

COGNITIVE BARRIERS AND SENSUAL LANGUAGE: RECLAIMING WOMEN'S EXPRESSIVE AGENCY

Dr. Amjad Sohail^{*1}, Dr. Natasha Kiran², Muhammad Ali Khawar³

^{*1}Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Sciences, National University of Medical
Sciences, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

²Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University,
Multan, Pakistan

³MPhil Scholar, Department of Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan,
Pakistan

^{*1}amjad.sohail@numspak.edu.pk, ²natashakiran@bzu.edu.pk,
³muhammadalikhawar740@gmail.com

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Corresponding Author: *

Dr. Amjad Sohail

Abstract

Language leaves a deep legacy by shaping a culture's identity and recording the history of humanity's desire to communicate effectively. It allows a person to express themselves and to manage their experience in the world, as well as others' expectations of them. Language is used to convey messages and to illustrate social complexities and cultural values. It is the arena of stories, metaphors, history, philosophy, ideology, and above all, what life is like for each person. The issue arises when any particular group, community, or gender is denied the right to express themselves, even when it is ethically and emotionally significant. History tells us that such suppression results in vulnerability, which weakens an individual's capacity for free thinking and free expression. In this perspective article, we will discuss the social limitations women face in Pakistan and how the cultural identity of the society has been affected.

Introduction

History is predominantly written by men (Hearn & Howson, 2024), who often overlook the suffering of the other half, particularly the subaltern. Men tend to express their emotions through war, fighting, and sacrificing for their purposes. But what did women do during these periods of war? They often remained victims, relegated to roles as *bandis* (maids) and *raqasain* (dancers) in the king's *harems* (courtyards). Women have rarely been the protagonists in these wars, resulting in a lack of historical evidence and documentation about women as fighters. One reason could be that they are emotionally sensitive and cannot handle casualties very well during war. This lack of recognition is hilarious and unjust, not a justified stance from men. The social world around us has been socially crafted, with most of what we know in both physical and conceptual

forms designed by men who were the rulers of their times. At the same time, women's participation has been largely marginalized. I believe this is primarily due to the scarcity of feminine texts (Zeiny, 2024). Until the first half of the twentieth century, texts written by women made up less than one percent of all published works. As a result, the feminine perspective on history is largely absent, leaving us with a skewed understanding of our collective past. This absence leaves us feeling disconnected from our feminine version. It is like a consciousness that is unconscious of its own femininity.

Women played significant roles during those wars, not on the battlefield but behind the scenes, specifically in decisions about producing and choosing the king's heirs. But unfortunately, only the king had *katibs* (writers) to document events according to his wishes and perspectives, while women had very little opportunity to make their voices heard. One such figure is Zeb-un-Nissa (1638-1702), the eldest daughter of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and great-great-granddaughter of Humayun. She is known for her eloquent use of sensual language. She was born at a time when women writers were discouraged from expressing their emotions in written form; that is why she hid her name and wrote under the pen name *Makhfi* (The Hidden). In her later years, she spent time confined in the Salimgarh Fort in Delhi because of her correspondence with Aurangzeb's rebellious son. Her famous secular, profane romantic verse reveals her true inner expression.

Four things are necessary to make me happy.
Wine, flowers, a running stream and the face of the beloved

Language is not merely a way to represent emotions; it develops a structure that shapes how emotions are interpreted and managed (Bamberg, 1997). Cognitively, the way of thinking or overthinking is strongly influenced by cultural entities. Women are taught from a young age that they are not allowed to desire to express their sensual emotions. Desiring such sensuality is seen as a shameful act and questions their sanctity, their character, and purity. These feelings of guilt, suppression, and self-erasure become part of their personality and identity. This character assassination through emotional suppression leads women to employ self-silencing, which is linked to lower self-esteem and a diminished sense of self, and in turn to greater vulnerability to depression (Jack & Dill, 1992). Dana C. Jack refers to this as the activity of passivity. When desire is framed as shameful or inappropriate, language becomes central; women may end up censoring their inner experiences. This silencing can create a cognitive disconnect between what they feel and what they say, and the consequence of this is emotional disconnection and psychological distress (Jack, 1991).

