

PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE OPPRESSION IN THE SELECTED POEMS OF PLATH, ANGELOU AND KAUR

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Abstract

Feminism is a mass movement that includes women of all groups to eradicate all types of female oppression that are prevailing in patriarchal societies. Feminists raise their voice in favor of women rights and support gender equality. In this context, this study probes the experiences and oppressions of women who belong to different age, race, and region. For this purpose, the researcher has compared and contrasted the portrayal of the oppression(s) of women through the poetry of Plath, Angelou, and Kaur. To conduct the analysis, different chunks have been chosen from the selected poems of Plath, Angelou, and Kaur. Four chunks have been chosen from Plath's "Daddy" (1965) and four chunks from "Mushrooms" (1959), four chunks have been selected from Angelou's "Still I Rise" (1978), and two chunks from "Phenomenal Woman" (1978), and one chunk is selected from Kaur's "Freedom of speech" (2014), and one chunk from "To fathers with daughters" (2014). The data has been chosen through purposive sampling technique and the researcher has analyzed the selected data through content analysis. The theories of Beauvoir (1949/1953) and hooks (1981) have been used as theoretical framework in this research. After conducting the analysis of the selected narratives, the findings reveal the similarities as well as differences in the portrayal of the oppression(s) of women that have depicted in the selective narratives of selected poets belong to different time period, race and region.

Keywords: Feminism, female oppression, feminists, poems, Beauvoir, hooks

Introduction

According to Aristotle: "The female is female because she lacks certain qualities" (Aristotle as cited in Selden et al, 1997, p. 121). It was considered that females lack those qualities that are found in males that's why females are not as superior as men are so these are considered as "imperfect man" (AlGweirien, 2017). Feminist theorists are against the patriarchal concept that are associated with females as according to Beauvoir (1949), the concept about the females as they are inferior to males is not truth but it is constructed socially by the males of the society as Beauvoir says: "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (p. 282) and females are treated unequally and cruelly as a result they feel oppressed.

It can be said that feminists work to protect girls, and women from sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape, oppression and male dominance and feminist movement was also started in favor of women's rights, including the right to vote, to work, to earn fair wages, to hold public offices, to own property, to receive education, to have maternity leave, and to have equal rights within marriage. According to hooks (2000), feminism is a movement that aims to end sexism, female oppression and racism as well as sexist exploitation. AlGweirien (2017) argues "Feminism comes as a result of capitalism, patriarchy and racism that bring women under oppression and inequality" (p. 120).

Women writers have always been against gender discrimination and male dominance in the society. They have always been against patriarchy and have always advocated the rights of women. To raise their voices in favor of women rights and against the female oppression they have used literature as a source. Many books, novels, essays, dramas, prose and poetry have been written by different female feminist writers to highlight the problems of the women which they face throughout their life. Even many autobiographies have also been written on this issue. Many female feminist poets have written poetry books to depict female oppression. As compare to other genres of literature, poetry is more effective genre through which poets can convey their message properly and effectively because people like to read poetry than the other genres of literature.

Works of women writers such as Angelou, Plath, and Kaur describe common issues such as female oppression, suppression, and gender inequality. The main focus of women writers is to break the submissive images built about the women in the society. Feminist writers have not only rejected stereotypical notions built about women but also have raised their voice for the rights of the women and have raised their voices against such issues as suppression, oppression, sexism, racism.

A literary text can be used for different purposes similarly many feminists like Wolf, hooks, Beauvoir, Sylvia, Angelou, and Kaur had also taken literature as a tool to express their feminist thoughts. Literature not only reflects the society but also represents what happens in the society. It can also be used to reflect people's oppression and suppression. Feminist literary criticism helps us to look at literature in a different way. In this approach, different philosophies, feminist theories and perspectives of feminism are applied to literature. These feminist theories examine the language and symbols used in a literary work. Feminist literary criticism reminds us that literature is shaped by the men of the society. It tries to consider the writings by women, both new and forgotten, and asks us to examine literature through female perspective.

This study proposes to compare as well as to contrast feminist poets and how they express their thoughts and thinking regarding female oppression. In this study, the researcher has compared and contrasts the poems of female feminist poets Sylvia Plath, Maya Angelou, and Rupi Kaur. The researcher has compared the feminist writers on the basis of age, race, and region. The selected poems of Plath, Angelou and Kaur have been analyzed by using feminist frameworks of Beauvoir (1949/1953) and hooks (1981).

