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**Empowerment and Poetry: Feminist Ideas
in *milk and honey* by Social Media Poet
Rupi Kaur
BA thesis**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies how Rupi Kaur (1992), an Indian-born Canadian social media poet who deals with hurt, healing, self-love, and empowerment, empowers women through feminist elements in her first poetry collection *milk and honey* (2014). Kaur has a large number of followers on social media, and an online community that offers a safe space for everyone. She is known for being an advocate of human rights and aims to empower marginalised groups, herself having a doubly marginalised identity, being both a woman and an immigrant.

This thesis consists of an introduction, two main sections, and a conclusion. The introduction describes Rupi Kaur, her practices and importance. The first section gives an overview of relevant literature on the topic of feminist ideas, social media, gender, women's poetry, and Rupi Kaur as an author. It is found that feminist thoughts are available for everyone online and personas like Rupi Kaur help to increase the range of said ideas. The second section is an empirical analysis of selected poems from the collection. The prominent themes in the collection *milk and honey* are mapped, grouped, and analysed. The analysis shows that through her poetic imagery Kaur emphasises self-love, confidence, and the naturalness of a woman. She strives towards creating an independent, confident woman, unconfined by male gaze oriented societal norms. The conclusion summarises the main findings of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Rupi Kaur (1992) is an Indian-born Canadian poet who incorporates empowerment, self-love, hurt and healing in her works. Being both a woman and an immigrant, she belongs in a marginalised group of people. Her first poetry collection, *milk and honey*, was self-published in 2014 while she was in her early twenties. Before publishing a collection, she gained popularity on social media sites, like Tumblr and Instagram, by now having gained more than four million Instagram followers. Thus, she has gained the title “instapoet” (Instagram + poet), like many other similar social media writers. The collection, *milk and honey*, hides several messages of self-love and empowerment.

Using elements from various waves of feminism, Kaur combines the essence of feminist thought in her work to empower her followers. She is known for fighting against male-centred societal norms, going as far as posting a picture of her menstruation on her platform to fight the taboo around menstrual blood. For this reason, it is fascinating to examine the exact messages she sends her followers through her poems. How does social media poet Rupi Kaur empower a sisterhood of fellow women with her poetry collection *milk and honey*? The aim of this thesis is to examine how Kaur empowers her readers all around the world.

Empirical analysis along with close reading is used to conduct the analysis of this collection. The four chapters of the collection are first studied separately and finally, the findings are analysed together. This study does not examine Kaur’s other collections, *the sun and her flowers* (2017) and *home body* (2020), that have followed the first one. Neither does this thesis analyse the illustrations next to the poems. The first section of this thesis gives an overview of literature on the topic of feminist ideas, social media, gender, women’s poetry, and Rupi Kaur. The second section focuses on the analysis of *milk and honey*. Various poems from the collection are examined to uncover elements and themes that Kaur uses.

1. Theoretical background

1.1. The evolution of feminist ideas and the importance of gender

To begin, feminism, in essence, is a social movement that aims to achieve equality and justice between men and women. One of the earliest feminist texts is generally considered to be Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published in 1792 (Zalewski 2010). The piece of writing was released years prior to the first wave of feminism, but it already analysed the struggles of women in society. Feminism as a theory is always changing alongside with society and people's views. The goal of first-wave feminism, happening at around 1840 to 1920, was to achieve equal rights for citizens and abolishing slavery. The second wave of feminism, between 1960 and 1988, focused on women's rights to education, reproductive freedom, and equal rights at work (Looft 2017: 894). Third-wave feminism emerged during the 1990s and mostly focused on the liberation and protection of women (Butler 2013: 42). There is another wave of feminism, the fourth one, which we are currently living in. This begun around the year 2008 and is directly connected to the rise of social media and newer technologies (Looft 2017: 894). Nowadays, feminism has become part of popular culture. Feminism is seen everywhere online and offline with more people gaining access to information and feminist ideas (Banet-Weiser and Portwood-Stacer 2017).

While we are currently living in the fourth wave of feminism, it is difficult to place Rupi Kaur's style in any certain wave. She does have a social media presence which she uses to actively empower her followers but the ideas she spreads are more related to the third wave of feminism. This wave specifically focused on diversity, femininity, intersectionality, and race (Evans 2016: 414). These aspects are all present in Kaur's poetry. Being an immigrant woman, Kaur uses her experiences of colonisation, sexualisation, and racialisation to create relatable poetry and a safe space for a marginalised group (Hagerman

2017-18: 108). With her use of body for subversion, Kaur also exhibits elements of second-wave feminism. Evans (2016: 410) notes that the wave narrative in feminism is not always conclusive and allows for overlapping. Thus, writers using feminist ideas do not have to fall under a certain category or period. What differentiates Kaur from other poets is her large social media following, through which her ideas can reach millions of people around the world. Also, she uses simple concepts that are already known to many and are thus easy to understand and relate to.

According to Channa (1995: 36-39), the existence of feminism (to create equality between men and women) means that there must already exist a male supremacy. She recognizes that gender is a social construct and notes that children are asexual before the age of three and then they later identify with a gender through social learning. Bierema (2002) agrees that from very early on, women are taught by our society to be submissive, caring, and kind towards men, even if it is at the cost of their own feelings. This leads to women feeling that life is not fair and that there is an imbalance in how genders are viewed in our society. Channa (1995: 43) notes that the fact that male and female as genders are different, does not specifically presuppose the need for a hierarchy. This is inherently interesting as there seems to be no reason for the existence of male supremacy. To add, Zalewski (2010) states that radical feminists and liberal feminists can in fact view gender differently and even have differing arguments. This illustrates how the connection between feminism and gender is not always unequivocal.

Seeing as the ideas of feminism can be viewed in different ways, the opportunity to criticise arises. As previously mentioned, Banet-Weiser and Portwood-Stacer (2017) argue that feminism has become so popular that it is now part of popular culture and they note that consumerism has taken over feminism and even refer to the term “commodity feminism”. They also highlight the fact that there are forms of popular feminism that rather reinforce

inequalities than fight against them. Banet-Weiser and Portwood-Stacer (2017) also point out that transgender women are often excluded from the discussions of feminism and are not treated equally. Furthermore, Firth and Robinson (2016) state that feminism requires the experiences of all different kinds of women from various fields. They note that during the height of the feminist movement in the 1970s, the leading women were not specialists but nowadays, feminist knowledge is in the hands of academics. There is a gap between the academic theory of feminism and the everyday experiences of women. Thus, Rupi Kaur's empowering poems are essential as they bring feminist ideas closer to everyday media consumers.

