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Hannah Arendt and Maruyama Masao: The Meaning of Politics for Citizens

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1. Introduction

A little more than 40 years have passed since Hannah Arendt died in 1975, but it can be said that she has already established herself as one of the great thinkers in the history of political theory. This is due to Arendt's ability to grasp the true meaning of politics through her experiences of surviving the political tumult of the 20th century and living through totalitarianism under Nazi Germany. She published many outstanding works in which she did not express her own experiences directly but analyzed contemporary politics theoretically.

Arendt's works were well read among those who specialized in Western political thought, and she was considered by them to be an original and brilliant thinker on a par with Carl Schmidt. Arendt is one of those thinkers who revived the traditional mode of political theory. However, it is clear that Arendt was sometimes looked upon suspiciously because she regarded Nazism and Stalinism as belonging to the same category of totalitarianism, at a time when the consciousness of affirming the expectations and revolutionary violence of socialism was still firmly held among Japanese intellectuals¹⁾.

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However, the true value of her theory came to be recognized at that time by those who tackled political realities without prejudice.

Although the political theory of Hannah Arendt began to attract attention as an authentic subject matter from the 1990s, one of Japan's political scientists who gained inspiration through reading Arendt's works since the 1950s was Maruyama Masao²⁾ (1914–96). Maruyama was unquestionably the first figure to represent Japanese political science after the Second World War, a thinker who had a major impact on his readers during his lifetime and whose work, after his death, established his immovable status as a great thinker. He had been a seminar student of Nambara Shigeru, professor of Western political philosophy in the Law Faculty of Tokyo Imperial University.

Maruyama started his academic career as assistant professor of the history of Japanese political ideas from a suggestion by his mentor, the liberalist Nambara. Maruyama first became well-known as a political scientist by carrying out comparative reflections on the history of Japanese political ideas using the method he learned in his studies of Western political thought.

Although his fundamental political views were formed under the influence of Max Weber and Carl Schmidt rather than that of Arendt, Maruyama entitled one of his books *During the War and the Postwar Period*, which draws from his articles and reviews spanning the period from his prize 1936 essay of his student years to articles written in 1957. It is clear that Arendt's book, *Between Past and Future*, was the inspiration behind its naming, as indicated in the book's postscript³⁾. However, even if there were some influencing relationship between them, it was a weak one-sided one from Arendt to Maruyama, since there is no trace of evidence that Arendt actually read the writings of Maruyama.

It is significant that these two thinkers lived in roughly the same time and shared a common political experience—surviving under World War II and working before and after it. Arendt experienced persecution, arrest, exile, and compulsory internment while she engaged in the resistance against the Nazis as a Jew. Maruyama also had the strong normative consciousness from his army experience that totalitarianism must not only be revealed but eradicated from its roots. He had also experienced the atomic bombing of Hiroshima as a soldier based in Ujina, located in the southern district of Hiroshima City;

The author is very grateful to Professor You-Kyung SUH at Kyung Hee Cyber University (KHCU), who kindly offered helpful comments on a draft of this article.

- 1) Muto Ichiyo criticized Arendt's position at the time for lacking a critical perspective on the aspect of administrative violence in his book review on *On Violence* (Muto Ichiyo, "Yokuatsuteki Shisou to Muishiki no Gougan (Repressive Thought and the Unconscious Hubris)," *Asahi Journal*, vol. 15, no. 34 (August 31, 1983), pp. 64–65).
- 2) Japanese names are provided here in common Japanese style: surname before given name.
- 3) See Maruyama Masao, "Afterword," in *Senchu to Sengo no Aida: 1936–1957 (Between the Wartime and Postwar: 1936–1957)*, Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1976, p. 635.

this experience seems hidden in his work but it was deeply rooted in his consciousness.

In order to return politics to ordinary citizens and to make it the everyday business of humans, it seems important to consider what politics means for ordinary people. We must think about how to make use of traditional political theories in search of a better world. As Arendt suggests, we find ourselves between past and future. Therefore, it is important to make dialogue with the past by means of reading books written by great thinkers of the past. In these terms, I focus on the theme of such dialogue Arendt and Maruyama made with the past and clarify how they formed their own theories through going back to the past. For we must learn much from past attempts at prudence in order to make the world a better place to live together with others.

2. Hannah Arendt on the Meaning of Politics

Although we can neither change the past nor know the future, a human being who stands in between past and future, provided he or she understands the past in an accurate and meaningful way, is able to make a better future. In this sense, it is important to understand not only negative events in history but also to capture and observe the essential features of events in history. In building theoretical understanding, any two thinkers are likely to consider political matters from the historical tradition of Western political ideas. However, they may also commonly focus on trying to understand the mechanism of governmental organization under which freedom is denied by the rule of ideology and by forcing people to do nothing but obey.