It is observed that Pakistani women have no medium to express sensual language. It is considered euphemistic in nature and highly immoral. Literature lacks feminist vocabulary and expressions that are more valuable for cultural growth and intellect (Benstock, 1987). This vocabulary gap creates a psychological disjunct in understanding women's sensuality, which exists but is not expressed or processed in a safe environment. This leads to emotional alienation, a gap between inner emotional life and the ability to express or act on it. If we look at the pictorial history of ancient civilizations, it was always portrayed in sculptures, sketches, and even the shapes of their

deities. It was never restricted in any culture, but here this sensual silence is not only becoming a cultural norm; it has also become an automatic thought and an automatic response to these hidden feelings. In literature, generally, metaphorical constructions such as phrases, patterns, grammatical forms, or sentences are shaped in women's daily speech by a regular and healthy sociocultural life, which influences thought processes and structures social reality (Zubair, 2007). Emotional suppression is reinforced by sexist sensual words that objectify women or treat them as obnoxious when referring to their desires. The language mostly used in our day-to-day life; it positions women as passive objects of men's desire. Even street language is used as a threat to disrespect women to control and silence their emotions.

In many local languages in Pakistan, including Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi, metaphors often express men's desire and suggest women's desire as an emotion that must be concealed, controlled, or disciplined (Sanauddin, 2015). This imbalance in language creates a psycholinguistic barrier to recognizing the infringements of traditional thoughts. Women are taught not only to fear social judgment, but also to mistrust their own feelings and sensations. The result is a cognitive and emotional form of self-censorship. This ongoing policing consumes women's energy, creativity, and relational authenticity, while their confined role to the *chador aur Chaar Davari* (veil and boundary walls of home) is mentioned as soul purification and the highest good. A cruel fact is that men do not only subjugate women; women also pass that subjugation on to other women, as mothers to daughters or daughters-in-law. They discouraged free thinking simply to keep them obedient to men, even if they want to tear their bodies. In the words of Giulia Sissa, social construction is supposed to replace nature. But once buildings are built, they stand proud, looking sturdy and, again, natural. We fall into the trap of their facticity (Sissa, 2024). A baby girl is a blessing, but a curse as a young adult, and a burden in old age.

Violence of Forgetfulness: Writing is a Coping Strategy for Painful Memories

Jacques Derrida mentioned (1976) in his book 'Of Grammatology' that the pain of forgetfulness is in the language. Though pain is physical and can only be explained through physical laws, the brain continues to work even when we are not conscious, perceiving, intending, speaking, or feeling pleasure or pain (Armstrong, 2022). Certainly, pain is physical and can be explained through physical laws, but it can sometimes be triggered by mental causes. For example, my friend said he would be at the library by 9 AM, but it's now 11 AM, and he still hasn't arrived. As I wait for him, I start to feel a headache or pain, which goes away after I have a cup of coffee or take an aspirin. This raises the question: did the pain originate from the mental process of *waiting*? Waiting itself is a mental activity rather than a physical one. Additionally, the fact that everything is physical doesn't mean that it cannot be mentally perceived. There is a mental aspect to our experiences; for instance, if my finger is pricked with a pin, I will undoubtedly feel pain. And when that pain becomes a memory, it turns into a trauma. Remembering or recalling certain events or sayings makes us very angry and stressed.

