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Maruyama Masao in the Philippine context: Subjectivity as a key concept in processing World War II

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ABSTRACT

In everyday discourses concerning Japanese philosophy, its political aspects are rarely brought to light. It is usually the aesthetic and ethical philosophical traditions that are discussed, especially by Western academics. This may be the reason why a more thorough discussion of Japanese thought and behavior during World War II is seemingly inadequate despite the number of philosophers who already study it. In countries such as the Philippines, China, or Korea where the Japanese occupation remains a politically charged subject, an analysis of Japanese philosophy may provide a more robust understanding of the war experience. In this regard, the philosophical approach and political thought of Maruyama Masao remain relevant. In this paper, I discuss the two distinct ways in which his philosophy may prove essential in contextualizing Japanese philosophy in relation to the war and beyond it, that is, as a critical assessor of his country's past and as a political realist with a cosmopolitan approach. These two ways are grounded in his discussion of autonomous subjectivity.

Introduction

As the foremost post-war intellectual in Japan, there is value in introducing Maruyama Masao (Sasaki 2012) in countries like the Philippines where the war experience is still being processed (José 2001). This article is an attempt at introducing Japanese philosophy as a framework to better understand Japanese thought and behavior during World War II (henceforth called WWII). The main objective of this work is to discover the means through which Japanese philosophy, specifically Maruyama Masao's work, may be meaningfully taught and better appreciated in former Japanese-occupied nations, like the Philippines. The second aim is to show how Maruyama's unique philosophical method has a contemporary and cosmopolitan approach that makes him a relevant political thinker even up to now. Based on these objectives, I posit that Maruyama may be studied by philosophy scholars from these formerly occupied nations in two conceptually different but politically related ways. First, he is a critical assessor of the sentiments and thoughts of the Japanese people in relation to WWII (Sasaki 2012). Second, he is a cosmopolitan thinker whose articulation of the sociopolitical challenges facing societies in the wake of modernity will prove helpful in assessing the current questions we face in the contemporary period (Izumi 2013). These two approaches, which focus on Maruyama's philosophical concepts and his methodology, provide us with a more robust understanding of his work and a deeper understanding of Japanese philosophy in general.

The former approach looks to the past. As a critical assessor of his own society, Maruyama's perspectives on Japan's political system and its policies, which he claims have directly predisposed Japanese thought and behavior, may possibly shed light on the continued ponderings of victims in formerly occupied nations (Shuichi 1997). In particular, his concepts on transfer of oppression (抑圧移譲/*yokuatsu-ijō*) (Maruyama 1969, 18) and autonomous subjectivity (主体性/*shutaisei*) (Davis 2019, 592-593) are illuminating. Meanwhile, the latter approach, which brings into focus his political realism, situates Maruyama in the present. He offered concepts that may help contextualize the problems of a nation forced to become one under the watchful eye of the West (Maruyama 1969). Furthermore, his methodology coupled with his knowledge and in-depth analysis of the events that helped shape our historical and present political milieu are worthy of investigation (Sasaki 2012). These two approaches—i.e., as an assessor of Japanese thought and behavior as well as a contemporary political realist/cosmopolitan—toward Maruyama's work will show his relevance in current sociopolitical philosophy. Even though only some of his major works are available in English (*Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics,* 1963*; Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan,* 1974*),* he has the potential to be a philosophical and political bridge between Japan and the rest of the world, as well as the past and the present.

Based on these two aspects, I divide this paper into three parts. The first is a brief discussion of how a nation like the Philippines generally perceived the Japanese during WWII. Second, I explain some of Maruyama's philosophical notions by focusing on his appraisal and investigation of Japanese behavior towards politics during and after the war. Through a textual analysis of his translated work, specifically *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics* (1st ed. 1963; expanded ed. 1969), I attempt to explain its possibilities in appeasing some lingering questions on the war. This collection of ten essays is widely read both in and outside Japan (Barshay 2007; Izumi 2013). Proof is the English translation itself: "written between 1947-1956, translated by Western scholars, introduced and sometimes commented on in 1962 by Professor Maruyama himself" (Maruyama 1969, v). The essays are samples of his critical commentaries on topics such as: Japanese nationalism both before and after the war, which he terms as "ultranationalism"; fascism, communism, and the dangers of ideologies; and Japanese modernity, among others. As such, it is the gateway text to Japanese political thought in general and the Japanese view of modern democracy.

In this article, his demarcation between internal values and external function as understood in the deeper context of his discussion on autonomous subjectivity (主体性/*shutaisei*) is investigated. The third part of the work explores the distinct contemporary tones of Maruyama's thought. I argue that his methodology, which Fumiko Sasaki describes as "political realism" (2012), ensures that his thoughts continue to be relevant and may be utilized in navigating our current political scenarios. However, I am more cautious in my analysis of his work as a political realist. In contrast to Sasaki, I show that Maruyama demonstrates ambivalence as a political realist and that this ambivalence is based on his cosmopolitan approach towards social realities. I also contend that this defines him as a contemporary political philosopher. Again, a closer inspection of his version of autonomous subjectivity is examined as the fundamental ingredient. This subjectivity relates to a democratic civil society that is both an ideal and a form of governance. He dealt with questions relating to how we are supposed to navigate our way in these shifting dual modes of democracy while struggling with the actualization of our autonomous subjectivities (Maruyama 1969). I end with a summary of the points presented. I argue that the aforementioned thoughts of Maruyama are essential analytic tools we may utilize. He provides critical methodologies that are more cosmopolitan (Izumi 2013) and may be appreciated by former occupied states. These are analytical tools that transcend the Japanese experience and may be appreciated by philosophy and political scholars. I believe that a more nuanced, burgeoning appreciation of Japanese thinking—one that is rooted in the intertwined histories and horizons of the moral, political, and philosophical—may be found in Maruyama's work.

