollstonecraft proposed an emulation of what she observed of male autonomy, as a claim for women to be accorded a similar status. Code attaches this early liberal conception to the “white affluent Anglo-American feminists”, who were the mainstay of the early second wave, and who in equating equality with sameness still emulated the existing characterisation of the independent unified self. This is in part because the concept of self had been so clearly claimed by prior definition, involving traditional structures of power (Thornham, 2001), that the idea of equality was similarly tainted. To claim equivalence was to assert that women’s experience was as important as that of men. However, at a time when women’s experience was considered a *subjective* experience only, in comparison to the claim of men’s experience that “it carries a tacit assumption that it is not just experience; it is *objective* experience, informed by theory” (Code, 1991, p. 245), then the sexed assumption prevailed. Overturning this assumption is an ongoing endeavour, especially when intellectual parity should not mean that women can only be considered competent if they comply with an assumption of objectivity as a superior qualifier, in comparison with subjectivity. Where educational theory is concerned, tacit implications of this hierarchy are most visible in the use of scientific empirical research methods imported with little reference to the difference between the non-living objects of science and the living subject in education (Biesta, 2010).

Code’s assertion that subjectivity is *essential* for the construction of credible epistemic, moral and political theory and the action that ensues from these, is an attempt at correcting this enduring assumption. She is contemporary enough to be able to reflect that the human ideal that was sought at the time was not yet defined by women, but rather conformed to a conventional definition:

“The liberal conception of the unified self — ideally self-sufficient, self-making, secure in its self-ownership and transparent to itself, striving for individual rational autonomy and defending its rights” (Code, 2013).

Her definition confronts this traditional distanced, controlled, de-personalised, autonomy with its focus on rationality, and introduces the subject explicitly as a recognition that self is a situated concept. She includes contexts such as gender and race, that have not previously been included, and that I read as a multiplicity of considerations, and where race could be more broadly expressed as origin, or heritage (Mohanty, 2003, pp. 190-217). In redefining self, Code explicitly names criteria such as situatedness and embodiment which were previously tacit and in doing so, opposes traditional norms. She makes it possible to nuance the concept of self, and opens it to development through situating it, in direct opposition to the idea of a consolidated, settled, and by implication static composition inherent in the more traditional definition. She is not alone in making these assertions, and her work on selfhood is referenced by Sharp on relationality, including ideas of friendship, that underpin Sharp's ideas of intelligent sympathy (Sharp, 2018f, pp. 236-237), and on the idea of judgement forming in the Col (Sharp, 2018b, p. 52). This recognition of the situatedness of the self makes space for ideas about the normative and meliorist implications of selfhood, ideas about *how I might be, in my being*, which are important considerations for Sharp's ideas of selves in the Col. Importantly, to view the concept of self as one with development potential requires that there is sufficient space and security for persons to work collaboratively in community, to try out ideas about *how to be*, and through doing so, practise what they think, and how they warrant their assertions, as a form of Deweyan rehearsal (Fesmire, 2003).

Code also includes a reference to Beauvoir's assertion that existence is relational and that it cannot be considered valid if led in isolation: an ongoing theme for Beauvoir (Code, 2013, p. 726). The inescapable feature of the social situation of human lives infers the requirement of the *other*, or *others*, for the appearance of the self. So Code's situated selves are never invulnerable to what is happening around them, because it is these influences "whose effects both benign and malign are constitutive of the scope and limits of 'self-realization', subjectivity, and agency" (Code, 2013, p. 728). The self is in relation with its context, and this is manifest in the social, political, ethical, environmental and cultural phenomena of the moment, the ways that these are conceived of by the self, and how they are presented by others. This temporal

relationality could appear to be overwhelming, if the community were experienced as antagonistic (Mouffe, 2013). If the educational environment is built on hostility and competition, then the mere idea of being authentic is too dangerous to contemplate. The risk of authentic expression is too high, and the possible negative outcomes of appearing to be vulnerable are too strong to contemplate. In contrast, if the community is built on agonistic principles that embrace the adversarial but reject the hostility or enmity, then *self* can be practised as a *way of being*, in relation to others. I am re-centring on the community aspect of the CoI, because when well-established, it should be a secure enough space within which the individual can experience self and can express herself with increasing levels of authenticity. It must be remembered that not all persons, child or adult will wish to express authenticity, based in prior experiences that are beyond the scope of this study, so the idea of authenticity as a part of CoI practice requires re-consideration as the community matures sufficiently to problematise it.

Code's reference to "white affluent Anglo-American feminists", is a stark reminder that Beauvoir has been criticised for being Anglo-centric and dismissive of working-class women and women of Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnicity (BAME). As a woman working against oppression, her lack of inclusion is a sad legacy of her colonialist context. It is an indication of her privilege, her limited experience and the period in which she worked, and I read Mohanty as a measured critic challenging this legacy:

"this scholarship inadvertently produces Western women as the only legitimate subjects of struggle, while Third World women are heard as fragmented, inarticulate voices in (and from) the dark" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 193).

Mohanty's critique addresses the vagueness of terms such as *difference*, which "seen as benign variation" fails to address the politics of power, or the added criteria of "conflict, struggle or threat of disruption". These conditions combine, in accordance with intersectionality, as structures of oppression that are experienced by women who are also BAME, and/or working class, disabled/differently abled, and/or living with the threat of violence, or other harmful power dynamics (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins, 2017; hooks, 2000). Whilst Beauvoir is celebrated for her contribution to feminist

scholarship by identifying woman as the second sex, initiating significant theoretical developments on equality between sexes, on which this thesis draws, her legacy also ignites indignation, rightly, about the prejudices that her work fails to acknowledge. I reiterate that I use a feminist frame as a tool of inclusion, with the intention of viewing of persons as persons of value, persons with the potential to grow and develop as individuals with increasing agency. Mohanty's work is significant in keeping the reciprocity of respect for *persons unlike me* in focus in the task of professionalising prejudice reduction, which I see as an aim of edifying practice.

A second wave feminist re-conceptualisation of the concept of self offers an introduction to ideas of *situatedness, embodiment, context, privilege, power and oppression* from the perspective of thinkers that drew on Beauvoir's ascription of woman as the Second Sex (Beauvoir de, 1949). It offers an insight into the history of masculine influence on the concept of self, which is relevant to how I wish to account for self in relation to education in the Col and more precisely, how the self is influenced by the experience of edifying practice. My theoretical concept of self becomes clearer through this inquiry, as being located within the feminist arena of situatedness, where the self is embodied and subject to context, susceptible to structures of power, and local hierarchies of authority, and where it is bound up with action and meaningful narrative. Meliorist openness to the possibility of improvement is included as a criterion of transitionalism and encourages me to think of the self as being revised as it is being experienced. I contextualise the Col as an educational space of collaborative edifying philosophical practice, guided by an ideal of edifying judgement. This adds a clarity to the concept as one that elicits a temporal sense of *how I am in the now* of engaging in the philosophical dialogue, which is then open for secondary reflection after the event. I am clearing the way to claim that to experience being a self in the philosophical Col is to experience self as a transitional phenomenon. I confront notions of stasis and push against ideas of educational labels which, as already discussed, are indications of more conventional static accounts.

In the following section I will assert a hopefulness that in confronting the historical sexed nature of selfhood, it is possible to conceptualise self as situated, as the site of action, influenced by language and experience and as a phenomenon of potential

development. I am not going to elaborate the Aristotelian assertion that “every living thing has a psyche, or soul, which is its vital principle”, as a way of accounting for its being alive, or Locke’s

“conscious thinking thing, whatever substance made up of (whether spiritual, or material, simple or compounded, it matter not), which is sensible, or conscious of pleasure and pain, capable of happiness or misery, and so is concerned for itself, as far as that consciousness extends” (Barresi & Martin, 2014).

Neither will I be engaging with Descartes’ mind: body duality, or ideas of the *pilot steering the ship*, because while they are important historical references, my thesis focuses on PPCol, which is based in pragmatism and which I have argued can be understood as a site of transitionalist pragmatism viewed within a feminist frame. With this in mind, William James’ search for an integrated theory of self, with its philosophical approach, accords with Mead’s, self as both a ‘me-self’, and an ‘I-self’. They assert that the *me* comprises that which can be known, which I associate with a more consistent, enduring idea of a sense of identity. The *I* correlates with the experience of *being*, which James asserts “is constantly changing” and where the *I* “as a persisting thing is relegated to fiction” (James, 1890, in Barresi & Martin, 2014). Mead’s theory although similar, proposes that this dual structure supports his claim of a dialogical self, where the *I* constantly challenges the *me*, in internal dialogue. I read here an overlap with Peirce’s idea of the habitual self, as the *me*, where the *I* correlates with his innovative self (Sharp, 2018b, p. 54). What I find useful from these early pragmatists is that they largely agree on a social relational quality of self. For them there is a quality of self that is subject to change, and there is a conceivable internal dialogue that support ideas of development as a possibility of self. What is most important is naming self or selfhood as a *sense of being*, which is experienced *in the moment*, by which I mean that an individual can become aware of how they are, as a *way of being now*, which is always *subject to revision*, and which I will call a transitioning self.

Thinking self

So, to recap, I propose that the Col is a secure enough space of the relational philosophical work of being together in community and thinking-together. When it is

well established, it is a space of *thinking action* that supports the participants in becoming aware of themselves as *thinking selves*, capable of developing in *relation with* each other. Throughout the thesis I have outlined some feminist reasons for refusing to dissociate thinking from *being a self*, and it is this unity of thinking, being, and sensing, while experiencing thinking-together, that I propose is likely to make selfhood an available experience for students in the Col. While it is difficult to identify all aspects of self, I assert that working within the Col offers participants a sufficiently secure space in which to develop a sense of awareness of *how one is in relation with others*, when thinking-together, and how transient this sense of self can be. The thinking work, thinking-together, making meaning, testing meaning, self-correcting, letting go of less well warranted arguments, searching for better reasons, becoming more open to other ideas, withholding immediate responses, looking for the intention of the other in what they propose, with a shared goal of progress contributes to recognising that a *sense of self is about being*, and the experience of being, with the emphasis on development is about making a relation between the experiences of thinking and being. To be a thinking self among other thinking selves influences how one *senses* one's idea of self, as a developing concept. Part of this undertaking is to do with seeing others as selves, developing selves as persons with thoughts, ideas, questions, reasons, proposals that represent how they see the world at this moment. This relation with other selves and their *being*, is a part of trying to better understand what they are saying, not only as an action of respect but also as an action of responsibility. Responsibility calls persons to be increasingly authentic in the way in which this thinking-together develops as edifying practice. One cannot separate this *way of being* from the philosophical engagement of arriving at a better justified, shared provisional judgement, because *the way of being* is the *how*, not only of how we are in relation with each other, but how we are when progressing our philosophical practice of judgement formation. To what extent this is a conscious awareness of self, or a tacit sensing of self will depend on many factors, including, but probably not restricted to the duration of regular engagement in the established Col, some indication of students' maturity of philosophical practice, a willingness to think about how one is with others, how they are with us, and why these observations are important. I suggest that without a sensitivity to edifying practice, for many, the sense

of being and the idea of thinking for oneself and with others, will remain experiential and may not become available for reflection. My point is that experience of this kind does not have to be translated into words to have worth. However, its worth can only be evaluated verbally if the experience can be sufficiently described so as to become a focus of further inquiry.

7.3 Narrative self

I argue that conceptualising self as a narrative self, within the social relational context, complements what I have already outlined as feminist and transitionalist influences. With a basis in hermeneutic theory, encompassing ideas about self as self-interpreting beings, this conceptualisation brings together “selfhood, narrative and agency”, which Schechtman argues in the following characterisation:

“To be agents we must be intelligible to ourselves and to others; our actions must be meaningful and significant in a way that cannot be captured in purely naturalistic terms, but this requires that we interpret our behaviors in the context of a narrative” (Schechtman, 2011, p. 395).

Schechtman proposes that MacIntyre’s work on intentions underlies this account. Intentions are narrative in their form, and when they are about leading a good, or better life. This theme is consistent in Col practice, and accords with transitionalist practice and edifying practice. For MacIntyre “The unity of a human life ... is the unity of a narrative quest” (MacIntyre, 1984; in Schechtman, 2011). Schechtman also claims an alignment here with Charles Taylor’s argument against reductionist views on the grounds of responsibility, where a reductionist life could be conceived of as having no moral connection with the good life. Taylor’s conceptualisation instead involves the idea that self and *the good* are inextricably entwined, which I most easily visualise as a double helix of concepts, requiring that the self be conceived of and expressed in narrative form. In the genetic double helix, proteins are synthesised to form bridges between the strands of DNA, making new connections. However, if I re-imagine the double helix as one of threads, twisted together to form strands, it is possible to envisage them as part of the weft of philosophical practice, held by the warp of the Col. The meliorist intentions become entwined with the philosophical practice that contribute to the strands of self, as strands of humanity, that I described in chapter 2.

The idea of bridges between *self*, *experience (not restricted to one's own experience)* and *the good* being constructed in dialogue with others, offers possibilities for these bridges to be informed by, strengthened, or reduced, by contexts beyond those personally experienced. In making this attempt at metaphor, my intention is to begin to view thinking-together as integral to the *shared endeavour* of the weaving. As the helix tightens, bridges become unnecessary, because individual threads are no longer separated, but lie in contact with each other like the threads of a strand of embroidery silk, forming the weft of the weave. There is a meliorist implication in this construction. A relationship between the self, agency and narrative form, that aligns with Sharp's ideas of the self in Col. Sharp draws on Murdoch, who introduces the idea of relationships with the world, to assist in the development of care (Sharp, 2018b, p. 52). This implies a meliorist intention, albeit tacit. One commonality to these connected concepts of narrative and agentic self is that they are situated concepts; there is no attempt at distancing the thinking and thinking-together from the philosophical narration, the way of being, or the selves as thinking selves.

However, what this concept of the narrative self assumes is that translation between the *beingness of being*, and language is possible. It assumes that a narrator can capture the ineffability of self and represent it in what is spoken. I cannot agree with this as an accepted phenomenon, for what acceptance does is to propose that what is sensed by an individual as being, can be adequately described in words. It presumes a sophistication of translation that eliminates hooks' *somethings*, that as yet have no name (Sharp & Gregory, 2018e, p. p145). It ignores the idea that there is as much being communicated in the way the words are spoken, or chosen, rejected or corrected, as there is meaning in the words. Heidegger expresses this in the following way:

“Language says what can be spoken, yet silently indicates what cannot be spoken, at the same time, or at least it does so if we have the ears to hear the unspoken silence, the whisper of the concealed” (Carter, 2001, p. 66).

He draws attention to that which cannot be adequately expressed in words. He is hinting at meaning that comes not from the words, but the ways in which they evoke responses, if an individual is attuned to a possibility of meaningfulness, in this wider

sense—sensitive to noticing it. I see connections between this sense of narrative meaning as incomplete, and Todd’s work on *the liminal* (Todd, 2014), where she attempts to include a heuristic quality of the pedagogical relationship, by using the term *liminality*. She elaborates her reading of Conroy, who proposes that “the liminal ‘operates’ in-between categories and spaces that sit ‘at the threshold of experience’”. Todd’s self, as a concept, has qualities that extend beyond the boundary created by language, where language can point to a quality in acknowledgement, “as a horizon of possibility”, available if willingness is present (Todd, 2014, pp. 234-235). Whereas Oyler extends Biesta’s idea of relationality to encompass self in the following:

“A socially *constituted* conception of self..... takes the relational notion further to suggest that there is no aspect of a self which is not itself relational in some material, cultural, linguistic, contextual way. The self is therefore made up of relations rather than in relationship to them” (Oyler, 2024).

In his recent revision of the 2024 paper, Oyler draws on Kathleen Wallace’s cumulative network model, which he describes as a:

“relationally constituted conception of the self that takes our embodied and embedded nature seriously without falling back on an essentialist conception” (Oyler, In peer review for 2026).

What Todd, Biesta, and Oyler all engage with are ideas of beyond the individual, either in the liminal space or in the relations that extend beyond the individual. They propose a space of connection. I view this space of potential connection as significant in PPCol, because it enables thinking-together.

Meaning and meaningfulness are strong concepts in Col, and narratives are involved in internal and communal conversations where meaning is established, questioned, or refined. If we talk about meaning, especially in the socially constructed context of Lipman and Sharp’s Col, then evaluation is one way of engaging with making things meaningful in dialogue with others. If I never have to justify the criteria that warrant my assertion of meaning, then how are these to become criteria for evaluation? However, it is not possible to critique or refine ideas without first being able to offer a narrative contextualisation or engage with one from another source. This evaluative practice, which is so important in the philosophical Col relies, in part, on the

development of more and more sophisticated stories. Stories that rely on children having a space to practise learning to make sense of themselves, their peers and the world around them. Arguably, the refinements that are verbalised in the child's early life, place them where spoken narratives, especially those with well referenced and well-reasoned forms, provide examples from which internal monologues can develop. Vygotsky's ideas of internalised speech are known and referenced by Lipman and Sharp in their development of the philosophy for children programme (Lipman, 2003; Gregory & Lavery, 2018), as are ideas from Wittgenstein about having something to say, being more important than acquiring mastery or skills (Lipman, 2003, p. 192). The significance of self in these theories is relevant, because a person needs a *sense of being someone*, in order to have something to say.

What is important to avoid however, is the argument of hypostasis, whereby "a property of primitive 'thisness' or self-identity is proposed for a concept which is phenomenologically important but metaphysically "less convincing". This is a common argument in support of an antirealist position, where the concept of self cannot "stand in existence', all by itself, even if all other entities were to disappear" (Metzinger, 2014). Self cannot be viewed in this isolated manner because it relies on connected concepts of person, individual, existence and reality for its conceptualisation. However, what I endorse is the idea that I am not able to imagine anything without *being* the imaginer. I can't think without being aware that there is an 'I' doing the thinking. Metzinger's caution is useful in cases where introspection elicits ideas of intuition which 'feel good' but are proven wrong. He problematises Nagel's argument of the existence of an objective self, as phenomenally flawed:

"The *View from Nowhere* is a phenomenal simulation, but one in which the phenomenal properties of selfhood and cognitive agency never disappear — it is only a thought experiment carried out by a cognitive agent, always accompanied by an intact phenomenal self comfortably seated in the proverbial armchair" (Metzinger, 2014).

