

# Practical Metaphilosophy

## —For inhabitants of two-storey houses—

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### Introduction

In Latin America, there is a rich tradition in which philosophers reflect on their own philosophical studies<sup>1</sup>. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they have been discussing the very existence of Latin American philosophy. The question is: Is there a Latin American philosophy? In relation to this, it has also been asked: What are the characteristics of it? Or is it irrelevant to ask such characteristics? ; Is the philosophy essentially connected to the social, historical or cultural context? Or is it independent of the local context? What is the philosophy? Are cosmovisions of the pre-Columbian philosophies? etc. Recently, a Mexican philosopher, Guillermo Hurtado, named this tradition 'practical metaphilosophy', which means philosophical reflection 'about conditions and problems of concrete practice of philosophy in a given place and moment'<sup>2</sup>. The richness of this tradition is one of the specific characteristics of Latin American philosophy<sup>3</sup>.

However, an interest in such reflection is not exclusive to Latin American philosophers but is widespread among philosophers in other areas of the world. We can say that such an interest is almost structurally necessary in non-occidental regions. These regions have been forced to receive occidental ways of thinking (regarding science, theories, concepts, etc.) to comprehend or explain their own reality. Philosophy is at the core of those intellectual items. In reality, however, there remain a number of elements that are deeply based on the specific history and culture of these regions. It is therefore understandable that conflicts may sometimes arise between theories proposed in other places and the local reality. Philosophers are urged to raise the above-mentioned questions in view of the gap between theory and reality. They are concerned about whether it is possible to produce an authentic or original philosophy. It may be admitted that one of the psychological motifs of this interest is a feeling of inferiority (Zea, 1942, 331; Miró Quesada 1974, 60)<sup>4</sup>. However, this does not mean that the problem is simply one of subjective feeling. Rather, it concerns the nature of philosophy, its relation to the circumstance and the way of reaching the autonomy of reason.

Having found themselves in a similar situation, Japanese philosophers seem to share a common interest with their Latin American counterparts. What they have in common can be described

through a metaphor expressed by Karl Löwith in 1940 on observing the activities of his Japanese colleagues and students. He compared Japanese philosophers to inhabitants of a two-storey house: 'Downstairs they think and feel in the Japanese way; upstairs a strand of European science from Plato to Heidegger is displayed. Now, a European teacher doubts where a ladder to go up- and downstairs is to be found' (Löwith 1974, 118). They import and study European philosophy with great enthusiasm, but the reality of their daily life is not always in accordance with these intellectual activities. Unfortunately, Löwith caricatured the Japanese as if they were unaware of this gap. Whether he was right or not, it is certain that, once they noticed it, they began asking the same questions as the Latin American philosophers. In fact, these questions are motivated by the fact that Japanese as well as Latin American philosophers analyse and comprehend reality with intellectual instruments that were not originally intended for that purpose.

Such a situation is not peculiar to Japan nor to Latin America, but is universal in the sense that it is structurally necessary for every culturally dependent region. The same can be said, for example, about Japan in the 7<sup>th</sup> century when it formed a national project of receiving Buddhism, or about China, which in the 20<sup>th</sup> century imported occidental philosophy. It is true that there are several exceptions in world history in which intellectual reflections were developed in harmony with one's own reality. Modern Europe is one such exception, but we can also include ancient China, India, Greece and so on. In these exceptional cases, too, people lived in two-storey houses, but their houses were provided with stairs that allowed them to go up- and downstairs in a comfortable manner. In other words, they developed scientific knowledge for and by themselves on the grounds of their own reality<sup>5</sup>. In contrast, in such cases as modern Japan and Latin America, the communication between the upstairs and the downstairs has not always worked well. In this respect, these regions share the similar situation.

