

**THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE IN
TEN SELECTED POEMS OF RUPI KAUR'S POETRY
COLLECTION *HOME BODY*: ELAINE SHOWALTER'S
GYNOCRITICISM**

THESIS

By:

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM
MALANG
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Presented to:

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S)

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state the thesis entitled “**The Representation of Women’s Experience in Ten Selected Poems of Rupi Kaur’s Poetry Collection *Home Body*: Elaine Showalter’s Gynocriticism**” is my original work. I do not include my previously written or published by another person, except those cited as reference and written in the bibliography. Hereby. If there is any objection or claim. I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, May 6th, 2026

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Malang, May 6th, 2026

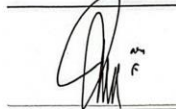
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MOTTO

“Maka sesungguhnya bersama kesulitan ada kemudahan. Maka apabila engkau telah selesai (dari suatu urusan), tetaplah bekerja keras (untuk urusan yang lain). Dan hanya kepada TUHAN mu lah engkau berharap”

(Qs. Al-Insyirah, 6-8)

“We’ve been through all the ups and downs, and we’ll continue to go through it all. No matter what the future brings, there’s nothing left to fear. Let’s go to the absolute present. To that super moment when we’re at our strongest, and standing at the top.”

(Mark Lee)

“It’s okay to feel tired, uncertain, or even lost. What’s important is to keep moving forward and given yourself the space to grow.”

(Cheers to Youth by Seventeen)

DEDICATION

This thesis is proudly dedicated to

My beloved parents,

Papah Susanto and *Bunda* Mama Mauilah

And my lovely sisters,

Najla Fairuz, Meysya Ramadhani

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Alhamdulillah rabbi' alamin, praise to be Allah SWT, the Lord of the Worlds. I offer my deepest gratitude and thanks to Allah SWT for His abundant mercy, grace, and blessings, which have enabled me to complete my thesis titled *The Representation of Women's Experience in Ten Selected Poems of Rupi Kaur's Poetry Collection Home Body: Elaine Showalter's Gynocriticism*. The writing of this thesis is one of the academic requirements for completing studies in the English Literature Department and obtaining a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree. May peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad SAW, the best example (*uswatun hasanah*), who guided humanity from the age of ignorance to the actual teachings of Islam. This religion brings mercy to all creation.

Therefore, the researcher would like to express deep gratitude and sincere appreciation to the following parties who have played an important role in completing this research:

1. Prof. Dr. Hj. Ilfi Nur Diana, M.Si., the esteemed Rector of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islam University Malang.
2. Prof. Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag., Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang.
3. Dr. Agwin Degaf, M.A., Head of the Department of English Literature, State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

4. Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A., my thesis advisor, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for her prayers, support, and guidance throughout the completion of my thesis. I am also grateful for her helpful suggestions throughout the process of completing this thesis and for improving its quality.
5. The English Department deserves special thanks for the knowledge, experience, direction, valuable discussions, and inspiring insights that have enriched the author's academic journey.
6. My beloved parents, Susanto and Mama Maulah, for their endless prayers, love, support, and sacrifices. Their belief has given the researcher the strength to pursue dream and overcome challenges throughout this journey.
7. My beloved siblings, Najla Fairuz Susanto and Meysya Ramdhani Susanto, for their encouragement, motivation, and best wishes throughout this academic journey.
8. Best friend since junior high school, Halimatu sa'diyah, who have always been there to listen to my complaints, encourage, remind to stay focused, and help me maintain my mental health amid pressures and challenges.
9. My friends from my days in the dormitory until now, Firna and Fitri Nur Hidayah. I am so grateful to God for bringing you into my life. Thank you for being my lifesavers. Life no longer feels scary with you by my side.
10. My fellow writer companions, Ike Nabila, Nabila Aliza Rahma, Nafila Zaha Syarif, Mazida Raumi, and Latifatul Ulya, who have always provided encouragement, unwavering support, and assistance in every way throughout the process of completing this thesis.

11. My KKM friends, Rajwa Nabila Arsy Faradina, Fita Ika Fernanda, and Khairiyatul Uyun, thank you for always being there for me from the very beginning until now, providing encouragement, motivation, and so much more.
12. My internship friends, Ni'matus Sholikah, Anggiliana Rutbatil Aliyah, and Zakia Nova Liana, thank you for sticking with it throughout the internship and for remaining friends to this day.
13. To my fellow mentor, Afro Syifa Umariyah, thank you for your time and support throughout the writing process of this thesis. I am deeply grateful to have had you as a companion on this journey.
14. To Jeong Jaehyun, who has indirectly served as a source of encouragement and inspiration for the author to never give up, through his works and the motivation he always shares with sincerity.
15. Shoutout to Nct and Seventeen for being my ultimate mood booster throughout this thesis journey. Your music and energy kept me going, even in the toughest days. You guys truly rock!
16. Last but not least, I want to thank me. I want to thank me for believing in me, I want to thank me for doing all this hard work. I want to thank me for having no days off. I want to thank me for never quitting.

The Researcher



Mumtaz Salsabilla Citra Susanti

ABSTRACT

Susanti, Mumtaz Salsabilla Citra (2026). The Representation of Women's Experience in Ten Selected Poems of Rupi Kaur's Poetry Collection *Home Body*: Elaine Showalter's Gynocriticism. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Supervisor Dr. Hj. Istiadah, MA.

Keywords: Gynocriticism, Female Body, Female Language, Rupi Kaur,

Feminist Literary Criticism

This study examined the representation of women's experiences and the construction of feminine literary language in ten selected poems from Rupi Kaur's third poetry collection, *Home Body* (2020). Elaine Showalter's gynocriticism served as the primary theoretical framework, specifically its biological model (female body) and linguistic model (female language). A qualitative descriptive method was employed, in which ten poems were selected through purposive thematic reading based on their relevance to the two gynocritical models. The findings revealed two interrelated dimensions in Kaur's feminist poetic practice: first, the female body functioned as the principal site encoding trauma, somatic alienation, self-recognition, and identity affirmation across the four thematic sections of the collection; second, Kaur constructed a distinctly feminine literary language through the consistent deployment of lowercase orthography, minimal punctuation, and fragmented line structures, which collectively resisted the formal hierarchies of male-dominated literary traditions. The study concluded that these two dimensions were inseparable writing the female body and constructing a feminine language constituted unified acts of feminist literary resistance. Subsequent researchers are encouraged to extend the analysis by applying Showalter's remaining two models, the psychoanalytic and cultural models, or by adopting postcolonial feminist frameworks to illuminate further the diasporic dimensions of Kaur's work.

ABSTRAK

Susanti, Mumtaz Salsabilla Citra. (2026). Representasi Pengalaman Perempuan dalam Koleksi sepuluh Puisi Rupi Kaur *Home Body*: Ginokritisisme Elaine Showalter. Skripsi Sarjana. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.

