

THE FILIPINO LANGUAGE IN THE FLOURISHING OF FILIPINO¹ PHILOSOPHY: THE POINT OF CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE BETWEEN ROQUE FERRIOLS AND LEONARDO MERCADO

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The paper argues that Roque J. Ferriols [1924-2021] and Leonardo N. Mercado [1935-2020] simultaneously converge and diverge in their understanding of the value of the Philippine languages in the flourishing of Filipino philosophy. On the one hand, these philosophers converge in seeing the vitality of local languages in philosophizing. On the other hand, they diverge because Ferriols' trajectory is centrifugal while Mercado's is centripetal. Ferriols' centrifugal orientation is conditioned by his belief that there is no Filipino philosophy and that developing one is a pointless endeavor. Mercado's centripetal orientation is conditioned by his belief that a local language is a locus for philosophical investigation because it mirrors a worldview. In this paper, I first show their point of convergence by exploring the context that disposes them to focus their attention on a local language. Second, I show that their point of divergence is seen in the way they see a local language: Ferriols sees it as a way to express a worldview, while Mercado sees it as a way to investigate a worldview. Third, I propose that a synthesis of the thoughts of these two influential Filipino priest-philosophers contributes to the ongoing study on the development of Filipino philosophy in the postmodern Philippines.

Keywords: convergence, divergence, Filipinization, Filipino philosophy, hybridity, language, Leonardo Mercado, postmodernity, Roque Ferriols

INTRODUCTION

So far, only Feorillo P. A. Demeterio III (2013) of De La Salle University has published a comprehensive study on the state and trajectory of Filipino Philosophy.

The study analyzes and differentiates the classifications and periodizations of Filipino philosophy by seven scholars of philosophy: Romualdo Abulad, Alfredo Co, Rolando Gripaldo, Napoleon Mabaquiao Jr., Emerita Quito, Florentino Timbreza and Fernando Zialcita. Demeterio (2013, 187) notes that while this list of Filipino scholars of philosophy is not comprehensive and final, he nonetheless believes that it suffices to initiate a "comparative retrospective discourse" on this kind of philosophical research. Anyone familiar with the country's philosophical landscape would be surprised by Demeterio's exclusion of Ferriols and Mercado—two of the Philippines' leading philosophers from Ateneo de Manila University and University of Sto. Tomas respectively. As regards the exclusion of Mercado, Demeterio (2013, 212) explains that the seven Filipino philosophers discuss the different facets of Filipino philosophy. Mercado, however, only insists on "a cultural, anthropological, or ethnophilosophical" form of Filipino philosophy. As regards the exclusion of Ferriols, in our email conversation last May 21, 2021, Demeterio thinks that "[F]erriols did not reflect on [F]ilipino philosophy, he just philosophized. [T]he coverage of that paper [the 2013 article] was [F]ilipino philosophers who reflected on the status of [F]ilipino philosophy."

In his follow-up article, Demeterio (2014, 191-192) assesses the potentials of the discourses of Filipino philosophy as: 1) "an application of logical analysis"; 2) "an application of phenomenology/existentialism/hermeneutics"; 3) "an academic critical analysis"; 4) "an appropriation of foreign theories"; 5) "an appropriation of folk philosophy"; 6) "a philosophizing with the use of the Filipino language"; 7) "a textual exposition of foreign systems"; 8) "a revisionist writing"; 9) "an interpretation of Filipino worldview"; 10) "a research on Filipino values and ethics"; 11) "an identification of the presuppositions and implications of the Filipino worldview"; and 12) "a study on the Filipino philosophical luminaries." In this article, he expands the list of leading Filipino philosophers, which includes Ferriols and Mercado. Based on Demeterio's (2014, 201-203) catalogue (see Table below), Ferriols practices Filipino philosophy as discourse nos. 7, 3, 12, and 6; Mercado practices Filipino philosophy as discourse nos. 4, 3, 9.

In his reaction to Demeterio's categorization, Mercado (2016, 24) insists that he understands Filipino philosophy as "the interpretation of Filipino worldview," "the interpretation of ethics and values," as well as "philosophy as reflected in Filipino language/s." These three are interconnected because concepts and values—the ideational part of a worldview—are imbedded in language, albeit its grammar is either written or not. In this case then, Mercado (2005, 30) proffers that "language reflects a worldview." For Ferriols (1974, 340), "[e]ach language is a way of being alive that is irreducible... Each language has unrepeatable potentials for seeing and feeling, its very own genius, its own nuance." He (1991, 234, translation mine) adds that "each language has the bitterness and the passion to pursue the truth." Although they problematize language from different perspectives, both Ferriols and Mercado see language as a rich source of philosophical discourse.

That said, the paper argues that Ferriols and Mercado simultaneously converge and diverge in their understanding of the value of the Philippine languages in the

flourishing of Filipino philosophy. On the one hand, inspired by the spirit of Filipinization in the late '60s and the early '70s, these two leading Filipino philosophers converge in seeing the vitality of local languages in philosophizing. On the other hand, if language is considered as a center of discourse, they diverge because Ferriols' trajectory is centrifugal while Mercado's is centripetal.

