15 Instapoetry and the transmodern paradigm

Transnational feminism in Nikita Gill's work[1]

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The hyperconnectivity facilitated by the rise of social networks has greatly contributed to the promotion, dissemination, and production of creative literary works that may reach a worldwide audience within a short period. Besides the rapid spread of these original creations, social media platforms such as Twitter or Instagram have the potential to offer users the possibility of actively engaging with these texts (Thomas 1). Hence, these sites have become, in the words of Miriam Johnson, a "meeting point for writers and readers" (1). In this sense, when sharing a post, writers come face to face with an audience that may feel identified with their creations' main themes, very often linked to their day-to-day experience. Any active or passive feedback on the part of the audience thus leaves the text liable to a continuous reshaping and reinterpretation based on the multiplicity of cultural parameters that users from all around the world have.

One of the genres of digital literature that has gained massive popularity in recent years is Instapoetry. Written in a bare and accessible style, Instapoetry deals with present-day social justice issues, and so one of its recurrent perspectives is the feminist one. The poetic praxis of feminist Instapoets such as Rupi Kaur or Nikita Gill—who is tackled in this study—can be said to align with the tenets of a feminist paradigm known as transnational feminism. In their seminal volume *Scattered Hegemonies* (1994), Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan succinctly construe the performance of transnational feminism in the following terms: "[C]reating coalitions based on the practices that different women use in various locations to counter the scattered hegemonies that affect their lives" (18). In a summarized way, it can be posited that this model mainly operates on two interdependent levels: first, it aims at the creation and strengthening of feminist synergies worldwide; second, it draws on the power of such a transnational effort to destabilize hierarchies.

While Grewal and Kaplan's idea of countering hegemonies is a natural outcome of their reading in the context of a postmodern society, both

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the emergence of horizontal alliances and the geographical polycentrism suggested by the variegated locations from which these practices are articulated, are some of the key aspects of a contemporary cultural paradigm known as transmodernity. Remarkably, the transmodern paradigm, which is more thoroughly explained below, shares with the term "transnational feminism" the prefix "trans-," which underlines a "move that connects (…) transculturally in a world more globalized than ever before" (Yebra 6). The move towards relationality that both transmodernity and transnational feminism advocate runs parallel to the connectivity fostered by the creation and publication of digital literature on social networks. Not surprisingly, the Spanish philosopher Rosa María Rodríguez Magda, who coined the term 'transmodernity' in 1989, has remarked that "our current reality is both transnational and virtual" ("The Crossroads" par. 10). Therefore, it seems important to draw academic attention to the role of Instapoetry—and, more concretely, feminist Instapoetry—as the epitome of such an amalgamation of the transnational and the virtual. What appears to make the case for this line of research is that Instapoetry capitalizes on the flexibility of geographical, social and cultural barriers enabled by social media platforms to make heard (hi)stories of insidious gender-based oppression, women's vulnerability or female empowerment and, most importantly, to let their audience engage with them.

This chapter aims to give an insight into the transnational possibilities of the feminist Instapoetry by Nikita Gill, a UK-based writer who, with over 600,000 followers and about 500 posts, has become one of the most widely known Instapoets. An organizing principle of her work is the construction of dialogic poetry that renegotiates both the identity and the position of women while benefiting from digital hyperconnectivity to encourage a fruitful worldwide debate on feminism. In like manner, her poetry's dissemination via Instagram enables a webbed interaction between a multifarious readership living in different places around the globe. Such a network-like interplay recalls the above-mentioned intersection between the transnational and the virtual and, indeed, it has been frequently identified by transmodern critics as a defining feature of transmodernity. Following the interconnectedness advocated in transmodern thinking, this chapter sets out to explore how Gill's digital poetry manages to give a literary response to the transmodern demand for a transborder exchange of (hi)stories and ideas, in this case on women's experiences. This can be seen in the construction of a poetic cosmos that represents and raises debate on feminist consciousness at a transnational scale. The ensuing analysis of a selection of Gill's Instapoems, then, seeks to stress how they are part of a transnational feminist endeavour that enhances the interpersonality, borderlessness and relatability of feminism, ultimately forging synergies of empathy and solidarity inherent to transnational feminism.