Significance of the Study

This research is significant for the following reasons:

Firstly, this study gives the information about feminism, its history, types, waves and characteristics and specifically about female oppression because in present times it has become one of the burning issues in the whole world so; it will provide better understanding about what feminism is and what is female oppression in a proper way.

Secondly, this study has compared and contrast the poems of different female feminist poets who belong to different race, region and time period. This will be helpful for those readers and researchers who want to understand poetry through compare and contrast.

Thirdly, this study has examined the selected poems of different female feminist poets by employing the theoretical frameworks and will provide information about how to examine poetry by using different theoretical frameworks.

Main purpose of this study is to show how different female feminist poets describe female oppression through their poetry. Chunks of the selected poems have been analyzed by employing the feminist frameworks of Beauvoir (1949/1953) and hooks (1981). Total six poems have been chosen, two poems of each poet for analysis. The main focus of this study is on the portrayal of female oppression in the selected poems of female feminist poets. Same issue is described by the different female feminist poets who belong to different age, race and region. In the portrayal of female oppression what sort of differences and what types of similarities are present are also examined in this study. The feminist theoretical frameworks employed in this study include the constructs given by Beauvoir (1949/1953) and hooks (1981).

Theoretically, this study will try to add some information in the study of the literature especially about poems of selected poets. Particularly, it will help the students of English department in learning about poetry. Generally, the result of this study will increase the knowledge and understanding of the researchers and students of all the universities who are interested in literary studies. This research will be helpful for the writers, students, researchers, and teachers who want to study feminism, female oppression, gender discrimination and patriarchy.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of the present research:

1. To compare and contrast the portrayal of female oppression in the poems of female feminist poets
2. To explore the portrayal of oppression of women in the narratives of Plath, Angelou, and Kaur which varies with respect to their age, race and region

Research Questions

Based on the issues mentioned above, this research deals with the following research questions:

1. Which sort of differences and similarities occurs in the portrayal of female oppression in the poems of Plath, Angelou and Kaur?
2. How does the portrayal of oppression of women in the narratives of Plath, Angelou, and Kaur vary with respect to their age, race and region?

Literature Review:

Following are the previous researches that are conducted by the different feminist writers, theorists, and activists on female oppression.

Woolf (1929) advocates the female oppression. She believes that all the enjoyment and growth belong to men and all the mental burdens, home chores and backwards belong to women. She says that men are enjoying their status, supremacy, dominance and power in the society but women are living their lives under pressure and subordination.

Plath (1965) in her famous poem "Daddy" expressed her feelings of oppression. She expressed how she suffered from the damage because of two males in her life one was her father and second was her husband. The main theme of this poem is female oppression, suppression, and male dominance which she faced throughout her life because of her father and her husband. She compared the male's authority and female's subordination.

Angelou (1969) in an autobiography "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" described about the female oppression and male dominance. She described about her personal experiences that how she faces racism, sexism, violence, and loneliness. In this book she used the metaphor of bird that is in a cage and trying to escape.

According to Young (1990), there are five types of oppression which are violence, exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism.

Okten (2009), states that in patriarchal societies women are bound to live their life under the rule of men. In all these societies, women are not free to think, to produce their ideas and to make any decision. Their status is determined by tradition and their role in the society.

According to Beduk (2005:114), women make home chores, look after children and fulfill all the needs of men. The men are breadwinner. They provide family income and make all the decisions.

Soysal (2010) argues that in recent years, technology and development of education system have changed the status of women and their role in the society and a positive attitude is developed towards women's work. As a result, more women have started to take part in social and economic fields and this trend has reduced male dominance in the society.

Tracy, (2007), states that when we analyze the previous studies then we notice that patriarchy is taking advantage of women.

According to Beduk (2005), in many developed and developing countries women generally have to face difficulties like all entrepreneurs.

Onder (2013) describes that the role of a women in economic life is not determined by her own self but by men's permission. A married woman is bound to take permission from her husband and an unmarried woman is bound to take permission from her father or any elder boy of her family. In this situation, a woman is not free to work freely but has serious restrictions to face.