I include Metzinger's argument because, as he states, there is "no empirical evidence and no truly convincing conceptual argument that supports the actual existence of 'a' self", and he cautions against the possibility of resulting ideological projections (Metzinger, 2014, p. 294). However, as a concept, if self is used broadly to try to

capture ideas about the *how one is* as a person, including the constant shifting that this involves, it enables inquiry into ideas of *being and becoming*, and relations between thinking, being and becoming. Importantly, in this thesis, I wish to explore conceiving of this phenomenon as one that is open to revision, self-correction and meliorist development, especially as a result of the educational experience of working through time, in a well-established philosophical Col. I use the concept of self as a way of offering a *situatedness for my thinking*, especially the thinking that allows for me to conceive of a *sense of being and becoming* as an 'I', which is not static, but responds to the shared thinking work undertaken in the Col. In this conception, self is temporal and developing, relational and influenced by meliorist intention.

7.31 The dialogical self

I conceive of dialogical self theory (DST) as an elaboration of the narrative self. Todd (2014), and Oyler (In peer review for 2026), both build their theories around the relationality of the self and implications of liminality. Hermans' recent precis of his theory cogently summarises the idea of the multiple I-positions functioning as a micro-society, a sub group of the wider concept of society:

"the dialogical self can be formulated as a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions with the possibility of conducting dialogues among I-positions within the self and with the I-positions of other people" (Hermans, 2025; Hermans, 2001).

He calls it a generative theory. It unites two usually separate concepts, self and dialogue. His intention is to create a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between the internal and external realms as an inter-relation, contributing to society. Kennedy argues that:

"the developmental model implicit in DST is predicated on the assumption that polyphonic dialogue leads to dialectical advance – that "individuation", or "self-actualisation", or "self-realization" is a result of an ongoing conversation between the multiple, expressive aspects of the self embodied by its I-positions, both internal and external, as they emerge and enter, at least potentially, into dialogue" (Kennedy, 2025).

This construction aligns with Sharp's proposal that philosophical dialogue has the potential for becoming transformative education. It resonates with Dewey's ideas

about the authenticity of democracy as a social concept. However, Kennedy claims that *dialectic* is implied in DST, pointing towards the idea of *not yet*, that he terms a *novum*, “an evolutionary vision of a potential state of a balanced self-structure with mutually enabling parts”. This *novum*, is embodied and also contextualised in the world outside the individual, representing an ideal that is both personal and public. I understand Kennedy’s development of DST as a bridging between the narrative self and a self for whom the narrative comprises both internal and external dialogue. These dialogues are situated in the world and occur between the I-positions of the self and the I-positions of the other liminally. Most importantly for Kennedy, “it is in continual reconstruction” (Kennedy, 2025, pp. 568-9). If I consider this dialogical self in the context of transitionalism, it reinforces the idea of the developing self, one that is transitioning as it encounters the other in dialogue. For Kennedy, this is enhanced by the encounter with other I-positions both internal and arising from outside. In making this claim, he is acknowledging the inter-relations between developing internal I-positions, that could be called transitions, within the dialogic interaction.

I am interested in the idea that self is in a space of internal negotiation. Kennedy positions the self as *field*, in a similar way to Griffiths’ web, where she presents self as *the web*, and not something within it. Kennedy is clear that whilst some aspects of the dialogic self are unconscious, this does not mean that there is a lack of awareness of them, merely that the focus is not localised. This awareness corresponds with hooks’ *some things*, that are, as yet, unnamed. He raises the idea of “interpersonal permeability”, in relation to Hermans’ idea that some energy forms have the capacity to radiate. Both the field and the radiation metaphors offer a porosity of boundary that I refer to in relation to the implications of a feminist integrated self, in chapter 7.43. In the context of PPCol, especially in communities comprising children and young adults, DST captures the idea of the transitioning self. However, when children are fully focused on their thinking work of clarifying, responding, revising and reconstructing meaning, awareness of self as a developing phenomenon is likely to be peripheral. Nonetheless, the implications for self as a dialogic phenomenon of transition contribute to the argument that PPCol has outcomes that are greater than the philosophical. That these outcomes are not visible to an external observer does

not mean that they are unimportant, merely that we need different evaluation methodologies in order to elaborate them.

7.4 Embodiedness and embeddedness of the feminist, transitionalist self

I wish to dwell with the ideas of an embodied self, embedded within a relational social context, as significant features of a feminist narrative self. This self is open to development because a concept of narration requires a narrator. What is so different, remarkable and authentic in feminist work on self is that the narration is done by the individual. In making this claim of first-person narrative, the 'I' that narrates *is* the 'I' that is integral to the narrator. There is no attempt at distancing the what is said, from the who it is that said it. Unlike Metzinger's thought experiment, where the *cognitive agent* with its *phenomenal self* is positioned as if it is an observer, with the inference that there exists an objective possibility of stepping outside oneself, (Metzinger, 2014), the feminist self is openly, unashamedly situated. It acknowledges her embodied status and the subjectivity that this includes. A feminist makes no attempt at distancing herself in her narrative, because it is an unnecessary action to undertake. Instead, she acknowledges her influences and makes them explicit, as much as is possible (accepting that personal biases, that are as yet unknown to the individual, will be present). Her acknowledgement of her cultural and contextual embeddedness will include a positioning of her work within the context of competing alternatives as an endeavour of authenticity. As MacIntyre states, "To be a subject of a narrative...is to be accountable for the actions and experiences which compose a narratable life". He cautions that no person can ever be more than a co-narrator, because of the traditions, cultures and contexts of our experience (Schechtman, 2011, pp. 404-405). This overt recognition of context is again significant, because it reveals what is tacit in the view from nowhere, which is that no action happens within a vacuum.

What this overt statement of context offers is an accountability that rests with the subject. As a feminist embodied, situated self, she is accepting responsibility for offering the best account that she can *at that moment*. A companion concept to responsibility is authenticity which Griffiths asserts "is to be understood in relation to agency and becoming" (Griffiths, 1995, p. 179). In offering this statement, Griffiths

situates authenticity as a temporal concept, subject to development as the individual develops. For an alliance between responsibility and authenticity to endure, each must be responsive to context, and as such, subject to critiques of inconsistency. Griffiths acknowledges this struggle, as an “exercise of a politics of the self” (Griffiths, 1995, p. 185), and I view it as open to critique from those who hold a static conceptualisation of the knower. Under these conditions, I can be accused of changing my mind regarding a statement that I held to be true, but for which I now support a better argument. I understand this from within a transitionalist, fallibilist paradigm and accept this as a better provisional position, a development that is based in a new consideration of a context, of which I was previously unaware. My critic’s accusation of inconsistency arises from within a more traditional paradigm, where knowledge and truth are absolute and unchanging, and where inconsistency is epistemically unacceptable. I propose that this inconsistency of paradigm results in what Fricker would assert is an experience of being a less worthy knower, where my testimony carries a “symbolic weight to the effect that the speaker is less than a full epistemic subject” (Fricker, 2007, pp. 142-146).

If I relate these concepts of embodiment and embeddedness to the work undertaken in the philosophical Col, their relevance to development is clear. Embodied subjects are not only thinking beings; they also have emotions and values and a sense of an ‘I’, a self, at least in the momentariness of thinking together. The embodied subject has both a cultural and traditional context within which they are situated or embedded. The Col, as a space for philosophical thinking and dialogue also has a context that embraces a set of conditions devised to support agonistic dialogue, boundaried by caring thinking and care for the other, such that participants are intended to feel secure enough to share their ideas. Development in the form of self-correction is a traditionally accepted philosophical end for a Col, where it is applied to the refinement and elaboration of the conceptual account, or where the philosophical question under consideration is more fully inquired into. However, as I have also indicated, a failure to achieve this end can also be a form of development, if the Col achieves *practice* improvements such as a greater understanding or appreciation of, or compassion towards others and their proposals, as selves in the Col. Building a

collaborative will to aspire to meliorist practice, comprising an improvement in reflection on thinking and thinking-together, can lead to an improvement in practice evaluation. Revising or becoming clearer about areas for future improvement becomes the product of the community, and not the educator. The community action of reflecting on practice as a means to development also elicits implications of responsibility, resilience, appreciation and compassion. I shall explore these as potential development criteria, along with the assertion that collaborative evaluative reflection is an indication of care which sets philosophical practice in the Col apart from other interventions. It values selves as subject to development as well as judgement. I will extend these themes in chapter 8.

7.41 The developing self

The self, characterised as gaining an experience of *how I am*, and of the *how I am becoming*, becomes apparent over time. It is an experience of the ontological realm of Col. Having a sense of self informs the intellectual, and relational actions I perform, and the thinking, valuing and feeling that informs these actions. In addition to the experience of being, and the sensing of being in relation with others, working philosophically together to make shared progress in the Col, for self to be a concept that has meaning, there has to be some self-reflection, some *noticing* of how I am altering, as part of the engagement with the shared philosophical problem. This account directly challenges notions of being grown-up, or mature, because these terms imply a stasis that contrasts with growth, (Biesta, 2020). Noticing, needs also to be directed towards the engagement with others and their ideas, challenges, proposals, examples and arguments and how they are in relation with what I offer as my contribution. It is likely that these will be momentary insights, which are not the main focus of the inquiry, so they do not claim attention so strongly at the time. I propose that these insights can be available to individuals as experiences for further consideration, and that they are also available to others as insights into the *how we are*, which possibly are most often noticed when there is a shift in *how we are* from *how we were*, as a temporal quality of the ontological realm. Sharp and Laverty associate this with “being receptive to the radical alterity and uniqueness of others”, which they reference to Todd’s development of Levinas’ idea about attentiveness to

the other. Attentiveness builds an ethical dimension into the relationship with the other. It requires that responsibility is held for treating others “with compassion, humility and reverence” (Sharp & Laverty, 2018, p. 124).

7.42 Relations, sensitivity, noticing, being attentive

Relational aspects of practice encourage individuals to care for others, and to learn to exhibit that care. This relational practice requires the facilitator to be sensitive to the selves in the community and relationships amongst those selves and the vulnerabilities of those selves in the moment. If sufficient educator sensitivity is present, and is made explicit verbally or through facial expressions, gestures of inclusion and spoken interventions that direct the community’s attention to their capacity for care, or through what I term *holding the space*, then growth in caring, compassionate concern for others becomes a possibility for those in the Col for whom this is not a familiar experience. This sort of care, for the vulnerability of the other when working at the very edge of what they can attempt, and working in relation with others, so closely that the thinking work is an example of thinking-together, is part of what sets philosophical practice in the Col apart from philosophical questioning and reason giving as a traditional, academic pursuit. I suggest that experiencing this care within the Col, as well as being liberating, contributes to the sense of agency that the individual has over how s/he is, and is thinking, and thinking with others. It affects how s/he is *being*, in the moment and how this is developing, or *becoming*. Without the educational experience of *being held* during experiences of dissonance, or the experience of being cared for in the Col, some children, students or adult community members may not acquire a sense of agency over conceptualising their selfhood, because it is not, or has not been experienced elsewhere, in other contexts. This is not suggesting that this is the experience for all members of any Col, but rather that it is a potential for experiencing a sense of self in relation with others, which I associate with the transformative claim that Sharp makes about P4C in the Col (Sharp, 2018b).

7.43 Implications for feminist, transitionalist integrated self in the Col

Experience of *being a self*, is one of integration. There are intellectual, relational, emotional, psychological, social, valuational phenomena involved. What is often tacit, are the inevitable power-relations and the conditions these may initiate; the wanting,

or not wanting to belong, the sense of pressure to conform, or to resist conforming, the feelings or sensations arising from these conditions and that influence the experience of being a self. As already noted, experience is not fully translatable into words, perhaps partly because of the inter-relations between these categories, something I have described previously as a porosity. A strong theme of feminist theory is the acknowledgement that these divisions are not as definite as conventions may have suggested. The actions that arise in response to these experiences help to inform the individual's sense of their development. To be present in relation with others with a shared goal (philosophical progress), a responsibility to care for the other, in addition to caring for the self and for one's being attentive, prompts the individual to become aware of the relational dimension of being. This evokes ideas of being compassionate at the same time as working towards being open-minded, which Sharp includes in her framing of selves in dialogue as developing selves; and this is where her theory of self-development appears to be reflexive in its relational construction. She asserts that through dialogue, especially with others who think differently from us, we risk making ourselves vulnerable by disclosing what we truly think, with a courageous willingness to try to "understand the world, myself and others" (Sharp, 2018b). Part of being vulnerable is that the ethical responsibility for the care of the self becomes shared with others, as a responsibility for not enacting harm, which Levinas proposes as a "call for me to take responsibility" for the vulnerable other (Sharp & Laverty, 2018, p. 124). To interact responsibly towards the other, or others, requires a care for others that recognises them as selves in relation to one's self. This has implications for all persons involved. All participants are potentially gifting and in receipt of benefits which build understanding of the other and the self through this responsibility. All participants enter into the relation of potential risk, because failure of any part of this complex relational dynamic has implications for all. If I risk my vulnerability and am not held by the other as community, I experience humiliation, perhaps a sense of rejection, or lack of support amongst a plethora of other potential emotional experiences. Conversely, if I cannot recognise the need for me to enact responsibility towards an other, I display my current inability to be compassionate, which may evoke a sense of shame. If compassion is not yet an available response for an individual, this experience will remain unnoticed.

That a person has yet to acquire a sensitivity to compassion does not preclude them from acquiring it over time. Indeed, it may be necessary for a student to experience this sort of compassionate community support, as part of a journey towards recognising it sufficiently to become involved in developing a personal sense of compassion. This may be an example of growth for an individual in the Col, in their involvement in, and experience of, a previously unknown *way of being*. I see strong resonances between this characterisation of experiencing a developing way of being in the Col, and Sharp's *learned, social and relational construct*, where both acknowledge the persistence of social interactions as influencing the construction of, or recognition of self. Sharp draws on Peirce proposing that it is the imposition of consciously controlled habits, that affect the way in which the self self-corrects (Sharp, 2018b). The idea that self-correction is dependent on habits being under conscious control, suggests that they are available for scrutiny. However, Sharp is referring to very specific habits, which Peirce conceives of as "a conscious awareness of habit formation", where an evolutionary change would not involve awareness. Marcel Danesi concludes his review of habits by stating that there is agreement that habit formation of the type described by Peirce is important, but that the formation of habits involves "agency, imagination and semiosis" (Danesi, 2018). This concept of habit must not be confused with the habits which are behaviours, acquired through routine repetition of tasks that require a regular, repeatable response. These regular habits are associated with behaviourist approaches to psychological theories (Verplanken, 2018). I have alluded to Peirce's semiotic theory in an earlier chapter without going into detail, and refrain from doing so here too, because it is concepts of agency and imagination that are of greater significance to Sharp's development of self-correction. She views self-correction as influenced by a person's ability to empathise with the *world of the other*, which she also attributes to Peirce (Sharp, 2018b). By involving the idea of empathising, she infers the action of imagination. I view the idea of agency, as one related to the conscious engagement with self-correction, which in its individual context is a reflexive form of understanding, potentially informing future action. This can be an indication of development. My cautionary tone is intentional. I wish to remind myself and my reader that in this section of my thesis, I am considering phenomena that are possible, and ideals of practice, but which are not experienced by

all persons, although they are sufficiently regularly mentioned anecdotally to be important practice considerations.

7.5 An integrated approach to the concept of self

I began by offering a transitionalist account of the self, because of what I see as the vital quality of development, which I assert is not restricted to the products of thinking, but embraces *thinking as action* of the self. I then considered the self as a feminist concept, in order to situate the self as embodied and embedded and relational with reference to context, tradition, culture and experience which all influence, but do not, or rather should not, define the subject as a self. Self as a feminist concept asserts women's agency over accounting for herself. The narrative self has a place in my account because of the need for the individual to make the concept of *self* meaningful to themselves and others. It enables verbalisation of a sense of *how I am*, as subject to development, or transitioning. I have rejected realist proposals, those that are based in a superseded tradition, and those that propose a Western no-self option (Metzinger, 2014). While they may be interesting, they are inappropriate in the feminist transitionalist Col, because they do not recognise being situated selves, capable of development, or generative of agency. Whereas, my integrated conceptualisation embraces agency as the potential for action, which I associate with the idea of power in all three of Allen's categories: the power to conceive of alternatives, which is an example of an agentic *power*, the support that the Col offers as a place of solidarity, which exemplifies *power with* others, and the recognition that societal structures of power are what attempt to constrain us, as examples of the *power over* the individual, arising from outside conditions (Allen, 1999a; Allen, 1999b). Framing self as capable of development is endorsed by Griffiths' idea of *becoming*; a form of progression of the self that remembers the importance of the past, in relation to the now. She emphasises the influence of the transitory theme of movement and flow, which in its language discourages conceptualising that infers a static or fixed phenomenon:

"In sum, the self may be experienced as feeling, acting and being, authentically, in the here and now. But there is no such 'here and now' for a self that is not the result of what has happened in the past – and what is

expected in the future. It may be that we may act authentically in the present, but, if so, that authentic, spontaneous, immediacy is in fact firmly rooted in time, especially in past social interactions” (Griffiths, 1995, p. 176).

Being in the here and now, with its reliance in what has been, and its relevance to what may occur in the future, is consistent with *being as moving through time*, which also coheres with a transitionalist reading of temporality and historicity (Koopman, 2009).

“Just as webs are made in context, an ever-changing context to which the new web contributes, so selves are always in a process of becoming” (Griffiths, 1995, p. 178).

Griffiths elaborates that whilst the web has a weaver, and the creation of the web is an expression of the weaver’s wishes, she works from a pattern and is therefore afforded creativity within its constraints. In relating this to the self, she asserts that whilst the self is developing and becoming, it does so within the constraints of “a particular time and place” (1995, p. 179). This speaks to me as an alignment between Griffiths’ *becoming* and the consequence of a transitionalist reconstruction for the self, in that once the improvement, the truer or better, is enacted, this resulting philosophical development supports intellectual, social, emotional and values-based transition, which in combination contribute to being a transitioning self. Griffiths’ web-weaver can exert her creativity within the constraints of the pattern, which she identifies as those of time and space and I would add that the social context, traditions and cultures should also be represented in this pattern. Where I differ from Griffiths is in asserting the possibility that the experienced weaver-collaborative may disregard the pattern, with the intention of freeing themselves from those constraints of context that they might be able to transcend. This proposes that it is possible to rise above some constraints; I am thinking in particular about the stereotypical expectations for adherence to sexed or class-based restraints and those based in hierarches of heritage, which are shadows from past structurally or culturally embedded social norms that once explicit should be eradicated.

