



# Transnational Feminism and Affective Communities as Resistance to Technopatriarchy: The Instapoetry of Nikita Gill and Monika Radojevic

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Feminismo transnacional y comunidades afectivas como  
resistencia frente al tecnopatriarcado: la instapoesía de  
Nikita Gill y Monika Radojevic

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## Abstract

This article aims to provide a feminist approach to community which moves away from patriarchal communitarian models and towards feminist genealogies, an ethics of care, and affective communities. It engages with the communitarian theories of Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot, particularly those of operative, inoperative and unavowable communities. The article then moves towards a feminist approach to community construction informed by concepts of vulnerability, affect and transnational feminist solidarity, drawing on genealogies from scholars such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Monika Rogowska-Stranget. The authors propose Feminist Affective Communities as a framework that promotes respect for alterity, situated knowledges, and an awareness of oppression—particularly regarding gender. This model emphasises intersectional connections, the collective over the individual, and voluntary, affect-based alliances capable of evoking change. Such transnational alliances

are essential to resisting technopatriarchy and forging solidarity in a globalized world. The article also examines the relevance and context of the 'transnational turn' in literary studies and its link to how Instapoetry is read. By applying a feminist close-reading methodology, the authors reveal how Feminist Affective Communities take shape through the interactions between author, text, and readership within a digital, transnational environment. Finally, case studies of two transnational poets, Nikita Gill and Monika Radojevic, are analysed to illustrate how the theory of Feminist Affective Communities informs a critical reading of Instapoetry and how these communities are mediated by literary forms and affective responses.

**Keywords:** technopatriarchy; transnational literature; transnational identity; transnational feminism; feminist literary studies; feminist close reading; instapoetry; affective community; Nikita Gill; Monika Radojevic.

## Resumen

El presente artículo se propone articular una aproximación feminista al concepto de comunidad que se distancie de los modelos comunitarios patriarcales para converger hacia las genealogías feministas, la ética del cuidado y las comunidades afectivas. El estudio entabla un diálogo crítico con las teorías de la comunidad de Jean-Luc Nancy y Maurice Blanchot, atendiendo específicamente a sus formulaciones sobre las comunidades operativas, inoperantes e inconfesables. Posteriormente, la investigación transita hacia una propuesta de construcción comunitaria feminista fundamentada en los conceptos de vulnerabilidad, afecto y solidaridad feminista transnacional, nutriéndose de las genealogías de académicas como Chandra Talpade Mohanty y Monica Rogowska-Stangret. Se presentan las Comunidades Afectivas Feministas como un modelo comunitario que promueve el respeto por la alteridad, los conocimientos y respuestas situados, y la conciencia sobre la opresión —especialmente en razón de género— y sus intersecciones con otras formas de subordinación. Este modelo reivindica la conciencia de un colectivo que trasciende lo individual y apuesta por alianzas voluntarias, arraigadas en el afecto, con la voluntad y capacidad de propiciar transformaciones sociales. Dichas alianzas transnacionales resultan imperativas frente al tecnopatriarcado y proveen vínculos necesarios en un mundo globalizado. Asimismo, se examina la relevancia y el contexto del «giro transnacional» en los estudios literarios y su vinculación con la recepción de la *instapoesía*. Mediante una metodología de lectura analítica feminista (*feminist close-reading*), las autoras demuestran cómo las Comunidades Afectivas Feministas se materializan en las interacciones entre autoría, texto y público lector dentro de un entorno digital y transnacional. Finalmente, se analizan los casos de estudio de dos poetisas transnacionales, Nikita Gill y Monika Radojevic, para evidenciar cómo la teoría de las Comunidades Afectivas Feministas fundamenta una lectura crítica de la *instapoesía* y cómo estas comunidades son mediadas por las formas literarias y las respuestas afectivas.

**Palabras clave:** tecnopatriarcado; literatura transnacional; identidad transnacional; feminismo transnacional; estudios literarios feministas; lectura analítica feminista; instapoesía; comunidad afectiva; Nikita Gill; Monika Radojevic.

## 1. INTRODUCTION. FEMINISM AND AFFECTIVE COMMUNITIES AS RESISTANCE TO TECHNOPATRIARCHY

This article aims to identify a feminist approach to community, which moves away from patriarchal communitarian models and towards feminist genealogies, an ethics of care, and affective communities. The relevance of this approach to community will be explored in relation to the need for a transnational perspective for feminist communities and literary studies. Furthermore, this article builds upon the methodology of a feminist close-reading to incorporate intermediality by analysing poetry published on Instagram as examples of transnational cultural production from two transnational woman poets, Nikita Gill and Monika Radojevic. Finally, the affective responses to these poems will be analysed as evidence of transnational feminist communities resisting technopatriarchy in online spaces.

In this article we will analyse poetry published on Instagram in relation to feminist conceptions of community, responding to the communitarian arguments popularised by Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot in their essays on the operative/inoperative and unavowable communities. In this type of communitarian theory, prevalent until the 1990s, there is a nostalgia for a lost, mythical past where community is based on ties such as nationhood or the patriarchal family unit. Within this framework, strong social bonds connect the individual to society in a totalising, unifying way, promising stability, harmony and an absence of conflict. This is a utopian «model of community [...] defined as institutionalised and transcendental, based on notions of shared identity and common purpose provided by stable discursive and ritual practices» (Rodríguez-Salas et al., 2018, p.6).