Kata Kunci: Ginokritisisme, Tubuh Perempuan, Bahasa Perempuan, Rupi Kaur, Kritik Sastra Feminis

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana pengalaman perempuan direpresentasikan dan bagaimana bahasa dibangun dalam kumpulan puisi ketiga Rupi Kaur, *Home Body* (2020). Studi ini menggunakan gynokritisisme Elaine Showalter sebagai kerangka teoritis utamanya, dengan fokus pada dua model analitis: model biologis (tubuh perempuan) dan model linguistik (bahasa perempuan). Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan literary criticism, dengan sepuluh puisi dipilih sebagai objek analisis melalui pembacaan dan interpretasi tematik yang mendalam. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan dua dimensi yang saling terkait dalam puisi feminis Kaur: pertama, tubuh perempuan sebagai ruang utama yang memuat trauma, keterasingan, pengenalan diri, dan penegasan identitas di keempat bagian tematik kumpulan puisi tersebut, kedua, pendekatan gaya yang khas melalui penggunaan huruf kecil, tanda baca minimal, dan struktur baris yang terfragmentasi, yang secara konsisten digunakan Kaur untuk menciptakan bahasa sastra feminin yang menantang hierarki formal dalam tradisi sastra yang didominasi laki-laki. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kedua dimensi tersebut tidak dapat dipisahkan, menulis tentang tubuh perempuan dan membangun Bahasa feminin merupakan tindakan perlawanan sastra feminis yang menyatu. Peneliti selanjutnya didorong untuk menerapkan dua model Showalter yang tersisa atau mengadopsi kerangka feminis poskolonial guna lebih menerangi dimensi diasporic dalam karya Kaur.

المخلص

سوسانتي، ممتاز سالسابيلا سيترا. (2026). تمثيل تجارب المرأة في المجموعة الشعرية "جسد البيت" لروبي كور: النقد النسوي لإيلين شوالتر. رسالة بكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية في مالانج. المشرف: د. الحاج استياد، ماجستير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النقد النسوي، جسد المرأة، لغة المرأة، روبى كور، النقد الأدبي النسوي

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل كيفية تمثيل تجارب المرأة وكيفية بناء اللغة في المجموعة الشعرية الثالثة لروبي كور، "جسد البيت" (2020). تستخدم هذه الدراسة النقد النسوي لإيلين شوالتر كإطار نظري أساسي، مع التركيز على نموذجين تحليليين: النموذج البيولوجي (أجساد النساء) والنموذج اللغوي (لغة النساء). تعتمد هذه الدراسة على منهج وصفي نوعي، حيث تم اختيار عشر قصائد كموضوعات للتحليل من خلال قراءة وتفسير متعمقين لموضوعاتها. تكشف نتائج البحث عن بُعدين مترابطين في شعر كاور النسوي: أولهما، الجسد الأنثوي باعتباره الفضاء الأساسي الذي يحوي الصدمة والاغتراب والتعرف على الذات وتأكيد الهوية في الأقسام الموضوعية الأربعة للمجموعة؛ وثانيهما، أسلوب مميز من خلال استخدام الأحرف الصغيرة، والحد الأدنى من علامات الترقيم، وبنية الأسطر المجزأة، وهو ما تستخدمه كاور باستمرار لخلق لغة أدبية أنثوية تتحدى التسلسلات الهرمية الرسمية للتقاليد الأدبية التي يهيمن عليها الذكور. وتخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن هذين البُعدين لا ينفصلان، فالكثافة عن الجسد الأنثوي وبناء اللغة الأنثوية يشكلان عملاً متكاملًا من أعمال المقاومة الأدبية النسوية. ويُشجع الباحثون في المستقبل على تطبيق النموذجين المتبقيين لشوالتر أو تبني إطار نسوي ما بعد استعماري لشرح بُعْد الشتات في أعمال كاور بشكل أعمق.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher explains about the background of the study, the problems of the study, the significant of the study, the scope and limitation of the study and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

The voice of women has held an uncertain position throughout the history of the literary tradition, and is often visible through the overwhelmingly male canon. The development of literature for centuries has been considered an intellectual and creative domain for men, so women's literary contributions are systematically dismissed from history (Showalter, 1985) . But often where women chose to write it was under separate names, dismissed by critics and their works banished from classification in the same arena as male authored text – which had a certain universality or objectivity stamped on it that those with an entirely different agenda did not. The first of these illusions is that this gendered hierarchy in literary culture is a historical artefact, not a further reflection of the deeper socioeconomic systems. that regards women as peripheral individuals whose experiences, feelings and perspectives are seen to be less worthy of academic inquiry.

Thus, the circumstance progressively produced feminist literary criticism, which came into its own in the mid to late 20th century as an academic effort to re-evaluate and reaffirm women's contributions to literature. These patriarchal standards of literary value were challenged by feminist criticisms in order to develop more appropriate ways of critically engaging with the misogynistic

language in which male authorship has been judged. However, in its initial, fledgling beginnings this movement was still overwhelmingly obsessed with exposing the ways women were marginalized or misrepresented in writings written by men. Showalter (1985) observes that much of this early critique was by nature reactionary, criticizing what males writers were doing to women, rather than applauding the freedom acquired through adaptively successful female writing.

Elaine Showalter attempted to transcend this constraint through the introduction of Gynocriticism in her essay *Toward a Feminist Poetics* (1979). Gynocriticism shifted critical attention from the representation of women in literature produced by men to women as authors, looking at the specific histories, trends and modes of expression that define women's writing. This results in the fact that gynocriticism would be the most appropriate framework for interpreting *Home Body*, since Kaur's collection is not only a text about women but also one written by a woman from within her experiential and gendered position reflected in literary language that produces baneful of a line distinctly feminine creative sensibility.

Gynocriticism was expanded by Showalter, the first major feminist literary criticism, who defined four analytical models in her essay *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness* (1981) biological model (female body), linguistic model (female language), psychoanalytic trait (female psyche) and cultural storyline (female literary tradition). This study uses two of these four models, namely the biological model and the linguistic model, as they are most closely related to what this research wants to analyze in Kaur's poetics in *Home Body*, namely, representation that

captures women's embodied experience and principles of construction for a feminine literary language.

Within this wider world of poetics, Rupi Kaur has become one of the most recognizable voices in modern-day poetry. Kaur was born in Punjab, India but moved to Canada when she was four years old, an experience that has had a major impact on her writing and the themes she explores. As a poet, Kaur represents the South Asian Punjabi-Canadian diaspora whose poems at this crossroads between diverse identities linked to gender & migratory subjectivity manage cultural memory and trauma healing for millions of people around the globe. Her debut collection *Milk and Honey* (2014) was a worldwide bestseller and was followed by *The Sun and Her Flowers* in 2017 and her current work *Home Body* earlier this year. In all three collections Kaur has made apparent the inner life of women: corporeal experience, psychical pain and fragmentary self-healing.

Despite Kaur's significant influence on contemporary feminist poetry and her wide readership across cultural contexts, academic engagement with her three collections remains uneven. Scholarly attention has concentrated predominantly on her debut collection, *Milk and Honey*, leaving her subsequent works comparatively understudied.