7.6 Self and education

I outlined some preliminary feminist ground in chapter one which offers context to my framing of Col practice, most obviously as a practice in need of a contemporary view which offers greater equality of importance to Biesta's purposes of education: qualification, socialisation and subjectification (Biesta, 2010). My observations of education in England over the past 20 years has led me to conclude that schooling is primarily concerned with qualification, with a strong emphasis on examination results as the most important outcome of the system. The socialisation and subjectification purposes may be a priority for educators within schools, and schools often indicate their worth through ethos statements, but evaluation of these purposes involves methods that do not yield strong statistical data, and methodologies that rely on testimonies are qualitative in type, and not traditionally considered as rigorous as those that produce quantitative results (Coe, 2017). I assert that this binary of approach is another legacy of importing a scientific empirical methodology into education, where the contexts are incomparable, but assumed to be comparable. Richard Pring, a proponent of recognising children as persons, is well known for retelling an anecdote from Larry Cuban, about the 'blueberry ice-cream maker' who stated that if he ran his business like the school in question was run, he would soon be out of business. To which the teacher replied, "That's right we can never send back our blueberries. We take them rich, poor, gifted, exceptional, abused, frightened we take them all. Every one. And that is why it is not a business. It is a school" (Cuban, 2005, p. 3). Pring's argument centres on the way that a narrow instrumental evaluation of education diminishes the personhood of children, reducing children to *producers of grades* instead of seeing them as persons, and which creates a hierarchy of importance which he refutes.

"To see someone as a person is to see them as a moral agent; responsible at least to some extent for their actions" (Pring, 2012, p. 752). Pring uses the language of 'nurture', with regard to learning about the self and others, which I see as an underrated aspect of caring practice: essential if we are to support children in the "appreciation of their points of view and the capacity to relate to others" (Pring, 2012). What Pring identifies is the importance of the whole, unified endeavour of

education, in contrast with measuring one part only, prioritising that to the detriment of children as persons. His consideration of *self as moral agent* aligns with the idea of the *narrative self* as agentic, and his inclusion of appreciation of others and their relational contexts offers support for a concept of compassionate self, as a holistic entity. He stresses the importance of the social needs of children experiencing what it might be like to become increasingly responsible for one's actions as persons, from which I infer an integrity of purposes, which together comprise a balanced approach to educational purposes.

This holistic endorsement of educational purposes enables me better to situate an integrated concept of self in the educational context. It makes space for the persons as individual selves and their relationships with each other to be considered more equitably with standard educational ends that are more commonly attributed prominence as educational outcomes. However, the relationship of philosophy and education that has provided a foundation for Col as a space of philosophical practice also needs clarification. I begin with Kohan and Kennedy's investigation of Biesta's stance of being an educationalist, outside of philosophy and philosophy for children (Kohan & Kennedy, 2017). Their rebuttal questions what is meant by philosophy if it is more like "a way of living" than an epistemic form, and proposes that true philosophy, as proposed by Lipman, is educational, and that true education is philosophical (Lipman, 1988). The important point they are making is that when we conceive of philosophy as something outside education, something is lost. The relation between the educative practice of philosophising, as "self-corrective thinking", and as "thinking inquiring into itself for the purpose of transforming itself into better thinking" (Lipman, 1988, p. 41), would be disrupted and philosophy as practice might be reduced to better thinking, or better questioning, which without being situated in the Col, may be indicative of learnification. My response to this is that Lipman and Sharp are philosophical educators, whose practice is integrated so thoroughly that these educational and philosophical threads cannot be separated from the weave. Whereas for Biesta, instrumental education as described by learnification is like a superficial decorative patch, appliquéd over the educational fabric, but not integral to the weave. Viewed in this way, Biesta's attempt at distancing himself from philosophical education

is less a critique of philosophical education and more of an attempt at disentangling education from philosophy, which whilst it aligns with his concept of learnification, adds little to clarifying his educational purposes. What it does however reveal is his concern with the moralising potential of the term *better* with regard to education.

Biesta's examination of the place of the term *better thinking*, within the context of a moral assertion and with potential to be moralising does not equate with third wave pragmatist ideas of truth as the *truer or better* (Koopman, 2009; Garside, 2013). What Biesta offers is an instrumentalist argument against P4C and as such he approaches it from an educational position that is not congruent with its pragmatist intentions. My claim is that this argument is resolved through approaching Col from Koopman's transitionalist perspective. When I apply a transitionalist conceptualisation of truth as provisional, open to revision and melioristically applied, the hopefulness implied by a wider inclusion of the world and those in it, is contrary to a narrow view of moralising. It raises important questions about how the philosophical Col can be misunderstood, especially if it is not contextualised within its pragmatist context. It also provokes a requirement for Col literature to voice better the transitionalist implications of philosophical practice in the Col especially with regard to meliorism. If Biesta can argue that P4C is an instrumental form of education, then others may also follow his lead, perhaps without the diligence necessary to elicit these transitionalist details. I read the responses to Biesta as well warranted from within the Col academic community, which elicit nuances of interpretation worthy of consideration. I also see these as provoking worthwhile questions about potential claims of learnification but separate from Biesta's model of educational purposes.

Biesta's educational model is also questioned for its "deeply entangled" purposes, which can appear on superficial reading to be distinct (Coelho, et al., 2025). Dalila Coelho and colleagues approach each purpose with the aim of exploring the relations between the categories and their interpretations, as well as the intersections between categories, which they develop as a set of domains and sub-domains, with the intention of using them for empirical verification in future studies. Whereas Maria Papastephanou takes issue with his ideas of *going beyond learning*, and the characterisation of learnification, using a Foucauldian approach to ideas of

emancipation and learning. This is complicated by “the axiomatic glorification of transgression”, which she views as producing political outcomes. I read her as intending to put distance between learning, a term that Biesta eschews, and its association with learnification. She aims to remind her reader that learning is not only learnification and that as such, learning has a place in the educational discourse, without always being tainted by association. I include these minor digressions as false paths, because I wish to situate Biesta’s purposes of education within a context that is not wholly accepting of his proposals. Coelho’s complexification I read as a genuine attempt at representing what lies behind categorisation, raising ideas about the overlapping nature of the purposes, which I find valuable. Papastephanou’s critique is more concerned with reclaiming the idea of learning beyond learnification and questioning the idea of *doing things differently*, as the key to change, which must be understood in the context of knowing why the change is required (Papastephanou, 2020).

As already argued, Biesta’s purposes of education offer the distinctions I require between what we learn—the subject matter, how we contextualise this learning—the implications of socialisation in its broad sense, and what effect the educational experience has on those involved—the subjects, in a manner which names the latter two as important, where in traditional conventions, the acquisition of knowledge is the primary concern. It elevates the experience and context of education with its implications for persons, where convention has placed them as auxiliary benefits. What sets feminist theory apart from the traditional philosophical canon is that women’s experience and perspectives are identified by women, originating with the testimony of women, in contrast with traditional ascriptions constructed by men and based in their observation of the sexed norms of the time. Biesta’s framework is enabling in this endeavour, because it names what can be considered as *soft* purposes that are often equated with feminine interests, as equivalent to the tangible, testable hard purpose that can easily be empirically tested. This aids the inclusion of these less verifiable purposes of education in the discourse and elicits their scrutiny in ways that were not possible when they were tacit. He names what are important societal and individual purposes of education and claims that they have value. In making this

move, he uses his scholarship as the opening of a door, to those who wish to elaborate these purposes. I experience this move as emancipatory, a welcoming gesture.

I include this brief review of Biesta's educational purposes as a preface for my focus on self, and the experience of self, within the educational and philosophical context of Col practice. I will be elaborating ideas about what it is to be, and to see oneself as being a self, with particular focus on working philosophically within a Col. I am not suggesting that self or selfhood are concepts that are exclusively experienced in Col, or that all children or young people involved in philosophical practice in the Col will engage with ideas of self, how they are as selves, and how they become aware of being, in relation with others. My proposal is that the *awareness of self*, especially the idea of its potential for development, has implications for individuals and cohorts that work together in the Col. Some of these ideas that arise from a feminist transitionalist interpretation of practice, are applicable to persons as selves working together in philosophical inquiry. The community provides the space and support for persons to become aware of themselves as selves, to acquire a *sense of self*, which is strongly associated with a *way of being*, and which is always available for development. I use the terms person, subject and individual interchangeably, with the idea that they provide a personal context for self. I assert that the self is relationally constructed and embodied in the subject. Self is informed by individual and shared thinking work, and a gradual awareness of self can make it available for scrutiny. This account of self is situated as such within the broader category of person, which encompasses added characteristics more commonly associated with embodied identity, or character amongst others. I build my arguments for a transitioning self from my feminist theory originating from Code, Griffiths and Sharp as an intersection between their work and Koopman's transitionalist pragmatism as related by Garside to philosophical inquiry, and more specifically edifying judgement formation in the Col.

7.7 Transitioning self, Col and meaning making

I understand Code's idea of social epistemology to set itself apart from the orthodoxy by asserting that "It marks a radical shift in practices of understanding and evaluating knowledge as integral to, and constitutive of ways of being in the world" (Code, 2020, p. xix; Sharp, 2018b, p. 57). The assertion that epistemic work is situated has already

been considered, but the idea that *being in the world* is an articulation of the *thinking self*, and that understanding, which I will equate here with meaning-making, is *constitutive of ways of being*, is of particular importance to my thesis. If a way of being is indicative of the *how I am*, then it will *exhibit* the self in relation to the other(s) both to the self as an individual and to the others. I agree with Sharp that individuals experience *how they are* through being a self among other selves (Sharp, 2018b). If this experience of self in relation with others is noticed and emphasised as an experience of interest, it can become available as a focus for subsequent reflection. In the Col facilitated by an educator whose practice embraces self-development as part of philosophical practice, this focus is likely to be emphasised. Sharp's early experience working with the Hampshire Country School in Ringe, New Hampshire, USA, attuned her as an educator to the reciprocity of recognition needed for young persons already rejected by society to begin to thrive (Gregory & Lavery, 2018, pp. 18-25). I read this as an endorsement of a way of being which is accepting of others, especially those who have experienced rejection or are sensitised to rejection for other reasons. She was immersed in living with the children on whom society had given up, eventually becoming a houseparent to a group of them. Her experience of trying to offer these students challenges that engaged their interest, made them feel worthwhile, gave them a sense of being, laid foundations for her to develop ideas around community and caring thinking. What it also did was to establish a theory for her that *being taken seriously* as a young person is an important part of development. I understand this as part of what Elvis describes as attentive listening (Elvis, 2023), and which I suggest is extended by Sharp's practice of *valuing the person* both for what s/he is trying to convey and for making the effort to try to convey it, and Gardner's caution that this does not make everything that is said worth hearing (Gardner, 1996). The recognition of authentic intention, as a way of being in the world, is a less documented, but significant part of Col practice. It is a criterion for selfhood that may be overlooked as a social detail in a traditional attempt at trying to understand the philosophical progress made in the Col. I consider this aspect of tradition to involve an over-emphasis on the *logic and reason* paradigm of Col evaluation. It prioritises traditional philosophical ends over means and relegates practice to a lower status. It relegates the important experience of *being a thinking self*, to a social realm, which can then be

ignored philosophically. My claim is that if one experiences what it is to be a thinking self, and if there is time to reflect on the experience, this will complement the more traditional ends of Col. It makes *practice* into a concept for philosophical inquiry, widening the philosophical project and valuing the persons engaging in it.

To recap here, I focus on Splitter and Sharp's descriptions of meaning making as "making sense of things that matter" and locating "that item in a framework which is connected to something in our own experience, something which already makes sense to us". If I fail to connect the phenomenon with something already meaningful, I omit the context that verifies the claims. If I isolate the thinking moves from the practice of Col, or silence practice, to make moves more easily available for educators to notice, my account becomes simplistic. Splitter and Sharp must be read in context of Col practice, where they identify *concerns*, that adults have about children and that children have about life: concerns about curiosity, a sense of wonderment, the yearning to understand which are all itemised as areas of concern, because these tend to diminish with exposure to schooling (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 65). What they also discuss is the worth of experience as *discovery* and propose that "activities unconnected to experience are meaningless". What is not elaborated in that chapter are the *ways of being* that support this connected construction of understanding: being seen, valuing persons, making space for authentic expression of views, and importantly, caring thinking. I suggest that these are assumed, if read in the context of the whole, but which are, in this chapter, largely tacit. They do discuss the distinction between having unfounded opinions and developing points of view (involving the development of judgement), learning to care enough to develop points of view, (an element of caring thinking), developing cooperation and weaving the cognitive with the affective, the physical and the aesthetic, each of which requires ways of being that assist with the development of better thinking, which is their focus in *Teaching for Better Thinking* (Splitter & Sharp, 1995). My intention is to make more explicit connections between Sharp's later elaborations of caring thinking, and her experience of creating community in the residential school setting, which I consider were instrumental in her being:

“the first to stress the social dimensions of the community of inquiry, that is, the way in which it weaves together a compassionate regard for others, a dialogical quest for meaning, and an acknowledgement of the bodily and emotional ground of human experience” (Lavery & Gregory, 2018, p. 13).

Interestingly, Lavery and Gregory describe these as social dimensions of the Col, although they are identifying relational qualities albeit ones that can be social, they do not identify them as practice qualities. These are themes that are present in Col literature (Kennedy, 1994; Kennedy, 2000; Kennedy, 2006; Kohan, 2002), with all but Kennedy’s five communities post-dating Splitter and Sharp’s publication. I include this section because it emphasises a growing awareness of some practice considerations that I assert are essential for the growth of the Col, and it prefaces the continuation of a gradual revealing of some of the complexity that has previously defied verbal clarification. It points me towards considering expanded methodologies for future practice evaluation.

7.71 Authentic intention as a form of meliorist practice

By authentic intention I am trying to capture the idea that a student is genuinely attempting to make sense of a complex idea and in doing so, is bringing her sense of value to it alongside her will to make connections with what she already holds to be true. Authenticity is characterised by the following accounts in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

“The term ‘authentic’ is used either in the strong sense of being “of undisputed origin or authorship”, or in a weaker sense of being “faithful to an original” or a “reliable, accurate representation”. To say that something is authentic is to say that it is what it professes to be, or what it is reputed to be, in origin or authorship” (Varga & Guinon, 2023).

It is in the sense that the attempt is a faithful one, and one which the speaker considers to be as accurate as s/he is able to verbalise, that I use the term. However, the definition that Griffiths offers supplements this standard version by identifying that feelings accompany the enactment of the intellectual agentic aspect, which along with the context, enhance the idea of *development*:

“To be authentic requires acting at one’s own behest both at a feeling level and also at an intellectual, reflective one. The feelings are the spontaneous enactment of the agency” (Griffiths, 1995, p. 179).

When a student engages with this authentic undertaking of meaning making as part of the community, sharing the intention of better understand the idea as a “making sense of one’s world and one’s place in it” (Sharp, 2018g), the axiological realm is acknowledged, albeit tacitly. Sharp proposes that the epistemic practice of the Col is not undertaken in a detached manner. The intellectual perplexity generated by the dialogue initiates the *urge* that Garside describes, the *motivational force* that he attributes to meliorism, as a form of ethical intention towards the better or truer (Garside, 2013, p. 125). What I see as most important is that this *authentic meliorist intention* is a situated phenomenon with the potential to initiate or support development. When a child offers an authentic expression with the intention of enhancing an aspect of meaning, s/he is offering the community an insight into how s/he is. If reflected back, it can offer the individual insights into the self, in relation to making or contributing to refining meaning, as the dialogue ensues. Sharp describes this cooperation in the making of meaning as a commitment to “ongoing, self-conscious reconstruction of their world-views” (Sharp, 2004). The selves that are contributing to the shared meaning-making are *in development* and some of those engaging but not verbally contributing may also be in development. The uncertainty towards, and emergence of, meaning through dialogue may be an example of what E.M. Forster was trying to capture in the phrase “How can I tell what I think till I see what I say?” (Royle, 1999). This does not mean that all utterances in the Col are examples of this authenticity, only that authenticity of this kind is possible. Attempts of this type have implications for selves in relation to meaning making with each other, and selves as they are experienced by individuals. I propose that this phenomenon of development through creating a sense of meaning that was not previously present, unfolds as the inquiry progresses, and is sensed most obviously through the establishing of meaningfulness, which for some persons will have implications for how they are as selves.

I am aware that Sharp’s assertion of this self-transformation implies that all selves in the Col might or do experience this phenomenon, and Kohan cautions that as a

practice P4C “is not as actually transformative as it is potentially so”. This is attentive to the idea that one shouldn’t over-assert what one cannot substantiate, or make an *is* claim where the proposal is about a latent quality. He proposes that P4C is formational, of persons, much like a form of modern day *paideia*, capable of developing dispositions that may be undeveloped, and that can assist in introducing them to an established society as a normative adjustment (Kohan, 2002). However, Kohan’s use of the ancient Greek notion of “adjusting what is to what ought to be”, given the context of Plato and his period, does raise important feminist questions about *who decides* what ought to be, and what sort of *power structures* surround this conceptualisation of normativity, given its origins. History apart, Kohan’s inclusion of the idea of potential for transformation coheres with my proposals about self and selfhood in the Col and about the way that experience of a phenomenon does not equate with being able to translate the experience into words to describe it. In attending to this, my assertions are also subject to the same caveat, that experiencing one’s thinking as developing or transitioning is a *potential* of Col edifying practice, as is acquiring a sense of self as a transitioning phenomenon, but neither is guaranteed.

7.72 Authenticity, time, and PPCol

Authentic attempts at philosophical meaning making through thinking-together within the Col require that the community is well established. Students need to have learned and practised working within this collaborative space that embraces the vulnerability of the speakers as they attempt to verbalise what they think. This Col is inclusive of its members and values their presence. A majority of the group has internalised the idea of care as a criterion for the community and eschews any conduct that might lead to ridicule or hostility. Members also have an established understanding of the complexities of caring thinking with its ethical, affective, normative, appreciative and active strands, which contribute to the way in which thinking together in the Col is integral to philosophical practice as well as productive of philosophical ends. The community recognises vulnerability as part of the experience of authentic meaning-making. It is facilitated by an educator with sufficient experience, knowledge of pedagogy, and sensitivity to the risks of self-disclosure that s/he can be confident that some mutual trust has been established. When selves reveal themselves in this caring

and thoughtful collaborative space, where they are at the edge of what they can attempt, one can liken the vulnerability to the *event horizon*, the edge of the black hole, where the pull is so strong that it can no longer be resisted. This vulnerability is not restricted to an intellectual or educational type but includes a risk to how-one-is as a self. The self is unable to make distinctions between cognition, value, and affect, in the moment of inquiry. Each is constitutive of self as an integrated phenomenon. This importance of the temporal condition of transitionalist pragmatism, which Kohan associates with Arendt's idea of *mental time*, as a form of non-time within the context of ancient Greek accounts of *aion* (Kohan, 2016) is relevant to *being in the moment* as an embodied self, engaging with forming judgements in the Col. If one is working in this non-time, reflection, which is the action taken in *chronos* looking back after the event, is largely suspended. In this suspension, a self *is*, it is *being*, in this moment. There is an integrity of *self* and *thinking being* which is inseparable in the moment. Kohan draws on the idea that this gap in time is characterised by what he calls an "enigmatic fragment of Hericlitus that connects *aion* and infancy, suggesting that if *chronos* is the adult time of institutions, *aion* is an infant time of play" (Kohan, 2016, p. 515). This *non-time* can be observed when one watches a young child engrossed in make-believe play. It has a joyfulness and timelessness that replaces all ideas of time passing. It is like an *extended now*, which I have also observed in the classroom when a philosophical inquiry becomes more than an intellectual exercise; where what the students are working on has engaged them in such a way that they lose track of time. They have entered into a way of being which is driven by the shared need for progress, but where that drive is stronger than the pull of the individual. It is an intense, integrated experience, which combines *being* with *thinking, valuing, feeling, and sensing*, which are inseparable in the moment.