According to Demirbilek (2007), in patriarchal societies, violence against women is a common issue. Women are advised to be silent and obedient to their family especially men because they cannot protect themselves and cannot live their life alone. Patriarchal societies do not allow women to take part in political, social, and economic issues. Women are considered as low creature as compared to men and are seem in low status.

Olaussen (1992) wrote that women are oppressed by men in many aspects of their life. They faced male domination in education, economy, jobs, even in family. They get physical and verbal violence. They are used as an object to satisfy men sexual satisfaction while their satisfaction, rights and freedom all are ignored by the men. The most terrible fact is that they struggle to resist oppression. They show different reactions toward oppression. Some of them turned in to mad women and committed suicide but some spend their life in isolation.

Assefie (2012) has explored the experiences of African-America women. According to her, sexual abuse, segregation, and issues of race, gender and class are the causes of black women's oppression as the black women in American society experience triple oppression of sex, race and class.

Research Methodology:

This research is qualitative in nature. It analyzes the selected poems of Plath, Angelou, and Kaur from feminist perspective. This research analyzes data from feminist perspective under the approaches of Beauvoir (1949/1953) and hooks (1981). This study deals with content or document analysis as a tool for the collection of data. In this study, the researcher has collected the data through purposive sampling technique from Plath's "Daddy" (1965) and "Mushrooms" (1959), Angelou's "Still I rise" (1978) and "Phenomenal woman" (1978), Kaur's "Freedom of speech" (2014) and "To fathers with daughters" (2014).

In this study, total three poets and total six poems are chosen and chunks have been selected from the following selected poems:

- Plath's "Daddy" (1965) and "Mushrooms" (1959)
- Angelou's "Still I rise" (1978) and "Phenomenal woman" (1978)
- Kaur's "Freedom of speech" (2014) and "To fathers with daughters" (2014)

The above-mentioned female feminist poets are best known for their feminist poetry and are the author of many books. Their poetry depicts female oppression and the sufferings of women. This is the main reason for the selection of these poets and poems and is also the demand of the research topic. The feminist theoretical frameworks employed in this study will include the constructs given by Beauvoir (1949/1953) and hooks (1981) because both the frameworks deal with female oppression.

Beauvoir's work "*The Second Sex*" (1949/1953) has been chosen as part of theoretical framework because in this work, she describes how the women have been treated throughout the history. She defines all the stereotypical notions built about women. She emphasizes the reality that women are not inferior to men and they should not be considered inferior and second to men in the society. This difference is not natural but is constructed socially by the men.

Beauvoir (1949/1953) said that women are not subordinate, slaves or animals that's why they should be treated equal to men in the society. Domestic violence, discrimination, inequality, and sexual harassment should be ended in the society because women are not born slaves or subordinate. They are constructed as subordinate and passive creature by the men in the society. There must be given equal rights to them.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), women are considered as inferior to men not because of their biological sex but because of social construction such as women are socially constructed as inferior and subordinated creatures. In biology both male and female are same, having same body parts except some and performing same functions but in society male is superior to female. If both are same then why one is superior and other is inferior

hooks' book *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981) has been selected as part of theoretical framework because she discussed racism, black women and feminism and how white women tortured the women of color in America as well as the slave experiences of black people. She discussed that women of color are oppressed by white men and also by black men and white women.

hooks (1981) further discussed that she was oppressed and discouraged by white people and was disliked by them because of her race and color. Black people were not allowed to enter in the colonies, shopping malls, workplaces, schools, markets of the white people even they were not allowed to use the public toilets. They were in the worst situation. Black women were considered as a morally low creature that's why white women also treated them as socially low people and were not ready to give them any rights. Hooks (1981) also stated that white women were not ready to associate with an impure creature and did not want to fight for them (p.178).

Data Analysis:

In this chapter, the researcher has conducted the analysis of data collected from Plath's "Daddy" (1965) and "Mushrooms" (1959), Angelou's "Still I rise" (1978) and "Phenomenal woman" (1978), Kaur's "Freedom of speech" (2014) and "To fathers with daughters" (2014). Beauvoir (1949/1953) and hooks (1981) as theoretical frameworks have been applied on the data that have been explained in chapter 3.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Selected Extracts

In this section, selected chunks of the selected poems will be analyzed by employing the frameworks of Beauvoir (1949/1953) and hooks (1981).