Discourse	Filipino Philosopher/Scholar
1	Z. Lee and A. Bonifacio
2	R. Ibana , M.J. Mananzan and F. Hornedo
3	R. Abulad, A. Bonifacio, J. Bulatao, N. Canilao, L. De Castro, F. Demetrio, M. Dy, R. Ferriols , V. Gorospe, R. Gripaldo, F. Hornedo, R. Ibana, Z. Lee, M.J. Mananzan, L. Mercado , D. Miranda, J. Oca, R. Pascual, D. F. Pilario, E. Quito, R. Reyes, and A. M. Rodriguez
4	R. Abulad, E. Babor, A. Bonifacio, N. Canilao, L. De Castro, M. Dy, R. Gripaldo, F. Hornedo, R. Ibana, Z. Lee, M.J. Mananzan, L. Mercado , D. Miranda, J. Oca, A. Palma-Angeles, R. Pascual, D.F. Pilario, E. Quito, B. Reyes, R. Reyes, A.M. Rodriguez, and F. Timbreza
5	D. Miranda
6	A. Bonifacio, R. Ferriols , R. Ibana, and F. Timbreza
7	R. Abulad, E. Babor, L. De Castro, M. Dy, R. Ferriols , R. Gripaldo, R. Ibana, Z. Lee, J. Oca, A. Palma-Angeles, E. Quito and F. Timbreza
8	none
9	J. Bulatao, F. Demetrio, V. Gorospe, F. Hornedo, L. Mercado , E. Quito, and F. Timbreza
10	J. Bulatao, L. De Castro, F. Demetrio, M. Dy, V. Gorospe, F. Hornedo, M.J. Mananzan, A. Palma-Angeles, E. Quito, R. Reyes, and F. Timbreza
11	none
12	R. Ferriols , V. Gorospe, R. Gripaldo, R. Pascual, A.M. Rodriguez, and F. Timbreza

Ferriols' centrifugal orientation is rooted in his phenomenological understanding of language as a way of being alive. This approach justifies his stance that he is not developing a Filipino philosophy because "it is a waste of time." However, he argues that philosophizing in the Filipino language "has unrepeatable potentials for seeing and feeling" the lived experience; philosophizing in this way is a way of being alive. In the context of Ferriols' philosophy, the term centrifugal means that language is not the theme but philosophizing in Filipino language. His trajectory moves away from the center of linguistic analysis to philosophizing in Filipino language. Mercado's centripetal orientation is driven by his belief that a local language is a locus for philosophical investigation because "it reflects a worldview." His ethno-philosophical understanding of language enables him to cull from it that which is a distinctively Filipino philosophy.

Here, in the context of Mercado's philosophy, the term centripetal means that language is the theme of philosophical analysis. His trajectory centers on linguistic analysis, which allows him to uncover what is Filipino philosophy. In this paper, I first show their point of convergence by exploring the very context that causes them to focus their attention on a local language in philosophizing. Second, I show that their point of divergence is seen in the way they see a local language: Ferriols sees it as a way to express a worldview; Mercado sees it as a way to investigate a worldview. Third, after analyzing the points of their convergence and divergence, I propose that a synthesis of the thoughts of these two Filipino priest-philosophers contributes to the ongoing study on the development of Filipino philosophy in the postmodern Philippines.

POINT OF CONVERGENCE: THE FILIPINO LANGUAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY

Religious Nationalism

In December 1957, Fr. Antonio Garin, OSA, Fr. Ambrocio Manaligod, SVD, Fr. Benito Vargas, OP, Fr. Hilario Lim, SJ, Fr. Julio Obvial, OFM and Fr. Salvador Calsado, OAR sent a ninety-page memorial to Pope Pius XII urging him "for greater recognition of Filipino leadership in the Philippine Church" (Mercado 2005, 15). Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr. and Nicholas Sy (2017, 276-277) give us more details about the issues raised by the aforementioned priests: 1) Filipino priests are outnumbered by foreign priests in their respective order/congregation, 2) Filipino priests are tasked to accomplish responsibilities of low level and 3) "the institutional negligence of the vocations and development of Filipino aspirants to the priesthood." As regards reasons 1 and 3, Mercado (2005, 12) notes that this reality was propelled by *liepieza de sangre* (purity of blood), "meaning the non-possession of European blood excluded Filipino candidates from the religious orders." He (2005, 12) also notes that while the Spanish-influenced clerics in the country "ordained some *Indios* or native Filipinos as diocesan priests, the religious orders did not readily accept Filipinos into their ranks." Aguila and Sy (2017, 277) note that Fr. Manaligod, SVD "lamented that the orders were not developing native vocations, with some, after three centuries, having 'only two or three or four Filipino religious, with little or no prospect of improvement.'" Regarding reason 2, Mercado (2005, 12) believes that Filipinos were given a low level of responsibility because they were considered second-class citizens of their own country. This kind of racial discrimination is proven by the fact that native clergy became assistants to foreign parish priests for a long time, the local superiors of religious congregations and orders of men and women in the country were all foreigners, and Catholic universities and colleges were headed by foreigners as presidents or rectors (see Aguilar and Sy 2017, 277; Mercado 2005, 13-14).

Although the six priests' memorial seemed to fall on deaf ears (see Mercado 2005, 16), their reactions against the Eurocentric Catholicism in the country echoed in Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*: There is a link between the Gospel message and human culture. The Word's incarnation "has spoken according to the culture proper to

each epoch" (no. 58.). In this perspective, those who wish to evangelize a culture must have a good grasp of it so that the message of salvation may be incarnated, that is, contextualized. Those who are better equipped to do this are those who belong to that culture. In this spirit, the indigenization of the clergy in the Philippines was implied. Aguila and Sy (2017, 268) note that among the 1,742 population of religious in the archipelago in 1958, 89% of which (1,555) were non-Filipinos and 11% of which (187) were Filipinos. Based on the Jesuit priest Pedro S. De Achutegui's report (1984, 83) in 1983—18 years after the promulgation of Vatican II—there were 6,107 priests in the country: 2,978 of them were diocesan, 1,976 were regulars, and 1,153 of them were religious. Although the report did not qualify the nationalities of the 6,107 priests working in the different ecclesiastical territories of the Philippines, it can be presumed that the majority of them were Filipinos (De Achutegui 1984, 81 and 95.)

