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## **PHILOSOPHY, K TO 12, AND THE KINDS OF OVERLAP**

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*Abstract.* In this project, we shall use the concept of overlap as reconstituting, mitigating, and symbolic as possible frames in configuring the experience of the discipline of Philosophy within the ambit of the K to 12. Reconstituting overlap or productive coupling, mitigating overlap as assertion of conceptual territories, and symbolic overlap as conjunctive generosity are conceptual frames that can help partly classify and explain philosophy's role and relevance in the new educational system and pedagogical format of the K to 12. Is K to 12 philosophy's better half that will make both thrive and become a productive pair/couple? Will philosophy in the country reckon such change as an opportunity to re-assess its understanding of itself, its importance? Can philosophy help form a life world upon which the K to 12 becomes an act where both act and the life world instantiate a symbolic gesture of conjunctive generosity? These are the questions that this project wishes to better understand in the hope that philosophy and philosophizing will recognize the K to 12 as an opportunity to invite, challenge, and test philosophy's role in building a country that is committed to a philosophic stance.

*Keywords:* Philosophy, K to 12, Overlap, Inter-disciplinal

### **Introduction**

When students enroll in an introductory course in Philosophy, they are usually quick to inquire on the reasons why philosophy should matter and how can philosophy be of help in the course/program that they hope to finish after four

or five years. For many, the value of philosophy appears vague, hence, hard to articulate. These, however, are simply my observations. I am unsure if students in other Universities find philosophy courses most beneficial and consider philosophy indispensable in an educational program. While many students seem hesitant to admit that there is value in philosophy, perhaps it is also necessary to ask how philosophy teachers appreciate the significance of the discipline that they teach. Why teach and study philosophy? Should philosophy be taught at all in a developing country? Or, is philosophy still relevant in today's world?

The trajectory of philosophy in the next five to ten years does not look promising. With the introduction of the K to 12 program, philosophy as a subject, which used to condition the creation of schools and universities, may be relegated to marginal and less influential spaces. Educational programs in college, for instance, will offer fewer philosophy subjects. In this case, philosophy professors will have to settle with either ethics or logic and teach the course on philosophy of human person in the secondary education or high school. These changes may mean that philosophy will be occupying a smaller part in the thinking engagements of University students and that philosophy teachers will teach only a handful of philosophy discourses in the new pedagogical structure. With the K to 12, it seems that philosophy shall be relocated and re-assigned to fulfill a peripheral role.

Do these transitions reflect or is contra-indicative of the disposition of students, even including some philosophy teachers, on the role and meaning of philosophy and philosophizing in the education program of the country? For such queries, to whom can we ask for guidance and insight on what can philosophy do still?

A person whom we can possibly turn to is one of the forefathers of Greek philosophy, Socrates. When one reads the lines of Socrates in Plato's *The Republic*, one will underscore the message that philosophy and philosophizing are both important and crucial in giving ground for a just and

happy city-state. In such a work, Socrates will show how the questions “What is justice?” and “What is *eudaimonia*?” are closely knit, and how such queries help enlarge the difference between “What can one contribute in the city state?” and “What can one can gain as member of a city-state?”. With these queries, Socrates underlines the stance that it is philosophy’s task to show the relation between *justice* and *eudaimonia*, and the difference between *contribution* and *gain*. As Socrates holds, it is the philosopher-ruler—an individual who has the experience, the virtues, and the pure golden soul—who can strike the right balance between individual and communal gains, and it is the discipline of philosophy, which makes such intellectual and ethical postures possible.

In Plato’s work, philosophy is, therefore, celebrated as the highest expression of thinking and being. This is what Socrates stands for. Philosophers function as the liberated persons from the cave and are reckoned as the advocate who seriously considers his/her responsibility to emancipate others from the chains of shadows—ignorance, greed, bloated egos, and the like. These are grand yet existentially primal roles that make philosophy necessary in determining the way society is arranged and re-arranged. These are lofty goals that philosophy and philosophers struggle with yet are expected to successfully exemplify, as they are most self-critical, ready and hard working in order to live-up to such demands.