1. (A) Selected chunks of Plath's poem "Mushrooms" (1959)

This poem is about the struggle and determination of women and mushrooms are used as a symbol for women. This poem was published in Plath's first collection "The Colossus and Other Poems". This poem describes the themes of equal rights and societal norms of the women. Plath uses the word "us" which represent the women of the whole world. This poem is about the women, the most oppressed creature of the world. In this poem, Plath describes about female oppression in detail and how they spend their whole life in a limited circle. This poem describes about the hopelessness of the women of male dominated societies.

Chunk # 1

Overnight, very

Whitely, discreetly,

Very quietly

This is the first stanza of the poem and in this stanza, Plath describes about the growth of the mushrooms. Mushrooms are used as a symbol and represent the women's situation in the 1950s. She represents the women in the patriarchal society that how they are unnoticed, and ignored like the growth of the mushrooms. In these three lines "Y" sound is used that shows that women's voices are soft and these are unheard and unnoticed in the society. Plath describes about the oppressed group of the society which is women and like mushrooms how they spend their life without any aim because no importance is given to their opinion.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), in many societies the value of the life of a female is nothing even in some societies there is a custom of blood price and very small amount is given if the victim is a female. The value of her life as compared to the life of a man is like the slave's compared with the free man's (p. 107).

Similarly, Plath describes about the oppressed population like women in this stanza. She describes about the life journey of a female by using the metaphor of mushrooms. As mushrooms grow very silently and wisely without any color similarly women lead their life without having any importance and aim.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), women accept that men are superior to them because they are financially, economically and socially strong than women. Women accept their passivity and consider men their masters (p.327). Similarly, Plath describes in this stanza that women are following all the rules and customs which are against them and are made by men and they are not ready for any change. As mushrooms are following the same patterns of growth without any change similarly women are following the rules made by the society in favor of men.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), it is a reality that female lack some physical powers as compared to men and because of this she loses confidence on her own self and does not dare to revolt. She not only becomes confidence less but also ignores all the powers and qualities which she has and accepts the place which a society already has made for her. She accepts that she is dependent and passive by nature (p. 330). Similarly, Plath shows in these lines that women have accepted their passivity and dependency so they are not ready for any revolution. They are not ready to struggle for their new life.

(B) Selected chunks of Plath's poem "Daddy" (1965)

The poem "Daddy" was written by Sylvia Plath originally in October 1962, a month after her divorce from her husband, Ted Hughes, and then in 1965 it was published as part of the collection "Ariel". In this poem, she addresses her father who has an oppressive power over her. She describes her struggle to free herself from this influence in detail. She complains her father and then her husband so, the main theme of the poem is the oppression faced by women throughout their life by the men.

Chunk # 2

It stuck in a barb wire snare.

Ich, ich, ich, ich,

I could hardly speak.

I thought every German was you.

And the language obscene

In this stanza, Plath tries to describe that how much fear she feels before her father that she is not able to pronounce even a single word. Her tongue is dried and stuck in her mouth. Generally, she tries to express the situation of women in the patriarchal society because women are not allowed to speak or convey their ideas. She says that all men are same that they like a submissive and subordinate woman because they consider themselves superior to

women. As, whenever she tries to speak, her voice is lost because of the fear of her father similarly, women are failed to raise their voice in favor of their rights because they are trained or asked to shut their voices up.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), male is always considered as superior as compared to female so, his superiority is overwhelming. Even in human history, there is always a great male figure like David, Hercules, Napoleon, and Achilles who saves a female and wins her heart. On the other hand, the biographies of famous women are unattractive and uninspiring as compared to great men. Eve was also created for Adam from his rib. There are few women who occupy higher place than men (p. 292).

Similarly, Plath describes in this stanza that she wants to speak with her father but her tongue stuck in her mouth and she fails to pronounce a word. In German “ich” means “I” she says that every German man is like her father harsh and obscene. She expresses the superiority of her father and says that all men are same in nature. They enforce their power and superiority over women.

2. (A) Selected chunks of Angelou’s poem “Phenomenal Woman” (1978)

The poem “Phenomenal Woman” was written by Maya Angelou, first published in 1978 then republished in 1995 in a collection “Four Poems Celebrating Women”. Womanhood, female empowerment, and inner strength are the main themes of this poem. It can be said that this poem is an anthem of female. This is a free verse poem without any rhyme scheme. From the feminist perspective the poem celebrates the beauty and pride of being a woman. This poem is enough to make a black woman confident and strong.