Of course, we should be cautious not to over-simplify the problem. We must appreciate the difference between the circumstances of Japan and Latin America. To apply the house metaphor, these regions do not share the same ground floor, which in each case is constructed in a historically and culturally unique style. Moreover, if we analyse the problem in greater detail, it is necessary to distinguish the different contexts of the various countries in Latin America. For example, the problem of indigenous people is a key factor in Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, and Bolivia and so on, but in other countries probably less so. In short, we should pay attention to the diversity of the ground floors of different regions. Nevertheless, in the present context, I prefer to stress on the similarities in the Japanese and Latin American situations to introduce the Latin American discussion as one which the Japanese may consider as if it were their own.

In the following, I present some topics explored in Latin American practical metaphilosophy. First, I briefly discuss the classical observation of a Peruvian philosopher about the situation of Latin American philosophy (1). Then, I will move on to the question of how to create an authentic philosophy in this region. I follow a common view that distinguishes two standpoints: one is oriented to locality, particularity or properness (2), and the other to the professionalism, universality or objectivity of philosophy (3)<sup>6</sup>. Finally, I mention some specific problems related to

the globalised 21<sup>st</sup> century (4).

## 1. Starting point for Latin American practical metaphilosophy

Latin American philosophers seem to have a common awareness. This awareness seems to be based on their comprehension of the actual state of philosophy in Latin America, which can be seen as a starting point for their metaphilosophical reflection. In my view, Salazar Bondy, a Peruvian philosopher, offers a clear outline of such an understanding (Salazar Bondy 1988, Chap.1, par.2), which consists of the following 15 points:

- i) Despite of the diversity of and distance between countries in Latin America, the philosophical evolution of this region can be understood based on the same schema. In other words, these countries have a basic character in common, although the difference among them is not to be underestimated.
- ii) Latin American philosophy has always been oriented towards a specific other area of culture in each time period: theology (16 and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries), science (18<sup>th</sup> century), politics (19<sup>th</sup> century), literature (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries), and natural science and mathematics (second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). In spite of this, philosophy in this region has not had a narrow link with scientific creation as it did in Europe.
- iii) Currently, Latin American philosophy is becoming increasingly specialised and technical, that is, is more practised as a profession.
- iv) Latin American philosophy has received significant influence from the philosophies of other countries, especially Spanish, Anglo Saxon, French and German philosophy.
- v) The historical development of Latin American philosophy shows a 'waving' character. In other words, after a period distinguished by speculative, conservative and systematic philosophy, comes another period in which an empiricist and liberal inclination against systematization is dominant: scholastic philosophy → enlightened sensualism → more conservative thought of Scotland, spiritualism and Krause's thought → positivism → Bergson's vitalism → phenomenology and existentialism → Marxism and analytic philosophy.
- vi) Latin American philosophy has developed in parallel to occidental philosophy, and its evolution is fundamentally determined by this. In addition, this development is discontinuous because it is not generated by its own internal logic. It is also synoptic in the sense that the introduction of a new stream of thought takes the form of an outline of a finished product. Introductions of the latest European thought tend to be quicker, thus the time gap is getting smaller.
- vii) Latin American philosophy does not have its support in the vernacular tradition of a basic historical community. It is, rather, like a transplanted tree because it is brought from abroad and newly set on the land.
- viii) An imported philosophy serves the practical purpose of confronting problems of reality, although it was not originally created to analyse the Latin American reality. As a result,

reality is comprehended by means of extrinsic suppositions. Moreover, the status of this supposition in reality is modified because it is put into a different context.

- ix) Latin American philosophy has an imitative character in the sense that philosophers only adopt and repeat a particular finished thought as an 'ism'<sup>7</sup>.
- x) Universal receptivity is another aspect of Latin American philosophy because it accepts almost every theory that is produced in the great centres of occidental culture.
- xi) Latin American philosophy is superficial and poor in the proposal and development of doctrines.
- xii) There is no characteristic methodological tendency or distinguishable theoretical or ideological inclination that is capable of founding an intellectual tradition such as, for example, the English empiricist tradition.
- xiii) Products of Latin American philosophy do not contribute to the worldwide philosophical community. They do not have an effect on, nor are they recognised by foreign philosophers.
- xiv) There is a strong feeling of intellectual frustration among Latin American philosophers. It is symptomatic that the most representative philosophers in this region deal with the problem of the existence of a philosophy of their own and form projects for the future construction of it. In contrast, a French or German philosopher would not ask the question, is there a French or German philosophy?
- xv) In Latin America, there is a distance between philosophers and the community. Because of the lack of communication between them, philosophy does not reflect the people's character. As a result, it is not possible to talk about 'Latin American philosophy' in the same sense as 'German philosophy', 'French philosophy' and so on.