1.2. Feminist ideas and gender on social media

The rise of feminism on social media is directly linked to fourth-wave feminism as this period is interlaced with social media and the development of newer technologies. The ideas surrounding feminism have generally stayed the same, but the means of reaching people have evolved – this is where social media is introduced (Looft 2017: 894). Social media is helpful in many ways, for example, according to Jackson (2018: 38), feminist ideas and thoughts are shared among girls on digital media sites. She refers to Facebook pages that share articles with feminist ideas, such as Everydayfeminism, Rooke, BuzzFeed, and others. An important aspect that Jackson (2018) points out, is that due to the algorithms of such social networking sites, the more a person interacts with a certain topic, the more posts about it are displayed to them.

Sharing various feminist ideas on social networking sites has also led to the organisation of various feminist social movements. Firth and Robinson (2016) state that many online campaigns are shared among feminist social media groups on different internet sites like Twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook. Turley and Fisher (2018: 129) introduce feminist campaigns like #everydaysexism and #AskThicke to illustrate this. #everydaysexism was

founded by Laura Bates in 2012 to gather women's stories about experiences of misogyny and sexism in public spaces and raise awareness. #AskThicke arose in relation to Robin Thicke's song 'Blurred Lines' that had lyrics about harassment in a normalised fashion. The lyrics and the music video were deemed misogynistic, and many feminists started using the hashtag to bring attention to it (Turley and Fisher 2018: 130).

Social media also allows for individuals to occupy safe spaces where they can be themselves. Harris (2008: 489-491) illustrates how newer technologies, like social media, can help young women resist stereotypes and feel less pressure to adhere to gender norms. She also notes that these social networking sites allow for women to create themselves online and occupy virtual spaces within the new discourses of femininity. This shows how social media sites are useful in empowering younger women to stand up for themselves and fight gender norms. Furthermore, social networking sites have been used to establish gendered identities ever since they were created (Cook and Hasmath 2014: 978). For example, a popular internet platform Youtube allows people to post videos about any topic they choose. Many young women also use this site to share their lives and thus their identities online. For example, women interested in make-up can create their entire online personas around it. Content creators such as Tatiana Aleksandra Westbrook (known as Tati Westbrook) and Nikkie de Jager (known as Nikkietutorials) base their social media presence on make-up and beauty which are generally seen as 'girly' subjects in our society. An interesting aspect about Nikkie de Jager is that she is a transgender woman. Born as a male, she used make-up, clothing, and other typically 'girly' elements to find herself as a woman and define her gender (De Jager 2020). This is where her online persona is crucial as it further establishes her as a woman.

In contrast, social media is not always a positive platform for sharing feminist ideas. While it does offer an opportunity for everyone to share their ideas with a wider audience,

there are also people waiting to demolish these ideas. Turley and Fisher (2018: 129) note that women frequently face attacks online that can even go as far as rape or death threats. This is intimidating to the victim as the attack is happening inside their own home and their safe space is violated. Boynton (2012: 539) agrees that it is easy to bully and harass on social networking sites. However, she states that due to this very nature of the social media sites, it is possible for feminists to fight back and offer support. Still, there is much more on social media than just feminist ideas. Ideas about any topic can be shared on these social networking sites. For example, people with strong political opinions (such as Donald Trump supporters in the United States of America, etc) can share their views with others and harass or bully those who do not conform to their ideas.

To add, there is a fair amount of relevant criticism on sharing feminist ideas and movements on social media. As Christensen (2011) argues, many social movements that are spread online on social media sites do not bring actual change but rather make the person sharing it feel better. Still, he agrees that this is not the case in all movements and that there have been ones that spike real change. Also, it is notable when it comes to sharing feminist ideas online that the movement of feminism in social media is not usually very inclusive. Harris (2008: 487) finds that on social networking sites, the feminist cultures mostly consist of white women from the United States. However, she does acknowledge that this is changing for the better as more and more sites attract international attention and are inclusive to all. This is also seen with Rupi Kaur, as being an Indian-born Canadian poet, she does not fall into the aforementioned category of white US women. According to Matthews (2019: 396), social media is actually very useful for black feminists as white feminist women sometimes ignore the struggles and issues of black women. She notes that black feminists are voicing their experiences and speaking out on social media as it offers an opportunity to stand against oppressors. Matthews (2019) brings as an example the #BlackLivesMatter

movement which was co-founded by two black feminists Alicia Garza and Patrisse Cullors-Khan.

1.3. Feminist ideas in literature and poetry

Looking back at world history, feminism does not date back more than approximately two hundred years. Hambur and Nurhayati (2019: 183-185) argue that literature portrays real life and the values shared by society. They recognize that gender inequality is a social phenomenon that is based on feminist ideas and being a social phenomenon, it is also represented in literature. According to Hinkly (2012: 8-10), one of the first feminist characters in literature is a progressive woman named Moll from Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* which is published already in the early eighteenth century. The character in Lady Mary Chudleigh's poem *To The Ladies* and Jane Austen's character Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* are other early feminist characters. All three of these are important because they were progressive at the time. These writers did not believe that men would be making a change in their social behaviour and that women's attitudes about themselves were to be changed (Hinkly 2012: 12). This is a sign of early development in the social movement that eventually gained the name feminism. When it comes to Canadian women authors, Rupi Kaur is following a line of many before her. It is impossible to talk about Canadian female writing without mentioning Margaret Atwood, who is one of the most prominent names in the field. Stead (2009: 20-21) claims that Atwood has actively helped to establish the tradition of new Canadian women authors, while also relying on her predecessors like Susanna Moodie. Margaret Atwood is also connected to feminism, but she herself does not define herself as a feminist writer as she does not consider the term inclusive. However, Atwood has paved the way for new feminist writers as she writes female characters who are complex and have a range of emotions without judgement (Stead 2009: 30).

