"Namimilosopo ka na!": Filipino Children as Victims of Testimonial Quieting[1]

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Abstract: Filipino children are often met with dismissive remarks such as "Namimilosopo ka na!" or "Hindi mo maiintindihan, isip bata ka pa," when they engage in reasoning or ask questions. These statements are often delivered in a derogatory manner as children are not seen as knowers, or at least, as potential knowers. Despite its prevalence, limited scholarly works have examined how Filipino children suffer from this treatment and perception of adults. As such, I aim to illustrate in this paper how Filipino children experience a specific practice of silencing, that is, testimonial quieting, when they do philosophy. To establish what it means for children to "do philosophy," I first draw on Peter Paul Elicor's article "Are Filipino Children Too Young to Do Philosophy?" Elicor highlights how adults easily dismiss children's philosophical questions, seeing them as naïve, embarrassing, or unworthy of serious attention. Then, I discuss Karrin Murris' "Can Children Do Philosophy?" to address common skepticism about children's ability to do philosophy. Building on these discussions, this paper primarily aims to conceptualize the practice of silencing experienced by Filipino children using Kristie Dotson's account of testimonial quieting. Testimonial quieting occurs when an audience fails to recognize a speaker as a knower. Dotson highlights how speakers hugely depend on their audience's willingness to be acknowledged and understood properly. I conclude by offering a preliminary account of how Filipino children suffer from testimonial quieting in two ways: first, by being ignored, and second, by receiving inaccurate or dismissive answers. This paper ultimately aim s to challenge the misconceptions toward Filipino children's status as knowers and capacity for philosophical thinking.

Keywords: *Philosophy for Children, epistemic violence, pamimilosopo, silencing*

Introduction

Filipino children frequently experience having their questions dismissed or not taken seriously by adults. Even in cases where their questions are answered, they are often met with simplified and inaccurate answers. These responses do not come from genuine engagement with children; it functions more as a way to stop them from asking more questions. Similarly, children's testimonies and attempts at reasoning are frequently dismissed. This pattern reflects a broader societal tendency that does not recognize children as knowers simply by virtue of age.

[1] I thank Keisha Christle Abog for her insightful comments and suggestions since the early conception of this paper in our Philosophy for Children class.

In this paper, I aim to conceptualize how Filipino children suffer from a practice of silencing that fails to see them as knowers, that is, testimonial quieting. This paper is structured into four sections. First, I discuss Peter Paul Elicor's argument that Filipino children can and are already engaging in philosophical inquiry. I draw from his definition of philosophy as an attempt to understand the world by asking questions. Second, I present Karin Murris' critique of John White and Richard Kitchener who argue against children's ability to do philosophy. By discussing Murris' work, I aim to address the common misconceptions regarding children's ability to do philosophy. Third, I introduce Kristie Dotson's account of epistemic violence and testimonial quieting, which serves as the primary framework of my analysis. Finally, I present two ways in which Filipino children experience testimonial quieting: first, through being ignored, and second, through receiving inaccurate or dismissive answers. I conclude by emphasizing the importance of ameliorating our assumptions and attitudes toward Filipino children to foster a genuinely inclusive epistemic environment that cultivates their philosophical thinking.

Filipino Children Doing Philosophy

In his article, "Are Filipino Children Too Young to Do Philosophy?", Elicor argues that Filipino children are not only capable of doing philosophy, but they are also already engaging in it.[2] Philosophy, in this regard, is the practice of reflecting on one's own and others' experiences in making sense of the world. Doing philosophy, then, involves being perplexed by one's conditions and attempting to understand them. This often leads to asking existential questions. It is important to clarify that, in this paper, philosophy does not pertain to a subject matter transferred from one person to another. It is also not the academic discipline taught in universities that requires a degree and expertise.[3] However, this is not to say that this is Elicor's sole definition of philosophy. Rather, this definition of philosophy must be understood within the specific goal of Elicor's paper: to establish Filipino children's ability to do philosophy—in its less strict sense.

