

Rupi Kaur's *home body*: Re-telling the Tales of Contemporary Women

Aanchal Arora and Manju

Abstract

This article explores Rupi Kaur's poetry, especially her collection *home body* (2020), using the framework of third wave of feminism as it was conceptualized by Elaine Showalter's groundbreaking feminist critical theory Gynocriticism. Gynocriticism sheds light on the complex web of female authorship, images, and feminine experiences, ideologies, and the development of a particular female literary heritage. Kaur emerges as the prototypical third-wave poet, going beyond the confines of feminism to examine a wide range of subjects. Her poetic subject matter includes difficult subjects like immigration, transgender rights, friendship with men, the tragic legacy of the Sikh genocide, and difficulties with mental health that result from separation from loved ones.

Keywords: gynocriticism, home body, female phase, feminism, Rupi Kaur

Introduction

Rupi Kaur is a Canadian poet, illustrator, photographer, and author. Her poetry frequently addresses issues related to women's strength and dignity and satirizes patriarchal systems and stereotypical codes of conduct. Female empowerment has been a major theme in many of Kaur's works. She uses poetry to communicate ideas. Her works *milk and money* (2014) and *the sun and her flowers* (2019) emphasize the barriers that women face in their lives, including anguish, sorrow, manipulation, and so forth. *home body* examines the dignity, status, suffering, and inner self of a woman. The guided writing exercises in her latest book *healing through words* investigate the themes of trauma, loss, heartbreak, love, healing, and self-celebration.¹ *Home body* serves as a reminder to readers to refuel on love, acceptance, community, and family while also embracing change through a collection of candid, unvarnished, discussions with oneself. The book presents themes related to nature and nurture, light and dark, and the author's illustrations. Kaur takes readers on an introspective trip that stops to consider the history, present, and potential of the person in *home body*. Kaur's *home body* has not been examined from a feminist standpoint. This study analyzes *home body* through Showalter's feminist theory, Gynocriticism.

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¹ Molly Fischer, "The Instagram Poet Outselling Homer Ten to One: Meet Rupi Kaur, Author of the Ubiquitous *Milk and Honey*", *The Cut* (2019). At: <https://www.thecut.com/2017/10/profile-rupi-kaur-author-of-milk-and-honey.html>.

A Brief Overview of Feminist Criticism

It is possible to use the four feminist waves to analyze historical examples of women's oppression. According to Dennis Walder, all feminist theories work to take over the canon and free it from patriarchy by guiding readers to systematically scan feminine works, genres, and movements.² Pam Morris reminds us the experiences of women differ from culture to culture.³ *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*,⁴ written by Mary Wollstonecraft, marks the beginning of the first feminist movement wanting the moral and social equality of men and women. Later, Virginia Woolf argued that women needed privacy and economic stability in *A Room of One's Own*.⁵ Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949)⁶ generates the European idea that Woman is Man's other; this argument marked the beginning of the second wave. Showalter challenges certain feminist theories in "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (1981).⁷ Peter Barry asserts that Showalter is credited with the term "gynocriticism," which explores the female search for identity and the social construction of gender.⁸ Showalter states that there are two types of feminist theories: first, feminist critique is concerned with women as readers; second, gynocritics is concerned with women as writers. Anita Hill's case is addressed by Rebecca Walker, who expresses her outrage at the oppression of women by males who exploit their power to avoid accountability, while engaging in acts of sexual harassment and other forms of oppression.⁹ Kira Cochrane argues fourth wave feminism focuses on "intersectionality," which tackles how different groups of women are affected by "oppression and discrimination" in society.¹⁰ Concerns about women's pay, reproductive rights, abortion, health, and social, sexual, and religious harassment are raised by fourth-wave feminists.¹¹

Gynocriticism and Origin

Gynocriticism is a late twentieth century critical literary theory and method of literary analysis. It focuses on the feminist-informed analysis of literature with a focus on the experiences, viewpoints, and voices of women in literary works. The broader feminist literary criticism movement, which rose to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s during the second wave of feminism, is where Gynocriticism first appeared. Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own*, which emphasized the

² Dennis Walder, *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

³ Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism: An Introduction*, (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993).