The religious nationalism instigated by the six priests has significantly transformed the landscape of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. From being a Eurocentric Catholic Church, it has become a Filipino Catholic Church sending men and women missionaries all over the world. From being a "mission Church," it has now become a "missionary Church." This kind of religious nationalism—echoed but tamed by the missiology of Vatican II—deeply influenced Ferriols and Mercado. For the former, the missionary approach must be "cultural adaptation," while for the latter, it must be "inculturation."

Ferriols (1997, 224) believes that "the natural [meaning culture] contains many points of departure into the supernatural, and aims at the greatest possible continuity between old natural values and new supernatural values." This means that one's culture is a vehicle to access the supernatural. By adapting the culture, one evangelizes the culture and the culture contextualizes the nature and purpose of evangelization. Ferriols (1997, 224-226) gives us three reasons in justifying the practice of cultural adaptation: 1) "concession to weakness," 2) "respect for the imperfect image of the eternal Word which is found in non-Christian cultures," and 3) "the exigency for cultural pluralism within the Mystical Body." The first reason means that a missionary must be able to understand the weakness of a culture that one enters into. He (1997, 224) proffers that "[c]harity should be willing to overlook faults, in order to obtain their salvation." The second reason means that non-Christian cultures "have some goodness and truth in them" that are "imperfect images of the eternal Word." An image of the eternal Word, whether perfect or imperfect, demands respect. The third reason means that no single culture can fully express Him because Christ is the only true embodiment of the "human genius hypostatically united with the Word." So, there is a need for cultural pluralism because "various cultures together will image Him much more perfectly because what one culture lacks will be made up by another."

Mercado, as a graduate student of philosophy, was deeply inspired by Fr. Manaligod's religious nationalism. He (2005, 17) was convinced that what Fr. Manaligod envisioned as a personal nationalism was, for him, an "intellectual nationalism." He considers this kind of nationalism as Vatican II's inculturation. Inculturation is the Church's efforts "to [incarnate] the Gospel in native cultures and also the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church" (*Slavorum Apostoli*, no. 21).

This technique is the process of making known the Good News through the categories of a given culture which in turn introduces the same culture to the Church. As a missionary priest, the Church's radical openness to the world was, for Mercado, a moment of grace. In order to realize inculturation, he (1974, 7) insists that "the Filipino needs a philosophy to explain and support his identity." He (1974,7 additions mine) adds that "[b]y being herself, each nation can make a contribution to the world [and to the Church]. But if a nation is contended with merely imitating a foreign model, she may turn out to be a fake and a 'neurotic' who possesses what Renato Constantino calls a 'national inferiority complex.'" Without a firm Filipino identity anchored on one's cultural rootedness, inculturation will never be made possible. Without inculturation, the country would still remain a slave of Western categories; the Church would be a church of Catholic Filipinos, not Filipino Catholics.

Secular Nationalism

Closely linked with religious nationalism is secular nationalism. Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr. (2015, 287) argues that the Filipino nationalist movement was inspired by the nationalist outcry of the Filipino clergy to take over the control of the parishes from the Spanish friars. What Fr. Pedro Peláez, Fr. José Burgos, Fr. Mariano Gómez, and Fr. Jacinto Zamora fought for in the nineteenth century was continued by the aforementioned priests in the twentieth century. "If the Philippine history," Mercado (2005, 15, additions mine) notes, "had the three Filipino martyr priests, GomBurZa...executed by the Spanish authorities for alleged subversion, the group prided themselves as ManLimVar (an acronym for Manaligod, Lim, and Vargas) [specifically three of the six priests who sent a memorial to Pope Pius XII]. Since the memorial fell on deaf ears, ManLimVar made a political move in 1957. Senator Roseller Lim, influenced by the triumvirate, "filed a bill that only Filipino citizens can be made presidents of every educational institution in the country" (Mercado 2005, 15). A year after, former President Carlos Polistico Garcia implemented the "Filipino First" policy. The Garcia administration actively promoted and chose Filipino-owned businesses over foreign-owned ones. During the Garcia government, Mercado (2005, 17) notes, "around eighty percent of the foreign trade were in alien hands, especially Chinese and American." Logically, during the implementation of the said policy, these foreigners were outraged because the promotion of local businesses meant their marginalization (see Mario Alvaro Limos, 2020).

In 1958, a year after ManLimVar brought the matter to Senator Lim, the latter filed bills that had a ripple effect on schools at the tertiary level, most of which were handled by religious orders or congregations. Aguilar and Sy (2017, 282-283) note that the bills filed by Lim aimed to reserve the leadership of educational institutions for natural-born Filipinos. Lim (quoted in Aguilar and Sy 2017, 283) himself revealed the rationale behind his move, which was reflective of the sentiments of ManLimVar: "We are sovereign in all lines of governmental activity. But in education, a great part of it is under the control of Aliens. Yes, I repeat: We are a sovereign Catholic nation with a captive Catholic education." His aim was to free the Philippine educational system

from the fetters of Western colonization. The very first rung of the ladder to decolonization was to Filipinize the country's educational leadership and management, and the contents of social sciences must be taught by a Filipino from the perspective of the Filipino. Lim's contention would have an effect, albeit slightly and indirectly, in the philosophical directions of Ferriols and Mercado.

Although Ferriols was torn between the tension of the Filipinization movement in the Ateneo de Manila University and the resistance of the foreign Jesuits administering the school (see Preciosa Regina De Joya 2013, 45-56), his own version of Filipinization predates the said political tension and therefore apolitical. He was "a pivotal force in the Filipinization movement in the Ateneo. Not only did he pave the way towards concretizing its vision, but he was also instrumental in disclosing its philosophical *raison d'être*" (De Joya 2013, 67). Ferriols (quoted in De Joya 2013, 68) has been thinking about Filipinization since he was a high school student. This childhood thought was developed even more when he was sent to Fordham University in New York to study for a doctoral degree in philosophy. There, he "learned the meaning of diversity" (De Joya 2013, 69). The diversity of cultures and languages in the Big Apple enabled him to appreciate the uniqueness of a given language. In this uniqueness, Ferriols (quoted in De Joya 2013, 70) argues that the "one who philosophizes chooses the language he uses; his choice is the outcome of his attitude towards the words/language of those around him. And his attitude can either be truth[ful] or a lie."