Elicor provides several examples to illustrate how Filipino children do philosophy by asking existential questions. For example, a child may ask, "Why does tatay have to work abroad?" or "Why do I have to wear polka-dotted clothes on New Year's Day?" Similarly, an adolescent might wonder, "Why am I not as pretty as the other girls in school?"[4] From these questions, Elicor suggests that children may have deeper existential concerns in asking these kinds of questions. He argues that such inquiries can be an opportunity to explore a child's existential concerns and guide them in exploring such inquiries. Thus, it becomes problematic when children's questions are quickly dismissed or given simplistic answers because it restricts them from cultivating their thinking skills. Similarly, adults miss the opportunity to critically reevaluate their personal assumptions.[5]

Furthermore, Elicor problematizes the way that adults often perceive children's questions as naïve, embarrassing, or unworthy of serious attention. He posits that the focus should not be on whether children can do philosophy or not, but on whether adults are willing to engage with and refine children's philosophical thinking. He identifies two common beliefs among adults that hinder

[2] Peter Paul Elicor, "Are Filipino Children Too Young to Do Philosophy?," *Kritike* 18, no. 1 (March 2024): 67–68.

[3] *Ibid*., 67.

[4] *Ibid*., 68.

[5] *Ibid*., 69.

children's engagement with philosophy. First is the assumption that children must reach adulthood before they can engage in higher-order thinking. As such, Elicor questions the idea of children as isip bata (childlike thinking) and lack the necessary experience in life to formulate meaningful questions. Second is the belief that children must be protected from certain topics that adults consider mature or age inappropriate. For example, adults typically avoid talking about taboo and controversial topics with children, such as death and sexuality. While Elicor recognizes that certain topics may not be practical to discuss with children all the time, he warns against completely dismissing their questions, as doing so silences children's curiosity rather than nourishing it.[6]

This is why, in this paper, I adopt Elicor's account of philosophy wherein philosophy is taken as an inquiry into understanding one's existential conditions and as a means to sharpen one's thinking skills. When I refer to the notion of children doing philosophy, I do not mean that children are engaging in academic philosophy as practiced in higher education. Instead, I refer to children's ability to engage and reflect on their personal experiences and interests, then formulate meaningful questions. Additionally, I also align with Elicor's critique of how children's questions are frequently dismissed. Identifying this problem lays the groundwork for a deeper philosophical inquiry, that is, examining the ways in which Filipino children experience silencing when they attempt to do philosophy. The tendency to dismiss children's questions can be traced to some commonly held beliefs about children's supposedly "limited" thinking skills. Such beliefs assume that children are too young to ask meaningful questions and form substantial beliefs. Thus, they must not be taken seriously. To further investigate this issue, I turn to Karin Murris' work to discuss some of the misconceptions we may intuitively have toward children's thinking skills. By identifying these misconceptions, we can have a clearer idea of why children are easily undervalued when they engage in philosophical inquiry.

Why Do We Think Children Cannot Do Philosophy?

In "Can Children Do Philosophy?", Karin Murris addresses some of the criticisms against the idea that children are capable of doing philosophy. She traces these criticisms to Neo-Aristotelian thinking and Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory. Through this discussion, I identify possible reasons why adults instinctively dismiss children's questions, thereby impeding their opportunities to engage in philosophical inquiry.

Murris responds specifically to John White's and Richard Kitchener's skepticism toward children's ability to do philosophy and higher-order thinking.[7] On the one hand, White argues that to genuinely do philosophy, children must not only be capable of thinking logically and rationally but must also adopt a "higher-order stance to reasoning" similar to adult philosophers. He distinguishes the kinds of inquiry that children pose from those that adults pose. He believes that while children ask questions to learn how to use a concept, an adult asks questions from a higher-order viewpoint.[8] For White, just because children can ask questions, it does not necessarily make them capable of doing philosophy. The context and the intention behind the question must be sufficient to consider their inquiries as philosophical.[9] Because children's intentions differ from those of adults when inquiring,

[6] Elicor, "Are Filipino Children Too Young to Do Philosophy?," 70.
[7] Karin Murris, "Can Children Do Philosophy?," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 34, no. 2 (2000): 262,
[8] John White, "The roots of philosophy," in *The Impulses to Philosophise* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 75.
[9] *Ibid*., 74.

he argues, they are not doing philosophy.[10] Children are merely acquiring a concept and not doing philosophy.[11]

On the other hand, Kitchener argues that what children express are only one-time performances or "philosophical one-liners."[12] He warns that using anecdotes as evidence of children's philosophical thinking can be misleading. For Kitchener, even though children can ask philosophical questions, these must be tested through sustained engagement to test the child's ability to explain and defend such views.[13] Looking back on Elicor's examples of Filipino children doing philosophy, they qualify for what Kitchener calls philosophical one-liners.