It may be debatable whether all Latin American philosophers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century accept all of these points<sup>8</sup>. However, the majority of these issues seem to be widely acknowledged. Indeed, the question concerning the existence of 'Latin American philosophy' has remained a genuine one up to now. As point xiv) indicates, this is a symptom of intellectual frustration.

Now, in face of the problematic situation of Latin American philosophy, philosophers are prompted to give an answer to the question, how can an authentic philosophy be created? There seem to be two major models of an authentic philosophy in Latin America. One can be called contextualism and the other universalism. Each has advantages and disadvantages. In the following, I present an outline of the grounds for and the dangers of both models in turn.

## 2. Contextualism

### 2.1. Grounds of contextualism

According to Francisco Miró Quesada (1974, 87-90), the movement for a philosophy of one's own country has been raised particularly in Mexico. Here some prominent philosophers pursued a philosophy with a national character in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. José Vasconcelos (1948) and Samuel Ramos (2001) are famous for this movement of 'the philosophy of the Mexican'.

Moreover, Mexico was greatly influenced by the thought of José Ortega y Gasset through his Spanish disciple, José Gaos. This philosopher is one of the most influential Spanish philosophers who emigrated from Franco-regime Spain to Latin America. Gaos (1945, 367-368) affirms that every philosopher, European as well as Mexican, starts to think philosophically from his own circumstances, which are formed in a certain historical context. Indeed, philosophy is an intellectual product of the interchange between a philosopher and the reality to which he/she belongs. Therefore, various types of expression of thought should be permitted under the term 'philosophy', that is, not only metaphysical, systematic or methodological philosophy of reason, such as that of Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and so on but also something that is lacking in these approaches (Taine, Renan, Marx, Nietzsche etc.). Thus, 'thought' or 'literature' can also be philosophy (Gaos 1945, 95-100).

Leopoldo Zea, a disciple of Gaos, develops this line of thought further with great enthusiasm. Even such 'universal' philosophical themes as being, knowledge, space, time, god, life, death and so on are inevitably considered from a specific standpoint. European philosophers too have intended to give universal answers to these problems, but this has resulted in Greek, Christian, French, German and Anglo-Saxon philosophies. Latin American philosophers also should start to think philosophically from their own situated standpoint (Zea 2001, 334-335). On the basis of such a supposition, the Latin American reality is considered as a theme of philosophy not only in Mexico but also in many countries in this region. There is a problem of political, economic, cultural or intellectual dependence on Europe and the US, and of the need for liberation from the domination of these countries. Based on this view, the movement for a 'philosophy of liberation' has been generated and developed (Dussel 2011).

It is also worth mentioning that Salazar Bondy (1988, 89-94) proposes that Latin America must begin by becoming conscious of a lack of authenticity and intellectual dependence in its philosophy to overcome such a state. Zea (1969, 34-35, 45, 112-113) goes further and affirms that authentic Latin American philosophy is not a future achievement, but it already exists in the sense that the reception of foreign thought is united with adjustments made by Latin American philosophers from an original perspective. That is to say, Latin America has not been totally passive in accepting finished philosophical products, but rather the importation of thought has always consisted of a process of modification and transformation. Consequently, imported thought becomes something different. The European authors of the original thought probably would not recognize them as their own or might consider it a distorted copy. This means that this process reflects an authentic effort by Latin American philosophers to deal with problems related to their own reality. Therefore, Zea proposes that we should recognize the original content that the philosophers in each time period have added in adjusting foreign thought to the reality of their countries. His proposition would lead to a series of historical investigations under the heading of the 'history of ideas'.