In his contention that "the national goals of Philippine education somehow dovetail with recent developments on what Christian education should be," Mercado (1977, 70-71) proffers that Christian education—which is basically the love of fellowmen—"must embrace all people, must extend beyond private affairs, and must be indigenized." The indigenization of Catholic education is his (2005, 18) personal reaction against the alienation of Filipinos from their true identity driven by the country's Westernized educational system. With the indigenization of both public and private schools, Mercado (1977, 77) believes that "the Filipino educator must work with Philippine culture and philosophy and not go against it." Educators must be able to understand the country's culture and philosophy so that the contents and methods of teaching may be Filipinized/indigenized. Once the Filipinized teachings are relayed to the students, they become more at home with themselves, and the "national inferiority complex" diagnosed by Constantino is overcome.

Return to Filipino Language for the Flourishing of Filipino Philosophy

As shown above, religious nationalism and secular nationalism are powerful means to effectively initiate the process of Filipinization. Of the many ways to Filipinize, the use of Philippine languages either as a medium for or object of philosophical discourse has been proven to be as effective as what Ferriols and Mercado have painstakingly achieved, respectively.

After learning the value of diversity in New York, Ferriols (1974, 340) realizes that the one "who has touched the heart of a language, even if only for a split second, knows that it is an irreducible way of being alive." Language keeps us alive because it

is very vital in our search for truth. He (1991, 234) believes that a true philosopher must be able to express his thoughts in a language understood by the people around him/her so that truth may be conveyed. Educating in the native language gives us a glimpse of the reality that cannot be expressed in a foreign tongue because some insights can only be expressed in a native language. Ferriols (quoted in De Joya 2013, 70) notes that those who philosophize live with their fellows who speak their language. The philosophers' choice of language in their philosophizing is the result of their "attitude towards the words/language of those around." This means that a true philosopher must be able to enunciate his lived experience in a way that is understood by the people around him who are also immersed in the same language. Ferriols (quoted in De Joya 2013, 68) notes that it was important to philosophize in the language used in the Philippines because any foreign language would never ever capture the flavor of philosophy expressed in Filipino. Without this kind of attention to language—any Filipino language at that—as a medium to communicate one's lived experience, the process of Filipinization will proceed at a snail's pace because there will be no genuine encounter between Filipinos.

In his pioneering effort to make explicit the seemingly implicit Filipino philosophy, Mercado (2005, 30) opines that the Filipino language must be investigated because "it reflects a worldview." While there are no written sources on Filipino philosophy, language is one of the ways to uncover the said philosophy because it carries the theology, psychology, beliefs, and points of view of Filipinos. In his commitment to show that there is Filipino philosophy, he (2005, 28) differentiates between the anthropological concepts of etic and emic. The former refers to the investigation of a particular culture from the "outside" perspective—an outsider's view. The latter refers to the investigation of a particular culture from the "inside" perspective—the insider's view. Mercado (2005, 28) is doing the emic: "[t]he emic is what we mean by Filipino philosophy, how the Filipino interprets reality from his perspective or world view."

Following the spirit of Filipinization, both Ferriols and Mercado uncovered the value of Philippine languages in the development of Filipino philosophy. Ferriols realized that the Filipino language is as potent as Nietzsche's German and Sartre's French as a medium for philosophizing. He has proved that "each language is a way of being alive." In the same way, Mercado—driven by his belief that the Filipino language is a mirror of the Filipino worldview—demonstrated that it is a rich source of philosophical reflection. The critical analysis of Philippine languages is a key to unlocking what truly Filipino philosophy is.

POINT OF DIVERGENCE: THE FILIPINO LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM OR AS AN OBJECT OF DISCOURSE

Ferriols' Centrifugal Trajectory as a Filipino Philosopher: Language as a Medium for Philosophical Discourse

It has been noted already that Ferriols does not try to develop a Filipino philosophy. What he intends to do is to philosophize in Pilipino. He (1974, 340,

numbering mine) writes [the numbered sentences are the focus of the following analysis]:

[1] When I try to philosophize in Pilipino, it is with intent to live and to help awaken other people into living. [2] Each language is a way of being alive that is irreducible. Yes, the things languages do, overlap and, if one just wants to do things with words, he can learn to reduce one manipulation to another. There are those who spend their lives producing vast linguistic networks of mutually reducible manipulations. But he who has touched the heart of a language, even if only for a split second, knows that it is an irreducible way of being alive. [3] Each language has unrepeatable potentials for seeing and feeling, its very own genius, its own nuance. [4] The more languages you really feel, no matter how in a glass darkly, the more you live. No, Pilipino is not my favorite language. [5] But it is a good language.

Ferriols' statement 1 captures very well his training in phenomenology. Phenomenology "is the experience of experience. [It] is the study of experience, of the way things appear to us together in their truth" (Chad Engelland 2020, 2-3). Founded by Edmund Husserl, this method aims to study the structure of consciousness from the first-person point of view. Although Ferriols follows the phenomenological tradition, he (1995, 10, translation mine) cautions that "Husserl's phenomenology is a fine and complicated rule of bracketing one's experience," enabling one to forget about the lived experience and focus only on concepts of that experience. In his (1991, ix-x) insistence that "*ang pilosopiya ay ginagawa*" [philosophy is about doing], he (1995, 10) proposes a "*maka-phenomenolohiko*" method that allows us to "evade Husserl's bracketing and to be totally immersed in what is really happening [*palaging kumilos na babad sa meron*]." If philosophy is about doing, then it makes us more alive. This kind of living is not only for the sake of living but finding meaning in everything that we do. A meaningful life awakens those who have been in the slumber of inactivity and meaninglessness. Filipinization, that is, philosophizing in Pilipino, is the most concrete way of waking up the Filipinos.

