

sun and steel yukio mishima

Sun and Steel Yukio Mishima is a compelling exploration of the Japanese author's philosophical reflections, personal discipline, and aesthetic ideals. As one of Mishima's most significant works, it delves into themes of body, mind, and the pursuit of perfection through the lens of martial arts, physical training, and existential contemplation. This book provides insight into Mishima's complex worldview, blending Eastern traditions with Western influences, and ultimately offers a profound commentary on the nature of strength, beauty, and mortality. In this article, we will explore the core themes of *Sun and Steel*, Mishima's life philosophy, and its enduring influence on literature and thought.

Understanding Sun and Steel: An Overview

What is Sun and Steel?

Sun and Steel (originally titled *Hi no Tetsu* in Japanese) is a semi-autobiographical work published in 1968. It is part philosophical treatise, part autobiographical memoir, and part meditation on physical discipline. Mishima combines personal anecdotes with broader reflections on the role of the body and spirit in achieving a meaningful life. The book is structured around two central themes: the spiritual (Sun) and the physical (Steel), symbolizing the harmony between inner enlightenment and outer strength.

The Significance of the Title

The title *Sun and Steel* encapsulates Mishima's belief in the complementary relationship between the spiritual sun—a metaphor for vitality, grace, and enlightenment—and steel—a symbol of resilience, discipline, and corporeal strength. Mishima argues that true mastery involves balancing these elements, cultivating both inner spirit and physical prowess.

Mishima's Personal Philosophy and Its Foundations

Discipline and Self-Control

- **Physical Training as a Path to Inner Strength:** Mishima emphasizes rigorous physical exercise, particularly martial arts like kendo and bodybuilding, as essential for developing discipline.
- **Self-Restraint and Spiritual Growth:** Beyond physicality, Mishima believes that self-control is vital for spiritual development and achieving personal excellence.
- **Connection Between Body and Mind:** The unity of body and mind is central to Mishima's philosophy, echoing traditional Japanese values and Western existentialism.

The Role of Aesthetics and Beauty

- **Beauty as a Reflection of Inner Virtue:** Mishima sees physical beauty and aesthetic discipline as manifestations of moral integrity.
- **Art and Life Intertwined:** His admiration for classical Japanese and Western art underscores his desire for harmony between artistic expression and personal discipline.

Existential Reflection and Mortality

- **Acceptance of Death:** Mishima contemplates mortality as an inevitable aspect of life, urging individuals to confront and accept death with courage.
- **Living Authentically:** The embrace of mortality fuels Mishima's quest for authenticity, urging a life dedicated to noble ideals and personal integrity.

The Influence of Martial Arts and Physical Cultivation

Martial Arts as a Spiritual Practice

Mishima's engagement with martial arts, especially kendo, is not solely about combat but serves as a method of self-improvement and spiritual discipline. He believed that mastering the sword was akin to mastering oneself, fostering virtues such as humility, perseverance, and resilience.

Bodybuilding and Physical Training

Mishima was a dedicated bodybuilder, advocating for physical cultivation as a means of achieving personal excellence. His rigorous training routines reflected his commitment to discipline and aesthetic ideals. He viewed physical strength as a vital component in living a full and meaningful life.

Impact on Modern Fitness and Martial Arts

- **Inspiration for Personal Discipline:** Mishima's emphasis on physical training continues to influence contemporary fitness philosophies emphasizing discipline and resilience.
- **Martial Arts Philosophy:** His integration of martial arts into a broader philosophical framework

has inspired many practitioners and thinkers.

Literary Significance and Critical Reception

The Role of Sun and Steel in Mishima's Literary Career

Sun and Steel is often regarded as a culmination of Mishima's philosophical journey, reflecting his obsession with aesthetics, strength, and mortality. It complements his literary works, which frequently explore themes of beauty, death, and the samurai ethos.

Critical Perspectives

- **Appreciation for Its Depth:** Critics admire Mishima's introspective style and the way he intertwines personal experience with philosophical inquiry.
- **Controversies and Interpretations:** Some interpret Mishima's emphasis on physicality as a form of nationalism or even as a precursor to his dramatic final act, the ritual suicide (seppuku).

Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

Mishima's Influence on Japanese Culture

- **Revival of Traditional Values:** Mishima's work sparked renewed interest in Bushido, the samurai code, and traditional Japanese aesthetics.
- **Impact on Literature and Philosophy:** Many modern writers and thinkers draw inspiration from Mishima's synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas.