⁴ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: Dover Publications, 1996).

⁵ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (New Delhi: Fingerprint Publishing, 1929).

⁶ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London and New York: Vintage, 1949).

⁷ Elaine Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness", *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1981), pp. 179–205.

⁸ Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

⁹ Rebecca Walker, "Becoming the Third Wave", *Jewish Women's Archive* (January 1992).

¹⁰ Kira Cochrane, "The Fourth Wave of Feminism", *The Guardian*, 10 December (2013). At: www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/10/fourth-wave-feminism-rebel-women.

¹¹ Alia E. Dastagir, "What Is Intersectional Feminism? A Look at the Term You May Be Hearing a Lot," *USA TODAY*, 19 January (2017). At: www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/01/19/feminism-intersectionality-racism-sexism-class/96633750/.

necessity of women having financial independence as well as private space to write about themselves, served as the impetus for the development of Gynocriticism. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*¹² analyzed how women were marginalized, while also examining how women were portrayed in Victorian literature. Gynocriticism is derived from the Greek 'gyne' (woman) and criticism. It is a term that was used to describe feminist literary criticism in a new form that is primarily intended to assess women as writers. Gynocriticism strives to resurrect and rediscover female authors who have been traditionally disregarded or ignored. Investigating the writings of canonical and non-canonical female authors is part of this. Gynocritics analyze canonical texts to unearth hidden or marginalized female voices and viewpoints. They challenge the representation of women characters and their experiences.

According to gynocritics, there is a specific female literary legacy that has been influenced by the issues and experiences of female authors. Themes like the female body, domesticity, sisterhood, and the difficulties women experience in a patriarchal society define this tradition. Elaine Showalter wrote in *A Literature of Their Own* that "It purposefully and collectively concerns itself with the articulation of women's experience and which guides itself by its own impulses to autonomous self-expression."¹³ Gynocritics analyze the language and storytelling strategies used by female authors. They examine how male-dominated literary traditions and styles of the time might be subverted or contested by female authors. Showalter places female writers in relation to the elements of literary culture, such as techniques of production, while maintaining their uniquely female brilliance.¹⁴ The cultural paradigm of gynocriticism demonstrates how the feminine tradition, which creates its own symbols and experiences, can be a beneficial source of strength.

Gynocriticism as Theory

In her essay "Towards a Feminist Poetics," Showalter makes the claim that "Feminist criticism can be divided into two distinct varieties."¹⁵ The first style of feminist criticism is concerned with women as readers and as consumers of male culture; the second type is concerned with women as writers and as producers of textual meaning. Female exploration is a form of self-discovery, which is why Showalter named it gynocriticism. Charles E. Bressler claimed Showalter dispels incorrect cultural stereotypes and depictions of women in canonical literature through gynocriticism.¹⁶ In reality, male critics are interested in their masculine view, in which women are marginal. Showalter claims that "what I mean here by 'male critical theory' is a concept of creativity, literary history, or literary interpretation based entirely on male experience and put forward as universal."¹⁷

Gynocriticism is, in fact, a framework for women in which a woman can evaluate a woman's literature for being aware of the feminine psyche. In addition, gynocriticism, in contrast

¹² Sandra M. Gilbert, and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979).

¹³ Elaine Showalter and Ellen Moers, "A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing", *Science and Society*, vol. 42, no. 3 (1978), p. 359.

¹⁴ Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness", pp. 179–205.

¹⁵ Kenneth Newton, "Elaine Showalter: 'Towards a Feminist Poetics'", in *Women Writing and Writing About Women*, ed. Mary Jacobus (Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 216–220.

¹⁶ Charles E. Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (London: Pearson, 1994).

