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Maruyama Masao Lecture
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Maruyama and History

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Andrew Barshay: Welcome, everybody, to Act 2 of the Maruyama Lecture and Seminar for this year. I wouldn't try to recap the lecture from last night. I don't think that's possible. And since the speaker is with us, perhaps it's also not necessary. But one of the formulations did strike me, about good history and it had three elements. I think everything good has three elements. And I think the three elements were big questions, deep empiricism, and fire in the belly, and I thought that's a pretty good combination, and I think it does describe our speaker. In line with the Maruyama Lecture series, what we have as our task for today is to talk about 'Maruyama and History.' And as with the lecture yesterday, I don't quite know what we're going to hear, but Carol just showed me her notes that she has been keeping for six weeks to be ready for this. She will speak for 45 minutes, and then we'll have a discussion.



Carol Cluck: This is actually related to last night, in a sense, because it's about the work of history. Last night I was talking about a historical conjuncture and the way history works on people in a positive way. And today I'll be talking about the way history worked on Maruyama and the way Maruyama worked on it, or what he himself called addressing oneself to history. He was a man haunted by history, and he was tied tightly to his times and his times were not a happy conjuncture. So it's a little bit different [in his case], the nature of the way history is working.

I actually started this, because I wanted to find out about the swelling criticism and critiques of Maruyama since his death on August 15th, of all days, 1996, the same day his mother died, by the way. Because it's just huge. I mean, everybody's after him. And I wanted to read. And as soon as I started to read, I realized this isn't going to work. These people are so bounded by history, I've got to figure where the boundedness of history is throughout Maruyama's life. So I just started from the beginning with the juvenilia and all of this stuff, and I read so much, I'm completely muddled. I think that's the result of this. But it was an incredible experience. It's like "Being John Malkovich." I feel like I've been inside his head.

And so it kind of turned into a meditation on Maruyama, unfinished, but also a kind of encounter with historicity, which Paul Ricoeur says is a condition of being historical. It's where man presents himself as history. Now, this is almost exactly what Maruyama wrote at one point in one of those wonderful notebooks they discovered in his study after he died, the most incredible book, *Jikonai taiwa*. He wrote about historical time. He said there's historical time and there's natural time. And historical time is time to which we give meaning. Natural time just happens mechanically. He says the Japanese are too hung-up on natural time. We give meaning from the vantage point of the present. That's historicity. That's historical. Normal time otherwise has no meaning.

So it's a question of relating the meaning that we give or that Maruyama gave to history from the present, but also, we have to figure out what his present was. So that's why it's about historicity. And I divided it into four, not really separate, but I'm trying to separate them, and I'll tell you why. Maruyama and history in four senses. One, Maruyama and the history he *lived*, that is to say, the history he addressed himself to, which is in the present. That's how he creates the meaning of the past. Secondly Maruyama and the history he *wrote*. This is giving meaning to the past, the second part of the definition. Third, *Maruyama and the history of the critiques of Maruyama*. All of these criticisms across those many decades have their own locatedness in time. That's of course what drove me back from the 90's, because it was all so 90's, this criticism. And fourth, and here's the thing that I realized with a bang this time, Maruyama and the *self-history he created and recreated*. I read lots and lots of critiques of Maruyama, obviously, celebratory and denunciatory. And I realized that when you write about Maruyama, you have to be careful not to look at what he later said he was doing, or what he later actually wrote and published about what he was doing if you're trying to separate historicity. And it's very hard, because he said so much, so often, and in print, about this, that you can see, in the books written, how people quote from Maruyama in 1968 about

something he wrote in '45. I tried to separate that. I didn't quite succeed, but I tried very hard, because I realized something was going on here that was a kind of time trickster between history and memory, if you like.

There's a fifth history I'm not going to talk about, but—full disclosure—I have a very long history with Maruyama myself. I realize that I had 25 years of history and a file drawer of Maruyama I'd never looked at, that I never realized that I had. I'm trying to keep that separate, too.

So let me just go through very quickly, briefly, and not give you all the stuff I wrote down, because it's much too much, just the highlights of those four kind of histories.



The first one, Maruyama and the history he lived, the one he addressed himself to, is the most important, clearly, even from his definition of historical time. And it's also the most important because I want to argue that Maruyama was one of those true contemporaries—it's a distinction made in the beginning of the 20th century in England—a true contemporary, which means he addressed himself to his time incessantly and obsessively. He was so of his time, to a degree that many people who do this kind of thinking are not. I mean, he is saturated with history, I'm persuaded. So this is about his problematic, I suppose you could say, but very, very close to the wick of history that he lived.

