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The Cold War and Maruyama Masao's Search for Liberal Ethos in Postwar Japan

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Abstract

Despite the surging interest in the so-called 'Cold War liberalism,' little attention has been paid to the mid-twentieth-century liberal traditions developed in East Asia. This article seeks to expand the history of postwar liberal tradition beyond the Western narrative by focusing on the leading postwar Japanese liberal Maruyama Masao (1914–96). By reconstructing his engagement with twentieth-century liberal tradition(s), I aim to demonstrate that his postwar thought was deeply informed by self-reflective—rather than triumphal—liberal perspectives. In revisiting Maruyama's engagement with plural voices within twentieth-century liberalism (e.g., Reinhold Niebuhr, Harold Laski, Judith Shklar, and John Dewey), I emphasize the distinctively ethos-centered, anti-deterministic, and self-critical character of his liberal thought. I eventually argue that Maruyama's close attention to the internal critics of contemporary mainstream liberalism entailed his concern about the decline of the revolutionary and open-minded spirit of liberalism with the advent of the new reality of the Cold War.

* Keywords: Maruyama Masao, Cold War liberalism, John Dewey, postwar Japan, liberal ethos

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Introduction

Re-intensifying global tensions and the growing threat to contemporary liberalism in recent decades have generated growing efforts to revisit prominent twentieth-century liberal thinkers (e.g., Isaiah Berlin, Reinhold Niebuhr, Karl Popper, and Raymond Aron) who sought to defend liberal values and ideas from the challenges posed by the Cold War environment.¹ Yet, despite the intensifying call for global political thought and a deeper engagement with non-Western political ideas among contemporary political theorists, the history of liberal movements in twentieth-century East Asia has received unfair neglect in the English-speaking world. Given the noteworthy

¹ Joshua L. Cherniss, 'Isaiah Berlin and Reinhold Niebuhr: Cold War Liberalism as an Intellectual Ethos,' in *Isaiah Berlin's Cold War Liberalism* (Singapore 2019); Aurelian Craiutu, *Faces of Moderation: The Art of Balance in an Age of Extremes*, Haney Foundation series, (Philadelphia, PA 2017); Aurelian Craiutu, 'In Search of the Decent Society: Isaiah Berlin and Raymond Aron on Liberty,' *Critical Review* 32, 4 (Oct 2020); Jan-Werner Müller, 'Fear and Freedom: On Cold War Liberalism,' *European Journal of Political Theory*, 7, 1 (2008); Jan-Werner Müller, 'What Cold War Liberalism Can Teach Us Today,' *The New York Review of Books* 26 (2018); Jan-Werner Müller, 'The Contours of Cold War Liberalism (Berlin's in Particular),' in *Isaiah Berlin's Cold War Liberalism* (Singapore 2019); Iain Stewart, 'Raymond Aron and the contested legacy of "Cold War Liberalism",' *Renewal* 28, 3 (2020); Mathias Thaler, 'Hope abjuring hope: On the place of utopia in realist political theory,' *Political Theory* 46, 5 (2018). On the current predicament of (Western) liberalism, see Edward Luce, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (New York, NY 2017).

development of liberal democracy and modern state-building—albeit with fluctuations—in major East Asian countries (e.g., Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea), such neglect comes as a surprise.

Responding to such a lack of attention, this article seeks to expand the history of postwar liberal tradition beyond the Western narrative by examining Maruyama Masao's (1914–96)—the leading postwar Japanese liberal thinker—effort to reformulate liberal political culture in postwar Japan.² Most notably, the expansion of the Cold War mentality (e.g., complacency, self-righteousness, and ideological thinking) was seen by him as a dangerous signal of the decay of liberalism. Nonetheless, he never lost his commitment to liberal ideas since he found plural voices within the Western liberal tradition that had provided him with hope for reviving the progressive spirit of liberalism. By reconstructing his engagement with his contemporary liberal thinkers in the West, this article aims to show that Maruyama's ethos-centered approach to liberalism was deeply informed by multiple and self-reflective (rather than triumphal) perspectives within mid-twentieth century liberalism—ones that go far beyond the simplified description of so-called 'Cold War liberalism' as a militant and narrow-minded tradition.³ I hope to demonstrate that a deeper consideration of Maruyama's postwar thought enriches our understanding of how mid-century liberalism was

² In this article, I follow the East Asian custom of placing the family name first in Japanese names. All translations from the Japanese are the author's unless indicated otherwise.

³ Cf., Samuel Moyn, 'Before—and Beyond—the Liberalism of Fear,' in *Between Utopia and Realism: The Political Thought of Judith N. Shklar*, ed. Samantha Ashenden and Andreas Hess (Philadelphia, PA 2019); Samuel Moyn, 'Human Rights and the Crisis of Liberalism,' in *Human Rights Futures*, ed. Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri (Cambridge 2017); Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, 'Yesterday's men: Cold War liberalism, what is it good for?' *The Baffler* (16 December 2021). <https://thebaffler.com/latest/yesterdays-men-steinmetz-jenkins> (accessed 10 Feb. 2023).

adopted and adapted in postwar Japan—through its leading liberal thinker—critically and selectively.

While having been deeply sympathetic to the self-critical liberals (e.g., Harold Laski and Reinhold Niebuhr), Maruyama's liberal thought, I argue, involved two vital distinctive elements. First, although he acknowledged the crucial role of liberal institutions and political systems in the functioning of liberal democracy, he was wary of an illusion that liberal and democratic 'ethos' would automatically spring from those institutional arrangements, especially when imposed from above or imported from without. Second, Maruyama's liberalism entailed a solid commitment to radical social change through transforming the ethos of the public.⁴ In this regard, he was different from the mainstream postwar-era liberals (or so-called 'Cold War liberals') whose main goal was to protect the existing liberal political regime from the external threat of Communism. As he observed the growing threat to liberal society from the inside with the emergence of the Cold War order (e.g., the Red Purge policy in postwar Japan or the witch-hunting of McCarthyism in the U.S.), Maruyama became highly cautious about overly optimistic views associated with liberal triumphalism. One clear thing is that, unlike some representative 'Cold War' liberals,⁵ for Maruyama, the key task of liberalism in the postwar world was never a fight against Communism—though he was highly critical of dogmatic Communists. Neglecting this aspect of Maruyama's critical approach to the mainstream liberal tradition of the postwar era may be at the

⁴ As Jeremy Nuttall recently points out, the issues of character and political morality were at the center of democratic politics throughout the previous century U.K. (and beyond). See Jeremy Nuttall, 'The persistence of character in twentieth-century British politics,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 56, 1 (2021).

⁵ E.g., Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (London 1970 [1950]).

root of (misleadingly) labeling him as a ‘Cold War liberal.’⁶ In this article, I aim to counter this simplified account by illustrating that Maruyama’s engagement with postwar liberal tradition reflects the unique circumstances he had to deal with in his effort to formulate a liberal society against the continuing legacy of wartime fascism and the emerging Cold War mentality.

