Topic:

**Yukio Mishima’s Seppuku: Actions Speak Louder Than Words**

Name:

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Date:

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Mishima was a prolific Japanese novelist, essayist, and playwright who was obsessed, both in his life and his art, with what he called "my heart's leaning toward Death and Night and Blood." As a child he was fascinated by pictures of samaurai warriors committing ritual suicide. Mishima committed seppuku, the ritual suicide; it was the only act, he felt that could affirm his personal convictions and that could make him comprehend his own existence. The actions speak louder than words is well illustrated by Mishima through the training of his own army, joining hands with opposition politicians, going against the westernized Japanese a government and committing suicide for the sake of his country. (Meyers, 2010)

Mishima's story embodies the idea of actions speak louder than words.  Shinji believes in honor and the glory of a soldier.  There is little in way of words or language to this end.  Shinji does not take refuge in words or in language to avoid taking action.  He clearly understands, as does his wife, that there is honor in suicide.  In this, Shinji is a character that believes in the power of action and the need to take it in the face of a world where honorable action is sorely lacking.  When Shinji commits suicide, he does not say many words except for those that extol the "Imperial Forces."  Takeyama Shinji's actions are driven by action speaking louder than words.  There is little equivocation or doubt as to what must be done.  Action is seen as a supreme entity, something that is absolute, and something that cannot be denied or deferred.  It is action that is vaulted above all else, something that is not going to be minimized or clouded through words.  It is here where Shinji represents how actions speak louder and more clearly than words, something that Mishima intends to bring out, interestingly enough, through language. (Watts, 2000)

References

Jonathan Watts (2000) ‘Dead writer's knife is in Japan's heart’ *The Guardian Publishers* Japan pp 1

Jeffrey Meyers (2010) ‘Mishima’s Suicide’ *Michigan Quarterly Review* pp 1