Propaedeutics to Any Future Philosophy in Indonesia

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Abstract: The local wisdom of Indonesia has long been considered philosophy proper by a number of Indonesian thinkers; they proclaimed that "Indonesian philosophy", or "filsafat Nusantara", does exist. Based on a number of studies of Indonesian thoughts—some of them called themselves "philosophy"—that underwent the hardness test in the forms of comparative philosophy and ethnophilosophy/ethno philosophy/ethno-philosophy, what is referred to as Indonesian philosophy does not yet meet the requirements to be classified as such. The hardness test involved tracing a number of representative literatures and comparing the outcomes with the two tests. This article shows that ideas thought to be called philosophy actually fall under ethnophilosophy or ethno philosophy category. The study also illuminates a deficit in Indonesian's philosophical thinking, which is the absence of either reception or refutation of preexisting ideas; there is no response to reveal the presence of dialectics—one of philosophy's traits. Facing that situation, and thanks to the two hardness tests, this article offers the propaedeutics required for Indonesian thought to be in line with the great philosophies of the world.

Keywords: Indonesian Philosophy; Filsafat Nusantara; Hardness Test(s); Comparative Philosophy; Ethnophilosophy/Ethno Philosophy/Ethno-philosophy.

Introduction

When I studied Nietzsche's aphorisms in 2022,[1] I discovered a fragmentary style of philosophy, which contrasted with the "architectonic" style of philosophy.[2] I thought that I had found a similar style of philosophy in Indonesia. At that time, I believed that philosophy in Indonesia was not structured in an architectonic style, but rather fragmentary in nature, similar to Nietzsche's aphorisms.

I was further inspired by how Indonesian philosophy should be. I thought that philosophy in Indonesia has not progressed significantly because no one has formulated what Indonesian philosophy is like. This lack of formulation leads thinkers in Indonesia to unconsciously view philosophy in Indonesia as

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[1] Later, this study was presented in a paper titled "On Aphorisms, and Nietzsche's Aphorisms" at the Book Launch and Discussion "Be Yourself! A Collection of Friedrich Nietzsche's Aphorisms and Words of Wisdom" held at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia, on August 29, 2022.

[2] The sentences taken from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as presented in Harsawibawa (2022), are as follows: "By an architectonic I mean the art of system. Since systematic unity is what first turns common cognition into science, i.e., turns a mere aggregate of cognition into a system, ..." and "Now the system of all philosophical cognition is philosophy." Albertus Harsawibawa, "Tentang Aforisme (Dan) Nietzsche," in *Paper Presented at The Book Launch and Discussion "Jadilah Diri Sendiri! Kumpulan Aforisme Dan Kata Mutiara Friedrich Nietzsche* (Depok: FIB UI, 2022).

having architectonic models. Architectonic philosophy is a product of a long process, and producing such a philosophy is a struggle in thinking that involves more than just a philosopher. However, before we can discuss the nature of Indonesian philosophy, we need to first determine what kind of philosophy actually exists in Indonesia.

I was able to get a number of books that I believe are sufficiently representative to explain what philosophy is like in Indonesia. Those books include Bachtiar et al. (1985),[3] Ciptoprawiro (2000),[4] Kartika (ed.) (2022),[5] Magnis-Suseno (1984),[6] Sihombing (2000),[7] Sulaksono (2019),[8] Suryalaga (2010), Wibowo et al. (eds.)[9] (2019), and Zoetmulder (2000).[10]

Philosophy in Indonesian culture is not a primary focus in Bachtiar et al. (1985), which instead explores the Indonesian people. However, the study is considered a philosophy of man. Ciptoprawiro (2000) observes that philosophical ideas are commonly cited in Javanese literature and art. Kartika (ed.) (2022) suggests that philosophy in Indonesia can be found in cultural phenomena. Magnis-Suseno (1984) provides insight into understanding Javanese culture by explaining how to interpret it. Sihombing (2000) and Sulaksono (2019) both argue that philosophy and manners are closely related. Suryalaga (2010) found that (Sundanese) philosophy can be discovered in (Sundanese) folklore. In addition to examining the presence of philosophy in Indonesian cultural phenomena, Wibowo et al. (eds.) (2019) have also raised questions about the issue of philosophy in Indonesia. Zoetmulder (2000) points out that philosophy can be found in (Javanese) literature.

Only Wibowo et al. (eds.) (2019) mention that there is *an* Indonesian philosophy/"*filsafat Nusantara*"; nearly all the books I mentioned say little or only a glimpse about Indonesian philosophy. The books I mentioned are, however, examples that show how the Indonesian thinkers draw conclusion about the Indonesian philosophy.

Philosophy in Indonesia appears to be characterized by two distinct features. First of all, its thinking is frequently disjointed, with concepts not being communicated coherently. Secondly, Indonesian philosophy is deeply intertwined with the country's local culture. This cultural influence is so pronounced that it is often necessary to specify not only its subject matter but also its geographical origin. This raises a number of questions: Does local culture have an inherent connection to Eastern philosophy? Is a fragmented way of thinking characteristic of Eastern philosophy?

Because of those questions, I studied philosophy in the East. The subject of my analysis was the three most representative non-Western philosophies. The first two are considered the great philosophies, and many university philosophy departments study them: Indian philosophy and Chinese philosophy. The last one is African philosophy. This relatively recent philosophical movement has made significant strides in establishing and expanding its areas of study.

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[3] Harsya W. Bachtiar, Haryati Soebadio, and Mattulada, *Budaya Dan Manusia Indonesia* (Malang & Yogyakarta: YP2LPM – Hanindita, 1985).

[4] Abdullah Ciptoprawiro, *Filsafat Jawa* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2000).

[5] Yuni Kartika, ed., *Filsafat Nusantara Dan Kearifan Lokal* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2022).