To Reverse the Politics of Totalitarianism

As Arendt had suggested herself, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) was an attempt to understand totalitarianism, which is, according to her, an unprecedented form of government both in history and ideology. Analyses of Nazism or fascism have generally been made by the positivistic method of history, which is common in social sciences. As for political science, it is done in the field of political history, and there are specialists with regard to each country in certain periods, and the causal approach is generally adopted. Although the viewpoint of comparison is immanent in the study of politics, unlike the methods of history and political science, Arendt's analysis was phenomenological in going deep to grasp the essence of a political phenomenon itself.

When asked from where she came, Arendt once said, "If I can be said to 'have come from anywhere,' it is from the tradition of German philosophy."⁴⁾ She was proficient in five languages (English, German, French, Latin, and ancient Greek) and had an extensive knowledge of the history of Western ideas, and her thinking was clearly influenced by

4) Hannah Arendt, "Eichmann in Jerusalem," (An Exchange of letters between Gershom Sholem and Hannah Arendt), *Encounter*, vol. 22 (January 1964), p. 53.

German philosophy, including that of Husserl and Heidegger, which enabled her to approach political matters phenomenologically.

Arendt's approach to totalitarianism took a macroscopic perspective in taking up and analyzing most critical problems of her time. It was an attempt to tackle such problems as how to deal with events like the mass murder of those who belonged to certain categories. To clarify the mechanism of totalitarianism was for Arendt so important that she could not bear to live without studying this theme. Her study of totalitarianism was clearly different from scientific inquiry, which chooses objects to which the method can be applied and consists of accumulated results of such research.

The period of Arendt's life when she was most active covered the eight years from 1933 to 1940. During these years, Arendt was deeply engaged in the resistance movement against the Nazis as a Jew, and she was consequently arrested but managed to become liberated and flee from Berlin to Paris illegally without a passport. In Paris, she engaged in social work to help Jewish children emigrate from Europe to Palestine, and in this effort she worked in cooperation with French women. Although in 1940 she was confined for more than one month in a camp in Gurs, a small town in the Pyrenees Atlantic province, she could fortunately escape from there and reach New York via Lisbon in 1941 as a political refugee.

On the other hand, most people left behind in the Gurs camp were later transported to the Auschwitz concentration camp and murdered. Clarifying the dynamics of this history, which led to the emergence of concentration camps, was, for Arendt, a work she could not put aside. Of course, people with such an experience could not necessarily write a literary work, as Arendt did. Unlike many of those who wrote of their experiences directly as memoirs, Arendt had been thinking intensively and persistently about this particular phenomenon. This made it possible for her to describe the details of events based on facts, and with her it could be done through philosophical knowledge and intensive study.

What Arendt did in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) was to find many elements from the historical facts of modern Europe that led to totalitarianism and then to clarify the connections between them in order to elucidate the mechanism of totalitarian government. Although capitalism, racism, nation-state consciousness, bureaucracy, imperialism, and tribal nationalism are among those elements that led to totalitarianism in Germany, in this book Arendt considered each of them separately. Even if she thought that some of these elements would not inevitably lead to the appearance of totalitarianism, she took up the task of understanding totalitarianism as "the burden of our time" and traced their roots back through European history to find their relationships with totalitarianism.

Racism is the element that Arendt considered the most important, and she believed that anti-Semitism was at the core of the Nazi ideology. Arendt certainly felt the threat of anti-Semitism as a Jew, but it was above all important to discover why such an ideology, in stark contradiction to the universality of human rights, was produced in Europe, considered the most advanced area of civilization at the time.

On the other hand, terror is employed by totalitarian states, where it separates people by force of fear. The apparatuses of terror are the secret police and the concentration camp. Fear of secret information changes the relationships among people into those filled with suspicion. Nothing is more dangerous than having a friend in a terror-dominated state because protecting oneself is done by informing on one's friends secretly. Moreover, if one does not confess the truth about a friend, by deciding to live according to one's conscience even if arrested and detained, one is placed in a dilemma: whether to refuse to confess, and thus bring one's own family to death, or to betray a friend and thus indirectly cause him or her to be killed⁵⁾. There is no room for conscientious resistance. What terror destroys is rapport among human beings and the space for "acting in concert."⁶⁾ Arendt recognized that this state was achieved by lying in the form of propaganda under totalitarianism.