What is missing in this account is the inclusion of *kairos*, the name given by the ancient Greeks to a quality that tries to name a condition of appropriateness, a decisive moment, or a *right* moment, which Weil places in the frame in her work on time, and which Sharp also notices as significant. It is the importance of transcending "the experience of being time's object" (Sharp & Gregory, 2018e, p. 155). I read this as an assertion that philosophical practice in the Col needs the freedom to involve the

suspension of monitored, measured time. It flourishes in *aion*, with confidence that moments of meaning will arise, which could be characterised as moments of *kairos* in the classroom. This suggests that the moment of meaning, the *aha* that is often cited as a key moment, is one of intellectual type, that the meaning of an example or a distinction is one of rational understanding. However, I suggest that sometimes this moment of meaning relates to the ways in which participants see each other, or recognise their *way of being* as part of the practice progress of the community. The sensitivity to the other, the engagement in the *I-Thou* relationship, when it becomes available for cognitive consideration on reflection, has first been observed or experienced in the moment. It is an example of integrated practice, where *being* (a self) and *thinking* (as action) have an *equivalence of importance* in the Col. This equivalence of importance is an example of a re-balancing of practice with theory, of being with thinking. When it is experienced, there is an associated shift in the perception of oneself as a thinking being. It situates the thinking as embodied, in contrast to traditional distancing. To be able to think of oneself as a developing thinker, is an affirmation of self and one which is not limited to a separate cognitive dimension.

When considering the concept of time and self in the Col, Nancy Vansieleghem describes what she calls an *in the moment* engagement with truth-telling, an experience of speaking freely as a form of *parrhesia*, “a form of thinking in which the self is not seen as an object of knowledge, but rather as an object of care” (Vansieleghem, 2011). This Foucauldian perspective is described by Stephen Ball as a “self-formation, for a *stylisation* of the self, a care for the self” (Ball, 2017). This raises a series of responsibilities, one of which concerns truth-telling as an authentic engagement, noted by Vansieleghem, which Ball extends to include responsibilities for sincerity, even when confronted by power, invoking considerations of duty. Responsibility also extends to criticism, where there is an ethical responsibility to speak out (Ball, 2017). Vansieleghem describes her project as one where the discipline is an exercise of “the self upon the self”, promoting the idea of becoming attentive, without interpretation, explaining or contextualising (Vansieleghem, 2011). Her experimental context comprises children walking alongside other children, rather than

in a more conventional inquiry circle. Whereas Sharp and Kennedy draw attention to the self-in-relation-with-others, or an inter-personal relation, Vansieleghem places the work of the self intra-personally. In her project, the focus is on the individual self, coming to understand herself and her capacity for attentiveness to her self, with the idea that this might offer an individual a sort of permission to assert that she *can* speak. What interests me is this Foucauldian view of truth-telling as “oriented by the care of the self — in the interest of the transformation of the self by the self”, that places a greater emphasis on responsibility to the self. I see these as related rather than competing claims, because whilst the relationships with others raise ideas about self, reflecting self in ways that make it a more overt phenomenon, there is still work to be done by the individual in making sense of the experience. Internal reflection, most likely to be reflection on action could also be an example of Schön’s reflection in action, as “an act of becoming *present* in the *present*” (Vansieleghem, 2011, p. 322; Schön, 1991). I relate this idea of *becoming present* to what Kohan calls *being in the moment*, where in each form, it is the *now*, as *being and becoming*, which is of greatest significance. What Vansieleghem notices is the *becoming*, characteristic of both being present and having an awareness of being present, in the moment, and this is where her idea and Kohan’s characterisation diverge. She is asserting that the *becoming present in the present*, is an important *moment of being*, which also indicates a sense of *how one is* in the moment. It suggests that one can sense this arrival of an awareness, which I think Kohan might associate more strongly with a reflective process after the event. What I think is interesting is the momentariness of experiencing *being* as a *phenomenon in motion*, which has significance for the individual in making sense of how she is, or is developing, when undertaking collaborative thinking work in the CoI. What it raises for me is the complexity of work undertaken in the CoI, which has implications for selves, working with others on a philosophical project with a shared goal of improvement, which relies on relations between and amongst peers in the community to produce this effort of better understanding. This shared effort initiates internal work for the self, in making sense of the complexity of becoming aware of oneself in, or after the shared intellectual action.

I am prompted to return to Koopman's transitionalist pairing of temporality with historicity, with the ideas that his framing might tie together these conceptions of time as a complementary conceptualisation. Is it conceivable to offer temporality as one face of a coin representing the *in the moment* happening, with the insights that this engagement might elicit represented as an inscription on the co-existing historicist face? In this sense, the exclusions of the previous considerations of time as either comprising one state or another, are eased, because we need not consider either mutually exclusive, but rather as a pair of co-occurring concepts with functions that complement each other. In all of these accounts moments of significance can happen, that can elicit insights about individual selves or about others, which given other educational conditions they would be less likely to experience. The idea of care of the self that Vansieleghem proposes, as a reflexive experience, is not in opposition to the idea of experiencing a sense of self in relation with others. She is viewing the self as emerging within a context of *self-care*, whereas the context of *care of the other* is more prominent in Kohan and Sharp's accounts. What is evident in each context is the implication of development; the idea that these fleeting moments may comprise a moment in time, but that they are experiences which can be reflected on and viewed as markers of self in the moment. They can indicate the *how I was*, that may prompt a comparison with *how I am* now, after the event. If I then conceive of the Col in the meliorist terms applied by Garside, these momentary experiences can also contribute to the *will to develop*, to aim for better or truer practice eliciting better or truer ends. Viewed in this way, the improvement in practice comprises both means and ends. What this prompts me to argue for is a proper evaluation of practice as means and ends, to rebalance the tradition of only evaluating the quality and use of the thinking moves of argument. Such evaluation represents the outdated structural hierarchy, which positions the rational, traditional method as superior to an integrated practice methodology which in acknowledging the *how we work together*, recognises practice as more than a social entity.

7.73 A feminist view of Col as integrated philosophical practice

We have been socialised to separate thinking from feeling, as another legacy of tradition, so that an experience which involves being, sensing, feeling, valuing and

thinking is contrary to our learned norm and difficult to describe. Complexity that is integrated in this way is like trying to identify the individual flavours of a combination of spices in a curry. One might be able to recognise that coriander and cumin, garlic, ginger and chillies are present, but the balance of the subtle additional cinnamon, mustard seed or cardamon are only identifiable as a blend of fragrances and flavours. Similarly, when Sharp talks of the how I am as a *way of being*, I understand her to mean that so much is happening in different and usually divisible ways, but that in this moment they are not divisible, they are present as an integrated experience. Sharp and Lipman are both clear that truth is one epistemic goal of Col, but that it is judgement that contextualises truth, guided by reasonableness, which is for Lipman “rationality tempered by judgment” (Lipman, 2003, p. 11), and which Sharp associates with self-correction and Peirce’s assertion that selves are interdependent. Sharp conceptualises reasonableness as part of coming to “know oneself”, which she states happens in the Col: “Each person is continually in the process of creating and defining her own identity through interaction with the natural world and other people” (Sharp, 2018b, p. 53). Sharp qualifies reasoning alone as insufficient requiring that traits of reasonableness and imagination be applied in practice, through the idea of care:

“care for the procedures of inquiry, care for one another as persons, care for the tradition that one has inherited, care for the creations of one another. Thus there is an affective component to the development of a classroom community of inquiry that cannot be underestimated” (Sharp, 2018d, p. 45).

Sharp’s elaboration of the complexities of caring thinking over years of work assume a sense of reasonableness rather than overtly articulating it. She elaborates Lipman’s categories of caring thinking from *Thinking in Education*, where Lipman outlines the following sub-categories of caring thinking as “appreciative, active, normative, affective and empathic”, in her original paper on the other dimension of caring thinking saying that it makes sense that: “To think caringly means to think ethically, affectively, normatively, appreciatively and to actively participate in society with a concern for the common good” (Sharp, 2004). What I notice is that she has modified these categories, by including ethical thinking overtly, where Lipman prefaces it in the preceding text, contextualising it ethically without naming it as such (Lipman, 2003, pp. 264-269). Interestingly, she has also wrapped Lipman’s assertion that caring

thinking is empathic, into her general assertion that caring thinking is also about participation in society with reference to the common good. It is important to read Sharp and Lipman and associates as situated in their era, which as Darren Chetty proposes, is not ahistorical and should not be universalised. His critique in *Racism as Reasonableness* draws attention to the lack of reference made by Splitter, Sharp or Lipman to cultural implications of reasonableness and points to Terri Field's cautious optimism about reasonableness in P4C, to open opportunities for "voices that have been excluded by reason" to be heard (Field, 1995). He questions whether this is sufficient and his work has opened a dialogue in English and UK PwC about the potential for reasonableness to be a well-meaning, but insufficient concept that doesn't adequately acknowledge racial prejudice or structural bias, or indeed a facilitator's implicit bias (Chetty, 2018). Chetty's work questions Lipman's assertion that reasonableness is to do with supporting emotions and valuations:

"To appreciate is to pay attention to what matters, to what is of importance. Never mind the seeming circularity: that what matters is of importance precisely because we pay attention to it" (Lipman, 2003, p. 265).

Chetty's point, which is also one of feminism, is that if our importance criteria are culturally limited, and our experience and appreciation of others who are different to us could be limited, then what we hold important will be correspondingly limited. The way reasonableness can assist with this is in recognising that when working together in the CoI, we must *all* be genuinely open to challenge, from within *and* outside our norm, to widen the criteria of importance and make space for greater inclusivity. For educators, the expectation is that they will notice if a CoI is expressing conformity about what is important and introduce perspectives that can open the inquiry so that the idea of "gated communities" (Chetty, 2018) can be robustly opposed.

My response to engaging with Chetty's work is that we all experience life having had the experiences we have had. These experiences curate for us what we come to view as important. Among these experiences will be ones of privilege and experiences of marginalisation or being overlooked, forgotten, discounted or undervalued. However, these experiences are not equally distributed, with some individuals or groups experiencing many more privileges or lack thereof than others. Just like intersecting

oppressions, intersecting privileges can compound and build on each other, creating impressions of importance. The difference between intersecting privileges and oppressions, is that where there is a constant ethical demand for greater equality arising from where oppressions intersect, where privileges compound, they, and their effects, are often unnoticed until confronted. As anyone who has confronted privilege will testify, the most regular response is a swift, often unconsidered rejection, which is likely to be accompanied by behaviours exhibiting anger or resentment. When a Col is working well, privilege, especially that noticed by others, should become a phenomenon for inquiry: a focus for our shared attention. In this way, reasonableness that embraces humility, openness, and a willingness to reflect in preparation for noticing what has previously been assumed, grows by identifying conditions that were previously assumed. The agonistic framework of the Col should then offer the community as a whole an opportunity to reconsider what is important, and to embrace what has been brought to attention. If the Col is sufficiently well-established and well-facilitated, the result will be development for the community, which will have varying implications for individuals within the community. In this description I am outlining an ideal. It is likely that there will be work needed, courage required and humility to be accepted, but I propose that these are all necessary for a Col to aspire to the truer or better edifying judgement. In making these assertions I bring a feminist intention to the concept of reasonableness which in part is initiated by the systematic historical erasure of women from traditional philosophy, and which places a greater emphasis on openness of practice. I also bring transitionalist ideals of meliorism and development, with the inclusion of historicity and temporality that were previously subsumed within reasonableness' pragmatist origins, and which enhance the idea of reasonableness as part of what guides my practice in the Col. I expect to outline this more fully in a journal article in future, as there is not space here to elaborate further. What I intend to be becoming noticeable in this short outline, is that reasonableness characterised in this feminist transitionalist form, contributes to the integrated practice of the Col.

7.74 Integrated feminist philosophical practice

In claiming that my feminist philosophical practice is an integrated phenomenon, I draw a parallel with Griffith's integrated feminist epistemology, where she makes a series of claims that together characterise her theory.

“(1) knowledge must be grounded in individual ‘experience’, ‘perspectives’, ‘subjectivity’, or ‘position in a discourse’; (2) the factors of power and values cannot be added afterwards, but are fundamental; (3) theorising is indispensable; and (4) there is no possibility of the acquisition or creation of stable, unchanging knowledge, since all knowledge must be subject to critique from other viewpoints which may fundamentally revise current structures” (Griffiths, 1995, p. 61).

It is a whole epistemic methodology that she is trying to capture, one that is situated and where each factor of each precept is necessary before she deems her description sufficient. She is clear that each statement relates to the others and that her criteria of power relations consist in, rather than complement, the integration. Similarly, her epistemological endeavour is one which is built on values, unlike traditional epistemic alternatives that make efforts to appear at least to have eliminated them. She is open about the impossibility of arriving at a static or unchanging piece of knowledge, recognising the inevitability of development. The situatedness of her epistemology mirrors the situatedness of a feminist transitionalist concept of judgement, which also draws on the need to be warranted, but which recognises that there are contexts that influence the judgement, that it is occurring in a moment of time, but that it is subject to development as new information becomes available or when other conditions alter. What is most important are the connections between each aspect of her theory, which I propose are also present in mine.

In conventional Col practice, the strands of the substantive and the procedural are often identified as separate, but I propose that these distinctions rely on traditions that go back to Plato and which are based in archaic divisions between the epistemic outcome and the practice by which it was arrived at, by assuming the superiority of rationality as a quality divisible from other modes of thinking. While I agree that it is possible to identify a substantive end of a philosophical inquiry as a better justified argument, especially if using a view from nowhere approach, the arrival at that

judgement would not have been possible without the tacit collaborative philosophical practice undertaken in the Col. Although it is usual to make the assertion that this judgement is a purely substantive philosophical end, the assertion neglects the practice that gives rise to the end. It results in a prioritising of the end over the means, and by doing so, reducing the means to a lower status of importance, if indeed it is credited at all. Evaluating what can be dissected out of a whole does not represent the whole. It is a partial evaluation which in prioritising ends over means, is another example where shadows of a traditional hierarchy of theory, elevates theory in relation to practice. I see one important outcome of my inquiry as a feminist re-balancing of what is valuable in the philosophical Col: valuing of the whole. The practice of philosophising in a community of inquiry as integrated philosophical practice, which involves persons as selves meeting, in the same room with others with meliorative intentions to think together as a form of edifying practice. This includes the subscribing to a shared goal of arriving at judgements guided by ideals of transitionalist pragmatist truth, and edifying judgement, whilst also experiencing a sense of intellectual engagement that can but doesn't have to lead to an experience of self as a phenomenon of development.

What is significant in making this claim is the integrity of practice that focuses on a philosophical problem, but which is more than a method for arriving at better judgement. The transitionalist aspect of practice highlights the meliorative intention of the Col, which is a shared intention, to work towards holding the belief that better outcomes *could* be possible, where ideas must be able to influence the thinker sufficiently to question *what is*, and ask *what might be?* (Garside, 2013). This aligns with Sharp's assertion that an intention of the Col is to offer children and young people a secure space within which to "mak[e] sense of one's world and one's place in it" (Sharp, 2018g). As a feminist transitionalist, I explicitly include *all persons* in the Col. This is implied in Lipman and Sharp's writing and elaborated in Sharp's feminist commitment to enabling women to experience their true value (Sharp 1997 in de la Garza, 2018). *This meliorist* intention is not limited to confronting sex discrimination. Its intention is that all voices, from all persons, be attended to openly and with care, so that no persons experience intentional or unintentional exclusion arising from any

minoritising characteristic, or any intersecting characteristics that combine to have the same effect. This is a feminist care that has been assumed in some early P4C literature, using the terms reasonable and reasonableness, which have more recently been interrogated, most thoroughly by Chetty (Chetty, 2018; Chetty & Suissa, 2016), and in his, to date, unreleased PhD thesis (Chetty, 2024). He uses the work of Charles Mills in *The Racial Contract*, to reveal structures of prejudice in English classrooms arising from implicit bias (Mills, 1999). Chetty has been a strong positive influence on raising this important issue in English PwC, most notably through SAPERE and has led training and development for the society's facilitators in uncovering implicit bias and its effects. Chetty's work questioned what was previously generally accepted, that reasonableness as a principle was based in Sharp's idea of the experience of "living reasonably and imaginatively with one another in community". Sharp elaborates that:

"Such a community presupposes care: care for the procedures of inquiry, care for one another as persons, care for the tradition that one has inherited, care for the creations of one another. Thus there is an affective component to the development of a classroom community of inquiry that cannot be underestimated" (Sharp, 2018d).

A contemporary reading of Sharp affords a hindsight informed by current literature, which provokes questions about traditions, especially if they are ones that we now judge as possible sources of bias or exclusion. Similarly, where Lipman asserts that "Reasonableness is not pure rationality; it is rationality tempered by judgment" (Lipman, 2003, p. 11), judgement is subject to bias. He qualifies the Col as:

"a wholesome social organization that provides a positive sense of belonging to its participants. In it, the participants are able to realize the reasonableness they are seldom able to practice amid the turmoil and turbulence of the rest of their lives" (Lipman, 2003, p. 122).

What I find most useful in Chetty's inquiry is the way in which he identifies educator judgements and related practice intentions as subject to implicit bias, with the unintended outcome of minority exclusion. His work is of significance, because it requires educators to be vigilant in examining their biases and those that may be implied within student dialogues, to make prejudice explicit (to self, community or both) and to be humble in revising practice to become more aware and more able to

create communities that are more inclusive and welcoming. I have more to say about the implications of bias, especially educator bias, but this will be the subject of future study. At this juncture, my assertion is that his anti-racist stance aligns with my intention for greater inclusion and that it should inform my account of contemporary feminist transitionalist integrated Col practice.