## 2.2. Dangers of contextualism

There has been criticism against contextualism. Risieri Frondizi (1949, 345-353) casts doubt on the existence of a Latin American philosophy. He points out the importance of distinguishing between philosophy and a simple, unreflected-upon worldview such as the pre-Hispanic Maya or the Inca civilization. Each community in the world has its own indigenous worldview, but does not necessarily comprise proper and authentic philosophical reflection. However, he precisely analyses the problem by distinguishing philosophy from other fields such as politics, literature, education, etc. Understood in this strict sense, he is highly sceptical of the existence of an authentic Latin American philosophy. As for the above-mentioned movement of a 'philosophy of the Mexican' or a 'philosophy of the Latin American', he criticises it for giving primacy to the Latin American character (and the hope for its existence) over philosophical originality. Indeed, a philosophy with a local or national character is not an aim for which we think philosophically, but simply a consequence. Provincialism is something that is far from philosophy and tends to lead a narrow nationalism. Frondizi's criticism is widely recognised as a classic in the discussion of this topic. In effect, Carlos Pereda's attack on what he calls 'nationalist enthusiasms' is substantially the same as that of Frondizi (Pereda 2006, 194-195; Pereda 2013, 44, Part IV).

Guillermo Hurtado (2007, 30-31) also describes some negative features of contextualism. According to him, philosophers of this orientation tend to confuse the authenticity of philosophy with the particularity of Latin America. In addition, when they pretend to give birth to a philosophy of their own, in reality, they often appeal surreptitiously to some foreign thought as an authority. Moreover, even though founders with this orientation are thinkers of great cultural and philosophical talent, the next generation encloses itself in a narrow space of authors, themes and methodology and forms a small closed circle. As for the content of thought, they tend to take for granted that problems related to Latin American philosophy are due to the region's economic and political dependence. Then, they affirm that the solution would be the economic and political liberation of these countries. However, this supposition is not well grounded because there is no assurance that liberation would make philosophers more authentic.

## 3. Universalism

### 3.1. Grounds of universalism

Miró Quesada (1974, 81-83, 113-118) describes the receptive attitude toward occidental philosophy in contrast to that of affirming the existence of Latin American philosophy. According to this perspective, an authentic Latin American philosophy is a future aim for which philosophers today have to make an effort. It is therefore necessary for them to learn about the major problems discussed throughout the history of European philosophy. Since these topics are in themselves worth learning about, they should be accepted independently whether or not they can be applied to a particular circumstance or are useful for a specific society. As for their responsibility to society,

philosophers who hold this perspective suggest that they contribute to social development through specialized philosophical investigations. In other words, a purely intellectual investigation can in itself have a social value, even if it does not respond directly to a certain specific circumstance.

A Mexican philosopher, Luis Villoro points out that philosophy is not an expression of historical particularity and should be distinguished carefully from literature, social science, politics and so on. The task of Mexican philosophers is not to create an 'original' philosophy for the region, but one that possesses rigour and professionalism (Villoro 1968, II).