Modern Interpretations of Sun and Steel

Today, *Sun and Steel* remains a seminal work for those interested in personal discipline, existential philosophy, and the interplay between body and spirit. Its teachings resonate with contemporary audiences seeking authenticity and resilience in an increasingly complex world.

Conclusion: The Enduring Power of Sun and Steel

Sun and Steel Yukio Mishima offers a profound meditation on the human condition, emphasizing the importance of balancing inner enlightenment with outer strength. Mishima's dedication to discipline, beauty, and authenticity continues to inspire readers worldwide, challenging us to confront our mortality and strive for excellence. Whether viewed as a philosophical manifesto, a personal memoir, or a call to action, *Sun and Steel* remains a vital work that invites reflection on how we can live with courage, integrity, and grace.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the significance of Yukio Mishima's essay 'Sun and Steel' in understanding his philosophy?

'Sun and Steel' is Mishima's autobiographical work that explores the dichotomy between physicality and spirituality, emphasizing the importance of physical strength and disciplined aesthetics as a path to authentic existence.

How does 'Sun and Steel' reflect Yukio Mishima's views on modern Japanese society?

In 'Sun and Steel,' Mishima criticizes modern Japan's decline in physical vigor and traditional values, advocating for a return to disciplined martial arts and aesthetic ideals to restore cultural identity.

What are the main themes explored in 'Sun and Steel' by Yukio Mishima?

The main themes include the relationship between the physical body and the spiritual soul, the importance of discipline, the critique of modern materialism, and the pursuit of an authentic, courageous life.

How did Yukio Mishima's personal life influence the ideas presented in 'Sun and Steel'?

Mishima's intense dedication to martial arts, his fascination with traditional Japanese aesthetics, and his complex identity as a writer and nationalist deeply shaped the themes of physical discipline and cultural authenticity in 'Sun and Steel'.

Why is 'Sun and Steel' considered a controversial work among literary and philosophical circles?

Because it advocates for physical strength, traditional values, and even touches on militant nationalism, which has led to debates about Mishima's political views and the implications of his philosophy.

How does 'Sun and Steel' compare to Mishima's other works in terms of themes and philosophy?

'Sun and Steel' complements Mishima's literary oeuvre by providing a personal philosophical perspective, emphasizing the physical and aesthetic aspects of life, which align with themes in his novels and plays but are expressed through autobiographical reflection.

What lessons can readers today draw from Yukio Mishima's 'Sun and Steel'?

Readers can reflect on the importance of physical discipline, cultural identity, and authentic self-expression, while also critically examining the tensions between tradition and modernity in contemporary society.

Additional Resources

Sun and Steel Yukio Mishima: An Investigative Analysis

Yukio Mishima, one of Japan's most influential and controversial authors of the 20th century, remains a towering figure in both literary and cultural circles. His complex persona, blending intense aesthetic sensibilities with radical political ideologies, has sparked ongoing debate and scholarly interest. Among his works, *Sun and Steel* stands out as a pivotal autobiographical manifesto that delves into his philosophies on body, spirit, and identity. This investigative article aims to explore the depths of *Sun and Steel*, examining its themes, historical context, philosophical underpinnings, and its influence on Mishima's life and legacy.

Introduction to Yukio Mishima and Sun and Steel

Yukio Mishima (1925–1970) was a prolific writer, playwright, and nationalist whose works often grappled with the tension between tradition and modernity in Japan. His literary output includes novels, short stories, essays, and plays—each reflecting his fascination with physical beauty, mortality, and the samurai ethos.

Published in 1968, *Sun and Steel* (originally *Hi no Tetsu*) is the fourth volume in Mishima's autobiographical trilogy, following *Confessions of a Mask* and *Forbidden Colors*. Unlike his fictional works, *Sun and Steel* is a raw, unflinching self-examination that combines philosophical discourse with detailed accounts of his physical training and martial arts practice.

Historical and Cultural Context

To understand *Sun and Steel*, it is essential to situate it within the socio-political landscape of Japan in the 1960s. Post-World War II Japan was experiencing rapid modernization, Westernization, and economic growth, often at the expense of traditional cultural values. Mishima's response to these changes was complex; he was both fascinated and repelled by modernity.