¹⁷ Newton, "Elaine Showalter: 'Towards a Feminist Poetics'."

to conventional literary criticism, concentrated on the background, subjects, genres, and forms of writing by women. Women's writing and its style have altered and developed into three phases throughout the history of women's literature, starting with the Victorian era and ending with the modern era of writing. The feminine, feminist, and female phases are the three categories that Showalter details. The Feminine Phase, Showalter's first phase, began to develop in the 1970s and was centered on praising and rediscovering female authors and their works. The Feminist Phase, which emerged in the 1980s, went further in its literary examination of gender and politics. The methods in which women's writing addressed questions of gender, power, and oppression, as well as how patriarchal standards were maintained or opposed in literature, attracted the attention of critics. The third phase termed as the Female Phase, began to take shape in the 1990s and afterwards. The notion that women's writing should not be limited to issues or concerns of a gendered nature is emphasized. Instead, it contends that female authors ought to be honored for their varied creative achievements in a range of subjects and genres. This stage supports reading women's literature from a more diverse and intersectional perspective.

Women's literary inventiveness and critical thinking have traditionally focused on dealing with androtexts. The first critical method to acknowledge and emphasize the importance of writings written by, about, and for women was gynocriticism. The female phase takes place in contemporary literature. In the modern period, as opposed to the old one, female writers have more freedom to select the subject matter of their writing. They no longer feel embarrassed if they are writing about the female body. Additionally, women authors no longer see their writing or literary creations as only a weapon for them to employ against males. They view literature as a kind of expression that may be utilized to describe or explain women as they are. Rupi Kaur is one of the female authors of modern literature, and she is forthright about expressing her views on women's issues in her works. This article presents the argument that *home body* not only demonstrates gynotext in its purest form but also serves as a role model for other female poets.

Gynocriticism and Literature

Sogra Nodeh and Farideh Pourgivi had a scholarly discussion about gynocriticism research, looking at the changing viewpoints and approaches used in the examination of women's literature and its importance in the field of literary criticism. In Adrienne Rich's *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*,¹⁸ a gynocritic forms a cultural locus of the female abstract identity that is examined in this study. It describes the forces that connect the cultural field of the female writer with the social context in which these forces occur. Rich effectively invoked the symbolic weight of female awareness by locating females in a female place.¹⁹ Research on short stories written by women from various ethnic backgrounds was done by Evi Jovia Putri. Her study demonstrates the

¹⁸ Adrienne Rich, *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far: Poems 1978-1981* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981).

¹⁹ Sogra Nodeh, and Farideh Pourgivi, "Showalter's Gynocriticism: Female Wild Zone of Experience in Adrienne Rich's *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*", *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, vol. 3, no. 4 (2012), pp. 2-12.

viewpoints of women from varied backgrounds on five different continents. Patriarchal culture is also examined to interpret the literature. The outcome is that female authors are attempting to convey the challenges of being a woman, both young and old. The inability of the male characters in the stories to comprehend the desires and thoughts of women serves as evidence. Additionally, she shows how patriarchal settings make it difficult for women to be heard or understood.²⁰ Azadeh Nouri and Fatemeh Aziz Mohammadi examined the heroine's internalized consciousness and how it echoed in their behavior in *Wolf Alice* by Angela Carter. They argued that the female characters in Carter's short stories—including *The Company of Wolves*, *Werewolf*, and—most importantly—*Wolf Alice*—share comparable traits in circumstances that cast them in an unfavorable light and give them less-than-ideal roles. Young women in conflict about love and desire are the main focus of novels; Carter attempts to motivate women to take action in response to this demeaning image.²¹

To illustrate the three stages of female literary evolution (feminine, feminist, and female), Mojgan Eyvazi, Mohsen Momen, and Homa Poorkaramali studied three novels written by Iranian women authors using Showalter's model of gynocriticism. The books are *Don't Worry* (2008) by Mahsa Moheb Ali, *My Bird* (2002) by Fariba Vafi, and *Hangover Morning* (1995) by Fataneh Haj Sejed Javadi. These novels conform to Showalter's argument about female writers' growth, demonstrating how *Don't Worry* follows the second stage (feminist phase), *My Bird* arrives at the third stage (female phase), and *Hangover Dawn* follows the first stage (feminine phase).²² Nodeh and Pourgiv, and Putri, analyse women's culture (the theory of female culture) in novels and short stories, while Nouri and Mohammadi analyse women's psychology (psychoanalytical criticism) in short stories. Eyvazi, Momen, and Poorkaramali analyse the three stages of women's writing in novels using Showalter's Gynocriticism. Biological criticism, linguistic criticism, psychoanalytical criticism, and woman's culture are the four analytic models used to analyse gynocriticism.

