

**Philosophy of education in a new key:
A collective writing project on the state of Filipino philosophy of education**

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Introduction

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While relatively unknown outside the country, Filipino philosophy is gaining more attention among scholars, educators, and philosophy communities in the Philippines. This growing discussion generates analysis of the various facets substantiating what is ‘organic’ and distinct about Filipino philosophy. One major aspect of interest in Filipino philosophy is education. Reflecting on the nature, aims, and problems of education, Filipino philosophy of education investigates philosophical issues and emerging trends of philosophical thinking in education which are distinctive to the Filipino context. The educational facet of Filipino philosophy is worth exploring for enriching self-understanding of what constitutes the Filipino philosophical and educational experience in the twenty-first century.

This collective writing project follows up on other collective philosophical projects of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia which engage diverse scholars in collaborative investigations of the significance of social and temporal contexts to what it means to think philosophically about education (Peters et al., 2021, 2020, 2018). While recent initiatives in collective writing have considered the nature of philosophical reflection on education in Britain (Orchard et al., 2021), Japan (Kato et al., 2020), Europe (Papastephanou et al., 2020), the United States and Canada (Jackson et al., 2020), and East Asia (Hung et al., 2021), the unique context of the Philippines requires further, sustained consideration.

This project thus aims to consider such questions as: What is the state of Filipino philosophy of education? What are the intersections between Filipino philosophy and philosophy of education? What is unique about Filipino philosophy of education within a global context? And, what is the future of Filipino philosophy of education?

This work is composed of contributions from scholars from the field of philosophy of education in the Philippines who share their perspectives on the above questions. Contributions are philosophical reflections that bring to the fore the state of Filipino philosophy of education as well as discussions about the nature of Filipino cultural, political, and intellectual heritage: its roots and influences, sources in indigenous philosophy, Filipino vernaculars (such as the use of mother tongue language in education), the postcolonial context of the nation, and intersecting contemporary trends in the philosophy and education. The discussions emphasize what is distinctive and significant in the Filipino experience, in relation to the country's unique history as well as international conversations and global challenges faced today.

Filipinos' philosophizing on education

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Can we talk of a Filipino philosophy of education? I surmise that I invite ridicule and reproach if I attempt to answer in the affirmative, especially in a brief essay like this. To talk of a Filipino philosophy of education is complicated, contentious, and controversial. 'Filipino' is complicated. 'Philosophy' is contentious. And 'Filipino philosophy' is controversial. It would be more fruitful, then, to say something about how Filipinos may philosophize about education.

Filipinos may philosophize about education by problematizing language, specifically, the medium of instruction. The issue is not only about the persistent privileging of the English language as a hegemonizing tool. Rather, the table is also turned on the Filipino (Tagalog-based) language's potential to homogenize—along Manila-centric narratives—a multicultural population that speaks 186 diverse languages. Philosophical insights may be gleaned from the likes of Roque Ferriols (1974) who taught and philosophized in Filipino but whose subtle message is not about the centring of the Filipino language but the preference for one's mother tongue in philosophizing about the everyday life and in searching for truth and meaning.

Filipinos may philosophize about education by rendering voice to the silence of and the silenced in the margins of Philippine society. Philosophical investigations may highlight the problematic relationships between the dominant knowledges and the minoritarian voices of women, children, and indigenous peoples among others. A case in point is Peter Paul Elicor's outlining of a 'culture-enabling' Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC), whose main motivation is to address the complexities of teaching philosophical reflection to the children of cultural minorities (Elicor, 2021). Another is Marella Mancenido-Bolaños' and Darlene Demandante's appeal to improve women's participation in academic philosophy and invitation for 'a community of women philosophers and academics who take interest in issues surrounding Filipina philosophers' (Mancenido-Bolaños & Demandante, 2020).