Toddlers have very short memories. During their first three years, they often argue with their parents about what they want, but later they forget about it. I have a daughter who frequently asks for milk. When she asks for it, her mother sometimes redirects her attention to solid foods like bananas, bread, or potatoes. She usually accepts these alternatives and quickly forgets that

she wanted milk. Similarly, she often asks for a cellphone. As her father, I sometimes refrain from giving it to her, and she quickly shifts her focus to other activities like playing with dolls or other toys, forgetting about the cellphone. This short memory span is understandable, as their brains are still developing (Courage & Cowan, 2022). The point is that babies can forget, but not young children or adults. A beautiful couplet by Akhtar Insari (1909- 1988) describes it well.

*Yaade-maazi azaab hai ya rab,
cheen le mujh se hafiza mera*

Is remembering the past a punishment,
O Lord? Take away my memory from me.

That's why some people find relief from the pain in writing. They put their thoughts on paper to free themselves from painful memories that weigh heavily on their minds, day and night. The only way to get rid of it is to write it down and forget it, as if they were merely fictional stories that never really happened.

Pakistan's Cultural Expressions of Sensual Language

The subjugation of individual rights, especially women's rights, is an ongoing process and part of Pakistan's cultural history (Imran, Rahat, and Munir, 2018). Men are seen as providers, while women are cast as nurturers or caretakers in traditional family and home roles. Women's role is not only different but also difficult to accept. In rural areas, they rise very early, work in the fields as laborers, fetch water from long distances, collect firewood for cooking, and carry babies on their shoulders all day (Hewitt, 1989). From this culture, some women became rebellious against their traditional role and became authors, but their writings are not admired and are considered immodest.

It is a true saying that the creators of *Ishaq* (love) are women. Pakistan's local cultural history recalls a time of richer and freer expression of sensuality among women, despite prevailing suppression, when literature like *Behishti Zaver* was taught. From this tradition, some women pursue their lovers in folktales such as *Heer Ranjha*, *Sassi Punnu*, and *Sohni Mahiwal*, crossing rivers, traversing deserts, and facing every danger. They ran away from forced marriage, challenged family control, and refused outdated customs that burdened society. In this way, their actions are a strong sign of sensual will, full of passion and emotional courage. Folk dances are performed with joy, attraction, and emotional expression, specifically in traditional weddings where young girls swirl their skirts, tilt their bodies, and move their arms in often coded but vibrant ways. In a wedding *geet* (song), women sometimes enjoy teasing and playing with verses that refer to bodily and emotional arousal (Anwar, Shahed, & Zafar, 2024). This indicates the sensual agency of South Asian women, which has always existed in the psychological and emotional reality and deserves recognition and visibility.

In this discussion, we will explore notable figures in the history of Pakistani women: Fahmida Riaz, Parveen Shakir, Kishwar Naheed, and Nasibo Lal. These writers are well-known within literary circles, particularly among the younger generation. Their works are often analyzed to understand their expressions within historical and cultural contexts. We will discuss each of these figures individually.

Fahmida Riaz (1946- 2018):

She is a renowned Pakistani poet, offering an unashamed view of the sensual as a transcendent and life-changing experience in her poetry. The sensual imagery she uses attempts to break moral limits, bringing the physical body into full poetic light as a place of existential and spiritual revelation. In her work, Riaz invokes the body as a desiring and knowing entity. She presents the body in her work as both desiring and knowing (Riaz, 2011). She gained recognition for her this famous poem.

Laao, haath apna laao zara
Chhu ke mera badan
Apne bachche ke dil ka dhadakna suno
Naaf ke is taraf
Is ki jumbish ko mehsoos karte ho tum?
Bas yahin chhor do
Thori der aur is haath ko mere thanday badan par
Yahin chhor do
Mere be-kal nafs ko qaraar aa gaya
Mere Isa, mere dard ke chaara-gar
Mera har muwe-tann
Is hatheli se taskeen paane laga
Is hatheli ke neeche mera laal karwat si lene laga
Ungliyon se badan is ka pehchaan lo
Tum isay jaan lo.