Women Through a Woman Poet

Rupi Kaur's *home body* is concentrated primarily on her own life and emotions which are relatable to many women. Kaur described a variety of events that women go through in her poems. *home body* is a work of literature that supports the objectives and tenets of gynocriticism by focusing on the experiences of women, providing a stage for their voices, and encouraging self-expression and empowerment. *home body* consists of around 200 pieces of prose poetry and poetry. Kaur emphasized the idea of child abuse and sexual assault in *home body*. According to Kaur, sexual assault can occur in both friendships and romantic relationships:

²⁰ Evi Jovita Putri, "Female Experiences in Different Cultural Backgrounds: Gynocriticism on Short Stories of Five Continents", *Vivid: Journal of Language and Literature* (2014), pp. 1–10.

²¹ Azadeh Nouri, and Fatemeh Aziz Mohammadi, "A Study of Carter's "Wolf Alice" Based on Showalter's Gynocriticism", *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, vol. 48 (2015): pp. 1– 8.

²² Mojgan Eyvazi, Mohsen Momen, and Homa Poorkaramali, "A Study of Selected Works of Iranian Female Novelists Based on Elaine Showalter's Gynocriticism", *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, vol. 6, no. 4 (2017): 211.

abuse doesn't just happen
in romantic relationships
abuse can live
in friendships too.²³

She claims in one of her poems that she was unable to distinguish between love and violence:

i have difficulty separating
abusive relationships
from healthy ones
i can't tell the differences
between love and violence.²⁴

She concludes by saying "it all looks the same."²⁵

The cultural model of Showalter indicates that women show their preferences through their body, language, and psyche. Once a muted and silenced woman by giving in to the whims and fancies of men, now expresses herself by being in the "wild zone."²⁶ Kaur makes a daring approach by sharing her story of molestation and how, in her eyes, she became a woman at the age of four:

being molested as a child has been the most confusing experience of my life. to learn sex without having any concept of it has messed me up in more ways than i'm aware of. to feel an orgasm so young. to have my life threatened. to be stretched. bruised. a bit. spit on. to become a woman at age of four. to know fear intimately. have it breathe down my neck. to be numb. stiff. silent. and own all the world's shame at once.²⁷

She publicly accuses a partner of having led her to feel that he was the centre of the universe and that she would perish without him in later poems, one of which she called "predator,"

i was trying to make him the one
and it took me three years to realize
love doesn't work like that²⁸
i couldn't survive without him
this is how men like him
trap girls like me.²⁹

²³ Kaur, *home body*, p. 21.

²⁴ Kaur, *home body*, p. 52.

²⁵ Kaur, *home body*, p. 52.

²⁶ I. Felicita Mary Prabha, "A Critique of Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue Between Sky And Water* Based On Elaine Showalter's Cultural Model Of Gynocriticism", *Literary Endeavour*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2019): pp. 31–33.

²⁷ Kaur, *home body*, p. 24.

²⁸ Kaur, *home body*, p. 53.

²⁹ Kaur, *home body*, p. 54.

“Don't ask me why i didn't leave,”³⁰ she added further. She responded because she was hopelessly in love and couldn't see the way out. She finished it by saying “i'm surprised i got out at all.”³¹ She was taken aback when she realized how strong she was after leaving a terrible relationship. She strives to shed focus on problems that are little and sometimes overlooked, such as concerns with picking a partner or maintaining relationships. She claims:

i'm leaving
cause i'm not happy here
i don't want to reach the end of my life
still having doubts about
the man i've been with
since my twenties.³²

Love in the Life of a Woman

The association between relationships and mental health is clearly bidirectional, however, stronger effects are observed when mental health is the outcome and relationships are the predictor, suggesting that the causal arrow flows more strongly from relationships to mental health than vice versa.³³

Love is a component of happy relationships, and it cherishes life. Kaur discusses the value of a good companion and a healthy relationship: “it took me getting into a healthy relationship/ to realize i shouldn't be scared/ of the person i love.”³⁴ She uses an artwork to explain this poem where a woman is sitting on her man's lap, feeling secure and at ease. She seeks to express affection, through the artwork, “self and partner communication variables, and love orientations were significant predictors of relationship satisfaction.”³⁵ She goes on to explain a partner's qualities in a later poem. Overbeek said young adulthood low-quality partner relationships were a strong predictor of midlife depression, anxiety, and unhappiness with life as well as low-quality partner relationships. Kaur's destructive relationship caused her to experience despair, which is why she places so much attention on a companion's positive qualities:

your partner is supposed to
enrich your life
not drain it

³⁰ Kaur, *home body*, p. 55.