Filipinos may philosophize about education by taking a critical stance about education itself. For whom and for what are the current educational reforms? Who are privileged and who are

victimized in the deployment of educational policies fixated with accreditation, metrics, rankings, stars, and likes? How is the notion of critical thinking in education cheapened by the ethos of the market? For instance, Raniel Reyes (2015) explains how Philippine education is configured to meet the demands of corporatism and Western neoliberalism and in the process estranges the Filipino minds and bodies. In a similar vein, Paolo Bolaños (2019) laments about how universities become obsessed with total quality management (TQM) and not on authentic quality embodied in ‘cultivation of culture, the formation of character and the democratization of knowledge.’

It remains a question if the ruminations produced by Filipino disciples of philosophy can become the starting point for a discovery of distinctive Filipino philosophy/ies of education. What is obvious is that many of these thinkers are not anymore contented with cold appropriation of foreign ideas sprouting from foreign lands and expressed in foreign tongues. Rather, they start with the Filipinos’ concrete struggles and from there, hopefully discern what it really means to be philosophers of education in the Philippines. In this fashion, we excitingly anticipate the Filipino philosophers’ critical reflections on how the current pandemic becomes entangled with educational issues and theorizing.

Putting the Carabao before the plow: Imagining a Filipino philosophy of education, purposes, and resources

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In the book, *History of Education: A Filipino Perspective*, the philosopher and educator Leonardo Estioko (1994, p. 2) described Philippine education as:

A carabao behind the plow. We have a huge educational system without a clear philosophy. First, there must be a philosophy of the Filipino people. What are we and what do we want as a people? In other words, who is the Filipino and what are his (her) goals as an individual and his (her) aspirations as a nation?

Almost three decades after, I wonder whether in contemporary times, Estioko’s description of Philippine education remains true. But beyond the question of existence or presence, Estioko raises an important point, that a Filipino philosophy of education relies heavily on the formation of a Filipino philosophy.

I offer two potential routes of engagement with the call of Estioko. First, recognizing the risk of functionalism, one must ask, what should be the purpose of a Filipino philosophy of education given the globalising context? Second, what are some distinct and significant potential cognitive and affective resources that might contribute to an emergence of an inclusive Filipino philosophy?

Concerning the first route, a Filipino philosophy of education should be one that instils a Filipino ‘imagination’. I use imagination here as a predicate that comes in both adjectival and nominal forms, and as such a form of virtue that allows for human flourishing (Higgins, 2009). For Higgins (2009), it is also a ‘skill in contracting the real world in its complexity’ (p. 13). My vision for a Filipino philosophy of education is one that allows the Filipino student to engage with the world in its realness, not in fantastical or banal senses that

are distanced from the real and ideal respectively. Instead, it facilitates the student's capacity to locate themselves in the regimes of mobilities of labour—especially gendered manual and affective forms—and social and economic remittances that are diacritics of the Filipino condition. What this means is that a Filipino philosophy of education must veer away from a methodological nationalism and nativism, treating a philosophy as emerging and occurring from a rigid sense of place, and naïve of the fluidity and shifting of Filipino lives. In relation to this, and as a way to go about the second route, important conceptual and affective resources in the making of a Filipino philosophy of education are Filipino youth's emerging tropes of relating with the world. This includes emergent notions of temporality and spatiality among young people of disadvantaged background. It has been found that left-behind children of emigrant women domestic workers from rural Philippines now exhibit a pattern of refusing the mobility imperative (de los Reyes, 2020) and their ways of relating to home and away are drastically changed (de los Reyes, forthcoming). This also means that a Filipino philosophy of education must learn from the shortcomings of Filipino curriculum studies. It must start tapping into Filipino domestic and diasporic youth cultures as a resource, in ways that recognises the agency of young people in informing the purposes and ways of educating the Filipino.