[6] Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Etika Jawa: Sebuah Analisa Falsafi tentang Kebijaksanaan Hidup Jawa* (Jakarta: Penerbit PT Gramedia, 1984).

[7] T. M. Sihombing, *Filsafat Batak: Tentang Kebiasaan-Kebiasaan Adat Istiadat* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2000).

[8] Djoko Sulaksono, *Filsafat Jawa* (Surakarta: Yuma Pustaka, 2019).

[9] A. Setyo Wibowo et al., eds., *Filsafat (Di) Indonesia: Pelangi Nusantara* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2019).

[10] P. J. Zoetmulder, *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti: Pantheisme Dan Monisme Dalam Sastra Suluk Jawa*, 4th ed. (Jakarta: Penerbit PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2000).

Indian Philosophy[11]

Indian philosophy can be best understood by studying its history. The history of Indian philosophy can be broadly categorized into five distinct periods.

The first period is the Vedic period (1700-700 BC). This era is characterized by Vedic thinking and culture, which are reflected in the ancient texts known as the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are primarily concerned with rituals, and each of the four parts of the *Vedas* contains a significant section known as the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* are particularly noteworthy for their profound philosophical investigations into the meaning of life. The Epic period (800-200 BC) marks a significant shift in the development of Indian philosophy. During this time, Vedic wisdom that was deemed incomprehensible or difficult for the general population to understand was reinterpreted and conveyed through folklore, stories, and poetry.

During the third period, the Period of Philosophical Systems (from the 5th century BC to the present day), there was a systematic attempt to explain the world and the nature of humanity through philosophical inquiry. Thinkers of this period sought to address the problem of existence, conducting analyses and building arguments to support their claims. This period is characterized by the presence of nine distinct philosophical traditions. Three of these systems, known as *Nāstika*, did not accept the Vedic authority without question. In contrast, the remaining six systems accept the *Vedas* without question. Both sides put forth their claims and arguments, which were recorded in *sutras*. The Commentary period (300 BC to 1700 AD) witnessed intellectuals and philosophers examining and interpreting their *sutras*; it prepared the way for the modern era (began around 1800), the time when Indian intellectuals came into contact with Western philosophical traditions, and they started to think critically about their own philosophical background.

Indian philosophy is characterized by the breadth of its thinking. Although there are many schools of thought, they argue using the same framework. The statements of their opponents are taken as the starting point (*purvapaksa*). This is then followed by refutation (*khandana*), and finally comes to a conclusion (*uttarapaksa* or *siddhanta*).

Indian thought is very practical, but the practical is supported by the theoretical. The practical aspect serves as a means to overcome suffering, whereas the theoretical aspect provides an explanation of the nature of reality and human life. All of this is built upon specific modes of thinking: a philosophy of life known as "*darshanas*".

Chinese Philosophy[12]

A long period of instability came to an end with the fall of the Zhou dynasty. During the chaotic time, the Spring and Autumn period (722-476 BC) and the Warring States period (475-221 BC), a new class of advisors ("state-scholars") emerged to serve as the ruler's advisors—Confucius and many of his

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[11] I consulted Harrison (2019), Koller (2018), and Chatterjee & Datta (1948) for information on Indian philosophy. In order to emphasize the special features and original ideas that define this philosophy, my presentation adopts a global perspective. See Victoria S. Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 2019); John M. Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, 7th ed. (New York & London: Routledge, 2018); Satishchandra Chatterjee and Dheerendramohan Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1948).

[12] I consulted Harrison (2019), Koller (2018), Lai (2008), and Liu (2006) for information on Chinese philosophy. In order to emphasize the special features and original ideas that define this philosophy, my presentation adopts a global perspective. See Harrison, *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics*; Koller, *Asian Philosophies*; Karyn L. Lai, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); JeeLoo Liu, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: From Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism* (Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

disciples fell into this category. As patronage grew, methodical research followed, and moral dilemmas, societal issues, and governance became the hot topics of discussion and debate.

Chinese philosophy is built on heated debate. For instance, debates between Daoists and Buddhists took place in the 4th century CE, and earlier debates occurred between Confucians, Daoists, and Mohists. From the 3rd century BC at the Jixia Academy, a group of academics engaged in debates before synthesizing their ideas. This is an example of the formation of a syncretic way of thinking in Chinese philosophy. Even Confucian philosophy itself is not based on a single idea; the Confucian tradition is multifaceted and adaptable, transforming in response to new insights or historical changes. Confucian scholars held diverse views, and they often disagreed with one another. Under such conditions, they would refer to Confucius' *Analects* ("Words").

Chinese cultural heritage was disseminated through an ancient text called the *I Ching* ("The Book of Changes"). The text focuses on changing situations in life, their impact on individuals and their surroundings, and how people respond to them. Its cosmological theories become a means of comprehending the world and the role of man in it. The *I Ching* contains implicit assumptions about the world, the relationship between entities, the complexity of cause and effect, the place of humans in the changing world, and the importance of individual action and response. Key aspects of the *I Ching* philosophy include: empiricism, a focus on observation as a critical element in reflective thinking (noted by Lai [2008: 12-15]); a dialectical approach to thinking—explains the framework of change; a correlative way of thinking—events and situations at one level are seen as parallel; and receptivity to various perspectives.

African Philosophy[13]

Two major elements can be considered the catalysts for the development of African philosophy. The Westerners' contemptuous attitude toward Africans, considering them primitive, was the first of these factors. This mindset had the unintended consequence of making philosophical thinking challenging for Africans. The second element was condescension, but it was articulated in a manner that made comparisons between other African nations. According to African history, the origins of philosophical thought are probably the Egyptians, who are seen as a non-black African nation.

Among African intellectuals, this condescension sparked intense arguments and a sense of nationalism. Despite their disagreements, they had the same viewpoint: philosophy in Africa does exist and has its own history. To ascertain whether the current ideas in Africa can be categorized as (African) philosophy or not, it is also necessary to redefine the concept of philosophy.