³¹ Kaur, *home body*, p. 55

³² Kaur, *home body*, p. 59.

³³ Scott Braithwaite, and Julianne Holt-Lunstad, “Romantic Relationships and Mental Health”, *Current Opinion in Psychology*, vol. 13 (2017): pp. 120–25.

³⁴ Kaur, *home body*, p. 61

³⁵ Brenda S. Meeks, Susan S. Hendrick, and Clyde Hendrick, “Communication, Love and Relationship Satisfaction”, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, vol. 15, no. 6 (1998): pp. 755–73.

staying when it hurts is not love.³⁶

She illustrates the verse further with a graphic of flowers and sunlight. Flowers enjoy the sun because it allows them to bloom.

Kaur's idea of Feminism

In contemporary society, the right to equality is vital. Today's society values equality between men and women in every aspect of life. According to Kaur, in the modern world, she wants someone who is inspired by her talent rather than afraid of it. "i want someone who is/ inspired by my brilliance/ not threatened by it."³⁷ In contrast to the popular perception of sorrow and misery as the norm for both males and females, Showalter anticipated that women would cherish who they were. She thought that with the aid of a shared framework, women would be able to express their wishes and become what they desired, both of which were forbidden in a patriarchal literary environment. They are expected to change themselves according to the need and interests of their partner. She states: "the reclamation of suffering is the beginning; its purpose is to discover the new world."³⁸ Kaur conveys her acceptance of everything and pride in who she is, through her poetry,

i am not a victim of my life
what i went through
pulled a warrior out of me
and it is my greatest honour to be her.³⁹

Women are more powerful than ever and are thriving in every industry. Women can now speak up and fight for their rights whenever they find themselves in challenging situations. "Women empowerment and economic development are closely related."⁴⁰ A woman who was born with a muzzle is now impossible to keep quiet, according to Kaur. As it is held that everyone possesses a part of God, Kaur also proves that she possesses divine power through her poetry:

"i fell from the mouth of my mother's legs/ into the palms of this world/ with god herself raging
in me."⁴¹

Feminism has been explained variously by sundry critics. Similarly, Kaur comments on feminism:

i'm not interested

³⁶ Kaur, *home body*, p. 66.

³⁷ Kaur, *home body*, p. 78.

³⁸ Showalter, *Towards a Feminist Poetics*, p. 32.

³⁹ Kaur, *home body*, p. 43.

⁴⁰ Esther Duflo, "Women Empowerment and Economic Development," *Journal of Economic Literature*, vol. 50, no. 4 (2012), pp. 1051–79.

⁴¹ Kaur, *home body*, p. 133.

in a feminism that thinks
simply placing women at the top
of oppressive systems is progress.⁴²

She makes it very apparent that having women in powerful positions while others remain oppressed is not feminism. She goes on to suggest that you should live your life as you want without considering how the world defines women “and reject their bullshit definition of what a woman should look like.”⁴³

Women hold each other back from growing because they are afraid that another woman will take their place. She urges the group of ladies to stick together in order to build a strong female community “more women in the arena means more room for all us to rise.”⁴⁴ She discusses trans genders and other women like black women in a white state who haven't received the respect that they deserve and she takes feminism to a new level:

look for the women in the room
who have less space than you
listen
hear them
and act on what they are saying.⁴⁵

Kaur also paid homage to the women who had struggled for their rights so that future generations may live in freedom. She claims that they want her to carry out activities that they were unable to do when they were alive because she feels that she is a part of them.

i can't tell which parts are them
can you see them taking over my spirit
shaking out of my limbs
to do everything
they couldn't do
when they were alive.⁴⁶

Kaur talks about global issues as well as about female identity. The female poets in the female phase address themes that are universal in temperament and were discussed only by male poets earlier. Kaur discusses the value of family and friends. “Family Values provides a major new theoretical account of the morality and politics of the family, telling us why the family is valuable,

⁴² Kaur, *home body*, p. 150.

