# philosophy and the academe

## origins, contexts and prospects

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## Abstract:

In the paper I previously wrote entitled "Philosophy, Well-Being and the Identity of Catholic Universities" (*Kritike,* June 2012), I discussed the entanglement of the academe with market economy and how such entanglement has undermined the identity of universities and the general direction of higher education. Following the insights of Alasdair MacIntyre, I argued that the humanistic aims of education are imperiled by the encroachment of corporate ideologies as well as the agenda of the industries and that one way of mitigating this predicament is for the academe to make an effort to secure for the disciplines of arts and humanities their rightful places in its overall curricular program. I cited in particular the importance of philosophy in restoring the humanistic character of the academe and in providing its students the kind of mental discipline and ethical disposition required of would-be citizens of both local and global communities. In this paper, I wish to continue exploring the same theme by doing a step-back in order to explore the wider philosophical context that led eventually to the quandary where the academe finds itself now. This acquires special urgency today in the light of the K-12 educational reform introduced by the government which, though centered on basic education, exerts a huge impact on the way higher education is understood and done. My argument is that K-12 is a necessary reform but a reform that is nonetheless based on infirm premises. I will likewise show that philosophy and the academe share a common history and a common tradition hence the damage inflicted on one can also extend to the other. If the academe therefore is no longer what it used be, certainly some form of re-thinking is in order and such re-thinking necessarily involves philosophy. The problematic that will guide the direction of this paper is: What defines the relationship between philosophy and the academe?

## Keywords

Philosophy, academe, K-12 education, arts and humanities

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## Introduction

This paper is an attempt to explore the evolving relation between philosophy and the academe and how such relation is challenged and sustained, from its origins in the heyday of the high middle ages to its dissolution during the modern period up to its tenuous recovery during the contemporary times. This move is prompted by the recent initiative of the Philippine government to implement reforms in the basic education dubbed as K-12, a program that seeks to elevate the quality of basic education in the Philippines by extending it to 12 years and by reconfiguring the content of basic education according to the template imposed by, so they say, global educational trends. The goal is undoubtedly noble but its long term impact, specifically on education at the university level, has not been subjected to a thorough and substantial deliberation. K-12 is a reform targeted at education at the basic level. This fact notwithstanding, it can hardly be said that the effects of such initiative may be contained within the domain of basic education alone. As the final stage of the entire educative experience, university education, for good or bad, is bound to feel the dent that K-12 was envisioned to make on Philippine educational system. One way of examining this projected impact is to consider how it would bear on the place of philosophy as a representative discipline of the humanities within the academe. There is a growing perception that the exaggerated emphasis on the utilitarian aspects of education bannered both by the government and a number of education practitioners leads to further subordination of humanities to science and technology. The inherent proclivity of science and technology towards utility and efficiency makes it an easy favorite among educators and learners alike. Utility relates with mastery of nature and economic gain, a trait that is naturally absent in humanistic disciplines like philosophy. Against this, I argue that philosophy has an irreplaceable role in the academe and the overall educational system in general. This natural fusion between philosophy and the academe stems from their shared history and is bestowed by the very nature of the educative practice. Education therefore cannot be done merely for utilitarian purposes. There are humanistic dimensions to education that even the most advanced system of science and technology can articulate only inadequately.

## Philosophy and the Academe

The common tradition which binds philosophy and the academe together dates back to the middle ages, more specifically, towards its end, in the so-called high middle ages. This shared tradition and history originated from scholasticism which means, then and now, as philosophy of the schools. Scholasticism is a philosophic system which took root and was nurtured within the confines of the medieval universities. It flourished and