These communities are defined as operative when they have a unity of purpose and practice, when they are in «communion», subsuming the individual to a collective identity which is «immanent» and, therefore, characterised as closed and exclusionary. Conversely, inoperative communities are those communities which aim to «unwork» this model by providing

alternative communitarian models that are not based on organic, essentialist forms. The key traits of these «inoperative communities» are finitude, singularity and exposure. In effect, these are a recognition of mortality and that one exists within a plurality of others, leading to an openness to alterity. These non-traditional, non-essentialist models of community are temporary and unfixed, recalling Georges Bataille's «community of those who have nothing in common» (Blanchot as cited in Rodríguez-Salas et al., 2018, p.6), Blanchot's «community of those who have no community» (Blanchot as cited in Villar-Argáiz 2013, p.48), the «communauté désœuvrée» (Nancy as cited in Villar-Argáiz 2013, p.48) or Agamben's reference to «inessential commonality, a solidarity that in no way concerns an essence» (Agamben as cited in Rodríguez-Salas et al., 2018, p. 13).

Feminism, meanwhile, has long been critical of fixed, exclusionary models of community predicated on the nation state and the patriarchal family unit which aim to restrict agency, perpetuate oppressive power structures and thereby prevent liberation. Alternatively, feminism creates networks, alliances and communities centred on concepts such as care, solidarity and resistance. Rather than being rooted in kinship and family ties, these networks are voluntary associations predicated on a shared recognition of oppression. One point in common with communitarian theorists such as Nancy, Blanchot, Bataille and Agamben is the confrontation with one's finitude and mortality. However, this awareness of finitude necessitates the recognition of an inherently violent, unjust system, and, as Monica Rogowska-Strangret highlights, the collective sharing of individual vulnerabilities (2017) in the face of that system. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, who has been working on community constructions from feminist perspectives ever since her first work back in 1984, *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, through *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003) and *Feminist Freedom Warriors: Genealogies, Justice, Politics, and Hope* (2018) to her most recent *Insurgent Visions: Feminisms, Justice, Solidarity* (2025) points to «the epistemic privilege of the oppressed» (Mohanty, 2025, p. 3), of those multiple and varied groups, mostly of women but not only, throughout the world, that face sexist, racialised, imperialist, settler colonial, homophobic, transphobic and carceral violence in the capitalist system. The transformative

power of these groups resides in their capacity to build feminist communities by sharing genealogies and epistemologies which are rooted in insurgent praxis, and can, thereby, develop positive, enduring community forms which construct shared identities in a positive sense, rather than in the fragmented, anti-social way suggested by the operative vs inoperative dichotomy of traditional communitarian frameworks. Mohanty's communities are such because of their political activism which mobilizes and brings to the surface the power of their oppressions. As she states:

this theorization of the epistemic privilege of the oppressed suggests that it is the reflection on social and economic inequities, often inherent in the collective praxis of marginalized communities, that provides the most comprehensive and compelling framework for the analysis of power and injustice. (Mohanty, 2025, p.3)

Crucially, alliances formed by these «affective convergences» recognise «communalities» (Sánchez-Espinosa & Méndez de la Brena, 2022, p. 15) while also staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) and activating their joint oppression as communal epistemic privilege.

In summary, the features of operative communities include: shared aims, beliefs and customs; essentialist forms of identity; communion which subsumes the individual; nostalgia for a lost community to be reclaimed; and rituals which avoid confrontation with mortality. Conversely, the features of inoperative communities include: community as an event, not a fixed entity; respect for alterity; singularities existing in relation to other singularities; the possibility of alternative forms of community; and an awareness of finitude. In comparison, the characteristics of Feminist Affective Communities are as follows: voluntary ties based on affect and alliances which supersede kinship or the nation state; respect for alterity; situated knowledges and positionality; intersubjectivity and experience beyond the self; and a recognition of shared (gendered) oppression. As this juxtaposition indicates, our conception of Feminist Affective Communities is not entirely oppositional to Nancy and Blanchot's philosophies (particularly in relation to respecting alterity), however, our positioning derives from feminist genealogies and therefore leads to different analyses and conclusions. Nancy and Blanchot's communitarian theories are clearly complementary

in some aspects but, crucially, lack the same feminist perspectives that we are employing in this article.

Alliances and solidarities are crucial in the context of technopatriarchy. As Wacjman observes, the «view that Western technology itself embodies patriarchal values, and that its project is the domination and control of women and nature, is an important precept of radical feminism, cultural feminism and eco-feminism» (Wacjman, 2006, p.18). Indeed, feminists have explored the marginalisation and invisibility of women in the history of technology, and the need to uncover hidden histories (Plant, 1997). In the context of technopatriarchy, social media platforms are plagued by monetisation, data privacy concerns, corporate monopolies, censorship, white supremacist and sexist views, and violent rhetoric frequently targeted at women and people of colour. This world is «resigned to inequality» and centres on «neutralized, un-differentiated data-connected, muted (we have voice recognition technologies for that old speaking and writing routine), object-filtered, always already enhanced and optimized, declined, substituted, techno-subjects» (Bassett et al., 2020, p. 4). However, there are also ways for these «gendered techno-subjects» to resist the «totalitarian» approach to difference (Bassett et al., 2020, p. 4). Such a view is articulated by the Xenofeminists, inspired by Shulamith Firestone, who recognise both the feminist applications of technology and its limitations within an unequal world (Hester, 2018; Laboria Cuboniks, 2018).

In communitarian theory «individualities are replaced with singularities and the relational aspect is materialised in communication rather than communion» (Rodríguez-Salas, 2013, p. 67). The acts of communication, in this case, will include poems from selected women poets and the affective responses to their work displayed on the Instagram platform. These poems have been published on the Instagram platform by their respective transnational women writers in the past five years, contain content which resonates with our transnational feminist perspectives, and demonstrate a sufficient level of engagement (through likes and comments) at the time of writing to suggest the activation of Feminist Affective Communities. One of our chosen writers, Nikita Gill, is an established writer often associated with the Instapoetry movement and genre, whilst Monika Radojevic, our second writer, does not have the same associations and could be labelled as

an emerging writer, but has published her poetry on Instagram to engage with her audience. Both writers are resident in England at the time of writing. Instapoetry is defined as a type of poetry «primarily written for use within [Instagram] and designed and optimised accordingly» (Penke, 2023, p. 2), a definition which we will explore further in a later section of this article.