Chunk # 3

**Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I’m not cute or built to suit a fashion model’s size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I’m telling lies.**

This is the first stanza of the poem. In this stanza, Angelou describes about the attitude of white women of her society towards her because she is black. In this poem, especially, in this stanza she describes the gender and racial discrimination that is faced by the black people in America. In these lines, she says that white women of America do not consider her beautiful because she does not have the traits which are essential to become beautiful such as, fair complexion, slim figure, straight and blonde hair, and thin facial features etc. She generalizes her personal experience to all the black women of America who are the victim of both gender and racial discrimination.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), for a girl, a woman, the sphere in which she is expected to live her life is limited, enclosed, and dominated by males. If she will try to fly high there will always be a ceiling over her head and the walls to block her way of progress. For men, gods are in a sky to a great distance but a woman lives her life around gods. This situation can be related to the situation of a Negro in America where they are considered as inferior caste (p.300).

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), for a newcomer, it is always difficult to maintain his position in a society which is hostile and mistrustful as, in Black Boy, Richard Wright shows that how the ambitions of a young American Negro are blocked by the white people of the society (p.657).

Similarly, Angelou describes in this stanza that white people especially, the white women of America do not consider her beautiful because she lacks the traits which a society has made to judge the level of beauty but her confidence and pride are enough to make her beautiful. Her voice reflects the sense of confidence and she does not care about so-called fashion.

According to hooks (1981), white women asked for the rights of women, but they remained adherents of white racist supremacy despite working for anti-slavery tradition, when black women and men were being enslaved. Black women were considered morally low, impure and of low social status in America and that’s why white women never tried to associate themselves with black women. hooks (1981) said “In general, white women did not wish to associate with black women because they did not want to be contaminated by morally impure creatures” (p. 178). Similarly, in this stanza, Angelou describes the behavior of white women towards her who were not ready to consider her even a woman and Angelou’s self confidence was unbearable for them.

(B) Selected chunks of Angelou’s poem “Still I Rise” (1978)

The poem “Still I Rise” was written by Maya Angelou in the late 1970s, during the post civil rights movement and the black feminist movement was also gaining strength at that time and this poem was published in 1978 by Random House. This poem symbolizes the courage and strength of black woman to stand up for her rights against the

behavior of the society. Main theme of this poem is confidence which she takes from the history of slavery and emphasizes her message by using repetition.

Chunk # 4

Out of the huts of history's shame

I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

In this stanza, Angelou wants to rise from the painful and shameful history and advices to all the black community to forget the past to shine in present. She remembers every act of hate, done by the white people of her community. She remembers her personal experiences of hate and discrimination. But, in spite of all this, she considers her as a black ocean of will power, and strength that will swipe all the pain and sorrows from the life. She admits the fact that her past was enough to hold her down but now she can never be stopped by anyone to rise and shine because she will never allow hatefulness of the society to determine her own success.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), in human history, women do not present them as a subject and have no religion or poetry of their own. They have not made any myth about themselves. They still are dependent upon men. They worship the gods made by men. Men have made great male characters like Hercules, Prometheus, Parsifal etc and women have passive and dependent roles in the life of these heroes because the representation of the world is the work of men and they describe it from their own point of view (p.162).

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), since patriarchal times all evil and negative powers belong to feminine flow. As, Pliny says that: crops can be ruined, gardens can be destroyed, bees can be killed, wine can be converted to vinegar, milk can be soured and so on when these all things are touched by a menstruating woman (p.168). Similarly, Angelou claims that besides of all the humiliation, and oppression she will and other women like her will rise and glow. No reason, no myth, no rule can stop her to rise because she is the ocean of courage and strength.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), when women are asked to make some decisions and to take some concrete actions about the goals of their own interest then they do it with courage as men do (p.572). Beauvoir says that when women are engaged in a worthy work then these are as active, effective, and efficient as men are (p. 573). The same theme is described by Angelou in the above stanza. She declares that the ocean of her power will swipe all the obstacles in the way of her progress.