The debate over the origins of African philosophy started with an investigation into its beginnings. According to some viewpoints, proverbs, belief systems, and ethos are just a few examples of the diverse African cultural products that contain elements of African philosophy. This led to the idea that in order to develop philosophy and culture in Africa, a pluralistic approach is required. Others argue that in order to comprehend African philosophy, an ethnographic approach is necessary. This concept, however, causes more debate because some contend that philosophy is a universal idea that transcends cultural boundaries

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[13] I consulted Hallen (2002), Imbo (1998), and Ukpokolo (ed.) (2017) for information on African philosophy. In order to emphasize the special features and original ideas that define this philosophy, my presentation adopts a global perspective. See Barry Hallen, *A Short History of African Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Samuel Oluoch Imbo, *An Introduction to African Philosophy* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998); Isaac E Ukpokolo, "Introduction: The Shifting Focus of Philosophy in Africa," in *Themes, Issues and Problems in African Philosophy*, ed. Isaac E. Ukpokolo (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

and is separate from local culture. Questions concerning the connection between philosophy and culture are raised by this viewpoint, leading to the development of ideas like "*ethnophilosophy*", "*ethno philosophy*", and "*ethno-philosophy*". The problem of African languages as a philosophical tool becomes more evident as the discussion goes on.

Because philosophy is a universal concept that is the same everywhere, it has given rise to a unique body of literature known as "ethno-philosophy". This term has been used to distinguish this philosophy from other branches of philosophy, thereby elevating philosophy's standing in Africa. Among other philosophical disciplines, African culture has given rise to epistemology, metaphysics, and aesthetics.[14] This proves that African philosophy is similar to philosophy in other parts of the world, despite being relatively new in the 20th century. Therefore, it can be said that African philosophy merits recognition as a valid philosophical discipline, with distinctive features and uniqueness influenced by the local culture in which it originated.

The philosophies of Africa, China, and India do not seem to have a fragmented style, yet they might nevertheless have such inclinations. Most importantly, these civilizations' overarching philosophical frameworks include the idea of "systematic philosophy" as a fundamental component.

In contrast to those in China, India, and Africa, Indonesian intellectuals/thinkers[15] are more likely to draw the hasty conclusion that Indonesians thought is worthy of being called "philosophy". However, these ideas must meet certain requirements before they can be called "philosophy". The philosophies of China, India, and Africa all teach us this.

This article's reasoning was guided by four research questions, namely: (1) Is there an Indonesian philosophy? (2) What conditions must a thought meet in order to qualify as philosophy? (3) Is the classification of Indonesian thought as philosophy appropriate? (4) What justifies a yes or no response to the previous question?

This article examines the fundamental requirements that must be met before a cultural output may be regarded as local philosophy, or the philosophy of a particular area. Whether a local's thought is worthy of being called philosophy depends on a number of criteria. The "hardness tests" that thinking must pass are implicitly governed by these criteria: to be called philosophy proper, the thinking of a nation is to be passed the ideas of comparative philosophy and ethno-philosphy.

Finding

Two essential tools — hardness tests — are needed to develop the idea of local philosophy: comparative philosophy and ethno-philosophy. They implicitly contain certain factors that are the building elements of philosophy proper. Before we continue, it is important to comprehend a basic idea that will be covered in this article. This idea is what Indonesians mean when they use the word "philosophy". We might consult the primary Indonesian dictionary, the KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia - *The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language*), to have a more profound comprehension of this idea.

In *KBBI Online*, there are two entries related to "philosophy", namely: "*filsafat*" and "*falsafah*".

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[14] Ukpokolo, "Introduction: The Shifting Focus of Philosophy in Africa."
[15] First, Undergraduate Studies in University of Indonesia (Depok, Jawa Barat) and University of Gadjah Mada (Yogyakarta) have a course called "Filsafat Nusantara" (electives in UI and mandatory in UGM). Second, currently there is an ongoing data collecting process by a number of researchers in Indonesia to establish an "Ensiklopedi Filsafat Nusantara". Formerly, I was part of them.

a. *filsafat*: 1 knowledge and investigation by the intellect into the nature of things that exist, their causes, origins, and laws; 2 a fundamental concept or underlying principle that governs the nature of thinking or an activity; 3 a science based on logic, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology; 4 *falsafah*

b1. *falsafah*: the most basic assumptions, ideas, and mental attitudes held by people or societies; worldview

b2. *berfalsafah*: 1 think deeply (about something); 2 embracing a profound mindset that becomes an integral part of one's daily existence

By distinguishing between "*filsafat*" and "*falsafah*", Indonesian thinkers appear to have distinguished between "technical" and "practical" philosophy.[16] The term "practical philosophy" describes beliefs and dedication to particular concepts, ideals, or modes of interpretation. Put differently, practical philosophy is a worldview or philosophy of life, as defined in the *KBBI*. Conversely, "technical philosophy" is the branch of philosophy that is typically linked to philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant. Because "*filsafat*" is used in Indonesia rather than "*falsafah*", it is important to comprehend the implications of this difference.

The word "philosophy" has its roots in Ancient Greece and was formed from the Greek "*philo*" (love) and "*sophiē*" (traditionally: wisdom[17]). This phrase means "love of wisdom" or "love of learning". The theoretical side of philosophy was the main focus when the term was adopted into Western languages.[18] Five essential components[19] make up this theoretical aspect of philosophy, namely: reflective, normative, critical, rational, and systematic. Thus, philosophy is basically a critical analysis of basic and normative issues with the goal of offering methodical and persuasive responses. Its history complements its insights and is full of answers that were thought to be comprehensive at the time.[20]

This theoretical philosophy is the philosophy of the West. The question naturally comes up: Are the philosophies of non-Westerners the same? In that case, how was it obtained? Was it their local roots or something else? Scholars from China, Japan, and India understand the consequences of using the word "philosophy". Since the word comes from the West, they know that it has more meaning than just its literal definition. In order to understand philosophy completely, one must also take into account the non-philosophical environment in which it evolved.