Transmodern routes for interconnectedness and dialogue

The centrality of the rhizomatic dialogue demanded in our hyperconnected global era has been underlined from the inception of the transmodern paradigm. In her 1989 essay *La sonrisa de Saturno*, Rosa María Rodríguez Magda gives a preliminary definition of transmodernity as "the persistence of the assumptions of Modernity in a postmodern society" or, to put it another way, "making good use of the characteristics of postmodern society and epistemology to carry over the modern project" (10; my translation). In this early attempt to theorize her perception of an ongoing paradigm shift, it is postulated that transmodernity does not entail a radical break from modernity and postmodernity. It is the continuation of modernity rather than a departure from it that is endorsed, and in that matter, Rodríguez Magda maintains: "Modernity is the project, Postmodernity its fragmentation, and Transmodernity is a simulated return in the plural form" (*La sonrisa* 10; my translation). Transmodern cosmovision, then, recaptures the idea of the modern coherent project amid postmodern fragmentation, while it leaves behind the modern systematicity and the cult for the individual to both embrace and celebrate the plurality that postmodern thinking promotes. The successful integration of elements belonging to apparently antagonistic frameworks points to the idea of a synthetic dialogue that Rodríguez Magda foregrounds in her later work *Transmodernidad* (2004): "Modernity, Postmodernity, and Transmodernity form the dialectic triad that, in a more or less Hegelian manner, would complete a process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis" (28; my translation). As primarily dialectical, this integrative epistemic perspective steers away from hierarchical classifications, adopting eclecticism as its organizing principle (Rodríguez Magda, *La sonrisa* 11).

The eclecticism and fluidity advocated by transmodernity tie in with the system of ever-flowing relations characterizing our global age. Drawing on Jean-François Lyotard's notion of the "grand narrative" (63), Rodríguez Magda explains that the postmodern drive to assemble the scattered and hitherto disjointed pieces of modern grand narratives has led to the creation of a new grand narrative, namely globalization (*Transmodernidad* 28). In this case, however, it appears that this twenty-first-century metanarrative does not support the establishment of pyramidal hierarchies; interestingly, it follows a polycentric, horizontal model of organization based on network-like connections. Once again, such an ongoing phenomenon as the myriad connections facilitated by globalization reflects one of the prospects of the transmodern cosmovision as exposed by Rodríguez Magda: "[T]o cast light on the gnoseological, sociological, ethical and aesthetic *relations* of the present day" ("Un nuevo paradigma" 1; my

translation and my emphasis). Accordingly, the move towards a relational mode of thinking seems imperative as a way of responding to what Susana Onega and Jean-Michel Ganteau have denominated "the gnoseological demands made by an era of swift transformations and fluidity in which water-tight boxes no longer make sense and everything functions as long as it is interconnected" (1–2).

The interconnectedness of our present-day world seems to have contributed to a re-evaluation of the way people interact with each other. Critics such as Jeremy Rifkin have pointed to the growing awareness of a global and relational consciousness binding people together (377). In like manner, Irena Ateljevic explores the potentially beneficial outcome of a non-hegemonic interpersonal dialogue where the commonality of certain experiences is stressed: "Once the grounds of shared risk, vulnerability, and interconnectedness of all humans occupying our Earth are acknowledged, a true dialogue without patronising can be created" (216). As suggested by the rejection of any patronizing tincture this dialogue might adopt, this network of interpersonal exchanges deviates from any essentialist views of identity, in terms of gender, ethnicity or nationality. Indeed, this all-inclusive dialogue is a consequence of our present-day world's demand for a transborder mode of thinking (Rodríguez Magda, *Transmodernidad* 30) that reflects our social reality's instability insofar as it advocates the dissolution of fixed, exclusive barriers.