Bring me your hand, please.
Touch my body.
Listen to the beating of your child's heart.
On this side of my navel.
Do you feel it move?
Just touch it here.
A little while longer, place this hand
On my cold body.
My restless soul has calmed.
My Christ, the scourge of my pain.
Every hair on my body
Began to be soothed by this palm
Under this palm, my redness began to curl up.
Recognize the body with your fingers.
You should know it.

The poetess explores touch and intimacy (Khattak et al., 2024). The texture and imagery are sensual and arresting, but sensuality is not simply indulgence. It is, at heart, an intensely human and almost sacred experience. Sensuality is bound up with tenderness, trust, and creation, as seen in the imagery of hearing a child's pulse in the womb: '*apne bachche ke dil kā dhadaknā suno, naaf ke us taraf*'. These instances suggest that the sensual is not only sexual, but also generative, involving personal union with the larger rhythms of life. And through verses like.

kūlhoñ meñ bhañvar jo haiñ to kyā hai
sar meñ bhī hai justujū kā jauhar
thā pāṛā-e-dil bhī zer-e-pstāñ
lekin mirā mol hai jo in par
ghabrā ke na yuñ gurex-pā ho
paimā.ish merī khatm ho jab
apnā bhī koī uzv nāpo!

What is wrong with whirlpools in the hips?
The essence of the quest is also in the head.
The heart was also beneath the chest.
But I am the one who is worth it.
Don't be afraid, don't be afraid.
When my measurement is over,
Measure any of your limbs too!

For Riaz, sensualism is a way to reclaim the body and spirit in his poetic realm. It asserts the holiness of the sensual life, challenges the restrictions placed on women, and offers a complete perspective of human fulfillment that includes love, creation, and transcendence. Her bold words

and images not only challenge the limits of Urdu poetry but also celebrate the sensual as a vital part of the awakening of the existential and spiritual self. Further complexity is introduced through reflections on the temporality of desire, as seen in:

*kab tak mujh se pyaar karoge kab tak?
jab tak mere rahm se bachche kī takhlīq kā
khuun bahegā
jab tak merā rañg hai taaza
jab tak merā añg tanā hai
par is ke aage bhī to kuchh hai
vo sab kyā hai
kise pata hai
vahīñ kī ek musāfir maiñ bhī
anjāne kā shauq baḌā hai
par tum mere saath na hoge tab tak*

How long will you love me?
Till the blood of the child's creation
That escaped my womb is shed.
As long as my color is fresh.
As long as my body is tense.
But there is something beyond this.
What is all that?
Who knows?
There is also a traveler in me.
There is a passion for the unknown.
But you will not be there with me.

The main subject of the poem *zabānoñ kā bōsa* (the kiss of tongues) is deeply sensual. Riaz does not obscure the act; instead, she revels in its physicality and taste, as in, *Zabānoñ ke ras meñ ye kaisī mahak hai?* (What kind of scent is in the taste of tongues?). The pairing of taste (ras) with the scent (mahek) and intoxication (nasha) is a hallmark of sensual poetry. In the poem, the female is not passive, but tells of her arousal and transformation, returning to a female point of view on sexual pleasure. The sensual image is not decorative; it is boldly anatomical, as it pushes back against the norms of earlier Urdu poetry that either objectify or deny women's desire.

*Zabānoñ ke ras meñ ye kaisī mahak hai
ye bosa ki jis se mohabbat kī sahbā kī uḌtī hai
khushbū
ye bad-mast khushbū jo gahrā ghunūda nasha
lā rahī hai
ye kaisā nasha hai
mere zehñ ke reze reze meñ ek aañkh sī khul
ga.ī hai
tum apñī zabāñ mere muñh meñ rakhe jaise
pātāl se merī jaañ khīñchte ho
ye bhīgā huā garm o tārīk bosa
amāvas kī kaalī barastī huī raat jaise umaḌtī
chalī aa rahī hai
kahīñ koī saa.at azal se ramīda
mirī ruuh ke dasht meñ uḌ rahī thī
vo saa.at qarīñ-tar chalī aa rahī hai
mujhe aisā lagā hai
tārīkiyoñ ke larazte hue pul ko*

