

## THE INTERPLAY OF SILENCE AND THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND IN YUKIO MISHIMA'S "THIRST FOR LOVE"

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**Abstract:** Abstract: This research article examines the multifaceted role of silence through Etsuko, the protagonist in Yukio Mishima's *Thirst for Love*, explicitly exploring its connection to the unconscious mind. This research aims to investigate (1) how themes of silence and the unconscious are portrayed in *Thirst for Love*. (2) In what ways do these themes reveal Etsuko's repressed desires and psychological conflicts? (3) How does Mishima use silence as a narrative device to explore the complexities of love, desire, and the position of women in post-World War II Japan? This research aims to contribute a deeper understanding of the interplay between silence, the unconscious, and human relationships in literature through a detailed textual analysis and psychoanalytical theories.

**Keywords:** passion; psychoanalysis theory; repression; silence; unconscious desire

### 1 Introduction

In Yukio Mishima's *Thirst for Love*, the theme of silence is recurrent. Silence and the unconscious mind are intertwined in this story. They allow for a glimpse into the character's psychology. Silence is rarely just the absence of speech. Silence is present in questionable circumstances and dubious relationships to the self and the other. It is always related to silences that remain unsaid in the text of the narrative itself. It is a humus for the unconscious, an emergence zone of representations always cut, dislocated, and overflowing with meaning, sensation, and effects the subject cannot control. A silence analysed from this angle is a speech about unsaid words, and silence is interpreted as a positive speech, as the unveiling of a thought that could not take the shape of a determined thought in words.

Silence can be a metaphor for an unconscious fight. We can even assume that silence means unconscious insight. We think this silence cannot be said, nor can it be explained, because "the individual has never succeeded in withdrawing from the impressions of the external world" and "in all cases, the result always remains in the unconscious." The concept of psychoanalytic theory of the unconscious. According to Freud, pressure and repression show remarkable contradictions, in which a person can experience the life of the soul, the unconscious mind, and everyday behaviour.

Yukio Mishima's profound exploration of human psychology mainly focuses on the themes of silence and the unconscious. The novel is set in post-war Japan and follows the life of Etsuko, a widow living with her father-in-law, Yakichi, and his household. Silence in the book often represents the characters' unspoken tension and hidden desires. Etsuko, the protagonist, is trapped in a web of silence imposed by societal expectations and self-imposed by her internal struggles. This silence becomes a medium through which her unconscious mind manifests repressed emotions and desires. The unconscious plays a significant role in shaping the character's actions and interactions. Etsuko's repressed love for Saburo, the young gardener and her unfulfilled desires emerge through her dreams, fantasies, and silent contemplations. The novel explores the unconscious's dark and often disturbing aspects, highlighting how it drives human behaviour in ways that are not always rational or conscious. This research paper examines how these elements are employed to convey the complexities of Etsuko's inner world and the broader existential themes of the novel.

### 1.1 Background of Yukio Mishima

*Thirst for Love* is a novel published in Japan in 1950 and set right after WWII. It details the story of Etsuko and explores her motivations as someone living in post-war Japan. Etsuko was a character who had tried to take on a different façade in society – one that appealed to the masses – but still held deep desires that poked through. In this way, the novel can be seen as one that looks to veil a psychoanalysis of Etsuko. The depiction of Etsuko represents the conflict that all women face in what is often a society's unrealistic expectations of womanhood. Focusing on motivations, in a psychoanalytic reading, we can see that it is believed that we are all servants of our unconscious mind. There was an influence from psychoanalysis and a particular draw to the idea of socialisation as something that influenced the desires that poke through the façade. It is believed that the character was being repressed, living a life of silence to seal off the unconscious – 'the other scene'. The act of repression, as opposed to enjoying desire, causes dissatisfaction (Mihai 2021).

Yukio Mishima (1925–1971) is arguably one of the most important Japanese novelists of the 20th century, and his works have been the subject of much critical discussion. *Thirst for Love* (1950) is a sociopsychological novel that narrates, in third-person dialogic mode, the story of the married young widow, Etsuko, who is entwined in complex relationships.