Perceptions of Japan

"While Japan's image in the economic sphere has progressed from an economic animal to a partner, as well as a leader, its involvement in the political/security affairs of Southeast Asia has consistently been viewed with suspicion and distrust" (Singh 2002, 276-277). While it is outside the purview of this paper to give an expansive historical account of the war experience during the Japanese occupation, it still seems necessary to provide context as to how Japan is generally perceived in the former colonies and occupied territories. This will hopefully give readers a better appreciation of how Maruyama Masao is able to provide a reflective analysis and criticism. In this section, I present some experiences of Filipinos under Japanese rule as a context for the political stances of Maruyama.

In a chapter titled "Gleanings from a Cruel War," Angelito Santos (2012) provides the political framework for a book that—according to the book's editor, renowned Filipino historian Renato Constantino —describes as a "retelling of the experiences of those who underwent the trials of war and occupation" (2012, 1). Santos describes the Japanese colonial rule as a "military regime which formalized the patriotic discourse into officialese. Indeed, every imposition on the Filipino people made by the Japanese Imperial Army was rationalized under the rubric of cultural development programs and projects for nation-building" (Constantino 2012, 5). This is in keeping with the Japanese intent to rid the Asian region of Western influence, a significant part of the *daitoa kyoeiken* (大東亜共栄圏), otherwise known as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Constantino 2012; Maruyama 1969). This background is part of the overarching history of the Philippines, first as a colony of Spain, and, 300 years later, as subservient to the United States of America for 48 years. There are numerous works on this rich and troubled past (Agoncillo 1960, 2012; Constantino 1975, 2008)). Each of these colonizers positively and negatively contributed to the identity formation of the islands (Constantino 2008; Herrera 2015; José 2001). Majority of Filipinos learn that their affinity with the Church was born out of imperial Spain's method of colonizing using religion (64-65) just as their textbooks say that what the Americans brought was our system of education (308-309). The three years of Japanese occupation are usually not portrayed with the same nuances because the entire period was a time of war. Hence, the narrative is quite different. This is why Filipino historian Ricardo T. José emphasizes that,

> The subject of the Second World War and the Japanese Occupation still evokes intense emotions in the Philippines even today…. the controversy has been made even more dramatic with the bringing into the open of previously suppressed accounts of wartime experiences (such as of the Comfort Women and of forced labor). (2001, 457)

As an example, the tale of Maria Rosa Luna Henson as a comfort woman has resonated with the public since she relayed her horrific experience in 1992.[1] Recently, her book, *Comfort Woman: A slave of destiny* inspired a stage play which became quite popular among the culturati of Manila (Casal 2019; Hawson 2019). Its popularity ensured that Lola Rosa's story and many others would remain fresh in the minds of the next generation. Other narratives that continue to persist in the Filipino mind and help shape the image of the Japanese include the Bataan Death March as well as the burning of Manila in 1945 towards the end of the war (Constantino 2012; José 2001). This is especially poignant since the older members of Filipino families such as grandparents were already alive during those years. First-hand accounts were enough to paint a picture of the Japanese in a villainous light. This image is completely set apart from the popularity of Japanese culture, arts, and media, which is also persistent in Filipino society (Bravo 2012; Gavilan 2016; Ileto 2017). This account of the Philippine experience is not exhaustive but gives us the necessary background as to how memories and history shape the Filipino perception of Japan.

Maruyama as an assessor of the past

One preconceived notion of Japanese philosophy is its connection to Zen Buddhism (Heisig 2001; Shuichi 1997). Cursory assessment reveals its continental roots, a combination of Confucian, Buddhist, Shinto, and, later on, Taoist thought[2] (Heisig 2001; Karatani 2014). As an example, Nishida Kitaro, the founder of the Kyoto School of Philosophy, was a Zen practitioner. James Heisig describes the school clearly, "Let there be no mistake about it: the Kyoto philosophers are eastern and they are Buddhist" (2001, 8). While Japanese philosophy finds affinity in these systems of thought, it also has its own unique history and academic stature (Heisig 2011). The discussion on the Zen concept of nothingness, for example, permeates Japanese philosophical discourse. Using the Zen notion in reference to the negation of the self then leads to other discourses of consciousness, subjectivity, and then later on towards the more social aspects of the discussion. What is of primary interest for us is a trace of cognitive dissonance that transpires when these spiritual concepts are then related to a discourse regarding the war. This dissonance is addressed by Maruyama Masao in his discussion of the autonomous self or autonomous subjectivity. For the layperson, the disconnect results in two opposing views of the country: Japan as the modern purveyor of democracy in the orient (Sasaki 2012) and Japan as the former empire with grand ambitions (Karatani 2014).