But after reading the inspiring lines of Socrates in Plato’s *The Republic* on why philosophy is vital in a society, some keen students are also eagerly waiting to quip this query: Where is Philosophy now, Sir? Should leaders still be philosophers so that a just city-state can flourish? Is the myth of metals in the dialogue of Plato too simplistic and deterministic? What has philosophy done for the Filipinos and what has it contributed to the nation-state? At times, it is hard to defend the discipline, since almost everybody is suspicious of the relevance of philosophy. Is the kind of philosophy that we

encounter today but a shadow of its once glorious past? Is philosophy still hoping that her previous glory be restored? Are we waiting for a Filipino Philosopher who can one day help pick us up from our marginal stance and help change society's take on what it means to philosophize? Can we also cite an instance when the stance of the philosopher has been sought and listened to in social issues? The saga on the question on the value of philosophy continues.

As philosophy tries to make sense of such queries, the voice of the gadfly, Socrates might remind us to re-visit the origins of philosophic thinking, and possibly rediscover something that maybe powerful enough to re-ignite the place and role of the discipline in today's society. Will Socrates' untimely yet graceful demise provide us the necessary strength to face the challenges of philosophy in the country with the K to 12 program?

### **Philosophy and K to 12**

With K to 12, philosophy, however, may be given this slight opening, which can be magnified for philosophy's advantage. Although this opportunity appears marginal, a Socratic eye might inspire us to exercise the wings and purpose of a gadfly to re-assess and re-assert philosophy's presence in the new pedagogical system and format which the government has decided to introduce. How will philosophy in the country fare given such new pedagogical environment? While philosophy has been categorized in the old curriculum as a general education subject within the fold of the humanities, the question arises whether or not philosophy in the traditional curricula prospered and found a better knowledge of itself given such pairing? For this question to prosper, a study on how philosophy fared with the traditional coupling will have to be conducted to ascertain the extent of growth or decay in the way philosophy has engaged herself with herself and with other disciplines within a specified period of time.

The notion of coupling will also need some good attention given that the K to 12 will dislodge philosophy from her familiar terrain. In the new educational format, philosophy will no longer be paired with a discipline. In the K to 12 program, philosophy will be relocated and assigned under the banner of general education subject. Although such a classification has already been the case in the way philosophy has been reckoned in various University programs, the K to 12 format is now only magnifying such point—that philosophy is a general education course and that it is no longer necessary to group her with either the humanities or the social sciences. In other words, K to 12 simply made the obvious move to boldly label how philosophy has been treated in the past decades as a general education subject. Should K to 12 be blamed for ushering philosophy into the general subject category? Or, should philosophy thank the K to 12 program for challenging philosophy to practice its highly discussed capacity for self-introspection?

The inter-disciplinal approach is another key feature in the K to 12, which philosophy will need to face. In this regard, philosophy has this chance to functionally relate with other systems of thought and approaches to knowledge production and assess how philosophy can take part in inter-disciplinary study. Since philosophy in the Philippines is not that accustomed to working with other knowledge domains, she may be provided with this necessary chance to be immersed with its unfamiliar self, to pursue an uncharted path, or intimate with its doubts as it tries to interface with other disciplines. Also, the Filipino philosopher may be inspired to prosper and survive the discomfort with the hope that philosophy may find her way in unfamiliar terrains.

Understanding how the discipline can work with other knowledge-based domains is something which philosophizing in the country may now need to seriously look into. Can we expect philosophy to co-author articles with other disciplinal domains? Should philosophical articles now

consider inter-disciplinary tracks or themes? These are exciting questions which philosophy in the country may want to consider and discuss at length. But then again, these other queries also demand attention: What can philosophy do to cultivate such skill for inter-disciplinary studies/research? And, how will the voice of Socrates inspire us to grope in an inter-disciplinary terrain?

With the tragic yet beautiful death of the gadfly, to be interdisciplinary may mean that philosophy has to lose herself, move outside of her comfortable thinking zone, and is now expected to be vulnerable. This implies that philosophizing in the country has to triumph in the Nietzschean quest, to be an introspecting madman, and be kind enough to offer her vulnerable state as a resource which other disciplines can learn from.

In a research project with the social sciences, for instance, how can philosophy find her space within such terrain and recognize its voice, which it seeks to express? Is it possible for philosophy to figure in an account of the world, which utilizes this mix between inductive, deductive, or abductive lines of reasoning? Another important concern is, should philosophy's obsession for general logical principles no longer serve as her entry point so that philosophy can make sense of herself given an inter-disciplinary approach in an investigation that desires to make an impact to the Filipino society? More importantly, should philosophy still function as a watchdog, observing how ideas behave in the presence of other ideas and map out such network of meanings vis-à-vis presupposed logical thinking principles? Can philosophy one day decide to bracket all of her speculations and just try to learn how her sensibilities change as she gropes in the domain of other disciplines?