The constant theme explored in Yukio Mishima's books is the revelation of consciousness's intricate and profound nature. Through presenting individuals from diverse perspectives, Mishima delves into the manifold possibilities of the inner spirit, inviting readers to introspect and contemplate. He aims to comprehend the desires, contradictions, troubles, and impurities beneath the surface of ethics, rituals, and social conventions. Novels now serve as a disguise for revealing people's hidden secrets and tragic events. The author's deliberate desire is to disregard the diligent and more virtuous essence within his heart. The final objective is to assert itself, to transform into a superior, consequential, or extraordinary state, or to present itself as its true self.

In *Thirst for Love*, Mishima broke the traditional narrative constraints of realism and aimed to reveal the complexity and silent depth of the feminine consciousness through a spirited novel and to present people from different positions to explore various possibilities of inner spirit and to try to understand the desires, contradictions, troubles, and impurities of the inner being behind the ethics, rituals, and social forms.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

Despite the importance of silence and the unconscious in modern literature, a unified theoretical corpus has yet to be developed to understand this literary mode. The main aim of this study is to exhibit the value of silence and the unconscious mind in literature by analysing *Thirst for Love* (1950) by Yukio Mishima. There are three subsidiary objectives to achieve the main aim. The first objective is to establish a theoretical foundation to enhance the understanding of an unconscious and silent mode of writing. Psychoanalysis and theoretical frameworks based on silence will be employed to achieve this objective. The second objective is to conduct an in-depth analysis of *Thirst for Love*, considering the theoretical frameworks. The analysis will exhibit how the novel silences the social and mental machinery of desire and how its dream contributes to forming the narrative of the unconscious. The third objective is to elaborate on the notion of the literary unconscious. This social, historical, and cultural unconsciousness can be traced across narratives without becoming the unconscious of a subject.

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

The term 'archetype' refers to the fundamental elements of the human psyche. These archetypes, such as the shadow and the child, are universal since they are imprinted onto the unconscious of every person, regardless of where they are from or what period they were born in. These symbols can be observed in the myths, religions, and art of different societies, and they also populate individuals' unconscious dreams. Archetypes are especially relevant in literature, as they tend to insert themselves into the culture more broadly, influencing the interpretation of themes and symbols (Roesler, 2021).

The collective unconscious consists of these universal, shared symbols. The unconscious was like a floating sphere, and the deeper and inward you went, the greater the unconscious became. Deeper than the personal unconscious, or the personal memories and experiences we have, grows the collective unconscious. Even though the images in the collective unconscious are universal, they can combine differently in each person. If an image from the collective unconscious is charged with enough psychic energy, it can become complex, influencing how we perceive, think, or make decisions. In literature, exploring the collective unconscious can allow deeper connections between characters, symbols, and the universal human experience. Themes of facing the shadow, achieving individuation, or bowing to a higher power can enliven a text, revealing the darker or lighter side of the human experience.

In the novel, one of the key themes is 'silence,' it is clear that the story is marked by prolonged silence left by the characters without any words. This paper analyses this theme from the point of view of psychoanalysis. First, it explains the use of silence in the novel and its significance, elaborating on how the characters consciously or unconsciously remain silent and how this operates regarding thematic progression in the narrative. Second, the study describes the mechanisms of repression and sublimation to demonstrate how silence in the individual speaking subjects can indicate the operation of their unconscious mind.

The theme of silence functions significantly and becomes an imploded energy; as a result, the unspeakable, unpardonable guilt, intermingled with sensuality, is silenced. People usually try to express their inner emotions or thoughts in words. However, part of the psychic interiority that must be filled in with words cannot be adequately conveyed. The narrator chooses to remain silent at a point where words can hardly be connected to confine the inner feelings and thoughts. Through these silences – unspeakable or deadly silences – in the narrative, the characters' hesitant, dissolving feelings are unravelled toward melodramatic catastrophic ends. These features in the sequences take the strategy of dialogical silence as a function of a sublimation act and give the reader hints to look into the realm of the unconscious. Such silent journeys through the story function psychologically, indicating the termination of the flocks of repressed thoughts released from the interiority.