What kind of scent is in the taste of tongues?
This is the kiss whose love carries the fragrance of
wine through the air.
This intoxicating fragrance induces a deep, sleepy
intoxication.
What an addiction this is
An eye has opened.
in the crevice of the dead mind
You put your tongue in my mouth.
like pulling my soul from the abyss
This wet, hot, dark kiss
The Amavas dark, black, raining night.
As coming toward me
Somewhere, there is a moment, forever frightened.
It's flying somewhere in my desert of spirit.
Those courteous moments are coming.
I feel like this.
Darkness of shaky moments

maiñ paar kartī chalī jā rahī huuñ
ye pul khatm hone ko hai
aur ab us ke aage kahīñ raushnī hai

I am crossing it.
These moments are going to end.
Next to it, there is light somewhere!

I will end here and would like to discuss another famous figure who is very well known among young women because of her early death.

Parveen Shakir (1952-1994)

She was a Pakistani poet and a civil servant of the government of Pakistan. She died in a tragic car accident in Islamabad. She brought a distinctive feminine voice to Urdu literature. She began writing poems at a young age and remained a student of the legendary Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984). She published her famous poetry book *Khushboo* (Fragrance) in 1976. In her poetry, she expressed the full image of the female experience in a very delicate way, using different literary techniques. In her poem, *Sabz Madhm Roshni Mein Surkh Anchal Ki Dhanak* (In the soft, dim light, a rainbow shimmered over the red shawl), her feminine sensual sensibility is conveyed through poetic subtlety and rich sensory imagery (Shakir, 2019).

Sabz maddham raushnī meñ surkh āñchal kī dhanak In the soft, dim light, a rainbow shimmered over the red shawl.
sard kamre meñ machaltī garm sāñsoñ kī mahak In the cold room, the scent of breath grew stronger.

Shakir's language creates an intimate sense of physicality. The example of *bazuon k sakht halqe main koi nazuk badan* (A delicate body held in the tight circle of arms) reflects intimate and loving relationships not in a transgressive way, but in a normal and healthy one. The word *anchal*, which originally meant veil, is now reinterpreted as a *dhanak* (rainbow), representing the diversity of female desire and its position in a woman's inner world. The remaining verses of the ecstasy are.

Bāzuoñ ke sakht halqe meñ koī nāzūk badan
silvaTeñ malbūs par
āñchal bhī kuchh Dhalkā huā
garmi-e-rukhsār se dahkī huī ThanDī havā
narm zulfoñ se mulā.em uñgliyoñ kī chheD-chhāD
surkh hoñToñ par sharārat ke kisī lamhe kā aks
reshmīñ bāñhoñ meñ
chūDī kī kabhī maddham khanak
sharmgīñ lahjoñ meñ dhīre se kabhī chāhat kī baat
do diloñ kī dhaDkanoñ meñ
gūñjtī thī ik sadā
kāñpte hoñToñ pe thī allāh se sirf ik duā
kaash ye lamhe Thahar jaa.eñ
Thahar jaa.eñ zarā!

A delicate body held in the tight circle of arms.
Clad in dresses.
but with a slightly loose skirt
Cool air burning from hot cheeks.
With delicate curls, the flirting of soft fingers
A reflection of a mischievous moment on red lips
Sometimes the faint jingle
of a bangle on soft arms
Sometimes the slow talk of love-desire in shy
tones in the beating of two hearts,
A single sound echoed
On trembling lips was only one prayer to God
If only this moment would pause,
pause just for a while!