During this period, Mishima's political activism intensified, culminating in his dramatic attempt to incite a nationalist uprising in 1970, which ended with his suicide. *Sun and Steel* reflects his philosophical stance that physical strength and aesthetic discipline are vital for spiritual fulfillment and national identity—views that underpin his radical political pursuits.

Core Themes and Philosophical Underpinnings

1. The Body as a Manifestation of the Spirit

One of the central themes of *Sun and Steel* is the inseparable relationship between the physical body and the spiritual self. Mishima posits that true beauty and authenticity are expressed through physical discipline and strength. He advocates for a harmonious integration of mind and body, emphasizing that physical training is a form of spiritual cultivation.

Key ideas include:

- The importance of rigorous physical exercise, such as kendo, bodybuilding, and martial arts.
- The belief that physical beauty is a reflection of inner strength and moral integrity.
- The notion that neglecting the body leads to spiritual decay.

2. Aestheticism and the Cultivation of the Self

Mishima's aesthetic sensibility permeates *Sun and Steel*, emphasizing the cultivation of personal beauty and discipline as a form of artistic expression. He advocates for the pursuit of excellence in physical form as an extension of artistic endeavor, aligning with traditional Japanese ideals of *mono no aware* (an awareness of the impermanence of things).

He writes:

> "The body is the vessel of the spirit, and its care and discipline are the duties of the individual seeking self-perfection."

3. National Identity and the Samurai Ethos

A recurring motif in Mishima's philosophy is the idealization of the samurai code—*bushido*—as a

guiding principle for personal and national conduct. Sun and Steel reflects his longing for a return to traditional values that emphasize honor, duty, and sacrifice.

He views physical strength and martial discipline as vital components of a renewed Japanese identity, especially in the face of Western influence and modernization.

Structure and Content of Sun and Steel

The book is divided into two main parts—Sun and Steel—each representing different facets of Mishima's philosophy.

The Sun: The Spirit and Aesthetics

This section explores Mishima's fascination with the spiritual aspects of life, emphasizing the importance of aesthetics, cultural heritage, and inner strength. It discusses his views on beauty, art, and the importance of cultivating the soul through discipline and devotion.

The Steel: The Body and Physical Training

Here, Mishima provides detailed accounts of his physical regimen, including his practice of kendo, weightlifting, and bodybuilding. He describes his training routines, diet, and mental preparations, illustrating his belief that physical mastery is essential for spiritual vitality.

He writes:

> "The body must be sculpted with the same care as a work of art; only then can the spirit truly shine."

Critical Examination of Mishima's Philosophies

While Mishima's ideas in Sun and Steel have inspired many, they have also attracted critique and skepticism.

Strength and Morality

Some critics argue that Mishima's emphasis on physical strength borders on authoritarianism or elitism, potentially neglecting the importance of compassion and social responsibility. His obsession with aesthetics and discipline can be viewed as an exclusive pursuit, disconnected from the realities

of societal inequality.

Nationalism and Political Extremism

Mishima's romanticization of the samurai ethos and his political activism are controversial. His advocacy for a return to traditional values and his participation in a failed coup attempt in 1970 have led some to interpret his philosophies as veering toward radical nationalism or even fascism.

Authenticity and Self-Identity

Some scholars question the authenticity of Mishima's self-portrait in *Sun and Steel*, suggesting that his obsession with physical perfection may have been a form of performative identity, a way to reconcile internal conflicts or societal pressures.

Legacy and Influence

Despite controversies, Mishima's *Sun and Steel* remains influential in both literary and martial arts communities. Its emphasis on discipline, aestheticism, and the integration of body and spirit continue to inspire athletes, artists, and thinkers.

His life and works have also sparked ongoing debates about the relationship between nationalism, personal identity, and cultural tradition in modern Japan.

Conclusion: An Enduring Reflection on Humanity's Duality

Yukio Mishima's *Sun and Steel* offers a compelling, if provocative, meditation on the human condition—highlighting the importance of physicality as a foundation for spiritual and aesthetic pursuits. While its philosophies are rooted in Mishima's personal convictions and cultural ideals, they resonate with universal themes of discipline, self-awareness, and the eternal search for authenticity.

As a piece of autobiographical philosophy, *Sun and Steel* challenges readers to consider the role of the body in shaping identity and morality. Its legacy persists as both an inspiring call to self-perfection and a cautionary tale about the dangers of extremism.

