

In twisted and trained
into the shape of



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Yukio Mishima's *The Sound of Waves*, the author expresses the representation and ideology that there must be balance in one's life to achieve harmony and prosperity, when the balance is not present chaos ensues through the portrayal of nature and its powerful forces. Mishima accomplishes this using juxtapositions of characters, locations, and events which are met through metaphors and symbolism to represent the theme of balance between the traditional views of the island and the intellectual knowledge of the outside world. Mishima expresses the importance of tradition by demonstrating the cultural aspects and purity that is not encumbered by modern technology or weight down by human sins and depravity. Which sheds light onto the author's approach to the idea that modernism not only the representation of the unknown, but loses compassion and creates tension between for those around them. Through such literary devices, Mishima introduces the message of the importance of balance in one's life in pursuance of

happiness. Mishima demonstrates the idea of balance through the juxtapositions of Yashiro Shrine to the lighthouse- the shrine, representing tradition and the lighthouse representing modernism. The Shrine is a metaphor for comfort and spiritual reflection. The relationship with the villagers is that the Shrine is based on the Shinto religion, the "torii pines growing here, their branches twisted and trained into the shape of a torii," (Mishima 19) and stone statues guard it. Yashiro Shrine is a lovely and scenic site on the island that Mishima describes as "an island of fishermen and it is natural that the inhabitants should be devout worshippers of this god. They are forever praying for calm seas, and the very first thing they do upon being rescued from some peril of the sea is to making a votive offering

at the sea-god's shrine." (Mishima 29) Which conveys the villagers have a strong spiritual connection that has been embedded into their tradition. Moreover, the true divine force in the novel seems to be the island itself. The island displays its might and its benevolence through "crashing of the waves on the beach." Not only the island represents traditionalism but meaningful place in regards to the lovers. Which portrays a spiritual connection that creates traditionalism in the island of Uta-jima. The lighthouse is a metaphor and a symbol of modernism which is portrayed as a guide for the ships and sailors to conduct trade that makes the lighthouse "a shining column of fog, was sweeping from right to left across the top of the watch house gable on the sign of the facing sea." (Mishima 180) Not only is the lighthouse a symbol of modernism but a symbol of the islands connection to the outside world. Since Uta-jima is a very isolated island from the outside world the sea is the only connection to the mainland and the wider world. "The sea it only brings the good and right things that the island needs." (Mishima 53) Therefore, creates a representation of the balance between traditionalism and modernism on the island that creates prosperity. Mishima then uses the island to represent purity between the lovers, Shinji and Hatsue. Which demonstrates the island's purity is also important as a personal characteristic that the two main characters, Shinji and Hatsue, possess which creates their innocent and childish demeanor. Mishima continues to create the message of the importance of balance by conveying the dangers of an imbalance between tradition and modernism. Too much tradition creates ignorance and chaos that is made by the intellectual encounters on the island. Characters that juxtapose those of Shinji's and Hatsue's characteristics are those of Chiyoko and Yasuo. For <https://assignbuster.com/in-twisted-and-trained-into-the-shape-of/>

instance, Chiyoko, the lighthouse keeper's daughter is frustrated with the dullness and backwardness of the island and desires to return to a place with nature that is more subordinate and intellectual life more valued. When Chiyoko sees Shinji " descending the storm-swept air- with Hatsue snuggled against him." As " to heed Chiyoko's unhappiness" and jealously for Hatsue, she creates rumors on the island that separate the lovers from each other and creates more separation from the social classes.

Mishima introduces the extremes of modernism is the evils that cause a separation between self-comfort and compassion for others. Which is a representation of Yasuo's imbalance of modernism that consumes his humanity and self-control. That has been devoured by the sinful actions of the mainland and the evil intents that have been ensued into his mind. " In an instant, taking advantage of her trustfulness, caught her by the right wrist" (Mishima 91). Nature, a symbol of comfort and tradition and a protector of the lovers. " The hornet had stung him again...angered...he tried wildly to catch the hornet" (Mishima 92). The hornet is a symbol of tradition when it is uncomfortable with the imbalance of modernism and causes the urges to fight back due to its harm on nature and morality.

The imbalance of the extremes of rationalism can cause harmful effects as well. The lack of technological advancements causes characters to be ignorant and unaccepting of change. The mother's emotions when Hiroshi leaves for the school excursion is afraid of her son when encountering the unknown of the outside world as " She began weeping, thinking of the day when both her sons would finally leave her for good and take to the sea." Other thoughts on the mother's excursion of the school are her ideals that she " felt their children were embarking on great

death-defying adventures." Also, the children's reaction to the reality of the world as the children have been exposed to the dangers and the evils of modernism. As " once they had seen reality, once they novelty of astonishment was gone, they perceived clearly how useless it had been for them to try to imagine such things, so much so that at the end of long lives spent on the island they would no longer even so much remember the existence of such things as streetcars clanging back and forth along the streets of the city."

Mishima addresses the importance of the island of Uta-jima and the mainland being symbols of tradition and modernism. The island is isolated and lack of technological advancements causes characters to be closer to nature especially the ocean. The ocean can be characterized as the life support for Uta-jima. It is what people rely on to survive and prosper. It provides the villagers the needs to survive. Such as, octopus, fish, and abalone. It is also seen as a symbol of peace between the themes of tradition and modernism. " the sound of waves, strong, but coming regularly and peacefully, as though the sea were breathing in healthy slumber."

(Mishima 177). Nature is symbolized as an over watcher of the two ideals as well. Nature is always prominent throughout the novel as she constantly reveals herself in the crashing waves, the heaving seas, and the severe storms. Nature displays herself mostly when the imbalance is at its most prominent. When the lovers are together and the balance is restored on the island, the oceans are peaceful as " the vast ocean stretched away from the prow, where he was standing...and without realizing it he felt peace again." (Mishima 13)

Therefore, Mishima addresses the importance of a balance between the ideals of tradition and modernism to gain happiness and prosperity through his symbolism and metaphors that is portrayed

throughout the novel, nature plays a key role in the balance between the two ideas as well. Nature is an over seer and keeps the balance between them equal.