Chapter 8: Integrated feminist transitionalist practice implications

In this chapter I organise some ideas that I have explored in my previous chapters into themes that influence feminist transitionalist theory and practice of the Col. I review the importance of the feminist framing as one that exposes power structures, situates persons as thinkers, confronts traditional exclusions, and is dependent on relations where selves can develop. I propose that a transitionalist framing of PPCol makes implied ideals of practice more explicit, including development of ideas, relations, and persons, transitionalist truth, and the meliorist intention of edifying judgement. I will review my reasons for proposing that the educational importance of PPCol needs a clearer explanation, and assert the significance of edifying practice in establishing PPCol. I consolidate my metaphor of the weave, with reference to its continual potential for development, and establish some evaluation proposals that focus on what is evaluated, and how this is undertaken.

8.1 The significance of my feminist framing of PPCol

For greater equality between and amongst participants in the Col, power relations must be made explicit. When this extends to PPCol, I propose that an integrated approach recognises an equality of practice and philosophical product, addressing an imbalance of tradition that elevates ends over means. It also requires a greater emphasis on how we are with each other, and how we think together to attempt to make better warranted, more widely evaluated, edifying judgements.

Throughout the study, I have related my findings to educational and philosophical Col practice, building a series of arguments structured by relevant literature, to consider the Col as a site of feminist, transitionalist practice. My inquiry reveals that practice, in particular shared philosophical practice, is an under-represented *philosophical practice realm*, created by shadows of structural power, implicit within traditional philosophy. I propose that in exposing the traditional diminution of the importance of relational practice in contrast with philosophical output, I make space for valuational and emotional forms of thinking to be recognised as part of the complex practice that

is judgement formation. This integrated approach, is a recognition that cognitive intellectual engagement is not separate from either the axiological or affective realms, but that traditions have attempted to present it as such. Values and emotions are involved in judgement formation, and if we are to attempt to form edifying judgements, these influences must be explicitly examined for their place in judgement formation, rather than being over-ruled by logical reasoning. In making this assertion, I propose that an integrated approach to philosophical practice, undertaken in a relational Col, enhances the forming of good judgement. I emphasise the importance of *how we are* with each other in the Col, our *ways of being*, that make the relational realm of PPCol explicit as a fundamental part of practice. In identifying ways in which power structures from societal origins and those associated with educational measurement overshadow classroom experience, including Col practice, I make space for a wider inclusion of voices, whilst attuning educators and students to becoming sensitive to indications of potential exclusion. If we become more able to notice the subtleties of power within the Col, we can intervene to interrupt them, make space for power imbalances to become another practice focus for philosophical inquiry, and, by doing so, experience a more equal dialogic practice. I suggest that in experiencing educator intervention that confronts tacit power structures, children and students can become better able to identify the presence of power structures that coerce or try to persuade, and that this is a necessary part of PPCol. I embrace the place of situated subjects, as a thinking selves in the Col, and propose a feminist re-conceptualisation of the subject, as an *embodied thinking self*. PPCol offers selves the space, to become aware of what it is to be a thinking self in relation with other thinking selves. To experience this development over time given a community within which to grow, offers students the potential to explore and develop ideas and arguments together, as valued contributors. Thinking together with the potential to think-together, with the intention of shared meaning making and judgement formation, can be a transformational experience and one that can have ongoing worth for individuals and the community, who conceive of themselves as transitioning selves. I consider that my study makes explicit the importance of an integrated approach to PPCol, and is a worthwhile contribution to the development of Col practice.

8.12 Exposing shadows of structural masculinised power

I have elicited some shadows of structural masculinised power that have consequences for persons in the Col, and facilitators of the Col, and originate within the masculinised tradition of philosophy. The marginalising of women's voices in the philosophical tradition is significant because of the covert nature of this relegation, which has been undertaken using methods that attempt to universalise philosophical practice, by endeavouring to remove subjects from their philosophical actions. My feminist engagement with Sharp's work affirms that emphasising personhood, action, work, the good, and ideas about a more equal society, negate their being conceptualised from an enduring, if tacit, masculinised perspective. I have considered power relations within the Col as important but often implicit features of practice, and have sought to explore these using Allen's framework of power. I elicit observations where power relations require exposure, revealing the effect this may have on the community and its development (Allen, 1999a; Allen, 1999b). In exposing sexed discrimination, I extend this beyond women's oppression, to encompass structural discrimination towards minorities of ethnicity, heritage, culture, class, disability and sexual preference, recognising that this list is not complete. There will be additional oppressions arising from possible intersections between these groups (Hill Collins, 2017). I have chosen Sharp as my Col feminist guide, because her insights regarding care, caring thinking and their places in transformative practice offer me some criteria from which to propose a focus on the concepts of attentiveness, sensitivity to nuance, the development of compassion, contributing to advancing open-mindedness, and an "authentic willingness to self-correct" (Sharp, 2018b, p. 55) all of which I view as under-emphasised as criteria for practice evaluation. I have built on Sharp's feminist proposal that "a feminist philosophy of education will take into account the relationship of method to personhood" (Sharp & Gregory, 2018e, p. 154), to highlight some aspects of the *relational realm* that I see as under-represented and worth greater emphasis in the Col.

8.13 Situated embodied selves, self-correction, transformation, transition

Self-correction in the Col, with its transformative potential, described by Sharp, is an experience that affords persons the possibility to view selves as having the potential to

continue to develop. A self that has experienced development among other selves in the Col has done so because of the integrated philosophical practice undertaken. This practice bridges previously strong boundaries between cognitive, affective, relational, and ontological realms of being. If integrated philosophical engagement comprises philosophical, emotional, social and valuational strands, twisted together as a thinking-thread, it becomes a refinement of provisional judgement. This unified thread is woven as the practice weft, making sense as the weaving of meaning. My assertion is that the creative endeavour of this integrated practice has benefits for the participants, as thinking selves, as well as benefitting the developing understanding that informs the provisional judgement. The strand of self is integrated within this practice weft as a representation of humanity. Development is something that Sharp links with Murdoch's "journey towards the good", which she asserts is not just associated with the verbal and the cognitive inquiry, but "it is also experienced in our most intimate relationships with the world" (Sharp, 2018b, p. 52). Garside equates this with the meliorism of edifying judgement (Garside, 2013). Journeying is a form of movement, a form that has a direction towards development (Koopman, 2009). I consider journeying to be relational in the Col, because the inquiry requires that participants think together (and ideally think-together), to form judgements. Shared thinking and judgement formation contribute to the development of persons involved in the endeavour, although the pace at which this happens, and the recognition of change as development, will vary between participants. It is a collaborative, relational endeavour, with benefits for its collaborators. This is quite different from the individual development associated with students working in isolation from each other, where they do not share their ideas, critique each other's proposals, or modify them according to the criteria they devise for themselves. This shared development is indicative of a self among selves, becoming aware that s/he has altered in relation to the shared thinking endeavour of edifying practice, which includes co-constructing understanding. Such edifying practice contributes to an experience of a transitioning self.

Not all students will experience personal development in edifying practice. It is a potential experience, and not one that is guaranteed. As the philosophical Col

becomes more rigorous and more demanding, the judgements that students form, and the nuances that are explored, in and after the inquiry should become more explicit to them as thinking selves. Shared thinking progress, when it is evaluated, can evoke a sense of achievement, which will have associated emotional, social and relational implications for the community and for individuals. It is only when participants evaluate their Col for making progress in practice, as well as in philosophical output, and can identify this improvement, that practice progress becomes explicit. Some students will experience this shared practice as contributing to a sense of personal growth. I associate this development with the potential for the self to be experienced as transitioning, from having held one view, to actively revising or developing it; from feeling that there is something missing, to sensing it less; from having contributed and having the contribution validated, to experiencing a sense of worth. What is most important is that when positively experienced, this development can encourage students to view themselves as capable of contributing to the progress of an idea, or argument, as shared Col practice. As an experience, it is affirming and it acknowledges possibility. It acts as an incentive to persevere, even when results are not immediately forthcoming, or when the progress is to be found in reflection on what wasn't done, what wasn't considered, or what was ignored or rejected.

In summary, integrated, situated thinking-together acknowledges that epistemic progress is not isolated from experiences of emotion, value implications and their examination, or experiences of selfhood. In edifying practice, socialisation in the Col is guided by transitionalist ideas of the truer and better, the inclusion of all participants, a shared goal of meliorist, edifying judgement and it must resist shadows of outdated masculinised power. If imposed structures of power are to be resisted, they must be exposed for critique and modification. If self is to be experienced as a transitioning phenomenon, the relational Col must become more explicit. Embracing the self as a transitioning phenomenon contributes to resisting labels arising from external sources of authority or culture.

8.14 Making space for the ontological realm of Col

I read Sharp's statement that: "Ongoing participation in a community of inquiry involves a self-transformation that puts the focus on *being* rather than *having*", as one

that endorses the situatedness of thinking (Sharp, 2018b, p. 57). It indicates a change of self-perception. She values a re-direction of attention, away from one state and towards another. Her idea is that *being* present, *being* attentive, *being* in a state of thinking-with others, is distinct from *having* an attentive or empathetic attitude. She situates those qualities as qualities of *being a self*. This suggests that when a self is aware of being, there is an awareness of the *how I am*, which may not have been present before. I propose that this awareness contributes to what Sharp calls self-transformation, an awareness that contributes to a sensing of, and learning to recognise *being* ones' self. Sharp asserts that self-correction is part of what it is to see ourselves as selves, because then we can identify "where we have gone wrong" (Sharp, 2018b, p. 55). I bring Sharp's ideas together with those of Koopman and Garside to re-conceptualise her idea of self-transformation as an entry into a *way of being* that offers the potential for ongoing development as *transitioning*. Sharp is committed to the principle of fallibilism and argues that what she calls authentic dialogue relies on the idea that the views of all persons are at least limited, sometimes wrong and in need of review in the light of experience. This endorses my proposal that her concept of self-transformation makes space for a transitioning self, in part because the conceptual shift between *having* and *being* contributes to a readiness for development, and amplifies the importance of the ontological realm of the Col.

In considering development to be a phenomenon that arises in part from collaborative inquiry in the Col, I want to make a distinction between development as progress, and a misattribution of development as consensus. I have asserted that edifying judgement is meliorist in its outcome. It attends to alternative proposals and counter-arguments, with a focus on reasoning and development. Edifying practice aims for *better* judgement, which is *truer*, and avoids the assertion of truth as absolute. Thinking-together, involves the effort of all participants in making progress towards better understanding their question. It might appear to the traditionalist as being about consensus. However, I assert that this is a misreading of Lipman and Sharp's practice. Conceptualisations that make assertions such as: "P4C's majority agreement on trying to reach agreement", a "tidy synthesis achieved by mutual consent" or "a comfortable bubble created in the classroom for timeless discussions of ideal virtues"

(Drane & Higham, 2023) approach the practice from a traditionalist perspective, that takes little account of the pragmatist origins or intentions for P4C. It indicates a misunderstanding of the idea of thinking-together, classing it as a form of group consensus formation. To assert that an aim of P4C practice is to arrive at a consensus, is to misrepresent both origins and intentions. I suggest that in conceptualising thinking-together as resulting in consensus, there has been a conflation of means and ends. It misrepresents the *means and end* of thinking-together, as an exclusive *practice end* of forming consensus. The practice of thinking-together is about having access to many more possible lines of consideration than any individual has access to independently of others. However, I argue that if the principle of *thinking for oneself* is not given its place, the individual's responsibility for the effect the dialogue has on what they used to think, is lost. Higham quotes Sharp on some aspects of reasonableness, but omits a key feature of her work in self-correction, that attributes responsibility to the community *and* the individual in the "commitment to fallibilism", through an "authentic willingness" to self-correct (Sharp, 2018b, p. 55).

This argument prompts me to attend to a challenge for PPCol, which is to adequately explain the complex nature of self-correction, which could be a reason for making the false conclusion of consensus. *Thinking for oneself by thinking together* may appear to be paradoxical. If one thinks with others, then how can one be thinking for oneself? I draw on Kennedy here to elaborate this challenge:

"Community is usually associated with the affirmation of collectively held beliefs and assumptions, and with the necessary sacrifice of individual opinion for a greater good" (Kennedy, 2000, p. 40).

He describes dialogues as *intersubjective discourse*, which he asserts, in development of Gadamer's play-theory, and with reference to Feuerbach's and subsequently Buber's "I-Thou" conceptualisation, places persons in dialogue in an "existential and interpretive space", which is the "*between*". It is neither the space of the interpreter, or that of the interpreted, but a space where meaning can be made. It is inclusive of individuals and it is open to examination by all. Kennedy asserts that this is a space of dialogue:

“Dialogue is the event-structure itself of a space of difference, of an interrogation of the other – or of the object of inquiry – or both – which is by necessity also a self-interrogation” (Kennedy, 2000, p. 40).

I understand Kennedy to be explaining that, in this dialogic form, more than one relation is important, and more than one relation may be occurring simultaneously, between an individual and a community member or group of members, between an individual and the object of the inquiry, and between the community members and the object of inquiry, that may have been brought to the community by one, several, or many. The object may have arisen out of their shared deliberations and is, therefore, attributable to no individual. So, while the group’s aim is to understand a *truer* position better, and to form a judgement that reflects this position, the individual engages in the dialogue with others, and the dialogue elicits positions that are better or less well justified. The group as a community will reflect and self-correct; individuals within the community likewise, and this may lead to some level of agreement. However, reflection will also generate alternative outcomes, based in what Gardner calls justifying one’s justifications (Gardner, 1996). What is so important about this elaboration is what Kennedy captures in his analysis:

“Dialogue theory grounds the subject, not just in the other, but at the boundaries of its own subjectivity – there where it can know itself only in relation to a dialectical intersubjective process of mutual transformation. So even as dialogue individualizes the other, it creates community between self and other” (Kennedy, 2000, p. 41).

The grounding of the subject at its edge in relation to both the object of the inquiry and the persons that make up the community, makes space for what Kennedy and Sharp identify as transformation. The transformation of meaning, self, and community, where causal attribution has merged, is where the products of the dialogue are available for further consideration through individual or collaborative reflection. If this shared dialogue is viewed as transitional pragmatist practice, development can describe what occurs at the object level, where clarity of meaning is enhanced. Through testing possible examples, the outcome may become differently nuanced in pursuit of a *truer* representation of the object (Koopman, 2009; Garside, 2013; Seigfried, 1996). Experience, particularly the *relational* experience of dialogue,

undertaken within this transitionalist pragmatist context of Col, has implications for self and selves, that, I propose, have yet to be explored sufficiently. Kennedy, Sharp, and to some extent Lipman all acknowledge that something happens beyond the object related *true* or *better* outcome. Sharp extends the idea of transformation to persons, in her characterisation of a social relational self. It is the focus on *being* and the conscious imposition of habits, “the control of these habits and control of the control of these habits”, that are, for Sharp, integral to this social construct (Sharp, 2018b). For Kennedy, the:

“extent to which any given COI stays together, and grows, and reaches judgements that are meaningful, depends to a great extent on how its members undergo these patterns – how they endure them, are obedient to their constraints, master them, learn to take a direction (or avoid one) by them” (Kennedy, 1994, p. 10).

A common and important theme amongst these representations is the relationality of persons in community, which I will now elaborate in the following two sections.

8.15 Belonging and unbelonging

If self is experienced in a positive manner, then there is a strong possibility that it can also be experienced negatively. If a student’s contribution is overlooked or not given attention, it can be experienced as rejection. As Gardner advises, not everything that is said in an inquiry is worth hearing (Gardner, 1996). If this is because it is irrelevant, unconnected, an unsupported claim, or a wild guess, then careful facilitation can support the child or student, whilst reinforcing the need for connection and justification, and the development can be shared among the community. Where a contribution is overlooked for other reasons— maybe the pace is too fast, or the momentum is building in another direction—again, development can be an outcome *if* the example is evaluated with a focus on inclusion. A call for attentiveness is not sufficient. A general proposal does not address the specific incident. It does not validate the silenced speaker. Asking what we avoided, or what was overlooked, is a more direct way of engaging with our biases. Asking why this happened will uncover anxieties, most often, in my experience, about not wanting to offend, or not wanting to engage with a known topic of conflict. Avoidance, originating with the educator, may be based in an assessment of the relational maturity of the Col, and this must be

explored. If, however, it is the product of unexamined bias, there is different work to be done. Avoidance should prompt examination. It should be signposted for a return, once the cause has been identified and addressed.

If an individual feels unheard and by extension, unvalued or rejected, a sustained effort directed towards inclusion is necessary for that child to feel any chance of subsequently being valued or wanted. If the child or student is not heard as a result of bias, be that overt prejudice or covert bias, and this is not noticed by anyone except the individual child, the result will be negative. The child experiences exclusion, potentially resulting in a sense of lack of worth. It is these experiences that Chetty's *anti-prejudice stance* (Chetty, 2018; Chetty, 2024) highlights, and these experiences should not, but sometimes will occur in the CoI, due to unacknowledged implicit bias or as yet un confronted prejudice. If the CoI is well established, reflection and evaluation of the inquiry should result in a recognition that prejudice has influenced the community. It should also elicit proposals for examining this prejudice, its origins and consequences. Exclusion is more likely to occur in a novice community, where the guiding principles are not yet sufficiently well-established, or where the novice educator is not yet sufficiently self-aware, or skilled in CoI facilitation. Not belonging, or being subject to un-belonging (Healy, 2019; Healy, 2020), can be an outcome of this experience and it can have deep and long-lasting implications for the community and the individual.

“At a basic level, to ‘unbelong’ is to have what was thought to be certain or taken for granted removed, disconnecting us from others: it is quite literally to ‘undo’ the ties of belonging” (Healy, 2020).

An exclusion can only become a development focus if it is noticed, attended to (on both individual and community levels), and made an explicit phenomenon for future attention. Through this attention, all participants are made aware that exclusions, including unintended exclusions can happen. It places emphasis on a shared responsibility to each other, to be attentive to inclusion and notice any possible excluding practice, so that it can be explicitly questioned and rejected. As teacher educators, raising awareness of this as a possible occurrence and reviewing practice for inclusion, especially in early practice, is vital if we are to work towards genuine

inclusive community practice development. It is also important because for the practice to be edifying, it must be inclusive. It must consider every contribution as “a potential source of truth” (Granny or the Goldfish?, 1999).