In responding to White and Kitchener, Murris exposes the underlying assumptions in their arguments. She argues that White and Kitcher appear to follow Neo-Aristotelian notions of human development, that is, the view that human beings are tabula rasa at birth. This notion relies on the idea that knowledge comes from experience. Therefore, as one's age increases, the more knowledge they can possess. This implies that since children lack sufficient experience, it hinders their ability to gain knowledge and do philosophy. However, Murris challenges this claim by arguing that children's lack of sufficient experience does not hinder their ability to philosophically reflect, ponder, or question.[14] Drawing on Ann Margaret Sharp and Laurence Splitter, she argues that while children may not grasp certain abstract concepts due to limited experience, they are still capable of reflecting on a wide range of philosophical ideas such as causality, reality, personhood, and truth.[15]

Meanwhile, from a psychological standpoint, Murris attributes the dominant educational thinking to Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory. Similar to the Neo-Aristotelian assumption, Piaget's theory posits that children's reasoning capacities develop as they get older. Hastening this process can even result in educational malpractice.[16] As a result, children's development is understood as a linear process that can be categorized into certain stages. For example, education systems often design curricula according to students' age and assumed developmental stages. Education, then, has fixated on students' ages and standardized teaching methods.[17] Murris points out two key problems with this approach. First, it places excessive emphasis on similarities between children without considering their individuality and differences. Second, it restricts the scope of what children are thought capable of understanding or engaging with. With these problems, Murris critiques the shortcomings of Piagetian frameworks in education as they overemphasize logical and mathematical thinking, neglecting imaginative thinking.

Two important points can be drawn from Murris' work. First, we tend to assess children's ability to do philosophy through the lens of academic philosophy. Specifically, White's and Kitchener's criteria of what counts as "philosophy" are drawn from practices and methods within academia. This

[10] Murris, "Can Children Do Philosophy?," 268.

[11] White, "The Roots of Philosophy," 76.

[12] Richard F. Kitchener, "Do Children Think Philosophically?," *Metaphilosophy* 21, no. 4 (1990): 426.

[13] *Ibid*., 427.

[14] Murris, "Can Children Do Philosophy?," 267.

[15] Laurance J. Splitter and Ann Margaret Sharp, *Teaching for Better Thinking: The Classroom Community of Inquiry* (Australian Council for Educational Research, 1995), 22.

[16] Ann Gazzard, "Philosophy for Children and the Piagetian Framework," *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children* 5, no. 1 (1983): 11.

[17] Murris, "Can Children Do Philosophy?," 270.

narrow approach prevents us from appreciating children's way of engaging in philosophical inquiry. Here, I reiterate my earlier point that when I refer to children doing philosophy, I do not mean that they are doing academic philosophy. Rather, they are engaging with personal, often existential questions that emerge from their own lived experiences. Second, I extend Sharp and Splitter's point that we cannot simply project concepts onto children and expect them to easily relate and understand. If we are to take seriously the idea of children doing philosophy, we must start by considering their personal experiences, as they are where they draw most of their philosophical thinking. Again, this follows Elicor's definition of philosophy as an inquiry into one's experiences in an effort to understand them.

Now that I have clarified what it means for Filipino children to do philosophy and what some of the commonly held beliefs are about their philosophical thinking, I turn to Kristie Dotson's account of epistemic violence and testimonial quieting. Using Dotson's account allows us to see what makes the silencing of Filipino children's questions epistemically violent. Moreover, it highlights how children are rendered vulnerable as speakers when adults fail to recognize them as knowers.

Epistemic Violence and Testimonial Quieting

Kristie Dotson draws from Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" to develop her notion of epistemic violence.[18] Spivak was primarily concerned with identifying how marginalized groups are silenced due to colonialism, resulting in the disappearance of local and provincial knowledge in favor of Western epistemic practices. She characterizes epistemic violence as any practice that undermines a group's ability to be heard and to express themselves meaningfully.[19] Therefore, to understand epistemic violence in testimony, Dotson examines the dependent relationship between a speaker and their audience. Specifically, in linguistic exchanges, a speaker relies on their audience to be recognized and taken seriously. The speaker's attempt to communicate depends on whether the audience is willing to listen and engage with the speaker.[20] To illustrate, Dotson adopts Jennifer Hornsby's concept of reciprocity from "Disempowered Speech." For Hornsby, a successful linguistic exchange necessitates reciprocity between the speaker and their audience.[21] Through reciprocity, an audience understands the speaker's words as well as how they are meant to be taken. Also, a speaker's speech and intentions are accurately understood by their audience.[22] Simply put, the audience meets the speaker halfway if reciprocity is practiced. Hornsby adds that reciprocity not only allows a speaker to express "meaningful thoughts but also to be heard."[23] From Hornsby's discussion, Dotson highlights that in communication, there must be a willing and capable audience to listen to the speaker. She argues that if the audience fails to reciprocate, then the speaker is put in a vulnerable position.[24]

[18] Kristie Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (2011): 236.

