

EXPLORATION OF FEMALE EXPERIENCES ABOUT LOVE, SEXUALITY, ABUSE, TRAUMA, SILENCE, HEALING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN RUPI KAUR'S "MILK AND HONEY"

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Abstract

Women have gone through so much mental trauma, violence, physical and emotional heartbreaking. They had been suffering for their survival, identity as a woman. They suffered a lot for their survival being a part of patriarchal mindset. Women were bounded by their household duties assigned by the men afterwards in 19th century women started their writing imitating men. In earlier times women writers didn't explore their identity as a woman for example Mary-Ann-Evans has written using male name that is George Eliot. Later, women started exploring themselves through their writing. They became aware about their educational and political rights for example Mary Wollstonecraft has written a book called "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman". Following her Elaine Showalter also emerged as a feminist writer. In earlier times female writers tried to prove their intellectual achievements with men but later they were writing about their educational, political and economical rights of women but afterwards in third phase of feminism they broke away all the norms and standards of male writing and started writing for their identity as a woman and equality on the grounds of the sexes. They spoke of social, economical, political and educational rights. In modern times women are more free to express their condition and speaking freely about sexuality, rape, abuse, silence, unspoken pressure etc. Rupri Kaur is one of them. She is the Canadian writer who has written poems about love, hurting, healing, abuse, women's body and its use for lust, silence and women empowerment in her "Milk and Honey". This research paper has adopted analytical research methodology with qualitative techniques with gynocritic approach

Taking into consideration the aforesaid issue the paper offers an attempt to look deep into nature and possibility of variety of emotions, its pain, struggle and strengths.



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Keywords : Women's emotions and experiences, gynocriticism, sexuality, abuse, trauma, silence, mental and physical violence, depression and women empowerment

Research Paper

Title: Exploration of Female Experiences of Love, Sexuality, Abuse Trauma, Silence, Depression, Healing and Women Empowerment in Rupri Kaur's "Milk and Honey"

Many scholar has done research on Rupri Kaur's poems. They are related to mental, physical and emotional violence, depression, abuse, silence and women empowerment. This paper presents my own opinion and my own perception about her poems in "Milk and Honey"

Introduction:

The style of women's writing has been changed in modern women's literature. They have also exploring the some most important issues of women which were not supposed to expose in earlier times due to patriarchal mindset. In earlier times women were not supposed to work freely as men could do. So, Mary Ann Evans even used male name for her writing. Getting influenced by women's writing women's literature came into existence. Feminist writers presented the problems of women through their writing for example Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Elaine Showalter, Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Bell Hooks, etc. They spoke about women's political, educational, and economical rights. They started exploring women's rights on the grounds of the equality of the sexes. In first phase of feminism female writers took efforts to write or to get intellectual achievement. In second wave women protested against male standards and values through their writing and in 3rd phase where they wrote about self discovery of women. Showalter says that women rejected both imitation and protest two forms of dependency and turned instead to female experiences.

By the 2010, feminist pointed to prominent causes of sexual assault and rape culture as emblematic of the work still to be done in combating misogyny and ensuring women have equal rights. Me Too movement gained new prominence in October 2017, when the New York Times published a damning investigation into allegations of sexual harassment made against influential film producer Harvey Weinstein. Many more women came forward with allegations against other powerful men including President, Donald Trump.

Feminist thinker, Simone de Beauvoir has pioneered the roots of feminism which followed by the other feminist writers. She speaks of gender inequality in her "The Second Sex". It is a detailed analysis of woman's oppression and a foundational trust of contemporary feminism. Later, Elaine Showalter, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Bell Hooks, spoke of female identity and problems of women for their survival.

Afterwards, female authors set their task of exploring the problems of women in openheartedly manner. Rupri Kaur, is Canadian writer and one of them. She is one of the best-loved contemporary poetess working today. Her book "Milk and Honey" is divided into 4 sections such as the loving, the hurting, the breaking and the healing which explores the themes such as love, hurting, silence depression, sexuality, abuse, trauma, depression, mental, physical and emotional

heartbreaking and women empowerment etc.
 feeling of love or unconditional love
 i struggle so deeply
 to understand
 how someone can
 pour their entire soul
 blood and energy
 into someone
 without wanting anything in return

A woman cannot understand a feeling of a love, care, emotions of a mother till she becomes a mother. Mother's love is very pure, unbiased and wants nothing in return. A mother pours her entire soul, blood and energy into someone [in her own child] without getting nothing in return. A mother never worries herself before her child. Mother's love is very endless love and unconditional love which poetess is unable to understand.

what am i to you he asks
 i put my hands in his lap
 and whisper you
 are every hope
 I've ever had
 in human form

It is about a man who spends life with the girl. Here she expresses her feelings about her beloved one. When she is being asked that what is he for her? It means he wanted to know his importance in her life. Then a girl put a hand on his lap and says that he is the person whom she was searching for a long time. A lover should be loyal, dignified, lovable so that a girl can feel secure while spending time with him. Here, she puts her hands on his lap, it shows that her fearless attitude and she is happy with him and is secured about her life. Otherwise, in some cases girls don't feel secured with their life partner. So, every girl should get her Prince Charming in a human form.

i know i
 should crumble
 for better reasons
 but have you seen
 that boy he brings
 the sun to its
 knees every night

This poem speaks of disrespect for a woman. A woman should be dignified as she shines the home as sunlight. She gives birth to the new one. She is the producer. But a man every time plays

with the emotions of a wife and brings her on her knees for the sake of his respect. A woman should have crumbled for better reasons but unfortunately it happens for the lust of a man.