In reconstructing Maruyama’s engagement with plural voices within the twentieth-century Western liberal tradition in his cautious search for an appropriate form of liberalism in postwar Japan, I emphasize the distinctively ethos-centered, anti-deterministic, and self-critical character of Maruyama’s thought. As I will provide further details in the following sections, he paid close attention to the internal critics of twentieth-century mainstream liberalism (e.g., Reinhold Niebuhr, Harold Laski, and Judith Shklar) due to the decline of its progressive spirit while not discarding his trust in the power of human ideas and agency as the ultimate impetus of social progress. I will argue that Reinhold Niebuhr’s warning against liberal triumphalism and Harold Laski’s call for freedom to social change considerably affected Maruyama’s self-critical view of mainstream liberalism. Also, Judith Shklar’s criticism of the loss of progressive ethos among the postwar liberal intellectuals was sympathized by Maruyama in his emphasis on the necessity of reviving the radical spirit of liberalism against the threat of extreme ideologies and totalitarianism. As such, Maruyama consciously sought to specify a liberal ethos necessary for Japan’s postwar democracy while objecting to a problematic Cold War mentality involving hubris and fatalism.

In addition to the reconstruction of Maruyama’s conversation with his contemporary thinkers who were commonly critical of the conservative shift and de-radicalization of liberalism or

⁶ E.g., In-sung Jang, ‘Naengjeongwa Ilbon-ui Jayujuui (Cold War Liberalism in Postwar Japan),’ *Journal of Northeast Asian History* 59 (2018); Seog Gun Kim and Karube Tadashi, ‘Preface,’ in *Maluyama Masaowa Jayujuui (Maruyama Masao and Liberalism)* (Seoul 2014).

progressivism, this article also highlights interesting affinities between the radical liberalism of Maruyama and that of John Dewey. The intellectual relationships between the two thinkers have yet to be explored seriously, probably because Maruyama's remarks on Dewey are generally short and brief. Nevertheless, in my view, there are striking parallels concerning the two thinkers' commitment to reviving the radical spirit of liberalism and redefining democracy as 'a way of life.' Both Maruyama and Dewey were deeply worried about new dangers to the twentieth-century democracy that originated from the modern conditions of mass society (e.g., the decline of communal life and personal autonomy). Responding to this problem, both thinkers offered new ways of revitalizing liberal spirits and democratic citizenship (further details in Section 4). Based upon such similarities, I argue that Maruyama's liberalism entails significant elements of Deweyan *radical* liberalism, arguably one of the most valuable legacies of twentieth-century liberalism worth revisiting today.

This article proceeds in four sections. In Section 1, I present recent efforts to interpret Maruyama's liberal thought in the tradition of 'Cold War liberalism,' and I introduce the contemporary scholarly accounts of the key characteristics and virtues of Cold War liberalism, which could shed light on exploring the complicated relationship between Maruyama and leading postwar liberal thinkers of the West. In Section 2, I examine Maruyama's caution against the danger of 'self-deception' and 'hypocrisy' embedded in the triumphal mentality of Cold War liberals. Niebuhr's critique of moralism is discussed as a critical source of Maruyama's self-critical perspective on liberalism. Furthermore, I also provide a contextual account of how McCarthyism and anti-Communist movements in the United States affected Maruyama's cautious view on the internal decay of postwar liberalism. In Section 3, I analyze Maruyama's effort to revitalize the radical spirit of liberalism by focusing on his fundamental belief in the power of political ideas

and human agency. Here I present two major intellectual sources that inspired Maruyama's radical liberalism: (a) Shklar's critique of 'fatalistic' liberal conservatism and (b) Laski's proposal of 'revolution by consent.' Finally, I conclude in Section 4 by offering some reflections on noticeable parallels between Maruyama's conception of 'democracy as a permanent revolution' and John Dewey's 'democracy as a way of life,' an interesting intellectual connection that has been widely ignored. I propose to pay careful attention to the relationship because their shared understanding of democracy primarily 'as an idea'—along with their emphasis on the necessity of active cultivation of liberal ethos and character—involves striking parallels worth revisiting today.

1. Cold War Liberalism and Liberal Ethos

It will be helpful to start with a brief survey of the recent scholarly efforts to revisit Maruyama's liberal thought in light of the Cold War atmosphere. One of the most significant events on this topic took place in South Korea in 2013, a two-day international conference on 'Maruyama Masao: A Liberal Intellectual's Thought and Action During the Cold War Period,' held as a part of the 'Asan Cold War Liberalism Project.'⁷ In this conference, Maruyama was presented as a major thinker representing Japan's postwar liberalism who sought to defend individual liberty and rights and safeguard the values of liberal democracy against the challenge of totalitarianism. Also, the project made it clear that the thoughts and practices of Cold War liberals are still relevant to contemporary East Asia, where an 'ideological-military standoff between a democracy and a

⁷ For more information on this conference, see <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/maruyama-masao-liberal-intellectual-thought-and-action-during-the-cold-war-period/> (accessed on 5 January 2023).

totalitarian system persists.’⁸ Similarly, other recent works on Maruyama have stressed the contemporary relevance of revisiting Maruyama’s postwar thought under the rubric of ‘Cold War liberalism,’ arguing that Maruyama’s postwar thought entails a valuable intellectual resource for counteracting the current ‘decline of liberalism,’⁹ or that his serious inquiry into how ‘a politics guaranteeing human liberty to be achieved’ is as much significant for contemporary Japan as it was in the postwar era.¹⁰

Despite such efforts, the concrete relationship of Maruyama’s liberalism to major Western counterparts whose ideas Maruyama deeply engaged with have yet to be seriously examined.¹¹ Although a reciprocal conversation between Maruyama and his contemporary Western liberals

⁸ Kim and Tadashi, ‘Preface,’ 7-8.

⁹ Jang, ‘Naengjeongwa Ilbon-ui Jayujuui (Cold War Liberalism in Postwar Japan).’

¹⁰ Tadashi Karube, *Maruyama Masao and the Fate of Liberalism in Twentieth-Century Japan* (Tokyo 2008). For a brief and well-rounded overview of Maruyama’s liberalism, see Reiji Matsumoto, ‘Maruyama Masao and Liberalism in Japan,’ in *Liberal Moments: Reading Liberal Texts*, ed. Alan S. Kahan and Ewa Atanassow (New York, NY 2017).

¹¹ Nonetheless, there have recently been important contributions to the Maruyama scholarship: on Maruyama as a realist thinker, see Felix Rösch, ‘Unlearning modernity: A realist method for critical international relations?’, *Journal of International Political Theory* 13, 1 (Feb 2017); on the influence of Weber’s model of rationalization on Maruyama, see Tobias Weiß, ‘Elements of Max Weber’s model of rationalization in the political analysis of Maruyama Masao,’ *Asiatische Studien-Études Asiatiques* 75, 1 (2021); on Maruyama’s ethical as well as political response to modernity, see Robert N. Bellah, ‘Confronting Modernity: Maruyama Masao, Jürgen Habermas, and Charles Taylor,’ in *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*, ed. Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig J. Calhoun (Cambridge, MA 2010).

happened infrequently,¹² Maruyama seldom ceased his internal dialogue with them by passionately keeping up with Western academia's latest discourses and publications. In addition, as Matsumoto put it, Maruyama was 'not a simple and complacent liberal' who blindly accepted the foreign ideas of the mainstream liberal tradition.¹³ Indeed, some crucial elements of his thought involve evident tensions with the liberal thinking of his Western counterparts—particularly those who are often labeled 'Cold War liberals.' Thus, a thorough examination of how Maruyama engaged with diverse Western ideas is needed to understand his complicated and critical approach to liberalism. Also, it needs to be answered what 'Cold War liberalism' means and what elements of Maruyama's postwar thought resemble it—or differ from it.