Re-evaluation of Filipino philosophy of education

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Through the years, we can notice that the curriculum of basic and secondary education in the Philippines evolved; however, we can also notice that it is not anchored in any concrete philosophy. Several texts showed several reasons why the curriculum has failed to address the needs of the students; some would claim that it is because of the inadequacy of training for teachers; others would claim that it is caused by economic and political priorities of the government officials. Fr. Leonardo Estioko, however, gave a plausible reason why the curriculum continuously fails—it is because the education system is linked in the bureaucracy of the government. He claims that there has been a number of studies about the ills of the system, the educators are made aware of such ills, yet the educators lack the will to improve the system. He adds that there is a problem with the curriculum—the curriculum strives to strike a balance between technical skills and general knowledge. 'There is hardly any socio-political awareness in the minds of graduates. The first thing they have in mind is to seek employment' (Estioko, 1994, p. 205). The solution that he proposes is the determination of an appropriate philosophy of education, 'only after then can an educational system devise a responsive curriculum' (Estioko, 1994, p. 207).

Adelaida Bago notes that there is a need to identify a philosophy of education before the formulation of a curriculum, but one can notice that she does not speak of a specific philosophy, but of a general theory with an encompassing definition for each theory. She also introduces Gonzalez's view that hermeneutics could help in contextualizing a philosophy of education in the Philippine setting. He used the hermeneutics of the retrieval that pertains to the past, hermeneutics of the actual, and hermeneutics of the potential. This simply means that we have to understand the culture of the society: its past, present and future (Bago, 2001, p. 110-117).

Wilfrido Villacorta noted that the curriculum is a transmitter of values, and that one of its assumed goals is to develop Filipino identity. If we are sincere in developing such identity why is there a reduction of Filipino language? We notice that once again, values are understood in relation to the notion of traditionalism, patriotism, and nationalism and not in the context of philosophy (Villacorta, 1982, p. 35).

Emerita Quito holds the same belief as Villacorta. She notes that we must first locate the Filipino identity before we can come up with a valid philosophy of education that could be applicable for Filipinos. She notes that there is a need to understand our history. The educational system must teach its students not to despise their own, thus she proposes decolonization of the system (Quito, 2005, p. 67-73). This might also be the reason why Gonzalez advocates for the hermeneutic of the past, the present, and the future. They see the need to understand the valuation of the Filipinos, and from there create a system suited for them. Only then can we have a Filipino philosophy of education that meets the needs of our students and society.

Notes on the status of philosophy in the pre-service education curriculum

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The Philippine K-12 program, otherwise known as the Philippine Education Act of 2013, brought a more evident inclusion of the study of philosophy in basic education. Prior to this, there could only be the unsurprising mention of critical thinking (as a 21st century skill) in all institutional and course learning outcomes, and the infusion of minimal content on ethical systems in the teaching of Good Manners and Right Conduct or Values Education.

K-12 brought a welcome development in the teaching of philosophy with the reconstruction of basic education curriculum which philosophically grounded Values Education to mainstream ethical systems such as Virtue Ethics, Personalism and Constructivism. This new course, that is called Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (or sometimes Edukasyon sa Pagpapahalaga at Pagpapakatao, and henceforth EsP), follows the spiral approach that trains the learners to understand, reflect, evaluate, decide and act (DepEd, 2016), to become good individuals and responsible citizens. This course being offered from Grade 1 to Grade 10 prepares the learners for a more content-based learning of philosophy in Senior High School through the course Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person and to the other core studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences Strand.

I then question how the basic education teachers are prepared and qualified to deliver philosophy-related courses. To be more precise, I ask how the education sector inculcates philosophy to the teachers. As per Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (DepEd T., 2017), philosophical orientation is expected to be realized in the domain of personal growth and professional development, as being capable of articulating one's own philosophy of teaching and of professional reflection and learning to improve practice. On the curricular level, this is addressed in the foundational course (theory/concept) The Teaching Profession, which inculcates to preservice teachers educational philosophies across professional teacher standards. This subject is interdisciplinary, being historical, legal, and philosophical in approach (CHED, 2017). On a broader perspective, The Teaching Profession is enhanced by Professional Deontology, which is the general education course Ethics already contextualized for preservice teachers.