I believe that these two notions of Japan should and could be studied in relation to one another. One of the ways that it may be considered is within the discourse of culture or, more precisely, how one utilizes culture as a method for analysis (Keating and Duranti 2011). The narrative that states that a culture, to be considered

authentic, must be pure—untouched by the influence of others and the outside—persists in our political strata, influencing our views on rights, race, welfare, among others (Karatani 2014). Japanese intellectual Kato Shuichi (1979) describes Japan's literature and culture this way: "it has never been simply the case of one particular form and style being influential in one period only to be succeeded by a new form in the next. In Japan, the new did not replace the old, but was added to it" (1979, 4). I would describe this as layering, which pertains to the innate characteristics of Japan's identity as well as the outside influences that the culture has incorporated—engaging and enmeshing these foreign entities with the innate ones—until one cannot be separated from the other. Maruyama echoes this idea of Shuichi when he described Japanese thought as a *basso ostinato* (Heisig 2011, 927-929).[3] It is an "obstinate repetition" (Heisig 2011) that persists even as other sounds are added to the melody. His use of this musical concept as a metaphor to describe the essence that underlies Japanese thought and sensibilities is, I believe, also representative of his philosophical approach, which will be explored in the next section of this work.

These ideas of purity and homogeneity are the key ingredients to Japan's identity (Maruyama 1969). As nation-states emerged from the empires and monarchies of old, it was necessary for these new divisions of communities to distinguish themselves from other groups (Karatani 2014). With the birth of sovereignties, this identity based on culture played two roles. Its main function is to give people a sense of community, establishing sameness: we are all alike because we speak the same language[4] or share the same physical attributes (Karatani 2014). The second purpose is to distinguish one country from another, creating the idea of us versus others. It was not enough for borders to clearly separate boundaries; it was important that the essence of this new community be established (Karatani 2014). These two fundamental roles of culture are the foundations of nationalism. Nationalism is a necessary ingredient in nation-building; the more abstract the notions of identity strengthening, the more concrete the structures of the state[5] (Karatani 2014). For a unique perspective on this, read Kojin Karatani (2014).

Maruyama begins his exposition on this very topic with a quote by Carl Schmidt, "an outstanding characteristic of the modern European State is that it adopts a *neutral* position on internal values, such as the problem of what truth and justice are; it leaves the choice and judgment of all values of this sort to special social groups (for instance to the church) or to the conscience of the individual" (1969, 3). I believe that he is not simply referring to secularization or the separation of the church and the state here. What he is alluding to is that there is a process that societies must undergo to become a democracy (113). He is echoing John Dewey in this sense.[6] Dewey also agreed that there is a process that democracies must undergo, which is why he underscored the importance of education in the advancement of democratic states (2000).

In this case, Maruyama (1969) refers to how Europe's nation-states were born out of the religious wars that dragged on through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "Until then the monarchs of Europe had brandished the slogan of the Divine Right of Kings thus providing their own internal justification for ruling. Confronted now with severe opposition, they were obliged to find a new basis for their rule, namely, in the *external* function of preserving public order" (1969, 3). Notice that he called the divine right of kings a slogan, a type of propaganda. Even during the medieval period, propaganda—that is, manipulating truth—was already a political tool (Jowett 2019). Even then, "wagging the dog" or "fake news" was essential in keeping power. Maruyama further explains,

> A compromise was reached between the ruler and the ruled—a compromise based on distinguishing between form and content, between external matters and internal matters, between the public and private domains. Questions of thought, belief, and morality were deemed to be private matters and, as such, were guaranteed their subjective, "internal" quality; meanwhile, state power was steadily absorbed into an "external" legal system, which was of a technical nature. (1969, 3)

This separation between the internal and the external is, at least for him, the locus of true nation-building, especially a democratic one. This is a modern notion influenced by the political philosophers with whom he finds affinity: thinkers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Immanuel Kant. This modernity is based on the idea of the individual bearing autonomy and rationality to sign the social contract, that is, for us to author our own laws (Hegel 1991; Kant 1999). The two conditions of the modern person, i.e., freedom and reason, afford them the ability to articulate and understand ethical dilemmas, which are an internal matter. This ability is essential in the making of a citizen who gets to choose their own leaders and make their own laws according to their moral frameworks, especially in their pursuit of a good life. Maruyama clearly positions that that is what happened in Europe, so what then transpired in Japan?

In the first half of the nineteenth century in Japan, there was a dual rule. The *tenno* (emperor) was the spiritual sovereign but it was the *shogun* (army commander) who actually had political power (Maruyama 1969). After the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912), "unity was achieved by removing all authority from the shogun and other feudal representatives" (1969, 4). The power now concentrated on the *tenno*. The term "unification" was used quite liberally to mean "unification of administration and law," "prestige and power," spirit and structure, the essence of the nation and the institution of the state (1969). Maruyama (1969) sees a problem in this structure. This conflation of internal and external matters, as exemplified by the dichotomies listed above, prevented Japan from becoming truly modern. Hence, Japan's democracy was still fascist in nature, which means that while it has advanced, technologically speaking, its way of thought is not modern

(Maruyama 1969). This is because, for him, "the real basis of national sovereignty is a purely 'formal' legal structure, divorced from all questions of internal value" (1969, 3).