With *Home Body* in 2020, widely regarded as Kaur's most contemplative and thematically complex work. This inadequacy is especially evident here, as *Home Body* represents somewhat of a development in Kaur's literary style, moving away from the explicit trauma narratives of *Milk and Honey* into more introspective territory about self, body-as-space, and the spaces between identity. *Home Body* has

four areas based on themes: mind, heart, rest and awake. And all this is but a piece of the inner world of each speaker.

Two dimensions of the collection are particularly suited to gynocritical examination. The first is Kaur's sustained representation of women's embodied experience, including bodily pain, recovery, and somatic self-recognition, which corresponds directly to Showalter's (1981) biological model of gynocriticism. The second is Kaur's deployment of a recognizably feminine literary language, marked by the consistent use of lowercase orthography, the deliberate omission of conventional punctuation, and the fragmentation of syntactic structures across short, isolated line units. Showalter's (1981) linguistic model of gynocriticism provides a theoretical basis for analyzing such stylistic choices as expressions of gendered literary identity rather than mere aesthetic preference. Taken together, these two dimensions: what the poetry represents and how it represents it, constitute the dual analytical focus of the present study.

Gynocriticism has been employed by certain scholars as a tool for evaluating the writing of women in a range of literary and cultural contexts. Sunendar & Sastromiharjo (2022) examined *Tanah Tabu*, an Indonesian novel by Anindita S. Thayf, applying Showalter's gynocriticism as their theoretical framework. Drawing on 75 textual examples, their analysis demonstrated that the female psyche, as a core dimension of gynocriticism, is directly shaped by the author's gendered subject position. This study is relevant to the present research in that it confirms the productive applicability of Showalter's framework to women's literary texts beyond the Anglo-American tradition.

Ali et al. (2020) conducted a gynocritical examination of Parveen Shakir's translated poetry using Showalter's theoretical framework. Their analysis demonstrated how Shakir constructs a distinctly feminine poetic voice within a literary tradition historically shaped by male authorship. The findings established that female language, as conceptualized by Showalter, functions as a mode of resistance to patriarchal literary norms. This study is particularly relevant to the present research because it applies Showalter's gynocriticism to South Asian diasporic women's poetry, a context that closely parallels the cultural and linguistic positioning of Rupi Kaur.

In a related application, Maemunah & Rahmawati (2025) applied Showalter's gynocriticism as their theoretical framework to analyze the song lyrics of Paris Paloma, examining how a contemporary female artist employs creative expression to articulate lived experience and resist patriarchal structures. Their findings demonstrated that female artistic production constitutes a site of feminist resistance, through which alternative narratives of womanhood are constructed. This study is relevant to the present research in that it extends the applicability of Showalter's theory to contemporary popular forms of women's artistic expression, reinforcing the theoretical foundation adopted in this study.

Gynocritical comparative study is used by Shahadat (2024) employing Showalter's gynocriticism as a framework for a comparative analysis of gendered authorship, examining how male and female writers construct femininity differently in their representations of gender identity. Umt Ur Rashid (2025) applied all four dimensions of Showalter's gynocritical model to Sana Munir's poetry collection

Unfettered Wings, examining how contemporary women poets construct their poetics through the lens of female experience. The analysis revealed multiple, layered dimensions of feminine identity formation within the poems. This study informs the present research by demonstrating the analytical depth achievable when Showalter's framework is applied systematically to a single poetry collection, a methodological precedent that supports the approach adopted here.

Tarigan et al. (2021) studied a particular set of Rupi Kaur's poetry. They analyzed poems from *Milk and Honey* using Showalter's gynocritical approach to analyze how women's bodies and rights are represented in the collection. Their findings describe how Kaur subverts the process of bodily objectification in the name of sexual well-being, expressing female agency and inner strength. However, this study is limited to *Milk and Honey* and only works with the biological model without dealing with the language model or collection *Home Body*.

Based on the feminist theory of Simone de Beauvoir, Hussain & Ali (2021) analyzed *Home Body* and found that women in Kaur's poetry are psychologically enslaved due to gender-based social restrictions. This research has many of the same primary materials as this study, but uses Beauvoir's framework rather than Showalter's, and is less concerned with what marking out a female language looks like. Adzkiya et al. (2022) critic Kaur's *Milk and Honeys* from the standpoint of feminism, contending that Kaur charts a journey from trauma to self-empowerment in the setting of institutional patriarchy.

Siva et.al. (2023) did a study that analyzed *Milk and Honey* from the feminist critical lens examining how Kaur utilized both visual and literary elements

to convey notions of female voice, patriarchal oppression, and feminine sexuality. According to Deka (2020), *Milk and Honey* may be analyzed through gaze theory, feminist vernacular language qualities and écriture feminine perspective further illustrating the numerous ways Kaur constructed the spider's web of feminism in her collection. These studies provide rewarding feminist interpretations of Kaur's work, but none of them specifically apply Showalter's gynocriticism, and all of them analyze *Milk and Honey* rather than *Home Body*.

Taken together, the studies reviewed above can be grouped into three interconnected strands that collectively illuminate the theoretical and empirical context of the present research. The first strand comprises studies that apply Showalter's gynocriticism to women's literary texts outside the Anglo-American tradition, including Sunendar and Sastromiharjo's (2022) analysis of an Indonesian novel, Ali et al.'s (2020) examination of South Asian diasporic poetry, and Maemunah and Rahmawati's (2025) application to contemporary song lyrics. These studies collectively confirm that Showalter's framework retains its analytical relevance across diverse cultural and generic contexts, including the diasporic and minimalist poetic context in which Kaur's work is situated.

The second strand consists of studies that focus specifically on Rupi Kaur's poetry but apply different theoretical frameworks or limit their analysis to a different collection. Tarigan et al. (2021) and Hussain and Ali (2021) examine Kaur's work through the biological model of gynocriticism and Beauvoir's existentialism respectively, while Adzkiya et al. (2022), Siva et al. (2023), and Deka (2020) engage with *Milk and Honey* through various feminist lenses. Although

these studies demonstrate the richness of Kaur's poetry as a site of feminist inquiry, none of them apply Showalter's dual biological and linguistic models to *Home Body*. The third strand includes studies that apply Showalter's gynocriticism systematically to a single poetry collection, such as Umt Ur Rashid's (2025) analysis of Sana Munir's *Unfettered Wings* and Shahadat's (2024) comparative gynocritical study. These studies provide the closest methodological precedent for the present research by demonstrating the analytical depth achievable when Showalter's framework is applied in a sustained and systematic manner to a single collection.

The convergence of these three strands reveals a consistent gap in the existing scholarship: no study to date has applied Showalter's biological and linguistic models simultaneously to *Home Body*, examined both what Kaur represents and how she represents it as two analytically interrelated dimensions of a unified feminist poetic practice, or produced a dual-model gynocritical reading of the collection in its entirety. The present study is designed to address this gap directly.

B. The Problems of the Study

Based on the background elaborated above, this study focuses on two main research questions:

1. How is women's experience represented through the biological model of Showalter's gynocriticism in Rupi Kaur's *Home Body*?
2. How is female language constructed through the linguistic model of Showalter's gynocriticism in Rupi Kaur's *Home Body*?

