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Culture, Ideological Dissonance and Romanticism of Silence in Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue: A Contextualisation of the Contemporary Society*

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the cultural, ideological, and gendered dimensions of silence through a critical reading of Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue*, foregrounding the paradoxical romanticisation of silence within patriarchal societies. It argues that while silence is often culturally aestheticised and sanctified, such romanticisation functions to naturalise repression and sustain gendered power hierarchies. Drawing on Michel Foucault's theorisation of silence as a mechanism of power embedded within institutions, the study examines silence as both a survival strategy and an instrument of control. Vera's protagonist, Zhizha, embodies silence as a response to incestuous violence, illustrating how enforced muteness both shields and erases the traumatised subject. The paper contends that the fetishisation of such silence transforms suffering into aesthetic spectacle, thereby muffling lived pain rather than confronting it. Through Runyararo, Vera disrupts this ideological economy of silence. Her rupture, provoked by the discovery of her daughter's violation, constitutes a radical intervention that exposes the devastating human cost of cultural silence and challenges its moral legitimacy. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative approach grounded in close textual analysis of *Under the Tongue*, supplemented by feminist, cultural, and critical theory. A thematic analytical framework is employed to examine silence as a culturally sanctioned yet oppressive construct within African patriarchal conditions, with reflective reference to Zimbabwe as a representational society. The findings position silence not merely as a communicative mode but as a powerful mechanism of repression whose romanticisation demands urgent ethical re-evaluation. The paper ultimately proposes alternative cultural engagements that privilege voice, justice, and human dignity over inherited silences.

Key words: Culture, gender; power; romanticisation; silence, trauma.



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INTRODUCTION

The continual cultural romanticisation of silence in many African societies constitutes a profound ethical and social problem, particularly in relation to gendered power and trauma. While silence is frequently upheld as a marker of respect, discipline, and moral integrity, especially for women and younger members of society, its idealisation often conceals violence, legitimises suffering, and sustains patriarchal domination. This paper addresses the binary problem of how culturally sanctioned silence, which is also celebrated as a virtue, again functions as an ideological mechanism that represses voice, obscures trauma, and normalises gendered violence under the guise of cultural propriety.

Silence, as used in this study, does not indicate mere absence of speech. Rather, it is understood as a socially produced and politically regulated practice through which power determines who may speak, what may be spoken, and which experiences must remain buried under the tongue. Romanticisation refers to the cultural and ideological processes through which silence is aestheticised and moralised, subsequently transforming endurance and suffering into virtues, and discouraging resistance. Heritage, in this context, is not treated as a neutral inheritance but as a dynamic cultural system that transmits values, norms, and power relations across generations, usually without sufficient ethical interrogation.

Using Zimbabwe as a representative site for examining broader African cultural dynamics, silence emerges as deeply embedded within family structures, customary institutions, and moral codes. Women's silence is particularly construed as obedience, dignity, and cultural maturity, while articulation around taboo subjects such as sexual violence, incest, and abuse is perceived as deviant or culturally transgressive. This ideological framing renders silence simultaneously culturally productive and ethically dangerous, converting trauma into moral restraint and discouraging disclosure or resistance (Nnaemeka, 2004). As a result, silence becomes a tool through which patriarchal authority is maintained and violence rendered invisible.

Within literary discourse, silence has been widely recognised as a powerful aesthetic strategy for representing trauma, power asymmetries, and the limits of language. Scholars note that silence can signify agency when strategically chosen, yet when imposed, it exposes vulnerability, surveillance, and repression (Foucault, 1978). This ambivalence makes silence a critical lens for interrogating patriarchal and postcolonial structures that regulate voice, visibility, and subjectivity.

Through a close reading of Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue*, this paper critically examines silence as both an ideological and aesthetic force. It argues that the novel reveals the romanticisation of silence as a culturally legitimised form of repression that aestheticises suffering while concealing the lived trauma of women and children. Despite sustained literary critiques of such silences, cultural discourse continues to validate silence as a protection and virtue. This study, therefore, addresses the gap between literary stance and cultural assumptions by interrogating silence not as moral restraint but as ideological repression.