The novel represents an essential moment in Japan's postwar literature when the country was seeking a new direction for itself as a nation, and the heart was redefined. Mishima is one writer who made this shift through his characters' struggles to redefine life. *Thirst for Love* is a novel in which speech becomes silent.

### 1.4 Scope and Limitations

In psychoanalytic terms, the unconscious indicates everything that humans try not to think about directly, which is always with them as a hidden and unspoken matter. In the novel *Thirst for Love*, the unconscious is reflected in the characters' "yes and no" behaviours and silence. The scope of this study is to investigate and examine this silence. When silence is present in written language, the factors determining verbal texts naturally restrict how silence can be expressed, limiting its investigation. The theory's limitations arise from its inability to accurately measure the level of silence and participation, which it fosters both

outside of awareness and within texts. While the author's selection and the recognition that silence is noticeable only in the presence of something, such as text, address this issue, the extent of its pervasiveness remains unexplored.

The novel *Thirst for Love* by Yukio Mishima explores the role of silence in the pursuit and experience of love, which may be both constructive and destructive. This work provides a clear understanding of how silence is widespread and can be considered concerning social or geopolitical matters, even if they are not the focus. In Mishima's narrative, the main character, Etsuko, frequently experiences quiet moments while attempting to gain insight into her identity, desires, and emotions. Critiques of silence analyse the simultaneous understanding of desires and the emotions linked to them that arise from expressing oneself. These critiques examine how internal desires are either fulfilled or not. Comprehending the extent to which one wants to prompt their reconstruction enables one to engage with them. Similarly, silence can manifest in several forms with a wide range of connotations, the analysis of which can be daunting when considering its purpose.

Silence and the unconscious – two central concepts concerning the narrator's inner monologue—Silence is not a state that contributes to nothingness but signifies a complex and meaningful mental state with self-reflection and self-awareness, reminiscent of Sartre's nothingness, which is consciousness. Sartre's central philosophy, existentialism, is concerned about nothingness, and nothing is the fundamental metaphysical category in Heidegger, so nothingness itself should never be interpreted simplistically. According to Freudian psychoanalysis, the unconscious is concerned with awareness of thoughts, feelings, and memories. It is the primary source of human actions and behaviours that are usually incompatible with the conscious mind's desires. It serves as a basis for forming the self, which cannot be completely aware of its existence and formulation. It employs symbolism and hermeneutic methodologies to investigate human thoughts, emotions, instincts, and superego phenomenology to elucidate the spiritual world.

## 2 Types of Silence

The sound of silence is as varied as the sound of words. Silence in literature is more effective, varied, and potent than the spoken word. On the one hand, silence may lull us into receptivity, but on the other, it may be used to speak much more eloquently than words do. Silence may result from shock, too much dignity, various psychological processes, communication difficulties, powerlessness, loneliness, and social repulsion. It may be total or partial, very small or overwhelming. Literary silence may be absolute, pathetic, ponderous, still, or loud due to its intensity and significance. Silence may be active or passive, voluntary or obligatory. When it is planned and meant to be articulate, it is called a 'strategy of silence'. It often serves the purpose of self-defence and protecting interests. Silence thus appears to be cunning and insincere; it may disguise hidden interests, restrain the reader, and engage them in a silent duel. Thwarting the reader's curiosity, the character testifies to their power. This is an intelligent kind of silence that extends to all involved. Those ambitions, desires, and moments of unofficial, subversive silence speak of inarticulate shame or resignation. The effect of fear and mental and verbal silence opens pretexts that seem inexhaustible in literature.

### 2.1 Postwar Japan and the Silent Generation

The early aftermath of World War II significantly influenced Japan's cultural, emotional, and psychological landscape. Japanese residents faced immense challenges in the aftermath of the war as they grappled with the physical, psychological, and societal devastation caused by the conflict. Although the new constitution and occupation brought about substantial socio-political changes, many of these changes remained incomprehensible to the average Japanese. Additional transformations, such as the rise of mass media and the school

system's growth, were superficial. As a result, throughout the ten years following the war, a cohort of Japanese individuals maintained silence as they endeavoured to comprehend the events that had transpired, the global context in which they found themselves, and, most significantly, their identities.

