



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## FEMININE SPIRIT IN THE POETRY OF RUPI KAUR

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### Abstract:

Rupi Kaur, born on October 4, 1992 is an Indian born Canadian poet, artist, and performer. Her poetry collections are *Milk and Honey* (2014), *The Sun and Her Flowers* (2017), *Home Body* (2020), *Healing through Words* (2022). Rupi Kaur is famous as an Insta-poet and for the sketches that she draws in the poetry. Feminism has always been a substantial part of her writings. She openly talks about the issues of feminism like upheaval, love, loss, trauma, healing, and necessitate for female distinctiveness. She proficiently highlights the experiences of women, the objectification of the female body, sexual exploitation, breakup, and their reverberations. Kaur boldly describes all harrowing experiences of the lives of young females in the contemporary context through the experiences that would make the reader feel her pains. The present paper focuses on the psychological trauma experienced by the women with great compassion through her poetry and impart a distinct voice to present-day feminine heart. Women, while adjusting themselves in this male dominated society struggle between various emotions like grief, sorrow, self-loathing, dissatisfaction, contentment and resentment together. The paper highlights the feminine emotions subjugated by her never-ending efforts to ascertain their individuality in the midst of incompatible circumstances of the fashionable society.

**Keywords:** feminism, struggle, trauma, individuality, patriarchal

### Introduction:

Rupi Kaur's poetry is particularly for women and teenage girls and about their experiences. She has boldly poured her heart out in her poems and illustrations. Rupi Kaur's poems are restraining desolation for men. She is a Liberal feminist writer who audaciously depicts the exploits of man. She with the assenting vigor uniqueness and her potentials bring out the ruthless truth of the patriarchal society. The reader can observe that her poems pour like a voluble river, illuminating her feelings out. Her poems disclose the struggles of women against men to ascertain their individuality. One can perceive the ideas precisely through the pictures in her poems. The poems are razor-sharp to shatter the reader. Women reader of this collection of short poems will be like observing a reflection of their experiences. The poems distress the reader because of the reflective misogyny replicated in the writing. There are poems where women anticipate love from men, but they get hatred or merely lust and rape. The poems are full of revulsion for men and male relatives who exploited her and treated her ruthlessly.

## Feminism in the poems of Rupi Kaur's "milk and honey":

When Rupi Kaur was 5 years old, her mother handed her a paintbrush and asked "to draw her heart out" (Kaur, milk and honey 2015). Rupi Kaur through her illustrations and poems has opened her heart out and set on a creative journey. Feminist movements have been initiated all over the world to fight for women's right and gender equality and with a view to spreading more consciousness about women's concerns. Men have more freedom compared to women, due to the male dominant set up of the society. Thus, it results into patriarchal ethnicity, where men feel they are more 'vital' than women are. Men believe that they could have authority over women according to their need.

Kaur, in a poem talks about her 'voice', which has been subdued by this male-dominated society. Men of our patriarchal society were well aware of the capabilities of women. Therefore, out of fear of women overpowering this patriarchal setup, they suppressed the voice of women and made her believe that it was for the betterment of the society.

"you were so afraid  
of my voice  
i decided to be  
afraid of it too" (17)

Kaur presents the representative of the marginalized women from her family itself. She presents the example of domestic violence and the suppression of women from her own experience. She expresses how under the pretention of conduct, women are enforced to shut their mouths.

"when my mother opens her mouth  
to have a conversation at dinner  
my father shoves the word hush  
between her lips and tells her to  
never speak with her mouth full  
this is how the women in my family  
learned to live with their mouths closed" (35)

Rupi Kaur is not convinced by the cultural belief that a woman is incomplete without a man and her desire to be by herself echoes in her poetry. She believes herself to be absolute and accomplished. She courageously discards the concept that woman needs a man to complement her. She firmly believes that she can single-handedly enlighten the world with her distinctiveness -

"i do not want to have you  
to fill the empty parts of me  
i want to be full on my own  
i want to be so complete  
i could light a whole city" (59)

Many a times woman feels lonely and then she starts believing that she needs somebody to accompany her. Kaur feels that the healing of a woman begins with the acceptance of the consideration that she is complete in herself and when she looks for support in her own company, "loneliness is a sign you are in desperate need of yourself." (153) Kaur tries to break the parable that existing for ages that a woman is incomplete without a man. She believes that women are made to believe that she needs men to complete her.

"you are in the habit  
of co-depending  
on people to  
make up for what  
you think you lack

who tricked you  
into believing  
another person was meant to complete you  
when the most they can do is complement" (154)

Kaur has complete assurance in the influence of women. She affirms that along with weaknesses women have strength too, “if you were born with / the weakness to fall, / you were born with / the strength to rise.” (156) Kaur recognizes the distress and the despondency of women in this society and offers mental support to them through her poems,

“stay strong through your pain  
grow flowers from it

...

bloom beautifully  
dangerously  
loudly  
bloom softly  
however, you need  
just bloom  
-to the reader” (158)

She feels proud to be a woman. She talks about the capability of women of feeling things to its depth and of their might to break down as well. She says that just the idea or the word ‘woman’ makes her feel complete and accomplished.

“i love that about us  
how capable we are of feeling  
how unafraid we are of breaking  
and tend to our wounds with grace  
just being a woman  
calling myself  
a woman  
makes me utterly whole  
and complete” (169)

She emphasizes upon the qualities of women of maintaining the spirit to subjugation and torture yet their potency to return it with bliss and love to the world. She mournfully reveals the plight of women, wherein the body a woman carries reminds her disasters and abuses she has suffered. The resemblance of female body with that of a museum is very striking. “Your body is a museum of natural disasters” (173) Kaur recognizes the sufferings of women. She expresses that every woman has a whole book of stories of her life and sufferings. She strikingly presents the sufferings and the vigor of women with authoritative and clever stroke.

“our backs  
tell stories  
no books have  
the spine to  
carry  
-women of color” (171)

Rupi Kaur has successfully dealt with the delicate perception and sentiments through her poems. Rupi Kaur’s uncomplicated illustrations give a periphery to the thoughts of the reader. “Kaur’s medium and her treatment of her subjects are tied to one another. Hers is a voice of the future, which is the instantaneous now. There will be others. But we cannot anticipate them nor mimic them nor know where they lead.” (Ali 2017)

## Conclusion:

This paper is the outcome of the study on Rupi Kaur’s poems compiled in her book entitled *milk and honey*. It focuses on the portrayal of women from their sufferings to the stages until they finally become sturdy and empowered. Kaur condemns the patriarchal beliefs that place women as an object for men’s pleasure. Kaur exemplifies tribulations that tyrannize women such as sexual objectification, psychological trauma, and family with male dominant ethnicity. Men have exploited women for ages for leisure and proliferation. On the accomplishment of the avariciousness, women is sanctified and abridged to rein her voice in order to curb her from challenging the man and his ways. Kaur is dexterous enough to present the

epic tale of affliction of women through her poems.

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S1. 2018 (March) ISSN: 2349-9451 (O) /2395-2628(P) <<http://www.ijelr.in> >