The form of literature that is most connected to my field of interest is poetry and moreover, women's poetry. Many of the first women poets, from as early as the 18th century to the middle of the 20th century, were generally destined to a life of gloom. Among them were Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charlotte Mew, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton – the latter three having died of suicide (Atwood 2020: 87). Alfred Miles, who published many volumes of nineteenth-century poetry, had a separate section for women's poetry (Thain 2003). According to Thain (2003: 578), this is the first time that the genre of poems by women was specifically noted. From there on, it seems that the genre started being established slowly and has paved the way for many women poets of today. Evans (2001) states that since the 1970s, the idea of women's poetry has been developing rapidly. He notes that since this period, women poets started turning away from patriarchal poetry and claims that this made it possible to start fighting against patriarchy. Still, Evans (2001) notes that this step alone could not have achieved as much, but with this turning point in women's poetry happening around the time of second-wave feminism, it was definitely a major point in the movement. Vickery (2007) also considers the 1970s the times where feminist poets started evolving and challenging the conventional societal norms.

In recent years, with social media platforms becoming more and more popular, many poets, also feminist poets, have moved online to write, publish, and gather followers. According to Matthews (2019: 396), poetry is the perfect form of text to engage with on social media for many young women who are on using social media for empowerment, and there are many 'instapoets' nowadays who share their pieces of writing on social media sites. Matthews (2019: 400) argues that publishing poetry on Instagram means having more freedom over your own image.

1.4. **Rupi Kaur and her empowering feminist poetry**

Kruger (2017) introduces Rupi Kaur as one of the most known poets who have a platform on Instagram. In her poems, she places value on empowerment and self-love while also creating a safe space for a marginalised group of people. However, Kaur is not the only one who publishes her work online. Ghanny (2017) places Kaur into the category of “sad brown girls online”, as Alfred Miles had previously categorised all women’s 19th century poetry as one and notices the similarities between ‘instapoets’ of her kind. Ghanny (2017) states that this formula of a social media poet requires, among other aspects, at least one immigrant parent, estranged native tongue and a sense of not belonging in homeland but also not belonging here. Ghanny (2017) mentions Rahila Maajid, who was a poet on Tumblr, and who turned out to be exaggerating her origins and was very controversial as she seemed to live on shock-factor only. By now, Maajid has removed her poems from her social media platforms and has disappeared. Matthews (2019) however sees many black women poets using Instagram very skilfully to create, publish and market their writing. The examples include Nayyirah Waheed and Aja Monet, who use their platforms for connecting people.

Rupi Kaur (1992) is an Indian-born Canadian poet and an artist who deals with issues such as empowerment, belonging, self-love, hurt and healing in her works. Rupi Kaur first gained her popularity while publishing on Tumblr, a website where individuals could upload anything onto their blogs. Before that, she only shared her writing anonymously (Hambur and Nurhayati 2019: 189). She wrote and self-published her first poetry collection *milk and honey* in 2014 while being in her early twenties. Together with her next collection *the sun and her flowers* (2017), her poetry has been translated into over 42 languages and she has sold more than eight million copies. Her newest collection, *home body* (2020), rose to the top of the bestseller lists all over the world (Kaur 2020). According to Medley (2017), Rupi Kaur is at the moment one of the most well-known Canadian poets in the entire world.

When it comes to Rupri Kaur and other diasporic writers, it is important to examine what is the significance of home and a sense of belonging for her. Helga Merits released a documentary in 2018 titled *Coming Home Soon*, in which a fitting idea is introduced: “Once you have left one country, you have left all countries”. This illustrates how an immigrant does not relate to their home country anymore, but still does not feel at home in the new country. Huggan (2020: 817) argues that Kaur uses experiences of diasporic separation in her works and views herself as an immigrant. According to Bhat (2020), there is a pattern of migration from South Asia to Canada due to various reasons, such as poverty, famine, etc. The first immigrants were often met with racism and discrimination, yet they were adamant in maintaining their ethnicity (Bhat 2020: 301). Rupri Kaur’s family migrated from Punjab, India to Canada in the late 1990s, when Kaur was 4 years old (Fischer 2017). Being an immigrant woman, she certainly has her own experiences, but her story is not always relevant to every single experience of an immigrant. It seems that Kaur herself sees it this way, almost creating a prototype of South-Asian immigrant women, speaking for others she possibly does not have much in common with, essentially having grown up in 21st century Canada. There is no universal immigrant experience and speaking on behalf of a marginalised group of people requires experience that Kaur, at times, seems to lack.

When Tumblr was the site Kaur first appeared, she is currently most active on her Instagram platform. She does have a large following (at this moment, she is at 4.2 million followers (Kaur 2021)), and she has gained a celebrity status in society (Huggan 2020: 816). Kaur’s poems are designed for exactly such social media presentation and Huggan (2020: 818) notes in 2020 the number of Kaur’s followers to have been about 3 million, Kaur has managed to gain 1.2 million new followers in a year. Hagerman (2017-18: 103) marks that Rupri Kaur uses her presence on social media to create a community of self-love and empowerment. This digital sisterhood is composed of individuals sharing their experiences

in a safe online space. This view is also shared by Kruger (2017) who examines how Kaur connects with people on her platform that has become a home for her expression and art. Kaur not only posts her poems on her Instagram account, but also the self-made illustrations that go along with the poems. The visual side is important when it comes to a social media presentation. Because of this visual importance, Kaur's work can be looked at as a phenomenon rather than just a series of poems. However, while Kaur sees women as sisters and her followers as a community, it cannot be said that every single Instagram follower of hers is an active member of a group and/or feels a sense of belonging. It can be argued that Kaur is just another content creator with followers who idolise her as an Instagram persona and do not focus on the deeper issues she dissects.

The reason why Kaur is so popular, especially among women, and why she can be linked to feminist ideas lies in the topics her works touch. She writes about self-love, rape, violence, and hurt. According to Kruger (2017), Kaur has become known for naturalising women's bodies and fighting the taboos around menstruation and giving birth. For example, Bivens and Cole (2018: 11-12) examine how Rupi Kaur posted a photo to her Instagram account of her bleeding through her pants. They note how at first, Instagram removed the image (twice) as it was supposedly violating community guidelines. Later, however, Instagram apologized and reuploaded the photo. In response to this, Kaur (2015) posted the photograph on her Facebook page and added:

thank you instagram for providing me with the exact response my work was created to critique. you deleted my photo twice stating that it goes against community guidelines... when your pages are filled with countless photos/accounts where women (so so many who are underage) are objectified. pornified. and treated less than human ... We will not be censored. I bleed each month to help make humankind a possibility.