While I acknowledge philosophical preparation that is focused on personal and professional development, there should be better fruits if future teachers are taught to use philosophies as frameworks in action research and in their exchange of reflections regarding teaching practice. In other words, there needs to be a more straightforward teaching of philosophy of education to have a more efficient relay of philosophical content, which is useful for effective pedagogy and educational research. More than the construction of a personal philosophy of teaching, a well-grounded philosophical orientation should provide the educator the rich source of inference and reflection in the performance of the teaching task. To make this possible, there should then be an active dialogue between philosophy scholars and pedagogues, to find means to develop appropriate philosophical rhetoric in basic education, inspire academic scholarship, and thrive in the spirit of free thinking, to be able to make sense of philosophy in Philippine basic education and in the public sphere.

Reassessing teacher training and teacher quality through Filipino philosophy of education

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In recent years, teacher education has undergone dramatic changes in relation to teaching practice and teacher quality in the Philippines. The K-12 reforms were just the tip of an iceberg in the Philippine educational landscape because it only signalled a whole revamp in teacher education—a move from the competence model to a standards model of the quality of teachers. These standards—the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, Professional Standards for School Administrators, and the Philippine Professional Standards for Supervisors, explicitly prescribe the know-how attributes of teachers, school heads, and school administrators towards quality education. These current developments in our educational landscape have prompted us to reconsider the role of philosophy of education in teacher training and teacher quality, as this wave of reform efforts will shape the future of Philippine education. We are, therefore, at the crossroads as teacher standard professionalism endangers the quest for good education. This requires us either to critique or prescribe to teacher professionalism.

In these recent changes, the question is what constitutes good education for the Philippines? What then is the future of Filipino philosophy of education? In this regard, there are some scholars who argue that the normative future of Filipino philosophy of education is decolonization. This decolonization includes political (Abenes & Malibiran, 2020), epistemic (Azada-Palacios, 2021), and indigenization dimensions (Abenes & Mahaguay, 2017). Such an attempt entails interrogating the dialectical relationship between theory and practice, society and curriculum, teachers and students, school administrators and teachers, content and cohort. This plea for decolonization is not new; our Filipino luminaries—Renato Constantino, Emerita Quito, Leonardo Mercado, and Amable Tuibeo—have all championed it. Constantino (1970) emphasized that education in the Philippines is still largely colonial in nature. He proposed a curriculum centred on political liberation, economic autonomy, and cultural renewal. Quito (1985) equally claimed that Philippine educational philosophy, although paying lip regard to nationalism, has embraced western ideas and philosophies. In this regard, she proposed decolonization through Filipino philosophy of education. This involves a process of cultivation of the totality of our culture and history in its purest form without any trace of western ideology. Mercado (1993)

similarly advocated for an in depth look into our own Filipino philosophy since this is the bedrock of Filipino identity. Filipino philosophy is a means of liberating the Filipino from the colonial umbilical cord. Likewise, Tuibeo emphasizes that Philippine education is still ‘feudal, colonial, and elite’ (Tuibeo, 2005, p. 176). He proposed an alternative Philippine education that is nationalistic, scientific, mass oriented, and democratic. This alternative, accordingly, must recognize that the teleological character is towards the realization of self-reliant and self-sufficient national development.

To summarize, philosophers, educators, and educational researchers are currently at a junction regarding rethinking the role of our own philosophy in nurturing good education and teacher quality in our country.

The promise of a mother tongue-based education

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Department Order (DO) 74s. 2009 (‘Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)’) inaugurated the multilingual turn in basic education in the Philippines, finally acknowledging the crucial role first languages play in learning. Less than a decade into its formal implementation, however, the multilingual language policy is facing its biggest challenge yet. Currently, a bill seeking to abrogate the implementation of MTB-MLE and the consequent amendment of Republic Act (RA) 10533, the law that institutionalized the child’s mother tongue (MT) as the medium of instruction (MOI) from kindergarten to Grade 3, is pending in Congress. House Bill (HB) 6405 (2020) asserts that teachers are not equipped to teach in the MT and that learners are ‘more competent with using Filipino or English’, an observation that does not fully reflect the linguistic realities on the ground. In fact, in many parts of the country, Filipino/Tagalog is as foreign as English. Nevertheless, critics of the policy blame the dismal performance of students in international standardized tests on MTB-MLE, and some well-placed government personalities lobby to bring English back in kindergarten classrooms, because they believe English to be the ‘most important language that should be taught in schools’ (Cruz & Mahboob, 2018, p. 52). In research conducted in 2018, parent participants also cited the uselessness of learning in MTs when the world they wish their children to inhabit speaks English (Monje et al., 2021) in the mistaken notion that MTs will replace English. If the move for the abrogation of MTB-MLE prospers, the MTs will be back in the fringes of language policy and planning, once again ‘auxiliary’ to learning.