Arendt is the type of political theorist who not only understands the essence of political matters but also looks for original meaning in the fundamental concepts of politics within political realities. She found positive aspects of political concepts from the negative meaning of the phenomenon represented by totalitarian domination. From the viewpoint of political phenomena, totalitarianism is also one of various political forms and totalitarian power is also a type of power, but the basic concepts of Arendt's political theory are constructed by reversing such negative phenomena to positive meaning. That is, politics is an activity among equals, a phenomenon of no-rule, while power is understood horizontally as it emerges among people who act in concert with others. The reason why this duality of political concepts arises in the thinking of Arendt consists in her intention to criticize political realities by supposing the ideal form of politics.

Arendt was not a pacifist but a realist who believed that military force was needed to fight the Nazis. However, recognizing that totalitarianism as a form of government arises not only in Nazi Germany or the Stalinist Soviet Union but also in other countries, she did not attribute the related phenomena to particular conditions in either country. Rather, she found political fundamentals by reversing those elements that totalitarian regimes denied, that is to say, public freedom, public space, plurality of human beings, etc.⁷⁾

Furthermore, she found cause for hope in that even totalitarianism could not deny such human conditions as love of freedom, natality, and plurality of human beings. Since she has a dualistic view and macroscopic viewpoints, Arendt's theory on totalitarianism became the starting point of her political theory of bringing politics back to ordinary people.

5) See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 3rd ed., New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966, p. 452.

6) See *ibid.*, p. 474.

7) See *ibid.*, p. 466.

The Citizen Spirit for Arendt

Arendt does not idealize democracy, since it is the rule by many people and it has a tendency to lead to rule by public opinion. Its concept includes the notion of rule, while she wants to exclude the idea of rule from political matters and considers the condition of politics as a situation where anyone can live humanely together with others. Although the Greek polis is considered her model of politics, public space can appear at any time and at any place. Therefore, the public space in Arendtian terms is not restricted to an area but can be formed beyond national borders. Moreover, although citizenship in the Greek polis was based on slave labor, Arendt's republicanism is a new type of civic republicanism based on participation in the public space and equality among fellow citizens⁸⁾, which, of course, neither affirms any slave system nor excludes women from the public space⁹⁾.

Generally speaking, with students of political thought the study of political thought starts from deep study on great thinkers of the past. The study of politics must be done by tackling the ideas of great thinkers or political realities. In the case of Arendt, except for her dissertation on Augustine, no thinker was taken up as a main theme of her monographs. Her thought is so original that she does not depend on any single thinker or school of thought but on her own thinking and experiences.

Unlike Leo Strauss's political theory, Arendt's political theory is not based on interpretations of great thinkers but rather chiefly aimed at the way of investigating the meaning of the political phenomena of her time. It consists of the search for the fundamentals in which every human being can live his or her life humanely. But her thought consists of constant dialogues in the tradition of Western political philosophy that began with Plato and Aristotle. Although Tocqueville and Kant influenced her thought, it is Socrates who was the most important dialogue partner for Arendt.

Socrates is a special personage for Arendt, since he remains a permanent presence in her thinking and she has been engaged in dialogue with him. As is well known, he did not write a single book, and thus his thoughts have been transmitted to us through his contemporaries such as Plato, Xenophon, and Aristophanes. Since his thought is expressed most strongly in the works of Plato, her dialogue partner is the Socrates who appeared in these works of Plato. Arendt persistently tried to distinguish Socrates from Plato and sought a prototype of critical thinking in the deeds and speech of the former. Similar to Karl R. Popper, Arendt wanted to de-Platonize Socrates, since Socrates is a very important person for her in thinking about the spirit of citizenship and the problem of conscience. On the contrary, Plato was against citizens in Athens and positioned politics as a business of rule, and thus he is an object of critical considerations by her.

8) See Iseult Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 129.

9) Although Arendt is similar with Aristotle in that she emphasizes the self-sufficiency of action, her republicanism is intended to reconstruct the public realm as a "*polis* without slaves." (See Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 25.)

The model of a citizen for Arendt is Socrates. Because he engaged in dialogues with his fellow citizens in the agora or other venues and was open to criticism by others. Socrates did not want to be a political leader and sought out how to live in the public sphere. The public sphere is an intermediate space between the city-state and the household. People can earn the right to be called citizens as long as they perform public duties in his political community, even if they do not directly engage in decision-making in the polis.

Like Socrates, Arendt was engaged in politics only for a short period, from 1933 to 1940. But she was always concerned with politics. She talked about political events with friends and acquaintances. She replied to unknown readers of her works and exchanged letters with them. After she was exiled to America, she never committed to politics as an actor, even though she observed events in her time and expressed opinions about them. She endeavored to do her best to perform the obligations of a citizen as a writer.