We will aim to demonstrate how Instapoetry allows for the emergence of affective, transnational feminist communities which emerge in the interactions between the writer, the poem and the reader, providing alternative forms of feminist online communities which reject technopatriarchy in favour of dialogue and connection. Although we are exploring these potentialities, we are not treating Instagram as separate from the technopatriarchal context. Indeed, the platform contains the same problems as those outlined above, including a loss of agency to an algorithm, corporate ownership of data and incentives towards monetization (Knox & MacKay, 2024). However, we are engaging with how Instagram is used as a space for the dissemination of literature and the activation of alternative communities, facilitating feminist solidarity across borders and ultimately demonstrating that technopatriarchal tools can still be used as resistance (although perhaps not dismantling «the master's house», to recall Audre Lorde's famous dictum in *Sister Outsider*, 1984).

Our analysis builds on Alyson Miller's claim that «the affective communities forged by [Instapoetry] possess «the potential to provoke genuine change» (Miller, 2021, p. 178) and Kristin L. Matthews on Instagram's «community of feeling» (Matthews, 2019, p. 404). We identify these communities as momentary and unstable, with the connections visible only in the readers' affective responses, realised through likes and comments. Such an analysis will aim to demonstrate how affective communities allow for sites of identification and a shared purpose, highlighting a divergence from traditional/primeval communitarian theories, the insufficiency of these models for either a feminist framework or an analysis of literature in a networked era and the need to resort to the new feminist community constructions reviewed above in order to meet such aims.

## 2. THE TRANSNATIONAL TURN IN TIMES OF POLITICAL TROUBLE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our contemporary era sees a reconceptualization of the nation state and national identity in an era of globalization, which is «characterised by migratory flows, hybridization among cultures and new concepts of citizenship and identity» (Federici & Fortunati, 2019, pp. 47-48). Refugee crises in the wake of imperialist invasions, human rights abuses and genocide continue to bring these issues to the fore, alongside the political responses in Europe. Indeed, in the past two years, to name but a few examples, we have been made witnesses of the genocide of one nation, Israel, against a deterritorialized Palestine; Dutch elections saw Geert Wilders' far-right Freedom Party enter a coalition government as the largest party for one year, Le Pen's Rassemblement National gained the largest vote share in the first round of the French elections, the latest polling suggests the possibility of Vox entering national government in Spain if an alternative coalition is not possible, Nigel Farage's Reform is topping opinion polls in Britain and, at the time of writing, Chega's André Ventura has reached the second round of the Portuguese presidential election<sup>1</sup>.

Before events such as these, citizens can only resort to looking beyond those nations at stake and to seeking transnational alliances in the search for a response-able construction of politics of solidarity which can help imagine and interact better futures across borders and cultures. Response-ability, in feminist terms, refers to both one's capacity and the ethics of responding, that is, taking action to effect change. Donna Haraway further emphasizes the «collective knowing and doing» (Haraway, 2016, p. 34) which encourages the creation of alliances. As cultural activists and literary scholars we resort to a genre which, as Azade Seyhan characterises it, «operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for [...] 'paranational' communities and alliances» (as cited in Lukic et al., 2019, p. 1). Indeed, in contrast to world literature, transnational literature emerges «at an identifiable historical

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1. A relevant contribution in this respect is Wodak (2015), which approaches what populist discourses, and their construction of a politics of fear, may mean to media and the arts.

moment, dealing, collectively, with a set of issues and themes associated with decolonization, globalization, postmodernity, and technology» (Jay, 2021, p. 51) and engaging with a broad range of issues and subjects (migration, displacement, exile, the fluidity of borders both literal and figural, cultural hybridity, identity and citizenship, the status of refugees, etc.), which have become pressing in our own time (Jay, 2021, p. 52).

Thinking within the larger area of European literature(s), the area of transnational literatures opens up the questions as to what transnational approaches can offer to the above-described urgent call for reconceptualisation of the state and of identities in an era of globalization. Should we keep talking about nation states or national identities right now? What are the possible geographical and cultural definitions of «Europe» and «Europeanness» (see also Keller & Rakusa, 2004)? A transnational gender perspective requires interdisciplinary approaches since it cannot be applied without relying on categorical apparatuses of migration studies, border studies, diaspora studies and area studies, to name just the most obvious ones. At the same time, it is an approach which speaks back to all these disciplines, confirming the seminal role of gender as an analytical category in these fields.

We will now provide an overview of current debates around the status of Instapoetry as literature, position our case studies in relation to transnational literature, and then move to a feminist close-reading (Lukic & Sánchez, 2011) of two selected poems, which will demonstrate how situated readings of the work of transnational women writers allow for the formation of transnational, affective, feminist communities in online spaces.

### 2.1. Instapoetry debates and their relevance to transnational literature

Instapoetry refers to literary texts «primarily written for use within [Instagram] and designed and optimised accordingly» (Penke, 2023, p. 2). As Knox and MacKay (2024) observe, there are «clear challenges of making precise delineations» and, if one defines the genre «too broadly or too narrowly, either nothing is Instapoetry or everything is Instapoetry» (Knox & MacKay, 2024, p. 3). Labelling a poem as Instapoetry does not preclude it from belonging to categories which are not Instapoetry, especially if it

was originally written for print publication, nor does it erase its potential for literary quality or complexity. However, for the purposes of clarity, we will use «Instapoetry» to refer to any poem published to Instagram which takes advantage of the affordances of the medium through visual, stylistic or algorithmic features. Indeed, Penke argues that Instapoetry texts share formal characteristics, as «it is mostly short texts that have the greatest potential to become instagrammable under the conditions of platform routines» (Penke, 2023, p. 3). Furthermore, this genre is associated with a «minimalist style of casual poetry that often [...] starts from concrete experiences or current feelings» (Penke, 2023, p. 23). As a result, this genre of literary production is often characterised by its «byte-sized simplicity» (Bresge as cited in Miller, 2021, p. 163) and «accessibility» (Watts as cited in Kiernan, 2021, p. 49), spawning debates over both its function and its supposed literary value.

