

Silenced Transitions: Cultural Invisibility of Menopause and
Women's Psychological Self-Construction in Literary Narratives

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ABSTRACT

Menopause remains one of the most culturally silenced transitions in women's lives, often positioned at the margins of literary representation. While puberty and motherhood occupy significant narrative space, menopause frequently appears as absence, metaphor, or decline. This paper examines how the cultural invisibility of menopause in literary narratives influences women's psychological self-construction. Drawing upon feminist psychology, narrative identity theory, and secondary scholarship on ageing and gender, the study explores the relationship between representation, silence, and internalized identity formation. When menopausal experiences remain under-represented or stigmatized, women may encounter disruptions in self-hood, feelings of bodily alienation, and identity fragmentation, shaped by youth-centric cultural frameworks. By analyzing critical literature and theoretical perspectives, the paper argues that narrative absence is not neutral but psychologically consequential. However, emerging autobiographical and feminist texts challenge this erasure by reframing menopause as a transformation rather than a decline. Through an interdisciplinary theoretical approach, this study positions menopause not

merely as a biological transition but as a culturally mediated psychological experience shaped by narrative power.

Keywords: Menopause, Narrative identity, Feminist psychology, Cultural silence, Self-hood.