Instapoetry and the call for a synergy of relatable women's experiences

In line with the uninterrupted boundary crossing that defines our present-day age, recent feminist theory has put forth analytical frames that both highlight and call for interactions across borders. At the onset of the twenty-first century, Chandra Mohanty advocated a vision of feminism that she termed "feminism without borders." This framework draws attention to the discernible existence of boundaries such as ethnicity, sexuality or location while envisaging, in the words of Mohanty, "change and social justice work across these lines of demarcation" (2). Mohanty's paradigm sets out to address the intricacy of borders that amalgamate narrowness and openness, or else restriction and liberation. In doing so, it acknowledges the existence of binary opposites that, far from being mutually exclusive, can be transcended through dialogue. Mohanty hints at the dialectical and inclusive nature of "feminism without borders" as she explains that, before exploring and problematizing the border, she must speak about feminism "without silences and exclusions" (2). It seems imperative, then, that feminist practices of performance and attention—including writing, storytelling or attestation—cast light on the experiences of individuals and groups from different social, cultural or geographical backgrounds while

offering them the opportunity to engage in a dialogue where any constructive opinion may matter.

The feminist concern about narratives that both oppose and complement what has traditionally been deemed mainstream perspectives is a keystone in transnational feminist theory and activism. During a round table on transnational feminisms held at Ohio State University in 2014, Mignonette Chiu conceived of transnational feminism as follows: "It is a political framework—a way of seeing that potentially offers a feminist escape from overdetermined colonial and colonizing, liberal and neoliberal, Western paradigms, narratives, processes, methodologies, practices, and applications" (Blackwell et al. 6). It can be asserted, then, that transnational feminism is a critical construct that aims to reject the univocality and subsequent limitations of discourses on women's experiences and identities. In its drive towards the escape from short-sighted, Western epistemologies of feminism, transnational feminism has been regarded as unanalogous to "global feminism." By way of illustration, Grewal and Caplan clarify: "The term 'global feminism' has elided the diversity of women's agency in favor of a universalized model of women's liberation that celebrates individuality and modernity" (17). Transnational feminism goes beyond a model that perpetuates the supremacy of the Western world by embracing the heterogeneity of women's voices and how their stories imbricate with the experiences of other women. In transcending the cult of the individual, this form of feminism stresses commonality, though without erasing the interpersonal or intercultural differences between women's experiences. In like manner, Barbara Fultner argues that "transnational feminists have made us aware that women's plights in one place are often deeply connected to women's situations elsewhere" (205). By encouraging the recognition of common difficulties and trials, transnational feminism contributes to the emergence of a network of solidarity that Mohanty defines in terms of "mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities" (7). This means that, when attention and visibility is given to experiences with which other fellow women can identify, a sense of empathy can arise that connects women across the globe in a weblike manner.

The analogy between the connective tissue of transnational feminist solidarity and the intricate pattern of a web is crucial for understanding the approach to Instapoetry taken in this study. As Gina Heathcote convincingly explains, "the flow of knowledge across transnational feminist networks is multi-directional, reacting to the international, enacted at the local, yet travelling across regions" (16). In a similar fashion, Instagram facilitates a smooth exchange of knowledge—in this case

Instapoetry and the users' feedback—that is created at a certain location on Earth and that immediately reaches as many destinations as viewers of that given post. A phenomenon on the move, Instapoetry radically departs from monolithic, universalist conceptions of cultural and gender identity. As social media platforms are a global forum, Instapoetry attempts to cater to a multifarious audience with diverse interests and needs. In this context, it appears vital for Instapoets to ensure that their poems are liable to openness and mutability, as, in the words of Jeneen Naji, "in both poetry and the digital world, (…) the construction of meaning is dependent on the context, background, platform and socio-cultural situation of the human interpreter" (3). It is not surprising, then, that Instapoetry is an accessible and open-to-interpretation digital genre whose meaning is renegotiated every time a given user engages with its manifestations.