In this transformation, Shakir restores the sensual to beauty (Sohail, 2026b), tenderness, and personal agency. Despite the lack of explicit language in this poem, the sense of sensual presence is all-important, as emotion takes precedence over the physical. In this portrayal, the female subject is not a passive figure but the main character in her own experience. The voice is conscious, thoughtful, and aware; it questions rather than suppresses and marginalizes women's voices when they express desire. At the end of her poem, Ecstasy, she says '*kash ye lamhe tahar jayein*' (If only this moment would pause, pause just for a while), which speaks to a wish to extend a moment, not just a moment of connection, but a moment where there is no fear in desire. Jouissance is a heightened, physical enjoyment that is not rational and breaks through socially acceptable ways of expression. In Julia Kristeva's opinion, this experience allows the body to express itself through language creation, for a brief interval, disturbing the prevailing symbolic order (Chevaillier, 2013).

Kishwar Naheed (1940-)

She was born in Bulandshahr, British India, and her family migrated after the partition. She witnessed the rape and abduction of women during the riots, which is reflected in her poetry and writings. She had a very difficult life: her husband's early death and raising two children were not easy in Pakistani culture. This led her to write her famous poem, *Hum Gunahgar Auratein* (We Sinful Women).

Yeh hum gunahgar aurtein hain
Jo aahile-jubba ki tamkanat se na roub khayen
Na jaan bachayen
Na sar jhukayen
Na hath joryen
Yeh hum gunahgar aurtein hain
Ke jin kay jismon ki bechaini jo log
Woh Sarfraz thehre in
Niyabat sarfraz thehre in
Woh daaw-e-rahil saaz thehre in
Yeh hum gunahgar aurtein hain
Kay sach ka parcham utha kay niklyen
To jhoot ki sari shahrahton mein mili hain
Har ek dehleez par
Sazaon ki dastanhein rakhi mili hain
Jo bol sakti thein woh zubanein kati mili hain
Yeh hum gunahgar aurtein hain
Kay ab taqab mein raat bhi aye
To yeh aankhein nahi jhukengee
Ke ab jo deewar gir chuki hai
Isay ab uthanay ki koshish na karna

These are we, the sinful women,
Who are not intimidated by those powerful.
Who do not save their lives,
Who do not bow their heads,
Who do not join hands,
These are we, the sinful women,
Those whose bodies are sold,
Those who are honored,
Those who are distinguished,
Those who are judges,
These are we, sinful women,
That we should raise the flag of truth,
The highways are paved with lies,
On every doorstep,
Stories of punishments are placed.
Those who could speak are cut off,
These are we, sinful women,
Even now, if the night is in search of us.
These eyes will not go out,
That now the wall that has fallen,
Do not persist in lifting it!

She expresses the true feminine spirit in her poem, *Asin Burian We Loko*, which serves as a voice and open call to today's male-dominated society. She wrote exclusively like,

*Ab sirf libās rah gayā hai
Vo le gayā kal badan churā kar*

Now only the clothes remain.
He stole the body yesterday!

Nasibo Lal (1970-)

The new Punjabi music is marked by a rich sensual metaphor, rural idiom, and performative excess, which is apparent in the work of a singer like Nasibo Lal. Desire is often expressed symbolically (Sohail, 2026) through images associated with agrarian and domestic activity, which can be explicit yet still carry indirect or subtle meaning (Kruger et al., 2020). One illustrative example is the lyric *Manji De Wich Dang* (A hard stick in the bed) (Lal, 2015). The image of a *dang* (hard stick) is a clear metaphor for penetrative sensual desire and normalizes it by linking it to familiar objects of rural symbolism. These metaphors are not unique; they also appear in phrases such as *Thund paway gi kaleje wich, yaar piyaar di ganderi choop le* (Your heart will cool down, suck sugarcane of love) (Lal, 2006), which openly conveys connotations of women's sensuality. The lyrics *Kurti ye gilli gilli by Nasibo laal* (Lal, 2001) are a vocal expression that represents sensual rhythm and the sounds of physical pleasure, or the intense feelings of desire. These songs are therefore part of the tradition of *mujra* (dancing by courtesans), *kotha* (residence of a courtesan), and other performance cultures, with a texture of veiled explicitness in metaphor and deliberate possibilities for interpretation. This defines Punjabi sensual songs as living texts, where class, gender, and desire are negotiated in culturally specific idioms, rather than through vulgar entertainment.