The simplicity of its form is at odds with conceptions of literariness, which is an aesthetic value judgement often predicated upon complexity and depth of meaning. Its popularity and global readership prove that the accessibility of the form is connecting with readers, particularly young people, women and people of colour. One such appeal of the form is that social media has allowed for diverse voices to emerge and find an audience whilst bypassing many of the gatekeepers associated with the traditional publishing industry. Instapoetry «largely circumvents the publishing industry – an act which recognizes how publishing historically has been a venture largely run by and profiting white men» (Matthews, 2019, p. 400). It is no coincidence that «the facts of who is speaking and what is being written about: marginalized voices, often by female authors and people of color» (Penke, 2023, p. 7). However, whilst acknowledging how the «pithy accessibility of new media poetries has undoubtedly helped magnify oppressed voices and perspectives», Alyson Miller has also criticised how the form has «fostered an insistence on universality that erases complexity and difference in the (largely aesthetic) interests of harmony, and the appeasement of both dominant and minority cultures» (Miller, 2021, p. 171). This observation is aimed at many so-called «celebrity» instapoets, with Nikita Gill named among the poets that Miller critiques (Miller, 2021, p. 171).

A desire for mass appeal therefore leads to a lack of particularity, which «translates to speed, universality being shorthand for everyone, appealing to everyone, everyone open to hearting and regramming» (Roberts as cited in Miller, 2021, p. 172). Both the form and content of Instapoetry is influenced by its need to be relatable and shareable (Kiernan, 2021, p. 48). The «universal» writer is seemingly one who is not situated, recalling Haraway's «conquering gaze from nowhere» (Haraway, 1988, p. 581). This position (or lack thereof) stands in contrast to the transnational writer. The transnational writer is never entirely at home, and therefore they are in a «condition of being re-adjusted or re-situated [which] grants the exiled a privileged space in which truths are constructed and deconstructed» (Fernández & Sánchez, 2019, p. 101).

A transnational lens in this context highlights that popularity is not a synonym for universality. From a transnational viewpoint, both the writer and the reader remain situated and must take responsibility for their knowledge claims. A transnational writer is not the unmarked, universal writer, but someone whose identity is informed by the intersection, fusion and conflict between multiple cultures, resulting in hybrid identities. Tensions clearly exist, however, and, as the above critics demonstrate, there are concerns that specificity and difference can be diminished or occluded when appealing to a mass audience for likes and shares. A transnational lens rejects the universality of a text, but that does not reduce its literary, interpretive potential, as the situatedness of the writer and reader can lead to a proliferation of interpretations, as we will demonstrate.

## 2.2. Locating the transnational in the Instapoetry of Nikita Gill and Monika Radojevic

Nikita Gill is a poet who made her breakthrough on Instagram before finding success in the more traditional publishing world. Since publishing her first volume, *Your Soul Is a River* (2016), she has published a further six volumes of poetry, short stories, a dramatic work for the theatre, an epic poem, and a novel in verse. At the time of writing, her 830,000 followers position her as one of the most popular poets on Instagram, earning her the title of the «poetry Queen of Instagram» (Syrdal, 2022) and «Britain's

most followed poet» with more than a million fans across her various social media channels (Smallman, 2022).

Describing herself variously as Irish-Indian and British-Indian, Nikita Gill's hyphenated, fluid identity arises as a result of her transnational experiences. Born in Belfast, Ireland, to Indian parents, she holds dual citizenship. She was raised in India, and later studied in England, where she now lives. Whilst she writes and publishes in English, her first language is Hindi. In an interview with the online travel blog, *Roadbook*, she described these influences on her personally and creatively:

My birthplace being Belfast and coming from Kashmir and Punjab means coming from three places of British-mandated partition in two very different parts of the world. [...] What does it mean to be from so many places and at the same time feel like you're from none of them and all of them? I think it makes me question what borders mean to people and why they exist. People, identity, divisions but most importantly love inform my creativity. (Horne, 2024, para. 5)

The «Instapoet» label and those associated with the movement have changed since Nikita Gill soared in popularity, particularly as these same poets have found commercial success with traditional print publications. In the context of transnational women writers who were born or lived in Britain, and who were associated with the Instapoetry movement, Yrsa Daley Ward and Warsan Shire are two of the most prominent success stories, with the former co-writing Beyoncé's *Black is King* (2020) and the latter's poetry featuring in Beyoncé's *Lemonade* (2016). Perhaps as a result of this success, they do not continue to post their own poetry on Instagram to seek reader responses and instead they use the platform to promote their own events, upcoming books in print, share other poetry that they are reading, or to highlight activist causes. As Knox notes, these poets can now «afford to take time off from their accounts for weeks or even months at a time, rather than posting multiple times daily» and often «their posts are no longer actual poems, but rather adverts selling their next book, performance, or merchandise» (Knox, 2024, p. 60). Moreover, Knox observes that these first wave of Instapoets have «decreased in digital engagement» but «that the genre itself has [...] continually adapted and changed in length, style, and even language» (Knox, 2024, p. 61). It is therefore necessary to

look elsewhere for poets who are not recognised as part of the Instapoetry wave and have not received the Instapoet label from critics, but who employ Instagram in their dissemination of poetry and whose work remains, to some extent, in dialogue with the Instapoetry tradition.