This illustrates how Kaur is an active feminist by resisting the objectification of women and bringing up taboo topics. This activism helps women come to terms with their normal bodily functions and fight against misogyny. Many of her poems strive to embrace women as they are.

When it comes to Rupi Kaur's writing style, her poetry is not traditional in its form. She prefers to write her poetry in lowercase and does not use periods, as seen also from the titles of her collections. This is due to her mother tongue Punjabi, written in either Shahmukhi or Gurmukhi script. There are no lowercase or uppercase letters in the Gurmukhi script and the letters are all treated the same. There is also an influence from bell hooks, a woman author who writes her name in all lowercase (Ditsche 2020). Kaur (2020) sees that this writing style brings equality to her poetry and has a level of simplicity. Thus, Kaur notes that she does not try to knowingly break the rules of the English language but rather tries to honour her heritage. Kaur's poems are also untitled. When it comes to how Kaur presents her writing – the visual aspect, and the space it occupies are just as important as the form. These aspects together create the phenomenon that is Rupi Kaur and her self-expression. Thus, her work can be looked at as an art form unconfined by the criteria of traditional poetry. Hagerman (2017-18) states that Kaur uses a non-traditional form of poetry along with marginalized cultural identity. She notes that Kaur's work is about who she is and is surrounded by the aspects of her identity that she has chosen to display. According to Kruger (2017), Rupi Kaur's personality is present in the space she creates with her poems. Instagram as a platform becomes a home for these poems and a community can be built around it. Kaur includes her readers in this space and offers safety for all who are interested (Kruger 2017). In addition, she states that this connection with a community is crucial in healing from years of trauma and inequality that marginalised groups face.

As previously noted, according to Ghanny (2017), both Rupi Kaur and poet Nayyrah Waheed fall under the same category of sad brown online poets that do not feel at home anywhere. Khaira-Hanks (2017) notes how, when Kaur's second collection was announced, Waheed accused Kaur of plagiarising. There are, however, recognizable similarities between the writing styles and topics of these two poets according to Khaira-Hanks (2017) and

Ghanny (2017). Furthermore, Dabiero (2017) claims that it is difficult to distinguish between their poems as they are so similar. She also notes that the fact that Kaur had ignored the allegations is a convincing argument for Waheed. Still, Khaira-Hanks (2017) claims that these plagiarism accusations can undermine the movement that these two authors are trying to start. The imagery that Kaur was accused of plagiarising (the use of honey and water as metaphors) has been used in poetry for many centuries. Belcher (2019) adds that the accusations resurfaced years later when Kaur received a writing award which many people felt like she did not deserve.

Rupi Kaur has also been criticised for her style of writing and her simple poems. Many critics have claimed Rupi Kaur's poetry to be too simple and go as far as to even not recognize it as poetry (McQuillan 2018). Viiksaar (2019), in her review of the translation of *milk and honey* into Estonian, notes that it is hard to criticise Kaur's work as she handles subjects that touch on very serious parts of women's lives in our society, such as rape, violence, and pain. This ties in with Khaira-Hanks's (2017) previously discussed idea that criticism and accusations can overshadow the ideas that the author is trying to uncover to the world. Viiksaar (2019), however, argues that poetry is foremost an artform and not therapy. She sees that Kaur fights for a community (her home country) whose experiences are not actually known to her as she herself mostly grew up privileged in Canada. McQuillan (2018) states that the form of the poems can be seen as simple. Still, when it comes to Kaur, he rather sees a new genre of poetry that is accessible to practically everyone and not just critics that have studied literature for many years. McQuillan (2018) therefore agrees that the simplicity of Kaur's writing is justified. The simpler writing style along with topics that women can relate to, as well as the use of social media is what makes Kaur's pieces of writing accessible to more people. The concepts she uses are known to many people already and are thus easier to understand.

2. Analysis of *milk and honey*

2.1. Methodology

Empowerment in Rupi Kaur's poems is analysed through her poetry collection *milk and honey*, self-published on Createspace in 2014. For this analysis, the version of the collection that was published in 2015 by Andrews McMeel Publishing is used. Empirical analysis along with close reading is conducted. A selection of poems from the collection are examined further to establish how elements relating to feminist ideology are handled by Kaur. The objective is to uncover how Kaur empowers her readers with feminist ideas in her poetry. When it comes to this collection, the most important elements to look for are female empowerment, self-love, hurt, and healing.

The collection *milk and honey* has been divided into four sections: "the hurting", "the loving", "the breaking", and "the healing". The poems in the collection do not have any titles and some of the poems have illustrations. Each of the four parts introduces a different theme and there is a sense of fluent movement from one concept to another. All four of the sections are first examined individually and, eventually, the findings will be analysed together to see their interconnections and the meaning arising from that. Selected poems from each of the sections are observed to uncover larger themes that Kaur uses in her works. These themes are related to feminist ideas and empowerment. The poems will be selected on a basis of their contents. Poems that exhibit Kaur's ideas on empowerment and relate to several other poems in the collection are chosen for analysis. This thesis will not analyse the illustrations that are next to some of the poems.

2.2. "the hurting"

The first section of Kaur's collection is titled *the hurting*. From the title it is seen that the section examines pain and hurt that the author has felt as an immigrant woman. As mentioned in the theoretical section, overcoming feelings of past pain and trauma are known

to many women. An interesting notion that Kaur (2015: 12, 19, 35) describes in her collection is trauma that is passed from the parents and thus the children are affected and carry the trauma into their own relationships. To begin with, on page 12, Kaur describes a first kiss experience. A passage reads “he had the smell of/starvation on his lips/which he picked up from/his father feasting on his mother at 4 a.m.” and the last passage is “and my god/did i feel as empty/as his mother at 4:25 a.m.” (see *Appendix 1: 1*). With this poem, Kaur connects the hurt of two women who are both dealing with men from the same family (the father and the son) and thus with the same pattern of behaviour towards women. The father exhibits this behaviour towards his wife and then his son learns the behaviour and carries it on in his life. The poem also illustrates how this pattern does not seem to have an end in sight, it describes the cycle of pain it causes women. The same pattern can be seen on page 19, where a poem describes that a father yelling at his daughter will make her grow up to trust men who behave in the same manner (see *Appendix 1: 2*). And, finally, on page 35, Kaur takes it even further back by referring to all the women in her family:

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

The woman is silenced by the man and this creates a succession where women are scared to voice their opinions and concerns. They are left alone to deal with the hurt and there is no emotional support from the men in the family. These poems illustrate that trauma and hurt women face are often cyclical in nature and rooted in family issues and relationships between family members.