These native and literary expressions reveal deep psychological processes. Women used poetry and dance as avenues to control their emotions, expressing strong feelings of love and yearning in a creative, safe way. They showed cognitive freedom by creating emotional and symbolic spaces for their desires to breathe, and by shielding themselves from social suffocation. Women, both in the body and in literary characters, claimed bodily control as fuller, more complete human beings. Such remembering, and critical engagement with it, can help modern women reclaim emotional models that empower them to be agents in their own lives.

Sensualism in Neuropsychological Perspective

Language enables us to talk about what we want, but it also shows that our desires can never be fully captured in words (Tayefi, 2023). Language can support communication while also limiting the expression of romantic and sensual desire (Jaurez, 1999). Sensual language is a powerful literary tool for conveying desire and agency, allowing characters to experience inner worlds and social norms. It is not only about desire, but also a catalyst for action, pointing to the complexities of sensual experience and the embodiment of desire (Knoll, 2011). Language is not just an abstraction in the mind; it is tied to the body and its sensual drives (Chevaillier, 2013). Sometimes, language is expressed through the body, psychosomatically, as in stuttering or changes in voice when experiencing emotions. This shows the relationship among mind, body, and words. Psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy often aim to help patients express

emotional language through bodily symptoms in order to increase awareness and promote healing. In the psychosomatic dimension, language is not only connected to the body, but sometimes even impossible to separate from it. The body speaks of a silenced mind.

Sensualism isn't just about expressing wild emotions; it is about being emotionally alive, feeling deeply, and daring to connect with oneself and others. Lorde's understanding of the sensual as an energetic force is rooted in a spiritual dimension of emotions and sensations that can be experienced unconsciously and without being spoken (Lorde, 2017). The individual's moral, cultural, and historical context is an important factor in shaping sensualism (Balzac, 1997). Throughout Pakistan's history, women's sensual energy, the capacity for desire, connection, and emotional freedom has been regulated by the codes of a rigid society and the silence of language. Both dominant and marginalized groups have their own unconscious beliefs about social reality, but the dominant group controls the structure in which those beliefs are expressed (Ardener, 2006). As Elaine Showalter says, women are required to express themselves within a system that is not theirs (Showalter, 1981). Women are a muted group, whose voices and realities are restricted by cultural boundaries they did not create. Consequently, they are not adequately represented in the mainstream (Ardener, 2006). When women are young, they are taught to suppress their bodily sensations, control emotional expressions, and view desires as sinful and dangerous (Zainab, Jadoon, & Nawaz, 2017). If we deny or suppress sensual desires, it does not disappear; it simply changes form just morphs, says Lorde. It becomes objectification rather than joy and connection between people and may lead to abuse as we try to cover up and ignore such suppressed emotions (Lorde, 2007). In a patriarchal society, sensual desire can be especially harsh on women, making them feel guilty and ashamed of their desire. In Pakistan, there is very little room for women to use positive and respectful sensual vocabulary to express and represent the true spirit of culture and its lore stories.

The way language is crafted by social and cultural structures provides an obstacle to sensual expression, leaving their relationship with their body and emotions fragmented. It also explores local folklore and contemporary literary interpretations that have preserved the legacy of women's sensual agency, and how access to that agency might restore it in the present. If that is the case, the body can communicate through symptoms if women are not allowed to express emotions, particularly relating to desire, sexuality, or trauma (Juárez, 1999). This is known as somatization, where psychological stress appears as bodily symptoms. Like, a person who does not express anger or fear in intimacy may become chronically tense in the muscles or develop stomach problems. Stress caused by societal norms and relationship conflicts may stimulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis (Sharan & Vellapandian, 2024), which can result in chronic physiological arousal (Wang & Campos, 2017).