Monika Radojevic is a half-Brazilian, half-Montenegrin poet raised in London who won the #MerkyBooks New Writers Prize for underrepresented writers for her debut poetry collection *Teeth in the Back of My Neck* (2021), which deals with themes of gender violence, identity and ancestry. She has since published a short story collection, *A Beautiful Lack of Consequence* (2025), which explores the experience of modern womanhood through feminist rage, revenge and the surreal. Radojevic also founded the Feminist Invoicing collective in 2022, a creative project which invited submissions for their Instagram page and conducted poetry workshops. In a similar manner to Nikita Gill, her transnational trajectory has troubled the meaning of home and identity for her. In an interview with *Huck* she explains:

I was born in London, and this is where it feels the most familiar, but this is also not necessarily my home and the two countries that my parents come from aren't necessarily my home, either, so it's that sense of feeling like you don't quite belong everywhere you go. (Tridimas, 2021, para. 6)

In analysing Nikita Gill and Monika Radojevic's work through the lens of both gender and transnational literature, one can see how their experiences influence their writing and are reflected in its content. Approaching their poetry through considerations of transnational identity and transnational literature brings a new dynamic to the interpretation of her work and to the genre of Instapoetry more generally.

### 3. METHODOLOGY: INSTAPOETRY AND FEMINIST CLOSE-READING

Our conception of transnational literature treats the genre as inherently situated, rooted in lived experience and reflective of the transnational, trans-cultural forces which shaped the authors' craft, and, in turn, demands a situated response from its reader(s). It is important to emphasise, however, that this does not reduce our interpretative lens to a treatment of literary texts as autobiographical or sociological evidence. We are not interested in

our subjects simply because they are the product of transnational forces. Rather we are reading these texts as *literature*, as distinct from other forms of writing and with an affective impact on their audiences. Literary forms (whether fiction or non-fiction) are rooted in experience and reflect social facts, however, they are also subject to linguistic, rhetorical and narrative mediation, as argued by Albert Chillón (2014).

Furthermore, our exploration of Instapoetry and our treatment of literature owes a debt to movements in academia and broader culture in the latter half of the twentieth century, influenced by feminism, racial justice, class politics and postcolonial perspectives, which moved away from elitist notions of the literary canon, from *literature*, to a plurality of *literatures* (see Widdowson, 1999, for a more sustained overview of these transformations). Instapoetry lacks the cultural cachet ascribed to print literature and it is often subject to deletion, due to acts of curation by its creators or platform changes. This ephemerality presents difficulties for preservation and literary scholarship. This ephemerality connects with our wider investigation of transnational literature, particularly in relation to Zygmunt Bauman's liquid modernity, which suggests that fluidity and uncertainty characterise our current age in the context of globalisation (Fernández Hoyos & Sánchez Espinosa, 2019).

The methodology for our purposes is feminist close-reading (Lukic & Sánchez, 2011), which builds upon Donna Haraway's notion of feminist objectivity (1988) to acknowledge the situated position of any reading and that our reading is one of many possible interpretations. Such a reading moves beyond the allegedly depoliticised close reading popularised by the Russian formalists, the Chicago School and proponents of New Criticism. As outlined above, the democratisation of literary studies has broadened the definition of literature and led to new approaches to reading and interpretation, including reader-response, with a focus on the interplay between author, reader and text (see Rosenblatt, 1978). Our feminist close-reading will involve a situated reading of the relevant elements we find in our case studies, including plot, theme, character, imagery and language. The political choice to read Instapoetry through a transnational lens necessarily precludes other readings which are equally productive and legitimate, and, consequently, provides only a partial truth among a multiplicity of others.

According to Sandra Faulkner, poetry is especially suited to feminist aims due to the form's potential for embodiment and reflexivity to explore multiple truths and avoid dichotomies (Faulkner, 2018).

In line with N. Katherine Hayles' call for media-specific analyses (Hayles, 2004) which pay attention to the specific affordances, constraints and materiality of the medium, it is necessary to acknowledge the distinction between reading Instapoetry on Instagram and how its interpretation will differ when reading the same poems in print. The paratexts (Genette, 1997) of print, the aspects which accumulate around the main text, consist of features such as cover art, the title, chapter headings, blurbs, and author photo, which inform the reader's interpretation. In Instagram, paratextual features could include, for example, captions, likes, comments and hashtags. Instapoetry is not simply a free-floating text divorced and decontextualised from its medium, but the reader's ability to engage with it is predicated upon the specific affordances of Instagram. Due to the platform's affordances (Gibson, 1979), Instapoetry's reception is immediately available to any reader in the likes and comments. Instapoetry forges «affective communities» (Miller, 2021) which are global in nature. Matthews refers to Instapoetry's affective immediacy which «connects virtual readers in ways that would be difficult otherwise, allowing them to belong to a community of feeling across time, space, sexuality, nationality, and so forth» (Matthews, 2019, pp. 404-405).

#### 4. RESULTS

Turning to the first case study, Nikita Gill's «DID YOU SAY NO?» was posted by the poet on her Instagram on 15th May 2023. The title «DID YOU SAY NO?» is a common expression the language of victim-blaming often heard in both social and legal settings, and recalls the conversations of the #MeToo era, especially in the digital sphere to which Instapoetry belongs. In the context of Spain, the question of no and yes in relation to consent has particular resonance after the *ley del solo sí es sí* (only yes is yes law), passed in 2022, which involved widespread legislative reform for sexual crimes, but resulted in the unintended consequences of the early release of prisoners, generating significant controversy. Nikita Gill's use of the «I» in

her opening line, «I know how to say “no” in every language» (Gill, 2023), evokes the confessional honesty which is a hallmark of the Instapoetry genre. Gill's use of the «I» frames the speaker as a woman mourning her own experiences and trauma in order to link the individual to the collective, going beyond one person to connect to a larger context. The first-person singular «I» becomes the first-person plural «we» as and «our» as she positions herself within a transnational community of survivors.