To continue with family, an aspect that Kaur (2015: 16, 28, 32, 37) also examines is the importance of a father (figure). Garrido and Taussig (2013) claim that the young people who have not had a warm and nurturing relationship with their parents while growing up,

are more likely to suffer from dating violence. This illustrates the importance of parental figures in developing a healthy attitude towards love and relationships. Kaur examines absent fathers in her poems, for example, on page 32: “your mother/is in the habit of/offering more love/than you can carry/your father is absent” (see *Appendix 1: 3*). Here she does not offer any comfort but rather states the truth about this topic. On page 16, a poem reads:

he was supposed to be
the first male love of your life
you still search for him
everywhere
- *father*

And on page 28, a poem reads:

a daughter should
not have to
beg her father
for a relationship

These two poems further explore the relationship between a father and his daughter. They show the disappointment the daughter feels towards her absent father. The poems are constructed in a way that also gives direct criticism towards the men who do not value the relationships with their daughters. However, Kaur also tries to understand the father’s perspective in a poem on page 37:

father. you always call to say nothing in particular. you ask what i’m doing or where i am and when the silence stretches like a lifetime between us I scramble to find questions to keep the conversation going. what i long to say most is. i understand this world broke you. it has been so hard on your feet. i don’t blame you for not knowing how to remain soft with me. sometimes i stay up thinking of all the places you are hurting which you’ll never care to mention. i come from the same aching blood. from the same bone so desperate for attention i collapse in on myself. i am your daughter. i know the small talk is the only way you know how to tell me you love me. cause it is the only way i know how to tell you.

Here Kaur shows that the reason some men do not know how to be close to their daughters is their own upbringing and their own past family life. There is an inability to communicate from the father’s side. This also adds a layer of generational trauma, as Kaur writes in this poem “i understand that this world broke you”, referring to how the father himself did not

have perfect conditions when growing up. Kaur shows understanding towards the seemingly cold absence. While in the previous poems she gives critique, in this poem she seems to be referring to herself and her father and thus offering love and understanding. The narration of this poem is different as Kaur uses the first-person form but the theme of it is similar to the previous poems.

In addition to the family centred issues, Kaur (2015: 22, 38) also observes a larger issue that many women face. It is the notion that some men see sex as something done to a woman and not with her. On page 22, her poem reads:

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 rape

The borderlines of consensual sex and rape are topics that recur in Kaur's work. In today's society, this topic is often talked about as women are voicing their experiences more and more. Most victims of rape are women, and most perpetrators are men (Adams-Clark and Chrisler 2018). Adams-Clark and Chrisler (2018) state that most rapists know their victim and marital rape and rape in intimate relationships is common. However, they note that many people do not consider marital rape or rape in intimate relationships to be a form of sexual assault and would engage in victim blaming (placing the blame on the victim and their choices instead of the perpetrator). They also note that men are more likely to blame the victim in situations of sexual assault. This illustrates how the topic of non-consensual sex is still under debate. With the aforementioned poem, Kaur tries to actively promote the idea that for sex to be consensual, both parties need to give actual consent. In addition, on page 38, a poem reads:

you plough into me with two fingers and i am mostly
shocked. it feels like rubber against an open wound.
i do not like it. you begin pushing faster and faster. but i

feel nothing. you search my face for a reaction so i begin
 acting like the naked women in the videos you watch when
 you think no one's looking. i imitate their moans. hollow
 and hungry. you ask if it feels good and i say *yes*
 so quickly it sounds rehearsed. but the acting.
 you do not notice.

The way the woman in this poem acts is directly related to how the topic of what is rape is under debate. Women have been blamed for men's behaviour and thus feel like they deserve the rape they get. The poem also depicts sex as something from an adult movie – through the male gaze. Additionally, this poem shows how even when a man is trying to pleasure a woman, the actual focus is on the man getting the satisfaction that he pleases a woman. In this scenario, how the woman actually feels is irrelevant and she feels she needs to put up a front as not to bruise the man's ego. This comes down to the society that values male gaze, and the man is the main character and women just exist to perform a role.

2.3. “the loving”

The second section of the collection is titled *the loving*. From the title, it can be seen, that this chapter incorporates feelings of love and happiness. An aspect that Rupi Kaur (2015: 55, 59) continuously emphasises is self-love and self-acceptance. She illustrates how a woman needs to love herself before she can love anybody else. For example, on page 55:

i am learning
 how to love him
 by loving myself

As previously mentioned, McQuillan (2018) notes that Kaur's writing can be considered simple, yet accessible, and this poem is a good example of that. There are only a few words, but the message of the poem, although we have heard it before, is clear. Anyone is able to understand the meaning, and this is how the message of self-love can reach even more people through this poem and Kaur's other works. Kaur also introduces this idea on page 59:

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
 and then

i want to have you
 cause the two of us combined
 could set it on fire

The poem begins by describing how a woman is complete on her own without a man or anyone by her side. It relates to the previous poem as the message here is also that self-love is important because otherwise one would not be able to offer love. Having someone by one's side should not be the aspect that makes them whole but rather the aspect that advances what they already have. This is important because, as previously mentioned, women have been seen as just somebody's wives for a long time and what Kaur does is encourage them to be themselves and find comfort in their own bodies.

Additionally, Kaur (2015: 54, 62) notes in her poems that the body is not the most important aspect of a woman. Personality and spirit are the centre of a person. For example, on page 54, a poem reads:

he placed his hands
 on my mind
 before reaching
 for my waist
 my hips
 or my lips
 he didn't call me
 beautiful first
 he called me
 exquisite
 - *how he touches me*

In these lines, Kaur emphasises mind over body, being exquisite over being beautiful. As women's bodies are subjected to critique, prioritising these elements is important for any young readers of hers. With the title of this chapter being "the loving", this poem exemplifies how love has little to do with the body but with the mind. Prioritising the mind is also seen on page 62 (see *Appendix 1: 4*), where the first verse reads:

he asks me what i do
 i tell him i work for a small company
 that makes packaging for –
 he stops me midsentence
no not what you do to pay the bills
what drives you crazy
what keeps you up at night

These lines show passions of the mind and how deeper desires are more important than societal norms. Paying the bills and surviving in this society is not always connected to what a person's mind actually desires.