Numerous traumas and problems resulting from the cessation of war, colonialism, forced westernisation, and national defeat were left unexpressed and disregarded. In other regions of the post-colonial world, comparable processes of confronting silence and inexpressiveness occurred. In Japan, the prevailing silence and refusal to acknowledge the situation was made worse by the ineffectiveness of traditional forms of communication, such as conversation, language, and words. Regrettably, the gloom was further intensified by typical aspects of modernity, such as hurry, economic growth, industrialisation, and westernisation. The entire trajectory of societal advancement was in opposition to reconciling with the devastation, disorder, individual ruptures, and divisions caused by war. The quiet profoundly impacted the Japanese perception of artistic potential and the psychological fear that needed to be expelled.

The contemporary phenomenon of silence and the inability to express oneself, as well as the act of suppressing and denying emotions, channelling them into other forms, and the subsequent resurgence of these repressed feelings, can also be explored as significant motifs in literature, cinema, painting, and other artistic mediums. Nevertheless, the lack of historical evidence and the absence of coherent discourse surrounding this huge global phenomenon provide a formidable challenge. The tragedy, magnitude, and brutality of victims and their suffering, even if made public and recognised, must be silently borne and cannot be fully understood through theoretical explanations. It surpasses the limitations of speech, artificiality, or intentional design. It is classified as indescribable and unspeakable. It must be faced and dealt with in a voyeuristic way that frequently includes involvement in slaughter, violence, and terror.

Mishima's work serves as a literary examination of the themes of silence and the unconscious. It depicts the challenging and unattainable endeavour of reconciling forgotten and marginalised history, memory, experience, desire, and pleasure. Simultaneously, disruptive and distressing remnants or recurring outbreaks of trauma-suppressed desires, obsessions, and intense pleasure derived from idealistic potential and fulfilment constantly occur. These elements risk unravelling and annihilating any story that attempts to establish control and containment.

## 2.2 Use of Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory, invented by Sigmund Freud in the late 1890s after his initial discoveries of the 'unconscious' and 'resistances' in pathology and the early development of 'free Association' in therapeutic practice, plays a crucial role in understanding the hidden psychic structures of the unconscious and the dynamic conflicts with them in the heads of civilised human beings. Since problems of interests, desires, intuition, thoughts, sentiments, and judgments predominate in the activities of human beings, psychoanalysis attempts to elucidate the psychosomatic systems that cause those phenomena and to help clients understand them.

Repressed desires and fears have a way of finding their expression in the unconscious, paradoxically perhaps because that is a site for speech acts that the individual's conscious mind has not thoroughly censored. Dreams and the unconscious are closely related because the former seems to express the latter in a state where repression from the conscious mind occurs.

The Freudian psychoanalytic perspective is based on the premise that unconscious desires drive the narrative flow of an individual's conscious desires. According to the psychic model of Freud's psychoanalytic theory, consciousness, referring to the area containing the person's current thoughts and perceptions, is the smallest area. The second area, the pre-conscious, refers to

the sensations located in the periphery of consciousness. The unconscious, the most significant area, refers to the parts of the human mind that are repressed. It is in these parts that painful, sexual, and aggressive desires are flushed throughout the entire life of a person (Heller 1988, 354).

Jungian analysis focuses on the study of archetypes that form the fundamental basis of a person's psychology. These archetypes are innate universal psychic dispositions that form the substrate supporting the unique personas as they develop. In *Thirst for Love*, several collective unconscious archetypes exist in the shadowy realm of the characters' unconscious. These archetypes are the Shadow, the Anima (aspects of repressed feminine character traits), and the Persona (the public face, or mask, we present to the onlookers). These figures offer insight into the text to help elucidate the idea of 'silence' as "the last room in the house of love," an idea that could indicate both an end of the line and a potential beginning for the characters (Rees & Whitney, 2020).

These archetypes provide a fascinating lens into the psychoanalytic exploration of 'silence' as being productive of unconscious activity. This unconscious mind has been patterned in line with psychoanalysis due to the natural world circumscribing the expression of the character's internal lives. The journey towards interment into the unconscious mind begins with careful attention to the underlying connections in the surrounding text.