gained wider acceptance when the philosophical thinking associated with monasteries and cathedral schools, with its language and structure steeped heavily in neo-Platonism, was deposed by the newly rediscovered logic and science of Aristotle (384-322). Scholasticism therefore, contrary to the common notion of it as a plain and lifeless terrain, was a site of a fierce tension between institutions (cathedrals and monasteries versus the universities; the monarchy against the papacy; the mendicants against the secular clerics; the Dominicans against the Franciscans; Christianity against Islam) and between two colossal systems of thought, neo-Platonism represented by Augustine (354-430) and his kindred minds like Bonaventure (1221-1274) and Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) on one hand and Aristotelianism bannered by the Islamic commentators like Avicenna (980-1037) and Averroes (1126-1196) and their Christian counterparts like Albert the Great (1193-1280) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) on the other. By the end of the high middle ages, despite condemnation in 1277,[1] Aristotelianism as embodied by scholasticism had achieved canonical status and its influence scattered and entrenched in universities across Europe, like Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Cologne, Bologna and Salamanca.[2]

In other words, by the time of the so-called high middle ages, the union of philosophy and the academe has been consummated.[3] When Francisco Suarez (1548–1641) came into the scene, philosophy knew only one language, that is, logic and dealt with only one subject matter, metaphysics. It was this enduring legacy of Aristotelian scholasticism which inspired Agostino Steuco (1497-1548)[4] to refer to it as perennial philosophy, *philosophia perennis*, because as it appeared, no other philosophy or philosopher could match its timelessness. Aristotle's influence would extend well into the

[1] Edward Peters (ed.), *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 223-230..

[2] Edward Grant, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 100.

[3] "Medieval Latin scholars eagerly embraced Aristotle's methodology and his approach to the physical world, while adding important ideas about the cosmos from Christian faith and theology. In the grand, historical development of science, the conscious application of reason to the natural world was the first step in the process that would eventually produce modern science. Without systematic use of reason, science would be impossible. In the ancient and medieval worlds, Aristotle's works represented the epitome of reason. His ideas, attitudes and methods permeated and dominated the thought of Western Europe between 1200 and 1650, and perhaps even to 1700. They did so because Aristotle's works had been made the basis of a medieval university education. Virtually all students studied his works on logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. Aristotle's ideas were thus rooted in the curricula of medieval universities where they became the common intellectual property of all educated Europeans." See ibid., 97-98.

[4] Charles B. Schmitt, "Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Oct. – Dec. 1966); 506-532.

Renaissance, in fact until the early phases of the modern period, in the works of thinkers like Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Samuel von Pufendorf (1632–1694) and Christian Wolff (1679–1754). Unlike these modern scholastics however, the Renaissance humanists would reserve their hospitality only to Aristotle and would harbor only hostility to the philosophers of the schools. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) was one of those Rennaisance figures who were characteristically unsparing in their often scathing remarks against the schoolmen.[5]

We can delineate therefore two responses to the Aristotelianism at the end of the medieval period: the first involved faithful continuity as exhibited by Grotius, Puffendorf, Suarez and Wolff and the second, manifested critical continuity as shown by the works of Erasmus, Petrarch (1304-1374) and other Renaissance humanists. I use the term "faithful continuity" to describe the efforts of the modern scholastics to extend and preserve the vocabulary, the method as well as the categories endemic with Aristotelian scholasticism, something which Erasmus, Petrarch and the other humanists rejected by expunging from Aristotelian and the rest of the ancient thought their perceived scholastic impurities. What is evident in these contrasting responses from the Renaissance humanists and the moderns scholastics are the emerging fissures in the formerly undisturbed union of philosophy and the academe during the medieval times. It should be noted that Suarez and Wolff, noted modern scholastics, were themselves academics and considered philosophy a preserve of the academe whereas Erasmus and Petrarch as well as their fellow humanists were men of letters who did not think philosophy should be limited to the locus of schools. With the arrival of the new thinking proposed by the modern