To be clear, the meaning and legacy of Cold War liberalism are far from settled.¹⁴ Yet, the recent efforts to rediscover its virtues have presented thoughtful reflections on the tradition. Among others, Jan-Werner Müller's 2008 article considerably set the terrain of debate,¹⁵ for his

¹² During the early 1960s, Maruyama had a chance to spend some time in the United States (1961–62, as a visiting professor at Harvard University) and the United Kingdom (1962–63, at Oxford University). For more details, see Rikki Kersten, 'Maruyama Masao (1914–96) and Britain: An Intellectual In Search of Liberal Democracy,' in *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Vol. VI*, ed. Hugh Cortazzi (Brill, 2007).

¹³ Matsumoto, 'Maruyama Masao and Liberalism in Japan,' 167.

¹⁴ For a recent debate on the legacy of Cold War liberalism, see Michael Brenes and Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, 'Legacies of Cold War Liberalism,' *Dissent* 68, 1 (2021); Kevin Mattson, 'Virtues of Cold War Liberalism: A Response to Michael Brenes and Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins,' *Dissent* (29 March 2021). https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/virtues-of-cold-war-liberalism.

¹⁵ Jan-Werner Müller, "Fear and Freedom: On 'Cold War Liberalism'," *European Journal of Political Theory* 7, no. 1 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885107083403>.

explication of Cold War liberalism—as primarily ‘negative liberalism’ essentially involving ‘anti-Marxist implications’—has been repeatedly cited in the recent literature, not least by the vocal critics of the tradition.¹⁶ Whereas the contemporary critics of Cold War liberalism consider it as a regretful ‘antitotalitarian constriction of liberalism,’¹⁷ Müller argues that revisiting the forgotten virtues of Cold War liberalism (e.g., its principled defense of value pluralism and the open society) could help us better respond to the current crisis of liberalism. He stresses that Cold War liberalism’s principled commitment to personal freedom and a humane society still offers us valuable lessons about how to defend an open society from the challenges of extreme politics.¹⁸

Other notable perspectives focusing on the distinctive ‘spirit’ of postwar liberalism have recently been offered by Joshua L. Cherniss and Aurelian Craiutu. In *Liberalism in Dark Times* (2021), Cherniss highlights the ‘ethical’ dimension of Cold War liberalism. In his view, Cold War liberalism was more of an ‘ethical project’ than of institutional or ideological project for two distinct senses. First, Cold War liberals addressed the ‘questions of *political ethics*’ frontally by offering principled answers to how to ‘act politically’ while being committed to the ideal of moral

¹⁶ For the major critiques of Cold War liberal tradition, see Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, "Yesterday's men: Cold War liberalism, what is it good for?" *The Baffler* (2021) <https://thebaffler.com/latest/yesterdays-men-steinmetz-jenkins>.; Samuel Moyn, "Human Rights and the Crisis of Liberalism," in *Human Rights Futures*, Stephen Hopgood et. al. eds. (Cambridge 2017).

¹⁷ Moyn, ‘Human Rights and the Crisis of Liberalism,’ 272.

¹⁸ Jan-Werner Müller, "What Cold War Liberalism Can Teach Us Today," *The New York Review of Books* 26 (2018).

integrity.¹⁹ Next, Cold War liberalism was also ethical ‘in being defined by the articulation of a particular *ethos*’ as a response to ‘anti-liberal *dispositions* of ruthlessness, extremism, and fanaticism.’ As many Cold War liberals believed, ‘merely defending liberal-democratic *institutions* would not be enough’ because formidable challenges posed by anti-liberals urgently demanded the cultivation of a genuinely ‘liberal ethos.’²⁰ For Cherniss, such an ethical aspect of Cold War liberalism entails a valuable lesson for the contemporary task of revitalizing liberalism since it reminds us of the crucial role of the ‘liberal spirit of prudence, forbearance, and openness to doubt’ in maintaining a liberal society.²¹

Craiutu—another key contributor—also focuses on the ‘ethos’ of Cold War liberals (Isaiah Berlin in particular). Resting upon his careful readings of leading liberal thinkers of the Cold War era, he argues that an ethos of ‘political moderation’ was not only consistent with but essential to the critical agendas of Cold War liberalism. Worth noting here is his account of political moderation as a crucial ‘antidote’ to monistic thinking (e.g., ‘doctrinairism’ or ‘moral absolutism’) based on perfectionist beliefs or doctrines. By refuting a simplified description of Cold War liberals primarily as anti-communist warriors, Craiutu contends that the prominent liberals of the postwar era committed themselves to ‘the ethos of moderation’ that ‘properly takes into account human fallibility and the complexity of the social and political world.’ Even in their fight against

¹⁹ Joshua L Cherniss, *Liberalism in Dark times: the Liberal Ethos in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ 2021), 4-6, 28-31 [emphasis original].

²⁰ Cherniss, ‘Isaiah Berlin and Reinhold Niebuhr: Cold War Liberalism as an Intellectual Ethos,’ 23-4 [emphasis original].

²¹ Cherniss, *Liberalism in Dark times*, 220-21.

Communism, he emphasizes, they were guided *not* by ‘Messianic ardor’ or ideological zealotry *but* by the pursuit of an open and plural society.²²

It is hardly deniable that significant overlaps exist between Maruyama’s postwar thought and the major accounts of Cold War liberalism presented above. For one thing, akin to those who are often called ‘Cold War liberals,’ Maruyama had a deep commitment to ‘anti-determinism’ and ‘value pluralism.’ In particular, he had a strong distaste for ‘abstract ideology’ detached from concrete reality and experience since he was deeply concerned about what he termed ‘theory-worship (理論信仰),’ or blind faith in the universal validity of a particular system of thought or *Weltanschauung*—a problematic attitude widely shared among postwar Japanese intellectual circles.²³ Indeed, Maruyama’s critique of ‘theory-worship’ was primarily pointed toward Japanese orthodox Marxists who tended to interpret and understand the postwar reality only through the lens of its deterministic doctrine or ‘formula.’²⁴ However, ‘formulism or schematism is,’ he stressed, ‘never an exclusive property of the Marxists.’ He wrote,

Whether it be an American democracy or a British social democracy, or anything else with a name with ‘-ism,’ as soon as it enters Japan, it immediately ossifies into a formula.²⁵

²² Craiutu, *Faces of Moderation: The Art of Balance in an Age of Extremes*, 71-111; Craiutu, ‘In Search of the Decent Society: Isaiah Berlin and Raymond Aron on Liberty.’