This paper is an attempt to bring psychoanalysis to literary studies. It explores the validity of psychoanalytic concepts in understanding the significance of silence and the unconscious in literature, hoping this illustration will incite further studies using this framework. Silence is the consummative or communicative state of a character in the narrative. It enables exploration into the hidden realms of a character's psyche. Most often, it involves subconscious references, particularly those to childhood memories. Such references can reveal essential components of a character's personality, motivations, and desires.

## 2.3 Research Approach

Qualitative content analysis is undertaken to analyse and understand the research aims and objectives. An in-depth examination of the connection between the unconscious mind and silence is being pursued in the novel *Thirst for Love*.

The concept of silence in *Thirst for Love* is examined in terms of its acknowledgement as a state of absence or as a response to the absence of others. From another standpoint, the idea highlights the need to protect innocence and embrace fantasy within a limited timeframe. This fantasy revolves around the themes of ownership and loss. The absence of awareness and the silence of thought create an external reality devoid of the burden of thought. This allows for an in-depth examination of the profound connection between silence and thought, as observed from the perspective of consciousness perceived as absence.

Examining the connection between the unconscious mind and silence in the novel aims to understand the state of silence that renders thought consciousness "theoretically dead", the silence of memory, and the cognitive aspect of this relationship with silence.

## 3 Silence as a reflection of Unconscious and Repressed Desires

"When silence is prolonged over a certain period, it takes on new meaning" (Mishima 138). Silence in *Thirst for Love* is multifaceted, representing both the external societal constraints and the internal psychological struggles of the characters. Etsuko's silence is particularly significant, as it is both a refuge and prison. Her inability to articulate her desires and emotions stems from deep-seated repression enforced by the rigid societal norms of her environment. This silence becomes a medium through which Mishima explores Etsuko's unconscious mind.

Etsuko's relationship with Yakichi and Saburo, a young gardener, is marked by a profound lack of communication. Her unspoken love for Saburo is a central aspect of the narrative, and her silence around this emotion intensifies her sense of isolation and despair. The silence between characters often reflects their emotional distance and the unbridgeable gaps in their relationships.

By examining Etsuko's repressed desires and the manifestation of her unconscious mind, we uncover the broader themes of love, loss, and psychological conflict that permeate the novel. Mishima's exploration of these themes reflects the character's internal struggles and critiques the societal norms and expectations contributing to their repression. *Thirst for Love* thus represents Mishima's mastery of portraying the human psyche's intricacies. It offers readers a compelling and psychologically rich narrative that continues to resonate with contemporary audiences. Through its exploration of silence and the unconscious, the novel invites us to reflect on our desires, repression, and the silent battles we wage within ourselves.

In extensive psychoanalytic theory and literature, silence often implies the unspoken and unacknowledged. The protagonist Etsuko's silence in the novel redirects the flow and shape of obscurity, melancholy, and confinement within man's existential terrain, like the silence before the storm. This study investigates the nature of silence employed by Etsuko to express the unconscious through psychoanalytic theory.

Psychologically, the characters possess repressed desires and emotions. Etsuko's silence implies her lack, anguish, dilemma, fears, and subconscious suppression. The protagonist's silence implies her incapability, inactivity, denial, rejection, hesitation, displeasure, and feeling of something not belonging to her due to her excessive want for contentment and satisfaction in the existence of the world, and she fails to subscribe to a character. When she does not want to be found by anyone, including herself, due to others, it implies her fear, nakedness, fragility, and energy discharge. Her desire to shelter within herself is a denotation of escapism from the horrific world of existence. The novel shows the suffocation and emptiness of life, reflecting the motive of silence.

Through Etsuko's dreams, fantasies, and silent contemplations, Mishima delves into the unconscious. These elements reveal her repressed desires and the dark aspects of her psyche. Etsuko's unconscious mind is a landscape of suppressed emotions, primarily her unresolved grief for her deceased husband and her unspoken love for Saburo. These unconscious drives manifest in her obsessive thoughts and anomic behaviour, illustrating the tension between her inner world and outward demeanour. The unconscious also surfaces through Etsuko's fragmented memories and intrusive thoughts. Her recollections of past trauma and unfulfilled desires are interwoven with her present experiences, creating a narrative that blurs the lines between reality and fantasy. This narrative technique emphasises the pervasive influence of the unconscious on Etsuko's actions and decisions.