C. The Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it adds to feminist literary studies by extending Showalter's gynocritical approach through the use of contemporary minimalist poetry from diasporic contexts, a field in which, to my knowledge, little gynocritical scholarship exists. By focusing on a Punjabi-Canadian poet of South Asian descent, this dissertation contributes to the modest but growing field in Indonesian academia that examines diasporic women's literary production and provides a model for fusion of feminist literary criticism with postcolonial and diasporic perspectives.

Practically, this study provides a reference for future researchers who wish to examine Rupi Kaur's work using various theoretical frameworks or apply gynocriticism to the work of other modern poets. It also serves as a methodological model for English literature students who wish to apply feminist theory to literary works. More broadly, this study encourages academics, educators, and readers to treat women's literature as a serious and distinct tradition, deserving of the same rigorous scholarly attention as other canonical genres.

D. The Scope and Limitation

The scope and constraints of the present investigation are as follow, to maintain analytical focus and so coherence. The major data source is a collection of poems titled *Home Body* (2020) by Rupi Kaur and published by Simon & Schuster. This corpus of analysis contains solely texts from this collection. It includes ten poems chosen to correlate to the models of Showalter's. The theory of

gynocriticism is generally reflected into two main models, namely female experience and female language.

The illustrations that go with the text are beyond these boundaries and will not be included in this analysis, it is strictly limited to an analytical interpretation of the verbal and textual mode of the poetry encompassing diction, imagery, symbolism, tone and typographic form. The analysis does not explicitly compare *Home Body* to any of Kaur's prior volumes of poems, nor the biographies outside her diasporic and cultural identities as they apply especially to reading the book. Such delimitations are made to keep the analysis focused, rigorous, and grounded in textual evidence that is based solely on what is available from the original source.

E. The Definitions of Key Terms

a) Representation

Representation refers to the process by which language and narrative construct and convey meaning about experiences, identities, and social realities (Hall, 1997). In this study, it denotes the ways in which women's experiences are expressed through Kaur's poetic choices of diction, imagery, and form in *Home Body*.

b) Women's Experience

Within the context of Showalter's gynocriticism, women's experience is understood as the biological, psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of existence as lived by women (Showalter, 1981). In this study, the term encompasses bodily experience, emotional and psychological life, responses to cultural and social expectations, and the intergenerational transmission of cultural memory.

understood as the biological, psychological, social, and cultural aspects of existence as lived by women (Showalter, 1981).

c) Gynocriticism

Gynocriticism is a feminist literary critical approach developed by Elaine Showalter (1981) that centers on women as producers of literary texts, examining the distinctive styles, themes, structures, and traditions that characterize women's literary production (Showalter, 1981). The framework comprises four analytical models: the biological model (female body), the linguistic model (female language), the psychoanalytic model (female psyche), and the cultural model (female literary tradition). In this study, the biological and linguistic models serve as the primary analytical framework.

d) Female Language

Female language, as theorized by Elaine Showalter in the linguistic model of gynocriticism, refers to the ways in which women employ language in a manner that is stylistically distinct from dominant male literary norms, encompassing choices of syntax, diction, voice, and formal structure (Showalter, 1981). In Kaur's poetry, this is evident in her consistent use of lowercase orthography, the omission of conventional punctuation, and fragmented syntactic structures, which together constitute a distinctive feminine mode of literary expression.

e) *Home Body*

Home Body is the third poetry collection by Rupi Kaur, published by Simon & Schuster in 2020. Organized into four thematic sections — mind, heart, rest, and awake — the collection explores themes of self-healing, identity, belonging, and

the body as a site of memory and recovery. It is also distinguished by Kaur's characteristic typographic style, which employs lowercase letters, minimal punctuation, and short, fragmented lines throughout.

CHAPTER II

THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of the theories used in this study. The researcher will explain feminist literary criticism, gynocriticism, the four models as proposed by Elaine Showalter, and poetry as a literary object. Of the four models of gynocriticism, this study applies two: the biological model (female body) and the linguistic model (female language).

A. Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism is a critical method of reading literature that seeks to study literary texts from the perspective of gender, particularly with regard to the representation of women in literature, and the ways in which patriarchal institutions are either mirrored or contested in narrative and poetic forms. According to Tyson (2006), the purpose of this method is to expose the inequities and ideological formations that are produced by patriarchy, investigating the ways in which language, characterization and narrative structure interact to create the representation of women in literary culture. This approach does not only view women as passive objects in the text, but also sees women as active producers of literary meaning, by paying attention to how female writers articulate their own experiences, consciousness and creative identity (Showalter, 1985). Feminist literary criticism has historically moved through three general phases. An initial phase brought women into writing and literary recognition, a second phase exploring the infiltration of patriarchal ideology into the structures of literary language and representation (Moi, 2002) and a more recent phase that incorporates

intersectional perspectives considering race, class, sexuality and postcolonial positioning as well as gender (Plain & Sellers, 2019).

Within this vast field two major directions are of special relevance to the present study. The first, feminist critique as Showalter (1985) calls it, analyses writings written by male authors, exposing the tropes and patriarchal beliefs entrenched in canonical literature. Showalter's second orientation, gynocriticism, shifts the focus back totally to women as creators of their own literary traditions. Instead of investigating the way male authors produce images of women, gynocriticism is interested in how women convey their own experiences and creative visions in their own literary work. The present study is based on the theoretical framework of gynocriticism as Rupi Kaur's *Home Body* as a subject of research is a woman's work, a work on women's experience and expressed in a distinctly feminine manner of literary expression.

B. Elaine Showalter's Theory of Gynocriticism

Gynocriticism, as formally proposed by Elaine Showalter in *Toward a Feminist Poetics* (1979) and further developed in her essay *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness* (1981). In opposition to the less active style of early feminist criticism that was mostly interested in the bad representation of women by male writers. Showalter, of course, a critique focused on women which would stress the distinctive history, themes and traditions of women's writing. Gynocriticism, as Showalter (1981) has indicated, is focused primarily in the history, styles, themes, genres and structures of women's literature from the perspective that women's

writing constitutes a different literary tradition for which the critical procedures must focus on its particular.

Showalter (1986) also proposed a more particular three historical eras of women writers across time. In the feminine phase, female writers imitate the shape of the aesthetic of the patriarchal exception in order to get canonized as serious writers. In the feminist phase they begin to challenge the patriarchal literary culture, expressing separate points of view. The female phase is when women writers go from reaction against the establishment of a female literary identity, writing coming out of the heart of their own experience, and not determined or assessed by masculine perspectives. *Home Body* by Rupi Kaur is located in the third phase: her poetry draws on her own female, diasporic and embodied experience to make a creative power, not as part of the existing literary canon.

Many scholars have affirmed the relevance of gynocriticism for contemporary literary studies. “It is still an important device for exposing female consciousness, and thus the state of awareness of women undeniably has an impact on how they write novels,” according to Ayoub (2022). The framework has also been enlarged to the interpretations of feminine aesthetics and cultural memory (Zohra & Mouro, 2022). A case in point has been its flexible use in studies undertaken by scholars of South Asian women, Indonesian women and diasporic women’s.