From the political theory of Arendt, there are two aspects of the role of citizen: as actor and as spectator. These two aspects are interrelated with each other. The politics at the macro level is done in the background of the world. In this respect, actors act under the soundless pressure of the public. If we pick up several normative points in the role of a citizen, the following points are important to bear in mind. (1) Spontaneity: Humans must be free to voluntarily engage in politics. One is engaged in politics based on his or her particular concerns. The freedom not to join politics must also be acknowledged. (2) Taking initiative: This involves beginning something new and implementing the idea. Proponents have to pursue communal work to its end, and they take responsibility for their deeds. (3) Open-mindedness: Citizens must foster open attitudes. Open-mindedness means being open to the criticisms of others. The mentality to cooperate with others, including unknown people, is also necessary. (4) Equality as equal relationships: It is important to place humans not in relationships of order and obedience. (5) Moral courage: One must behave from his or her independent will. He who cares for the world has the right to participate in politics, or as Arendt stated, that “only those as voluntary members of ‘an elementary republic’” who “care for more than private happiness and are concerned about the state of the world, would have the right to be heard in the conduct of the business of the republic.”¹⁰

Conscience works as the result of thinking, as a function of making one unable to do evil or to commit injustice.¹¹ The reason why citizens have the custom of thinking this way consists in the idea that one’s speech and deed are always to be examined. For this purpose, one must have an inner space named “myself.” It is the faculty of willing rather than of thinking, according to Arendt, that leads humans to action. By virtue of willing,

10) Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, New York: Viking Press, 1963, p. 284.

11) See Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1 *Thinking*, New York and London: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1978, pp. 190–193.

one can start something new and open up a new future. Thinking is the faculty used to not do evil. A human being who thinks deliberately desires to speak with fellow citizens.

By returning to the ancient Greek polis, Arendt gained her conviction on the idea of politics. Politics was part of the lives of Greek citizens. According to Arendt, polis is the space of “free deeds and living words.”¹²⁾ Socrates is open to hearing the opinions and criticisms of others. He lived his life in accord with his conscience, never contradicting himself. He never did evil nor committed injustice. He was democratic in exchanging opinions with others. He lived consistently with his words by his deeds.

3. Maruyama Masao on the Concept of Democratic Spirit

When considering the concept of citizen as an independent subject in political society, political theorists have to examine whether consideration has been given to which kind of political organization is desirable. Although the just form of political society was not explicitly investigated by either Maruyama or Arendt, political reality is criticized from the viewpoint of the state of desirable politics, and a kind of idea as telos (end) of political theory is shown in a hidden form. In the case of Arendt, it is republicanism, and in the case of Maruyama, it is democracy; however, these are not ideal states of society but rather expressions of an idea.

The Idea of Democracy

In contrast with Arendt, Maruyama understands democracy as a valuable idea and posits it at the highest position among political principles. Prewar Japan was under the Emperor system, and postwar Japan’s political system was democracy based on the popular sovereignty principle. Maruyama thinks much of August 15, 1945, because it was a turning point in Japan. Of course, the Japanese people did not embark on a revolution on August 15, but Maruyama called the day a moment of “bloodless revolution.”¹³⁾ Although Japan accepted democratization as mandated by the Potsdam Declaration, it was the occupational policy that pushed forward Japan’s democratization. Especially important was *how* to make the new Constitution of Japan, and Maruyama himself participated in a group to make a research about it at his working place, Tokyo Imperial University, and made efforts to see that it would be established by the Japanese people themselves.

However, democracy was for Maruyama not only a problem of political institutions but also one involving the ways of social life and the human spirit. According to Maruyama, democratization will not end at the level of institutions but is a never-ending

12) *On Revolution*, p. 285.

13) Maruyama describes August 15, 1945, as the day of “Japan’s so-called bloodless revolution.” (Maruyama Masao, “Wakaki Sedai ni Yosū: Ikani Manabi Ikani Ikubekika (To Younger Generations: How to Learn and How to Live?)” (1947) in *Maruyama Masao Shū (The Works by Maruyama Masao)*, vol. 3, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995, p. 83).

process of reforming human lifestyles or the structure of the human spirit. It is Maruyama's thought that democracy must be rooted in the foundations of liberalism. The ancient Greek democracy did not place the independent individual in any predominant position; only in modern times was respect for the individual established. In the case of Maruyama, the people-sovereignty theory of Western modern thought became the starting point of Japan's democratization. As shown by his endorsement of John Locke's political philosophy rather than that of Rousseau, he envisaged such a type of democracy as that based on the democratic spirit of individuals.