[5] Erasmus writes: "And next these come our philosophers, so much reverenced for their furred gowns and starched beards that they look upon themselves as the only wise men and all the others as shadows. And yet how pleasantly do they dote while they frame in their heads innumerable worlds; measure out the sun, the moon, the stars, nay and heaven itself, as it were, with a pair of compasses; lay down the cause of lightning, winds, eclipses, and other the like inexplicable matters; and all this too without the least doubting, as if they were Nature's secretaries, or dropped down among us from the council of the gods; while in the meantime Nature laughs at them and all their blind conjectures. For that they know nothing, even this is a sufficient argument, that they don't agree among themselves and so are incomprehensible touching every particular. These, though they have not the least degree of knowledge, profess yet that they have mastered all; nay, though they neither know themselves, nor perceive a ditch or block that lies in their way, for that most of them are half-blind, or their wits a wool-gathering, yet give out that they have discovered ideas, universalities, separated forms, first matters, quiddities, *haecceities*, formalities, and the like stuff; things so thin and bodiless that I believe even Lynceus himself was not able to perceive them." Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly* , trans. John Wilson (Rockville, Maryland: Arc Manor, 2008), 58 – 59.

philosophers, these fissures would become huge chasms that would further bring philosophy and the academe asunder.

## Philosophy Beyond the Academe

At the very outset of *Discourse on Method*, Rene Descrates (1596–1650) made known his predilection against the classics, that is, the literature and philosophy of old. Descartes said he had read enough and seen enough and that the time had come for him to pay attention to his native interests. He recounted:

> But I considered that I had already given sufficient time to languages and likewise even to the reading of the literature of the ancients, both their histories and fables. For to converse with those of other centuries is almost the same thing as to travel. It is good to know something of the customs of different peoples in order to judge more sanely of our own, and not to think that everything of a fashion not ours is absurd and contrary to reason, as do those who have seen nothing. But when one employs too much time in travelling, one becomes a stranger in one's own country, and when is too curious about things which were practiced in past centuries, one is usually very ignorant about those which are practiced in our own time.[6]

This Cartesian statement aptly describes the very topology of modern philosophy. It speaks of turning away from the established authorities of academic scholarship in general. While Descartes acknowledged his debt to his former studies, he also recognized their limits as he pined for new and more exciting frontiers where new forms of knowledge might be discovered. One thing that Descartes shared with other modern philosophers, from either rationalist or empiricist camp, with the sole exception probably of Leibniz (1646-1716), was the wholesale abandonment of the philosophical tradition inherited from the ancients. Hobbes (1588-1679), Hume (1711-1776) and Locke (1632-1704) never hid their distaste for Aristotle and the scholastics and despite some affinity in the vocabulary and method, Spinoza (1632-1677) himself would find a way to make himself distinct from his ancient and medieval predecessors.

Modern philosophy would bring to completion the erosion of scholasticism despite gaining ground in the medieval universities of Europe as well as in the early episode of the modern period. What was initially a selective repudiation of the philosophy of the schools and the recovery of the original wisdom of the ancients during Renaissance eventually led to a grand rejection of everything that was old and past including their

[6] Rene Descartes, "Discourse on Method" in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol. I, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 84.

institutional embodiments, that is, the universities. With the traditional sources of knowledge vanishing, scepticism emerged as a viable alternative. In the absence of any reliable source of certainty, it had become more convenient and more fashionable not to care to know. As Descartes lamented in the first of the part of *Discourse on Method*, the incessant debate of philosophers, the self-appointed vanguards of knowledge, did not in any way help to mitigate the situation; on the contrary, it only contributed to produce the contrary effect.[7] His proposed remedy therefore, encapsulated in the very succinct yet very powerful statement, *cogito ergo sum*, was an attempt to address the problem of scepticism by building a new foundation of knowledge, a new beginning for philosophy.[8] Descartes was considered the "Father of Modern Philosophy" because of his distinct contribution to identify new itinerary for rational thinking tersely expressed by the said Cartesian formula: *cogito ergo sum*.