⁴³ Kaur, *home body*, p. 160.

⁴⁴ Kaur, *home body*, p. 161.

⁴⁵ Kaur, *home body*, p. 164.

⁴⁶ Kaur, *home body*, p. 167.

who has the right to parent, and what rights parents should—and should not—have over their children.”⁴⁷ She uses the example of holding hands to illustrate the love shared by family members:

the love of family
friends and community
is just potent
as the love
of a romantic relationship.⁴⁸

The importance of friendship is demonstrated by different women who confide in one another and maintain a boundary so that no one else can intrude into their personal space and she says, “nothing can replace / how the women in my life / make me feel.”⁴⁹

Love can be compared to friendship. Love is not mandatory for survival, but without friends, life would be incomplete. “Friendship is built into the very structure of human life itself such that human living is living together.”⁵⁰ It is shown through a picture in which a flower is being watered by numerous people, illustrating how one needs all aspects of love to feel complete. You cannot become whole through passionate love. She further states; “i can live without romantic love / but i can’t survive without / the women i call friends.”⁵¹

She and her friends are now adults with busy schedules who rarely have time to get together. They have become overly occupied in their lives and have little time to spare. In a piece titled “friendship nostalgia,” Kaur describes this “we compare calendars just to plan coffee dates / that one of us eventually cancels / cause adulthood is being too exhausted.”⁵²

Kaur explained this in an interview:

When we emigrated to Canada, my mom brought a bunch of clothes from India, which I wore for the early parts of my life. They were all boy clothes because we didn't have the means to buy nice things. So I remember when, in the second grade, my aunt—who worked at a Sears outlet at the time—came over to our basement apartment and gave me these red corduroy pants (they're kind of back in style now) with flowers embroidered on the hem, and she was like, “Try them on.” I put them on, and I remember crying in the bathroom because it was the first time I felt like a girl, and they became my favorite piece of clothing for the next five years.⁵³

⁴⁷ Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, *Family Values: The Ethics of Parent-Child Relationships* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 1.

⁴⁸ Kaur, *home body*, p. 64.

⁴⁹ Kaur, *home body*, p. 69.

⁵⁰ Irene Liu, “Love Life: Aristotle on Living Together with Friends”, *Inquiry*, vol. 53, no. 6 (2010), pp. 579–601.

⁵¹ Kaur, *home body*, p. 71.

⁵² Kaur, *home body*, p. 109.

⁵³ Jasmine Fox-Suliaman, “Rupi Kaur Believes Style and Stanzas Are One and the Same”, *Who What Wear*, 16 June (2022). At: www.whowhatwear.com/rupi-kaur-interview.

She discovered her true self and wanted other women to discover who they are. She thus writes primarily about women's identities. She concealed her Sikh heritage, yet wrote the entire book in lower-case to respect her native Punjabi language. The single case letter is used in the Gurmukhi script, which is used to write Punjabi. She does not even capitalize her name or the book title.

Trauma and Immigration

Most of the world's population is trapped in materialistic things as everyone is chasing materialistic progress. "'Economic man' is presumed to have infinite wants, and economic theory would have us believe that the millionth dollar of a person's consumption is valuable as the first."⁵⁴ These are the things that, according to Kaur, cannot make one feel complete; instead, people require the company of their special one:

we already have the things that can complete us
they just aren't things
they are people
and laughter and connection.⁵⁵

She could not restrain herself from speaking about the bonds of love and friendship. Being herself an immigrant, she also discusses the trauma of immigrants in her works. Her father drove a truck day and night and had to obey the instructions of his boss because the family had immigrated to Canada. She gave the composition the title "a lifetime on the road." She talks about the lives of immigrants: "Working as an immigrant is challenging because you are treated like a second-class citizen, and you constantly worry about losing your job." She portrays her love for her father:

i want to give my dad
a lifetime of peace
for the lifetime he spent
on the road to feed us
i want him to know
what comfort feels like
i want him to see
he's done enough.⁵⁶

Today, the majority of people on earth are suffering from depression. According to NCHS data that 11.2% "of emergency department visits with depression [were] indicated on the medical

⁵⁴ Andrew Bard Schmookler, "The Insatiable Society: Materialistic Values and Human Needs", *The Futurist*, Vol. 25, no. 4 (1991).