It seems that philosophy can benefit from the invitation to initially lose itself as she attempts to bracket her old habits, and be immersed with her vulnerability and magnify her interest to look at the world via another lens, for instance, that of the social sciences. Comparable to an artist who has

lost his/her inspiration to create and produce art-works, and is cornered by a tarnishing capacity to be a receptacle of artistic vision, the philosopher in the country, like the artist, is encouraged to be immersed in the world of fresh associations as discussed by Russell (1990) and sense impressions as stressed by Collingwood (1933), so that he/she can bathe in the pool of artful possibilities. Can philosophy in the country learn from the methods of the artist as she feels her way in the K to 12 program?

In magnifying philosophy's vulnerability, students and teachers of philosophy in the country may also finally need to let go of familiar habits while teaching, studying, or doing philosophy. This may also mean that philosophy in the country can finally have the courage to instantiate a Nietzschean turn, a route, which philosophy can trek as she faces the K to 12 program as her best friend and adversary. Extra mindful of the demands and beauty of an interdisciplinary ethos, philosophy can be an epitome when it comes to the exposition of one's vulnerable self and can leave a trace, which other disciplines may try to emulate as a philosophical stance of generosity. Will this be the natural and productive pair of philosophy in an inter-disciplinal age as a period of sharing and exposing inter-disciplinal vulnerabilities?

### **K to 12 and the Overlap**

A possible approach to make sense of inter-disciplinal vulnerabilities, as philosophy's contribution in the K to 12 program of the country, can be gleaned through the logical merits of the kinds of overlap.

An overlap can be nuanced in three ways, namely: reconstituting, mitigating, and symbolic. In broad strokes, these kinds of overlap serve as my way of re-configuring Collingwood's stance that the logic of the overlap necessarily admits the precariousness or blurring of boundaries between interfacing domains or entities. This blurring of boundaries is something, which we interpret as Collingwood's intimation of

what it means to be vulnerable with an other. In relation to the K to 12, the overlap can be re-interpreted in the language of inter-disciplinary vulnerabilities.

A reconstituting overlap privileges the concept of productive pairing. The coupling of entities is productive, since entities or concepts experience advancement in self-knowledge and capacities via the contribution of the other. This synthesis-like development entails a broadening of sorts, which can be within the purview of a question—an enlargement of one's understanding of an inquiry, an expansion of comprehension of one's uncertainty, or an increased conception of the nuances of interfacing network of relations. This is why productive pairing can also be reckoned as producing pairs, which admits agency, fertility and capacity as coming from both ends.

In the case of K to 12, philosophy can demonstrate reconstituting overlap as a specific context of inter-disciplinary vulnerabilities. In this regard, philosophy has to re-learn her questions with the questions emerging from other disciplines. Philosophy can also re-construct her understanding of the uncertainties of her field alongside the uncertainties that unfold from the interests and engagements from other disciplines. And, she can re-figure the experience of the familiar in relation to the familiar territories that other disciplines uphold. Given these tracks of thought and the values that may unfold, the confluence of K to 12 and philosophy may result to the re-matriculation of the nature of the discipline – with the way she construes her questions, her uncertainties and certainties, which she has labored to carve and articulate in history.

A mitigating overlap operates when the presence of the other disposes the invitation or challenge to re-assess and re-discover one's conceptual territory. Instead of a confluence, the primary logical effect is the inward reflection or introspection, which is guided by this question: What is that which this stance is really asserting? Is there a need to better comprehend its meaning? Or, are there other assumptions

that need articulation and discussion to better comprehend the stance that one is committed to defend? With the mitigating overlap, thinking renders itself vulnerable to self-critique. This is a habit of thought, which this type of overlap is naturally interested to look into.

In relation to K to 12, the mitigating overlap can provide this assurance: that philosophy will not dissolve or scatter into incoherence to the point that she, within the frame of inter-disciplinary approach, entirely forgets voice and language. In the process of self-critique, philosophy and the way she is taught in the country will need to spend some more time with herself and assess the kind of commitment that she has to the truths and meanings that philosophy has been proposing or inquiring about. Since it is inward looking, mitigating overlap can provide a space wherein philosophy can also articulate what she wants to accomplish in the future—her trajectories. This means that more round table discussions should be organized where philosophy teachers and enthusiasts are expected to face squarely the question of philosophy's fate. This is what K to 12 can possibly provide to philosophy: the impetus to indulge in the logical routes of a mitigating overlap.