Modern philosophy then was born out of the womb of the consciousness of the Cartesian cogito. Because cogito was the only thing immune to doubt and only cogito was reliable, only cogito therefore could serve as the sufficient ground for knowledge. Descartes hoped to found philosophy anew within the domain of mathematics because only mathematics could provide the certainty required by the cogito. To understand and then conquer the world, the thinking subject had to turn first to his own consciousness and in and through it, with the aid of mathematical sciences, divine the key which will unlock the secrets of nature including the hitherto unknown universe. This turn of events did not escape the critique of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) who saw in the rise of modern sciences a truly radical shift in the way we look at ourselves in relation with the known and yet to be known reality. Arendt explained:

> The perplexity inherent in the discovery of the Archimedean point was and still is that the point outside the earth was found by an earth-bound creature, who found that he himself lived not only in a different but in a topsy-turvy world the moment he tried to apply his universal world view to his actual surroundings. The Cartesian solution of this perplexity was to move the Archimedean point into man himself, to choose as ultimate point of reference the pattern of the human mind itself, which assures itself of reality and certainty within a framework of mathematical formulas which are its own products. Here the famous *reductio scientiae ad mathematicam* permits replacement of what is sensuously given by a system of mathematical equations where all real relationships are dissolved into logical relations between man-made symbols. It is this replacement which permits modern science to fulfill its 'task of producing' the phenomena and objects it

[7] Descartes, "Discourse on Method," 85-86.
[8] Ibid., 101.

> wishes to observe. And the assumption is that neither God nor an evil spirit can change the fact that two and two equal four.[9]

Coinciding therefore with the disappearance of the unity between philosophy and the academe was the rise of the unhampered pursuit of knowledge through the native mathematical capacities of the human mind. The rise of the modern sciences was made possible by the elevation of the individual consciousness, the cogito, as the primary source of knowledge. With this transformation, universities, as emblems of the authority of past dispensation, gradually faded into the background. Not that the universities or philosophy ceased to be significant; they continued to be significant but merely on a level subordinate to the dominion of the cogito. Science became the language as well as the method and content of modernity. It had become a self-contained, a stand-alone discipline very much like the cogito whose creation it was. Modernity was the site of the unbridled expansion of science which would eventually find its highest point in what succeeding thinkers would celebrate as the age of "enlightenment."[10]

## Modernity from the Perspective of Hannah Arendt

The Age of Enlightenment started with benign hopes: economic progress, political order and human autonomy through the instrumentality of reason and science. Whether it lived up to those promises however was another matter. In this part of the paper, I will turn to Hannah Arendt, a critic of modernity and a philosopher who knew firsthand what it was like to do philosophy outside the academe and what it was like for the sciences and the academe to lose their philosophical moorings..

Hannah Arendt was born and raised in Germany where she developed at an early age huge interest on Greek language and literature. She initially prepared for a scholarly career, first under the tutelage of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and after their falling off, under Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) who directed her dissertation entitled *Concept of Love in St. Augustine*. She was nonetheless forced to abandon her leaning towards an academic life with the increasing persecution of the Jews in Germany.[11] Arendt saw in the Nazi's takeover of Freiburg a concrete illustration of how easily the university and philosophy

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[9] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 284.

[10] See Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment" and Karl Leonhard Reinhold, "Thoughts on Enlightenment" in James Schmidt (ed.), *What is Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 58-64; 65-77.

[11] Hannah Arendt. *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 11.

could bend easily to the ideological agenda of those who wielded power. Or to put in another way, how modernity, appropriated by a totalitarian regime like the Nazi could reduce to subservience autonomous institutions and disciplines like the academe and philosophy. Read through the eyes of Arendt, one could see in Nazi's encroachment into the affairs of a university like Freiburg more than just a political flexing of muscle; it was in fact a totalitarian ploy aimed at extinguishing the freedom and plurality of thought inherent in the very life of the academe. Totalitarian regimes like Nazism had little regard for reason or philosophy or anything revelatory of the self or anything associated with liberative engagement. These, for them, were stumbling blocks to their aim.[12] Hence it was necessary to curb any potential for public discourse or the exercise of reason which the university extolled. Even the most fundamental human activity such as thinking must serve only totalitarian ends. For Hitler, said Arendt, "even thinking exists only by virtue of giving and executing orders."[13] In place of reason, the totalitarians found an ally in the sciences. The crown achievement of the Cartesian cogito had met its match in a group of megalomaniac adventurers who were willing to leave no stones unturned in putting science to its fullest use. In the hands of the totalitarians, sciences functioned as tools of fantasy formation. In Arendt's description:

> Scientificality of mass propaganda has indeed been universally employed in modern politics that it has been interpreted as a more general sign of that obsession with science which has characterized the Western world since the rise of mathematics and physics in the sixteenth century; thus totalitarianism appears to be only the last stage in the process during which 'science has become an idol that will magically cure the evils of existence and transform the nature of man.[14]

It should be pointed out that Arendt's critique of the sciences was not directed against the sciences as such but against a "worldless" science, that is, against sciences that took for granted the social realities which alone condition the exercise of the political. In other words, the results of any scientific endeavor are not supposed to be divorced from its applicability on the world and that scientists themselves must always be reminded to keep themselves abreast with the "objective necessities conceived as the ingredients of reality itself."[15] It is for this reason that science requires the constant interaction with philosophy. Arendt noted that the worst drawback for philosophy took place not in the

[12] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 308.

[13] Ibid., 325.

[14] Ibid., 346.

[15] Hannah Arendt, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Jan. 1950), 61.

middle ages but during the modern period with the Cartesian insistence on a self-contained science. The challenge is to make it more responsive to the world, more constitutive of action through the re-introduction of thought. The task of philosophy therefore, following the cue from Arendt, is to recover such kind of thought, that is, thought no longer in the sense of Descartes but in the sense of what is historical, what is anti-tyrannical and what is of the world. Towards the end of her book *The Human Condition*, Arendt wrote:

> Thought, finally—which we, following the premodern as well as the modern tradition, omitted from our reconsideration of the *vita activa*—is still possible, and no doubt actual, wherever men live under the conditions of political freedom. Unfortunately, and contrary to what is currently assumed about the proverbial ivory tower independence of thinkers, no other human capacity is so vulnerable, and it is in fact far easier to act under conditions of tyranny than it is to think . . . This may be irrelevant, or of restricted relevance, for the future of the world; it is not irrelevant for the future of man. For if no other test but the experience of being active, no other measure but the extent of sheer activity were to be applied to the various activities within the *vita activa*, it might well be that thinking as such would surpass them all.[16]

## Restoration of Philosophy in the Academe: Insights from Alasdair MacIntyre

What I have done so far is a sketch of the evolution of the union between philosophy and the university, starting from its original fusion during the middle ages to its dissolution during the modern times when the acquisition and promotion of scientific and technological knowledge including the promotion of philosophical thought ceased to be a restricted privilege of the academe. The new cultural order was mirrored in the work of certain philosophers like Hannah Arendt who carried out sustained critique of the modern conditions in her capacity as an intellectual displaced from her traditional academic environment. Hence, when philosophy got a new lease on life in the aftermath of the modern period, it would be due to the efforts of non-academic, that is, independent philosophers like Karl Marx (1818-1883), Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and after his stint at the University of Basel, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) among others. Their sustained philosophical engagements lent further credence to deteriorating relation between the academe and philosophy. Between the 19th and the 20th centuries, philosophy became a discipline in search of itself while the university was transformed into a bulwark of sciences. Alasdair MacIntyre (1929 to present) took up this problem in his work *Three Rival Moral*

[16] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 324-325.