²³ E.g., Masao Maruyama, ‘Aru Jiyū Shugi-sha e no Tegami (A Letter to a Liberal)’ in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works of Maruyama Masao)*. Vol. 4 (Tokyo 1995 [1950]), 319.

²⁴ Masao Maruyama, ‘Nihon no Shisō (Japanese Thought),’ in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works of Maruyama Masao)*. Vol. 7 (Tokyo 1995 [1957]), 237-9.

²⁵ Maruyama, ‘Aru Jiyū Shugi-sha e no Tegami (A Letter to a Liberal),’ 321.

Thus, it is important to note that his critique of ‘formulism (公式主義)’ or ‘theory-worship’ targeted as much the orthodox Marxists as the stubborn adherents of Western democracy in postwar Japan since, in his view, such a tendency (i.e., formulism or schematism) had more to do with the defective way in which Japanese intellectuals responded to foreign theories and ideas than with the fallacy of Marxism itself. What is notable here is that Maruyama was equally worried about the blind worship of Anglo-American models of democracy (either liberal or social), particularly the anti-Communist efforts to *stifle* alternative leftist ideologies in the name of ‘protecting liberal democracy.’ For him, the ‘Red Purge’ policy of the Occupation authorities in postwar Japan (led by Supreme Commander MacArthur) and the fanatic spread of McCarthyism in the U.S. were seen as a complacent—and even hypocritical—motion that betrays liberalism’s elemental spirit of tolerance and value pluralism.

Maruyama’s subscription to the principle of value pluralism was also deeply linked to his historical reflections on the rise of ‘ultra-nationalism’ in prewar and wartime Japan. In analyzing the key features of Japan’s ultra-nationalism, he identified that ‘the monopolization of values’ by the Meiji state and the emperor—as the spiritual authority of the nation—was ‘the main ideological factor that kept the Japanese people in slavery for so long and that finally drove them to embark on a war against the rest of the world.’ In contrast to the ‘modern European State’ based upon the liberal ideal of ‘*ein neutraler Staat* [neutral state],’ the Meiji state of Japan failed to, Maruyama argued, adopt ‘a neutral position on internal values, such as the problem of what truth and justice are,’ and thus it failed to leave ‘the choice and judgment of all [internal] values . . . to the conscience of the individual.’²⁶ The expansion of ‘conformism’ and the ‘uniformization of

²⁶ Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, ed. Ivan I. Morris (London 1966 [1957]), 1-3.

thinking’ along with the decreasing ‘spontaneity’ under the condition of modern mass society was another big worry for him because he regarded independent ‘individuality’ and ‘the faculty of rational criticism’ as the essential elements for protecting liberal society from the threat of fascism.²⁷ In his view, modern democracy could easily fall into dangerous collectivism (e.g., ultra-nationalism or fascism) unless sufficient room existed for cultivating and exercising rational self-determination.

By citing Rosa Luxemburg’s famous remarks,²⁸ Maruyama once defined freedom as ‘the tradition of thinking differently from others.’²⁹ For him, individual freedom could not exist without the ‘freedom to have a different opinion’ from everyone else.³⁰ In the same vein, he further explained the condition under which ‘the spirit of freedom’ (自由の気風) springs: ‘The spirit of freedom comes only from numerous free debates. . . . It could exist only where dissenting opinions are freely expressed, and the right of minority opinions is guaranteed.’³¹ Obviously, the main target

²⁷ Masao Maruyama, *Senchū to Sengo no Aida: 1936-1957 (Between the Interwar and Postwar)* (Tokyo 1976), 549.

²⁸ The original words of Luxemburg: ‘Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently’ Luxemburg, as cited in Rosemary H. T. O’Kane, *Rosa Luxemburg in Action: For Revolution and Democracy* (London 2017), 117.

²⁹ Masao Maruyama, *Jiyu ni Tsuite: Nanatsu no Mondo (Seven Conversations on Liberty)* (Kyoto 2005), 141.

³⁰ Maruyama, ‘Gendai seiji no shisō to kōdō dai 2-bu tsuiki (Addendum to Part 2 of Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics),’ 20.

³¹ Masao Maruyama, ‘*Bunmeiron no Gairyaku*’ o Yomu (Reading ‘An Outline of a Theory of Civilization’). Vol. 1 (Tōkyō 1986), 146.

of critique in this regard was the prevailing attitude of doctrinaire Japanese Marxists, who considered their theory as the only truth. Yet, by mentioning J. L. Talmon's influential book *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (1952), Maruyama also warned that 'democracy without liberalism' or the Rousseauian notion of 'general will' could result in a similar error if it stopped tolerating different worldviews. As such, value pluralism and tolerance were at the core of Maruyama's conception of liberty.³²

During the postwar period, Maruyama put massive effort into inculcating a responsible and autonomous ethos—or 'shutaisei' (主体性, subjectivity) in his term—into the minds of Japanese people. In particular, he was extremely concerned about the revival of fascist ideology in postwar Japan since a collectivist mindset still prevailed after the prolonged war. Based upon his reflection on the rise of fascism, militarism, and irresponsible ethos of wartime elites, Maruyama concluded that individual liberty could hardly exist in a society where the philosophy of autonomy and independence had not been firmly established in the mind of the people. Therefore, his main agenda of postwar liberalism lay not so much in institutional reforms or an anti-Marxist 'war of ideas' but in the active cultivation of the liberal spirit and democratic ethos, such as independent individuality, tolerance of different thoughts and beliefs, and realization of one's moral and political agency. During the postwar years, he frequently referred to the state of Japan's new democracy as a 'precarious democracy' due to the widespread 'conformism' and the lack of liberal ethos among the Japanese public. For this reason, he put a strong emphasis on fostering freedom to 'think differently' and a habit of 'constantly asking 'why' concerning power' as a vital task for Japan's postwar democracy.³³

³² Maruyama, *Jiyu ni Tsuite: Nanatsu no Mondo (Seven Conversations on Liberty)*, 139-40.

³³ Maruyama, *Senchū to Sengo no Aida: 1936-1957 (Between the Interwar and Postwar)* 348.

2. Maruyama's Caution against Liberal Triumphalism

Despite the extensive social and political reforms implemented in postwar Japan under American occupation,³⁴ Maruyama saw worrisome trends of resurging fascism behind the façade of a Western-style political system. In his 1950 essay 'A letter to a certain liberal,' for instance, he wrote,

In the power structure and human relations of [postwar] Japan, pre-modern elements that are contradictory to the principles of 'Anglo-American' democracy are being revived and strengthened in the name of defending 'Anglo-American' democracy. Can you really feel nothing about the progress of such a horrific paradox?³⁵

In the same essay, he criticized explicitly those who naively believed that 'the establishment of a democratic constitution or legal system' automatically ensures the democratization of social relationships, referring to them as 'ultra-formalists' or 'constitution-fetishists.'³⁶ He was concerned that the rhetoric of 'defending democracy' was misused by those who sought to protect their established status by stifling the people's spontaneous and voluntary political participation. The continuing legacy of the wartime police-state system in postwar Japan and its tendency to prioritize maintaining social order over protecting the basic elements of a liberal open society (e.g., freedom of speech and association) offered him another reason to be cautious about the rhetoric of defending democracy taken by Japanese postwar conservatives.