In examining Mishima's life and writings, one is reminded that the pursuit of harmony between sun and steel—spirit and body—is a lifelong journey, fraught with contradictions but rich with meaning. Whether one agrees with his views or not, Mishima's *Sun and Steel* remains a powerful testament to

the complex interplay of physical discipline and cultural ideology that continues to influence modern thought.

Sun And Steel Yukio Mishima

sun and steel yukio mishima: Sun and Steel Yukio Mishima, 1990-11 Part autobiography and part reflections on his personal search for identity, *Sun and Steel* provides a fascinating insight into the complex mind of this spectacularly gifted author. In it Mishima traces his tortuous path from a sensitive, introverted childhood to creative maturity as acclaimed novelist, playwright and self-proclaimed conscience of postwar Japan. A powerful work of art in itself, *Sun and Steel* also provides a key to understanding his other works.

sun and steel yukio mishima: Sun & Steel Yukio Mishima, 1980 A meditation on why a modern Japanese writer rejected the veracity of the word for the spiritual discipline of physical action, culminating in the gesture at the Self-Defense Force Headquarters in November 1970

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sun and steel yukio mishima: The Life and Death of Yukio Mishima Henry Scott Stokes, 2000-08-08 This incisive biography begins with the spectacularly tragic last day of the militant Japanese novelist, perhaps best known for his monumental four-book masterpiece *The Sea of Fertility*.

sun and steel yukio mishima: After Lacan Willy Apollon, Danielle Bergeron, Lucie Cantin, 2012-02-01 *After Lacan* combines abundant case material with graceful yet sophisticated theoretical exposition in order to explore the clinical practice of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Focusing on the groundbreaking clinical treatment of psychosis that Gifric (Groupe Interdisciplinaire Freudien de Recherches et d'Interventions Cliniques et Culturelles) has pioneered in Quebec, the authors discuss how Lacanians theorize psychosis and how Gifric has come to treat it analytically. Chapters are devoted to the general concepts and key terms that constitute the touchstones of the early phase of analytic treatment, elaborating their interrelations and their clinical relevance. The second phase of analytic treatment is also discussed, introducing a new set of terms to understand transference and the ethical act of analysis in the subject's assumption of the Other's lack. The concluding chapters

broaden discussion to include the key psychic structures that describe the organization of subjectivity and thereby dictate the terms of analysis: not just psychosis, but also perversion and obsessional and hysterical neurosis.

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sun and steel yukio mishima: Vanguard Performance Beyond Left and Right Kimberly Jannarone, 2015-11-06 Vanguard Performance Beyond Left and Right challenges assumptions regarding "radical" and "experimental" performance that have long dominated thinking about the avant-garde. The book brings to light vanguard performances rarely discussed: those that support totalitarian regimes, promote conservative values, or have been effectively snapped up by right-wing regimes the performances intended to oppose. In so doing, the volume explores a central paradox: how innovative performances that challenge oppressive power structures can also be deployed in deliberate, passionate support of oppressive power. Essays by leading international scholars pose engaging questions about the historical avant-garde, vanguard acts, and the complex role of artistic innovation and live performance in global politics. Focusing on performances that work against progressive and democratic ideas (including scripted drama, staged suicide, choral dance, terrorism, rallies, and espionage), the book demonstrates how many compelling performance ideals—unification, exaltation, immersion—are, in themselves, neither moral nor immoral; they are only emotional and aesthetic urges that can be powerfully channeled into a variety of social and political outlets.

sun and steel yukio mishima: Gay Men's Literature in the Twentieth Century Mark Lilly, 1993-11 In gay men's writing, tenderness lies side by side with rage; existential rejection of convention rubs shoulders with sexual hedonism. Beginning with Wilde's and Byron's existentialist outlaw, the theme of social rebellion, and the fight against conformity, form a common link among the literary works of the twentieth century. But mainstream academic criticism has shown itself for the most part incapable of engaging gay work without distorting or ignoring its most central features.