Appropriating Michel Foucault's theorisation of silence as a productive mechanism of power, alongside a postcolonial feminist lens, the study shows how Vera subverts cultural narratives that sanctify silence by revealing its devastating psychological, relational, and ethical consequences. The paper situates silence within its cultural and theoretical orientations, reviewing relevant scholarship, outlining the methodological approach, and conducting a detailed textual analysis of *Under the Tongue*. It sums up by reflecting on the broader implications of dismantling the culture of silence for gender justice, ethical accountability, and social transformation in African societies.

The manipulation and romanticisation of silence for ideological and institutional benefits is a deeply troubling feature in many societies worldwide. Within African contexts, particularly under patriarchal cultural systems, silence has often been

elevated as a moral virtue associated with respect, endurance, femininity, and cultural authenticity. Yet this idealisation frequently conceals the violent consequences of enforced muteness, especially for women and other marginalised groups. By denying individuals legitimate spaces for articulation and redress, such cultural ideologies have contributed to sustained trauma, social stagnation, and, in extreme cases, preventable suffering and loss of life.

African literary texts have often exposed the dangers embedded in this culture of silence. Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988), for example, deploys silence to symbolise the unspoken tensions and prohibitions imposed on women within patriarchal societies. Through the character of Nyasha, Dangarembga illustrates how enforced silence signals psychological conflict and resistance rather than cultural harmony, revealing the cost of demanding female compliance through muteness.

Similarly, Selimovic's (2018) study on gendered silences in post-conflict societies demonstrates how silence functions paradoxically as both a survival strategy and a mechanism of continued subordination. Her analysis shows that silence, particularly around sexual violence, often enables the persistence of gender-based harm rather than offering protection or dignity. In such contexts, silence becomes complicit in sustaining trauma and injustice.

Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue* (1996) offers one of the most unsettling literary examinations of ideological silence as an instrument of patriarchal power. Muroyiwa's repeated sexual violation of his daughter, Zhizha, is sustained by a culturally enforced silence that negates women's voices and shields male authority from accountability. Vera exposes how silence ceases to function as a moral restraint and instead becomes a weapon of domination, repression, and dehumanisation.

Despite the sustained presence of silence as a critical theme in African feminist and postcolonial literature,

cultural discourse continues to romanticise silence as a marker of virtue and respect without adequate interrogation of its violent implications. This uncritical valorisation obscures the lived realities of those compelled into silence and perpetuates harmful ideologies that normalise suffering in the name of tradition.

This study responds to this gap by critically interrogating cultural ideological silence within gendered relationships, focusing on *Under the Tongue* as a central text. It examines how silence operates as a mechanism of repression within patriarchal systems and how its effects resonate beyond literary representation into contemporary African societies, with Zimbabwe as the primary context and reflective parallels across the continent. By foregrounding the romanticisation of silence as a central problem, the study seeks to challenge its ethical legitimacy and expose its destructive consequences for human dignity, agency, and justice.

This study is justified by the urgent need to critically interrogate culturally enforced silence as a persistent mechanism of gendered oppression in African societies. While silence is often celebrated as a marker of cultural virtue, respectability, and moral restraint, particularly for women and youth, its ideological deployment frequently masks violence, sustains trauma, and forecloses possibilities for agency and dialogue. Such silence operates insidiously, lodged in the subconscious and intermittently surfacing in social consciousness, thereby inhibiting innovation, creativity, and collective social transformation.

Existing cultural discourses, even in the twenty-first century, continue to normalise silence within gendered relationships, especially around taboo subjects such as incest, sexual violence, and domestic abuse. This normalisation not only silences victims but also legitimises patriarchal authority and shields perpetrators from accountability. By engaging literary representation as a critical site of cultural reflection, this study creates an analytical space for unpacking how silence is aestheticised, romanticised, and ideologically weaponised.

Literature, particularly African feminist writing, provides a vital archive for examining the emotional, psychological, and ethical consequences of silence. Through a close reading of Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue*, alongside insights from related feminist texts, the study interrogates how silence is culturally produced, internalised, and resisted. In doing so, it contributes to broader efforts aimed at destabilising harmful cultural norms and fostering ethical engagements that privilege voice, healing, and justice.