The multilingual language policy after all is less about legislating a language a pupil uses to learn academic content as it is about the country’s anxiety of replacing ‘higher valued’ languages, such as English and Filipino, with ‘less powerful’ ones (think Kinamay, Itawit, or Yakan). And yet, the past ten years have seen a good amount of research on MTs. Grammar books, dictionaries, and orthographies of previously ignored languages are being written, when there were little of these in the past. Basic education classrooms have never been noisier, the good kind of noise where children freely express what is in their minds without fear of being shushed for not using the ‘right’ language. Most importantly, big and small books of children’s literature are being recovered and written in MTs, many by teachers who respond to the call of providing quality content to children in need of education in the language that they know best and use often. Philippine languages are also being heard, or are

going ‘mainstream’, popularized in both traditional and social media by P-Pop groups SB19, Alamat, and others (Tupas, 2020). Filipino children are waking up to a multilingual Philippines, where languages are assets rather than handicaps. In time, children who grow up mastering their mother tongues first will come to understand how important MTs are in learning, in forging their identities as Filipinos, and as receptacles that will eventually collect, in the words of Sahota (2007), their linguistic labours.

Back to basics: Indigenizing education through the Kafudian philosophy

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Philippine educational philosophy is dominated by major themes from perennialism to existentialism with their famous counterparts—Adler and Dewey, to Nietzsche. However, these seemingly immortalized concepts were brought by colonization. Indeed, we adapted helpful ideas; nevertheless, their western ways are not always suitable to our eastern living. Unfortunately, few studies and resource materials exist on local educational philosophies; in response, more scholars today substantiate these gaps with Filipino philosophical studies.

The Beginning: the Thomasites used popular education as a vanguard to Americanizing the Philippines. They opened the blessing of education regardless of social status with undeniable phenomenal progress (Zaide, 1999). Undoubtedly, the entranced Filipinos bit the apple for their promise of Eden, leading to a colonial mentality, overwhelming locals with a foreign-superiority mindset that the ideal life was the American dream—a classic case of conditioned inferiority.

Cultural imperialism thwarted nation building and destroyed historical continuity, obliterating the Filipinos’ collective sense of becoming (Mulder, 2013). Consequently, academic circles recognized the depth of the colonial impact of miseducation. In the Cordillera Administrative Region, locals started to indigenize education. Dacillo and Nuval (2019) study digitized the oral narratives of Pidlisan in Sagada, entitled ‘Ang Pinagmulan ng Fidelisan (The Origin of Fidelisan)’ reflecting Indigenous Knowledge Systems anchored on tradigital pedagogy, wherein traditional and digital learning were fused by injecting indigenous courseware using a board game fostering memory retention, values formation, sociocultural awareness, and intergenerational ties. Hence, technology instilled indigenous values of love, bravery, respect, cooperation, and peace as embedded in their folktales, hoping to transcend good moral values and cultural identity into the future.

The Ibaloi philosophy best describes transcendence: Kafudian, the intergenerational passage of all cultural knowledge and values from creation to the present flowing fluidly into the future. Kafudian is grounded on three pillars; inayan¹ (respect), onjon (unity), and aduyon (bayanihan), constructing the basics that bind values that develop resiliency³. This foundation cultivates the indigenous people’s virtues; inayan teaches that ‘it is better to be a listener than a talker,’ onjon inspires people with a sense of oneness, solidifying the community, and is associated with aduyon, that motivates the spirit of volunteerism in providing service without expecting payment. Guided by these principles and demonstrated by their words and actions, they live harmoniously with nature. As a result, the race survives and can live a good life wherever fate leads them, and the culture is preserved and passed on across generations over time in this changing world.