In an excellent article, he affirms that the 'authenticity' of philosophy can be understood in two ways, depending on whether we pay attention to the 'reasons' or the 'motifs' of philosophical beliefs (Villoro 1987, 91-94). On the one hand, a reason, which is a ground or justification, is objective and valid for everyone. With respect to reason, an authentic philosophy would be a rational, critical and rigorous analysis of beliefs that may be accepted without justification. This activity is only possible through the autonomy of reason, not its heteronomy. Therefore, the criterion of authenticity and the lack of it do not consist in whether it is indigenous or comes from abroad, but whether it is a result of the critical exercise of thought or it simply imitates someone's thought without justification. On the other hand, philosophical beliefs can have motifs, which can be any psychological cause for an action such as conscious aims, rational purposes or emotive impulses, including unconscious ones. In contrast to reasons, motifs are subjective and singular. In this context, an authentic philosophy is that which is subjectively motivated by the demands of one's own reality. An unauthentic philosophy would be that which is dissociated from proper necessities based on the reality of a person. It would be just an intellectual game that is disconnected from life. Academic philosophies in developing countries tend to be unauthentic in this sense because they often just adopt problems and discussions that do not correspond to their own motivations, but only to someone else's. Villoro affirms that authenticity in the sense of the autonomy of reason includes motifs, but not vice versa. Namely, there are some cases in which only motifs are authentic, and this is what he criticises under the term 'ideology'. For him, it is important to pursue rigour, discipline, and professionalism of thought in order to accomplish the first sense of authenticity and, as a consequence of that, the second sense of it too (Villoro 1987, 99-104).

### **3.2. Dangers of universalism**

Unfortunately, in spite of Villoro's suggestion, the autonomy of reason is in reality very rare. In actuality, the majority of philosophical studies consist of investigations of occidental philosophy, in which it is not always easy to distinguish the autonomy of reason. Miró Quesada (1974, 113-118) and Hurtado (2007, 24) point out a paradox of specialised investigations of the history of European philosophy. Philosophers say that this is a necessary step in order to create an authentic philosophy of their own in the future, but it seems that they never complete the step of learning. In fact, for the purpose of understanding a contemporary European philosopher, it is necessary for philosophers to learn the history of modern philosophy, and for this, to enter into all the history of ancient and mediaeval philosophy. Moreover, the required knowledge becomes

more and more precise and detailed. In this way, the task infinitely increases, and philosophers cannot advance to the next step of creating their own philosophy. Philosophers end up enclosing themselves within their specialties without answering directly to social concerns.

In relation to this phenomenon, Pereda (2006, 193-194; 2013, 42-43) suggests two vices of Latin American philosophy. One of them is 'subaltern fervor'. Here once philosophers learn about an influential philosophical movement from abroad, they determine that they will be its followers for the rest of their lives. They are satisfied with, so to speak, administering a branch of the headquarters of thought elsewhere. This means that the relationship between Latin American philosophers and their counterparts in foreign centres is based on a unilateral dependence. The other vice is a 'craving for novelty': curiosity about something new is strengthened to the extent that philosophers aimlessly follow the most current tendencies in foreign countries without critically assessing or intrinsically evaluating them. Curiosity in this sense is different from knowledge because knowledge is regulated by validity criteria as being true, justified beliefs. These two vices reflect a decaying form of universalism<sup>9</sup>. The above-mentioned 'nationalist enthusiasm' of desiring a philosophy with national traits is a reaction to these two vices; however, these vices can be also a reaction to the movement towards the national. In this way, the three vices form a 'vicious triangle', not to mention a vicious circle (Pereda 2013, 380). In any case, these three vices are variations of what Villoro calls the 'heteronomy of reason'.

Philosophers of a postcolonialist inclination mention a different problem related to universalism: 'reason' and 'humanity', which pretend to be universally valid, can in reality be ideals that express a local worldview that reflects only Western modern culture. If such universalities are then imposed on people of a different background, they can serve as a means of oppression (Dussel 2011, 19, 89; Zea 1969, chap.1). Latin American modern history is full of suppression and the exploitation of indigenous people under the name of universal 'reason' or 'humanity'<sup>10</sup>. Even scientific methodology can work as a tool of the dominant ideology that oppresses the exterior, the other, if it pretends to be free from its political, social and historical context (Dussel 2011, 249-250). This criticism can be connected with another problem, that is, whether human reason should be considered as uniform for every culture or can be different depending on the historical and social background. Universalists seem not to take this problem seriously and just naively presuppose the uniformity of reason.