The significance of this study is threefold. Academically, the study contributes to African feminist literary criticism, trauma studies, and postcolonial discourse by foregrounding silence not merely as an aesthetic strategy but as an ideological instrument deeply embedded in patriarchal and cultural systems. By synthesising Foucauldian theory with postcolonial feminist perspectives, the study advances critical conversations on how power operates through absence, repression, and enforced restraint in African literary texts. Socially, the research illuminates the real-world implications of gendered silence, offering insights relevant to educators, policymakers, gender activists, and cultural leaders. By exposing how silence perpetuates violence and inequality, the study underscores the need for culturally sensitive yet ethically grounded frameworks that support dialogue, accountability, and survivor-centred justice.

Practically, the study emphasises the reclamation of voice as a transformative act. It advocates for ethical cultural spaces, both traditional and contemporary, that validate women's and youth's experiences and challenge harmful silencing practices. In this regard, the study resonates with ongoing struggles for gender equity, social justice, and mental health advocacy in African societies.

The study's aim is to examine the impact of culturally and ideologically enforced silence in gendered relationships in Zimbabwe, as represented in Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue*, and to explore

its broader relevance within contemporary African societies. It does so by not only analysing the psychological, relational, and societal consequences of enforced silence on women and youth but also interrogating silence as both a mechanism of repression and a potential site of resistance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly engagement with silence in African literature consistently reveals it as a complex, ambivalent phenomenon situated at the intersection of culture, power, gender, and trauma. Rather than functioning merely as the absence of speech, silence emerges in critical discourse as an aesthetic strategy, a psychological response to trauma, and an ideological mechanism through which patriarchal authority is maintained. This review synthesises key debates on silence with particular attention to Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue*, while identifying critical gaps that necessitated the present study's focus on the romanticisation of silence as a culturally legitimised form of repression.

Aesthetic Silence and Narrative Strategy

Several scholars have examined silence in *Under the Tongue* as an aesthetic and narrative device that enables the articulation of experiences resistant to direct representation. Guzman (2011) conceptualises silence in the novel as an "oralisation of thought," arguing that Zhizha's muteness paradoxically becomes a narrative voice through which trauma is communicated beyond conventional speech. In this reading, silence functions productively, allowing the text to register the unspeakable without reducing it to linguistic transparency.

Similarly, Muponde (2007) describes Vera's prose as a lyrical accumulation of silences, pain, and loss, suggesting that aesthetic restraint becomes a mode of representing extreme violence without sensationalism. Silence, in this sense, acquires poetic density and symbolic weight. While such readings illuminate Vera's stylistic innovation, they tend to privilege silence as an aesthetic achievement, often without sufficiently interrogating its ethical implications. The present study builds on these insights but departs from them by questioning how aestheticised silence risks becoming complicit in the cultural romanticisation of suffering, particularly

when silence is detached from its material consequences.

Silence and Trauma

A second body of scholarship situates silence within trauma theory, emphasising its relationship to psychological fragmentation and memory. Kopf (2005) reads Zhizha's silence as a symptom of trauma that disrupts linear narration and realist form. According to this view, trauma fractures temporality, necessitating experimental narrative structures that mirror psychic dislocation. This approach is reinforced by broader trauma studies, which argue that certain forms of violence exceed the limits of language and are therefore registered through silence, repetition, and fragmentation.

While these studies compellingly account for the psychic dimensions of silence, they often individualise trauma, framing silence primarily as an internal coping mechanism. The present study extends this discussion by situating trauma-induced silence within socially produced and culturally enforced systems. Zhizha's muteness is not merely psychological but institutional, sustained by familial authority, patriarchal norms, and ideological taboos surrounding sexuality. By foregrounding this social dimension, the study challenges readings that inadvertently depoliticise silence.

Gendered Silence and Patriarchal Power

African feminist scholarship has often identified silence as a gendered practice embedded within patriarchal cultures. Uwakweh (1998) argues that silencing constitutes a culturally sanctioned restriction on women's social being, thought, and expression, functioning as a primary weapon of patriarchal control. Similarly, Fonchingong (2006) observes that African women are frequently socialised into invisibility, rendered "seen but not heard" within both private and public spheres.