Here is writing that embodies its ability to generate meaningful readings within different literary and cultural contexts.

1. Female Body (Biological Model)

This biological model views the female body as a site of lived experience, a source of creative energy, and an object representation that shapes women's literary works and content. Showalter (1981) argues that women's experiences of the body, such as bodily experience across the lifespan, sexuality, vulnerability, and healing, strongly influence literature written by women. In this model, women's writing is not viewed as biologically deterministic. Instead, it recognizes that the body is always a socially mediated experience and that women's literary engagement with it has historically been suppressed as a form of self-knowledge. Since the title itself describes the body as a dwelling and a space of recovery, this model is particularly applicable to the body of the home. In this collection of poems, Kaur depicts a wounded body, a body learning to rest, and a body gradually gaining the capacity for presence. She does so with a breath-like rhythm to her fragmented lines.

2. Female Language (Linguistic Model)

This is a linguistic model that examines the relationship between gender and language and how women create their own language. It deviates from the male-centered literary tradition. Showalter (1981) states that style, grammar, word choice, and formal structure are evident in literary works written by women. These patterns reflect the distinct social positions women occupy as literary creators. In *Home Body* is an ideal illustration of this idea. In Kaur, lowercase letters are consistently used, demonstrating a typographical rejection of the power typically represented by capital letters in literary culture. The

flowing, uninterrupted speech eschews grammatical hierarchy, and its short, disjointed lines exhibit a linguistic economy that avoids the trappings of male lyricism.

Overall, this distinctly feminine approach to writing cultivates heritage to create a language that resonates with women's experiences.

3. Female Psyche (Psychoanalytic Model)

The psychoanalytic paradigm is the full psychic universe of women in public and private as it appears in literary texts the sentiments, wishes, anxieties, reflections, and self-examination that make up women's inner life. In Showalter (1981), female writing is the result of the specific physiological conditions of women who are subject to gender hierarchies of power and sexual identity politics. In *Home Body*, the psychoanalytic model is the basis for the framework of the whole collection. The four sections mind, heart, slumber and awake are linked by the thread of a psychological journey from emotional burnout to a steady recovery and acceptance. Kaur gives voice to worry, loss, loneliness, and the emotional labour of negotiating cultural dislocation and body shaming, at the same time she charts the internal resources through which her speaker eventually reconstructs herself. This arc parallels the greater experience of women who have been denied their own interiority, following the pattern of recovery feminist critics have found behind and in women's literature.

4. Female Literary Tradition (Cultural Model)

The Cultural model places the work women writers do as part of a larger historical continuum of female composition, exploring how individual women authors receive from it, react to it, and participate in a tradition women's artistic expression. According to Showalter (1981), each woman writer stands in relation to a history of women writers which has been defined by the heritage of those who preceded her, and that women's literary writing must be examined alongside influences from non-literary culture, including oral traditions, folk practice, and intergenerational transmission of both narrative. This model has an excellent analysis in Rupi Kaur's work, *Home Body*. Kaur's literary development is at once derived from the Punjabi orality tradition that stretches back through her family line, confessional women's poetry in English, (Sylvia Plath and Maya Angelou) and the burgeoning contemporary diaspora women's writing tradition of which Kaur herself has become a defining voice. In this sense, *Home Body* is more than a record of one woman, it is deliberate participation in a continuing tradition of women's literature.

C. The paraphrase of the Poems

Paraphrase is a method of restating a literary text in one's own words while preserving its essential meaning, themes, and emotional content. In the context of poetry analysis, paraphrasing serves as a foundational interpretive practice that enables the researcher to move beyond the surface level of a poem's language and access its underlying ideas and thematic concerns. As Abrams and Harpham (2012)

note, paraphrase in literary study is not a replacement for the poem itself, but rather a tool for clarifying meaning before deeper interpretive analysis is undertaken.

In poetry, where meaning is often compressed, fragmented, or conveyed through non-literal language, paraphrase functions as a bridge between the poem's linguistic form and its interpretive content. It allows the researcher to identify what a poem is saying before examining how it says it, a distinction that is particularly relevant in the context of Rupi Kaur's minimalist poetic style, where sparse diction and unconventional typography can obscure meaning at first reading.

In this study, paraphrase is employed as a preliminary analytical step in the close reading of ten selected poems from *Home Body* (2020). Prior to applying Showalter's (1981) gynocritical framework, each poem is paraphrased to establish a clear understanding of its thematic content, narrative voice, and emotional register. This process ensures that the subsequent gynocritical analysis, whether examining the representation of women's embodied experience through the biological model or the construction of feminine literary language through the linguistic model, is grounded in an accurate and nuanced reading of the poem's meaning.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter contains several steps, first research design, second data source, third data collection, and last data analysis.

A. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding meaning, interpretation, and the subjective dimensions of human experience through language and symbol, rather than through numerical measurement (Creswell, 2014). A descriptive approach, within this framework, aims to present a detailed and systematic account of the phenomena under investigation without manipulating variables or testing hypotheses. This combination is suited to the present study because it allows for close engagement with the linguistic and thematic dimensions of Kaur's poetry as they are, attending to the original language, imagery, and formal qualities of the texts. The theoretical framework applied is Showalter's (1981) gynocriticism, specifically the biological model and the linguistic model, which serve as the primary analytical lens for examining selected poems from *Home Body*. Findings are presented as close readings and interpretive analyses grounded in the textual evidence.

B. Data Source

The primary data source *Home Body* (2020) by Rupi Kaur, published by Simon & Schuster. The collection comprises four thematic sections — mind, heart, rest, and awake. It has been selected because it is the least academically

studied of Kaur's three collections despite its thematic maturity, and because it provides consistent and comprehensive evidence of both the biological model (female body) and the linguistic model (female language) of Showalter's gynocriticism.

The secondary data consists of Showalter's theoretical writings, particularly *"Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness"* (1981), alongside relevant scholarly literature on feminist literary criticism, gynocriticism, and prior studies on Rupi Kaur's work, which provide the theoretical and contextual basis for the analysis.

The data consist of words, lines, stanzas, and poetic phrases drawn from ten selected poems, chosen based on their thematic relevance to the two gynocritical models, their representativeness of the collection's central concerns, and the richness of textual evidence they provide. The original English-language publication is used throughout to preserve the integrity of Kaur's linguistic and typographic choices.

C. Data Collection

The data gathering for this research was made in several phases. The initial step for the researcher was to read the whole *Home Body* collection from beginning to end, as a way of getting a feel for the general structure and working concept of the collection.

Second, several close readings were conducted, with particular attention to Showalter's two models of gynocriticism used in this research: representation of female bodies and women's embodied experience (biological model) such as gendered references to anatomical structures, and occurrences of specific features

in female language including typographic and stylistic spelling options (linguistic model). Relevant poems and passages were provisionally identified on the basis of their showing these two dimensions.

Third, the final analytical corpus of ten poems was selected from the tentative collection using three indications of importance (thematic relevance, representation and gynocritical richness).

Fourth, background material was written, based on secondary literature, Showalter's own theoretical work and scholarship in feminist literary criticism and earlier work on Kaur, to provide the theoretical basis necessary for interpretation.

D. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved a systematic process of reading, identifying, and interpreting textual elements from the selected poems in relation to Showalter's (1981) gynocritical framework. The analysis proceeded through careful close reading of each poem, focusing on how women's embodied experience is represented and how feminine literary language is constructed across the collection. This process was guided by the interactive model of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which comprises three interrelated stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

In the first stage, the researcher identified and coded textual elements relevant to each of the two gynocritical models applied in this study: bodily representations and expressions of women's embodied experience (biological

model), and stylistic and typographic features constituting a feminine mode of expression (linguistic model).

In the second stage, the coded data were grouped into thematic categories corresponding to the two research questions, allowing for a systematic comparison and examination of how these two dimensions of feminist criticism interact across the collection.

In the third stage, interpretive conclusions are drawn based on the collected data and specific textual evidence. These conclusions are then verified by comparing them with relevant secondary literature and Showalter's theoretical framework to ensure they align with established feminist literary criticism. Throughout the process, the researcher maintains Kaur's distinct literary preferences, so that the meanings inherent in the poems, rather than predetermined interpretations, serve as the basis for the analysis.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the textual analysis of ten selected poems from Rupi Kaur's *Home Body* (2020) to address the two research questions formulated in Chapter I, using Elaine Showalter's gynocriticism specifically the biological model (female body) and the linguistic model (female language) as the primary analytical lens.

A. The Representation of Women's Experience through the Biological Model

Showalter's gynocriticism works from biological models, looking at how the lived experience of a female body marks its flesh and content on women's writing. Showalter (1981: 184–190) argues that the bodily pain, healing, vulnerability and corporeal recovery of women's embodied experience has resulted in literary texts inscribing a distinctive female art form of self-knowledge traditionally consigned to quiet and ignorance in patriarchal culture. This paradigm always hits the richness of tasking across all four themes of mind, heart, rest and awake in *Home Body*. The body of the speaker is always somewhere near to portray with traumatized, mental pain, cure and identity. Such state is hardly more-clear than in the five poems dealt with below, which offer the most authentic example of how embodied female experience is depicted in Kaur's collection. Before analysis, the following sub-sections will look at five poems in order: *where the depression came from*, which traces the body as the site of psychic trauma;

disconnected, which interrogates somatic dislocation and estrangement; *there is no place more intimate than a bed*, which depicts the body as an archive of lived experience; *today i saw myself for the first time*, which stages the from melancholic self-recognition, and finally; *give me laugh lines and wrinkles* which enacts feminist reconciliation with patriarchal ideals of beauty through affirmation of ageing female body.

1. *Where the depression came from*

This poem opens the mind section of *Home Body* and immediately positions the female body as both the origin and the archive of psychological suffering. The speaker does not locate her depression in the mind alone; instead, she traces it through a sequence of bodily encounters, beginning before birth and moving through migration, sexual violence, and an abusive relationship. Kaur writes:

Datum 1:

*maybe i walked out of the womb with it
is it possible to be born
with such a melancholy spirit
maybe it met me at the airport
slid into my passport
and remained with me
long after we landed in
a country that did not want us
maybe the rapist left it behind
or was it that criminal i called a boyfriend
he beat it into me (Kaur, 2020, p. 9)*

The opening image, *maybe i walked out of the womb with it*, places psychological suffering at the very threshold of bodily existence, before the speaker has entered the social world. The word *womb* makes the body the first possible source of depression, not the mind in isolation. The trajectory that follows

moves outward from that originating body into the social world, the airport, the country that “did not want us” before returning to the body through acts of violence: the rapist, the abusive boyfriend. The phrase “he beat it into me” is particularly precise: it insists that trauma was not merely experienced psychologically but physically installed within the body.

The poem’s interrogative structure, organized around the repeated *maybe*, does not arrive at a definitive answer. The speaker cannot separate what the body inherited from what was done to it. This refusal of certainty is itself meaningful: the body is presented as the only archive capable of holding the possible origins of pain, even if those origins remain unresolved. In the biological model of gynocriticism, Showalter (1981) identifies bodily vulnerability, the body as a surface upon which social and sexual violence leaves lasting marks, as one of the constitutive dimensions of women’s literary production. This poem enacts that principle concretely: the speaker’s depression is not located in the mind as an abstract psychological state but traced through specific bodily sites, the womb, the body in transit, the body subjected to rape and physical abuse. The body is the archive, and the poem is the act of reading it.

2. *disconnected*

This poem is positioned as the deliberate conclusion of a four-poem sequence in the mind section of *Home Body*. In the poem immediately preceding it, Kaur records childhood sexual assault from ages seven to ten, the silencing that followed, and the onset of depression. *Disconnected* does not repeat or explain this story; it records its bodily aftermath. The brevity of the poem, six lines only

itself meaningful: a self -shattered by sustained trauma cannot produce an elaborate account of its own condition. The speaker can only name what has happened to her body. Kaur writes:

Datum 2:

*my mind
my body
and i
all live in one place
but it feels like we are
three completely different people (Kaur, 2020, p. 15)*

The poem's six lines are structured as two movements. The first three lines separate the self into three distinct entities "my mind", "my body", and "i" each placed alone on its own line. This typographic isolation is the poem's central formal argument, the self that has been subjected to sustained bodily trauma does not simply feel confused or sad; it fractures. The "i" becomes a third party, separate from both mind and body, a witness to its own dissolution rather than the integrating center of its own experience. The second three lines deliver the paradox: all three inhabit "one place," yet feel like "three completely different people." This is not conflict, which would imply relationship and communication; it is estrangement co-location without unity.

That Kaur does not name the trauma within this poem is a deliberate structural choice, not an omission. The trauma has already been recorded in the poems that precede *disconnected* on the page: the childhood sexual assault that spans pages 12–13 of the collection, the enforced silence of the poem immediately following it, and the onset of depression that leads directly into this poem. Kaur constructs the mind section of *Home Body* as a cumulative sequence, in which each poem

adds a layer to the speaker's experience rather than standing in isolation. By the time the reader arrives at "disconnected," the trauma does not need to be named again; its consequence in the body is already legible. What the poem records is what prolonged, unprocessed trauma produces in the female body: the condition that clinical psychology identifies as dissociation, in which the self -detaches from bodily experience as a protective response to overwhelming injury. The body in this poem is not a site of active suffering, that was the preceding poems but of numbness and internal distance, which is the biological model's account of what patriarchal violence ultimately does to women's embodied self-knowledge: it separates women from their own bodies entirely.

3. there is no place more intimate than a bed

This is the most sustained representation of the female body as a biographical archive in the collection. Through the extended metaphor of the bed as a lifelong companion and witness, the speaker catalogues the full range of embodied experience from girlhood to death. She addresses the bed in the second person:

Datum 3:

*most of my life has been spent
with the two of us touching
skin to skin
you carried me when my limbs refused to
when i was so sick i could not move
you've witnessed all my dreams
my sex
my writing
my weeping
every vulnerable act of my life
has been with you
i went from girl to woman on top of you
and in the end*

*it will be you old friend
delivering me to death well rested (Kaur, 2020, p. 41)*

The poem organizes women's embodied life into a sequence of physical encounters, all of which occur in the shared space of the bed. Illness ("when my limbs refused to"), sexuality ("my sex"), grief ("my weeping"), and writing ("my writing") are placed in the same list, without hierarchy. This horizontal arrangement refuses to privilege intellectual or spiritual experience over bodily experience. The body's vulnerability, its capacity to fail, to feel, and to be witnessed, is presented as the substance of a life.