Comparative Philosophy

Comparative philosophy serves as the first hardness test for formulating philosophical concepts. This tool consists of three key components. The first component is world history. This alludes to European powers' aggressive global expansion into non-Western nations beginning in the 17th century. The Easterners tried to comprehend the Europeans' intentions and behavior in reaction to this hostility. Their main objective was not to invade or convert Westerners to Eastern beliefs like Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism. Instead, in order to defend themselves against colonialism and conversion, they attempted to understand and possibly even lessen the violent tendencies of the Westerners.

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[16] D. A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press & Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 59-60.

[17] Actually, the term "*sophiē*" has several meanings, and includes more than just "wisdom". See Hadot (2002).

[18] The translations of "philosophy", "*philosophie*", and "*filosofia*" demonstrate how the word "*philosophiē*" was imported into Western languages.

[19] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5-8.

[20] H. Gene Blocker, *World Philosophy: An East-West Comparative Introduction to Philosophy* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1999), 6.

The Meiji Restoration, which began in 1868, was the Japanese response to the threat of colonization by embracing Western science and technology. The Japanese had to first translate Western scientific terms into their own language in order to assimilate Western knowledge. "Philosophy" was one of the crucial terms they had to translate.[21] Given that Japanese employs Chinese characters, they selected two characters to symbolize the idea of "philosophy", which was subsequently called "*tetsugaku*".[22] The Chinese adopted a similar strategy, translating "philosophy", which was spelled "*zhexue*", using the same set of Chinese characters.[23] Both the Chinese and the Japanese utilized this common written form of "philosophy" in the early 1900s. In the 1920s, the Chinese also chose to use the term "*zhexue*" for their classic texts. At about the same time, the Indian scholar Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan proposed that the term "philosophy" may be used interchangeably with the Indian philosophical idea of "*darshanas*". As a result, beginning in 1923, three primary philosophical traditions were recognized: Chinese, Indian, and Western.

The second component is the history of philosophy. This field of study demonstrates how ceremonial, religious, and mythological culture influenced the development of philosophy.[24] Due to the combination of rational and irrational characteristics, this precursor was deemed incomprehensible at the time, even by its own standards. In response, philosophers made an effort to tackle these problems in greater detail and on a wider scale. In order to resolve these inconsistencies, dialectics was developed. In Ancient Greek philosophy, myths and changes in political life served as precursors. Another example can be found in the *Rig Veda*; it presents a collection of stories that blend psychological, religious, physical, and philosophical themes.

The third component is individual figures. The rise of individual philosophers signified the start of philosophy in the philosophies of Ancient Greece, China, India, and Africa. Various thinkers raised important issues and looked for solutions, which fueled the development of philosophy in various fields. It would seem from the history of philosophies, especially the evolution of the ideas of notable individuals, that philosophical thought generally follows predictable cyclical stages.[25] This pattern is explained as follows: first, innovation; next: consolidation; then: decline—which leads to the re-emergence of the initial stage: innovation, etc.

Ethnophilosophy/Ethno Philosophy/Ethno-Philosophy

The second hardness test that I employ is the ethnophilosophical/ethno philosophical/ethno-philosophical framework.[26] This framework was chosen for a reason that is pertinent to the circumstances

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[21] I cited Blocker (1999) on the colonization issue in relation to philosophy. Regarding non-philosophical issue in relation to Japanese history, I have referred to Andressen (2002). I have also consulted Hammond (2004) for Chinese history, and Metcalf & Metcalf (2006) for the history of India. See Blocker, 11-12; Curtis Andressen, *A Short History of Japan: From Samurai to Sony* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2002); Kenneth J. Hammond, *From Yao to Mao: 5000 Years of Chinese History. Part III* (Chantilly: The Teaching Company®, 2004); Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[22] According to the Japanese, the term "*tetsugaku*" should be reserved for Western philosophy. They believe that there is only one true philosophy, which is Western philosophy.

[23] Blocker, *World Philosophy: An East-West Comparative Introduction to Philosophy*.

[24] Blocker, 17.

[25] Blocker, 29.

[26] For the next three concepts, I will use a lot of quotes from Ibanga (2022) because her discussion is easy to understand, straightforward, and methodical. See Diana-Abasi Ibanga, "What Is 'Ethno' and 'Philosophy' in Ethno-Philosophy?," in *Ethnophilosophy and the Search for the Wellspring of African Philosophy*, ed. Ada Agada (Cham: Springer, 2022).

in Indonesia; the issue of "ethno" and "philosophy" arose in Africa in a context akin to that of the books I've already discussed, namely the blending of philosophical inquiries that either follow or become parasites of cultural phenomena. Learning from African philosophy can therefore facilitate the discussion of technical issues pertaining to philosophical questions in Indonesia.

After colonization, Africans had a resurgence of their national identity, which gave rise to the concept of ethno and philosophy. Following their independence, they were frequently disparaged and thought to lack a unique philosophy. The first question at the core of ethno and philosophy was simple: do regional philosophies emerge as a result of local, non-philosophical cultures, or do they need to undergo processing and transformation in order to qualify as such? Or should they be disregarded in order for regional thought to qualify as philosophy? This seemingly straightforward matter set off a 50-year discussion known as the "Great Debate".[27] It ultimately led to the emergence of two opposing camps. According to the "universalist" camp, there is no such thing as "philosophy of the African", just as there is no "philosophy of the European" or "philosophy of the American". On the other hand, the "particularist" camp argued that philosophy is essentially culturally and geographically specific, meaning that there are philosophies for particular regions, such as the "philosophy of the African" or the "philosophy of the European".