What exactly is the danger if there is no clear demarcation between the public and the private domains? In the essay, Maruyama quotes Hegel, "Those things that are free in an interior sense and that exist within the individual subject must not enter into the purview of the law" (1969, 6). This is because the law should stem from the public sphere, i.e., through the intersubjective consensus of the demos either by referendum or through their duly elected representatives. Basically, the logic can be summarized this way: "Private affairs cannot be morally justified within themselves, but must always be identified with national affairs. Conversely, it has another implication, private interests endlessly infiltrate into national concerns" (1969, 7). For Maruyama, this conflation is a symptom of the fact that the Japanese individual has no real sense of subjectivity, at least during this transition period. The danger thus lies in the fact that there is no true subjectivity and when there is no subjectivity, there cannot be accountability—the ability to take responsibility for one's actions and choices. We can then better understand how Japan internalized the atrocities that transpired during WWII. Maruyama says, "What the nation does, whether within its own borders or beyond them, is not subject to any moral code that supersedes the nation" (1963, 8). Kato Shuichi concurs with Maruyama,

> The analysis of Japanese Fascism leads beyond questions of the stage of industrial development and geopolitical conditions to the lack of any values which transcend the group and the tendency for the individual to be integrated into the group—both peculiarities of the Japanese world-view throughout the ages. The supernationalism which arose in the thirties was not an exception in the history of Japanese ideas but an extreme extension of something which had always been latent. (1997, 339)

In this value framework, morality or virtue spreads out from its central entity, the emperor, to the rest of the world. In the Philippines (1942-1945), China (1931-1945) (Maruyama 1974; Moore 2011), Taiwan (1895-1945) (Peng-Er 2004), and Korea (1910-1945) (Bleiker 2007; Maruyama 1974), this overreaching, overarching essence or system of spirit was expressed in nefarious ways. After all, part of this moral code is to rid Asia of the evils of Western thought. This way of thought can be seen in the way Japan, for example, encouraged Filipinos to speak their local language and to celebrate their ethnic arts and culture during the occupation (Constantino 2012). This world-view was not at odds with other, darker war crimes and activities but is in keeping with them. Since Japan's "national sovereignty was the ultimate source of both ethics and power" (Maruyama 1969, 9), it was able to use this as permission to do anything in the name of the *tenno*—even doing personal, individual acts—if it is in the name of the emperor. Maruyama himself explains the actions that Japanese soldiers committed during WWII, including the

plight of comfort women. He used the term "transfer of oppression." He claims that Japanese soldiers basically paid forward whatever oppression they may have felt and undergone in Japan because of this *tenno* system of power. "The identification of morality with power meant that pure inner morality (as opposed to the external type) was always regarded as impotent and worthless" (1969, 10). To estimate morality, not by the value of its content but in terms of its power, can also be seen in the way Japan related with other countries at that time. For example, Japan bypassed the League of Nations because it did not have the formal structure to chastise its member nations. This was the reason why it left the league and Germany followed shortly afterwards, leading the way to the first world war (1969).

Even up to now, we may observe vestiges of this phenomenon. For example, in 2016, Japanese television giant NHK (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*) teamed with the world's foremost streaming service Netflix to produce *Tokyo Trial*—a historical mini-series that portrays the drama behind the Far Eastern International Military Tribunal (Tallgren 2017). Following the Nuremberg Trials and convened in April 29, 1946, the trial heard and documented the narratives and defense of the leaders and commanders of the Empire relating to the actions of Japanese soldiers in WWII. Given that NHK was the forerunner of the drama, the perspective is worthy of discussion in this work. It was told from the point of view of the international panel of judges who had to apply the then non-existent rules of law, with no precedents for the monumental proceedings. The series claimed in no uncertain terms that the trial was a farce, and justice—as a virtue—was not its foremost goal. The judges had to navigate the political realities of their countries, Japan, as well as the Allied Forces. Rather than explore the ramifications of the war and the actions of the personalities that perpetuated it, the series presented how the trial was a biased show. The one-sided perspective of the series is a symptom of the simplified ways we can view historical events, depending on which side told their narrative (Maruyama 1974; Tallgren 2017). Related to this, Kato Shuichi once again concurs with Maruyama when he described,

> This is not a matter of simply individual morals; there is a device within the system whereby they can avoid responsibility. The distinctive feature of the statements of the defendants in the Tokyo trial in comparison to those at Nuremberg can be summed up as "submission to existing facts" and "flight to closely circumscribed areas of authority." (1997, 339)

The example given cannot represent the thoughts of an entire nation, but it is symptomatic of the condition that Maruyama describes. Thus, when he posed the concept of ultranationalism in Japan, he is referring to a concept of nationalism that has its basis on a pseudo concept of autonomy or the lack of subjectivity. Therefore, nationalism can be used as a political tool for propaganda. Whether or not we agree with his view, he clearly admits that there is value in defining sovereignty using the categories he set: standards that may be perceived as more occidental than

homegrown. Thus, he has been accused of leaning towards this tendency (Sasaki 2012). It should be noted that Maruyama does not defend himself against such West-leaning accusations. In his introduction to this collection of essays, he quotes Kant and Hegel, and extensively reacts to Karl Marx and Japanese Marxist scholars (Maruyama 1969). This is also part of Maruyama's critical approach. He subjects political events and actions to intense logical scrutiny, i.e., using the frameworks of political theorists (1969). This approach, though maybe not as schematic compared to other political philosophers, provides a critical and analytic framework, which is a good place to start. For example, in the author's introduction, he uses terms such as "parts of shame of Japanese society",[7] shame being a significant term to use in assessing culpability in relation to Japan and the war. He also actively states that he,

> ... sought to counter the tendency… to explain the catastrophic events after 1930 simply as resulting from the external international environment or as a temporary response to severe internal problems, but in any case as a contingent and fortuitous deviation from the "natural" trend of Japanese political development, and as best put out of mind. (xiii)

To counter such a tendency is to be aware of the literature that has since attempted to articulate this history. To counter the flow of discourse among his fellow Japanese is worthy but is interesting when viewed within the context of the academe. Maybe it is because he was the son of a journalist; he does acknowledge his father's and his father's friends' influence on him.[8] Indeed, he gives a compelling argument that people can utilize to process what has happened in the past.