Ferriols' statement 2 shows us that language is a way of being alive. When a Filipino tries to philosophize in Pilipino, his/her language becomes a way to confirm the meaningfulness of his/her activity. When one is immersed in one's lived experience, language becomes the expression of this immersion. This is the very reason why he sees trying to develop a Filipino philosophy as a waste of time. One is so obsessed with developing that kind of philosophy that one forgets about living, and forgetful living is indeed a waste of time. In order to prove his point, he argues that both Hegel and Nietzsche were Germans but they did not in any way try to develop a German philosophy. He (1974, 339-340) believes that they "are too fascinated by the striving to see into, by the visions that occasionally break at them, to engage in dramatics about identity."

For him, "engaging in dramatics of identity" is a waste of time. The aforementioned philosophers were not bothered about the Germanness or the Frenchness of their work. They were too "fascinated by the striving to see into, by the visions that occasionally break at them" for them to look at the mirror and examine their identity. The job of the philosopher is to be immersed and give meaning to the unraveling of truth. In his rootedness in the truth, one begins to wonder about its nature, beauty, totality, and relevance. From this awe, a philosopher begins the journey to being authentically human—a theme which Ferriols has devoted so much of his time and energy. This journey towards being authentically human becomes possible if and only if a philosopher "keeps his [her] eyes away from mirrors."

Ferriols' statement 3 shows us the giftedness of any language. This uniqueness of each language rests on the fact that there are realities that can only be well expressed in a given language. The German term *Eigenleben*, for example, cannot be translated satisfactorily in English as subjectivity because the term subjective in the epistemological sense is negative. "Here 'subjective,' Dietrich von Hildebrand (2021, 143) writes, "refers to the suspicious epistemological 'dignity' of something not truly real." Such suspicion is foreign to the entire meaning of *Eigenleben*. This means that the meaning of *Eigenleben* is entirely positive, which cannot be fully captured by the term subjectivity. The English "home" means "a social unit formed by a family living together." However, the Tagalog "tahanan" does not only presume "home." It connotes peaceful living as indicated by its root word "tahan" — meaning peaceful and relaxed. When one says "tahan na," it means that the baby or someone crying is commanded to stop from crying. The Cebuano concept "puhon" is very pregnant with meaning compared to its English counterpart "someday." Aside from the concept of "someday," "puhon" is a wish that something good will happen in the future and this future is not anyone's future but God's time. This is not to say that English is inferior to any Philippine language. There are also English expressions or idioms that cannot be expressed in Filipino languages, as can be seen later.

Ferriols' statement 4 shows us that the more languages you know, the better you interpret the world around you. Ferriols is known to be fluent not only in Filipino [Ilocano, Tagalog, Kapampangan, Cebuano Visayan] and English but also Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, and German (see Pauline V. Miranda 2013; Wilhelm P.J. Strebel 2018). Because of this god-like capacity, Ferriols was able to translate into Tagalog some of the works of Greek philosophers and some of the writings of the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel and many more. His exposure to the languages of the world has broadened his philosophical horizons, which has enabled him to be more perspicacious about the human experience. In finding the nuances of the said languages, he becomes more adept in "feeling" and "seeing" the world. For him, each language has its own genius. If one knows some, then one's grasp of the world is deeper and more meaningful. With depth and meaningfulness, one becomes truly human.

Finally, Ferriols' statement 5 is his justification of the Filipinization of philosophy. "Pilipino language is good." Although he did not qualify such goodness, one can surmise that this goodness is rooted in his deep appreciation of the Philippine languages. This appreciation has a practical purpose—fellowship. Ferriols' insistence

on the employment of a local language in philosophizing made him one with the people who speak the same language. When one philosophizes in Pilipino, Ferriols (1991, 233-237) argues one can easily communicate with ordinary people and such ordinariness of philosophy removes her from her own ivory tower. When one philosophizes in a language understood by the people, philosophy becomes more relevant because ordinary people can now be led to find meaning in their lived experience and thereby cultivate their humanity. With this philosophical cultivation, philosophy no longer becomes an affair of the elite but everyone's journey to becoming fully human who is always fully alive. When one philosophizes in Pilipino, Ferriols (1991, 236-237, translation mine) argues, "there is fellowship. A word deeply rooted in an encounter. Person to person, heart to heart, human to human." Indeed to philosophize in Pilipino is to be one with the Filipinos.

Mercado's Centripetal Trajectory as a Filipino Philosopher: Language as an Object of Philosophical Discourse

Mercado (2005, 30) argues that "language mirrors thought." In his analysis of worldviews as carried by Filipino languages, he employs the metalinguistic approach. He (1974, 8-9, numbering mine) writes [the numbered sentences are the focus of the following analysis]:

[1] The metalinguistic approach rests on the assumption that a [2] language reflects the thought and somehow determines the outlook of its native speakers. [3] Language, thought, culture, and society are linked inseparably...In short, we subscribe to a modified view of linguistic relativism: [4] 'Insofar as languages differ in the ways they encode objective experiences, language users tend to sort out and distinguish experiences differently according to the categories provided by their respective languages.

As regards the metalinguistic approach, Mercado (1974, 10) clarifies that "the prefix *meta-* indicates that metalinguistic begins where linguistic ends." This means that he refrains from using foreign models in analyzing the Philippine languages because that would not be appropriate to his emic approach, that is, understanding the Philippine languages from the point of view of an insider.