In this chapter, Kaur (2015: 60, 74) also examines the comfort of love and how there are many types of love. She mixes the reality of love with the comfort it offers. For example, on page 60, a poem reads:

love will come
and when love comes
love will hold you
love will call your name
and you will melt
sometimes though
love will hurt you but
love will never mean to
love will play no games
cause love knows life
has been hard enough already

This poem describes how love can be comforting but is also a direction so a person would not confuse something else with love. With these lines, Kaur defines the essence of what love is, including the reality that it is not always perfect and there are tough times. Still, she sees that the tough times can be overcome with love and compassion. Kaur takes the idea even further in a poem on page 74:

i need someone
who knows struggle
as well as i do
someone
willing to hold my feet in their lap
on days it is too difficult to stand
the type of person who gives
exactly what i need
before i even know i need it
the type of lover who hears me
even when i do not speak
is the type of understanding
i demand
- the type of lover i need

This is one of the last poems in this chapter and shows the progression. The beginning of the chapter was softer, but this poem is more assertive. Kaur demands for a type of lover, placing the power into her own hands. With women being seen as submissive in society, taking

matters into her own hands by being assertive and voicing her needs is an act of defiance against it. Women are not as intimidated to make demands as they used to be, and these types of poems help reduce the stigma around women asserting themselves. On another level, this poem also reads into the narrative of self-love, as learning self-love leads to being sure about what to want from life and relationships. Thus, giving confidence to voice stronger opinions that may not coincide with the male ideal of a submissive woman.

2.4. “the breaking”

The third section of Rupi Kaur’s collection is titled *the breaking*. Following the softer theme of love, this part deals with broken trust. The first poems in this section describe the sense of being naïve and falling in love with someone who does not deserve it. This is how it is connected to the previous section which emphasises that in order to truly love someone, self-love is needed first. If a woman does not love herself, she will go looking for this love from men who cannot give it. Kaur (2015: 81, 106) examines these ideas in this chapter. For example, on page 81, a poem reads:

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 am hopelessly
 a lover and
 a dreamer and
 that will be the
 death of me

The feelings of being naïve, falling in love, and broken trust are evident in this poem. It is easy to believe the lies of men while not placing value on yourself. With the first lines, Kaur places blame on herself, as if she is the one who “gets into the mess” and not the man who chooses to break the trust. There are two sides to a relationship and trusting everyone should

not be considered a weakness. This is related to a poem on page 106 (see *Appendix 1: 5*), the first verse of which reads:

you treat them like they
have a heart like yours
but not everyone can be as
soft and tender

Here, Kaur introduces the notion that having a trusting heart and giving all your love away can be harmful because not everyone is like that and not everyone can see the kindness and not take advantage of it. This teaches the importance of being careful while choosing men to trust and confide in.

With trust being broken, it inevitably leads to breaking up. Kaur (2015: 142) has compiled a list of things to do after a breakup and made it into a poem (see *Appendix 1: 6*). There are points from one to sixteen that give directions. The first points are to cry and change up the surroundings and buy new things. Point fourteen reads “stop crying at some point.”, which shows progression and healing. This poem differs from the others because of its form and directness. It is as if Kaur decided to hide a form of self-help in the collection for all the women experiencing heartbreak. Still, as a poem it is empowering as the meaning is clear and anyone can relate to it. The overall message of this poem is that it will get better, and a breakup is not the end of the world as it is yourself that you must truly love. The fifteenth point emphasises this “allow yourself to feel foolish for believing/you could’ve built the rest of your life/in someone else’s stomach.”. In society, women often believe that they need a man to feel complete. The message of this poem firmly fights against it.

While this chapter deals with broken trust, it also holds some poems that incorporate feeling powerful and coming to terms with the breakup. Kaur (2015: 95, 97, 119) has mentioned this topic in various poems, for example, on page 95, a poem reads:

i didn’t leave because
i stopped loving you
i left because the longer
i stayed the less
i loved myself

This poem describes how the woman left because she felt like she was not valued. The decision to leave came from her and not the man. Kaur has put “i” in the beginning of each line to represent the importance of the woman narrator. This carries the message that you are the most important person in your life and the decisions you make should be by your own desires. Another poem that has somewhat of a different approach to the same theme is on page 119, and it reads:

you are snakeskin
 and i keep shedding you somehow
 my mind is forgetting
 every exquisite detail
 of your face
 the letting go has
 become the forgetting
 which is the most
 pleasant and saddest thing
 to have happened

With this poem, Kaur notes how leaving someone is both pleasant and sad at the same time. She also sees the moving on process as a snake shedding its skin. This comparison shows the naturality of moving on from people who you no longer wish to associate to. A snake sheds its skin just like women shed toxic men from their lives. One of the most empowering poems of this chapter is on page 97, which reads:

did you think i was a city
 big enough for a weekend getaway
 i am the town surrounding it
 the one you've never heard of
 but always pass through
 there are no neon lights here
 no skyscrapers or statues
 but there is thunder
 for i make bridges tremble
 i am not street meat i am homemade jam
 thick enough to cut the sweetest
 thing your lips will touch
 i am not police sirens
 i am the crackle of a fireplace
 i'd burn you and you still
 couldn't take your eyes off me
 cause i'd look so beautiful doing it
 you'd blush
 i am not a hotel room i am home
 i am not the whiskey you want
 i am the water you need
 don't come here with expectations
 and try to make a vacation out of me

This is an important poem as it shows how powerful a woman can be. It equates a woman with elements of warmth and safety, like “the crackle of a fireplace”, “home”, and “homemade jam”. Also, it shows the difference in wanting something and needing it, referring to how a man wants whiskey but needs water. This illustrates how the aspects that men often seek are the temporary elements that women do not offer. A woman is more than a place to rest without giving it much thought. The poem is truly empowering as it places confidence and self-love above all. It emphasises that it is possible to have faith in yourself and be assertive with your needs in life.