It is important to use the terms "ethno" and "philosophy" carefully. Ibanga (2022) demonstrated this prudence in her method by making a distinction between ethnophilosophy, ethno philosophy, and ethno-philosophy. There are different meanings for each of these terms, and ethno-philosophy is the one that applies to this article. I will explain its usage in accordance with Ibanga.[28]

Philosophizing, as it is used in ethnophilosophy, is the process of reappropriating philosophy to fit a particular cultural setting. In this case, philosophy explains and sheds light on a group's cultural features. Ciptoprawiro (2000)[29] and Sulaksono (2019)[30] have been recognized as containing ethnophilosophy. Cultural philosophy, on the other hand, includes a culture's worldview, belief system, ethos, and other associated elements. This is known as "ethno philosophy". In contrast to ethnophilosophy, ethno philosophy aims to explain and comprehend cultural practices rather than to challenge or critique them. Sihombing (2000)[31] and Bachtiar et al. (1985)[32] provide examples of ethno philosophy.

Ethno-philosophy represents the highest level of this idea. The hyphen that separates the words "ethno" and "philosophy" signifies that the term is a compound word, meaning that two words are read as one[33]: "ethno" is understood as an explanation of "philosophy", which distinguishes the philosophy it describes from other philosophies.[34] However, the hyphen that separates the terms implies that "ethno" and "philosophy" are two distinct ideas: an "arumaristic" relationship is created between them.[35]

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[27] Divided into "first Wave" and "second Wave".
[28] Ibanga, "What Is 'Ethno' and 'Philosophy' in Ethno-Philosophy?", 45-46.
[29] Ciptoprawiro, *Filsafat Jawa*.
[30] Sulaksono, *Filsafat Jawa*.
[31] Sihombing, *Filsafat Batak: Tentang Kebiasaan-Kebiasaan Adat Istiadat*.
[32] Bachtiar, Soebadio, and Mattulada, *Budaya Dan Manusia Indonesia*.
[33] Ibanga, "What Is 'Ethno' and 'Philosophy' in Ethno-Philosophy?", 45.
[34] Ethno-philosophy is part of general philosophy, along with political philosophy, philosophy of language, philosophy of culture, etc.
[35] Originating in African philosophy, the term "arumaristic" is regarded as a neologism.

A situation known as "arumaristic" occurs when opposing variables coexist without producing a synthesis.[36] This idea is especially pertinent to the relationship between ethno and philosophy, two concepts that are regarded as mutually exclusive because of their hyphenated connection. Ethno, or culture, is the source of philosophy, but it also acts in opposition to it. Consequently, it is impossible to reconcile these two concepts. From a philosophical standpoint, ethno can be examined and questioned because of the hyphenated relationship between ethno and philosophy.

Ibanga (2022: 47-52) asserts that ethno-philosophy uses a unique method. Finding metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical materials from a variety of sources—such as proverbs, fables, language, art, and religion—is part of this approach. In order to do this, the approach necessitates analyzing these sources to either represent them as philosophy or extract philosophical insights. In this process, Ibanga (2022: 47–48) distinguishes three phases or methodological levels.

The initial phase, referred to as the "survey stage", entails gathering information from multiple sources, including proverbs, fables, and language. The second phase, referred to as the "critical stage", involves a thorough philosophical examination and analysis of the gathered data. The result of this process is a philosophical abstraction. The final phase, referred to as the "referencing stage", involves intercultural allusions and links to well-established philosophical theories, which are used to compare and contrast the philosophical abstractions. Therefore, the abstraction is elevated to a more expansive "philosophical space" rather than a "philosophical place".[37]

Two fundamental principles serve as a guide for the abstraction process.[38] The first principle, referred to as the "deviation principle", asserts that a non-philosophical concept will change from its initial form when put to the test. But the idea is not necessarily philosophical just because of this deviation. For example, local wisdom is not regarded as a philosophical concept in and of itself. This is where the "principle of commensurability" enters the picture. According to this principle, ideas that are more philosophical in nature tend to be less ethnographic or grounded in local knowledge. Conversely, an idea becomes less philosophical the more ethnographic it is. Philosophical concepts are those whose rationale is grounded in reason itself, not in capricious or inexplicable elements.

The ethno-philosophy approach clearly shows an "epistemological progression" from non-philosophical to philosophical ideas. This is the point at which the philosophical emerges after the non-philosophical elements, or "parasites", are removed. The more the mind reaches its maximum level of generalization, the fewer references to a particular culture there are.[39] The mind gradually breaks free from the conventional, empirical worldview as it progresses toward reason, eventually arriving at a transcendental point where ethnocentrism is totally eradicated. The mind then shifts into pure and abstract philosophy, concentrating on concepts that are universal without mentioning the culture from which they came. When the transcendental point is reached, the normative principle enters. It is the point at which the thinker's ideas are no longer limited by their culture and have taken on a universal quality.

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[36] Nnajiofor (2024) contrasts Hegel's dialectic with the arumaristic relationship. Osita Nnajiofor, "Conversational Philosophy as a Decolonial Project," *Nnadiebube Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 7 (2024), 106–108.

[37] According to Janz (2009), "place" is "tradition" whereas "space" is "modernity"—the location where traditions "converse". See Bruce B. Janz, *Philosophy in an African Place* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 13–14.

[38] Ibanga, "What Is 'Ethno' and 'Philosophy' in Ethno-Philosophy?", 48.

[39] Ada Agada, "The Sense in Which Ethno-Philosophy Can Remain Relevant in 21st. Century African Philosophy," *Pronimon* 20, no. 1 (2019): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.25159/2413-3086/4158, 14.

In order to arrive at philosophical abstractions, ethno-philosophy places a strong emphasis on rigorous inquiry, logical analysis, criticism, and analysis. The conceptual generalization of ethno-philosophy thus supports its ethnocentric nature while also proving its universal applicability.