More recent feminist scholars, such as Nnaemeka (2004) and Tamale (2020), have further complicated this discourse by examining how cultural values of respectability, endurance, and moral restraint are mobilised to normalise women's silence while delegitimising female speech as disruptive or immoral. These studies are particularly relevant to

Under the Tongue, where women's silence is looked at as a virtue until it disrupts patriarchal stability.

Despite these scholarships, the study has established that not much interrogation on how silence is actively romanticised as a cultural dignity has been done. This study addresses this gap by arguing that the validation of silence as a moral virtue obscures its role in sustaining gendered violence. Vera's portrayal of Runyararo's rupture of silence through speech and action exposes the moral decay of a culture that privileges silence over dialogue and justice.

Ideological Dissonance and Silence as Power

Michel Foucault's theorisation of silence as a productive element within discourse provides a critical framework for understanding its ideological function. Foucault (1976) argues that silence operates alongside speech to regulate knowledge, subjectivity, and power, noting that "there is not one but many silences" embedded within discursive formations. Drawing on Foucault's thought, Silence is seen as neither neutral nor passive; it circumstantially frames outcomes.

Appropriating this perspective, scholars have demonstrated how patriarchal silence protects male authority while punishing female bodies and voices. In *Under the Tongue*, for instance, Muroyiwa's incestuous violence on his daughter is sustained by a network of silences that shield him from accountability. Yet, as Foucault suggests, silence also contains the seeds of its undoing. Runyararo's eventual rupture of silence represents what this study refers to as ideological dissonance: a moment when cultural systems collapse under the weight of ethical contradiction.

Despite extensive engagement with silence as discourse and trauma, existing scholarship has not sufficiently examined how silence functions simultaneously as repression and as a paradoxical catalyst for transformation. This study contributes to the field by theorising silence as a destructive yet potentially transformative force, whose romanticisation must be critically dismantled in order to reclaim ethical speech and agency.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Looked at collectively, the study reveals that existing scholarship has richly presented silence as an aesthetic strategy, a trauma response, and a patriarchal mechanism. However, there exists a critical gap in examining the romanticisation of silence as a cultural ideology and its complicity in sustaining gendered violence. By foregrounding this dimension and situating *Under the Tongue* within broader African feminist and postcolonial debates, this study presents a nuanced intervention that bridges literary analysis and socio-cultural critique, positioning silence as a central ethical problem rather than a neutral cultural value.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored primarily on Michel Foucault's theorisation of power and silence, particularly his assertion that silence is not a mere absence of speech but an active, productive force within discourse (Foucault, 1976). Foucault argues that silence functions alongside speech to regulate knowledge, normalise authority, and discipline subjects within institutional structures such as the family, culture, religion, and the state. Within patriarchal systems, silence becomes a technology of power that determines what may be spoken, who may speak, and under what conditions.

Complementing this framework is postcolonial feminist theory, which interrogates the historical silencing of African women under intersecting regimes of patriarchy, colonialism, and nationalism (Mohanty, 2003; Nnaemeka, 2004; Mama, 2009). Feminist scholars caution against romanticising cultural practices that demand women's silence in the name of tradition, arguing instead for critical engagements that foreground lived experience, bodily autonomy, and ethical accountability.

Recent feminist trauma scholarship further enriches the framework by emphasising silence as both a survival strategy and a site of unresolved trauma (Herman, 2015; Caruth, 2016). These perspectives are particularly useful in reading Zhizha's muteness not as passivity but as a psychic response to extreme violation within a culture that denies her speech.

Performance theory informs the analysis of moments where silence is disrupted through bodily action,

gesture, and violent speech, particularly in the character of Runyararo. Her rupture of silence constitutes an ethical performance that exposes the limits of cultural endurance and challenges patriarchal moral authority.

Finally, media ecology perspectives are briefly engaged to situate the study within contemporary contexts where digital platforms increasingly provide alternative spaces for breaking silence, amplifying marginalised voices, and contesting institutional repression. While *Under the Tongue* predates social media, these perspectives allow the study to bridge literary analysis with present-day discourses on voice, visibility, and resistance.