"The initial is the same, but nobody will know since I've changed him to a woman. The name S comes up too much, but I don't have to worry about that. After all, there's no proof. To me, this is a false diary, though no human being can be honest as to become completely false" (Mishima 17).

The manifestation of these obsessions, unrequited love and unconscious desires manifests Etsuko's actions and relationships, revealing her deep-seated psychological conflicts and hidden longings. Her obsessive love for Saburo, the servant, can be seen as a projection of her unconscious desires. This relationship is fraught with power dynamics and unexpressed emotions, highlighting the complexities of Etsuko's life.

Freud's concept of the unconscious is crucial in interpreting these hidden desires. According to Freud, the unconscious mind is a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories outside of conscious awareness. Etsuko's intense and often contradictory

feelings towards Saburo reflect the tumultuous nature of her unconscious desires. Throughout the novel, her dreams, fantasies, and symbolic actions provide further insight into her repressed emotions and psychological conflicts.

### 3.1 Silence as emotional repression

Repressed desires and fears have a way of finding their expression in the unconscious, paradoxically perhaps because that is a site for speech acts that the individual's conscious mind has not thoroughly censored. The dream and unconscious are closely related because the former seems to express the latter in a state where repression from the conscious mind occurs (Akhtar, 2020)

"Nobody even imagines how well one can lie about the state of one's own heart" (Mishima 16). In *Thirst for Love*, silence symbolises repressed desires and unspoken emotions, showcasing it as a manifestation of emotional repression. Set in post-World War II Japan, it is next to impossible for Etsuko, the young widow who returns to her father-in-law's home and finds herself trapped within a patriarchal society and entangled in a complex web of unexpressed love and unfulfilled longing to express her thoughts and feelings. Her silence reflects her internal struggle and reveals the depths of her repressed emotions. She embodies this theme through her quiet suffering and emotional withdrawal, as her silence reflects her struggle and the suppression of her desires, particularly her longing for affection and intimacy.

Initially, Etsuko's silence in the text can be approached as revealing her repressed desires. Through psychoanalytic interpretation, the protagonist's silent mouth suggests she is holding back her unsatisfied emotional experience of the world. If she utters something from her suppressed self, she risks destroying the harmony of the family and even the listeners' lives. Deeper than hurting others, however, unconscious of her daily consciousness, she is frustrated enough to destroy herself.

Sigmund Freud's theory of repression is instrumental in understanding Etsuko's silence. According to Freud, repression is a defence mechanism the ego employs to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious. In Etsuko's case, her silence serves as a means to manage her psychological pain and cope with her unfulfilled desires. An underlying tension marks her interactions with others as she continually suppresses her emotions and desires, leading to a sense of isolation and despair.

"She opened the sliding door. Yakichi was sitting at the desk, engrossed in reading something. He seemed flustered when he looked up and saw his daughter-in-law. Etsuko realised that the red, leather-backed book he had been reading was her diary" (Mishima 14).

Etsuko was surprised to discover her father-in-law reading her diary but pretended not to notice. "Father doesn't know this is my false diary. Nobody knows that it is a false diary" (Mishima 16). Etsuko's silence is her way of responding to her intense feelings of grief, desire, and frustration. Because of social constraints and psychological barriers, she cannot openly express her longing for Saburo, the servant, or how disgusted she feels about Yakichi, her father-in-law. Instead, her silence becomes a way to manage and conceal her emotions, allowing her to navigate the oppressive environment in which she finds herself. This use of silence aligns with Sigmund Freud's concept of repression, where unacknowledged desires are pushed into the unconscious mind, often resurfacing in indirect ways.

Etsuko, embodies this theme through her quiet suffering and emotional withdrawal. Her silence reflects her internal struggle and the suppression of her desires, particularly her longing for affection and intimacy with Saburo. "Love is a thirst that can never be quenched" (Mishima 167). This expression encapsulates the unfulfilled yearning and insatiable nature of love that Etsuko possessed for Saburo. It suggests that love is an

eternal longing that can never be fully satisfied, always leaving us desiring more.