Having regarded democracy as a kind of lifestyle, Maruyama thought that Japan's social system was not a dictatorship but authoritarian in nature, and he believed that the democratic principle must penetrate society as a whole. In his article entitled "A Letter to a Liberalist" (1950), Maruyama emphasized the necessity to establish democracy in the everyday life of citizens, stating that such ideologies as liberalism and democracy "are not produced out of the life experiences of the Japanese people."¹⁴ For example, he questioned the reality of decisions even reached by "discussion": "Over 100 meetings are held every day, which are far from mutual persuasion, and so can decisions made in such settings be considered a 'democratic' determination? In particular, when a hierarchical order between the top and the bottom is found among constituents, unless an upper-level person has the greatest self-restraint in power and impartial eyes, free discussion is instantly made a farce by various functions of *extra*-logical coercion."¹⁵

This state of affairs shows how distant the reality of so-called democratic decisions is from the idea of democracy, although it is said that decisions are made by mutual persuasion. This condition implies that the function of political theory is to criticize realities from the standpoint of ideas, and for this purpose one must have the ability to capture the essence of actual politics and criticize the reality. This faculty is of such a nature that it requires not only scientists but also every citizen to learn by him- or herself.

It is a firm conviction of Maruyama that democracy is unachievable if one does not become an independent individual. Therefore, the democratic theory of Maruyama reaches the state of the human spirit. In order to root the democratic lifestyle in society, it is necessary that (1) each human being become an independent person and (2) one respect others as another independent person.¹⁶ During the war, Maruyama molded democratic thought from two liberal thinkers, Fukuzawa Yukichi and John Locke, as the sources of his dialogue partners.

Maruyama thought that democracy could not be achieved if the individual spirit were not sufficiently cultivated to become democratic. Although the freedoms of thought, faith,

14) Maruyama Masao, "A Letter to a Liberalist" (1950), in *Maruyama Masao Shu (The Works by Maruyama Masao)*, vol. 4, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995, p. 319.

15) *Ibid.*, p. 323 (emphasis by Maruyama).

16) See Maruyama Masao, *Jikonaitaiwa: 3 Satsu no Nōto kara (Self-reflective Dialogue: From 3 Notebooks)*, Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1998, pp. 10–11.

conscience and the spirit of tolerance were formulated in modern European thought, their foundations are not found exclusively in Western civilization. In Maruyama's thinking, it is crucially important in democracies to relativize a visible authority with an invisible authority, and to seek universality. However, even if universality can be sought, it can never be attained. Democracy is regarded by Maruyama as one of such universal ideas.

Therefore, we have to constantly fight against moves toward injustice and against un-democratizing forces in order to attain democracy. Such struggle falls on the activity of an independent human being, which Maruyama considers to be a democratic citizen who tries to continuously reshape him- or herself in order to come close to the idea of democracy.

The Mentality Sustaining the Emperor System

As well as for Arendt, for Maruyama Masao, who lived under the ideology of the Emperor system, the experience of fascism provided great momentum behind his firm conviction to explore the mechanism of Japanese fascism. Although he came to use the word "totalitarianism" later in the 1980s, Maruyama was interested in how such a monolithic ideology centered on the Emperor was formed.

Since he studied Western political ideas, he strived to describe political realities while always being conscious of comparison. When he attended a lecture of Hasegawa Nyozeikan, who was a journalist and liberalist, as a student of the then most elite high school, The First High School in Tokyo, he was arrested and detained for one night. He was drafted into the army at a time when he was the associate professor of the Law Faculty of Tokyo Imperial University. In the army, he experienced violence and repression. These experiences motivated him to explore the mechanism of the Emperor system.

Maruyama, who majored in political science and the history of Japanese political ideas, did not have any other way to conduct research in place of using concepts and terms such as fascism and nationalism, which were concepts developed through the history of Western social sciences. But in common with Arendt, he analyzed political realities theoretically and historically.

Although he did not write a huge work on totalitarianism as Arendt did, he released several noteworthy articles focusing on Japanese fascism. It was his treatise entitled "Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism" that attracted most people in the aftermath of World War II. It was a work written with the intention of escaping the spell of the Emperor system after the war, and since it appeared in the monthly journal *Sekai (The World)*, published by Iwanami Shoten, it was read widely among socially conscious people.

In this article, Maruyama clarified that the standard of values "that determined a person's position in society was based less on social function than on relative distance

from the Emperor.”¹⁷⁾ The Emperor was at the top of the hierarchy of the Japanese political system and was the ultimate source of authority. According to Maruyama, “Nietzsche characterizes aristocratic morality as ‘the pathos of distance’ (*Pathos der Distanz*); for the ruling class of Japan, the consciousness of being separated from the ‘humble’ people increased in proportion to the sense of being near the ultimate value, that is, the Emperor.”¹⁸⁾

Maruyama’s key concept of “transfer of oppression” means that by “exercising arbitrary power over those who are below, people manage in a downward direction the sense of oppression that comes from above, thus preserving the balance of the whole.”¹⁹⁾ This principle, according to his understanding, was expanded to the international arena, as he stated, “This can be seen in the campaign in favor of invading Korea, which flared up directly after the Restoration, and in the subsequent dispatch of troops to Formosa.”²⁰⁾ As absolute value was expressed not in an individual person but within the sovereign, and thus ordinary people conducted themselves based not on his or her independent morality but on this type of social psychology.