Cosmopolitanism and a non-schematic approach

When we read and study an academic thinker, we take into consideration their setting, circumstances and factors that might help us understand the concepts they are trying to introduce. Using the scientific tools at our disposal, there is another point of view we may employ to better analyze their contribution to our literature. This point of view lies squarely upon their methodology, the procedure that these thinkers use to demonstrate their unique perspective of the world and its various phenomena.

Maruyama Masao did not call himself a philosopher. He was a political scientist whose perspective of the world was grounded on his expertise as an academic in his own discipline (Sasaki 2012). Thus, compared to more popular sociopolitical philosophers or thinkers, his work lacks the schematic foresight that comes with an attempt at building a system of thought. Many sociopolitical thinkers share this "handicap." This limit neither makes their work any less compelling nor illuminating. Hannah Arendt (Canovan 1978), Michel Foucault (Moussa and Scapp 1996), and Isaiah Berlin (Parekh 1982) are a few examples.

In this section of the work, I focus on the methodology that Maruyama utilized to explain his notions. He concerned himself with the theme of modernity in the Japanese political context. His distinct style stems from the fact that he was able to analyze salient political events and problems using these philosophical notions of man and society. I concentrate on two points in this paper: once again on his assertion that man is an autonomous and rational individual. Secondly, that this autonomous subjectivity is the essential component to form real democracies.

As already mentioned, Maruyama did not have a meticulous system of thought. In his writings, he avoided it as much as possible claiming that he has an "inbred skepticism of any 'grand theory'" (1969, preface xvi). This reluctance to adhere to a fixed framework or, at least, attempt at a systematization of his points of view is both a bane and a boon to scholars of his work. This doggedness is at odds with his affinity to the Enlightenment thinkers (i.e., Kant and Hegel) whose works were holistic but varied, original but schematic (Chirot 2015; Cornell 1999). Where does this place him compared to other Japanese philosophers? I think contemporary philosopher Andrew Feenberg gives a good summary: "In the 1930s and early 1940s, Japanese philosophy reflected the political climate by becoming increasingly nationalistic and authoritarian. With a few honorable exceptions, major thinkers, such as Kuki Shuzo, Tanabe Hajime, and Watsuji Tetsuro defended Japanese imperialism" (1995, 151). Thus, the philosophical is never far from the political in Japanese academic discourse. However, this is not how Japanese philosophy per se is usually viewed by others.

In March 1945, Maruyama was drafted into the army. He was stationed in Hiroshima, which gives us further insight into his philosophical musings. After the war, one of the first articles he published was "The Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism" (1946). It made waves because in it, he questioned the Japanese version of democracy, which came immediately after WWII, vehemently stating that it is actually a fascist government in disguise. Some of the points he gave in the essay were discussed above. My reading of his thoughts is related to my reading of German philosopher and journalist Arendt, particularly in his articulation of democracy as participatory and his definition of nationalism as "more civic than ethnic" (Sasaki 2012). In it, he emphasized that he wanted "to work for the development of a broader and more diverse approach" (Maruyama 1969, xiii). He admits that this may be symptomatic of an "ideological confusion" (1969) on his part, but he accepts this and, in fact, uses it to his advantage. Interestingly, he used Kant's differentiation between two students of nature to describe his own methodology.[9] He claims to be one of those scholars whose approach focuses on "special characteristics which differentiate them" (xiv) as opposed to those who find commonality in species to be able to give a generalization. It is possible that he said this to avoid being accused of sweeping generalizations. However, in the same breath, he acknowledges that both practices are necessary for a more vigorous analysis of political phenomena. Sasaki agrees and states that Maruyama's view

of reality is distinctly Kantian as well. "Based on that view, Maruyama believes that ideas precede institutions" (2012, 71). This concept ties into his notion of subjectivity since it is people who are able to conceive their own realities. For Sasaki, there is another aspect of reality that Maruyama utilizes and that is Karl Mannheim's Marxist conception of it. She says,

> Although Maruyama did reject the Marxist idea that people's interpretation of reality is strictly conditioned by economic structure, he cannot help accepting the conception that people's thinking cannot be free from conditioning by their individual circumstance which oftentimes they cannot choose, such as family, history, society, culture, religion, and education. (2012, 72)

This world view is distinct from the usual conception of reality by the Japanese, which Maruyama describes as having three characteristics. "The Japanese people see reality as a 'fait accompli,' an accomplished fact; there is only one reality at one time; it is what the government explains" (2012, 69). This view of reality coincides with his view of the subjectivity afforded to the modern person or, at least, the subjectivity a modern individual should possess. Without it, the reality that we are navigating becomes a pseudo-reality, an upside-down version where unbelievable atrocities may be normalized. This was best visualized in Charlie Chaplin's classic film, *The Great Dictator* (Maruyama 1969). In other words, a historical consciousness opposes a "fact (factum)" accompanying a "feeling of reality." The latter has an affinity for "reminiscences" and "oblivion" because it excludes the dimensions of the abstract, the normative, and the historical. It is nothing less than accepting the actual Establishment as a kind of "nature" or untouchable "reality" (Takahiro 2004, 107).