Implementing the Kafudian philosophy using twenty-first century technology to indigenize education regenerates and preserves the indigenous people's essence of life. These contradictory concepts prove effective when appropriately implemented, attesting that opposites attract even in education (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Final Layout of the Board Game Design.



Figure 2. Pilot Testing among Grade 5 and 6 Pidlisan, Sagada, Mountain Province.



Thinking philosophically on education with Filipino children

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In this short piece I make a claim that only a few have made so far: that is, thinking with children broadens the horizons of Filipino philosophy of education. I proceed with these assumptions: (a) Filipino philosophy, in general, represents an undertaking—rather than a mere catalogue of literature—that involves meaning making and construction of truth via a continuous negotiation with the world, and in particular, the Philippine society, (b) Filipino philosophy of education constitutes the process of articulating the normative questions, philosophical issues, and possibilities related to the education of and for Filipinos, and (c) children have as much to say about education as educators (as well as philosophers and policymakers) do. With these assumptions in mind, I further argue that thinking with children should be taken seriously as it challenges the notion that thinking about education is a practice adults exclusively do for children.

Most Filipino children are exposed to pedagogy, not philosophy. In most cases, they are taught what to think and rarely how to think, if at all. This practice rests on the assumption that children and philosophy are at odds with each other; thus, any effort to think philosophically with them is bound to fail. However, this can be challenged on two grounds: First, children have a unique standpoint that adults no longer have access to. They have philosophical questions and insights that adults may never have thought and reached by themselves. Second, children possess some of the fundamental impulses in philosophy: wonderment, curiosity, and openness. In this sense, treating Filipino children as dialogue partners broadens the possibilities of philosophizing in the country. It adds a different voice—that of the Filipino child as philosopher—to the existing discourses on Filipino philosophy. The invitation here is to create and sustain spaces where philosophical questions and issues are addressed from their perspective. Doing so deemphasizes the notion that philosophy is reserved only for the philosophically-trained adults and insists upon the view that children, too, given the appropriate venue, can meaningfully contribute to knowledge generation.

Moreover, thinking with children as a philosophical praxis promotes a more inclusive and participatory Filipino philosophy of education. It makes the process of articulating the questions, issues, and possibilities pertaining to education for Filipinos more accessible to

children who have always been considered ‘outsiders’ to philosophy and mere ‘recipients’ of education. What does this entail? Giving children access means providing them enough opportunities to express their views about education (space); encouraging and facilitating them in articulating these views (voice); making sure their views are heard by the right persons (audience); and, finally, acting upon their views if deemed appropriate (influence).^{Footnote⁴} These processes are necessary to overcome the widespread mistrust of childhood and challenge the deficit-thinking towards children’s linguistic and epistemic abilities. Finally, allowing all stakeholders, especially children, to meaningfully and effectively participate in matters relevant to them contributes to achieving more holistic views of education today.

Education and the Filipino: Freedom and integration of conflicting cultures

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Colonialism shaped the educational philosophy of the Philippines (Schwartz, 1971, p. 202). It generally served the purposes of the colonizers but undermined the aspirations of the Filipinos. Colonial education has resulted in the imperceptible bi-polar tension between the traditional values of the Filipinos and the modernizing values of the colonizers. The internal incongruencies of those values produce a culture of insecurity that results in insecure institutions that upset the institutional dynamics of the country.

If ‘Spanish education for the Filipinos was designed to convert them to Catholicism and then to maintain them in that faith’ (Schwartz, 1971, p. 203) and American education for Filipinos was designed to ‘quickly promote the pacification of the islands’ (Constantino, 1974, p. 2), education for freedom should be the goal of education for Filipinos in the postcolonial time. It is the only way to integrate their seemingly conflicting values. An education for freedom corrects the internal incongruencies of values that the two equally important institutions of family and nation demand. A free Filipino, Jose Rizal iterated, is one who is disciplined, and has intellectual integrity and moral uplift. Together with a love of country and a refusal to submit to tyranny, they are willing to give their life in defence of all these qualities (Majul, 1996, p. 28).