Without a language that is moralized or made shameful, people feel fragmented and alienated from their bodies and feelings. From a neuropsychological perspective, the repression of sensual language and expression can be seen as causing emotional numbness, cognitive dissonance, and a lack of authenticity in relationships. It could also be seen as a path toward restoring sensual dynamism, not only sexual behavior, but the essence of emotional freedom and existential presence. Language and words can modify structures built over centuries, making them greater when they serve as moderators for the new world.

Emotional Regulation defines Cognitive Freedom.

Expressions are indigenous and literary, and they embody deep psychological processes. Women used to express intense emotions such as love and longing through poetry and dance in safe and creative ways. They learned to create emotional and symbolic worlds their desires could inhabit, and to keep the social suffocation at bay. They gained cognitive freedom. Women claimed bodily autonomy through the expression of the body and through the characters created in literature. If these traditions can be recalled and critically engaged, they can help modern women reconnect with models of emotionality that nurture free agency, vitality, and self-trust. Cognitive and emotional re-education is necessary to heal sensual alienation. Language renewal is essential, including a fuller, more positive lexicon that allows women to describe feelings and experiences without embarrassment. It should encourage women to recognize and dismantle schemas that stifle and divide their emotional experiences. Emotional courage and sensual vitality can be found in living models from cultural reengagement (Wang & Campos, 2017) with indigenous traditions and literary works. Sensual agency is not a question of copying imported models or rejecting tradition without thinking. It is about reclaiming the deeper truth: emotional aliveness, sensuality, and connections. These are natural drives of human life, and women have always struggled throughout history to claim them.

On the neuropsychological level, these barriers contribute to emotional fragmentation. If someone internalizes guilt, shame, or fear about their sensual expression, there is a disconnection between the inner and outer self. This internal battle leads to cognitive dissonance and affects brain regions that regulate emotions and manage conflict, such as the prefrontal cortex and amygdala. Difficulties with emotional regulation can result in anxiety, stress, depression, and reduced emotional authenticity, all due to stress. These psychological effects can ultimately reduce intimacy and further fracture selfhood. The brain is organic; it can change and offers a possibility for healing. Engaging in sensual language, whether through writing, talking, or therapy, can help reorganize neural networks. This re-engagement activates parts of the brain responsible for arousal, pleasure, and emotional connection (Bamberg, 1997). As these channels reopen, people can begin to feel congruence between their sensuality and their feelings. Therefore, therapeutic and expressive interventions that support the recovery of sensual expression can help revitalize the emotional regulation of sensuality and facilitate a more holistic and fuller experience of desire and relational presence.

Conclusion

The violence of forgetfulness lies in language, especially when that language becomes text or writing (Derrida, & Spivak, 1976). It helps us forget painful memories. But in our scenario, people are not used to writing things down, and this is what those characters did in their lives. It is not a suppression of women's sensuality per se; it is suppressed by cognitive and social mechanisms that embed the idea of restraining emotions and distrusting the body in women. The core of emotional and sensual energy, however, is woven into the stories, dances, folktales, and literature of the day. The recovery of women's expressive agency today must overcome internal divisions and barriers, reclaim lost emotional worlds, and assert the human right to feel

and desire, and to express without fear. Sensual alienation can only be healed through cognitive and emotional re-education.

Linguistic renewal is essential: women need more positive, affirming language to name emotions and experiences without shame (Sanauddin, 2015). It should foster women's awareness and reveal the internalized schemas that may be inhibiting and fragmenting their emotional lives. Emotional courage and sensual vitality can be found in living models found in cultural re-engagement with indigenous and literary traditions. No, reclaiming sensual agency is not about copying imported models and rebelling against tradition without any critical perspective whatsoever. It is about returning to a deeper truth: emotional aliveness, sensuality, and connection are natural parts of human existence, and women have always been fighting to claim them.

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