Mercado's statement 2 is one of the main justifications that there is Filipino philosophy.³ Language mirrors the thought of native speakers. The Filipino language mirrors the thoughts of Filipinos. In order to justify this, he examines some of the linguistic expressions of the three biggest Philippine languages: Ilocano, Tagalog, and Cebuano Visayan. The advantage of using major Philippine languages is that they complement each other." The Tagalog *loob* means self and one's interiority. In his (1974, 32) analysis, Mercado "found out that *loob* [*buot* in Cebuano Visayan and *nakem* in Ilocano] shows how the Filipino is holistic" unlike the soul-body dualism of the West. By examining the third person pronouns of the said Philippine languages, he

(1974, 32) also found out that the Filipino is gender neutral, unlike the explicit he/she/it of the English language. Mercado (1974, 55-64) cites so many examples to justify the metalinguistic approach, but the aforementioned examples suffice the need to prove what he has proved already. Closely linked with this fact is that language determines one's outlook in life because that is his/her own limit. This means that the perspective or worldview one has is actually molded by the language one uses.

Mercado's statement 3 deals with the relationship of language with thought, culture, and society. Since the relationship between language and thought has already been expounded above, we shall now explore the two remaining relationships. In his analysis of the relationship between language and culture, Mercado uses phenomenology of behavior. In this kind of phenomenology, he (2005, 34) discovered that "[Filipinos have] mechanisms in making group alliances." These alliances, he (2005, 34) argues, anchor on the Filipinos' *sakop* philosophy." This *sakop* mentality has two characteristics: interpersonal and hierarchic (Mercado 2005, 34). The former "is seen in the *suki* system wherein the buyer and the seller are bonded by interpersonalism." The *comprazado* system and the *balato* system also belong to this characteristic. The latter refers to the relationship between the politicians and the people, landlords and peasants, teachers and students, employers and employees, among others. As regards the relationship between language and society, Mercado (1974, 24) believes that "[a] child born [in Philippine] society is unconsciously formed by the language he [she] learns." This means that a language has the power to form the mind of a child, of communities, and of a nation. The Filipino languages have the power to mold the consciousness of Filipinos. In return, Filipino society sharpens, develops, or changes this consciousness through the same languages.

Finally, Mercado's statement 4 is the synthesis of the relationship of language to thought, culture, and society. The kind of language determines the kind of categories of expression used to enunciate the experiences of the people. So, while there are objective experiences, the kind of language employed to give meaning to the same experiences makes the expression of the same experience unique because each language has its own nuances. When two persons of different linguistic orientations [French and Cebuano Visayan] see the same phenomena, say it is raining, the former would say "Il pleut," the latter would say (1) "Ulan o," or (2) "Ulan man," or (3) "Ulan lagi," and many other related expressions as regards raining. The French is so objective in his/her observation [of course, this is an etic observation because I am not French]; the Cebuano Visayan gives a deeply subjective take on the phenomena: the first one is a statement of fact with amazement, the second one is a statement of fact with outright indifference to the situation, and the third one is a statement of fact with seeming frustration perhaps because plans are canceled because of the rain or one is frustrated for telling it to someone—"that it is really raining"—who does not seem to listen to him/her.

The Intellectual Conflict Between Ferriols and Mercado

Although the two did not engage in polemics, they were critical of each other's work. Ferriols was the editor of the *Philippine Studies* journal from 1972 to 1975. In

support of Mercado's initiative to develop a Filipino philosophy, Ferriols assisted him to publish in the said journal a number of his works (De Joya 2013, 207). In his reading of Mercado's work, Ferriols (quoted in De Joya 2013, 207) would later comment: "His thinking did not open up; I thought he was just starting." In his examination of Mercado's analysis of the Filipino conception of time, Ferriols notes (quoted in De Joya 2013, 208) that while it is an interesting way of philosophizing, it is a philosophy that limits because Mercado is preoccupied with "what does the Filipino think about time" not about "what is the attitude of the human person to time." Ferriols sees Mercado's attempt to develop a Filipino philosophy very limiting because the latter's preoccupation with the Filipinoness of a certain aspect of reality keeps him from inquiring into reality itself. Mercado was unable to "keep his eyes away from mirrors." In his attempt to look at the "Filipinoness" of things, he forgot to delve into the deepest realities of life, which is supposedly the very task of a true Filipino philosopher.

Although Mercado did not directly respond to Ferriols' criticism, the former was very critical of the latter's *meron*. Mercado (2005, 39, additions mine) writes:

My misgivings with *meron* as the translation of being are the following reasons. First, *meron* is a neologism and esoteric which the ordinary Filipino does not understand. In fact *meron* in colloquial Tagalog can also mean pregnant. Second /pagka-/ [his own version of the Western "being"] already contains *meron*. Thus pagkatao (being a man) has *meron*. Third, *meron* is a translation of being in Western thought. It is not liberating.

Mercado's bias against Ferriols' neologism is perhaps rooted in his ethnophilosophical approach to developing Filipino philosophy. This kind of approach almost automatically rejects any neologism and hybridity because it focuses on language in its pure and decolonized form. Because *meron* is a kind of neologism, ordinary people would have a hard time understanding it, thus rendering it esoteric. Finally, Mercado understands *meron* as a translation of being in Western thought.⁴ For Mercado, Ferriols' philosophizing in the ambit of Western categories is not liberating. Such a style for Mercado renders filipinization impossible. In fact, in one of his interviews, Mercado (quoted in Emmanuel C. De Leon and Marvin Einstein S. Mejaro 2016, 9) has this to say about Ferriols' *meron*:

Well, Ferriols was not writing about "Filipino philosophy." That was not his concern. His only concern is his idea of "Meron" [laughing out loud]. He was also struggling to come up with his own philosophy, as far as we know he got stuck with "Meron" [laughs]. Wala namang more specific na [contribution], hindi ba? (It seems that his contribution to Filipino philosophy is not that specific).