8.16 The relational Col

Development of thinking-together as a shared phenomenon is most likely to be possible if a community has sufficient awareness of, and care for embracing all its members, showing a genuine willingness to attempt to understand every speaker from her perspective and engage with her context and culture caringly; as an agonist community (Mouffe, 2013). I view this as an extension of what Sutcliffe defines as collaborative thinking, as the *fourth C*, in his 4C thinking model (Sutcliffe, 1995-2007) and which Kennedy explores as structural dimensions of the Col in his five communities of “gesture, language, mind, love and interest” (Kennedy, 1994). In other words, this is where the relational realm of the Col affords children and students the space and gradually developing security in which to progress their ideas, proposals, values, opinions and emerging authenticity; a space in which they can learn to listen well and attentively, and practise expressing themselves as a developing collegiate and caring community of philosophical inquiry. As the community becomes better established and participants extend trust between and amongst themselves, and experience being taken seriously, they can become more confident in taking the risk of expressing themselves with a growing sense of the importance of contributing to a shared development of ideas that are well-warranted, and which are open for correction by all members of the community: a development from monological to dialogical inquiry, which aims to be critical dialogical inquiry (Daniel, et al., 2003), and directed towards truer or better judgement. The intention to include all persons, and create a space of greater belonging is important, because it is contrary to much other regular competitive classroom engagement. In emphasising the shared responsibility for openness to difference as a communal ideal, welcoming the challenge of alternative perspectives, it proffers an educational experience that contrasts with exclusionary, antagonist debating environments, so entrenched in British culture. The enabling of persons as responsible selves is one of the underexplored and significant relational qualities of PPCol, which requires further evaluation. Lipman includes

responsible thinking as an aspect of critical thinking, where “models of *intellectual responsibility*” can assist in developing responsibility (Lipman, 2003, p. 118). Splitter and Sharp reference reciprocity in the context of the environment (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 229), to extend the domain of responsibility. However, Splitter’s description of Sharp’s “passionate”, commitment to the relational Col and its involvement in “becoming a person” (Splitter, 2018), further endorses her position. The enabling of self as a responsible entity occurs *within* a community of selves, where the development is both a responsibility *of* the community, and a responsibility *of* the individual. In this way, the relational community is *a space of development* for the community as a group, and for the individual selves within it. The Col as a relational phenomenon accommodates to its current needs, and makes space for individual self-correction, most obviously where the ability to identify the need for self-correction may only become apparent when reflected in the *face of the other* (Todd, 2001; Todd, 2014). Whereas Todd talks of the liminality of the pedagogical relationship, I consider that liminality in the Col is complemented using Higgins’ “complex of pedagogical relations”, where points 9 -14 are tacit and rarely made explicit:

- “9. Aspects of the subject matter perceivable only from within the teacher-student dialogue
- 10. The internal logic of the subject matter (reflexive relationship)
- 11. The student’s understanding of, and relationship to, him- or herself (reflexive relationship)
- 12. The teacher’s relationship to the student’s self-understanding
- 13. The teacher’s understanding of what it means to be a teacher and how this relates to her dominant vocation (reflexive relationship)
- 14. The teacher’s cycle of self-reflection about her pedagogical relations and awareness (reflexive relation)” (Higgins, 2011, p. 246).

This group of relations is contextualised by Higgins in the teacher-student setting, whereas, in the Col, they are further complexified by occurring between and amongst all members of the Col, their educator, and the subject matter. In his point 9, I replace the teacher-student dialogue with that between the community members, which adds another layer of challenge. Not all student-teacher, or student-student dialogic perceptions coalesce, meaning that the educator must be aware of the *relational synergies*, apparent and potential, as well as the *discordances*. Likewise in point 12,

the educator in the Col tries to maintain awareness of student's self-understanding for all her students. This is a vast undertaking and one that requires constant revision as selves transition. Most of this development is not visible to the observer and can therefore remain tacit; unknown and unacknowledged, unless it is explicitly included in the evaluation of practice. It prompts facilitators to use *checking in* moves, and requests for student clarifications, to encourage the community to notice when parallel lines of understanding are being conflated. Perhaps most importantly for the educator in the Col is Higgin's point 14, where she reflects on these complex relations and awarenences and develops a sensitivity to them. This sensitivity alerts the facilitator to noticing relational and non-verbal indications of a hiatus in practice, which may signify a need for a focus on relational work, essential for the community to continue to make progress. It is in this analysis where I myself realise that as a facilitator of communities of inquiry, I have a greater understanding of some pedagogical relations than others. It alerts me to where I can set myself a target of being *more curious* about those I need better to understand. I include this consideration of Higgins' complex of pedagogical relations because it raises awareness of the liminalities of the Col where thinking together has the potential to become thinking-together, a shared action of the community. If these episodes are not noticed, and therefore not brought forwards as a focus for evaluation, they are lost to development, remaining tacit possibilities for relational growth.

Such awarenences will be familiar to experienced facilitators of the Col, moments where there is *a something* present, one which evades words, but which is a *phenomenon in waiting*, a *phenomenon of value*, an experience that as yet cannot be expressed in words, but which is sensed as important. These liminal phenomena, present in established Cols, will remain tacit unless they become the criteria for reflection, and are evaluated. I argue that they are essential elements of Col practice and that they can be evaluated, if noticed, and by using an appropriate methodology. If educators are sensitised to noticing these phenomena, such as a slight, but noticeable *shift in flow*, where the listening becomes less attentive, or when the content of a proposal is *received with resistance*, these relational indications can become criteria for review. If brought to the attention of the community, they can

offer relational insights that elicit understandings, often ones that are sensed as emotions, that have importance for the development of the community, its practice, and the selves present within it. It is necessary to make this part of regular Col review practice, for the relational Col to become established. Shared practice reviews between educators and experienced mentors, and structured educator interviews undertaken periodically throughout a project, would offer data on Higgins' relations 9, 12, 13 and 14. Private individual students' reflections, could facilitate their meta-thinking about the relations between self, subject matter, thinking and development, which I assert would enhance the way in which student conceive of themselves as developing selves. These evaluative proposals will be developed in my next phase of research. They will be subject to review by a panel of colleagues before becoming formalised into a new relational PPCol evaluation.

In summary, I have used Higgin's model to elaborate some tacit features of the relational Col, including an emphasis on responsibility for when students listen to each other, the attentiveness of that listening, and the choices that students have for constructing agonist responses, (which do not exclude rebuttals), that refrain from the violence of antagonism. I propose that for worthwhile intellectual engagement, *a compassionate care for others* (and oneself), and an *authentic willingness to self-correct* are enhanced by learning to be intellectually (and personally) humble and discerning in the face of complex, well-warranted alternative judgements. Facilitator's attentiveness and sensitivity to nuance, context, and noticing *relational phenomena in waiting* are essential if the Col is to become relationally inclusive. By extension, these sensitivities, if explicitly reviewed with the Col members, can become participant awarenesses through regularly *evaluated relational practice*. I position these qualities as central to an enduring attempt at exposing structures of power that are otherwise tacit in the Col. Likewise, reflection on the relational practice of the Col can elicit other tacit biases, for example, those that minoritise others, or their cultures, ways of being, or their attempts at being understood. In making these assertions, I recognise that responsibility becomes an increasingly important condition for all individuals within the community, and that the facilitator's role includes support for all individuals to grow in responsibility for the choices they make, or refrain from making, in their

selection of the words, tone, construction, timing and *way of being* when they contribute in the Col. As the educator, s/he must balance this attention towards responsible contribution, with a focus on increasing the levels of *attentive listening* for all members, if the responsibility to self and community is to be enhanced. This responsibility can be observed by a sensitive facilitator, familiar with her community, when a student refrains from immediately responding to the *urge to react*, instead pausing to consider a response that takes account of the personhood and experiences of others (Garside, 2013). This feature of PPCol is one which has particular relevance in the Alternative Provision setting, where my colleague Tony Clayton proposes that the pause for thinking that he practises in his Col exercises can be lifesaving, if sufficiently well-established, such that a student invokes the *thinking pause* to interrupt immediate reaction, when confronted outside the classroom. If a student can resist the urge to retaliate when confronted in situations of escalating anger, where violence may be normalised, and where weapon carrying is commonplace, the thinking pause may interrupt a *cycle of reaction*, long enough for an alternative action to be considered. His criterion for advocating regular and sustained PPCol, beyond its educational value, is his assertion, based in experience, that introducing and practising the thinking pause can become a habit, and one that can interrupt the youthful urge to use violence as a first response to confrontation inside and outside of education (Clayton, 2023).

8.2 The importance of transitionalism in PPCol

I have introduced transitionalism as third wave pragmatism, in order to place emphasis on its reconceptualisation of truth as truer, its emphasis on development and its highlighting of meliorism. The concepts of temporality, historicity, and meliorism offer a base from which to extend Garside's concept of edifying judgement as a practice ideal for PPCol. Garside also outlines the field of transitionalism as one that is influenced by philosophical inquiry that includes valuational thinking and which does not exclude the potential for emotions to contribute to judgement formation.

8.21 Development and Col practice

Transitionalism's focus on development is something that Garside applies to Col practice, through his concept of edifying judgment. Koopman's theory of temporally

mediated development (Koopman, 2009) is foundational in understanding the temporal quality of judgement; and it is this that underpins Garside's proposal for the philosophical Col to be the site of edifying judgement. Koopman's theory brings "time, contingency, development and continuity" together to inform pragmatism, "as serious and basic subjects", states Thayer, and I read this with reference to the theorising of pragmatism (Koopman, 2009, p. 64), in an academic rather than a practical paradigm. It is Garside who makes space for development to be explicit in the context of the philosophical Col. I apply development to philosophical practice, where thinking subjects as embodied selves engage in the shared action of thinking-together. My feminist framing of transitionalist pragmatist philosophising highlights the importance of the subject as situated self, philosophising in the Col with other thinking selves, and learning to think with others and for themselves. It embraces Sharp's idea of transformational educational experience, because it names development as an explicit characteristic of practising edifying judgement in the Col. I assert that development of the Col and the philosophical practice undertaken within it, can initiate a sense of participant development, a sense of self as subject to improvement. I view this development as an integration of philosophical attainment in the formation of better judgements, with a whole person experience of development, that connects understanding, the action of thinking, improvements in warranting judgements, refinements that rely on open-mindedness to correction, with responsibility, and an experience of development: experiences of a transitioning self.

8.22 Development as a concept extended to communities and selves

Sharp highlights the importance of intellectual humility, that helps to enhance attentiveness to ideas that originate from experience that differs from one's own. Intellectual humility, curiosity, and a willingness to be immersed in perplexity, are necessary conditions for self-correction to become part of what it is to think together in the Col, as a community capable of development; one that has a temporality as outlined by Koopman, and which is contextualised in the philosophical practice of the Col by Garside (Koopman, 2009; Koopman & Garside, 2019; Garside, 2013). I assert that the concepts of development and meliorism, temporality and historicity that Koopman proposes, and that Garside advances as aspects of the philosophical practice

of the Col, guide the development of the community. If Col development is influenced by the meliorist intentions of edifying judgement formation, as a shared practice, then communities can develop, and in doing so, make space for selves to develop. Conceiving of self as a progressing concept enables individuals to conceive of themselves as developing rather than static beings. This affords persons the flexibility to leave behind aspects of selfhood that are no longer wanted, that may have been imposed, and that resist change, as they embrace better ways of being. It resists the acceptance of educational judgements, associated with achievement or the lack of it, that are applied by educators to students as *labels*. Labels are enduring. Whereas when a student conceives of herself, himself, their-self as a transitioning self, it enables them to envisage *how they want to become*, how they aspire to act. It offers them a sense of *agency* over how they intend to develop within an edifying Col and beyond. It extends Sharp's claim for the normative Col (Sharp, 2004), where through reflective thinking "the community earns its right to identify, discuss, and establish specific normative criteria" (Kohan & Carvalho, 2019, p. 281), that García Moriyón claims as a fallibilist principle "linked to self-correction, which implies procedures of high moral demand" (García Moriyón, 2019, p. 6). What I am asserting is that this normative proposal is also one of meliorist self-correction. It is *enacted* by situated, thinking selves, amongst other selves, in the Col. Shared thinking in the Col, undertaken by thinking selves and resulting in the development of understanding about the topic is not isolated to the topic. It is shared thinking work that extends understanding beyond the individual endeavour. The making of meaning together has development implications for the topic under discussion and for the selves involved. Conceiving of practice as a shared, developing entity, where selves are integral to the practice, affords a possibility for reconceptualising practice and self as transitioning phenomena. This places *greater responsibility* with the community of students to care for each other as selves, with the potential for transitioning, as they reflect on shared practice. If meaning is made collaboratively, and a *will to develop* our thinking becomes an established aim of our Col, then as our thinking develops, the possibility for persons to develop may be realised, during the correcting, refining or extending of their thinking. Pedagogically this empowerment assists with the educational and personal growth of selves, who are surrounded by change, and for whom

development is necessary if they are to continue to learn and grow as thinkers, and persons of increasing maturity. This conception also proposes that maturity is not a fixed state, but one of transition. To conceive of one's self as transitioning equates with embracing the concept of self as one of development. The idea aligns with growth mindset psychological theory (Dweck, 2007) and post-human theories of becoming (Braidotti, 2011). What sets it apart is that it is contextualised through thinking together, shared meaning making, and ideally thinking-together as edifying practice, in the feminist transitionalist philosophical Col, guided by meliorist development, with its philosophical practice ideal of edifying judgement.

8.23 The practice ideal of edifying judgement

To assert that edifying judgement is a practice ideal, requires that the Col works with the intention of forming judgements that are guided by the ideal. The transitionalist principles of development, meliorism as a form of positive educational and ethical hopefulness, the two sides of the temporality and historicity coin and their place in orienting the Col, provide its foundation. Garside's transitionalist philosophical practice complexifies the Col as well as enhancing it, and this leads me to propose that when we make meaning together as shared practice in the Col, especially when we are thinking together and aspiring to think-together, with the intention of making progress towards edifying judgement formation, we need to practise and refine the way we work together, as well as the way we *are* together as a way of being. It is this rehearsal and refinement that I call edifying practice. It is an elaboration of what Lipman and Sharp proposed with their thinking model of caring, creative, and critical thinking working together, to offer children or students experiences of philosophical practice, when centred on a philosophical problem. It offers a consideration of practice that is equal in value to the progress made by the community on accounting for or elaborating the central provocation, as a philosophical entity. This is particularly important because of a general political move in England towards further increasing the content of the already content rich curriculum, in part, I assert because of the ease with which factual recall can be tested, and the resulting data compared for political purposes. Engagement in edifying practice in the Col, guided by edifying judgement, has progress potential for the community, the problem at the centre of

the practice, and the individuals, learning about themselves and the relationships they establish to support community members. This is a vital rebalancing of integrated Col practice, as ends and means, in an otherwise overly instrumentalised, ends based system of schooling.

8.24 Edifying practice

I have outlined the idea of edifying practice as the work undertaken by the relational philosophical Col, that is guided by the ideal of edifying judgement, recognising the importance of this conception. I contrast proposing edifying judgement as an *ideal*, with the idea that it can be a Col *expectation*. Children, students, or participants in establishing communities of philosophical inquiry do not become thinking selves immediately. The formation of edifying judgements is dependent on the development of the Col, its practices and intentions, its relations and its philosophical capabilities. The Col takes time and guidance to become established, and educators and their communities need time to learn, to practise and to refine their philosophical thinking work, attuning it over time to the ideal of making edifying judgements, with all the conditions that these comprise. It is this learning to, and doing of, the philosophical work with others in the relational Col, thinking together, making meaning together, ideally progressing to thinking-together in the increasingly secure Col, that enables the shared endeavour of forming and refining judgements that are better justified and better defined that I call edifying practice.

I strongly reject any suggestion that a philosophical Col can be formed easily or quickly. The complexity of practice, with its integrated philosophical characteristics, its relationships between and amongst members, its shared intentions and goals, and the trust that is necessary for genuine inquiry to evolve is not achieved quickly. As I reiterate, a feminist inclusion of subjects as embodied thinking selves, as worthwhile persons, who learn to think better by learning to think with others in the Col, and practise refining this philosophical thinking together, as embodied feminist transitionalist practice, the idea of forming edifying judgements becomes a *practice principle*: something to aspire towards as an ideal. Meliorative, aspirational, consistent, rigorous and regular philosophical practice is what I consider to be implicit within Garside's theory. He acknowledges that arriving at edifying judgement may be

aspirational rather than actual, and this is where I read his work with a hopefulness that in aiming for edifying judgement, students can create possibilities for a better way of living, that have potential for the world and the way in which we all live in it. Garside is characteristically careful in his claims, proposing that: “P4C communities offer the potential to be such spaces for rehearsing and exercising judgement”, where the word such, refers to his requirement that power invested by society in teachers, “that enables domination and epistemic humiliation” (Fricker, 2007), be recognised and resisted (Garside, 2013, p. 160). His distinction between figurative judgement and edifying judgement is apposite, with the former restricted to an epistemic judgement, “arrived at by a figure”, with the potential to close down “a child’s natality”, and edifying judgement embracing the more complex, and possibility producing judgement that:

“anticipates that the judgement is part of an attempt at world-improvement, and acknowledges the gnarly embedded and situated context where judgement is taking place” (Garside, 2013, p. 160).

My contribution to Garside’s concept of edifying judgement is twofold. Firstly, I emphasise the relational *practice* of the philosophical Col, that enables the practising of judgement formation that aspires to conform with his criteria for edifying judgement. Secondly, I propose that in introducing a feminist conceptualisation of the self as agentic and capable of development, I extend his emphasis on the practice that supports judgement formation, with a stronger emphasis on the situated selves that enact this practice.

8.3 The educational significance of integrated PPCol

I consider development in a Col and of a Col to be open-ended in its educational purposes. (Biesta, 2010). I associate Biesta’s educational purposes with PPCol as follows: qualification equates most strongly with the intellectual philosophical progress that informs the inquiry practice thread of questioning, reasoning, warranting, refining, testing out and arriving at provisional judgements, including the judgements themselves as epistemic, ethical, political, aesthetic and/or axiological ends. The application of these philosophical moves centre around a philosophical question, that Splitter and Sharp identify as “common, central, and contestable”

(Splitter & Sharp, 1995; Kennedy, 2012). This is the aspect of P4C that is a most traditional philosophical endeavour.