#### 4. Some particular problems in the globalized 21<sup>st</sup> century

Before concluding this paper, I would like to mention some further problems that Latin America and Japan may have in common today. One issue is the management of the academic investigation of philosophy. As Salazar Bondy already mentioned in 1968, philosophy is becoming increasingly professional. Now, the majority of philosophers exercise philosophical investigation as a 'profession' and 'work' (*oficio*) in universities. Although this surely has advantages, it can also hinder the sound development of philosophy. Pedro Stepanenko, the current director of the Instituto de investigaciones

filosóficas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, affirms that such a professionalism can be considered as an obstacle to mutual dialogue among Latin American philosophers<sup>11</sup>. To make matters worse, it is not even a problem of philosophical belief, but rather of economic circumstance. Namely, the national evaluation system, which is determined by the government, leads philosophers in a particular direction. They are urged to publish articles in certain internationally recognised academic journals, the majority of which are issued in English-speaking countries. Because it is not so likely that, for example, a specific article concerning a Mexican philosopher of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century will be accepted by these journals, philosophers of the younger generations are likely to avoid such a subject. Instead, they pay more attention to the topics that are discussed in those countries in which the journals are produced. Thus, philosophers may work on particular topics not because they find them highly interesting but because they pay off. In this way, philosophical investigation is influenced in a specific direction through an external cause.

Now, there is surely a perspective that denies the significance of 'thinking in Spanish' in the globalised 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to this view, there is not a problem of 'how to do good philosophy in Mexico and in general in Latin America'. The Problem is, rather, 'how to make good philosophy... in any place' regardless of region or language (Pereda 2013, 393). In that case, philosophy would deal with the same topics in the same manner independently of the circumstances to which philosophers belong. This view conforms to the above-mentioned system in which philosophers are evaluated. However, the problem is that this is only one of many possible answers. If the important thing is to continue the dialogue between different positions, and the careful and mutual examination of their grounds, it is not a sound approach to take for granted the direction given by the government. It is not easy to change this tendency, however, because it is a problem of the political and economic strategy of the government in a given international circumstance. Nevertheless, philosophers should at least consider how to cope with such a one-sided situation because it is their responsibility to keep their community sound.

### **Final Remark from the Standpoint of a Japanese philosopher**

In my view, the discussion among Latin American philosophers contains many topics that are applicable to the Japanese context. Philosophers in both Japan and Latin America have made similar reflections on their way of practising philosophy. Generally speaking, in Japan too, it is not difficult to find those who are contextualists and those who are universalists. One of the advantages for Latin America is that there is an explicit debate in that region between these two tendencies of thought. In contrast, it seems to me that in Japan, many philosophers express their view about Japanese philosophy by presupposing one of these positions from the beginning. As a result, there are affirmations, but no discussion or examination of the grounds for each affirmation. Granted, in Latin America, too, philosophers always take a specific point of view. However, since there is an abundance of discussion, they cannot ignore the criticism presented by other philosophers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and have to justify their position. In this way,

a dogmatic attitude is eliminated, and further discussion takes the place of a lack of dialogue, although the problems that I mentioned in the previous section still exist.

Finally, my personal observation is that the debate between contextualism and universalism will not –and need not–be easily settled. The debate concerns the fundamental understanding of ‘philosophy’. Contextualism is grounded on the conviction that philosophy should be based on the interaction of a subject with its real circumstances. In contrast, universalism stresses that philosophy is a strict exercise of reason in examining arguments for beliefs that may be accepted without justification. Both sides are supported by a plausible understanding of this discipline. In Latin America, and also in Japan, the complexity of the debate between these two positions is reinforced due to the addition of another problematic factor: cultural and intellectual dependence on some foreign centres. Some people say that this additional factor has nothing to do with philosophy, but others think that philosophy in Japan and Latin America should deal with this factor. Frankly and personally speaking, I have sympathy with both contextualism and universalism. At the same time, I agree with almost every point of criticism directed at both perspectives. From my perspective, it is not so important that we reach a correct answer as that we recognise this as a problem for us all. By ‘for us all’, I refer to all people who intend to study philosophy while removed from the centres of philosophy.