Here, Mercado contends that Ferriols' philosophical journey stagnated because of his preoccupation with *meron*. Because of this stagnation, Ferriols seems to have failed to contribute something specific to the development of Filipino philosophy.

Filipino Philosophy for Ordinary Filipino

Despite their philosophical rift, it is obvious in their philosophizing that they want to be understood by ordinary Filipinos. Ferriols (1991, 234) notes that a Filipino philosopher must be able to communicate his philosophy with the jeepney drivers, street sweepers, and vendors. For him, the goal of philosophizing in Pilipino is to be in touch with the people with the hope that such activity will help them in their journey to becoming fully human. To become fully human, one must be able to attain happiness. He (1997, 324, translation mine) notes that the attainment of happiness lies in one's effort to search for the truth and the good. The former is attained by the movement of the intellect, while the latter is by the movement of the will. In philosophizing in Pilipino, "the truth and the good that we seek [that] are complete, flowing, eternal, outright and perfect" will always be understood and lived (Ferriols 1997, 324). "For me," Ferriols (1997, 324 translation mine) furthers, "it is clear that the truth and good [that we seek] are the joy that we want to have." The Filipino language then enables the Filipinos to understand and live up to what is true and good. The attainment of these means the attainment of joy, which is the very goal of "pagpapakatao."

In his critique of Ferriols (see above), Mercado implies that philosophy must be understood by the people because it is fundamentally formed by them. To facilitate this, the expression of philosophy must be within the ambit of the language understood by the same people. In his mis/understanding of Ferriols' *meron*, Mercado (1974, 7) insists that the language of philosophy must be the language of the ordinary Filipinos in order for "Filipino philosophy [to liberate] the Filipinos from mental bonds."

SYNTHESIS: THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE SIMULTANEITY OF THE CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE OF FERRIOLS AND MERCADO

The Complementarity of Ferriols' and Mercado's Understanding of Language in View of the Development of Filipino Philosophy

It has been noted above that Ferriols and Mercado converge in their insistence that Filipino language is a way to Filipino philosophy and that they diverge from each other because the former understands the language as a medium for philosophical discourse while the latter employs it as an object of the same discourse.

Ferriols' employment of language as a medium to philosophize implies that language is dynamic in the sense that it evolves as people evolve. When one wants to capture the linguistic framework through which people analyze and give meaning to their lived experiences, philosophical language must be able to accommodate such

dynamism. Now that the world is highly globalized, foreign terms become a necessary tool to capture what is happening globally with the intention of communicating it locally. With this in mind, Ferriols (1974, 341) argues that "[i]t is different when one speaks a language from its genuine center and, from that center, creates new words by stealing (a good talker never borrows, he steals) from other languages." By stealing, he means that foreign terms are stolen—not borrowed because they can never be returned—in order to accommodate the Filipinos' linguistic evolution. The Cebuano Visayan language does not have a term for "ice," so in order to speak about it locally, the said language steals the English "ice." When an English speaker says, "I want some ice on my drink," the Cebuano says, "Butangi ra gud ug *ice* ang akong ilimnon." Similarly, the English word "sandwich" does not have any Tagalog translation. So, if one wants to translate into Tagalog the imperative "Eat my sandwich," one would usually say "Kainin mo ang *sandwich* ko." For Ferriols (see 1974, 342), this linguistic dynamism enhances the Filipino language because it shows it can accommodate foreign terms.

Mercado's employment of language as an object of philosophical discourse implies that the language being examined must be statically meaningful so as to accommodate the contention that it "reflects a worldview." In his (2005, 30-31) analysis of the Philippine languages' structure, he was able to infer from it Filipino thought, worldview and insights. He notes the following: 1) "[t]he preference of mode over tenses hints something about the Filipino's time orientation which is non-linear;" the absence of linking verbs in his examined languages shows that Filipino thought "is both-and mentality which is totally different from the Western either-or mentality;" and 3) while the English term self only refers to an individual the Filipino *sarili* "is extended to the consciousness of others, the world, and the environment." From this examination, Mercado was able to construct the seminal work on Filipino philosophy entitled *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (1974). This work became the basis of his other works: *Applied Filipino Philosophy* (1977), *Elements of Filipino Ethics* (1979), *Filipino Thought* (2000), and several other pioneering works on the Filipinoness of theology and psychology, among others.

From the foregoing, it appears that Ferriols' linguistic dynamism and Mercado's linguistic staticism contradict each other. The former's filipinization of philosophy is open to accommodate foreign terms, while the latter appears to be very allergic to such terms. Is there a middle ground? My answer is affirmative. Alfredo P. Co (2004, 15-16, additions mine), in his analysis of who the Filipino philosopher is at the threshold of the new millennium, argues that Filipino philosophers "[must] shift away from the power struggles and towards greater cooperation through a dialogue of cultures, faiths, and worldviews...[because] [g]lobalization involves profound transformations affecting economy, politics and [for certain philosophies]." Ferriols' linguistic openness belongs to this shift but Mercado's seems to be out of place. This is so because Mercado seems "to wallow in a pseudo-nationalistic⁵ search for Filipino identity, culture and philosophy, as if unwary that the world has already moved to a new age of Globalization and Postmodernism" (Co 2004, 16). This means that in order to find the middle ground, Mercado's metalinguistic approach must be purged first of its modern [as opposed to postmodern] nationalistic preoccupations. By purging, I

mean his metalinguistic approach must be expanded in order to accommodate terms that are stolen and/or hybrid. By this expansion, his approach becomes attuned with what is truly happening in the postmodern Philippines. I believe that such updating does not run counter to his Filipinization project because a Filipino does not cease to become one when his/her language accommodates foreign terms. Mercado has contributed so much to the development of philosophy, and his pioneering works can contribute more if scholars of Filipino philosophy begin to adjust his seemingly closed metalinguistic system to accommodate the language the Filipinos of today are using.