The line *i went from girl to woman on top of you* compresses the entire arc of female bodily development into a single phrase. The closing line, which delivers the speaker *to death well rested*, frames death not as an abstraction but as the final bodily act in a long sequence of bodily events. The female body in this poem is not merely a site of suffering; it encompasses the full range of what Showalter's (1981) biological model identifies as women's bodily experience: sexuality (*my sex*), illness and physical vulnerability (*when my limbs refused to*), healing and rest (*you always took me back*), and death (*delivering me to death well rested*). The bed as witness records all of these without hierarchy. This is the biological model's most comprehensive realization in the collection: the female body as the medium through which a complete life is lived, recorded, and eventually surrendered.

4. *today i saw myself for the first time*

Situated in the awake section of the collection, this poem marks the pivot from bodily estrangement to somatic reconciliation. The speaker recounts a transformative moment in which the body she has inhabited for decades is finally perceived with clarity and gratitude:

Datum 4:

*spent decades living inside my body
never left it once
yet managed to miss all its miracles
isn't it funny how you can
occupy a space without
being in touch with it
how it took so long for me
to open the eyes of my eyes
kiss the soles of my swollen feet
and hear them whisper
thank you
thank you
thank you
for noticing (Kaur, 2020, p. 150)*

The central paradox is stated plainly: *spent decades living inside my body / never left it once / yet managed to miss all its miracles*. One can inhabit a body for a lifetime without truly inhabiting it, because the social conditions that shape women's relationship to their own bodies shame, indifference, hostility, the reduction of the body to its appearance or utility create a distance between the woman and her own physical self.

The act of recognition in this poem is not abstract or psychological. It is performed on specific body parts: the *soles of my swollen feet*. Healing, in Kaur's poetics, is always concrete and somatic. When the word *thank you* is repeated three times and attributed to the feet themselves, the body is granted a voice and

positioned as a subject capable of gratitude rather than a passive object of scrutiny. This moment of bodily recognition represents the turn in the collection's arc: from inherited trauma and fragmentation toward self-knowledge and affirmation.

5. *give me laugh lines and wrinkles*

This poem completes the biological arc of the collection by reconfiguring the ageing female body as evidence of a life fully lived rather than as a sign of decline. The speaker does not merely accept ageing, she actively desires it:

Datum 5:

*give me laugh lines and wrinkles
i want proof of the jokes we shared
engrave the lines into my face like
the roots of a tree that grow deeper
with each passing year
i want sunspots as souvenirs
for the beaches we laid on
i want to leave this place knowing
i did something with my body
other than trying to
make it look perfect (Kaur, 2020, p. 167)*

The poem opens with a command: *give me*. This grammatical choice is significant. The speaker is not lamenting the signs of ageing or accepting them with resignation; she is demanding them as proof. The metaphor of the tree roots, which “grow deeper with each passing year,” reframes physical change as accumulation rather than loss. Wrinkles deepen, like roots; they do not disappear.

The final lines state the poem's central claim directly: *i want to leave this place knowing / i did something with my body / other than trying to make it look perfect*. This is a refusal of the cultural standard that defines the female body primarily through its appearance. The body's value is relocated from aesthetics to experience. What the body has done, where it has been, and what it has felt these

constitute its meaning. Across the five poems analyzed in this section, the biological model of gynocriticism finds its fullest expression: the female body is not a liability or an object of shame but the primary medium through which women come to know themselves and the world.

B. The Construction of Female Language through the Linguistic Model

Kaur's typographic and stylistic choices in *Home Body* constitute a systematically constructed feminine literary language. Her consistent use of lowercase letters throughout, the deliberate absence of conventional punctuation, and the preference for short, fragmented line structures diverge from the formal norms of a literary tradition historically shaped by male authority. These choices are not accidental: Kaur has stated that her typographic practice is rooted in part in her Punjabi heritage, as the Gurmukhi script does not employ capital letters, and reflects her effort to assert cultural identity and resist the hierarchies embedded in standard English orthographic conventions. The five poems examined in this section demonstrate how these linguistic choices operate as formal acts of feminist expression: *productivity anxiety*, *i am complete simply because i am imperfect*, *home*, *birth*, and *can you hear the women who came before me*.

1. *Productivity anxiety*

This is the longest meditative poem in the collection, and its linguistic structures is as significant as its thematic content. The poem deploys Kaur's typographic signature throughout: lowercase letters, no punctuation, and short interlocking lines. Kaur writes:

Datum 6:

*capitalism got inside my head
 and made me think my only value
 is how much i produce
 for people to consume
 capitalism got inside my head
 and made me think
 i am of worth
 as long as i am working
 i learned impatience from it
 i learned self-doubt from it
 learned to plant seeds in the ground
 and expect flowers the next day
 but magic
 doesn't work like that
 magic doesn't happen
 when we play
 when we escape
 daydream and imagine
 that's where everything
 with the power to fulfill us
 is waiting on its knees for us (Kaur, 2020, p. 87)*

The most linguistically striking feature of this poem is the refusal to capitalize *capitalism*. In standard orthographic practice, proper nouns and ideologically significant terms are capitalized, a convention that grants them formal authority. By writing *capitalism* in lowercase, Kaur refuses to extend that authority to the ideology she is critiquing. This is not a typographical error; it is a deliberate act of linguistic resistance, a refusal to grant formal prominence to a system that the poem explicitly identifies as invasive and destructive.

The phrase *capitalism got inside my head* is repeated in identical form in the first and fifth lines of the excerpt. This repetition formally enacts the circularity it describes: the internalized logic of productivity returns unbidden, just as the phrase itself returns in the poem. The poem's lack of punctuation means the reader cannot pause at a period or exhale at a comma; the lines flow into one another

without the formal closure that conventional syntax would provide. This creates a breathless quality that mirrors the experience of anxiety itself. This is significant not only formally but also in terms of the poem's gendered subject position. The pressure of capitalist productivity is not gender-neutral: women are disproportionately subject to dual demands of productive labour and reproductive or domestic labour, and the anxiety of never doing enough is a condition that women's writing has consistently named and resisted. By constructing this poem in a feminine literary language lowercase, unpunctuated, circular in structure Kaur enacts the condition she critiques at the level of form. The linguistic model of gynocriticism holds that the formal structures of women's writing reflect their distinctive social positions as literary creators, and here the poem's form performs the very condition it names.