Maruyama clarified the mechanism explaining why acts of atrocity were inflicted by ordinary people as follows: “[T]he masses, who in ordinary civilian or military life have no object to which they can transfer oppression, should, when they find themselves in this position, be driven by an explosive impulse to free themselves at a stroke from the pressure that has been hanging over them. Their acts of brutality are a sad testimony to the Japanese system of psychological compensation.”²¹⁾ As seen by Fukuzawa Yukichi radically criticizing this type of mentality as “attaching too great importance to power”²²⁾ in his major work *An Outline Theory of Civilization* (1875), it is this type of spiritual structure that modern Japan inherited from the previous feudal society.

Since modern Japan was formed as a centralized administrative-state system whose center was the Emperor, Maruyama thought free active consciousness was not formed because it was considered the ethical mechanism that carries out the goodness, truth and beauty embodied only in the Emperor; mere Japanese people were not considered capable of freely forming the conscience by which people normally regulate their actions.

However, the Emperor, who was placed at the center of modern Japan, was also merely

17) Maruyama Masao, “Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism” (1946), translated by Ivan Morris, in *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, Expanded Edition, ed. by Ivan Morris, London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1969 [1963], p. 13.

18) *Ibid.*, p. 13.

19) *Ibid.*, p. 18.

20) *Ibid.*, p. 18.

21) *Ibid.*, p. 19.

22) *Ibid.*, p. 18. See also Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (1875), *The Thought of Fukuzawa*, vol. 1, revised translation by David A. Dilworth and G. Cameron Hurst III, Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008, pp. 176–182.

a traditional character, not a free actor in contrast to the absolute monarchs in early modern European history. “Though the Emperor was regarded as the embodiment of ultimate value, he was infinitely removed from the possibility of creating values out of nothing. His Majesty was heir to an Imperial line unbroken for ages eternal, and he ruled by virtue of the final injunctions of his ancestors... It was only because his existence was inextricably involved in the ancestral tradition, in such a way that he and his Imperial Ancestors formed a single unit, that he was regarded as being the ultimate embodiment of internal values.”²³⁾ The center is understood not as “a single point but an axis of ordinates” that forms the massive “system of irresponsibilities”²⁴⁾ whose center also lacked a sense of responsibility. Such a “system of irresponsibilities” can be applied not only to the Emperor system in its political dimensions but also to Japanese society in general.

On this point, how the materials of the Tokyo Trials clarified the mentality of military leaders is analyzed in the article entitled “Thought and Behaviour Patterns of Japan’s Wartime Leaders” (1947). Maruyama clarified the point that the subjects being judged were deficient in their decision-making process. In making decisions, they were moved by an atmosphere of relative situations and by the urge to “escape to authority.” “Transfer of oppression” and “the system of irresponsibilities” were concepts created by Maruyama when he considered actual politics, and these were also realities to be conquered. The Emperor system denies the free subject, which Maruyama considers in the first place. He is similar to Arendt in pulling out positive values from negative matters. However, unlike Arendt, Maruyama put emphasis on human psychology. Maruyama thought much of the concept and function of authority because modern Japan has built such a mechanism that forces everybody into “voluntary obedience” to orders.

Consequently, a free subject could be formed only if we could remove that structure from Japanese society. This was the problem of the subject, which Maruyama had to tackle in the first place after the end of the Second World War. Although Maruyama pushed himself into the study of the history of ideas in Japan, he called the period when he engaged in the research of contemporary politics a period of managing a “food stall,” but I think it is not necessary to take his words at face value. It seems to me that he earnestly practiced his work in political theory through the analysis of Japanese politics. By having begun to derive the pathology of modern Japan’s political society immediately after the war, Maruyama began to form his prototype of citizens in the meaning of “a free subject” and “the subject who judges right and wrong, good and evil.” Like Arendt, Maruyama himself engaged in thinking from various points of view as seen by “seeing the dark in the bright and seeing the bright in the dark”²⁵⁾ and his criticism of the mentality of

23) “Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism,” p. 20.

24) Maruyama uses this word in the context of criticizing the mentality of Japan’s Wartime Leaders. (See Maruyama Masao, “Thought and Behaviour Patterns of Japan’s Wartime Leaders” (1949), translated by Ivan Morris, in *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, p. 128).