As a people that ought to try harder to shake off the yoke of colonialism, Constantino’s view about education as ‘a vital weapon of a people striving for economic emancipation, political independence and cultural renaissance’ (Constantino, 1974, p. 1) is a fair conclusion. However, education as freedom should veer away from contemporary education’s traps of ‘utilitarian, performative, and individualistic concerns’ (Tan, 2017, p. 10). To build on the esteem of the Filipino people is first needed, a self-esteem anchored on freedom which Rizal meant as the ‘condition in which (hu)man is allowed the full development of both her/his intellectual and moral faculties, and where s/he is allowed to keep her/his self-respect’ (Majul, 1996, p. 23).

The continued underdevelopment of the Philippines is a reflection of unfreedom, which means being imprisoned in the idea of having to choose between tradition and modernity, which results in an unbalanced social structure between the care for the welfare of the family against that of the nation. As a consequence, the universalistic values of modernity may get co-opted into the particularistic demands of familism (Ramirez, 1991, p. 6). Education as freedom could inspire ‘a total revolution of mindsets... so that in a common venture all

Filipinos may truly get educated to bring forth authentic human development of a people-in-process, a nation-in-process' (Ramirez, 1991, p. 13).

In conclusion, education for freedom produces free Filipinos whose cultural identity does not regress to a world that has gone by. Rather, it awakens the hidden values of a culture which imputes new meanings based on the conditions of the present. Freedom brings together the past and the future into the present, recharging the present with new energies that constantly recreate and renew the world, and developing, in a humane way, persons in the process (Ramirez, 1991, p. 13).

Speaking in our voice

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In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha (1994) deployed the term hybridity to challenge aspirational conceptions of cultural purity, used both in imperial racist discourse (such as in anti-miscegenation campaigns) and in anti-colonial nationalist discourse. Without minimizing the violence of imperial and colonial projects, Bhabha highlighted the creative fecundity of these encounters between the colonizer and the colonized, made visible in postcolonial cultural artifacts, literature, language, and even identities.

The word hybridity and the creative possibilities it indicates augur the future of Philippine philosophy of education. The tradition of Philippine philosophy, or more accurately, of Philippine philosophies, is itself a creative product of violent encounters, as seen across its historical milestones. To mention just two: In the late 19th century, Filipino thinkers wrote amid and against colonial structures of domination, and the questions they struggled with produced the corpus we identify today as the literary, philosophical, political, and religious/theological works of the Philippine Enlightenment (see Mojares, 2008; Thomas, 2012). In the mid-twentieth century up to the 1970s, Philippine academics assailed the Eurocentrism and US-centrism of their own academic training, forever transforming several academic fields—including linguistics, literature, psychology, history, and of course, philosophy—giving these disciplines the distinct decolonial timbre that characterizes them in the Philippines (see Ferriols, 1974).

To do philosophy of education in the Philippines, then, is to work from the same history that gave birth to these traditions. It is to work uncomfortably in the liminal space between the dominant and the dominated, hyper-aware of how imbalances of power are replicated in the places we study—the home, the classroom, the school, the wider community—and in the places we inhabit as academics—the university, regional academia, and global academia.