Discussion

Philosophy in Indonesia and Comparative Philosophy

For philosophy in Indonesia to be regarded as equal to those of other countries, it must pass a stringent comparison test: the comparative hardness test. This includes the potential for philosophical comparisons between Indonesia and other regional schools of thought. This comparison can be made easier and the specifics of the situation can be better understood by using a variety of frameworks.

The first framework proposes that a regional philosophy has unique antecedents that are influenced by the region's historical context. For example, Indonesia has a similar historical background to nations like China, Japan, and India. The main distinction, though, is how these countries reacted to Western influence. While China, Japan, and India considered peaceful ways to oppose the West, frequently through intellectual means, Indonesia adopted a more confrontational strategy, utilizing force to fight back against its colonizers. This is not to suggest that there was no cultural resistance in Indonesia. This resistance is exemplified by e.g., Budi Utomo, Sumpah Pemuda, and Kartini. But these were relatively unusual instances that did not represent the dominant approach to confront Western influence.

Given that there is arguably no opposition in thought, the term "philosophy" is presumed to be appropriate. However, the translation of "philosophy" as "*filsafat*" has never been explained. Furthermore, the reason why "philosophy" is translated as "*filsafat*" instead of other terms like "*falsafah*" has not been specifically studied.[40] Why it is called "Indonesian philosophy" or "*filsafat* Nusantara" (philosophy of the archipelago) is also unclear. Furthermore, there should also have been a question to why the KBBI distinguishes between "*filsafat*", "*falsafah*", and "*berfalsafah*". Examining the effects and ramifications of using these terms is necessary. In contrast, other cultures, like the Japanese, Chinese, or Indians, translated "philosophy" into their own languages (*tetsugaku*, *zhexue*, and *darshanas*) after much discussion and debate.

The idea of "place", which includes both geographical and cultural components of "tradition", is another important consideration. Large landmasses make up the regions of China, India, and Africa; these are not like the Indonesian region. Because of their similar topography, the former regions have comparatively more interconnected relationships, while Indonesia is an archipelago of about 17,000 islands. Because of this geographic difference, it is possible that mainland and island populations think differently. These discrepancies underscore the significance of comprehending Indonesia's distinctive features and call for additional research.[41]

Individual figure(s) is the next framework. This framework shows an effort to either respond to or distance oneself from one's culture. This idea can be comprehended by drawing a comparison to the Ancient Greek philosopher Thales, who challenged myths regarding the origin of everything.

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[40] The terms are briefly discussed in a chapter, "Searching for Philosophy in Indonesia" in Wibowo et al., *Filsafat (Di) Indonesia: Pelangi Nusantara,* 3-36.

[41] There are already two starting points for this investigation. These are "The Origins of the Idea of Indonesia" (Elson 2009), and "Cultural Roots" (Anderson 2008). See Robert Edward Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia: Sejarah Pemikiran Dan Gagasan* (Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2009), 1-65; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Komunitas-Komunitas Terbayang* (Yogyakarta: Insist, 2008), 12-54.

In fact, there are plenty of insightful people in Indonesia. The issue is with their successors. We can learn from the histories of regional philosophies that specific individuals were important to the growth of regional philosophy. There are two reasons these figures exist. First, they offer an alternative to the current "status quo" in a given circumstance. Second, a school of thought starts to emerge when the reality of their thinking draws others to react to that circumstance: their ideas must be validated or refuted and reconciled. This is evident in the polemic between Heraclitus and Parmenides; they held opposing views, which Plato and Aristotle were attempting to resolve. Later, there were new thinkers who either supported or contradicted Plato's and Aristotle's theories. There is no end to this process.

The aforementioned paragraph emphasizes the importance of figures in philosophy since they represent the dialectic. As we have learned from the great regional philosophies of Ancient Greece, China, and India, dialectical processes have led to their evolution. Despite the fact that each of these schools of thought approached the dialectic differently, they all had dialectical thinking as a common feature. African philosophy, which is much younger and distinguished by the "Great Debate", also exhibits this dialectical situation.

There is no lack of philosophical insights from historical thinkers in Indonesia. Among them are Soekarno and Tan Malaka. Soekarno, for example, used Pancasila to recognize and express Indonesian values. Examining Pancasila more closely reveals that it is a synthesis of several powerful global ideologies, such as divinity, humanism, nationalism, and democracy. Furthermore, in his work, Soekarno developed a synthesis between nationalism, Islam, and Marxism.[42] One trait that many Indonesians share is the capacity to synthesize their own ideas with those of others. This quality validates Soekarno as a genuine representative of the country.

Next is Tan Malaka. In regard to this article, I think Malaka's book *Madilog* (no publication year) contains his most intriguing and pertinent ideas. In the section titled "Mystical Logic", Malaka addresses the supernatural aspect of Indonesian thought.[43] Whether one agrees or disagrees with Malaka's ideas is not the central point. What is important is the point he makes about the Indonesian mindset. The process of disputing or approving his ideas would have been dialectical, as was the case with many significant philosophers in the past.

A general problem with Indonesian mentality can be deduced from the discussion of Soekarno and Malaka. The issue is that there are no thinkers to carry on the ideas of their predecessors, either by embracing or rejecting them. As a result, these figures' ideas are reduced to historical monuments without any thought given to whether they should be expanded upon or reinterpreted. Therefore, it is not surprising that Indonesia does not have adherents like the Confucianists who base their beliefs on a single person. Likewise, lengthy debates like the Great Debate do not exist in Indonesia. This problem demonstrates how challenging it is for Indonesia to create a comprehensive philosophy that is comparable to those of China, India, or Africa.