[19] Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (University of Illinois Press, 1988), 282–283.

[20] Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," 238.

[21] *Ibid.*, 237.

[22] Jennifer Hornsby, "Disempowered speech," *Philosophical Topics* 23, no. 2 (1995): 134.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," 238.

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With this, Dotson defines her account of epistemic violence as an audience's failure to communicatively reciprocate to a speaker due to pernicious ignorance.[25] Pernicious ignorance pertains to any form of reliable ignorance that causes harm. However, it must be noted that reliable ignorance in itself is not harmful. It simply pertains to any form of consistent ignorance or lack of knowledge due to expected gaps in cognitive resources. For instance, Dotson identifies reliable ignorance in a three-year-old child unaware of voting practices in their country. Dotson argues that this form of ignorance is reasonably expected.[26] What then makes reliable ignorance harmful? Dotson suggests that harm in epistemic violence is a context-dependent exercise that must include analysis of power relations and other contextual factors that make ignorance harmful. For example, a benign ignorance for one knower in a specific social location and power level may be pernicious to another knower in a different situation.[27]

Dotson's account of epistemic violence allows us to understand how our linguistic exchanges become a locus of epistemically violent practices. The absence of reciprocity is easily understandable as to why epistemic violence can occur. However, Dotson's idea of pernicious ignorance may not be as robust as her idea of reciprocity. Here, I defend Dotson's idea that identifying harmful reliable ignorance requires context. I agree that while all forms of ignorance are not harmful, they always carry the potential to produce harm. Hence, as Dotson advises, we must look at the person's social location and power differentials.[28] With these, I posit that locating pernicious ignorance is best done by analyzing how it translates into harmful practices.

Dotson identifies one practice of silencing as testimonial quieting.[29] She calls it a practice of silencing rather than an instance of silencing, since the latter implies a non-repetitive occurrence of silencing. Meanwhile, the former concerns a repetitive occurrence of an audience failing to communicatively reciprocate to a speaker.[30] This distinction emphasizes why testimonial quieting is a serious and harmful practice of epistemic violence — it is pervasive and persistent. Testimonial quieting occurs when an audience fails to recognize a speaker as a knower. By not acknowledging a speaker as a knower, reciprocity is denied.[31] Dotson elaborates on this form of silencing by referring to Patricia Hill Collins' Black Feminist Thought, which documents how Black women in America are systematically undervalued as knowers. Their competence is impeded by audiences' failure to acknowledge the stereotypes they hold about black women, making their prejudices naturalized and seem inherent.[32] Collins traces this undervaluing to what she calls "controlling images" that stigmatize black women as mere mammies, matriarchs, mothers, and prostitutes.[33] Given these prejudices held against black women, they are targeted as a social group whose capacity as knowers is questioned.

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[25] Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," 238.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.*, 239.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] The other practice of silencing that Dotson introduces is testimonial smothering. However, given this paper's intent, I only focus on testimonial quieting.

[30] Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," 241.

[31] *Ibid.*, 242.

[32] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2000), 69.

[33] *Ibid.*, 72–81.

In addition to Collins, Dotson cites how other scholars depict how the failure to recognize speakers as knowers causes harm. For example, Miranda Fricker discusses the damage to a person's intellectual courage. Meanwhile, Cynthia Townley highlights the undermining of knowers' epistemic agency. Lastly, Collins, on a broader scale, notes the erasure of entire intellectual traditions. By listing these thinkers' ideas, Dotson reiterates her stance that the degree of damage due to epistemic violence varies depending on specific circumstances. Dotson argues that a similarity between Fricker, Townley, and Collin is their identification of a problem that arises when an audience fails to see a speaker as a knower.[34]

Based on Dotson's framework, I offer an integrative definition of testimonial quieting: testimonial quieting occurs when an audience fails to see a speaker as a knower, therefore, they fail to communicatively reciprocate to the speaker due to pernicious ignorance. In the following section, I use Dotson's ideas of epistemic violence and testimonial quieting to conceptualize how Filipino children doing philosophy are silenced. Specifically, I focus on how adults fail to communicatively reciprocate Filipino children's attempts to do philosophy due to pernicious ignorance. More specifically, I attempt to identify and illustrate how pernicious ignorance functions to harm Filipino children as knowers.