According to hooks (1981), white Americans and some brainwashed blacks regarded all black women sexually immoral, and impure creatures. According to this racist mythology which was originated in America, black women were considered as sexual savages. So, when white women were raising their voices for general reforms while black women were launching a campaign to defend their virtues. They were trying to clear their negative image. They wrote many articles, speeches to define black female sexual morality. Main issues of the organizations of white women were education, charity, formation of literary societies while black women were concerned with issues such as poverty, care for the elderly, or prostitution (p.222).

In this stanza, Angelou describes the shameful human history as a reference in which black women have suffered a lot. They have faced both racial and sexual discrimination. But in spite of these behaviors and false myths against black women, she and all other black women like her are ready to face the situations.

3. (A) Selected chunks of Kaur's poem "To fathers with daughters" (2014)

The poem "To Fathers with Daughters" is written by Rupi Kaur in 2014 in her book "Milk and Honey". This is a short poem with direct message to fathers of daughters. The main theme of this poem is the behavior of fathers with their daughters which makes them less confident and oppressed. She expresses the whole journey of a woman in a very beautiful way and how she is oppressed by the men of her life.

Chunk # 5

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.**

This is a short poem written by Rupi Kaur. In this poem, she tells about the behavior of fathers with their daughters and the effect of this behavior on her daughter's whole life. She explains that bad behavior of fathers with their daughters make them dependent, lose confidence, and submissive. When they are treated badly by other men they think that such behavior is justified because they are use to it from their childhood. They cannot differentiate between the bad and good behavior because they are treated badly by their own fathers. When they are treated in the same way by their husband then they never complain and accept it as their fate.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), firstly, father performs all his powers over girls and then she is transferred to another man who becomes her husband. For example, Beauvoir (1949/1953) says: "When she becomes a young girl, the father has all power over her; when she marries he transfers it to the husband" (p. 107, Emphasis original). Husband treats his wife as his property, slave or a chattel. As, Beauvoir says: "Since a wife is his property like a slave, a beast of burden, or a chattel, a man naturally has as many wives as he pleases" (p. 107). Similarly, Kaur in her poem "To fathers with daughters" describes about how fathers treat their daughters in their childhood. They yell at their daughters and teach them to confuse anger with kindness. Their behavior makes their daughters suppressed, marginalized and oppressed. As a result, their daughters start to rely on a person who also feels them inferior because they have taught to be inferior from their childhood.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), for a woman to get a husband is very important task of her life because she considers him a protector. She feels herself blessed when she is under the protection of a man and without him she feels herself inessential and unsafe. After marriage she feels herself free from mother's hold. She starts her new life but not as an active participant but as a passive and subordinate and she presents herself before a new master (p. 328). Similarly, Kaur describes the same idea in her poem and says that after marriage a girl looks her husband as a master and devotes her whole life for his service because she is treated as an inferior creature by her own parents especially by her father. When she is treated as a subordinate and submissive person by her husband then she thinks that she is created as an oppressed and low creature and this behavior is normal for her.

According to Beauvoir (1949/ 1953), from her childhood a young girl looks the power of her father over her and the other women of home so, she accepts his command and control over her (p. 390). Beauvoir (1949/1953) also says: a woman is considered as a pariah and spends her whole life under the control of the men of her life as father, brother, brother-in-law and husband. Similarly, marriage enslaves her to a man and makes her a mistress of her husband's home (p. 420). Kaur also describes in her poem that for a girl or a woman marriage is nothing more than a contract in which her master is changed from her father to her husband.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), when a woman is married to a man she enters in a new world and her husband is more or less a stranger for her. The destiny of every marriage is to become a perfect wife and a perfect mother and to give birth of children (p.444). Similarly, Kaur defines in this poem that a girl in her parents' house is bound to obey the orders of her father and after marriage she is bound to obey the orders of her husband because the after marriage the authority is transferred from father to husband.

(B) Selected chunks of Kaur's poem "Freedom of Speech" (2014)

The poem "Freedom of Speech" was written by Rupi Kaur in 2014 in her book "Milk and Honey". This is also a short poem in which she describes about the right of women to speak freely and confidently but she is not given the chance to express herself. She expresses the norm of the society that freedom of speech can dull the beauty of a woman and how a woman is advised by her own parents not to speak about her thoughts and ideas because a confident and open-minded woman is not welcomed in the society.