However, to work from such spaces can lead to what Kelly Agra (2020) calls epistemic paralysis. Building on Miranda Fricker's work, Agra cites the example of a woman 'immersed in philosophies about being human that regards being emotional as a feminine character and then equated to a form of non- and/or ir-rationality.' Such immersions, she continues, could lead the woman 'to deny herself of her emotions and start acting or thinking "like a man,"' or alternately, could lead her to 'regard herself and her [emotional] kind as inferior to men, ... never ... able to match the philosophical abilities of men' which could result in her ceasing to philosophise altogether (p. 34). Similarly, in the liminal space between the dominant and dominated, the Philippine philosopher of education is at risk of a

similar epistemic paralysis. Reading canons made in and for the Global North, she may, like the philosopher in Agra's example, begin to try to erase the Filipino-ness of her own philosophical voice, allowing philosophy of education as is done in the North to dictate the form and direction of her own work. Alternately, she may begin to regard indigenous sources as 'unphilosophical,' her own thinking as inferior, her voice unimportant, and Philippine experiences of education irrelevant in the global conversations (which are predominantly Global North conversations) about educational philosophy.

However, for philosophy of education in the Philippines to be creative, Philippine philosophers of education must recognize and embrace the hybridity of the liminal space that they occupy and speak honestly—without apology or shame—from the soil on which they stand. This collaborative essay is a start.

Conclusion

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To talk about one's identity calls for self-reflection from which one may discover the idiosyncrasies and peculiarities of their identity. And it is through self-reflection that one may uncover the richness and powerfulness of their core. Examining Filipino philosophy of education unlocks multiple, intersecting components. What is Filipino philosophy of education? As discussed here, it is a thriving potential that requires revisiting cultural and historical narratives, considers inclusivity, re-evaluates the educational system, challenges existing pedagogies, and rediscovers indigeneity. It problematizes issues of freedom, globalization, colonization, multilingualism. In addition, the problematizing should begin, as Azada-Palacios puts it, 'from the soil on which they stand,' to 'locate a Filipino identity,' as Bolaños purports. Filipino philosophy of education therefore necessitates looking at the roots of Filipino, philosophy, education, and their intersections. A plethora of discussions thus emerges, leading back to the question 'what *then* is Filipino philosophy of education?'

It is crucially important to respond to this question as it entails putting Filipino identity at the core of discussion and unearthing exponential points about it. This may further mean many things, such as looking at the historical accounts, particularly the aspect of colonialism, and being challenged to 'shake off the yoke of colonialism' and regain the Filipino self-esteem anchored on freedom, as Suazo asserts. This is in turn supported by Abenes' point that shaking off the yoke of colonialism means 'liberating the Filipinos from the colonial umbilical cord'; it may also mean locating other facets more specific to culture, such as multilingual and indigenous aspects of the Filipino identity. A form of moving away from colonialism, Monje speaks of forging Filipino identity through the use of mother-tongue languages in learning, which should be seen as assets rather than handicaps. Also premised on the need for divorcing from cultural imperialism, Basal attests to the uniqueness and richness of the Filipino indigenous communities and their philosophies and puts forward indigenized education. Elicor, on the other hand, considers vital the role of Filipino children as dialogue partners thereby not limiting philosophy to adults and challenging epistemic injustice to children. Similarly, De los Reyes encourages tapping on the capacities of youth in building a Filipino philosophy of education. He envisages a Filipino philosophy of education that allows for engagement with the world in its realness and fluidity. This also means taking a critical stance on education and focusing on Filipinos' organic and concrete struggles

instead of ideas from foreign lands, as Cortez remarks. In addition to having a critical stance, Albela holds that active dialogue between philosophy scholars and pedagogues is significant in crafting an appropriate philosophical rhetoric in (basic) education, hence influencing the status of Filipino philosophy of education as a whole.

Filipino philosophy of education has rich stories to tell. It has a unique identity with vast historical and cultural roots to bank on. And while the foregoing discussions are but a few perspectives from Filipino scholars, they present an immense fecundity of (re)imagination about this evolving philosophy, and they have more stories to tell. The telling of the story does not stop here. Its future is bright. Our reflections continue.

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Notes

- 1 Inayan is broad and complicated requiring further study for better understanding.
- 2 There is no exact English translation, generally defined as a system of mutual help and concern.
- 3 This is not limited to the common definition of withstanding difficulties but is based on indigenous people's way of surviving forged by their indigenous philosophies.
- 4 I borrow these four elements from Lundy's model in conceptualizing Article 12 of the UNCRC. See Lundy (2007).

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