sun and steel yukio mishima: A Philosophy of Autobiography Aakash Singh Rathore, 2018-10-09 This book offers intimate readings of a diverse range of global autobiographical literature with an emphasis on the (re)presentation of the physical body. The twelve texts discussed here include philosophical autobiography (Nietzsche), autobiographies of self-experimentation (Gandhi, Mishima, Warhol), literary autobiography (Hemingway, Das) as well as other genres of autobiography, including the graphic novel (Spiegelman, Satrapi), as also documentations of tragedy and injustice and subsequent spiritual overcoming (Ambedkar, Pawar, Angelou, Wiesel). In exploring different literary forms and orientations of the autobiographies, the work remains constantly attuned to the physical body, a focus generally absent from literary criticism and philosophy or study of leading historical personages, with the exception of patches within phenomenological philosophy and feminism. The book delves into how the authors treated here deal with the flesh through their autobiographical writing and in what way they embody the essential relationship between flesh, spirit and word. It analyses some seminal texts such as *Ecce Homo*, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, *Waiting for a Visa*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *A Moveable Feast*, *Night*, *Baluta*, *My Story*, *Sun and Steel*, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, *MAUS* and *Persepolis*. Lucid, bold and authoritative, this book will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of philosophy, literature, gender studies, political philosophy, media and popular culture, social exclusion, and race and discrimination studies.

sun and steel yukio mishima: Dysfluencies Chris Eagle, 2013-11-07 Dysfluencies is the first comprehensive study of how speech disorders are portrayed in modern literature. Tracing the roots of this interaction between literary practice and speech pathology back to the rise of aphasiology in the 1860s, Dysfluencies examines portrayals of disordered speech by writers like Zola, Proust, Joyce, Melville, and Mishima, as well as contemporary writers like Philip Roth, Gail Jones, and Jonathan Lethem. Dysfluencies thus speaks directly to the growing interest at present, both in popular culture and the Humanities, regarding the status of the Self in relation to speech pathology. The need for this type of study is clear considering the number of prominent writers whose works foreground disorders of speech: Melville, Zola, Kesey, Mishima, Roth, et al. Moreover, thinkers like Freud, Bergson, and Jakobson were similarly concerned with the implications of language breakdown. This volume shows this concern began with the rise of neurology and aphasiology, which challenged spiritual conceptions of language and replaced them with a view of language as a material process rooted in the brain. Dysfluencies traces the history of this interaction between literary practice and speech pathology, arguing that works of literature have responded differently to the issue of language breakdown as the dominant views on the issue have shifted from neurological (circa 1860s to 1920s) to psychological (circa 1920s to 1980s), and back to neurological during the so-called decade of the Brain (the 1990s).

sun and steel yukio mishima: The Thorn in the Chrysanthemum Mamoru Iga, 2024-06-14 Japanese society is frequently held up to the Western world as a model of harmony and efficiency, but the price it pays tends to be overlooked. In a searching analysis that will fascinate students and admirers of Japan as much as it will inform psychologists and suicidologists, Mamoru Iga discusses the precise nature of the "thorn in the chrysanthemum," a thorn that may hurt both the Japanese and the outsider who conducts business with them. The author, who was reared and educated in Japan, is uniquely qualified to interpret the value orientations of a society in which suicide is all too common. He finds that the traits leading to homogeneity and extreme adaptability in that society as a whole are the very traits that can produce painful reactions in the individual. Those traits are described as monism, groupism, authoritarianism, familism, and accommodationism, and together they comprise the Japanese "social character." Because the individual's behavior is based on the images, assumptions, and ideas about the world that make up his or her culture, conformism in the individual is one major manifestation of Japan's social character. In Japan, the need to fill one's socially prescribed role may make it doubly difficult to think independently and creatively and to find solutions for the resulting stress. Suicide notes and other personal documents reveal the painful cost of modern Japan's success story, as the examination of individual suicides is related both to the theoretical framework of Durkheim's types of suicide and to the sociological patterns that characterize suicide in Japan. It is in personal value orientations, however, that Iga finds the common ground between suicide and economic success. American readers will find especially interesting the contrast between value orientations in Japan and in the United States. Nearly the opposite of the Japanese traits described above, American values of rationalism, individualism, competition, and change create their own problems. There is much to be learned from this expert analysis of the problem of suicide in Japan. This title is part of UC Press's Voices Revived program, which commemorates University of California Press's mission to seek out and cultivate the brightest minds and give them voice, reach, and impact. Drawing on a backlist dating to 1893, Voices Revived makes high-quality, peer-reviewed scholarship accessible once again using print-on-demand technology. This title was originally published in 1986.