Having said all this, I would like to add, even more frankly, that the question: ‘Is there a Latin American or a Japanese philosophy?’ is not so urgent. Instead, what is urgent is, ‘whether Latin Americans or Japanese can appropriately think as they should regardless of whether it can be called “philosophy”’. The problem of ‘whether it should be called “philosophy”’ is surely important, but it is secondary because it refers only to the matter of the categorisation of disciplines within the system of academic research. In contrast, the latter question is literally crucial because if we cannot think appropriately about what we have to think, we may take the wrong approach and endanger our lives. Returning to the metaphor of the two-storey house, the former question, that is, ‘Is there a Latin American or a Japanese philosophy?’, has to do only with the arrangement of the pieces of furniture on the second floor. Depending on how we answer, we could be forced to do a total remodelling of the upstairs. However, the latter question, that is, ‘whether Latin Americans or Japanese can appropriately think what they should’, concerns the existence of the entire house. Indeed, if the distortion between the up- and downstairs becomes too serious, then the house itself will collapse. Therefore, it seems to me more urgent to consider, apart from the former question, what our appropriate manner of thinking is. And in this respect, we should pay more attention to the differences than to the similarities between Latin America and Japan. As Miró Quesada (1974, 273, 279) observes, a significant distinction between Latin America and Asia exists in that Latin American pre-modern tradition is almost totally destroyed, while there remain a lot of remnants in Asia. This means that the basements on which we should formulate the appropriate way of thinking for us are different. Each of us has to find the proper way on our respective unique grounds.

## Practical Metaphilosophy

### notes

- 1 I do not offer a historical review of this tradition in this paper. I only mention that Peruvian philosopher Francisco Miró Quesada points out that the search for the proper philosophy in Latin America began after the independence of countries in that region (Miró Quesada 1974, 25-26). Alberdi's 1842 work is generally recognised as one of the earliest manifestations of such a movement.
- 2 In this context, the term 'metaphilosophy' has its source in the philosophical activities of José Gaos, who is much engaged in the thought of 'philosophy of the philosophy': On Gaos' 'philosophy of philosophy', see: Ziri6n Quijano 2010, 141-150. Hurtado presents his 'practical metaphilosophy' in contrast to Gaos' metaphilosophy, interpreting it as theoretical (Hurtado 2007, 18). Because I am not entirely sure whether this type of reflection is 'philosophy', I do not insist on its having the status of 'philosophy'. However, I consider that it is necessary for every philosopher in Latin America or in Japan to be conscious of these topics in this type of reflection.
- 3 Philosophers, in reality, in the US have actively held discussions on the existence of Latin American philosophy and its characteristics: ex. Gracia 2003; Nuccetelli 2010. However, their discussions tend to focus too much on formal definitions of key terms such as ethnicity, originality, culture, etc.
- 4 Ramos 2001 is the classic work on this subject.
- 5 Using the words of Miró Quesada, we can express the same thing, saying that, in Europe, a product of philosophy is elaborated through a natural movement. Even a rebellious thought against tradition remains a product of history, that is, a consequence of a total movement started centuries long before (Miró Quesada 1974, 37).
- 6 Miró Quesada calls the former 'regionalism' and the latter 'universalism' (Miró Quesada 1974, 12). Hurtado calls the former perspective a 'model of authenticity' and the latter a 'modernizing model' (Hurtado 2007, 21, 27).
- 7 In this respect, see also: Mariátegui 1925, 41; Frondizi 1949, 347.
- 8 There are some positive views about the practice of philosophy in Latin America: Miró Quesada 1978.
- 9 Hurtado (2007, 23-26) offers a similar view.
- 10 It seems to me that the problem of indigenous people is more than one of various problems of philosophy in, for example, Mexico. Even though I cannot, regrettably, enter into it here, I would like to mention its enormous complexity for Mexican philosophers. In this respect, see: Villoro 1996; Martiarena 1998.
- 11 In a personal interview conducted on 28 January, 2015.

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