In his 1953 essay 'Contemporary Situation of Fascism,' he further expressed concerns about the growing tendency of fascism even in the United States by pointing to the risky status of the freedom of thought and conscience due to the prevailing anti-Communist mentality among the

³⁴ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York, NY 1999).

³⁵ Maruyama, 'Aru Jiyū Shugi-sha e no Tegami (A Letter to a Liberal)' 330.

³⁶ Ibid.

American public. Maruyama specifically took the spreading enactments of the ‘loyalty oath’ in many states of the U.S. as a worrisome sign of the ‘fascist shift’ of America.³⁷ ‘Freedom granted only to those who *actively praise* the existing order is nothing but,’ he insisted, ‘freedom as a dead letter (形骸化).’³⁸ For Maruyama, the most pressing threat to postwar liberalism was not so much the challenges from the Communist powers but the decay of liberalism from the inside. He thus wrote,

Even in places where liberal principles have long been entrenched *in the first place*, such as in the United States, the idea of limiting freedom to preserve it . . . risks turning into a fascist logic of homogenization.³⁹

In addition, he held that the notion of ‘negative liberty,’ which conceptualizes liberty primarily as freedom *from* interference, was not so relevant for (and could even be harmful to) non-Western late-developers like Japan. In societies where liberal political culture is weak, he insisted, the construction of democracy requires a more fundamental transformation of the ‘ethos’ of the people whereby ordinary individuals’ moral agency and political subjectivity can be empowered appropriately. For him, in other words, what is crucial about the vital spirit of liberalism is not freedom *from* external interventions but realizing freedom *to* liberate oneself from arbitrary and

³⁷ The loyalty oath of the late 1940s and early 1950s enacted in many American states required educators to ‘swear that they did not subscribe to certain beliefs or belong to certain organizations’ Charles F. Howlett and Audrey Cohan, ‘Loyalty Oaths and Academic Witch Hunts,’ *Social Science Docket* 8, 1 (2008): 60.

³⁸ Maruyama, *Senchū to Sengo no Aida: 1936-1957 (Between the Interwar and Postwar)* 543 [emphasis original].

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 548 [emphasis original].

illegitimate political authority through the self-conscious formulation of what he termed ‘liberated autonomous personality’ (解放された自主的な人格).⁴⁰

Although it has rarely been discussed in the existing literature, it is worth noting that Maruyama’s thought on the complicated task of developing independent moral agency and prudent understanding of politics in the modern world was greatly informed by his contemporary Western liberals, especially by Reinhold Niebuhr—one of the leading American public intellectuals of the twentieth century. Maruyama never claimed expertise in Niebuhr, yet one of Niebuhr’s major works, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932), was frequently cited by Maruyama with sympathetic comments. Moreover, significant parallels exist between Maruyama’s attack on liberal ‘moralism’ and Niebuhr’s (particularly the early Niebuhr’s) ‘realist’ critique of what he called ‘rationalistic meliorism’ or idealistic ‘pacifism,’ as the tendency also prevailed among many of the interwar and postwar liberals.⁴¹ As Cherniss has noted,⁴² Niebuhr vehemently objected to ‘a naïve faith in the inevitability of gradual progress based on steadily increasing human intelligence and moral virtue’ (i.e., rationalistic meliorism) because he held that ‘social injustice cannot be

⁴⁰ Masao Maruyama, ‘Gendai seiji no shisō to kōdō dai 1-bu tsuiki (Addendum to Part 1 of Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics),’ in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works of Maruyama Masao)*. Vol. 6 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995 [1956]), 273.

⁴¹ On this aspect of Niebuhr, I closely draw on the following works: Joshua L Cherniss, ‘A Tempered Liberalism: Political Ethics and Ethos in Reinhold Niebuhr’s Thought,’ *The Review of Politics*, 78, 1 (2016); Kevin Mattson, *When America Was Great: The Fighting Faith of Liberalism in Post-War America* (New York, NY 2005).

⁴² Cherniss, ‘A Tempered Liberalism,’ 63.

resolved by moral and rational suasion alone.’⁴³ Like Niebuhr, Maruyama sought to be a realist while committing himself to the fundamental values of liberalism.

Among various elements of Niebuhr’s thought, what particularly drew Maruyama’s attention seems to be Niebuhr’s reflections on ‘self-deception’ and ‘hypocrisy,’ which he referred to as ‘an unvarying element in the moral life of all human beings.’⁴⁴ It is notable that Maruyama hugely rested upon Niebuhr’s objection to moralism when he criticized the prevailing attitude of ‘self-deception’ among the ‘anti-Communist liberals’ of postwar Japan. He once laments that, along with the rise of the Cold War atmosphere,

Liberals who do not hold high anti-Communist banners are all treated like unidentified opportunists or vicious Communists in clever disguise . . . as if raising the anti-Communist flag is proof of democracy.⁴⁵

In his view, many Japanese postwar ‘anti-Communist’ liberals were making the same mistake as the typical error of moralists criticized by Niebuhr:

[The moralist] usually fails to recognise the elements of injustice and coercion which are present in any contemporary social peace. The coercive elements are covert, because dominant groups are able to avail themselves of the use of economic power, propaganda, the traditional processes of government, and other types of non-violent power.⁴⁶

Like Niebuhr, Maruyama was deeply concerned about many of the ‘self-claimed’ Japanese liberals’ dogmatic and indiscriminate decry of Communism or other contentious political activities (e.g., mass demonstrations or labor strikes). He held that this approach was self-deceptive because it

⁴³ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (Victoria, BC 2021 [1932]), 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 59-60, 70.

⁴⁵ Maruyama, ‘Aru Jiyū Shugi-sha e no Tegami (A Letter to a Liberal),’ 316-7.

⁴⁶ Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 129.

failed to properly acknowledge the injustice of ‘covert’ coercion widely utilized by dominant and privileged groups to maintain the unjust *status quo*. In the context of postwar Japan, the harmful consequences of such self-deception could be, Maruyama warned, the suppression of the ‘growth of people’s free faculty of criticism’ while reinforcing the authoritarian ‘rule by boss’ in every corner of the society, both could pose an evident threat to the viability of postwar democracy of Japan.⁴⁷

In short, what Maruyama learned from Niebuhr was the prevalent existence of self-deception and hypocrisy in modern politics—even in Western liberal democracies—due to the inevitable conflict between, in Niebuhr’s words, ‘ethics and politics,’ or the conflict between ‘individual and social morality.’ Similar to Niebuhr’s suggestion of a prudent approach that does ‘justice to the insights of both moralists and political realists,’⁴⁸ Maruyama rejected the indiscriminate ‘interfusion of ethics and power’ (e.g., ultra-nationalism of the Japanese Empire) and instead stressed a mindful awareness of the perpetual tensions between the two. For this reason, he emphasized the cultivation of political realism and personal moral agency at the same time. Without such a sense of ‘realism,’ he alerted, it is likely that liberals fall into ‘self-deception’ or anachronistic thinking detached from the reality of politics.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Maruyama, ‘Aru Jiyū Shugi-sha e no Tegami (A Letter to a Liberal),’ 325-6.