The reference to «every language» (Gill, 2023) highlights how gender violence is a global issue. Indeed, the speaker could be the global community of survivors speaking with one voice, united in their message as a result of a common experience of violent oppression. Furthermore, the reference to every language encourages not only a transnational reading in the context of gender violence, but also the context of colonialism. Refusal and resistance here evoke hegemonic narratives of colonial domination which rewrite and whitewash history to diminish historical crimes, framing colonial domination and suppression as a neutral encounter of cultures. This phenomenon can be seen in the history of Gill's India, but of course also familiar in narratives surrounding the Americas and Palestine. The colonised are accused of not resisting in the correct way. «Telling us we were not clear and loud enough/ in our objection» (Gill, 2023) emphatically rejects the use of gaslighting and ignorance as a defence, where women's voices are not heard or trusted, again placing the burden of responsibility on the victims of violence, rather than the perpetrators.

Imagery of the «language of ashes» evokes a barren wasteland where nothing can grow, highlighting long-term, irreversible, irreparable damage as the legacy of violence. This line also connects to the illustration of smoke which floats above the title. The textured background mimics the materiality of the page in an act of skeuomorphism, and an inky three-dimensional smoke illustration interrupts the reader's gaze and dominates this textured page. The reader returns to the illustration of smoke both before and after the poem. Smoke here acts in a spectral capacity; it appears when the damage is inflicted as a symbol of the burning, but it persists once the fire stops, a reminder of its haunting presence and the pain that remains long after the cause disappears. The finality of the full stop following the word «ashes» exemplifies this irreversibility and leaves the reader with

this haunting image. Similarly, the full stop is an imposition, forcing a «language of ashes» upon the speaker, evoking both patriarchal control of accepted speech and linguistic practices of colonial domination.

The paratextual feature of the Instagram caption sees Nikita Gill provide guidance on how to read her poem, as she clearly outlines her intentions:

Did you say no? Really? Were you loud enough? Did you scream? Did you really say no clearly enough though?» – this obsession that society has for blaming victims and saying we weren't loud enough is proof of a system that needs to change. A survivor led care and justice system is needed urgently. #words #survivors. (Gill, 2023)

Instapoetry is a networked form of literature and the hashtags also serve as paratexts, linking Gill's poem within Instagram's literary output and the discourse of survivors in a hypertextual web. The affective communities (Miller, 2021) responding to Gill's poem are global and they include comparisons to their own situated contexts, calls to action, broader political connections, and the sharing of their own related poetry. The most basic form of interaction is the «like» whereby users show their appreciation of a particular post. In this case, the poem has amassed 10,855 likes at the time of writing (Gill, 2023). Comments under the post display a stronger form of appreciation, which can take the form of text or, in many cases, emojis. Users a.fabpoet and deathdoulasarah use clapping emojis and heart emojis, conveying applause and enthusiastic appreciation respectively.

Beyond affect, readers have the opportunity to make political interventions. User ronwynallen comments that:

people in a court (lawyers and judges) think they have the right to say she was asking [for it] it due to the way she dressed, the underwear she wore or the place she went to. These are the people supposedly dispensing justice. (Gill, 2023)

This comment highlights the systemic misogynistic bias which pervades criminal justice systems worldwide and results in low conviction rates for offenders. Other users share their own poetry on similar issues. For example, the poet Zaneta Varnado Johns under the username authorzanjohns includes her poem, «What Matters» which includes the lines «If I said

“no” and you assaulted me anyway,/ Are you less guilty because I waited to report?» (Gill, 2023).

As illustrated above, Nikita Gill begins with the first-person voice before expanding to the collective and the transnational, recalling Haraway's concept of situated knowledges (1988). She speaks from her own situated experience in order to make larger knowledge claims and connections. Rosi Braidotti's description of the nomadic subject draws on Deleuze and Guattari who «dissolve and regroup the subject in an ecophilosophy of multiple belongings» (Braidotti, 2008, p. 182). Braidotti's nomadic subject exists in «a web of forces, intensities, and encounters» (Braidotti, 2008, p. 182), possessing particular relevance for the transnational writer who is consistently resituated and readjusted. The individual is decentred and therefore their experiences must be seen in a wider context. Nomadic subjectivity shifts the emphasis from individuality to interdividuality, and from independence to interdependence. There are clear political ramifications for both subjectivity and identity, as subjectivity extends beyond borders, placing the individual in a web of connections. Through this lens, Gill's position, although beginning with the «I», acknowledges her positionality whilst inviting global connections.

Although her Instagram engagement is not on the scale of Nikita Gill (her Instagram followers number just under 4,000 at the time of writing), Monika Radojevic maintains an online presence and posts her poems on Instagram to engage with her audience. She shares both poetry that has already been published in print and poetry which has not yet found a traditional publisher. Radojevic publishes her poem «Weaponised Incompetence» on her Instagram profile on two occasions: 16th January 2022 and 12th January 2023. For the first publication, she provides a caption, guiding the reader's interpretation, stating that «In this society, dating a man who weaponises his incompetence is a rite of passage» (Radojevic, 2022), pointing to the ubiquity of the issue she confronts. This statement is paired with the pinched fingers emoji, also known as the Italian hand symbol or «che vuoi?» which is used to express disbelief or frustration at a person's actions.