The symbolic overlap is a form of thinking that desires to cultivate a ground, which can serve as an operative platform where thoughts and discussions can be gathered and given a kind of context, where such ideas and discourses can take root. The ground and the thought both find each other's meaning(s) with each other's embrace. This is another reason why the term symbolic is used to describe this kind of overlap. The interface no longer confines itself to respective territories. The space where the context and the thought is re-located and re-identified as fertile meeting points or historical structures.

In view of the K to 12 program, philosophy's embrace with such pedagogical system may bring life to each other in such a way that the symbolic enfolding can bring K to 12 in-touch with its philosophical nature, and philosophy can re-

locate herself within the education program. By rediscovering philosophical bearing, the K to 12 may reveal its philosophical commitments conveying the message that it has to be philosophical rather than being predominantly instrumental. For philosophy's side, she is given the possibility to discover her sense of obligation to stand by and grow with K to 12 as the program finds its way into the structures of the Filipino society. Through the symbolic overlap, philosophy looks forward to how she can contribute to other disciplines and be reciprocated in return.

### **Conclusion**

The structural change in the pedagogical format of the country in the form of the K to 12 provides an opportunity for philosophy to ponder upon four interesting points: first, the concept of interdisciplinal vulnerability, second, the notion of the overlap, third, overlap as reconstituting, mitigating, and symbolic, and fourth, the legacy of Socrates.

(1) The idea of interdisciplinal vulnerability is a possible object of philosophical rumination as philosophy decides and commits itself to learn the language of other disciplines. What does it mean to have interdisciplinal vulnerability? Can this form of vulnerability be epistemologically mapped out or described? Will philosophical description and interpretation be possible in a criss-crossing of languages, paradigms? These are some of the questions that philosophy in a K to 12 program can expect to think of and look into.

(2) The concept of the overlap gains more premium, hence needs more attention, as philosophy desires to interface with other expressions and histories of thought. As she acknowledges the opportunity to learn new habits of the mind and unlearn some of her traditional ways, philosophy can relocate herself within the purview of the overlap—a paradigm that she hopes to discover. Philosophy will also start reminding herself of these queries: Will a philosophical project help comprehend what it means to overlap with other disciplines? What image can one imagine and think of when

disciplines, thoughts, structures interface? Can overlap serve as a presupposition upon which philosophy can build her renewed or revitalized self?

(3) Since the concept of the overlap is endorsed, three types of overlap can be initially explored: reconstituting, mitigating, and symbolic. When concepts are paired, e.g., question and answer, is the relation leaning towards reconstituting, mitigating, or symbolic? The same approach can be applied to such concepts as thesis and anti-thesis, modernity and post-modernity, philosophy and anthropology, philosophy and theology, and other possible pairs.

An instance of a pair that we have looked into in this paper is philosophy and K to 12. With this couple, a case of the mitigating overlap ensues when the discipline and the educational program are disposed to re-assess or re-examine respective territories. The overlap happens, since such introspective path is traversed when the two concepts are placed in the same box. It seems that philosophy demands that the K to 12 program should know its philosophical foundation, and the program also asks philosophy to re-check what philosophizing means in the new pedagogical stance. With regard reconstituting overlap, both philosophy and the K to 12 are invited to influence each other's landscape and nurture a relation that can give birth to new philosophical and pedagogical insights. With a reconstituting overlap, the discipline of philosophy and K to 12 maintains an affair that can usher new thoughts, conceptual categories, methods, and approaches to what it means have a philosophically reconstituted K to 12 and a K to 12 that reconstitutes the mindscape of philosophy. This affair eventually leads to a symbolic overlap where philosophy and the K to 12 are well reciprocated with each other's generosity. This eventual familiarity consequently makes it almost impossible to make sense of K to 12 in the absence of philosophy, and that philosophy will become less relevant if she does not involve herself with the new educational format.

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(4) With the three points in mind, we are now led to re-think the death of the gadfly as a resource and well-spring of inspiration for philosophy and philosophy teachers to be more committed to this query: What does it mean to be relevant in society today?

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