Together, these theoretical lenses enable a multidimensional reading of *Under the Tongue* while also justifying references to other African feminist texts such as Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. These comparative references are not treated as primary texts but serve to contextualise Vera's work within a broader feminist literary tradition concerned with silence, trauma, and gendered power.

While existing studies on African literature acknowledge silence as a narrative device, many stop short of interrogating its ideological romanticisation and ethical consequences. This study addresses that gap by centring silence as a culturally sanctioned mechanism of repression and by foregrounding its human cost, particularly for women and children.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative literary research design grounded in close textual analysis. Its primary text is Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue* (1996), which is examined in dialogics with the author's wider fictional corpus: *Butterfly Burning* (1998), *Without a Name* (1994), *Nehanda* (1993), and *The Stone Virgins* (2002). These earlier texts, which formed part of my prior scholarly engagement, are incorporated to provide thematic continuity and comparative depth, particularly in relation to silence, gendered trauma, bodily inscription, and resistance within patriarchal and colonial contexts.

Close reading was employed as the principal analytical method to examine narrative gaps, metaphorical silences, character behaviour,

embodied expressions, and moments of speech rupture. Particular attention was paid to how silence is produced, enforced, aestheticised, and contested across Vera's fictional universe. In *Under the Tongue*, silence is foregrounded as a central weaponised tool around incest, trauma, and cultural repression. In *Without a Name* and *Butterfly Burning*, silence operates alongside displacement, desire, and gendered marginality, while *Nehanda* and *The Stone Virgins* extend the inquiry into historical and nationalist silences, especially those surrounding women's bodies in moments of political upheaval. The inclusion of these texts allows the study to situate *Under the Tongue* within a sustained literary meditation on silence rather than treating it as an isolated case.

Both inductive and deductive reasoning guided the analysis. Inductively, recurring patterns of silence, trauma, surveillance, and resistance were identified across the texts. Deductively, these patterns were interpreted through established theoretical frameworks, primarily Michel Foucault's theory of power and silence. Foucault's (1976/1978) conceptualisation of silence was operationalized along three analytical dimensions: silence as a mechanism of repression (for instance, the enforced muteness surrounding incest in *Under the Tongue*), silence as a tool of surveillance and control within institutional spaces such as the family, and silence as a potential site of resistance when ruptured through speech or embodied action.

Operationalising this framework involved tracing who is permitted to speak, who is silenced, the consequences attached to speech, and the institutional forces, such as cultural, familial, and ideological issues, that regulate discourse. Silence was therefore treated not as an absence of meaning but as an active structuring force within power relations that shapes subjectivity and ethical possibility.

The study further draws on postcolonial feminist theory to interrogate how gender, culture, and colonial legacies intersect to normalise women's silencing, particularly within African patriarchal systems. Performance theory complements this approach by enabling a reading of Runyararo's verbal and non-verbal acts as embodied interventions

that disrupt repression and reconfigure agency. Together, these frameworks facilitate a nuanced analysis of silence as both an aesthetic strategy and an ideological weapon.

Through this methodological approach, the study critically examines the romanticisation of silence in Vera's fiction, illuminating its profound implications for gendered subjectivity, justice, and ethical responsibility in African societies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study focuses on the examination of the cultural romanticisation of silence in gendered relationships and its bearing on trauma, power, and resistance in Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue*. The textual analysis shows that silence in the novel operates not as a neutral cultural value but as an ideological practice that perpetuates patriarchal authority while inflicting serious psychological and social damage on women and youth.

First, the findings demonstrate that patriarchal culture constructs a gendered hierarchy of voice, privileging male speech while systematically muting women and children. Within the domestic space, the father figure is positioned as the unquestioned centre of authority, while women and youth occupy peripheral, voiceless positions. Zhizha's enforced muteness following repeated incestuous rape exemplifies silence as embodied trauma rather than moral restraint. Her lament, "*My voice has forgotten me*" (Vera, 1996, p. 120), is a metaphor that signifies not an individual's failure but a collective societal breakdown in which the future is sacrificed through the silencing of its youth. This finding aligns with Kopf's (2005) argument that trauma fractures subjectivity, while extending it by situating Zhizha's silence within a culturally sanctioned system of repression rather than just a private psychological collapse.