First, fascism. Fascism is the Leitmotif, there's no question about it. He was a Wagnerian nut in the last third of his life, and not surprisingly his life had one of those Leitmotifs. And I'm sure it's an experience of fascism. I used to think it was the war. It's not the war. It's not the war. It's really fascism, from the early thirties on, and what fascism meant to Maruyama was mental unfreedom. It meant the interference of the state inside people's heads. That's why he talks about the spiritual system. It's very much like Isaiah Berlin's kind of "freedom from," the freedom he was talking about was freedom from the state in your head with its boots on. And so when he talks about psychology, which he always does, and he talks about interiority, and he talks about subjectivity, and he talks about individual choice and individual action, that's all about what he didn't, the feeling that he didn't, have. And this starts in the very first essay, the 1936 essay that he won a prize for when he was an undergraduate, which is about the concept of the state in political science. The words are already there: a civil society/individualist view of the state. And it's very much the individual in that early essay that is mediating with

the state. It's all there, and it comes out of that unfreedom that he, of course, was already in the middle of.

And that's before Fukuzawa. Now, Fukuzawa became a sort of intellectual *doppelgänger* for Maruyama. We turn to him over and over again. He started reading him in '38, and he had both found himself and Fukuzawa, because Fukuzawa said all the right things about individual action and about the need for individual action and choice every day. The nation depended on that. And then he projected himself on Fukuzawa, I mean, he found himself there and then he projected himself on that.

So that's what it meant, fascism. It also meant passivity, or what he called passive conformity. This is why he talks about the collapse of distance between the individual and the state. The emperor system dominated by usurping value—these are his kind of terms. Fascism from above, the failure to resist, and of course intellectuals, because it's his failure to resist he's talking about, and he gets hung up on intellectuals very early on and never leaves them. It's intellectuals like himself, and you can see the language over time when he talks about things happening *nantonaku*, all the time he says that. Things just somehow happened. The War somehow happened. Things somehow happen. And this "somehow happening" is a critique of himself. And when he writes in the late 50's about the difference between doing and being, *suru* and *de aru*, that's all about not having done and just having been, you see.

So this passivity is really there. He talks about true intellectuals, and all those things, that are very suspect, actually. That's all about himself. The need for never-ending choice and action. Later on he talked about a continuous revolution, never stops. continuous democracy. If you don't do it, make it every day, it's not real.

Fascism was about unreason, and he talks about logic as well as psychology all the time. He talks about rationality—*rin*, *rinensei*—the absence of reason in the emperor system was what he was talking about. Yes, it sounds Hegelian, but the reason Hegel spoke to him was because it was his irrationality that he felt. And when he searches for universals, about wanting to, quote, 'leap above the constraints of history and find a voice that speaks to us for all time,' that's the need to transcend what he felt was the unreason of his time. And that's why he talked a lot about Fukuzawa's *wakudeki* in this funny term, which means fetishism or irrational attachment. That was the enemy, right? And fascism also meant Japan and its failure. The state had prevailed in Fukuzawa-type terms over the nation. In other words, the *kokka* over the *kokumin*. And the national people did not have their autonomy. *Kokumin*, *shutai*, all this stuff. And, of course, it's a political failure, and

the absence of politics, of modern politics, in this state of facism, the *gleichschaltung* of the war years, the total mobilization in the war years.

That's what it is, and that is the Leitmotif. I don't see that going away. I see him continuing to work that through. It doesn't mean that he didn't change his ideas or his topics or his interpretations. But the power of this particular historicity, that mental psychological unfreedom of facism is fundamental. And it was an experience, it wasn't a thought. He's very clear on that. 'I felt,' I mean, he felt it, you know.

All right, that's the first one, the longest. Second one, the post-War moment. Now, this is the so-called rupture of August 15th. I'm not going to go into it all, but actually he backdated that. He didn't really feel the rupture on August 15th. It's a very interesting story...I looked very carefully at everything from the time of surrender, when he was still in Hiroshima in the army, and what he did in the fall and what he wrote. But basically the story, the rupture of August 15th is backdated because the thing that struck him was when the CHQ-drafted constitution was made public in March 1946. And he wrote the essay that made him famous, 'The Logic and Psychology of Ultrationalism' in two weeks, from the day it was made public until the 22nd of March; it was published in May in *Sekai*. And he hadn't really made any great rupture, he hadn't. But when it looked like the constitution wasn't going to be a people's constitution, people making those decisions and making those daily actions, he said it had to be a *kokumin kenpo*. It had to be a people's constitution. And that's what impelled him.

Now, he didn't write that out of thin air. He'd been lecturing in Hiroshima to the troops after the surrender, about Japanese political history since 1931. Can you imagine? He was asked to by his superior. So it's not that it was new, but he backdated the rupture of August 15th and that became the post-War moment. And in so doing, he joined the historicity of all of Japan, then, which was based on the myth of a break on August 15th, 1945. He was completely of his time. There was no critical distance here from what I call the heroic narrative of the post-War period.

And during the post-War moment, this is when modernity becomes really the issue. You notice I didn't use the word so much when I talked about fascism, but now this is a crisis of the modern. It's the same thing in Europe. In Japan it was an opportunity to get modernity right. That's why I include him as a late modern. There were late moderns all over Europe. And he became a pathologist of the past. And he did so, based on that Leitmotif, with an emphasis on ideas and ideology, and psychology. So it's the thesis, it's the thought of the emperor system, it's how we got trapped mentally, psychologically, that interests him, not the institutions. And that's what creates the passivity. So he's looking for subjectivity, for a *jijū ishiki*, a