⁴⁸ Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 129.

⁴⁹ Maruyama, ‘Ken’ryoku to Dōtoku (Power and Morality)’; ‘Nashonarizumu, Gunkoku-shugi, Fashizumu (Nationalism, Militarism, and Fascism),’ in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works of Maruyama Masao)*. Vol. 6 (Tokyo 1995 [1954]), 300-01.

3. Against the Mid-Century Fatalism and Conservatism

While Maruyama was cautious about excessive optimism and self-deception widely observed in the triumphal attitude of self-claimed liberals in postwar Japanese society, he never rejected optimism *per se*. Indeed, he was an ardent proponent of ‘human progress’ and ‘the power of ideas,’ conceiving that such belief was necessary for formulating a new vision of liberalism against the backdrop of the increasingly ‘defensive’ and ‘conservative’ shift of twentieth-century liberalism. Disagreeing with two major postwar-era perspectives on the progress in human history (namely, the Marxist view of historical materialism and a fatalistic perspective widespread among the liberals), Maruyama aligned himself with an alternative perspective that called for an anti-fatalism and a revival of the radical spirit of liberalism as a way to overcome the ongoing crisis of liberalism. In particular, Maruyama deeply shared the belief in the power of political ideas and human will in shaping history, notably articulated by the American political theorist Judith N. Shklar (1928–1992).

Sympathizing with Shklar’s critique of the decline of the key spirit of the Enlightenment in the postwar intellectual world,⁵⁰ Maruyama emphasized the continuing relevance of the ‘spirit of the Enlightenment’ in the context of the twentieth century (postwar Japan in particular) where scientific dogmatism or materialistic instrumentalism was widely shared. In the ‘Author’s Introduction’ to *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* (English edition), he expressed his belief in ‘the force of ideas operating in human history,’ defining himself as ‘a follower of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment’ who still holds to the idea of ‘human

⁵⁰ Judith N. Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith* (Princeton, NJ 1957), 24.

progress.’⁵¹ In his 1959 essay ‘Modern Japanese Thought and Literature,’ Maruyama cited Shklar’s following account as an example depicting the vital spirit of the Enlightenment, or ‘genuine radicalism’:⁵²

Radicalism is not the readiness to indulge in revolutionary violence; it is the belief that people can control and improve themselves and, collectively, their social environment. Without this minimum of utopian faith no radicalism is meaningful.⁵³

The ‘essence of radicalism is,’ Shklar stressed (and Maruyama cited), ‘the idea that man can do with himself and with his society whatever he wishes.’ Genuine radicalism regards men not ‘as the agents of historical destiny’ but ‘as the free creators of society.’⁵⁴ As Samuel Moyn pointed out, Shklar’s view in *After Utopia* entails her strong critique of mainstream postwar liberalism for its fatalistic attitude and the decline of its radical spirit.⁵⁵ Like Shklar, Maruyama also subscribed to the cause of anti-fatalism and the re-radicalization of liberalism in that his conceptualization of ‘the subject’ (主体) considered the collective efforts of human beings—rather than material conditions or historical destiny—as the primary maker of history.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, xvi.

⁵² Masao Maruyama, ‘Kindainihon no Shisō to Bungaku (Modern Japanese Thought and Literature),’ in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works of Maruyama Masao)*. Vol. 8 (Tokyo 1995 [1959]), 157.

⁵³ Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith*, 219.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁵ Moyn, ‘Before—and Beyond—the Liberalism of Fear.’

⁵⁶ Both Maruyama and Shklar were seriously concerned about the revival of fascism in the postwar world. In her famous 1989 essay, ‘The Liberalism of Fear,’ for instance, Shklar remarked that ‘Anyone who thinks that fascism in one guise or another is dead and gone ought to think again.’ Maruyama would fully agree with this statement. See Maruyama, *Senchū to Sengo no Aida: 1936-1957 (Between the Interwar and*

Also, Maruyama's effort to re-orient liberalism in postwar Japan toward a progressive direction has another important aspect: a deep interest in radical social change through non-violent and democratic means. Indeed, the overly conservative shift of liberal democracies in the postwar world greatly concerned him. In his 1949 essay, Maruyama wrote:

Freedom of criticism is allowed in Western democracy because there is a sense of relief that freedom of criticism would not develop into freedom to change. It has been proven by many actual cases that, when such a sense of relief was shaken overnight, a sudden and explicit exercise of state power would be requested from the ruling class.⁵⁷

It is important to note that Maruyama paid careful heed to the critique of conservative liberalism presented by the English political theorist Harold Laski (1893–1950).⁵⁸ Sympathizing with Laski, Maruyama once described the violent suppression of the U.S. Textile Worker Strike of 1934 (which took place under the presidency of FDR) as an example of the 'non-neutral' and 'hypocritical' characteristic of the contemporary liberal state. He accused the Roosevelt administration of having served the interests of the dominant class by wielding its coercive power in the name of 'law and order.'⁵⁹

Postwar), 537; Judith N. Shklar, 'The liberalism of fear,' in *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, ed. Stanley Hoffmann (Chicago, IL 2007 [1989]), 4.

⁵⁷ Masao Maruyama, 'Rasuki no Roshia kakumei-kan to sono suii (Development of Laski's views on the Russian Revolution),' in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works of Maruyama Masao). Vol. 4* (Tokyo 1995 [1949]), 42.

⁵⁸ Laski is well known for his conversion from liberal pluralism to Marxism during the 1930s, mainly due to his disappointment with the pro-business attitude of liberal states.

⁵⁹ Maruyama, 'Rasuki no Roshia kakumei-kan to sono suii (Development of Laski's views on the Russian Revolution),' 44-5.

However, Maruyama did not go so far as to follow Laski's ultimate embrace of Marxism. While having been alerted to the conservative and even reactionary drift of postwar liberalism (e.g., the Cold War mentality and McCarthyism), Maruyama remained firmly committed to the fundamental cause of liberalism and democracy, especially to the liberal principles of 'freedom of thought' and 'tolerance of different opinion.' His strong emphasis on the liberal spirit of toleration, persuasion, rational thinking, deliberation, and self-mastery seems to be coherent with his diagnosis of the crisis of postwar liberalism resulting from the decay of such liberal ethos.

Ultimately, Maruyama held that democracy in the conditions of modern mass society could survive only when 'the people try to monitor the activities of their representatives daily, even in a short time each day.'⁶⁰ In his 1960 essay, he insists that 'the genuine basis of democracy' is not 'a certain grand ideology' or 'a certain formally established system' but ordinary people's 'habit' to fulfill social obligations—no matter how mundane and tiny they are. If political activities become limited to professional politicians or political parties, 'from that moment on, democracy dies.' To be sure, he did not oppose the direct involvement of the people in revolutionary politics. Yet, he held that well-organized radical action on a collective scale is hardly expectable in a usual situation. Therefore, he stressed that the cultivation of people's 'habit' of political and social involvement (e.g., participation in voluntary associations, engagement in the deliberations of public matters, and active communications within and across groups) was more a realistic and practical way to save democracy from the challenges posed by fatalism, fascism, and conformism, which are the fundamental problems of the modern mass society.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Masao Maruyama, 'Gendai ni okeru taido kettei (Determining One's Attitude Today),' in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works of Maruyama Masao)*. Vol. 8 (Tokyo 1995 [1960]), 316-7.