**Chunk # 6
You tell me to quiet down cause
my opinions make me less beautiful
but I was not made with a fire in my belly
so I could be put out
i was not made with a lightness in my tongue**

**so I could be easy to swallow
i was made heavy
half blade and half silk
difficult to forget but
not easy for the mind to follow**

This is a short poem written by Rupi Kaur. In this poem, she describes about the thinking of men that they do not like an outspoken woman. A submissive, obedient, and passive woman is considered as a perfect and good woman. This passivity is one of the scales of beauty and if she lacks this scale then she is not a beautiful woman. She says that she is a normal human being like men and she is created free to speak, think, and feel. So, she can never be chained and kept in a small or limited circle. No one can stop her to think, to rise because she is also as independent as men are.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), for a woman the word female is sufficient to define her. A man is not ashamed of his animal nature but it is an insult of him when he is compared with a female. Men claim that woman is stupid, non-sense, heartless, idiot and violent because she is a female (p. 33). Beauvoir (1949/1953) also says that passivity is imposed on a girl by her parents, teachers, books, myths, men and other women. She is taught from her childhood that she is subordinate to men and she is forcefully compelled to obey all the rules. The young boy is free to choose his ambitions and follow his dreams but a young girl has only one choice to become a wife, a mother, and a grandmother. She has to do house chores like her mother (p.301).

Similarly, Kaur describes that an outspoken woman is unacceptable in the society. It is expected from her that she will follow the rules silently, already made by men. No one is ready to change these rules.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), feminine means a useless, weak and an obedient creature and it is expected from her that she must learn the rules of passivity from her elders because self confidence will dull her charm, grace and attractiveness. There is a pressure on her to accept her as a passive object but how is it possible to make her mind that she is inessential and how she can give up her ego. Woman has to face this painful dilemma throughout her life and oscillates between desire and disgust, hope and fear (p.334). Similarly, Kaur defines the state of confusion in which a woman spends her whole life. An outspoken woman is not liked by men and is unaccepted in the society because cooperative and obedient woman is liked and adopted by the society.

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), for a wife husband is not a cooperative person if her wife is more intelligent and beautiful than him then he becomes jealous from her and wants to keep all credit of her elegance and charming personality and when both are in company of each other then he remains unromantic and ill humored (p.513). According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), a woman is given the role of parasite that is dependent on men to fulfill her all desires. She needs male, to eat, to enjoy life, to make progress and even to gain dignity in the society (p.583).

Similarly, Kaur defines that a woman with an opinion is not welcomed by the society. She is forced to shut her mouth because her opinions and thoughts can make her priceless. According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), in many societies, freedom is not given to woman but if she tries to become independent and take some steps toward it then she ruins her reputation and career. Women are liked only when they make themselves prey and a passive thing and when they are succeeded in doing this then it is thought that they have done their job perfectly (p.643-649).

According to Beauvoir (1949/1953), when a woman moves forward to become a bluestocking and woman of brain, her other chances fade. In becoming a successful person, she loses her attraction in general and humiliates her husband or her lover (p.658). In this poem, Kaur describes the same idea which is described by Beauvoir that a woman is restricted in her limits and boundaries which are made by the society for her.

Conclusion

From the whole discussion, it can be concluded that this research justifies all the research questions. Question number one explains the differences and similarities in the portrayal of female oppression in the selected poems of Plath, Angelou, and Kaur. From the analysis of the selected chunks, it can be shown that there are some sorts of differences found in the portrayal of female oppression as white women are facing gender discrimination while, women of color are facing both racial and gender discrimination.

It can be concluded that all the poets express similar thoughts and ideas regarding female oppression of women. All the three poets are not influenced by each other but their writings, themes, and tone of their poetry are almost same. All are describing the sufferings of the women and effect of these sufferings upon their life.

Question number two explains that how the portrayal of female oppression varies regarding age, race, and region of the poets. From the analysis of the selected chunks of the selected poems of Plath, Angelou, and Kaur it can be expressed that the difference in age, race, and region of the poets has great effect on the portrayal of female oppression. Plath describes the oppression (s) of white women only. She only describes that how women are

oppressed by the men of their own family and the society. Angelou describes the oppression (s) of black women. She not only describes their issues but also encourage them to take some steps to solve their issues and problems regarding oppression, discrimination, and inequality. Kaur generally, describes the oppression (s) of women but especially who belong to her race because she is a woman of color and has to face oppression throughout her life from her childhood to old age but she is well aware about the rights of women also.

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