⁵⁵ Kaur, *home body*, p. 110.

⁵⁶ Kaur, *home body*, p. 95.

record.”⁵⁷ When someone recovers from depression, it feels like a new beginning. In her book, Kaur focuses primarily on depression equating depression in one of the verses with the longest night; “i’m waking up / from the longest night of my life / it’s been years since i’ve seen the sun.”⁵⁸

She gave this experience the label “awakening” since she was preoccupied with her thoughts. She felt gloomy all around, but she eventually emerged from her sadness. She had a brand-new existence. She also offers guidance under the heading of “stillness” to those who are experiencing despair or a difficult time:

on days you can’t hear yourself
slow down to
let your mind and body
catch up to each other.⁵⁹

She used the example of a woman taking a bath to relax her body and mind, as most psychologists advise in this circumstance. “An approach to treating depression is proposed that consists of adapted cold showers performed once or twice daily.”⁶⁰ Later, she realizes that many other individuals were going through the same thing for a variety of reasons, not just her.

what a relief
to discover that
the aches i thought
were mine alone
are also felt by
so many others.⁶¹

Kaur maintains her Sikh identity while living abroad, and being true to her culture she declares Sikhs are her people and writes for them. In her poetry, she writes about the 1984 Sikh genocide in which more than 3,000 people died, contemplating the victims' suffering and trauma. She claimed that no one could ever let her forget those terrifying days, writing:

our men were
slaughtered in those streets
our women were raped
while thousands were tortured
but no amount of yoga or bollywood
can make us forget the

⁵⁷National Center For Health Statistics, “FastStats – Depression”, *Center for Disease Control and Prevention* (2019). At: www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/depression.htm.

⁵⁸ Kaur, *home body*, p. 131.

⁵⁹ Kaur, *home body*, p.135.

⁶⁰ Nikolai A. Shevchuk, “Adapted Cold Shower as a Potential Treatment for Depression”, *Medical Hypotheses*, vol. 70, no. 5 (2008), pp. 995–1001.

⁶¹ Kaur, *home body*, p. 136.

sikh genocide they orchestrated.⁶²

She places the blame for what occurred squarely on the shoulders of the Indian government “the Indian state denies what they did.”⁶³ She claims that she was unable to remain silent because her community had put up a valiant fight to release her, therefore she will support them. She gives credit to pain and wounds for her ability to write poems:

our wounds are the reason
 i started writing poetry
 every word
 i've ever written was to
 lead us back into our arms.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Rupi Kaur's *home body* stands out as a model of gyno-text that embodies the fundamental ideas of gynocriticism. It draws attention to the changing tastes of modern readers by illuminating their choices for genres and female writing. This emphasizes how crucial it is for women to have the freedom to write in a variety of genres so that they can create the most suitable framework for their topics. Kaur's writing unmistakably belongs to the third stage of female writing, as described by Showalter, despite the introduction of innovative issues like the examination of fatherhood and masculinity in love relationships. In the framework of this phase, her writing is loaded with imagery that explores identity, the feminine experience, and the deconstruction of stereotypes. The way patriarchal structures have historically and enduringly impacted the lives of women is effectively revealed by Kaur's work. She establishes a foundation for healing, affirmation, and resistance through the power of language. She challenges preexisting assumptions while writing about a wide range of topics, including the social context, body and sexuality, sisterhood, self-discovery, mother-daughter connections, loneliness, and female experiences.

⁶² Kaur, *home body*, p. 138.

⁶³ Kaur, *home body*, p. 138.

⁶⁴ Kaur, *home body*, p. 140.