A procedural and substantive division of P4C engagement outlined in Splitter and Sharp, and also developed by Gregory (Splitter & Sharp, 1995; Gregory, 2014), historically enhanced the justification for the P4C programme's claim to be a philosophy programme. This structural division between the form of the philosophical question and the philosophical method for development of the ideas presents the practice as one of cognitive, intellectual engagement. The legacy of this division between philosophical procedure and philosophical content conforms with a traditional distancing of subjects from their pursuit of truth and better judgement. This distinction diminishes the importance of the relationality of the CoI, and the subjects working together on those endeavours by subsuming them within the procedural. I contextualise this as part of a historic claim for legitimacy (Lipman, 2008). However, it presents the tradition of philosophy as superior to that of education, and as such has been a leading feature of evaluative studies of P4C, including Bierman and Lipman's early New Jersey Reasoning test (Lipman, et al., 1977; Lipman, 2008, pp. 120-123), and SAPERE's evaluations undertaken by (Trickey & Topping, 2006; EEF, 2021; Gorard, et al., 2017) amongst others. I don't include Marie-France Daniel and colleagues' dialogic critical thinking study here (Daniel, et al., 2003), because whilst it strongly focuses on critical thinking, reflections on responsible thinking, inter-subjectivity, cooperation, social awareness and concern for peers, are also included, and indicate that what I call practice and what the authors call praxis features in this evaluation (Daniel, et al., 2003, p. 54). Importantly, what the procedural-substantive division does is to hide relationality in the CoI, within the realm of the procedural; a term that reduces the *how we practice together*, to that which is articulable in words applicable to the individual. It suggests that the skill base of dialogue, finding criteria, making connections and similar philosophical moves is one that can be verified through evaluations that separate the practice from its ends, and individuals from their community. However, what makes the CoI different from a traditional philosophy class, is the building of complex relations, that are largely hidden if described using the procedural-substantive duality, because the relational

realm is not explicitly referenced. Shared thinking is present in the literature, but evaluations of Col practice are oriented towards evaluations of individuals, not the community as a whole, with the exception of Sutcliffe's 4C thinking review (Sutcliffe, 2008). Interestingly, it is within this relational realm of the Col that the experience of self is felt. So, when we reduce the relational realm to admitting only a series of moves that occur within it, we diminish the practice. The erasure of selves, and their relational context, may be considered as shadows of sophisticated traditional power, that resist the situatedness of Col practice.

Biesta's framing of socialisation as becoming "part of particular social, cultural and political orders" or more broadly as an introduction to and continuation of the roles of "culture and tradition", is identified as a purpose of education not to isolate it from the others, but in order to name it as important (Biesta, 2010). It is a necessarily broad category, within which one might assume that there are dominant general or prevailing educational cultures that are more desirable than others, if only implicitly. Indeed, Biesta identifies the connection between education, children and the state as the "transmission of particular norms and values, in relation to the continuation of particular cultural or religious traditions, or for the purpose of professional socialization" (Biesta, 2010, p. 20). In Col practice, socialisation is an orientation to, and an immersion in, *ways of being* and *thinking with others* where the shared goal is progress. This shared goal of progress in the Col is dependent on the relations within the Col. Philosophical practice as a shared endeavour requires a socialisation environment that supports the relational development that gives rise to sufficient trust in others for shared progress to be made. Biesta's general socialisation purpose needs specific contextualisation as an entry to relational philosophical practice, augmented by Sharp's call for a pursuit of the good life, her normative proposal. I consider this to be what Garside develops as part of meliorism in the Col, when he states that in this endeavour, a person must hold the belief that better outcomes *could* be possible, where ideas must be able to influence thinkers sufficiently to question *what is*, and ask *what might be?* (Garside, 2013).

My feminist proposal also incorporates the meliorism accounted for by Jane Addams, that asserts that it isn't until the progress is seen by *all* members of society that

successful lateral progress can be claimed (Code, 1991). This is congruent with Sharp's feminist agenda, "a political [and] ethical commitment [to] giving women their true value" (Sharp 1997 in de la Garza, 2018). Sharp's socialisation includes a proposal that from within this context there lies the possibility of "making sense of one's world and one's place in it" (Sharp, 2018g). It comprises a set of principles that aims at establishing a welcoming, supportive, increasingly thoughtful community open to ideas that come from others. Its collaborative intention is to bring persons into a relation with others, to think together, that offers space for meaning to be created *while* selves are becoming an emerging or transitioning phenomenon. It is in the shared endeavour, where ownership of ideas is of much lower importance than the goal of shared meaning making, guided by practice ideals, where persons can experience what it feels like to matter.

In co-creating these conditions and working within establishing Cols, guided by these principles, children, students, participants are working relationally at an ethical aspect of edifying practice, *compassionate care*, that has an equality of importance with the subject matter of the dialogue. This should not be relegated to the status of the *procedural*, that implies a diminution in relation to the substantive. The division is a false one. It attempts to separate relational philosophical practice from its intellectual ends, using the language of method, which is inadequate for expressing the relational. I claim that when edifying PPCol has equal status with the quality of its philosophical ends, this is when children, students, participants can begin to *conceive of themselves as selves* and be perceived by others as selves through their shared thinking work. This integrated conceptualisation of PPCol introduces the possibility that selves can experience Sharp's idea of transformation, that I claim is an introduction to enabling a participant to view her/him self as capable of ongoing transitioning.

8.31 The weave: The integrated relational educational Col

In relation to Biesta's educational purposes, I weave his subjectification purpose as an incorporation of a thread of humanity. It enhances the many coloured patterning and texturing weft of the weave. However, the tensioning of this weft, to exhibit its emerging design cannot happen without the balanced tensioning of the supporting *relational warp* of the Col, that offers a structure on which the work relies for its

integrity. Col's socialisation purpose is itself a developing entity as its relations becomes better established, stronger, more able to cope with the inevitable challenges of slipped strands or unequal spacing. In traditional weaving, warp threads would be equally spaced, tensioned and pinned to prevent slippage, but in my metaphor, they have to flex with the developing relations, the stresses they endure, the learning that comes from the experience of establishing and maintaining the warp. The feminist transitionalist frame, provides a counterbalancing resistance for the tensioning of the relational warp, which, as it becomes more secure, allows for adjustments of community, self, and philosophical practice to develop as the weaving progresses. I call this integrated philosophical practice because every aspect relies for its integrity on others. If I dissect out the warp, the weave is likely to unravel. Without a frame, the warp cannot support the weft. The hues and textures of the philosophical weft need the tension of the warp if they are to become meaningful beyond the moment, and the weaving selves, each reliant on others, empower the development, that I configure as the continuation of the weaving that is yet to be created. The shared integrated philosophical practice of the Col is then an entity that is stable for as long as the Col endures.

8.4 Implications for future PPCol evaluation

In valuing the integrated philosophical practice of the Col, through the re-balancing frame of feminist thinking, I highlight the value of the relational realm. This under-represented realm is the space of meeting, a space of being with others. It comprises meliorative intentions to think together, as a form of collaborative edifying practice, with a shared goal of achieving judgements guided by ideals of the truer or better, and edifying judgement. This shared experience of edifying practice can lead to an experience of self as transitioning, with the possibility of continued development.

8.41 Progress of Col practice

Susan Gardner offers the following statement about Col progress:

“if one is said to successfully inquire, surely one must have a substantially clearer picture of the topic under investigation at the end of the process of inquiry than at the beginning” (Gardner, 2015).

If the aim is to identify progress on understanding the topic of the inquiry, this seems like a strong proposal. If, however, the intention is also better to understand the practice of the relational philosophical Col, then I will disagree. I have indicated that a *failure* to arrive at a substantially clearer picture of the topic at the end of the inquiry can be a progress criterion too. It may appear paradoxical, but this is because always arriving at a successful end, indicates that the educator has restricted evaluation criteria to those that only indicate traditional *ends related* progress. Such criteria exclude reference to practice development. A feminist characterisation of progress will involve both shared practice development and the collaborative progress made on better understanding the philosophical problem. Reflection *on practice* introduces participants to analysing their shared, and individual efforts, a metacognitive approach to understanding where we went wrong. Sharp credits this self-correction as an important part of philosophical inquiry as a “criterion for self-knowledge, self-transformation and growth”. She clarifies this by stating “To perceive oneself as a self is to recognise where we have gone wrong” (Sharp, 2018b, p. 55). I propose that Sharp’s use of self-correction in this context relates to the community as an entity, as well as referring to individuals in the community. Her inclusion of recognising where we went wrong as selves, tacitly implies that this occurrence is not restricted to perceiving the self. Failure to make progress in understanding a topic, indicates a failure of *practice*. Reflection on individual and community self-correction is *means oriented*. It is practice that has intrinsic value because pedagogically, thinking-together and meaning making as collaborative practice is as important as the outcome of the practice. This is well summarised by Felix Garcia Moriyán in the following statement:

“P4C’s educational proposal is novel in the sense that it proposes philosophical activity as the central nucleus of a truly transformative education” (García Moriyón, 2019, p. 4).

While we dwell with García Moriyón’s observations, I draw attention to another under-exposed purpose of PPCol, which I associate with Biesta’s second educational purpose, that of socialization, “the many ways in which, through education, we become part of particular social, cultural and political “orders” (Biesta, 2010, p. 20), and his third educational purpose of subjectification, or becoming a subject. García Moriyón reiterates Sharp’s view of these purposes of education as follows:

“If we assume that the purpose of education is the forming of persons — persons of responsibility and integrity, capable of making good judgments — then the community of inquiry becomes a means and an end, satisfying in itself, while at the same time cultivating the traits essential for morally discriminating persons” (Sharp, A. in García Moriyón, 2019, p. 5).

What is important for each, in their different contexts, is that education is more than arriving at correct answers. It has purposes that are often not tested, but which societies rely upon education to support, (perhaps especially where that part of the traditional role of parent may have been eclipsed by the parental role of economic provision for the family). In García Moriyón’s conceptualisation, the socialisation purpose requires the subjectification, the acquisition of *dispositions of responsibility and integrity*, being able to justify their assertions and so on, because it is in the socialisation into the Col that the subjectification can occur. He emphasises the elements of practice that are too often omitted from the evaluation of educational purposes. Perhaps this is because they are so much more difficult to identify or assess. In making his proposal, he supports Sharp’s premise that communal philosophical inquiry:

“brings about a slow shift over time into a new way of being in the world, one characterised by awareness, curiosity, cooperation and patience, absorption in the wonder of what it is to be in this world” (Sharp, 2018b, p. 50).

I read Sharp as a woman who asserts the importance of practice as well as outcomes, and who was a feminist pioneer in attempting to *redistribute importance more equally* between practice and theory.

What I have highlighted in my thesis are some aspects that I see as important in the Col. Kennedy and Kennedy identify implicit and explicit rules of discourse, that are reinforced with experience, and that they term reconstructive (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011). In discussing participant authority and responsibility for practice, they *leave tacit* what I see as a vital co-existing *listening community*, where I will situate the disposition of attentiveness in my development of PPCol. I draw on Biesta’s educational purposes of subjectification and socialisation to propose that Sharp’s feminist openness to practice as *the how* we arrive at better judgement, offers a

redistribution of importance that brings parity to practice, over a prior, tacitly implied prioritisation of substantive product.

Having discussed Gardner's early progress criterion (Gardner, 1996; Gardner, 2015), her later work based in her reading of Charles Taylor, and Mead's proposal that self-consciousness relies on the social interactions of the individual, offering support for ideas of relationality. Acquiring an experience of self, and taking responsibility for its development, may also be significant outcomes of working within a Col, as part of what she calls "taking selves seriously" (Gardner, 2011, p. 3). She draws on Dewey's assertion that effort must be oriented towards process as well as content when developing educational programmes. She quotes him articulating what he sees as important about how we think:

"Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1910; in Gardner, 2011).

What are not sufficiently well conveyed by this quotation are the pedagogical relations that embrace the investigation of such information, or the refinement of pedagogy, that I see as foundational in elucidating the edifying practice of the Col and its wider implications. Gardner also supports the P4C convention of contextualising philosophical problems in accessible and relevant forms, engaging children in learning to support their assertions where they *matter* and where they are genuinely the belief of the student. Gardner queries the elitism of the philosophical academic tradition, that rejects the idea of proper philosophy with children being possible. She references an academic disregard of children as "of little interest", and notices that for these academics, education is women's work and therefore somehow of lesser worth. She suggests that such elitist themes prevent their proponents from connecting "the source point of the river of recognition", which "must begin in the waters of childhood" (Gardner, 2011, p. 6). I read these academic assertions as persisting shadows of a past masculinised tradition that resists feminist approaches. Gardner's focus is on refuting them, whereas I propose that in the past, the extent to which methodology is foregrounded is often determined by the *criteria of the critics*, not the inherent benefits of the practice. Academic criteria that disregard children directly,

oppose “the recognition of children as subjects of human dignity with lives rich in experience and existential interest” (Gregory, et al., 2025). Whereas I suggest that my feminist approach welcomes the situating of children and young people as selves in the relational Col. Meanwhile, the meaningfulness of the provocation in relation to what *matters* to the students, is an indication of a greater recognition of diversity and equality that goes beyond the sexed biases of the tradition. What is now needed is an evaluation practice that is grounded in integrated feminist transitionalist practice, where the philosophical practice of the relational Col holds equivalent importance with the judgement that it produces, and where ideas of child and childhood are central to the methodology rather than excluded from it. If what we value in *practice* is not reflected in our evaluation criteria, then much of the value of the practice will remain tacit. As a result of this thesis, I plan to devise an evaluation that encompasses some of these relational criteria for use in the evaluation of Col practice.

8.42 Shared responsibility for reflection

A shared reflection on how we did or didn’t arrive at a clearer or better account of our concept or question, develops community responsibility. It asks children or students to accept that they are responsible for their actions, their thinking work and their *ways of being*, as selves within the Col. Reflecting on examples of being openminded, welcoming of persons and ideas, attentive towards all contributions, sensitive to context, discerning in the weighing up of competing claims, and caring about the manner in which this is achieved are important if we are to develop a robust Col. I suggest that they are foundational indicators of relational practice development that support greater critical analysis, because together they reduce the fear of intellectual or personal risk taking. These dispositions support a more secure environment in which students can explore their authentic proposals, with an enhanced sense of trust that Col members will attempt to listen attentively and respond thoughtfully. Responsible practice supports the use of the *thinking pause*, as a strategy for resisting the urge to react. Reflecting on when it is important to listen more attentively, and be overtly present, to show acknowledgement of *others*, may not produce ends focused epistemic progress data in and of itself. However, these essential relational qualities afford a robustness of community, a compassionate approach to challenge, and care

for all the selves present, that support the development of more rigorous inquiry. These are not undocumented features of the Col, but they are *under-acknowledged* structures of practice, and rarely, if ever, are they systematically evaluated. In an increasingly polarised society, it is even more important for children to experience thinking together in a caring compassionate community, to develop a caring and compassionate disposition towards their peers, especially when their claims are in opposition. It builds a set of educational experiences, on which the child may reflect, and that for some children will shape the ways they engage with persons, ideas and communities and may contribute to developing greater meliorative collaborative capacity.

I am proposing a greater focus on shared reflective evaluation as meta-analysis, inviting students to review their role as a community, its development, and their goals, for improving the progress of the community. My evaluation proposal asks questions of the collective and its individuals. There is educational significance in accepting responsibility for not making the expected progress, because it provokes action directed at development. It is philosophically significant because it investigates where our thinking work failed, with regard to progressing our understanding of the topic, that contributes to philosophical practice development. If shared responsibility develops a sense of humility and reduces the urge to blame someone or something for the lack of progress, then it contributes to a meliorist intention. If shared responsibility can become a stronger, more established, overt practice outcome, the experiencing of it, accompanied by caring evaluation that identifies new ways forward together, provides a basis for future inquiries. Shared reflection on, and evaluation of philosophical practice, are building blocks of responsibility, which, if supported by the educator, can lead to community and individual development of the will to persevere, even when there is no apparent academic progress. This evaluation is a worthwhile practice experience, because the evaluative focus is directed at the *how* we worked together. It asks about the relational realm of the community, that is an essential aspect of philosophical Col practice. Discovery of the cause of the lack of progress, and attention to improving practice, are strong incentives for developing the resilience needed for improving practice.

The practice of complex dialogic philosophical engagement requires the Col to be responsive to the shared challenge of the provocation, and responsive to others within the practice community. Building relational trust is necessary for stronger collegiate practice, especially with regard to increasingly challenging dialogues where there is a risk of antagonist or hostile engagement occurring. As the challenge level rises, vulnerabilities become evident. One indication of an establishing Col is a student recognition of the vulnerability of another, as an acknowledgement of the other as a self. It indicates a developing sensitivity to the other as a potentially vulnerable self. A shared sensitivity to others contributes to holding collective responsibility. When this happens, the whole way of being of the Col becomes more compassionate, more caring and more sensitive. Progress on the topic is no longer the sole evaluative concern. When appropriate, prioritising the community's approach to challenge, re-defines compassion as a collective strength of caring thinking. This resonates with the concept of relational inclusion, that is a growing educational practice that seeks to create educationally inclusive, compassionate environments that are based in care and trust (Benedict & Braven, 2025).

8.43 Methodological misalignment of evaluation practice

What is emerging is a characterisation of self in relation with others, in the relational Col, working with a shared goal of making philosophical progress on the subject material under consideration, whilst making progress with our developing PPCol. The development of our shared philosophical understanding has been conventionally categorised as a duality of substantive gains and procedural ones, but what these distinctions prioritise is the topic over the practice. Analysis of a transcribed philosophical dialogue, as an evaluation of the epistemic worth of P4C in the Col, excludes any reference to the very the practice that gives rise to the ends. It offers information about philosophical moves, but it removes all reference to the relational context within which these are made. It reduces meaning making to what is conveyed in the words only, without consideration of all the ways in which those words were imbued with meaning: the pauses, the stresses, the hesitations and their accompanying gestures, the omissions, the facial expressions that may indicate support or otherwise, even the tone and speed of the words, their fluency and the

audience to whom they were spoken, with the corresponding non-verbal responses, have all been eliminated. This evaluation is restricted to analysing argumentation; necessary, but insufficient to evaluate PPCol. In evaluative terms, this equates with the imposition of traditions of analysis that reduce the words to a disembodied voice from nowhere. Methodologically, it is incompatible with the integrated practice of feminist transitionalist inquiry.

Meaning making and judgement formation rely on thinking practice in the relational paradigm of the Col, that has been erased in this form of evaluation. There is no mention of the individuals as selves and their complex of relations that inform their shared philosophical practice. What is needed is an evaluation that can acknowledge the relationality of the Col and represent the thinking-together and meaning making intentions alongside the judgement outcomes of the practice. It must acknowledge the shared responsibility for making progress and seek to offer an account of how this is progressing. If we are properly to evaluate the practice of philosophising together in the Col, then there needs to be a way of evaluating implications for development of the community, for progress of selves as thinkers, and selves as persons working together with others as collaborative partners, growing in capability, as a form of becoming that results from the shared experience. Until these essential aspects of practice are acknowledged as necessary, and integral to the philosophical endeavour, they will remain undervalued and acknowledged only as procedural details, if mentioned. A robust account of practice development and argumentation progress is required for a proper valuing of the complexity that is PPCol.