How Testimonial Quieting Functions Against Filipino Children

Central to this paper is my conceptualization of how Filipino children suffer from testimonial quieting when they do philosophy. In this section, I delineate two distinct ways in which children are not treated as knowers in linguistic exchanges, making them victims of testimonial quieting. First, I show how children's questions are often ignored or dismissed by adults, drawing from Elicor's anecdote in "Are Filipino Children Too Young To Do Philosophy?" Second, I offer a hypothetical case to demonstrate how adults give inaccurate or misleading answers to children when they ask questions. Through this example, I problematize how giving false answers to children becomes a form of testimonial quieting.

Ignored Inquiries

Elicor shares an anecdote when he was on a flight to Tacloban for a philosophy conference. Sitting beside a mother and her six-year-old daughter, he overhears the child ask: "Mama, aren't we close to heaven now? Would we be able to see God?"[35] Embarrassed, the mother hushes her daughter. Elicor points out that, interestingly, the child's question has also been asked by philosophers before her. The difference lies not in the question's depth and content, but in the child's clear and non-hermeneutic language that lacks philosophical jargon. Elicor believes that, in this scenario, the mother missed a chance to explore the notions of God and faith with her child.[36]

Following Elicor's definition of philosophy, I argue that the child's question reflects her ability to do philosophy. Her inquiry emerges from puzzlement and a desire to understand her experience of being on a plane for the first time. In her attempt to understand the idea of God, she asked her mother a question. The mother's decision to dismiss and ignore the question is where the locus of testimonial

[34] Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," 243.

[35] The child originally asked in her mother tongue. The cited passage here is Elicor's translation of the child's questions in English.

[36] Elicor, "Are Filipino Children Too Young to Do Philosophy?," 66–67.

quieting emerges. Testimonial quieting, as defined by Dotson, occurs when a speaker is not regarded as a knower by their audience. In this instance, I posit that the mother failed to see her daughter as a knower, which led her to dismiss the question rather than engage with it. As Elicor argues, the child's inquiry mirrors those asked by academic philosophers. The only difference is the clarity and simplicity with which the child framed the question. Here, I extend Elicor's claim by arguing that the child's question was ignored largely due to her age. The mother's decision to ignore the inquiry reflects a form of pernicious ignorance, which, as Dotson explains, results in a failure to communicatively reciprocate. By acting on her pernicious ignorance, the mother not only disregarded her daughter's question but also committed epistemic violence.

Following Dotson's account, pernicious ignorance must be assessed within its specific context to determine its potential for harm. Hence, I identify several ways that the mother's dismissal of her daughter's question may have caused epistemic harm. First, the child may come to believe that her questions are unintelligent, unimportant, and unworthy of adult attention. After being ignored, the child could internalize the idea that her thoughts and curiosities lack value. Second, such an experience may discourage the child from expressing future inquiries, particularly those prompted by existential or unfamiliar experiences. This reluctance may impede her ability to communicate her existential worries even if she can articulate these by asking questions. I argue that these possible situations are indicative of how the mother's ignorance was not merely a benign oversight, but a pernicious form of harm.

Inaccurate Answers

Another way that testimonial quieting can function is when children's questions are met with inaccurate answers. In such cases, although the child is acknowledged and responded to, they are still not treated as genuine knowers. To illustrate this, I offer a hypothetical scenario that reflects a common experience among children. This example aims to reflect the experience of children who are perplexed by certain concepts and ideas about God, as exemplified by several children's books.[37]

Let us take the case of Matthew, an eight-year-old child who regularly attends Sunday school with his family. Known for his curiosity, he often asks numerous questions about the Bible. During one class, the topic of Jesus Christ's Ascension was discussed. Confused and curious, Matthew asked his teacher, "Teacher, paano po umakyat sa heaven si Jesus kung nakapako siya sa krus?" At this point in the class, he had already posed several questions. In an attempt to quickly satisfy Matthew's curiosity, the teacher simply replied: "Ginamit ni Jesus 'yung superpowers niya kaya siya naka-alis at nakapunta sa heaven." Satisfied with the answer, Matthew did not ask any further questions and chose to stay silent throughout the class.