Radojevic also employs a series of hashtags which perform the dual function of shaping interpretation and linking the poem to Instagram

posts by other users, including «#everydaysexism #misogyny #housework #womenswork #menexplainthingstome #domesticbliss #domesticgoddess #poetrypharmacy #poetsociety #poetsoninstagram #poetsandwriters #feministart #feministpoetry #feministpoems #feministmemes #feminism #equality #femalepleasurematters» (Radojevic, 2022). These hashtags are an attempt to appeal to specific audiences and interests, especially those related to poetry and feminist poetry, in particular. They also allow Radojevic to intervene and raise consciousness in spaces which are not exclusively feminist but may be disproportionately frequented by women, such as «#domesticbliss» and «#domesticgoddess» (Radojevic, 2022). These labels also provide an ironic juxtaposition to Radojevic's title and critique of a domestic life dominated by patriarchal power imbalance, thereby signalling the presence of comic irony which will pervades her poem. Furthermore, she contributes to ongoing feminist discourse with «#menexplainthingstome» (a phrase popularised by Rebecca Solnit's 2014 book of the same title which inspired the use of the term «mansplaining» in the popular imagination), thus connecting the poem to a wider conversation about what women tolerate from men and what types of behaviour are normalised. The hashtags «#housework #womenswork» specifically target the issue of undervalued and invisible women's labour, which forms the theme of the poem.

The appearance of Radojevic's poem visually echoes the characteristics of Instapoetry, with the simple presentation of black text on a white background accompanied by small, artistic flourishes, namely, a rough, black arrow mimicking the texture of ink, the use of strikethroughs, and a curative «fin» marking the end of the poem. Radojevic's poem takes the form of a short narrative, following a woman and her male partner, who are both narrated in the third person, and the poem follows the woman and this relationship at different periods of her life. In contrast to Nikita Gill and other Instapoets, however, the poem is not designed for the brief engagement of users scrolling their Instagram feeds, as it is divided into five sections over five separate images, with each section relaying a different time period (19, 22, 27, 31, and 35 respectively).

We see the beginning of the problem at age nineteen, when the unnamed young woman «proudly packs his bags [...] for him» (Radojevic, 2022). The first strikethrough eliminates the words «with him» thereby revealing that

a supposedly collaborative activity is, in fact, one of unequal labour. The technique of the strikethrough recurs throughout the poem to highlight how everyday speech can unconsciously perpetuate injustices as it masks gendered socialisation, sexism and the undervaluing of women's labour. Radojevic's juxtaposition stresses the need to eliminate the casual use of this dominant language in order to assert a more truthful narrative.

Her activity is contrasted with the passive, unhelpful behaviour of her partner, as «he sits on the bed and watches her» (Radojevic, 2022). She «glows» implying that she is pleased with her current situation, but comic irony builds as the man is described: «How radiant, how useful, how lucky he is» (Radojevic, 2022). The ending of this stanza where «she temporarily forgets he's a grown man» ironically subverts the sentiments of gratitude and her glow. The problems continue as, she «teaches him to iron his shirts» at age twenty-two, but the strikethrough of this phrase reveals that, in reality, she «irons his shirts for him» (Radojevic, 2022). His «big hands» are ineffectual as he «can't quite grasp the iron» and his complaints are mocked, «the steam» So hot! It hurts!» (Radojevic, 2022), with clear childish connotations. His inability to clean is mocked in the third stanza, with a list of excuses which become increasingly less plausible as they go on: «he'll be wounded, or tired, or busy, or the football's on and besides: too many products, steps to remember, cloths and sponges» (Radojevic, 2022). At age 31, she «wants to rip his eyes out» (Radojevic, 2022), but suppresses this violent urge, as indicated by the strikethrough, and instead seeks to remedy the problems by purchasing a cooking course for his birthday. However, the reader is treated to a familiar scenario as the boyfriend lists his reasons for not attending cooking lessons. At this point, «what was once a glow is now a forest fire: destruction, commence!» (Radojevic, 2022) as the happy glow becomes feminist rage.

Stanza five provides the ending to the poem and the final twist. A strikethrough hides her thoughts, «I'm leaving you» (Radojevic, 2022), and she instead cooks a dinner for herself, subverting an act of domestic labour into the scene of her revenge as, this time, he watches her «[t]ied up» with a «[g]agged mouth» (Radojevic, 2022). Her realisation that she «temporarily forgot he was a grown man» (Radojevic, 2022) refers back to the first stanza, humorously providing catharsis. The cursive «fin» emphatically ends the poem with this comical act of revenge, leaving the reader to

speculate. Furthermore, in the second version of this poem, published 12th January 2023, the reading is altered by multimodal elements: the poem is now presented as white text on a black background, the strikethroughs are now in red, and a drawing of a hook features on the first and last image. These additions provide a more ominous atmosphere to the process of reading, foreshadowing the final twist. The monochromatic drawing further echoes Instapoetry associations, however, the hook is a symbol which draws attention to the shifting power dynamics in the poem and therefore its meaning is altered in its two appearances. In the first instance, it conveys the woman's limited freedom, trapped in the relationship, and unable to counter its injustices, while the final hook refers to the power reversal in the poem's climax.

Radojevic's caption of the second iteration, «[b]ringing back an old favourite» (Radojevic, 2023), demonstrates the importance of reader engagement to her. Popularity and engagement on Instagram are often out of the writers' control, as visibility is a mix of both hidden algorithms and affective engagement, mediated through the platform in the form of likes and comments. In contrast to Gill, Radojevic chooses to keep her likes hidden, avoiding the quantifiable, competitive aspect of Instagram culture. However, the poem's second posting implies that the poem has sufficiently resonated with her readers.

Indeed, in both poems, Radojevic receives likes and comments from other writers, including Charlie Brogan and Charlotte Moore. Furthermore, positive comments are often tied to emotion and displays of affection, with rebeccakennywrites saying «Absolutely brilliant, love this x» and evakinder-writes commenting «Love this. So true» with a heart emoji (Radojevic, 2022). Many of the commenters identify with the experiences described by Radojevic, and how the poem is «true» repeats throughout the comments. One user states that «Reading this was like getting punched in the guts. Why the hell do I do it/ put up with it??? Things are going to change in this house NOW» (Radojevic, 2022). This comment demonstrates that the reader's affective response is embodied, along with the poem's potential to instigate change by altering the reader's political consciousness.