Language as Medium-Object of Philosophical Discourse: Hybridity in Postmodernity

Going back to Demeterio's (2014) assessment of the discourses of Filipino philosophy, Ferriols generally belongs to the category "philosophizing with the use of the Filipino language," while Mercado belongs to the category "interpretation of Filipino worldview." Ferriols' movement is centrifugal because local language is employed in philosophizing, while Mercado's is centripetal because local language is the object of philosophizing. After purging Mercado's approach, I propose that the synthesis between the two can be treated as a new form of philosophical discourse; to be specific, this is the "unofficial" thirteenth discourse in the context of Demeterio's discourses of Filipino philosophy: "philosophizing the Filipino worldview with the use of the Filipino languages."

Let me explain the elements of this hybridity. I replace the term "interpretation" with "philosophizing" because when one interprets the world, one is critical of the world. A true philosopher always has a critical mind. The "Filipino worldview" here means the postmodern Filipino worldview. This is the expansion of Mercado's metalinguistic approach. His original approach only focuses on Philippine languages untouched by foreign influences. Such focus is very selective and outrightly ignores the fact that the Spanish, American, and Japanese colonization of the country also influenced the evolution of its languages. How can the unpurged metalinguistic analysis of Mercado be used in analyzing the Chavacano of Zamboanga City and Basilan? How can the postmodern languages of Jejemon and SwardSpeak be examined through the lens of the said approach? By "Filipino languages," I mean the language that people of the Philippines speak today, hybrid or not. Ferriols anticipated such hybridity, which is why his stealing of foreign terms is justified. However, I see a problem in Ferriols. If one tries to read his *Pambungad sa Metapisika* and *Pilosopiya ng Relihiyon*, one begins to have intellectual indigestion because the Tagalog employed in the said works seems to be outdated and otherworldly. He, too, needs to adjust to the language of the postmodern Filipinos. Without these purging and adjustment, Ferriols' and Mercado's pioneering works, just like the ManLimVar, would fall on deaf ears.

Postmodernity presupposes hybridity. And language as both-medium-and-object approach in doing Filipino philosophy is one way to meet the demands of this time that paves the way for the development of the said philosophy. The hybridity

approach to the development of Filipino philosophy is a linguistic affirmation of how Co (2004, 17) understands the postmodern Filipinos:

We are beyond definition, beyond recognition, beyond identification, beyond description. We are never anchored on the monotony of one but on the countless many. We truly need not have to search for our identity. Ours is the identity of the new age- ambivalent, polymorphous, processual, always becoming.

The linguistic fluidity of Ferriols and the stability of Mercado are the "yin and yang" of Filipino philosophy. In the middle of the tension between these two giants lies the promising reciprocity that gives new direction to doing Filipino philosophy attentive to the linguistic "being and becoming" of the postmodern Filipino. The language as both-medium-and-object approach in Filipino philosophy— the unofficial thirteenth discourse of Filipino philosophy— assures us that the Filipino language is both a rich source for Filipino philosophy and a powerful medium to share the said philosophy with the postmodern Filipinos.

CONCLUSION

Committed to the Filipinization of philosophy, both Ferriols and Mercado see the Filipino language as a powerful tool to realize the movement. While they converge in seeing the language as a way to philosophize, they diverge in its employment. The Jesuit priest's emphasis on philosophizing in Pilipino follows a centrifugal trajectory because he treats the Filipino language as a medium for philosophical discourse. The SVD priest's contention that the Filipino language reflects the Filipino worldview follows a centripetal trajectory because he treats language as an object of philosophical discourse. For these philosophies to become more relevant to the postmodern Filipinos, synthesizing them is a must. Employing language as both a medium and object of philosophical discourse accommodates the evolution of the Filipino language as a result of globalization. This new style of discourse of Filipino philosophy accommodates the "ambivalent, polymorphous, and processual" Filipinos. The synthesis of the simultaneity of the convergence and divergence of the two leading priest-philosophers contributes to the development of Filipino philosophy because it captures well the being and becoming of Philippine languages in view of understanding and communicating well with the postmodern Filipinos. If Filipino philosophy of today does not speak on behalf of postmodern Filipinos and cannot be understood by them, how on earth has that philosophy become a Filipino philosophy?

NOTES

1. The term "Filipino" here must be qualified. In relation to Ferriols, the term "Filipino" in Filipino philosophy refers to the fact that he is a Filipino who is

philosophizing. He does not intend to develop a Filipino philosophy because he believes it is "a waste of time." In relation to Mercado, the term "Filipino" refers to his opinion that there is a Filipino philosophy.

2. Aside from metalinguistic analysis, Mercado (1974, 11-12; 2005, 33-34; 34-35; 35-36) also employs phenomenology of behavior, comparative oriental philosophy, and value ranking.

3. Here, Mercado misconstrues Ferriols. Ferriols' *meron* is not a translation of the Western concept of being. For him the concept being is too abstract and *meron* is "more concrete and more basic to everyday human life" (De Joya 2013, 204).

4. I do not think that Mercado's search for the true Filipino identity is pseudo-nationalistic. I am just trying to make a point here in light of Co's assessment that there are some who seem to be left behind by the progress of postmodernity by painstakingly insisting that there are "unchanging" Filipino traits that serve as the foundation of establishing a seemingly puritanical Filipino identity. I am saying "Mercado seems" not "Mercado is."

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