Another persistent reading of him comes from his Marxist leanings. A good example is the description below:

> The political Left failed to propagate the necessary sense of autonomous subjectivity (*shutaisei*) in Japanese society. Buried beneath a system of irresponsibilities, nobody in interwar or wartime Japan could dissent—it was unthinkable. For Maruyama, as for postwar Marxists like Katsumi Umemoto (1912), a vital first task for the progressive Left after August 1945 was to transform the "common sense" (*joshiki*) of the Japanese people; if progressive intellectuals could not succeed in disseminating *shutaisei* into the psyche of the Japanese, then Japan would never really escape from the dark valley. (Williams 2006, 3)

As already mentioned, Maruyama himself admits to having Marxist leanings but once again he clearly, explicitly attempts to "stand out against the flood-tide of the vulgarized, dogmatic Marxism which was swamping the Japanese intellectual world" (1963, xiii). Since he was a public intellectual who was eminent at a time when it was also popular to be known as a Marxist scholar, this aversion to be

labeled as such is quite telling. In the introduction of the English translation to *Thought and Behavior*, Maruyama states, "as a consequence under Marxist influence the study of Japanese society and culture tended naturally to become 'a class analysis of the power structure of the Emperor system' or an analysis of 'the socio-economic infrastructure of imperialism'" (1969, xii–xiii). As already mentioned, he deliberately avoided this. Instead of using a classical Marxist approach, he chose a wider critical methodology focusing on the general analysis of the thought and behavior of his compatriots rather than implementing the Marxist approach he stated above. This shows that even though he was conversant in critical theory, it is simplistic to categorize him as a Marxist philosopher.

To underscore this point further, one also needs to draw attention to the fact that he is also considered as one of the foremost liberal thinkers in Japan (Barshay 2007). It seems that the concept of democracy may be mostly, fairly understood in the Japanese context through Maruyama's analysis. According to Andrew Barshay, Maruyama is "the preeminent imaginer of democracy in postwar Japan" (198). His formation of what democracy is supposed to be as practiced in Japan was formed "through personal struggle with the imperial system in its last crisis-ridden decade" (198). Barshay describes Maruyama's intellectual aim as an attempt at creating a mass citizenry "by publicizing a 'scientifically imagined' notion of democracy in postwar Japan" (198). On the surface, his liberalism may seem at odds with his Marxist tendencies but, as I mentioned, there seems to be a method in such madness. This methodology will be described later. Aside from being a Marxist and Liberalist, Sasaki states that Maruyama is a political realist. Sasaki argues this from the point of view of his stance on unarmed neutrality, claiming that Maruyama's position is "not grounded on cosmopolitanism, universalism, optimism of the Enlightenment, moralism, utopianism, defeatism, nor internationalism—the very things of which Maruyama was accused" (2012, 2). Political realism is usually attributed to the likes of Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes, whose political theories were founded on the political upheavals of their times. Sasaki makes a good point for Maruyama's political realism in that he also "sees power as the core of politics" (2012, 9). But Sasaki distinguishes his political realism from other conceptions of it with two points:

> First, conventional political realists, proponents of neo-realism in particular, generally accept the idea that the balancing of power among nations is the optimal way to avoid war. In contrast, Maruyama insists that balancing power benefits only the larger states and not the smaller ones because larger powers are focused merely on each other in balancing, and are not concerned about the welfare of smaller states (2012, 9).

Second, she describes Maruyama as someone who devotes himself to inculcating political realism sees human wills and ideals as real, because he believes that people's aspirations related to political change do in fact affect politics: one's goal certainly defines one's behavior (2012).

While I agree with Sasaki's analysis of Maruyama's point of view, I believe that her claim of his realism should be more circumspect. The first point is clear enough, but the second description precisely attests to Maruyama's liberal idealism. I argue contra Sasaki that the notion of aspirations in the context of the political assumes freedom, a liberalism based on reason and will. Since his political realism is based on a vision of subjectivity, the power that Sasaki refers to in "power as the core of politics" is not simply power exercised between two jostling nation-states. It is potential power, which can be exercised by citizens if they can explore this subjectivity. Readers of Maruyama should be wary in simplifying his supposed political realism and liberalism. These two opposing views should not be easily fused together. Sasaki dismisses Maruyama's cosmopolitan stance in favor of political realism but, in this article, I seek to establish that his notion of subjectivity, along with his critical stances on various forms of nationalism, support the argument for his cosmopolitanism more than his Marxist leanings or his political realism.