Indeed, Radojevic responds to a comment from a user, who claims that while her poem contains «[s]o much truth on the surface» there is in fact

«a lot of social blame to go around» (Radojevic, 2022). He asserts that «[b]ack in the day, there was a very clear division of labor where the man typically earn the income at work and the woman took care of the house» but that «in the modern society where two incomes are usually required, the additional workload somehow gets shifted to the female» and that the solution is «a clear division of labor and tasks in a household» as we are «all just floating around here without a clear societal definition of what our roles are» (Radojevic, 2022). Radojevic uses this response as a pedagogical opportunity, referring to the user's comment as «misinformed» before explaining that the «division of labour and feminisation of domestic work was largely created by the capitalist framework we all live in today and reinforced by cultural and religious norms» and the solution, in her eyes, requires «recognition from men of their privilege that allows them to get away with doing less work and a commitment equal contribution from them» along with ultimately the need to «abolish capitalism and the patriarchy» (Radojevic, 2022) in the long term. In these comments, Radojevic highlights that these problems cannot be solved simply on an individual level, but that they are a societal and, indeed, global issue.

As demonstrated above, Monika Radojevic's poem employs a comic irony to subvert a patriarchal power imbalance which she identifies across borders and cultures. The affective responses to her work also demonstrate that this approach resonates with her international audience. Rather than beginning with the first-person singular (as in Gill), Radojevic constructs a fictional narrative with an unnamed woman and man, allowing for the audience to identify with the characters from their own situated positions, reflect on societal injustices and thereby instigate a change in consciousness which leads to concrete action.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In this contribution we have aimed to explore a feminist conception of community and how transnational literatures and their intermedial potentialities from a gendered positionality can contribute to these discussions. Through the Nikita Gill and Monika Radojevic case studies, we have tried to attain an illustration of how these considerations can be put into

analytical practice. For ease of information, table 1 below lists the features of the poems and the affective responses in both case studies which relate to Feminist Affective Communities.

Table 1. Features of Feminist Affective Communities Realised in the Case Studies of the Respective Writers

| Nikita Gill                                                                                                       | Monika Radojevic                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reference to shared oppression through choice of topic: gendered violence, colonialism                            | Reference to shared oppression through choice of topic: gendered socialization, invisibility of women's labour |
| Calling attention to linguistic masking of oppression: use of «No» and «language of ashes»                        | Calling attention to linguistic masking of oppression: the use of strikethroughs                               |
| Connections between different forms of oppression: gendered violence, colonialism                                 | Focus on gendered socialisation and invisibility of women's labour                                             |
| Relates the personal experience of the individual «I» to wider, collective experiences                            | Use of characters fictionalises the experience and thereby invites comparisons                                 |
| Use of hashtags invites intertextual and hypertextual connections to other narratives                             | Use of hashtags invites intertextual and hypertextual connections to other narratives                          |
| Use of poetic imagery to concretise experiences of oppression                                                     | Use of poetic imagery to concretise experiences of oppression                                                  |
| Affective responses: likes and comments demonstrating emotional resonance                                         | Affective responses: likes and comments demonstrating emotional resonance                                      |
| Affective responses: creativity, sharing of poetry                                                                | Affective responses: individual action to change personal circumstances                                        |
| Affective responses: calls for systemic reform or calls to action                                                 | Affective response: debate around meaning and relevance of poem's message                                      |
| Affective responses: situated knowledges, comparisons to readers' own contexts                                    | Affective responses: situated knowledges, truth of experience                                                  |
| Affective responses: political analysis linking individual instances to national, transnational or global systems | Political analysis linking individual instances to national, transnational or global systems                   |

Source: Own Elaboration

The two case studies analysed have led us to conceptualise Feminist Affective Communities to include a respect for alterity, situated knowledges and responses, an awareness of oppression (particularly in regards to gender), connections with other forms of oppression and other contexts, an awareness of a collective beyond the individual, and voluntary alliances, rooted in affect, with the aim and capacity to evoke change. The Feminist Affective Communities in our examples emerge in the interactions between authors, readers and texts and they are therefore mediated by literary techniques such as poetic language, imagery and theme. Interpretation is shaped by (embodied) emotion rather than mere argument.

In this way, Instapoetry possesses the potential for transnational connections, as demonstrated in the affective responses, with readers responding from their own situated positions, and also our own feminist close-reading, which emphasises the relevance of texts beyond their national context. Transnational writing is always in dialogue with transnational solidarity. As we come to a close, we realise that our conception of Feminist Affective Communities is very much in the making. Future contributions could develop this concept in other contexts, including offline spaces, and further explore the different types of affective responses which emerge from these interactions. Similarly, more research on the rapidly evolving genre of Instapoetry could result in the discovery of new features which will continue to shed new light on notions of Feminist Affective Communities.

To conclude, it is worth considering the words of Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, evoking bell hooks, who «identifies the possibility of resistance to modernity in what she calls a “radical postmodernism” that alerts us to «those shared sensibilities which cross the boundaries of class, gender, race, etc.» to establish «fertile ground for the construction of empathy ties that would promote recognition of common commitments, and serve as a base for solidarity and coalition» (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 7). We must recognise commonalities and connections whilst also being aware that «people in different locations and circumstances are linked by the spread of and resistance to modern capitalist social formations even as their experiences of these phenomena are not at all the same or equal» (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 7). Literature, when viewed through a transnational lens, provides such a vehicle to provoke these discussions and reflections.

6. AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

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No artificial intelligence tools have been used in the planning, writing or editing of this article.

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