2.5. “the healing”

The final section in the collection is called *the healing*, and it serves as a softer ending to a collection that deals with some heavier topics. The normalisation of the naturalness of women is an aspect that Kaur is deeply interested in. Soumya (2020: 3585) states that traditionally, women’s bodies have been used as metaphors for motherhood and beauty, but feminist poets, like Rupi Kaur, use the female body for subversion. Kaur does not describe the female body as something seen through the eyes of men but rather as something more important, more significant, more real. This is seen in her poem, on page 177, which reads:

apparently it is ungraceful of me
to mention my period in public
cause the actual biology
of my body is too real
it is okay to sell what’s
between a woman’s legs
more than it is okay to
mention its inner workings
the recreational use of
this body is seen as
beautiful while
its nature is
seen as ugly

This poem shows critique towards the society’s disapproval of mentioning anything about the inner workings of the female body. It is seen here that Kaur is against the view of women as just beautiful creatures. This also ties in with the aforementioned social media post by

Kaur about her period. She constantly teaches that the natural bodily functions that women experience are nothing to be ashamed of. Another natural occurrence that is stigmatised in society is body hair on women. This is also examined by Kaur (2015: 165, 176, 193) in her poems. On page 165, a poem reads:

the next time he
points out the
hair on your legs is
growing back remind
that boy your body
is not his home
he is a guest
warn him to
never outstep
his welcome
again

This poem directly shows male disapproval towards leg hair on women. Kaur refers to the male individual as a “boy”, not as a man, which can be seen as a diminutive term towards the male. The poem also shows how men feel entitled to voice opinions on women’s bodies on what they perceive to be attractive. And it gives directions to the reader on what to do upon receiving this unsolicited opinion. Kaur really emphasises the naturality of hair on page 193, where a poem reads:

hair
if it was not supposed to be there
would not be growing
on our bodies in the first place
- we are at war with what comes most naturally to us

She puts emphasis on the simple notion, that the body as a system creates what it needs to create in order to survive and thrive. With the last line, using the word “war”, which refers to a larger scale conflict, she shows how much disapproval of body hair there is. However, Kaur also stresses that the woman has a freedom of choice when it comes to body hair. For example, on page 176, a poem reads:

removing all the hair
off your body is okay
if that’s what you want to do
just as much as keeping all the hair
on your body is okay
if that’s what you want to do

- you belong only to yourself

With this poem, she notes that while there is a general fight against women's body hair in a male gaze oriented society, there is also the matter of free will. A woman can choose how to care for her body without having to feel pressure from either side. This is the reason why this poem is important – it normalises both sides of the conversation without placing blame or forcing something.

As previously mentioned, Kaur has created a digital sisterhood of women who empower each other. This notion that women are allies and should not put other women down for male approval is present in this last chapter of Kaur's collection. In these poems, Kaur (2015: 164, 169, 191) enforces a sisterhood and puts value on supporting one another. For example, on page 164, her poem reads:

you tell me
 i am not like most girls
 and learn to kiss me with your eyes closed
 something about the phrase – something about
 how i have to be unlike the women
 i call sisters in order to be wanted
 makes me want to spit your tongue out
 like i am supposed to be proud you picked me
 as if i should be relieved you think
 i am better than them

The empowerment of women is shown here with the dissatisfaction of being told that other women are not as good. Like with her digital sisterhood, in this poem, Kaur welcomes differences in how women live, think, and just exist. She does not put any one woman on a higher level because she sees all women as sisters, as allies. In hegemonic masculinity, the focus is on male attention and this can lead to women seeing other women as competition. This is exactly what Kaur fights against in these poems. She also incorporates the pronoun “we” when referring to other women to further establish the message that women need each other's support. There is a poem on page 169:

i like the way the stretch marks
 on my thighs look human and
 that we're so soft yet
 rough and jungle wild

when we need to be
 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

And on page 191, another poem:

we all move forward when
 we recognize how resilient
 and striking the women
 around us are

These two poems illustrate how Kaur sees herself as being a part of something larger. There is great emphasis in “we” and “us” as she welcomes all and sees each individual woman as an ally.

In this last chapter, Kaur also goes deep into self-love and acceptance. Previously she touched on it in a few poems, but this part is filled with the same meaning – love yourself unconditionally. There are several short poems that carry the same message and are easy to understand (Kaur 2015: 150, 154, 189). For example, on page 150, a poem reads:

you must enter a relationship
 with yourself
 before anyone else

And on page 189:

you
 are your own
 soul mate

These poems emphasise that accepting yourself and loving yourself for who you are is important. This sends a very empowering message to specifically younger readers who are only just learning about love and relationships. Empowering other women is important to Kaur, as was mentioned before, she has created an entire digital sisterhood of women who look up to her. These are the kinds of messages that Kaur sends these women, and it makes a vast difference in their world. Also, the poem on page 154:

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 compliment you
 when the most they can do is complement

This poem further establishes how it is a norm for women to feel that they need someone by their side to make them feel whole when in reality, all they really need is themselves. With this poem, Kaur directly addresses how the choice of depending on someone else is not done consciously by the woman. With phrases like “you are in the habit” and “who tricked you into believing” Kaur notes that these norms are still present, and the society is what pushes these ideas in the minds of women.

2.6. Findings and Discussion

The four sections of Rupi Kaur’s *milk and honey* form an entity that offers a sanctuary for women who seek empowerment. Kaur has used various techniques to show women that they are more valuable than they think. She gives directions on how to behave and reassures that the naturality of a woman’s body is nothing to be ashamed of. Self-love and self-acceptance are two large elements that are always present in these poems. The collection has a sense of movement from one type of feeling to another. In the first half, Kaur describes the situation as it is – women being hurt by men. She gradually moves on to give women words of encouragement. This leads to creating a new age woman who knows her value and does not allow anyone to dismiss her. It is apparent that Kaur is helping to create a generation of confident women and her position as an empowering persona is important in our society.

It is clear from the poems that Kaur is against the male gaze oriented societal norms that many people are still perpetuating today. With her poems, she not only gives critique, but offers advice and empowerment to women dispositioned by society. Kaur has made the

messages of the poems clear and understandable. She is using her simpler writing style to make the meanings known to any reader who might come across her collection. Kaur hopes that with making women more assertive, the power is slowly taken from men who would have otherwise gained from the submissiveness of women. It does, however, seem from the selected poems that Kaur sometimes lessens men to one-sided primitive creatures. This portrayal is not the most accurate but because of the disposition of women, it is understandable why Kaur focuses foremost on glorifying women and their bodies rather than focusing on the inner workings of a man's consciousness.