25) *Jikonaitaiwa: 3 Satsu no Nōto kara (Self-reflective Dialogue: From 3 Notebooks)*, p. 38.

the Emperor system through the ideal of universal value.

Dialogue with Fukuzawa Yukichi

In the case of Maruyama, he seldom used the term “civil society” in its contemporary sense. Since he was influenced by the tradition of Marxist social science, Maruyama first understood civil society as bourgeois society. But he had come to use the term “citizen” as a distinct concept from “bourgeois” after the war and became the most influential advocate of citizen-based democracy in Japan. Therefore, it is reasonable to search for the various elements leading to the contemporary theory of civil society in the thoughts of Maruyama.

For Maruyama Masao, the most important dialogue partner with the past is Fukuzawa Yukichi. This is related to Maruyama’s primary intention, that is, how to create independent spirit in Japan. Fukuzawa, whom Maruyama intensively studied during wartime and after the war, was a theorist of civil society as “civilized society.” For Fukuzawa, the most important matter was civilization. However, to create civilized society it is necessary to foster an “independent spirit of self-respect” in all people of Japan. This is the reason why he decided upon education as his vocation.

According to Maruyama, Fukuzawa is an original thinker in Japan. If originality means producing something from nothing, of course, Fukuzawa is not original; however, in the field of thought originality does not mean generating a completely new thought but finding the most important elements in past thought and reshaping them into new ideas. In this sense, Fukuzawa was an unusual thinker in modern Japan. According to Maruyama, Fukuzawa was a “thinker of civil society” in that he emphasized interaction among people and dialogue with others.²⁶⁾

4. Coincidences between Two Thinkers

Arendt and Maruyama were thinkers who considered the importance of politics in small groups. They were commonly concerned with many actual problems and thought about the state of political society from a broad perspective. It is very interesting to find and consider the coincidences between these two thinkers.

The Concept of the Citizen

Arendt’s image of the citizen spirit is similar to Maruyama’s concept of the democratic citizenship. The most important point for both of them is the open-mindedness of the human spirit. Through engaging in dialogue with Fukuzawa, Maruyama became aware of the importance of “the sense of others,” which means to think or to feel from the

26) See Maruyama Masao, “The Philosophy of Fukuzawa Yukichi” (1947), in *Maruyama Masao Shu (The Works by Masao Maruyama)*, vol. 3, p. 196.

viewpoint of another person's position. A change in roles is necessary to possess such a sense. According to Maruyama, the citizen should be "one party for one person" and should be an independent individual. Moreover, the citizen is a person who does not make politics an occupation for oneself like a lay Buddhist but always embraces a concern with politics.

Maruyama's image of the citizen closely resembles Arendt's concept of the citizen. This is because, also for Arendt, the citizen is a being in singular, an individual who cares for the world rather than for oneself. The ordinary citizen is a human whose profession is not politics but who lives partly in the public sphere while being able to begin something new in cooperation with fellow citizens. The formation of citizenship must be considered important because it has a close relationship with the formation of civil society.

Bringing Back Politics to Ordinary Citizens

Arendt's political theory did not measure politics with a scale of labor or work but from the level of action. Although one must admit that such a viewpoint is too weak to influence politics on a national level, it becomes important at a time when an individual must be esteemed. For that purpose, one must get politics back to one's own life, and realize an equal relationship in every dimension of society and make democracy a nonviolent way of life. This is the reason why Arendt recovered the hidden meaning of such political concepts as politics, power, violence, and freedom; as Margaret Canovan stated, "[S]he manages to find within our existing language more shades of meaning than we are commonly aware of when we use different words as synonyms."²⁷⁾

Arendt redefined politics as action. This is the type of politics we can consider possible in civil society, where one can cooperate with each other, and it can be said that citizen action can make politics everyday business. Therefore, present-day civil society can be regarded as a space for "politics as action," and a space of "free deeds and living words" is to be created everywhere. From this point of view, human beings are expected to open new possibilities that have been unpredictable until now by spontaneous and creative attempts.

Foundations of Citizenship and Civil Society

Arendt's political theory influenced the rebirth of the concept of civil society in the 1980s. Arendt did not use the term civil society, and she was against the conformity and uniformity of society that came from the ancient Greek household (*oikos*). But the present concept of civil society is almost the same as the political community (*politikē koinōnia*) in ancient Greece, where Socrates lived with his fellow citizens.