you are the faint line
between faith and
blindly waiting

A woman dreams for a person in her life who will understand her, care for her, trust, love, her. She uses the faint line for her future husband because at that time she doesn't know what would happen with her. A girl waits blindly for her future beloved one although she is unaware about his cruel nature. That's why he is faint line between faith and blindly waiting

you
have been
taught your legs
are a pit stop for men
that need a place to rest
or vacant body empty enough
for guests but no one
ever comes and is
willing to
stay

The men can rest into woman's empty body for their sexual pleasure. Men get pleasure from resting in woman's vacant body but they like only guests. They only want to fulfill their sexual desires. They don't want to love or they don't care about women. They rape women and only think about their sexual pleasure but do not want to accept the girl. It is a tragedy of a woman or prostitute who suffers for others lust or sexual pleasure.

she was a rose
in the hands of those
who had no intention
of keeping her

She was a Rose in the hands of those people who had no intention of keeping her. She was pure, delicate, beautiful but not respected by the unwanted people.

I've had sex she said
but i don't know
what making love
feels like

if a man touches and makes sex with a girl without her permission then it is very cruel. A girl may not be interested in him but still a person touches her. It happens in most of the cases that a girl is

sexually harassed so that she doesn't experience a feeling of true love. If someone touches without a consent of her then there is nothing cruel than this act.

sex takes the consent of two

if one person is lying there not doing anything

cause they are not ready

or not in the mood

or simply don't want to

yet the other is having sex

with their body it's not love

it is a rape

Sex takes the consent of two people. If one person is lying there and doing nothing it means that one is not ready for the touch. That person may not simply want to live with a man but still other having sex with her body then it is not love but a rape. Because sex needs feelings for each other. If a woman doesn't have feelings towards a person and he touches her then it is a crime and it is a rape because feeling is important than the body.

i always

get myself

into this mess

i always let him

tell me i am beautiful

and half believe it

i always jump thinking

he will catch me

at the fall

i hopelessly

a lover and a dreamer and

that will be the

death of me

If a girl always depends upon someone who doesn't care for her then it leads to depression. If a girl waits for someone to say that she is beautiful and doesn't get expected answer then it breaks her heart. If a girl jumps high thinking that he will catch her at the fall and doesn't get him then it will be the end of her hopes. It will lead to her death. Hence, think independently and not to get yourself depend upon a man who feels nothing for you.

he only whispers i love you

as he sleeps his hands

down the waistband

off your pants
 this is where you must
 understand the difference
 between want and need
 You may want that boy
 but you certainly
 don't need him

If a man says that he loves you and sleeps his hands towards your waistband of your pants then a woman should understand the difference between love and need. Love is not lusty. A woman may need that person at that time but she does not need him for her life. He only says I love you to fulfill his sexual desire.

perhaps
 i don't deserve
 nice things
 cause iam paying
 for sins i don't
 remember

A woman get a punishment for the crime that is not done by herself. Most of the times she suffers a lot because of someone else's sin

it is a part of the
 human experience to feel pain
 do not be afraid
 open yourself to it

It is a destiny women that they have to suffer for someone else's sin. So, women should not be afraid of it, they should fight with it open heartedly and strongly.

do not look for healing
 at the feet of those
 who broke you

One should not expect good deed from a person who damaged your life. Women shouldn't depend upon men who has broken their heart and made them suffer.

if you were born with
 the weakness to fall
 you were born with
 the strength to raise

A woman is very powerful. She can do anything what she wants to do. If someone weakens her to fall then she has the strength to rise as well as to become a strong one. She is the creator and

destroyer as well.
of the hurtcomes
so will the happiness

If a woman is hurt then she will meet with pleasure also. So, what she need is to be patient. With patience she can handle the saddest situation and turn into a happiest one.

we are all born
so beautiful
the greatest tragedy is
being convinced we are not

We all women are beautiful, strong patient but for the generations we are being taught or convinced that we are not beautiful or we are not strong. Or someone needs to make us understand that we are beautiful. This is the tragedy of a women.

the word
gives you
so much pain
and here you are
making gold out of it

The world gives women so much pain. But it is depend upon them whether to heal their selves or break their selves into pieces. Strength comes from the pain or takes birth from the pain. So it is a golden opportunity to make and feel strong and to increase strength out of pain.

Conclusion:

Women are facing problems of gender discrimination until now and they have to deal with it. They have to fight with this injustice. For that feminism becomes an important issue. Women are expressing their issues, injustice, exploitation, unspoken pain, gender discrimination, abuse, depression, silence as well as sexuality, mental trauma, harassment through their writing. First of all, Simone de Beauvoir has pioneered its roots and many feminist writers came forward to deal with the issues. Women writers have started presenting their issues through their writing which is very important to give them social, political, educational and economical equal rights on the grounds of sexes.

Women have started speaking their sexual abuse, trauma, depression, unspoken pressure openly and making a revolution for the women's rights. Rupri Kaur is also one of them. She is the feminist writer. Through her book "Milk and Honey" she has presented the condition of women and their problems, their body, sexuality, abuse, silence, unspoken pressure, depression and women empowerment. The book "Milk and Honey" is divided into four parts such as the hurting, the loving, the breaking and the healing. Each chapter serves its different purpose. The first section, the hurting, begins with the nerve-racking realities of sexual assault and household issues while the

next part the loving uplifts the reader's feelings with the existence of love. Further the breaking section deals with heart breaks and last part that is the healing, Rupri Kaur sums up by empowering every woman to embrace the beauty within the chaos. These four chapters are about the experiences of violence, abuse love, loss and pain, strength and women empowerment. She advised by this women to be patient and they should get strength from the pain. Overall Rupri Kaur's poems deal with love, abuse, sexuality, violence, silence, loss, trauma, depression, heartbreaking and women empowerment. Hence her poems are about survival.

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