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### 3.2 Silence as power and control

"To Etsuko, the nightcap had a strange significance. She knew she was not needed that evening when he crawled into bed with it on his head; when he didn't wear it, she was wanted" (Mishima 183).

Etsuko understands Yakichi's desires and advances without him having to speak. Silence in *Thirst for Love* also functions as a tool of power and control. A complex interplay of silence and speech marks the dynamics between Etsuko and the other characters. Etsuko's father-in-law, Yakichi, exerts authority through spoken words and strategic silences. His control over the household and Etsuko is partly maintained by the unspoken rules and expectations he enforces, creating an atmosphere where silence signifies dominance and submission.

Another example is Etsuko's silence about her feelings for Saburo, a personal struggle and a poignant reflection of the broader cultural constraints that limit her ability to act on her desires. This societal silence is also evident in how the characters interact with one another. Politeness and formality often mask true feelings and intentions, creating a veneer of harmony that conceals underlying tensions. Mishima's portrayal of this societal silence exposes the gap between appearance and reality, revealing the emotional and psychological costs of adhering to social expectations.

A tension-filled silence characterises Etsuko's interactions with Saburo. Her inability to voice her feelings towards him grants her a degree of control over her emotions, even as it heightens her inner turmoil. The silence between them is laden with unspoken desires and power struggles, highlighting the psychological complexity of their relationships. Freud's concept of repression suggests that what is unsaid or silent in a text can be as revealing as what is expressed. The unconscious mind communicates through slips, gaps, and silences, making these moments rich for psychoanalytical interpretations.

One essential category in Freud's psychoanalytical theory is the structural model of the mind. According to this model, the unconscious areas of the mind are full of unknown forces and practices. Freud states that the structure of the mind consists of three layers: the conscious mind, the pre-conscious mind, and the unconscious mind. The one we see in our deeds and talks is the conscious mind. It appears as a small part of reality, with logical comparisons, reasonable outcomes, and problem-solving thinking. The second layer is the pre-conscious. The pre-conscious draws from the conscious mind. Both turn to each other, and the contents can become steam. The last part is a part that has no connection with logical comparisons, revealing its greatest secret and never reaching consciousness (Allison, 2023). Mishima's masterful use of silence is a poignant critique of post-war Japanese society's rigid social norms and expectations. The characters' silences, which often reflect the societal pressures that dictate their behaviour and relationships, evoke empathy. At the surface of its narrative, Etsuko's silence may seem to symbolise her negative will, her fear of the emerging time of self-help, or a sign of her silent "will forget." Yet, given criticism of what silence can mean in every daily fight for self-involvement and authenticity, the consequences of silence must be investigated more deeply.

### 3.3 Silence as a symbolic and narrative device

Mishima uses the character of Etsuko to demonstrate how silence can indicate a mysterious and intricate range of emotions that cannot be effectively expressed by speech, making them seem plain or believable. Etsuko's romantic desires, sensory experiences, vivid imagination, and other subconscious longings remain concealed from her mental and verbal awareness. Repressing underlying urges leads to a compulsive desire to express them symbolically in a flamboyant way. Life becomes a monotonous struggle to balance honesty in quick speech, submissive behaviour, and deliberate avoidance of self-expression. An explosive maelstrom of uncontrollable delirious outbursts, characterised by grotesquely indiscreet directness, fills the melancholic accumulation, eagerly awaiting an opportunity to manifest. However, this type of quiet is deliberately preserved and socially accepted only in a repressive manner. It clarifies the moral inferiority and abnormality of an unfulfilled, socially unqualified hypocrite. The true nature of what is unknowingly disguised is painfully exposed.

"Etsuko's entire body was still swathed in the groping of Yakichi's dry, gnarled fingers. Even an hour or two of sleep had not wiped it off. A woman who has been caressed by a skeleton can never forget that caress. It was a new skin added to her skin-transparent, damp, thinner than the chrysalis a butterfly is about to shed" (Mishima 27).