*Enquiries* where he discussed the problem engendered by the tradition that gave dominion to science. MacIntyre named this tradition *encyclopedia*, a movement which traced its origin to *L'Encyclopedie* of Diderot (1713-1784) and D'Alembert (1717-1783) and reached its apex in the publication of the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in 1873 under the editorship of Thomas Spencer Baynes (1823-1887).[17] MacIntyre pointed out that this phenomenon was not an isolated event but something that was significantly related with the institutional evolution of the academe. MacIntyre was referring to the complete transformation of the university as a secular institution, that is, an institution purely dedicated to secular pursuits. There was really nothing wrong with the university becoming secular. In MacIntyre's account, the real cause of alarm was none other than the drastic loss of the unity of understanding that accompanied such conversion to secularism. Note that the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* came out in about the same generation that Newman's (1801-1890) *Idea of a University* was published.[18] What modernity did, and this was where MacIntyre agreed with Newman, was to convert the university into a conglomerate of isolated academic departments with nary a semblance of commonality.[19] Under this dispensation, it was not uncommon to find a biologist professing ignorance about the work of an economist who in turn questions the findings of a psychologist who in turn considers the intellectual musings of a philosopher a useless endeavor. Given the lack of any connection with other disciplines, the usual tendency is to insist on the make-believe orthodoxy and universality of a discipline's parochial view. It was such lack of an integrated and coherent academic identity which made the contemporary university easily vulnerable to the intrusions of corporate organizations. Jean Francois Lyotard (1924-1998), in his landmark work, *The Postmodern Condition*, had foreseen this with a fair amount of accuracy.[20] The current penchant of the academe to play cozy to the market agenda of business organizations is doubtless an indicator of how far such vulnerability had extended to its core. Once considered a vanguard of the free market of ideas, it has now reduced itself into a mere outpost of free market. This is the kind of context that gave shape to the modern academe. The universities in the Philippines are about to cross the same threshold with the impetus provided by the government program K-12.

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[17] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*: *Encyclopedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 18.

[18] The book was a collection of Newman's lectures dealing with his philosophy of education. It was first published in 1852. An online version is available at http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/#contents.

[19] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman and Us," *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 57, Issue 4 (December 2009), 347-362.

[20] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 39.

## The University and K-12: The Philippine Context

It must be stated that K-12 is a program that targets basic education and not necessarily the education at the university level. But what makes K-12 worthy of philosophical reflection is the assumption it makes concerning education which, for all intents and purposes, extends likewise to the same province of university education. At this juncture, I wish to reiterate my claim that one cannot really talk about education without raising the question of what it does mean to become a human person. Underlying therefore any assumption on education, be it at the basic or university level, are fundamental humanistic claims on whose foundation any educative enterprise rises or falls. And so when the government starts talking about education in terms of global competitiveness, labor market, matching of skills, needs of industry, language proficiency for job qualification, one can easily detect certain undertones which inform (or do not inform) the academic claims it is making. I wonder if it were really a welcome news that senior high school students would be job-ready when they graduate considering that there might not be enough jobs ready for all of them. I wonder too if getting them job-ready also includes preparing them to be life-ready. The latter I suppose remains a difficult goal as long as the university does not recognize the problem that emanates from having fragmented and atomistic academic disciplines and departments. It is precisely this kind of academic culture that produces lawyers, doctors, nurses, priests, engineers, architects and scientists among others who think of themselves as individuals set apart from the rest by virtue of their specialized profession. They too have become as apart and isolated like the disciplines and departments which produced them. That the sole aim of education, specifically, university education is to get students all prepped up for their professional careers is a cheap fiction. Sadly, this is the kind of fiction which our students are constantly fed with and which they themselves assent to without question. For most students, the worth of a university degree is determined by how much it can yield in terms of financial return. Education is no longer seen as end worthy of earnest pursuit but merely as means towards an end decided neither by the school nor by the students. The only choice now left for the students and their parents to make is whether to pay in cash, credit card or installment. Practically, all the preferred courses are taken into consideration for their ability to lend quick passage to jobs in demand. I am referring here to courses oriented to science and technology, the chief tool of modernity. This is where the traditional dichotomy between major and minor subjects comes in. These labels are by no means innocent classification of learning contents but are themselves conceptual infrastructures of utility. Major subjects are so called because they provide skills and know-how directly required by a given profession. Minor subjects are given that derogatory name because they are perceived as unnecessary in the performance of one's prospective career. Among the minor subjects with which students have developed an ambivalent