2. *i am complete simply because i am imperfect*

This poem from the rest section enacts a challenge to linear narratives of self-improvement through its distinctive syntactic and typographic choices. The poem alternates between short declarative assertions and longer, more expansive lines:

Datum 7:

*i'm a new person every month
 always becoming and unbecoming
 only to become again
 our fuller selves are not off in the future
 they're right here
 in the only moment that exists
 i don't need fixing
 i will be searching for answers my whole life
 not because i'm a half-formed thing
 but because i'm brilliant enough to keep growing
 everything necessary to live a vivid life
 already exists in me (Kaur, 2020, p. 113)*

The brief, emphatic phrases *i don't need fixing* and *they're right here* carry the weight of the poem's central argument. They are then clarified and elaborated in the longer lines that follow. This movement between compression and expansion creates a conversational intimacy: the speaker addresses the reader as an equal, not as a passive recipient of instruction.

The consistent use of the lowercase *i* for the first-person singular pronoun is particularly significant in this poem. In standard English orthographic convention, the first-person singular is always capitalized, a practice that linguists have noted implicitly confers a sense of primacy and authority on the speaking subject. Kaur's systematic rejection of this convention positions the speaker as relational rather than sovereign: one voice among many, intimate and open rather than formally authoritative. The lowercase *i* is not a diminishment; it is a reordering of literary authority away from hierarchical individuality and toward communal intimacy, which is characteristic of the feminine literary language identified in the linguistic model of gynocriticism.

3. *home*

This short poem from the *awake* section is the most concentrated example of the linguistic model in the collection. Its brevity is not a limitation but a deliberate formal choice that reflects the poem's central argument about self-sufficiency:

Datum 8:

*i dive into the well of my body
and end up in another world
everything i need
already exists in me
there's no need*

to look anywhere else
(Kaur, 2020, p. 156)

The poem contains no punctuation whatsoever not even a period at the end. This absence is linguistically significant. The poem does not close; the final line extends forward without the authoritative stop that conventional form would demand. This openness of voice is characteristic of women's literary language: it resists the definitive, sealed closure of the male poetic tradition. The poem does not conclude with certainty; it simply continues, as life does.

The central metaphor *i dive into the well of my body* fuses the poem's linguistic and bodily dimensions in a single image. To find language is to find oneself in the body. The well is both a physical depth and a source of sustenance, something one descends into and from which something essential is drawn. The poem is written in six short lines without punctuation, in lowercase throughout, and achieves its effect entirely through precision and restraint rather than rhetorical elaboration. This poetic economy maximum meaning from minimum material is characteristic of the feminine literary language Kaur constructs across the collection.

4. birth

This is the shortest poem selected for analysis, yet its linguistic choices are among the most politically charged in the collection. In two brief lines, Kaur accomplishes a radical reorientation of the language through which female origin and divine authority are conventionally expressed:

Datum 9:

i fell from the mouth of my mother's legs
into the palms of this world
with God herself raging in me (Kaur, 2020, p. 131)

The most linguistically significant gesture is the feminization of the divine: *God herself*. In a literary and theological tradition shaped by centuries of masculine language, where the divine has consistently been identified with the male gender and encoded in male pronouns, Kaur's use of *herself* is an act of linguistic resistance. She does not argue for this change or explain it; she simply makes it, inserting the feminine pronoun as though it were the most natural thing in the world. The effect is quietly radical.

The opening metaphor is equally significant. The word *mouth* is used to describe the site of birth a speech organ, an organ of language production. New life and new language enter the world through the same opening. The maternal body is thus positioned as a site not merely of biological reproduction but of linguistic origin, the place from which both the child and her voice first emerge. This reverses the long tradition in patriarchal discourse of silencing or marginalizing the maternal body. The poem constructs a feminine literary language through the combination of a feminized divine pronoun, a body that speaks at the moment of birth, syntactic simplicity, and the complete absence of punctuation.

5. *can you hear the women who came before me*

This poem, which appears near the end of the awake section, situates the individual speaking voice within a vast collective lineage of women's expression. It is the most direct articulation in the collection of the idea that women's literary language is not a singular achievement but an inherited, trans-individual practice:

Datum 10:

*can you hear the women who came before me
 five hundred thousand voices
 ringing through my neck
 as if this were all a stage built for them
 i can't tell which parts of me are me
 and 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 (Kaur, 2020, p. 155)*

The poem's primary linguistic strategy is the persistent interrogative address: *can you hear* and *can you see*. The speaker does not assert; she asks. She does not declare the presence of those five hundred thousand voices; she invites the reader to listen for them. This is an invitational mode of address one that draws the reader into shared witness rather than positioning them as a passive audience receiving a statement. Women's literary language, as constructed in this collection, characteristically works this way: it creates intimacy rather than authority.

The image of *five hundred thousand voices / ringing through my neck* is striking because the voices are located in the body in the neck, the throat, the organ of speech rather than in the mind or the imagination. Language, for Kaur, is bodily as well as cognitive. The speaker cannot distinguish which parts of herself are her own and which belong to the women who came before her, a formulation that directly challenges the Romantic and male-defined notion of singular authorial genius. Her voice is collective, inherited, and continuous with a lineage of women's expression that precedes her and will continue after her. The linguistic model of gynocriticism recognizes women's literary language as precisely this

kind of inherited and communal practice, and this poem is its fullest expression in the collection.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This study examined ten selected poems from Rupi Kaur's poetry collection *Home Body* using two models from Elaine Showalter's gynocriticism: the biological model (female body) and the linguistic model (female language). Five poems were assigned to each model in correspondence with the two research questions formulated in this study.

In relation to the first research question, the analysis found that the female body serves as the primary space representing women's experiences in the five poems. In *Where the Depression Came From*, the body functions as an archive of trauma, where depression is not only experienced psychologically but also physically embedded in the body through sexual and physical violence. In *Disconnected*, prolonged trauma causes somatic alienation, namely the separation between mind, body, and self. In *There Is No Place More Intimate Than a Bed*, the body functions as a biographical archive that records all of a woman's life experiences. In *Today I Saw Myself for the First Time*, the body becomes a space for self-recognition. And in *Give Me Laugh Lines and Wrinkles*, the body represents identity affirmation as a form of rejection of patriarchal beauty standards.

In relation to the second research question, the analysis found that Rupi Kaur constructs a distinctively feminine language through three forms of feminist resistance: the consistent use of lowercase letters that rejects the authority of

capital letters in the literary tradition, the lack of punctuation that rejects grammatical hierarchy, and the short and fragmented line structure. All three together constitute a form of rejection of male-dominated literary norms.

B. Suggestion

This study has examined *Home Body* through only two of Showalter's four gynocritical models. Future researchers are encouraged to extend the analysis by applying the remaining two models the psychoanalytic model (female psyche) and the cultural model (female literary tradition) to produce a more comprehensive gynocritical account of the collection. Given that Kaur's work is deeply inflected by her Punjabi-Canadian diasporic identity, future studies might also benefit from combining Showalter's framework with postcolonial or diasporic feminist perspectives, which would illuminate the cultural and migratory dimensions of her poetics that the present study has not addressed directly. Researchers working within Indonesian academic contexts may find particular value in applying this dual-model gynocritical approach to the work of Indonesian women poets, where both the representation of embodied experience and the construction of a distinctly feminine literary language remain underexplored research areas.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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