From a narrative standpoint, Mishima's use of silence instils tension and suspense throughout the novel and actively involves readers in interpreting the narrative. Rather than being passive, pauses and gaps in dialogue encourage readers to delve into the characters' unspoken thoughts and emotions, fostering a deeper connection with the text. This narrative silence paves the way for a more reflective and contemplative reading experience, as readers are drawn into the characters' inner worlds and actively participate in interpreting the narrative. Moreover, the silence in the narrative structure poignantly reflects the theme of unfulfilled longing that permeates the novel.

"What if I am the one Saburo has loved? I will have to be bold and try to find out. I must not even think that what I anticipate will not come true. If my hopes come true, I shall be happy! It's that simple" (Mishima 191).

Just as Etsuko's desires remain unspoken and unfulfilled, the narrative often leaves questions unanswered and emotions unexpressed, mirroring the character's experiences of incompleteness and dissatisfaction. Beyond its symbolic and thematic roles, silence functions as a powerful narrative device. It creates suspense and focuses attention on moments.

Mishima's symbolic use of silence in the novel enhances its thematic depth. The physical setting of the book, particularly the house, serves as a symbol of Etsuko's psychological state. The house, with its silent rooms and empty spaces, mirrors her emotional isolation and the unspoken grief that haunts her. The house's silence is a backdrop for Etsuko's internal monologues and silent suffering, emphasising the novel's exploration of solitude and insight. The decaying condition of the house mirrors Etsuko's emotional desolation and repressed desires. Once a place of familial warmth, the house has become a site of entrapment and unfulfilled longing, symbolising Etsuko's internal world.

Nature imagery in the novel plays a significant role in reflecting the characters' inner transformations. The changing seasons, for instance, parallel Etsuko's shift in emotional states and the cyclical nature of her desires. The cherry blossoms, a recurring motif in the novel, symbolise both the fleeting beauty of life and the inevitability of decay, mirroring Etsuko's transient moments of hope and her eventual return to despair. According to Carl Jung, the collective unconscious contains universal experiences and archetypes all humans share. In *Thirst for Love*, the house and nature imagery are archetypal symbols representing Etsuko's journey through love, loss, and self-discovery.

#### 4 Conclusion

Yukio Mishima's *Thirst for Love* is a poignant exploration of silence and the unconscious, illustrating how these themes shape the characters' lives and relationships. Through Etsuko's silence and the manifestation of her repressed desires, Mishima delves into his protagonist's psychological depths, revealing the unconscious's profound impact on human behaviour. This study highlights the significance of silence as both a narrative device and a reflection of existential angst.

By examining Etsuko's repressed desires and the manifestation of her unconscious mind, we uncover the broader themes of love, loss, and psychological conflict that permeate the novel. Mishima's exploration of these themes reflects the character's internal struggles and critiques the societal norms and expectations contributing to their repression. *Thirst for Love* is a testament to Mishima's mastery of portraying the human psyche's intricacies, offering readers a compelling and psychologically rich narrative that continues to resonate with contemporary audiences. Through its exploration of silence and the unconscious, the novel invites us to reflect on our desires, repression, and the silent battles we wage within ourselves.

##### 4.1 Key Findings

The research uncovers a clash between masculinity's allure of silence and its incapacity to surpass its gendered identity, mirroring the friction in Mishima's personal life between his outward image and inner longings.

Love functions as a dual power, both constructive and destructive, stimulating an internal conversation, arousing a need for the hidden desires of the feminine subconscious, and ultimately resulting in feelings of dread, loss, envy, and mortality. However, this harmful affection cultivates a novel sense of self and other, a need that brings about the unattainable creation of desire between oneself and another, embedded in both long-lasting periods and the everlasting instant of the aggressive deed. Therefore, it does not occur as a loss but rather as a new addition, a worrisome repetition or unwelcome intrusion that increases the lack and division, making the want for love impossible to comprehend.

*Thirst for Love* can be interpreted as a cautionary narrative that exposes the inherent impossibility of love and desire while simultaneously recounting the catastrophic outcomes of engaging in forbidden yearnings for affection. The research shows that new desires and wants can emerge from submerged unconsciousness.

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