Similar to the first example, the locus of testimonial quieting emerged in how Matthew's teacher responded to his question. While Matthew's question was acknowledged, I argue that he still suffered from testimonial quieting due to the inaccuracy and oversimplification of the answer he received. This manifests the teacher's failure to see Matthew as someone capable of understanding the Death and Ascension of Christ. Ideally, the teacher could have explained what happened after Christ's Crucifixion instead of giving a misleading answer. The example shows that while the teacher may appear to have

[37] Some books include *Where is God?* by Lawrence and Karen Kushner, *Abraham's Search For God* by Jacqueline Jules, and *What is God Like?* by Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner.

communicatively reciprocated to Matthew, he was still not seen as a knower, as he was given an oversimplified response that prematurely ended the child's line of inquiry.

Following Dotson, it is necessary to assess the broader context in which this ignorance becomes pernicious. I posit that the teacher's pernicious ignorance is their assumption that giving Matthew a simplified answer would stop him from asking further questions. This assumption is caused by Matthew's attitude of being persistent in asking questions. The epistemic harm from this example unfolds in two ways. First, Matthew, as an individual knower, may develop misconceptions about his faith based on false information. Second, the teacher's behavior reinforces a broader norm, that it is acceptable to suppress children's inquiries by offering inadequate responses, especially when they are perceived as overly inquisitive. Testimonial quieting in this case not only affects Matthew but also other inquisitive children as well.

Avoiding Testimonial Quieting

One may object that it is not ideal to answer a child's question, especially when practical constraints are involved. For instance, a child may raise a question in a public setting where it might be deemed inappropriate or disruptive, or the question may be an unfamiliar topic to the adult being asked. Here, I argue that it is still possible to communicatively reciprocate without committing epistemic violence and engaging in testimonial quieting. In this way, children are still seen and treated as knowers.

Following Dotson's strategy of defining pernicious ignorance, I posit that communicatively reciprocating to a child's question in impractical situations requires context. For instance, an adult might ask a child how they came up with their question. In this way, while the child's question is not directly answered, their curiosity is still sustained and given importance. Alternatively, the adult might clarify how the child understands the question, which can open the space for a meaningful conversation that explores the child's thought process. Another option is for the adults to admit that they do not know the answer. This gesture of humility allows the child to recognize that not all questions have immediate answers but that the question remains valuable nonetheless. In each of these responses, the adult avoids committing epistemic violence by affirming the child's capacity as a knower. Thus, even in challenging or inconvenient circumstances, it is possible to communicatively reciprocate without silencing children, ensuring that their inquiries are treated with the seriousness they merit.

Conclusion

The problem of silencing Filipino children remains unexplored, prompting the need for a rigorous philosophical investigation into this problem. In this paper, I sought to shed light on this issue by drawing from Elicor's definition of doing philosophy and Dotson's account of testimonial quieting. This approach enables us to recognize the philosophical capacities of children and underscore the role of adults as their epistemic audiences.

I reiterate that the prevalence of epistemic violence and testimonial quieting implores us to reexamine our perception and treatment of Filipino children. The issue is not merely about whether their questions are answered, but whether they are recognized as capable of asking meaningful questions in the first place. The everyday dismissal, simplification, or misrepresentation of their

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inquiries reflects a broader cultural tendency to overlook children as genuine epistemic agents. Testimonial quieting, in this context, is not an isolated act but part of a systemic pattern of disregarding children's epistemic capacities. While this point is not thoroughly elaborated in this paper, it opens up opportunities for further research. Nonetheless, it ushers in the problematization of how Filipino children routinely and detrimentally suffer, not only in linguistic exchanges but also in other epistemic affairs. By looking at where testimonial quieting possibly stems from, we can have a clearer picture of why Filipino children are immediately silenced when they do philosophy.

Finally, I conclude by asserting that to ameliorate our epistemic attitude and practices toward Filipino children, it must start by listening intently and engaging sincerely with them. The ultimate desideratum is to create epistemic spaces where Filipino children can sharpen their philosophical thinking as early as possible by being engaged in dialogues that welcome their insights, interests, and questions.

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