We need only to revisit his vision of democracy as an "eternal revolution" to show this point. Democracy as active participation that goes beyond exercising voting rights is reminiscent of Arendt's conceptions of the political (1998, 175-181). Authentic democracies do require action and this notion has a decidedly idealist undertone, even though Maruyama grounds his stipulations in his analysis of actual issues and events situated in the real world. Sasaki herself notes,

> that the importance of institutions such as democracy and family are in the effort of those who are involved to maintain them, not the existence of the institutions itself. This is why he labels democracy as the eternal revolution because it requires people's ceaseless engagement in public affairs, and once such engagement stops, democracy ceases to work. (Sasaki 2012, 174)

The idea of eternal or permanent revolution could be better viewed when analyzed together with subjectivity.[10] This is the picture that he creates for us from the very beginning. His political realism therefore should be understood in terms of power as exercised with other sovereign states. He understands that as structures of states enter a discourse, it is necessary to discuss from positions of bargaining power. However, between the citizen and the state, the dynamics are quite different. We see this argument unfold in his explanation of dictatorships. "What determined the everyday morality of Japan's rulers was neither an abstract consciousness of legality nor an internal sense of right and wrong, nor again any concept of serving the public; it was a feeling of being close to the concrete entity known as the Emperor" (Maruyama 1969, 13).

In addition, if one's moral sense is identified with a specific entity, then it makes moral dilemmas easier to process as more complex arguments are simplified into whether the emperor is alright with it or not. Maruyama claims that, "the consciousness of being under the direct control of the Emperor led them to

conclude that they were superior to other members of the community, not only in their position within the hierarchy, but in all values" (1969, 14). In such a system, one is not able to exercise individual subjectivities. Maruyama says the essential premise of a dictatorship is the existence of a free, decision-making agent, and this was lacking in his country. His view of Japanese society was that "it was so organized that each component group was constantly being regulated by a superior authority, while it was imposing its own authority on a group below" (1969, 16). Because of this lack of agency, there is no accountability. This is one of the reasons why Japan, generally speaking, cannot seem to take responsibility for its actions—at least according to Maruyama—whether as a country or as individuals doing bad deeds that go beyond killing on the battlefield[11] during the war.

Given these general themes—Maruyama as a critical Marxist, Maruyama as a political realist, and Maruyama as a liberal—it is difficult to place him in a specific ideological category. Some might see this as an inconsistency of methodology.[12] I disagree because there are fundamental concepts in his work that help ground his claims. Regardless of the labels that he sought to avoid but have otherwise, perhaps unwittingly, invited, Maruyama's thoughts centered on autonomous subjectivity. This is the concept that grounds him as a cosmopolitan thinker. By cosmopolitan, I mean someone who underscores the importance of an individual as a bearer of rights and responsibilities regardless of their national identity. This is in keeping with the definition set by David Held and agreed upon by Seyla Benhabib. "Cosmopolitan sovereignty is the law of peoples because it places at its center the primacy of individual human beings as political agents, and the accountability of power" (Benhabib 2006, 31). Maruyama's ideological ambiguity does not automatically mean that he is a cosmopolitan but his insistence on the importance of autonomous subjectivity is its strongest evidence.

Conclusion

Even for the casual reader, Maruyama is an interesting read. His sharp commentaries on concrete events, which he believes played a role in shaping the thoughts and behavior of people, are accessible. They were easy to comprehend but still leave one pondering on the points he raised. Much like Arendt ([1951] 1979, [1958] 1998) after WWII, he generously referred to such events from the past or present—and by present, I mean events that occurred within his lifetime—to ground his generalizations. This realist methodology towards assessing the political dates him and his philosophical ideas. However, this datedness does not mean that his ideas are now antiquated; hence my second point that he remains a salient voice in this cosmopolitan, contemporary world. Maruyama himself might disagree with my claim. In his introduction to *Thought and Behavior*, he addresses the reader and warns them that they "may find the conceptual framework underlying these essays somewhat odd or outdated" (1969, xv). He attributes this to the "epistemological assumptions and the currency of academic discourse shared by Marxist and non-

Marxist scholars alike in the immediate post-war period." I beg to disagree once again. It was precisely because he was in the "thick of things"—his immersion in the wave of political discourse—that makes him contemporary. My reading is based on the recent academic ethos where Marxist philosophies are dealt with more conservatively and with more trepidation given the political status of Russia and China, (Bi 2007; Borowska 2002; On the 130th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx 2013) which was quite different from Maruyama's context at that time.

Based on the following, we see the themes of Maruyama's philosophy. His political philosophy is founded on the modern notion of a rational and liberal individual. He is a political realist who is very much aware of the events and structures that shape his society's reality. According to Sasaki, Maruyama sees man as the only subject that attributes values to everything else. Accordingly, modern nationalism for Maruyama is the popular willingness to take responsibility for their national affairs. It is not just about an aesthetic sense of belonging. We should know why we belong to a community and how we help create that community. We do this through the choices and political actions we make as free-thinking individuals. His insistence on the primacy of autonomous subjectivity marks him as a cosmopolitan thinker. Because of his cosmopolitan approach, he can objectively present a more critical view of Japanese society and politics in the tumultuous periods before, during, and after WWII. This perspective is different from the more defensive stance of Japan in the wake of the horrific events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (Ishizawa-Grbić and Oh 2000; Schneider 2008) Therefore, even if Maruyama was analyzing Japanese behavior during a specific time and place, he can be considered quite ahead of his time.

To conclude this work, we need to step back and briefly reiterate what Maruyama contributed to sociopolitical literature and how his work as a critical assessor may be used to understand Japanese political thought in formerly occupied nations. When he is taught to Filipino students, the following should be highlighted. First, ethical and philosophical concepts should never be taken away from our political realm because these are the tools we use to critically assess our current milieu as well as our past behaviors. This was a recurring theme in this work.