Secondly, the analysis reveals that silence functions as a technology of surveillance and control, consistent with Foucauldian theory. Muroyiwa's continuous monitoring of Zhizha's behaviour illustrates how silence is actively maintained to protect male authority and prevent exposure of patriarchal violence. Silence here becomes what Foucault (1978) describes as a "shelter for power,"

regulating what can be spoken and punishing transgression. Zhizha's fear of articulation and her refusal to see her father are silent acts of resistance, yet they are constrained by a system that denies her discursive legitimacy.

Thirdly, the findings complicate romanticised readings of silence by demonstrating its paradoxical potential for rupture and transformation. Runyararo's eventual break from silence, though violent and ethically troubling, exposes the moral bankruptcy of a culture that values silence over justice. Her action to avenge her daughter's rape disrupts the ideological equilibrium that protects male dominance, transforming silence into discourse through confession, trial, and public reckoning. In Foucauldian terms, this rupture illustrates how silence can be converted into resistance when it enters discourse and destabilises institutional authority. However, the novel simultaneously underscores the cost of delayed speech: Runyararo's imprisonment and Zhizha's continued trauma reveal that silence, even when broken, leaves enduring scars.

Generally, the findings affirm that while silence may function temporarily as a survival strategy, its romanticisation perpetuates harm, delays healing, and sustains cycles of violence. Vera's narrative thus challenges cultural ideologies that aestheticise silence and exposes its destructive consequences for both victims and perpetrators.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue* effectively demonstrates that culturally imposed silence carries devastating psychological, relational, and societal consequences. By dramatising silence as both trauma and contested resistance, the novel dismantles the myth of silence as a virtue and repositions it as an ideological practice requiring ethical scrutiny. Zhizha's voicelessness and Runyararo's rupture expose how patriarchal silence dehumanises women and youth while simultaneously undermining the moral foundations of the society that enforces it.

Theoretically, this study contributes to African feminist and postcolonial scholarship by reframing silence as a dynamic site of power rather than a

passive cultural inheritance. Drawing on Foucault, the analysis demonstrates that silence is productive: it produces compliant subjects, regulates bodies, and sustains institutional dominance. Yet, when ruptured, silence also becomes a catalyst for exposure and transformation. This paradox extends existing scholarship by showing that silence is neither inherently oppressive nor liberatory; its ethical value depends on who controls it, how it is enforced, and whose suffering it conceals.

By situating *Under the Tongue* alongside Vera's broader oeuvre (*Without a Name*, *Butterfly Burning*, *The Stone Virgins*, *Nehanda*), this study underscores Vera's sustained interrogation of silence across historical and political contexts. Silence emerges as a recurring ideological mechanism through which women's bodies become sites of nationalist, cultural, and patriarchal inscription. The study, therefore, strengthens contemporary debates on gender, trauma, and voice by insisting that cultural practices must be evaluated not by tradition alone but by their human consequences.

Finally, the paper argues that societies committed to justice and healing must dismantle the romanticisation of silence and cultivate dialogic spaces where voice is protected rather than punished. Such spaces are essential not only for individual recovery but also for ethical social transformation.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study, several interrelated recommendations are proposed. First, there is a clear need for expanded scholarly engagement that extends this analysis to other African literary texts and genres, including autobiography, oral narratives, and contemporary digital storytelling. Such research would enable a deeper interrogation of how silence operates across diverse cultural and historical contexts. In addition, adopting interdisciplinary approaches through collaboration among literary scholars, sociologists, psychologists, and gender studies researchers would enrich the understanding of cultural silence beyond textual representation, illuminating how it is experienced and reproduced in everyday life.

From a pedagogical perspective, educational curricula would benefit from the incorporation of critical discussions on silence, voice, and power,

using literary texts such as *Under the Tongue* to challenge harmful cultural norms and to foster ethical awareness and engagement among learners. At the level of policy and advocacy, policymakers and gender-focused organisations should recognise culturally enforced silence as a form of structural violence and develop protective frameworks that

amplify survivors' voices while dismantling stigma surrounding disclosure. Finally, there is a need for cultural reorientation within communities, encouraging a critical reassessment of values that equate silence with virtue, particularly where such values sustain gendered violence and psychological trauma.

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