⁶¹ Maruyama, 'Nashonarizumu, Gunkoku-shugi, Fashizumu (Nationalism, Militarism, and Fascism),' 335.

4. Democracy as a Way of Life: Maruyama's Deweyan Moment

In previous sections, I have presented the main characteristics of Maruyama's liberal thought in connection with the ideas of leading Western postwar liberal thinkers with whom Maruyama deeply engaged. To be specific, Maruyama's postwar thought features close attention to the liberal ethos and spirit (Section 1), the careful apprehension of liberal triumphalism (Section 2), and the belief in the power of human agency and the power of ideas (Section 3). This section concludes the article by offering further reflections on crucial overlaps between Maruyama and the prominent 20th-century American liberal intellectual John Dewey, focusing on their comparable commitment to the radical spirit of liberalism and democratic ethos.⁶²

Despite interesting intellectual affinities between Maruyama and Dewey, this relationship has received little attention, probably because Dewey's name rarely appears in the corpus of Maruyama. Although there are a few instances where Maruyama approvingly cited Dewey's ideas (e.g., the use of intelligence and experimentalism), those commentaries are generally short and brief. Nevertheless, here I propose to pay careful attention to this relationship in two senses. First, Dewey was one of the leading self-critical voices of mid-twentieth century liberalism, whose proposal of 'radical liberalism' entails significant parallels with Maruyama's engagement with the postwar liberal tradition.⁶³ These include his emphasis on the mind and character, defense of

⁶² Given the vast body of Dewey's writings, I limit myself here to addressing the two most important books of Dewey relevant for the purpose of this section: *The Public and its Problems* (1927) and *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935).

⁶³ Kevin Mattson offers an informative account of the intellectual tradition of 'radical' liberalism that grew up in the U.S. during the postwar period (1945–70). He presents Dewey as a central figure who made a

radical social change, and critique of the blind worship of existing institutional arrangements. Second, Maruyama's view on democracy—not merely as a political system or institution but—as an 'idea' and a 'movement' clearly shares the crucial spirit of Dewey's distinction between 'political democracy' (i.e., democracy as a form of government) and 'democracy as a social idea' (i.e., democracy as a way of life). For instance, it is well-known that, in emphasizing the importance of the ordinary people's continuous efforts and voluntary participation, Maruyama frequently used the term 'permanent revolution' to highlight the vital role of ideas in a democracy.⁶⁴ In his words,

Although I hesitate to tell you repeatedly what I said decades ago, democracy as an idea and a movement becomes a 'permanent revolution.' . . . Democracy can exist only in the form of constant democratization. . . . The clause in the Constitution doesn't make popular sovereignty self-evident. That simply states the idea that people are required to work constantly on the sovereignty of the people. It does not end by institutionalization. I think that it will be increasingly important to emphasize the aspects of idea and movement.⁶⁵

significant contribution to the development of this tradition. See Kevin Mattson, *Intellectuals in Action: The Origins of the New Left and Radical Liberalism, 1945-1970* (University Park, PA 2002), 17-8.

⁶⁴ In elaborating on democracy as a *permanent revolution*, Maruyama argued that the term 'permanent revolution' entailed ideas that aligned much closer with the ideal of democracy than Communism or totalitarianism. He maintained that, unlike Communism or totalitarian democracy, his proposal of democracy as a permanent revolution did neither 'neglect' the dimension of individuality nor replace it with a collective conception of 'the people.' See Masao Maruyama, 'Zōho-ban gendai seiji no shisō to kōdō tsuiki (Addendum to the expanded edition of Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics),' in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works of Maruyama Masao). Vol. 9* (Tokyo 1995 [1964]), 174.

⁶⁵ Maruyama (1989), as cited in Takashi Izumi, *The Political Philosophy of Maruyama Masao: Cosmopolitanism from the Far East* (Honolulu, HI 2013), 66.

Yet, unlike Dewey's systematic elaboration of democracy as 'a way of life' (particularly in his 1927 book *The Public and its Problems*), Maruyama rarely provided a fuller account of democracy-as-a-permanent-revolution beyond the one presented above. Hence, comparing the two thinkers could also better illustrate the distinctive features—and limitations—of Maruyama's liberal thought. In what follows, I also discuss some noticeable differences between Dewey's and Maruyama's approaches toward the issue of character formation and institution transformation in the modern democratic society.

Let me begin with crucial parallels between Maruyama and Dewey. First, similar to Maruyama's strong commitment to progressive and non-violent social transformation as an essential element of liberalism, Dewey strongly urged that 'liberalism must now become radical.' He reminded his contemporary readers of the fact that the history of modern liberalism entailed 'a power in bringing about radical social changes' through the combination of the 'capacity for bold and comprehensive social intervention' and a 'detailed study of particulars and with courage in action.' Yet, akin to Maruyama's objection to violence, Dewey opposed the 'use of violence as the main method of effecting drastic changes' since 'force,' or 'coercion' is, in his view, contrary to the core values of liberalism (e.g., liberty, individuality, and freed intelligence). As an alternative to violence, Dewey instead proposes that 'the organization of intelligent action' be the chief method of social action for the liberals.⁶⁶

Similar to Maruyama's caution against liberal triumphalism, Dewey also expresses his concern about the expansion of dogmatism within liberalism and its harmful effect on liberalism's commitment to the ceaseless pursuit of human progress and social reform. 'Soon after liberal tenets were formulated as eternal truths,' Dewey says, 'it became an instrument of vested interests in

⁶⁶ John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York, NY 1963 [1935]), 15, 62-3.

opposition to further social change, a ritual of lip-service.’ Also, Dewey extends his critique to conservative liberals or moral purists for their failure to grasp the prevalent, though mostly covered, utilization of coercive and violent force ‘in the present social system as a means of social control.’⁶⁷ ‘[T]his liberty is tolerated,’ he adds, ‘as long as it does not seem to menace in any way the *status quo* of society.’ As discussed earlier, Maruyama firmly objected to the defensive and conservative shift of postwar liberalism, arguing that it is nothing but ‘freedom as a dead letter’ if freedom to fundamental social change is not permitted. Also, by drawing on Niebuhr, he pointed out that the ruling class frequently relied upon ‘coercive power in a veiled form’ to fortify their *status quo* while claiming their moral superiority over other forms of radicalism.⁶⁸

Second, both Maruyama and Dewey commonly belonged to the tradition of radical liberalism in that they objected to a blind trust in established institutions, even if those institutions were widely considered to be crucial parts of modern liberalism. According to Maruyama, an attitude that idolized the newly introduced liberal institutions—while neglecting the critical role of human initiatives and practices in protecting and improving liberal democracy—prevailed among many postwar Japanese intellectuals and liberal activists.⁶⁹ Like Dewey, Maruyama believed that overcoming the fatalistic perspective and constructing a new modern society demanded the emergence of a new ‘consciousness’ based upon the trust in the power of human intelligence. In his words, ‘there has to be an awareness that the public order, institutions, *mores*, in short, the

⁶⁷ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, 47, 64.