It is important to recognize that society has two functions: (1) to socialize people and shape human consciousness in a solid mold that is dominant in society and (2) to provide

27) See Margaret Canovan, *The Political Thought of Hannah Arendt*, London: J M Dent & Sons, 1974, p. 10.

people with places to meet unknown people and thus make new personal networks. In the second sense, society has the potential to connect individuals to public matters. Arendt evaluated public space for politics, but public space can now emerge everywhere in society, even in the form of social activities. She suggested the importance of something which is in between (*inter-est*), “which lies between people and therefore relates and binds them together. Most action and speech is concerned with this in-between, which varies with each group of politics, so that most words and deeds are *about* some worldly objective reality in addition to being a disclosure of the acting and speaking agent.”²⁸⁾ Although interest is usually economically defined, here it means a common concern in which people are interested. It may be a symbol or public affairs around which citizens gather and act in concert.

Therefore, it is possible to extend Arendt’s concept of action to the sphere of civil society. From her point of view, civil society is an intermediate domain that belongs to neither the state nor a private domain. What she suggests in relation to the view of society as a semi-public sphere is that this sphere is important to foster the individuality and diversity of human beings. I think her book *Rahel Varnhagen* (1959) and her article “Reflections on Little Rock” (1959) are important works that portray society as an intermediate space, or a mixed domain of the private and the public, in contrast to her conception of society in *The Human Condition* (1958). In *Rahel Varnhagen*, the salon is a semi-public space, while in “Reflections on Little Rock” society is defended by her as a realm of fostering diversity.²⁹⁾

According to Arendt, “acting in concert” can generate power among citizens, and its condition is defined by humans living together. The political exists ubiquitously and also combines people to solve social problems. Through cooperating and acting together in everyday life with others, people can become citizens and society works as places for people to meet each other. If the spirit of citizenship is open-mindedness, civil society must be an open society. The formation of an open mind is conditioned by civic culture, which is fostered by the tradition and history of a city or region where one has had memories worth telling about.

5. Conclusion

Political theory must be critical in regards to political realities in order to improve the human condition. As Maruyama recognizes, realities cannot be criticized by other realities, it is ideas that can criticize political realities. The most important function of political

28) Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 182 (emphasis by Arendt).

29) See Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: Lebensgeschichte einer deutschen Jüdin aus der Romantik*, München: Piper & Co. Verlag, 1959, S. 26–47; “Reflections on Little Rock,” *Dissent*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Winter 1959), p. 51.

theory is to set up ideas that would be valid for all humankind.

Equality and freedom are ideas introduced by great thinkers in modern times. The concepts of the political, politics, and power are crucial in contemporary political theory. In contrast to Carl Schmidt, Arendt's concept of politics is not antagonistic but collaborative. Her thought places emphasis on ordinary people and bringing politics back to them. She shares in common with Maruyama the view of the political in the places where people live.

Traditional political theory focuses on the problem of how to create a stable and safe order on earth. But political theory, which is represented by such great thinkers as Plato, Hegel, and Marx, has somehow had an impact on the emergence of totalitarianism or dictatorship.³⁰⁾ They wished to establish a perfect society without inconsistency, aiming at a world of the individual in harmony with the whole; however, history proved that while trying to make heaven on earth, believers of such ideologies as racism or communism have made hell on earth. This is why in the 20th century political theory abandoned the project of creating a perfect society and instead sought a better world and a better society, as did Arendt and Maruyama. Contemporary political theorists have continued dialogue with the past great thinkers and tried to recover hidden meanings of occurrences in the past. Political theory has to place its aims on thinking of how to make this world better and more peaceful than it is now.

Citizen-based politics is one of the most distinctive concerns of contemporary political theory. Modern political theory thinks much of the theory of sovereignty, but contemporary political theory focuses rather on the concept of power. In this vein, contrary to the ordinary understanding of power, namely the vertical concept of power, Arendt understood power as a horizontal force providing the potential for people to act in concert among equals. This can be called "people power", which can influence political decisions at the state level and start a new movement to influence the present conditions of the world. One is not forced to participate in politics, but those who are more concerned about "the state of the world" than about private affairs will voluntarily take part in public affairs. Public action must be voluntary and be regarded as an integral part of everyday life for everyone.

Special attention must be given to the positive meaning of political concepts in ordinary language. It is also necessary to create new words to clarify new experiences. Examples of such words are "people power," which comes from Arendt's concept of power, and "the sense of others," which Maruyama has given a special meaning, that is, to think and feel in the position of others. Maruyama emphasized this concept because, although it seemed to him that the Japanese people lack it, it is crucially important for the

30) See Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 1: *The Spell of Plato*, vol. 2: *The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath*, Fifth edition (revised), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966 [1945].

democratic way of life. As well as we need to bring politics back to people, we must take back and develop the authentic meanings of political concepts. This is one of the tasks of political theory and the reason why we must regard political theory as the most important field of academic study for building a better world.

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