relationship are humanities courses, chief among them philosophy. The university is supposed to be the native sphere of humanistic education although one can hardly make this statement with certainty these days. Whereas before, Erasmus, Petrarch and other Renaissance thinkers would ridicule the Scholastics for not being humanist enough, today one would likely get the same condescending treatment for remaining a humanist. Arendt's campaign to bring back thought to our engagement with science including MacIntyre's solicitude for the lost unity of knowledge are efforts to revive the humanistic element which the academe has long lost to its unfortunate complicity with the world's infatuation with profit. K-12's attempt to upgrade the quality of our education by giving it sharper orientation to science and technology is an episode of a global trend that dates back to the birth of modernity. This is carried on until this very day with the migration of the major universities all over the world to the route opened by science and technology and its abandonment of the old trails once blazed by humanities. I am not saying that we should do away with science nor do I make a claim that education in humanities is the only way to go. The point I wish to make is that there should be a way of doing education that does not repress the humanistic tradition which makes the university what it is. Education is not a tool for profit nor a mere medium towards the fulfillment of one's own professional aspiration. Education is a requisite of public good whose appreciation is communicated more effectively by the values, skills and insights fostered by the humanities, specifically, philosophy.

## Conclusion

In the preceding parts of this paper, I tried to provide an account of the philosophic tradition that underwrites the relation between philosophy and the academe. I indicated that the unity between the philosophy and the academe can be traced back to the middle ages, specifically to the rise of the universities and scholasticism. Scholasticism is the by-product of the medievals' appropriation of Aristotle's philosophy which regained popularity during the middle ages. I also pointed out that modernity's rejection of the authority of Aristotle and scholasticism coincided with the disappearance of the academe's control over philosophic discourse. With the unity between philosophy and the academe superseded, modern philosophers, led by Descartes, introduced a new method of philosophizing that relied no longer on academic authority nor the canons of the past but merely on the certainty of the cogito. Aristotle's philosophy was replaced by the methods espoused by the mathematical sciences. Modern period initially hoped to bring about progress but as it turned out, the problems it engendered became larger than its promises. Hannah Arendt saw in modernity, particularly, in its unbridled pursuit of knowledge, the necessary condition which made the rise of totalitarian regimes possible and the subservience of the political to the inordinate ideological fantasies of the

totalitarians. Under their control, science became a tool to create fantasies and dreams which fed the imagination of the masses at the expense of the historical and the political. Arendt believed that the sciences can once more be won for action by reintroducing thought - thought of the world, thought of history – to an otherwise worldless endeavor. MacIntyre, for his part, lamented the fragmentation of knowledge which issued from modernity. Under the sway of its scientific culture, modernity also paved the way for the specialized pursuits of knowledge and made the learning enterprise a highly individualized and atomistic undertaking. This approach to knowledge has disastrous impact on the overall educative practices of the university because it tends to legitimize the market mentality being promoted by the emerging global culture.

In this context, K-12 may be seen as a continuation of a long-existing trend which demotes university education from its status as an all-important goal into a pliant, malleable means towards the achievement of purposes designed and dictated by business organizations and corporate interests. In the absence of potential for profit, humanities courses like philosophy are not given the same priority lent to subjects with orientation to science and technology. Towards the end of this paper, I argue that K-12 would achieve the kind of reform it wishes to accomplish if the balance of energy, priority and emphasis is not heavily tilted to science and technology. I share the conviction of those who think that humanities courses will not directly eradicate the problems of poverty, hunger and other social ills just as I share the opinion of some who argue that the same problems are not caused by the humanities either. These problems are in fact by-products of misplaced policies, wrong governance, unethical application of science and technology and the unbridled obsession with profit. Philosophy is not meant to be a panacea that will cure all our social and political ills. To accomplish that, what is required is a solid, sustained and concerted effort on our part as a collective of conscientious citizens. Towards this end, philosophy can aid us in nurturing and sustaining a kind of consciousness that will compel us to think, to act and to participate in the pursuit of public good of which all of us are creators and beneficiaries.

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