Second, the ability to critically analyze our history and relate it to our current reality is essential to our own understanding of our worth as a citizen and as a scholar. However, the ability to do this only comes with a mature subjectivity that is autonomous, that is, free from the influences of more modern forms of *tenno*. With this ability come responsibilities to express and to act. His process of analysis is still relevant because it is apparent that exercising our autonomy and subjectivity is constantly necessary in our liberal democracies. I explained how the concepts of transfer of oppression and autonomous subjectivity highlight the lack of accountability, an issue that still resonates even up to now. To be explicit, one only needs to assess Japan's ongoing stance on compensating comfort women as a clear example (Hayashi 2008).

Lastly, Maruyama presents an accessible philosophy because of his methodology. Even though there are varying interpretations of his work because of his non-schematic methodology, its core concepts and recurring themes remain applicable in these contemporary times because of his cosmopolitan approach. This cosmopolitanism—that is, his use of various theoretical frameworks, not just Japanese philosophies—underscores his potential as a tool to understand Japanese thought and behavior during WWII.

An analysis of Japanese philosophy may provide a more robust understanding of the war experience. Through the critical stances of the likes of Maruyama of his own society and history, formerly occupied countries may have a more thorough grasp of the motivations and intentions surrounding the actions and events that have transpired. At the very least, an appreciation of what the Japanese intellectual landscape may offer on these discourses is important. Raising awareness that such attempts in reflecting about the war exist is a step in the right direction.

Endnotes

[1]   As described by Lola Rosa, "In a period of nine months, I was forced to have sex with from twelve to twenty men daily from two in the afternoon to ten in the evening" (Constantino 2012, 60).

[2]   "Of the three streams of ethico-religious culture shaping Japanese philosophy over the past fourteen centuries—Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism—Buddhism has been the most influential in shaping how the Japenese have thought about the most difficult and universal questions of human existence" (Heisig 2011, 45).

[3]   In *In Search of a Ground*, Maruyama Masao (1984) explains his usage of the term *basso ostinato*. "Basso ostinato—in English, 'ground bass'—refers to the obstinate repetition of a low sound. So, why did I use it to replace 'old stratum'? Given the clear influence of Marxism in Japan and the fact that many readers seemed to liken this 'old stratum' to the Marxist notion of Unterbau… The 'old stratum' I was thinking of, however, has no such meaning. As mentioned above, it is something that can only be identified in fragmentary fashion and shows up in history in combination with thought systems of foreign origin…. Needless to say, the term 'old stratum' is a geological metaphor. The idea is that a number of foreign ideas accumulated atop the 'old stratum,' things like Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, liberal democracy, and the like, leaving the 'old stratum" at the bottom unchanged.' (Heisig 2011, 927-929)

[4]   "Plurilingual societies were dismissed as the mode of organization of the old empires, where stratification and differentiation could be accepted. As soon as subjects were members of a national family, participating in national education and national welfare and contributing to defense, then linguistic unification seemed necessary and inevitable." (Wright 2000)

[5]   Maruyama (1969) thus takes this conversation further by expanding the question—if all modern states are nation-states and nationalism is its fundamental attribute, what makes nationalism ultra?

[6]   "Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself" (Dewey 2000).

[7]   "On the one hand, I seek to expose the pudenda, the parts of shame of Japanese society, which the events of the thirties and forties were bringing ever more clearly into view but which had been an inseparable feature of the Japanese body politic throughout the period of Japan's 'remarkable advance' from a feudal society to a ranking industrial power." (Maruyama 1969)

[8]   "My earliest views of the world were formed under the strong influence of my father, a political journalist who remained to the last a typical representative of Japanese intellectuals of the nineteenth-century positivist generation" (Maruyama 1969, xv).

[9]   "Immanuel Kant once remarked that all students of nature could be divided into two groups,

those who were more concerned with principles of homogeneity, and those who leaned towards specification. One group, according to Kant, seem to be 'almost averse to heterogeneousness and always intent on the unity of genera'; others 'are constantly striving to divide nature into so much variety that one might lose almost all hope of being able to distribute its phenomena according to general principles'. If the same classification may be applied to social scientists, I must own my membership of the latter category." (Maruyama 1969, xiv)

10   Arendt (1998) also looks at the possibilities of the political as occurring in the public sphere in a similar vein, the idea that the political is only possible as people come together through speech and action. However, after the revolution, institutions and structures step in, which should always be checked by constant vigilance of the people through their speech and action once more.

11   "Again, when we examine the atrocities committed by Japanese forces in China and the Philippines, we are confronted with the unhappy fact that, whoever may have been ultimately responsible, the direct perpetrators were the rank-and-file soldiers. Men who at home were 'mere subjects' and who in the barracks were second-rank privates found themselves in a new role when they arrived overseas: as members of the Emperor's forces they were linked to the ultimate value and accordingly enjoyed a position of infinite superiority." (Maruyama 1969: 19)

12   His earlier work on the intellectual history of Tokugawa Japan (Maruyama 1974) may be a look at the past but his collection of essays in *Thought and Behavior*, whether he meant to or not, held themes that may be applied in contemporary philosophy. He admits that he is torn between realism and nominalism. That is, he is conflicted by the foundation set by his father, the practical journalist, versus the nominalism he acquired with his reading of Hegel and other German Idealists, which very much influenced his pre-war articles on intellectual history as well as his later essays in *Thought and Behavior*. This tension is very much apparent in his work and is worthy of study later on but is outside the purview of this paper.

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