sun and steel yukio mishima: Black Belt, 1972-10 The oldest and most respected martial arts title in the industry, this popular monthly magazine addresses the needs of martial artists of all levels by providing them with information about every style of self-defense in the world - including techniques and strategies. In addition, Black Belt produces and markets over 75 martial arts-oriented books and videos including many about the works of Bruce Lee, the best-known martial arts figure in the world.

sun and steel yukio mishima: Masterworks of Asian Literature in Comparative Perspective: A

Guide for Teaching Barbara Stoler Miller, 2016-09-16 This is a collection of 46 essays by specialists in Asian literature, who offer a wide range of possibilities for introducing Asian literature to English-speaking students. It is intended to help in promoting multicultural education.

sun and steel yukio mishima: *The Paradox of Suicide and Creativity* M.F. Alvarez, 2020-11-12 If creativity is the highest expression of the life impulse, why do creative individuals who have made lasting contributions to the arts and sciences so often end their lives? M.F. Alvarez addresses this central paradox by exploring the inner lives and works of eleven creative visionaries who succumbed to suicide. Through a series of case studies, Alvarez shows that creativity and suicide are both attempts to authenticate and resolve personal catastrophes that have called into question the most basic conditions of human existence.

sun and steel yukio mishima: *Leiji Matsumoto* Helen McCarthy, Darren-Jon Ashmore, 2021-01-21 Leiji Matsumoto is one of Japan's most influential myth creators. Yet the huge scope of his work, spanning past, present and future in a constantly connecting multiverse, is largely unknown outside Japan. Matsumoto was the major creative force on *Star Blazers*, America's gateway drug for TV anime, and created *Captain Harlock*, a TV phenomenon in Europe. As well as space operas, he made manga on musicians from Bowie to Tchaikovsky, wrote the manga version of American cowboy show *Laramie*, and created dozens of girls' comics. He is a respected manga scholar, an expert on Japanese swords, a frustrated engineer and pilot who still wants to be a spaceman in his eighties. This collection of new essays--the first book on Matsumoto in English--covers his seven decades of comic creation, drawing on contemporary scholarship, artistic practice and fan studies to map Matsumoto's vast universe. The contributors--artists, creators, translators and scholars--mirror the range of his work and experience. From the bildungsroman to the importance of textual analysis for costume and performance, from early days in poverty to honors around the world, this volume offers previously unexplored biographical and bibliographic detail from a life story as thrilling as anything he created.

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sun and steel yukio mishima: *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh* B. Baird, 2012-01-30 Hijikata Tatsumi's explosive 1959 debut *Forbidden Colors* sparked a new genre of performance in Japan - butoh: an art form of contrasts, by turns shocking and serene. Since then, though interest has grown exponentially, and people all over the world are drawn to butoh's ability to enact paradox and contradiction, audiences are less knowledgeable about the contributions and innovations of the founder of butoh. Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh traces the rollicking history of the creation and initial maturation of butoh, and locates Hijikata's performances within the intellectual, cultural, and economic ferment of Japan from the sixties to the eighties.

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sun and steel yukio mishima: *The Ethics of Aesthetics in Japanese Cinema and Literature* Nina Cornyetz, 2006-11-22 This is an innovative, scholarly and original study of the ethics of modern Japanese aesthetics from the 1930s, through the Second World War and into the post-war period. Nina Cornyetz embarks on new and unprecedented readings of some of the most significant literary and film texts of the Japanese canon, for instance works by Kawabata Yasunari, Mishima Yukio, Abe Kôbô and Shinoda Masahiro, all renowned for their texts' aesthetic and philosophic brilliance. Cornyetz uniquely opens up the field in a fresh and controversial way by showing how these authors and filmmakers' concepts of beauty and relation to others were, in fact,

deeply impacted by political and social factors. Probing questions are asked such as: How did Japanese fascism and imperialism ideologically, politically and aesthetically impact on these literary/cinematic giants? How did the emperor as the 'nodal point' for Japanese national identity affect their ethics? What were the repercussions of the virtual collapse of the Marxist movement in the 1960s? What are the similarities and differences between pre-war, wartime and post-war ideals of beauty and those of fascist aesthetics in general? This ground-breaking work is truly interdisciplinary and will appeal to students and scholars of Japanese literature, film, gender, culture, history and even psychoanalytic theory.

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