This thesis does not examine Kaur's later collections, *the sun and her flowers* (2017) and *home body* (2020) nor does it analyse the illustrations next to the poems. This leaves room for further research and analysis on Kaur's writing style and her use of feminist ideas.

CONCLUSION

Social media poet Rupi Kaur (1992), having gained a vast audience on social media platforms like Tumblr and Instagram, published her first poetry collection (*milk and honey*) in 2014. Kaur deals with themes such as empowerment, self-love, hurt, and healing in her poetry, incorporating a double marginalised identity, being both a woman and an immigrant. This thesis examined how Rupi Kaur empowers women through feminist ideas in her poetry collection *milk and honey*. This study consisted of two sections. The first section gave an overview of feminism, social media, women's poetry and Rupi Kaur as an author. The second section analysed selected poems from the collection and examined the findings.

Rupi Kaur does not belong to a certain wave of feminism, but her ideas certainly are feminist in their essence. Kaur is empowering with her poems that include various messages of self-love, give confidence, and value the naturalness of women. Writing in a simple style and using simple concepts makes her work accessible to many people but also attracts critique. Unique due to her large social media following (4 million Instagram followers), Kaur is not the only social media poet and does carry similarities with some others.

The analysis of *milk and honey* uncovered themes that Rupi Kaur uses to create a collection filled with empowering messages. Through preaching self-love and the acceptance of naturalness, Kaur creates an empowered woman who is brave enough to be assertive in a world centred around male gaze that values submissive women. Kaur explores self-love, hurt, healing, empowerment, and acceptance in the collection through narrating poems in a way that offers clear directions.

It is evident that Rupi Kaur, with her large following, is vital in empowering women towards creating a more equal society. It is likely that Kaur will continue to grow her platform as her ideas are and will be relevant for a long time.

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APPENDIX 1

1. Kaur's poem on page 12 of *milk and honey* (2015):

the first boy that kissed me
held my shoulders down
like the handlebars of
the first bicycle
he ever rode
i was five

he had the smell of
starvation on his lips
which he picked up from
his father feasting on his mother at 4 a.m.

he was the first boy
to teach me my body was
for giving to those that wanted
that i should feel anything
less than whole

and my god
did i feel as empty
as his mother at 4:25 a.m.

2. Kaur's poem on page 19 of *milk and honey* (2015):

every time you
tell your daughter
you yell at her
out of love
you teach her to confuse
anger with kindness
which seems like a good idea
till she grows up to
trust men who hurt her
cause they look so much
like you

- *to fathers with daughters*

3. Kaur's poem on page 31 of *milk and honey* (2015):

your mother
is in the habit of
offering more love
than you can carry

your father is absent

you are a war
the border between two countries
the collateral damage
the paradox that joins the two
but also splits them apart

4. Kaur's poem on page 62 of *milk and honey* (2015):

He asks me what i do
 i tell him i work for a small company
 that makes packaging for –
 he stops me midsentence
no not what you do to pay the bills
what drives you crazy
what keeps you up at night

i tell him i *write*
 he asks me to show him something
 i take the tips of my fingers
 place them inside his forearm
 and graze them down his wrist
 goose bumps rise to the surface
 i see his mouth clench
 muscles tighten
 his eyes pore into mine
 as though i'm the reason
 for making them blink
 i break gaze just as
 he inches towards me
 i step back

so that's what you do
you command attention
 my cheeks flush as
 i smile shyly
 confessing
i can't help it

5. Kaur's poem on page 106 of *milk and honey* (2015):

you treat them like they
 have a heart like yours
 but not everyone can be as
 soft and as tender

you don't see the
 person they are
 you see the person
 they have the potential to be

you give and give till
 they pull everything out of you
 and leave you empty

6. Kaur's poem on page 142 of *milk and honey* (2015):

to do list (after the breakup):

1. take refuge in your bed.
2. cry. till the tears stop (this will take a few days).
3. don't listen to slow songs.
4. delete their number from your phone even though it is memorized on your fingertips.
5. don't look at old photos.
6. find the closest ice cream shop and treat yourself to two scoops of mint chocolate chip. the mint will calm your heart. you deserve the chocolate.
7. buy new bed sheets.
8. collect all the gifts, t-shirts, and everything with their smell on it and drop it off at a donation center.
9. plan a trip.
10. perfect the art of smiling and nodding when someone brings their name up in conversation.
11. start a new project.
12. whatever you do. do not call.
13. do not beg for what does not want to stay.
14. stop crying at some point.
15. allow yourself to feel foolish for believing you could've built the rest of your life in someone else's stomach.
16. breathe.

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Gerda Kalda

Empowerment and Poetry: Feminist Ideas in *milk and honey* by Social Media Poet Rupī Kaur (Võimestamine ja luule: feministlikud ideed sotsiaalmeedia luuletaja Rupī Kauri luulekogus *mesi ja piim*)

Bakalaureusetöö

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Annotatsioon:

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Antud töö koosneb neljast osast: sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist ja kokkuvõttest. Sissejuhatus avab teema tausta ning tutvustab Rupī Kauri ja tema tähtsust. Selle töö esimene peatükk koosneb kohase kirjanduse ülevaatest, keskendudes feminismile, sotsiaalmeediale, soolisele väljendusele, naiste luulele ning Rupī Kaurile kui autorile. Selgub, et internetis leidub mitmeid feministliku alatooniga ideid ning isikud nagu Rupī Kaur on selliste ideede tähtsad edasijagajad. Teine peatükk koosneb valitud luulekogu empiirilisest analüüsist. Selgub, et Rupī Kaur hindab kõrgelt enesearmastust, enesekindlust ning naiste naturaalsust. Tema eesmärgiks on luua ennast armastav enesekindel naine, keda ei mõjutaks ühiskondlikud normid, mis on orienteeritud meeste tähelepanule. Kokkuvõtte esitab käesoleva bakalaureusetöö tulemusi.

Märksõnad: Rupī Kaur, naiste võimestamine, luule, sotsiaalmeedia, feminism

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