8.44 Aligning evaluation methodology with practice

A philosophical practice that orients students to the idea of the humanity of their peers including a compassionate care for others and for the practice of meaning making and learning to think together, needs to inform the evaluation of this aspect of practice. It must include an evaluation of the development of care for the progress of the philosophical argument, the relationships that support this, and the importance of collaborative practice as means and ends. This integrated practice increasingly relies on students' responsibility and self-regulation, their sensitivity to others, which underlies a developing openness to other ideas, their capacity to withhold immediate

reaction with the purpose of attending more fully to conflicting and sometimes deeply contentious alternatives, with the intention of making edifying judgements. This integrity of practice encompasses intellectual, emotional, valuational, and relational aspects of being, that are rarely observable, but which are experienced as *integrated sensations* comprising cognitive, affective, valuational and relational threads of a complex weave, so closely woven that they are not identifiable as separate experiences. Importantly, individuals bring their unique blend of past experience to this practice, that will further influence how they experience it. To assess these interconnected criteria, evaluation of Col practice must include a strand of participant testimony, which if criterion referenced to previous experience, can complement more distanced, and apparently objective evaluative criteria. No doctor would attempt to diagnose a musculoskeletal injury purely by palpating and testing the affected physical structures, because that offers only a partial view of the patient's condition. The diagnosis is always accompanied by a verbal patient history, collected by using a standard series of questions in a known order. As educators, if we genuinely wish to understand our philosophical practice and its effects, we need to learn to reject traditions that sever the relations of situated personhood from their philosophical practice. Enhanced trust in our participants to offer as accurate an account as possible, will complement our analysis. We must be bold in claiming the relational realm of Col for its vital place in the philosophical practice of the Col.

8.5 Recommendations

In the following chapter I outline recommendations that arise from the research. I also indicate some areas of development that will lead my future research and practice as both a national and international endeavour. This thesis is written about Col practice that is familiar to me in my context of the English education system, where the majority of my practice has been undertaken. I have limited my context in order to avoid over generalising Col and its varied forms. However, I am keen to acknowledge my colleagues who practice in over 60 countries across the world, and to assert that in limiting my context, my sole intention was to avoid over claiming. I wish to continue to develop international connections with colleagues who are interested in Col and PPCol, especially those for whom the relational realm of the Col is important.

8.51 Developing greater understanding of relational practice

Throughout the thesis, I have become aware that dispositional development is integral to edifying philosophical practice and I wish to make these dispositions explicit as criteria for the development of a methodology that embraces edifying philosophical practice that is inclusive and which is the means of arriving at better or truer judgements. For the evaluation of philosophical practice in the Col to be transparent, the practice intentions of the Col need to be more explicit. When introducing children and students to philosophising in the Col, the English convention is to focus on the thinking skill aspect of practice. Children are made aware of the philosophical criteria of finding good or better reasons to justify their arguments, and to listening respectfully to each other as part of the practice. What is often missing is an overt reference to the importance of becoming more responsible for how we listen, and what is asserted, our warrants and our judgements. In becoming more overtly aware of this responsibility, we encourage attentiveness. If we extend responsibility to considering the consequences that might arise from what we attend to, this may enhance what we say.

In English PwC practice, the idea of caring thinking is often explained as caring for what is being said, the importance of the topic as the subject of inquiry, and for the people who are contributing, but this falls short of making explicit the breadth of Sharp and Lipman's criteria for caring thinking: its ethical, affective, normative, appreciative and active aspects. I am aware of criticisms of this superficial attention to caring thinking that suggests that it leads to creating a culture of 'being nice'. If this arises, it is likely that the teachers are not sufficiently well introduced to care and caring thinking, and do not have enough depth of understanding as educators, to inform their classroom practice. This raises an important teacher education outcome, that care and caring thinking need to be better outlined and explored in introductory facilitator education. An *appearance of* openness and listening is disingenuous and insufficient for supporting PPCol. When an enhanced level of introduction becomes established practice, I would expect it to give rise to evaluative practice that is more reflective of progress on caring thinking.

My thesis exposes the importance of the relational realm of practice, that was previously subsumed within the procedural. Recognition of the relational Col is necessary for caring thinking to become more than a list of ideals. The relations within the Col are what afford caring, critical and creative philosophical thinking the space for development, an environment, “as a field of meaning”. Hung and Stables’ propose that:

“There are three factors involved when there is a consciousness of an environment: the subject surrounded, the objects surrounding and the interrelationship between them” (Hung & Stables, 2011).

What I have proposed is that children and students bring *them-selves* and their experiences to the Col. These selves with their individual experiences contextualise their meanings, offering the Col members access to other ways of thinking, when they are shared. These contexts initiate the potential for challenge, be that disagreement, a need for greater clarity, a request for warrants or a proposal to connect what seems unconnected. Challenge will be received variously, in ways that are not easily predictable, often based in the degree of difference proffered. Hung and Stables identify “intention, expectation, imagination or memory” as mental conditions for space as an environment, an educational space, proposing that “the meaning of a place is related to the individual subject and his or her interrelationship with the envioning objects” (Hung & Stables, 2011, p. 195). What I understand them to be saying is that envioning objects are not restricted to physical items in a geographical place, but include phenomena that contribute to the potential for individuals to make meaning together in ways that confront assumptions and make space for better understanding. When we reconceptualise the relational Col as a space of meaningful thinking, with the potential to be a space of thinking-together, it is the pedagogical relations so insightfully outlined by Higgins, that support and boundary the thinking space (Higgins, 2011, pp. 246-248). If the space is not sufficiently well-established with overt intentions and expectations, the Col as an educational space is not ready to support the development of caring, critical or creative thinking as shared philosophical practice.

When these integral relations remain tacit, educators and Col members are not sufficiently aware of the potential for relational security of the space, or the conditions that help to make it a collaborative thinking space. Guiding principles of PPSol practice, by which I mean intentions to strive towards practice ideals, relational phenomena and enviroing objects need to be more explicitly outlined so that educators are introduced to them during their practice introductions, instead of only becoming aware of them when communities fail to thrive. My proposal to make the tacit explicit is only possible with further development of focused teacher education programmes. Educators who are introduced to the idea that relational philosophical practice and philosophical achievement through judgement formation have an equivalence of practice, are more likely to establish Cols that are robust enough for philosophical practice to flourish. It presents a challenge to organisations with programmes that prioritise ends over means.

8.52 Dispositional development

I propose that Col education programmes also offer a stronger and more comprehensive introduction to the dispositions of attentive listening, resisting the urge to react, (the thinking pause), open-mindedness, responsibility as a shared and individual concept, appreciating and embracing vulnerability, becoming sensitive to dissonances, noticing disruptions, and learning to stay with ideas that prompt a sense of disequilibrium. Dispositions of trust in self, others and the possibility of thinking-together as an enhancement of shared meliorist thinking, require timely introduction if they are to become established explicitly, rather than limited only to experience. A courageous will to speak out, or to be curious when others have made assumptions or accepted a flawed argument, is only enabled with a *sensitivity of facilitation* that requires explicit identification and consistent support. This educator facility is, in part, due to learning to hold the space, when dissonance is noticed. I propose that this is a pedagogical responsibility that may previously have been assumed, but which requires explicit attention if all children are to be supported in the Col. Inclusion of Higgins's pedagogical relations in educator development programmes could assist with educator dispositional development of this sort (Higgins, 2011). Likewise, educator induction into receptivity through noticing and becoming more sensitive to the

presence of structural, traditional, or more local power implications, is necessary if a community is to become more inclusive. Educators who are introduced to *ways of being* that are compassionate, sensitive, patient, inclusive and aware of potential vulnerabilities and strengths are more likely to be able to manage these relational criteria, because the criteria become explicit. An educator recognition of the risk potential for each community member, will attune them to noticing alterations in contribution or resistances that have personal implications for students that may otherwise be masked by learned behaviour associated with prior experience. Once explicit as important relational criteria that make space for authentic student engagement, these facilitator awarenesses can contribute to developing the PPCol as authentic practice, that enhances thinking-together to offer space for selves to emerge. This list of dispositional awarenesses is not finite. However, what I recognise is that these features are part of what makes it difficult to articulate the qualities of the Col. Explicit reference to them is vital for making a better account of Col.

As a facilitator, one is managing the trust building process of establishing a community and managing the holding of responsibility for the selves present, until the community can share in this responsibility. This requires articulation of a compassionate care for the persons present as an explicit practice phenomenon. If this facilitator responsibility is not evident when establishing the community, then students are unlikely to develop a sense of shared responsibility for each other. If it is selves who do the thinking, then selves require the support that enables them to offer those thoughts for community consideration. I propose that the philosophical progress of the community is limited where care for persons is not sufficiently evident.

8.53 Stronger theoretical introduction

A stronger emphasis on transitionalism's account of truth as the *truer*, and a focus on practice principles of edifying judgement and meliorism would enhance PwC educator introductions. In England, concepts of fallibilism, anti-foundationalism, relativism, and the idea of provisionality are not introduced to educators until they engage in additional PwC programmes, which are only undertaken by a few senior staff. It is not possible adequately to comprehend Lipman and Sharp's theory or practice without this knowledge. I assert that until a brief history of the masculinising tradition of

academic philosophy is routinely part of educator PwC programmes, *shadows of traditional power structures* will remain tacit, and inequalities will continue to be overlooked. I also assert that in understanding argument from its *view from nowhere* origin, educators can be better prepared to understand arguments focusing on certainty, when they are used to oppose pragmatist fallibility and make space for development. Similarly, an introduction to the situated self as part of a potential community of thinking-selves, should be included in educator introductions, so that a modern approach to pragmatist thinking is better understood. Feminist transitionalist theory opposes the otherwise tacit acceptance of traditional certainty. It exposes shadows of privilege that still lie dormant in some traditional educational theory. I will refer in more detail to feminist theory in section 8.55.

8.54 Developing an integrated evaluation methodology that better aligns with PPCol

To reflect on our inquiry practice in relation to our progress on the question *and* our edifying practice progress, would offer an integrated evaluation. Learning to reflect on *how we arrived at* our provisional judgement would complement the epistemic review of the judgement as end. A meta-evaluation makes connections between the relational Col and its dispositions, raising awareness of their importance in philosophical practice. By presenting practice and judgement as equally valuable outcomes, we move beyond the restrictions of a tradition that prioritises substantive ends over means. What this integrated evaluation also offers is the focus on thinking together, that Sutcliffe has been championing as collaborative thinking, but which is often mistaken for collaborative practice (Sutcliffe, 1995-2007). Thinking together, as a concept, confronts the convention that considers thinking to be an individual action. It positions the sharing of thinking as a central requirement of Col practice. In making thinking together an aspect of integrated practice, with explicit reference to its practice principle of thinking-together, PPCol is explicitly more complex than collaboration, which is how many novice PwC educators conceptualise collaborative thinking. I envisage such an evaluative project as the next stage of my inquiry and it will be to this that I direct my attention next.

Evaluations are the mechanisms that both assess worth and exhibit worth to others. If we truly wish to understand and explain the worth of integrated relational philosophical practice in the Col, then testimonial practice evaluations should accompany reflections on judgements. Emphasising the importance of reviewing *how* we arrived at our provisional judgement with our students should exhibit such a rebalancing of value to them. Exhibiting this value to others, especially those with assessment authority, requires a methodology that aligns with Col practice; one that reflects on the practice progress that was made in developing towards thinking together, the dispositions that were used or absent, the shared meaning making, and collaborations in refining and nuancing the judgement, as well as reflecting on the quality of the judgement. In addition, for this evaluative practice to become accepted as rigorous, we have to gain credibility within an assessment culture that relies on empirical ends related data.

A practice evaluation methodology that recognises early development, would assist new communities and their facilitators to become aware of their progress. The focus would be on relational pedagogy and philosophical practice in the developing Col, introducing goals and ideals, with a careful approach to levels of risk, mindful of the fragility of the establishing community. Intermediate practice evaluation would reference the increasing responsibility devolved to participants, and it would offer insights into how the community is developing through its relations, dispositional development, shared thinking, meaning making and its philosophical ends. If responsibility for evaluating practice as a community, is gradually devolved to students, then reflecting on how this happens, how it is supported and how it becomes apparent, is necessary. As students become aware of the progress they are making and not making, through their responsible evaluation, they can assume increasing responsibility for their next development goal. When educators reflect with the students on student evaluations, criteria that may be hidden can become explicit. In my experience, reflection on practice often appears in the literature, but it is the least likely aspect of practice to be consistently undertaken in classrooms or other educational environments, because of the limitations of time. However, it is also the most likely way for communities to notice their strengths and weaknesses,

acknowledge them and learn to set achievable goals that support integrated practice development.

I plan to review a range of practice criteria elicited in this study and subject them to further scrutiny by a working group, with the intention of jointly devising an evaluation framework for integrated relational philosophical practice that can inform an empirical study. These include but are not limited to developing the following:

- intellectual and interpersonal responsibility, including considering possible consequences;
- attentiveness in relation to listening quality and in developing ideas of importance;
- compassionate care for the progress of the philosophical topic, the ways in which we work together to make progress (thinking together, meaning making, developing relations) and a recognition of practice progress;
- a willingness to engage in self-correction as a community and as individuals, including the criteria used to warrant judgements;
- a willingness to try to understand the speaker and their intended meaning;
- the humility to engage with ideas that are not personally appealing;
- a sensitivity to others, especially those that are susceptible to being overlooked;
- perseverance with developing meaning making and thinking-together, with the shared intention of making better judgements;
- a responsibility to use a thinking pause, to interrupt immediate reaction or the *pull* to unconsidered or hurried judgement;
- a sensitivity to noticing tensions that may indicate structures of power at work;
- a sensitivity to risk factors, different for each student, and dependent on their context;
- a sensitivity to inclusion or exclusion;
- a willingness to reflect on and evaluate shared practice and philosophical ends;
- a shared responsibility for making a sufficiently secure community for selves to develop;
- a willingness to support selves, as thinking selves to speak with authenticity, and;
- a non-judgemental approach to identifying assumption;

The purpose of noticing these dispositions and reflecting on their progress is to assist in a more rigorous application of our philosophical reasoning and argumentation in pursuit of truth. The working group will comprise colleagues with a background in P4C, p4wC and Col practice, and those who work with children, and students in schools, Alternative Provisions and Universities. Student representatives will also be welcome. The aim will be to represent development of the relational community and its philosophical practice better, and the development of provisional judgements guided by transitionalist ideals. It will attempt to identify dispositional progress associated with the communities as communities, alongside the individual progress made possible in achieving this shared philosophical project. Methodologically it will confront some of the exclusionary shadows of conventional evaluations and attempt to gauge the philosophical practice of the Col and its philosophical ends, using a more open and balanced evaluative approach.

8.55 Importance of a feminist methodology

A feminist transitionalist methodology offers a base from which to advance the feminist proposal that being a situated thinker, acknowledges that there is a place for value, emotions, relations, and compassion to complement critical analysis in the pursuit of edifying judgement. The feminist frame places greater emphasis on *aspects of practice* that have previously been undervalued by the prioritisation of critical approaches to progressing the philosophical question. It raises awareness of the *relational dimension* of the Col and the concept of the *situated self*, including the potential for selves to be considered as subjects of transition. My reason for referring to Sharp as the most relevant voice in the field of Col is that she notices the importance of a practice balance with the philosophical outcomes of that practice. Her term *intelligent sympathy*, one she borrows from Dewey, is an articulation of compassion. It underlies her proposal that caring thinking is the environment within which the critical and creative thinking can best operate (Morehouse, 2018). She calls this the *education of emotions*, that I see as contributing strongly to what I call an integrated approach to the relational PPCol, recognising that an integrated approach values the axiological and relational-ontological realms of PPCol, alongside Sharp's

attention to the emotional realm, and a proper valuing of judgements formed as philosophical ends.

Sharp's community of inquiry as the *hotbed of care*, has been mis-represented in my opinion, evoking suggestions of curating the experience of the child from the adult perspective (Murriss, 2016), and as legitimating "pampering" of children, that Morehouse associates with Brenifier, who argues that it may be used to prop up a current consumerist societal characterisation. However, while these critiques are important for reflections on practice, offering criteria for further consideration, Sharp's focus was on the importance of developing:

"caring persons, or persons attuned to experiential value. This personal and educational commitment to the growth of caring persons is the "other dimension" of caring thinking (Sharp, 2004:17), that is, the existential or ontological dimension, as opposed to the merely epistemological" (Morehouse, 2018, p. 198),

and it is this context that is consistent with my feminist frame. It values persons as whole, situated, thinking selves in relation with others, and capable of transitioning. This contrasts with children as *learners*, attempting to improve their thinking skills, in the sense that Biesta characterises as learnification (Biesta, 2010). My deeper reading of Sharp, Code, Griffiths and my collected feminist theorists, enhances my understanding of Garside's transitionalist proposal of edifying judgement. Together, their influences combine to burnish the strands of authenticity and humanity that sustain transitioning selves in the shared weaving of edifying practice. Together they inform my account of integrated feminist transitionalist Col practice.

My Feminist Transitionalist Manifesto for the Philosophical Practice of the Community of Inquiry

To all educators that endeavour to create spaces for collaborative, inclusive, caring, rigorous, relationally responsible philosophical practice, the following four statements are a guide to re-envisioning our philosophical practice in communities of inquiry.

On Power

We must endeavour to *make explicit and work to eliminate* any traditional, oppressive power relations, (present or implied) in the theory on which community of inquiry is based. In the ideal Col all participants should have a parity of power, and their solidarity should relate both to the philosophical and relational realm of practice. This is an endeavour of inclusion, where all voices are empowered and respected for their contributions. The educator must be sensitive to, and work at *minimising any attempt at power over others* that may arise, with awareness that power relations are often tacit. The epistemic authority traditionally associated with conventional teaching must be withheld by the educator, to empower the community to engage in meaningful, egalitarian, philosophical inquiry.

On Meaning

We acknowledge the community of situated, embodied thinkers, as the originators of their shared meaning making and judgement formation practice. Working together, they develop and extend their understanding of complex concepts and philosophical questions. This edifying practice makes space for the emergence of the *thinking self*, in dialogue with others. It enables children and students to enter into meaning making and judgement formation as collaborative, caring, generative, and reconstructive, shared practice, with meliorative intention.

On Relations

We argue that the relational realm of Col practice is one of *equivalent importance* to the philosophical realm in the philosophical practice of meaning making. It is the security of pedagogical relations between and amongst children, their educator, and the topic of their dialogue, that creates the space for children to become a community capable of thinking-together. When this relationality is securely established, collective and individual responsibility enhances the edifying practice that aims for truth and edifying judgement. The secure relational realm generates a shared epistemic responsibility for thoughtful reflection, considered revision, and the reconstruction of provisional judgement. It promotes ethical, relational responsibility between community members that enhances the experience of thinking-together and which supports *selves in development*.

On the meliorist intention of edifying practice

We establish communities of inquiry that develop into communities of edifying practice, where the aspiration is for *improvement of the world* and *those living in it*. Edifying practice, undertaken within relationally responsible communities of inquiry, will generate meaning and judgements that are fallible. These judgements remain available for further reflection and review both *by the community* as a whole *and its individuals*. This collaborative endeavour aims to provoke further consideration and engender a lifelong love of meaning making.

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