Philosophies and Ethnophilosophy in Indonesia

The next hardness test is ethnophilosophy/ethno philosophy/ethno-philosophy. Due to its appropriateness in the Indonesian context, where the foundation for comprehending Indonesian philosophy is comparable, this test is used. The information utilized here comprises: cultural systems, mentality, *serat*,

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[42] Soekarno, *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1970).
[43] Tan Malaka, *Madilog* (Koleksi Rowland, Electronic Classics Series, n.d.), 26-35.

pedalangan, wayang, wayang kulit, keris, local wisdom, tradition in *pesantren*, spiritual philosophy, philosophy of *lanturan*, science (according to certain figures), public administration (according to certain figures), moral teachings in reliefs, community life, charisma, etiquette for eating and drinking, visiting customs, cakes, banquets, matchmaking, marriage, *ulos*, family relationships, surname, inheritance, death, singing, expressions, stories, special times/day/month/year, zodiac, song lyrics, rhyming, *pantun*, stories, legends, literature of *suluk*, keris, kelirumologi in agriculture, kelirumologi in energy policy, kelirumologi in research and technology, kelirumologi in people's economy, kelirumologi in the state's budgeting.

Unquestionably, these data reflect a wealth of Indonesian thought that merits consideration as a place to start. What can be said about philosophy in Indonesia using the framework of ethnophilosophy/ethno philosophy/ethno-philosophy? It seems that the books I have mentioned are the main representatives of the discourse surrounding "philosophy in Indonesia". According to the data, most of the ideas I have discovered can be classified as ethnophilosophy or ethno philosophy. The explanation is given below:

Cultural systems, mentality, how to eat/drink, visit, cakes, banquets, matchmaking, marriage, *ulos*, family relationships, surname, inheritance, death, how to sing, expressions, kelirumologi in agriculture, kelirumologi in energy policy, kelirumologi in research and technology, kelirumologi in people's economy, kelirumologi in the state's budgeting are **ethno philosophy**. *Serat*, *pedalangan*, wayang, wayang kulit, expressions, stories, special times/day/month/year, zodiac, song lyrics, rhyming, *pantun*, stories, legends, literature of *suluk* are **ethnophilosophy**. Keris, local wisdom, tradition in *pesantren*, spiritual philosophy, philosophy of *lanturan*, science (according to certain figures), public administration (according to certain figures), moral teachings in reliefs, community life, charisma are **both ethno philosophy and ethnophilosophy**.

To differentiate between ethnophilosophy and ethno philosophy, take into account the criteria that Ibanga (2022) gives.[44] According to these criteria, the more philosophical an idea is, the less ethnographic it is; and, the more ethnographic it is, the less philosophical it is. One can use Ibanga's criteria to explain why Magnis-Suseno (1984), *Etika Jawa*, falls under the ethno-philosophy category. He bases his argument on reason, not on outside influences. Instead of merely explaining Javanese culture, he uses a reading process that is grounded in logic. "Ethics" and "Javanese" are perceived as having an arbitrary relationship—another culture could take the place of the Javanese culture as explained by ethics. It is not the culture in question that is important here, but rather the way in which it is understood, or its "how to read".

The "reading" carried out by Magnis-Suseno (1984) ought to serve as a template for other Indonesian societies and cultures. This is what Ibanga (2022: 47-48) refers to as the second stage, or the "critical stage", of the methodological levels of ethno-philosophy.[45] In Indonesia, many different communities and cultures have conducted the first stage, known as the "survey stage", in great detail. Since the books I mentioned already covered this material, I didn't think I need to do any more research. The second stage, the "critical stage", was what was required, though. Unfortunately, aside from Magnis-Suseno (1984), none of the studies I reviewed were included in this phase.

It is debatable whether or not Indonesian society and culture have a "referencing stage". One thing is certain, though: Zoetmulder (2000) methodically completed this step in his work. He examined Javanese *suluk* literature's philosophical ideas of pantheism and monism. This method can be contrasted with

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[44] Ibanga, "What Is 'Ethno' and 'Philosophy' in Ethno-Philosophy?", 48.
[45] Ibanga, 47-48.

shallow, seemingly philosophical studies, such as "the metaphysics of X tribe in the lyrics of Y work" or "moral teachings in Y". Although Zoetmulder (2000) does use philosophical ideas in his writing, this does not amount to genuine philosophical investigation. His method is better characterized as ethnophilosophy.

Back to the article's primary focus. The obvious dominance of Indonesia's first and third phases demonstrates the lack of a philosophy proper. Only local philosophies, such Javanese, Batak, and Sundanese philosophy, have emerged from these phases. It begs the question of whether ethno-philosophy exists in Indonesia. It would be required to extract the common findings from different local philosophies if that were the case. The question that needs to be addressed is whether Indonesian philosophy can be simply described as the sum of local philosophies, such as Javanese philosophy plus Batak philosophy plus Sundanese philosophy, and so forth. If Javanese, Batak, and Sundanese philosophy are considered independently, is it accurate to assert that Indonesian philosophy is comparable to each of them? Would it be equivalent to comparing a number of local philosophies to a single national philosophy, like Chinese, Indian, or African philosophy? Isn't it problematic to contrast a variety of local ideas with a single, unified, national philosophy?

This revealed the true issue with "philosophy(ies) in Indonesia". It became clear that the majority of Indonesian thinkers have been using the terms "Indonesian philosophy" or "philosophy of the archipelago" to refer to thinking that is only local, or even a small part of local thinking. This usage was frequently assumed without much thought given to the ramifications and repercussions of its use.

Magnis-Suseno (1984) shows how philosophy might be used in a way that minimizes the culture under study to "reading material", with the main emphasis being on how to understand it. In a similar vein, Zoetmulder (2000) studied culture and came up with abstractions about it. Unfortunately, their works were never further engaged, accepted, or refuted. This demonstrates the lack of dialectic in Indonesian thought. Dialectic is a key component of philosophy; it is the sharing of ideas and the development of ideas by discussion and critique. The philosophy of Ancient Greece serves as an illustration. This type of dialectical interaction is not exclusive to Western philosophy; it is also present in Chinese, Indian, and African thought.