⁶⁸ Maruyama, ‘Aru Jiyū Shugi-sha e no Tegami (A Letter to a Liberal),’ 325.

⁶⁹ Maruyama, ‘Nihon no Shisō (Japanese Thought),’ 225-6 [emphasis original].

whole social environment that encompasses mankind, is man-made, and can be changed by the force of man's intellect.'⁷⁰

Third, the two thinkers' similar pursuit of 'radical' liberalism and the 'social ideal of democracy' is closely related to their deep interest in the cultivation of, to use Dewey's words, liberal 'habits of mind and character.' As I mentioned in the previous section, Maruyama underscores that 'the genuine basis of democracy' is laypeople's 'habit' to fulfill social obligations and to participate in politics voluntarily (e.g., monitoring the activities of elected officials) rather than 'a certain grand ideology' or 'a certain formally established system.' Maruyama also stresses that conscious awareness and efforts are needed to evoke people's 'political and social spontaneity' by enlightening and enhancing such habits of mind and character.⁷¹ Specifically, he suggests that people's engagement in voluntary group activities (either political or social), opportunities to participate in the process of deliberations concerning public problems, and active communications across and among groups can play an essential role in countering the worrisome modern tendency of the expansion of 'conformism' and 'uniformization of thinking' among the passive public.⁷² In short, Maruyama's central focus was decidedly on cultivating liberal ethos and democratic citizenship. Such a perspective is also well illustrated in his following emphasis on democracy-as-movement over democracy-as-institution: 'In reality, democracy exists only as a process of democratization, and it cannot be completely absorbed into any institutional arrangements.'⁷³

⁷⁰ Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, 255 [emphasis original].

⁷¹ Maruyama, *Senchū to Sengo no Aida: 1936-1957 (Between the Interwar and Postwar)*, 554-5.

⁷² Maruyama, 'Nashonarizumu, Gunkoku-shugi, Fashizumu (Nationalism, Militarism, and Fascism),' 335.

⁷³ Maruyama, 'Zōho-ban gendai seiji no shisō to kōdō tsuiki (Addendum to the expanded edition of *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*),' 173-4.

Like Maruyama, Dewey believes cultivating liberal ethos is essential in realizing his radical vision of liberalism. In *Liberalism and Social Action*, he explicitly says that ‘the first object of a nascent liberalism is education,’ whose principal task is ‘to aid in producing the habits of mind and character, the intellectual and moral patterns.’⁷⁴ For him, liberalism is committed to an end of ‘the liberation of individuals’ and ‘the use of freed intelligence as the method of directing change.’ Such ideas of liberalism require a social organization that ‘will make possible effective liberty and opportunity for personal growth in mind and spirit in all individuals.’⁷⁵ In addition to education, both Maruyama and Dewey supported experimentalism and piecemeal reform as primary means of social change. In emphasizing its virtue, Maruyama remarked that experimentalism is ‘always open to new experiences, and it respects the collective combination of many people’s experiences.’⁷⁶

Unlike Dewey, however, Maruyama seems to have offered too little theoretical reflection on how to foster and defend liberal democracy *institutionally*. As cited earlier, for him, the single most important task of the democratic revolution in postwar Japan was the formulation of ‘subjecthood with strong self-control’ among the Japanese public.⁷⁷ Yet, as Dewey pointed out, the ideal of democracy can be properly protected when concerted efforts exist to defend it through the cultivation of democratic ethos *and* corresponding changes in institutions. In acknowledging the limited power of education and character formation unless it is combined with actual changes in social and political institutions, Dewey stated that ‘[t]he educational task cannot be

⁷⁴ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, 61.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 56-7.

⁷⁶ Maruyama, ‘Kindainihon no Shisō to Bungaku (Modern Japanese Thought and Literature),’ 134-5.

⁷⁷ Maruyama, ‘Nihon no Shisō (Japanese Thought),’ 244.

accomplished merely by working upon men's minds, without action that effects actual changes in institutions. The idea that dispositions and attitudes can be altered by merely 'moral' means conceived of as something that goes on *wholly inside* of persons is itself one of the old patterns that has to be changed.'⁷⁸ Compared with Dewey's perspective, Maruyama's democratic theory involves much insufficient consideration of political institutions, perhaps because formulating the liberal ethos was at the top of Maruyama's priority list among the major tasks of rebuilding Japan's postwar democracy. Nonetheless, his subscription to experimentalism and idea-centered understanding of democracy seems to imply that he was much closer to Deweyan tradition than to other triumphal or dogmatic ideologies that prevailed during the Cold War era.

To conclude, this article has examined Maruyama's self-critical and ethos-centered view on liberalism by reconstructing how he engaged with leading Western liberal thinkers of the interwar and postwar eras, such as Niebuhr, Laski, Shklar, and Dewey. Similar to many Cold War-era liberals, Maruyama wholeheartedly committed himself to the principles of anti-determinism and value pluralism as a philosophical basis for modern liberalism. Such an attitude was his intellectual response to the monistic worldview of Japanese wartime fascism, on the one hand, and the dogmatism of orthodox Japanese Marxism, on the other. At the same time, however, Maruyama's thought differs from a standard account of Cold War liberalism as essentially 'negative liberalism' or, in Shklar's terms, 'liberalism of fear.' Instead, I have argued that Maruyama's participation in the tradition of postwar liberalism entails a more conscious and active pursuit of liberal political culture beyond the narrow aim of anti-Communism. His deep interest in ethos formation also implies that countering totalitarianism's challenges and the growing tendency of liberal triumphalism is inseparable from the concerted effort to enhance political moderation and

⁷⁸ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, 61 [emphasis added].

independent publics. Obviously, Maruyama was a self-conscious participant in the so-called ‘war of ideas’ of the 1940s and 1950s. However, he was as critical of deterministic Communism as the hubris and conservatization of postwar liberalism.

Revisiting Maruyama’s multifaceted relationship with his contemporary liberal thinkers of the West reminds us that there exist rich and diverse liberal traditions across the time and region. He was especially an interesting and important non-Western mid-century liberal in that he seriously considered the danger of ignoring the fundamental spirit of liberalism (e.g., its underlying commitment to social change) in the unique circumstance of postwar Japan, where the norms and institutions of liberal democracy were massively transplanted from the West while the liberal ethos and political culture were yet to develop. For Maruyama, it was not merely a matter of academic interest but an existential problem for the future of Japan’s postwar liberal democracy. Considering the ongoing crisis of today’s liberalism, it is high time that we stood up against any ungrounded simplification of its tradition and revisited the diverse visions and approaches developed by postwar liberals—across the globe—in their fight against existential threats to liberal society.