Ethno-philosophical ideals have not been reached by Indonesian thought in general. It would be more correct to characterize the current concepts as ethnophilosophy or even ethno philosophy. Their extreme ethnocentricity and dependence on empirical context are the causes of this. A philosophy that is genuinely ethno-philosophical does not need a particular setting and shouldn't be contrasted with similar ideas of other ethnic groups. Its distinct qualities, which are absent from other philosophies, ought to be highlighted instead e.g., arumaristic thinking, as opposed to dialectical reasoning.

Another example: Confucianism and Jainism. Both can be separated from the broader philosophies of Chinese and Indian thought, and can be viewed as distinct philosophies that are not inherently tied to the history of their nations. This can be compared to the concept of pantheism or monism in Javanese *suluk* literature by Zoetmulder (2000).[46] The idea of pantheism or monism is a common and highly philosophical concept, but in Zoetmulder's work it is tied to its context: Javanese people. In arumaristic versus dialectical thinking, it is more important to investigate what these forms of thinking look like, rather than their origin. While it may be possible to explore the origins of these concepts, it is more important to examine their nature and the reasons for their contradictions.

In comparative philosophy, Indonesian thought should be and could be included alongside that of Western, Indian, Chinese, and African philosophies. But, the formation of a philosophy that would be

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[46] Zoetmulder, *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti: Pantheisme Dan Monisme Dalam Sastra Suluk Jawa*.

regarded as a philosophy proper in the Indonesian region requires a propaedeutic to Indonesian thought. This would entail creating the foundation for a thorough comprehension of Indonesian philosophy.

Propedeutics to the Study of Indonesian Philosophy

According to the *Encyclopaedia Americana*,[47] "propaedeutics" is a term used by the Germans to refer to the knowledge needed to understand or practice an art or science. Propaedeutics to Indonesian philosophy is necessary if Indonesian philosophy is to be developed. The objective is to draw a distinction between what is commonly called philosophy and *our* so-called philosophy. What requirements need to be fulfilled?

First, as previously mentioned, a comparison with non-Western nations that have prominent philosophy. Some elements of these nations' histories serve as antecedents, or a kind of criterion, in the form of their sense of pride as a nation. This first criterion states that the West was an "opponent" that had to be faced and dealt with. Although Indonesia has physically challenged the West, have we done so in an intellectual manner as well?

The second criterion is systematic philosophy. Is systematicity already present in Indonesian thought? As mentioned earlier, even if there is "systematic philosophy", what is found is a *post-factum* act of inference by the author who reads the pertinent idea. In the meantime, the first person to write down their ideas did so implicitly. This could be the result of the original thinker's lack of a systematic philosophical framework in the Western style.

The third criterion is dialectics. There are relatively many intellectuals and their works in Indonesia. Unfortunately, though, no one is "responding" to them in any way, positively or negatively: dialectics have not been established. Therefore, the fourth criterion is not established: periods. All of the major non-Western philosophies have dialectics, and these dialectics were documented throughout the periods they went through.

Texts are the fifth criterion. Actually, there are a number of works by Indonesian renowned intellectuals. However, the writing will once more only act as a monument. As was already mentioned, no one responded positively or negatively.

Finally, a question that might result in a propaedeutic: Does Indonesian thought simply fall under the category of "*falsafah*" instead of "*filsafat*" proper? It is unnecessary to continue talking about what "*filsafat*" is and how it differs from "*falsafah*". The fundamental issue is: Where is the referred "place"[48] in Indonesia? Is it referring to one local thinking or to a "collection" of local thinkings? Before calling these ideas "Indonesian philosophy" or "*falsafah* Indonesia", it is crucial to emphasize their "place".

Conclusion

The kind of thinking that is currently prevalent in Indonesia is not yet worthy of being called "Indonesian philosophy" or even "*filsafat* Nusantara". The first reason for this is that, in the domain of philosophy known as "Indonesian philosophy" or "philosophy of Nusantara", there is still no consensus on what "Indonesian" or "Nusantara" actually means. The use of the adjective "Indonesia" or "Nusantara" to describe philosophy appears to be a straightforward acknowledgment that there is a certain type of thinking in the region commonly known as "Indonesia" or "Nusantara", which warrants being called philosophy.

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[47] Francis Lieber, et.al ed., *Encyclopaedia Americana: Popular Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, History, Politics, and Biography* (Boston: B.B. Mussey & Co., 1851), 372-373.
[48] Janz, *Philosophy in an African Place,* 13-14.

But this begs the question: Does Indonesian philosophy represent a collection of local ideas or an abstraction of those ideas?

Intellectuals/thinkers in Indonesia uncritically claimed explicitly or implicitly that there is a philosophy in Indonesia, called "Indonesian philosophy" or "filsafat Nusantara". Unfortunately, there is no basis to defend that claim. There is also no study to compare what is called Indonesian philosophy with other nations' philosophies. See, for example, comparative studies between Ancient Greek and Chinese philosophy, or Chinese and Indian philosophy.

Learning from countries with established philosophies, their way of thinking is called "philosophy" since it appears to have comparable parameters. These parameters are as follows: general history (which gives a broad background); systematic philosophy (which takes an organized approach to comprehending the world); individual thinkers (notable people who have contributed to the development of philosophy); schools (groups of thinkers who have similar ideas and methods); periods (different eras in the history of philosophy); and texts they produce (written works that contain philosophical ideas and concepts).

The two criteria I suggested—comparative philosophy and ethno-philosophy—would probably not be met by Indonesian thought if it were to be assessed against them. One could claim that Indonesia has some of the traits linked to these criteria. Nevertheless, dialectics, the core component of philosophy that underpins and is necessary for these traits, is conspicuously lacking. For this reason, I would claim that the lack of a philosophical standpoint is the weakness in Indonesian thinking.

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