It should be noted that Instapoetry represents the culmination of a process by which the assumedly elitist praxis of poetry is opening up to non-canonical forms—most notably digital poetry—which, as Astrid Ensslin notes, combine "thereness, critical potential, and replicable accessibility" (9). In other words, it is a tangible poetry whose accessibility may entice readers into an active engagement with the text that may ultimately bring about a critical response. Such an implication of readers is first and foremost facilitated by the poems' language and spatial arrangement. They are written in a simple, reader-friendly style and are often enhanced by drawings and images that lead to a more thorough understanding of the written text's main themes. In addition to this, the openness of this poetic genre is strengthened by the cultural hybridity of many of its best-selling authors. To name but a few, the Indian-born Canadian Rupi Kaur, the British-Somali Warsan Shire, the New Zealander of Asian origin Lang Leav, and the British-Indian Nikita Gill share a cultural multifariousness that lays bare that the accessible world of social media poetry has opened the way for transnational voices, many of which are female and non-white (Hill and Yuan par. 9).

It should also be remarked that, as a form of poetry, this digital genre appeals to emotions while creating a sense of shareability among readers (Khilnani 135). As users read about issues such as trauma, war, gender roles or resilience, there emerges a feeling of relatability that may ultimately become the catalyst for social action. This is certainly the case with the selected poetry by Gill to be analysed below, in which she revolves around such relatable experiences as abuse, body image or the lack of agency, using the power of words to kindle both individual and collective transformation. Gill's Instapoems promote self-care for women in the aftermath of shattering and, at the same time, they advocate an empathetic response that binds different people—both women and men—together with

a view to consolidating a strong feminist consciousness that is inherently transnational. In doing so, she brings to the fore frequently overlooked experiences to which women around the globe may relate, hence creating a network-like topography of poetry that reflects the transversality of our global age.

Nikita Gill and the transformative function of her feminist Instapoetry

Gill's poetry is an emblem of the potentiality of creative writing to transform a desolating and alienating experience into a pathway towards resilience and reconnecting with both the self and others. In a personal experience article written in 2018, Gill reminisces about her first steps as a yet-to-be-discovered Instapoet. She makes it clear that her main mission when she started sharing her creations on social media platforms was to find whether her feelings were potentially relatable. It was when her inbox started being filled with direct messages from people who felt identified with her poetry's main themes that she had an epiphany, which she relates in the following terms: "I was, indeed, not alone in my flawed, terrible and sometimes extremely difficult-to-handle feelings" ("The Power to Transform" par. 9). What followed was the inclusion of questions in the captions of her Instagram posts that could enable their readers "to share their personal stories, to start conversations and to empathise with strangers" ("The Power to Transform" par. 11). After facing the rejection of more than one hundred publishers, she was encouraged by her awareness that her Instapoetry was in tune with the day-to-day experience of users who now had the opportunity to undergo a similarly motivating and empowering realization that their story mattered: "Where people had been feeling powerless, they now felt motivated. They came away from the experience of reading and listening to poetry feeling better, stronger and empowered" ("The Power to Transform" par. 14).

Drawing on her personal experience, Gill turns her evolution from unrelatability to bond-forging into a leitmotif in her feminist Instapoetry. In "The Women I Know," she appeals to the strengthening of affective ties between women as a potentially empowering compromise. The opening lines of the poem already hint at this transformative process as they emphasize how the passing of both the hours and the seasons intensifies the radiance of these women, who are perceived as peers: "I call them: my sisters, goddesses and the moon. / I tell them they glow more radiant / with each passing spring and monsoon" (1–3). The poetic persona's compliment is a token of the interpersonal love that this text aims to bring to centre stage. Such a pure love is seen as the harbinger of togetherness, which this poem sets in opposition to the egotism of women who have opted for hating each other rather than embracing mutual support and admiration:

> We have loved each other through the pain, / through the forests of crueller hearts / and refused to tear each other apart, / even though we were all taught in subtle ways / from an early age / to hate one another. (4–9)

It is interesting to note that the final lines in the stanza, which touch on the promotion of female misogyny, are notably shorter than the ones dealing with interpersonal care. The brevity of these lines may be said to reflect that there is no room for such disruptive behaviours as those of the stereotypical "mean girl" in the relational project that Gill aims to build. Indeed, female misogyny curtails any attempt at forging powerful bonds between women as it tears apart rather than links, and this might be formally suggested by the lack of rhythmic or rhymical connection between the last two lines. What is proposed for the enhancement of solidarity among women is not simply a readiness to "defend one another with a primal fury" (11), but chiefly to partake of a collaborative endeavour to write that mirrors Gill's project for writing accessible poetry whose meaning is refashioned every time readers reply on the post: "Together, we will write better / stories to tell. Oceans to love. / Skies to fly" (13–15). These concluding lines could be interpreted as an invitation for readers to share their particular little narratives in a virtual forum of debate where any constructive story is welcome. The wide range of (hi)stories this dialogic poetry is liable to interact with, is evidence of its transnational extent, and this is metaphorically implied by the reference to fluid and limitless spaces such as the ocean and the sky.

"The Women I Know" lays bare that Gill's Instapoetry has the potential to become, using Johnson's phrase quoted above, a "meeting point" for the poet and her readers. As evinced by the progressive adoption of a collective 'we', this representative example of her digital poetry sheds light on the dissolution of hierarchies as crucial for the attainment of a dialogue leading to the creation of feminist synergies. The poem "Queens II" revolves around this idea of renegotiating power hierarchies to ensure a dialogue that, along similar lines as Mohanty's "feminism without borders," eradicates silences and exclusions. This poem takes the form of a dramatic monologue where, as Gill points out in the caption, the poetic speaker addresses a female friend who had long been facing the abusive behaviour of a male partner. Having been belittled by this form of insidious oppression, the shattered addressee is reminded in this poem that she has the status of a queen: "Listen to me, girl, / you have castles inside your bones, / coronets in your heart" (1–3). The metaphorical positioning of the victim as a figure of authority is a subversive strategy that serves Gill to critically comment on patriarchy while underscoring the dignity of women. Unlike her perpetrator, the female addressee is likely to put her

power to good use. Accordingly, when growing cognizant of her potential, she is bound to start a struggle that, far from being destructive, aims at the renegotiation of her position in society: "If he threatens you with battle, / you raise him a whole war, / the last time I checked, / Queens cower before no man" (4–7). It is implied that the previous flinching of a submissive woman is soon to give way to answering back to patriarchy. Just as the seemingly experienced poetic persona is doing, the poem's addressee can overcome the obliteration of both her voice and agency, ultimately uttering a strong-willed verbal backlash that runs parallel to the resolute tone used by the lyrical subject throughout. This is an example that, as Gill implies by the end of her explanation, can be helpful for all women alike. Her final assertion in the caption—"Now I pass it [this poem] to you"—is an indication of the poem's relatability. It is not coincidental, then, that the word "queens" is written in the plural to show that every woman may become an agent for positive change regardless of her class or sociocultural situation.

Gill's enterprise to celebrate the long-neglected fortitude of women is illustrated by the poem "What I Dread Most". In this meditative composition, the poetic persona mulls over her frustration at having to teach her daughter that she should yell "fire" in the event of rape. It is insinuated by her unrest that she is deeply aware of women's susceptibility to sexual aggression. Moreover, her disturbance seems to be aggravated by the fact that this lesson does not necessarily prevent sexual assault from happening. As implied by her reproduction of the advice to scream "fire" through direct speech, she considers this lesson as a cliché that does not fulfil the function of empowering women. In view of the vulnerable position to which society has condemned women, the poetic speaker opts for teaching her daughter an alternative lesson: "(…) [T]eaching her / that she matters and is sacred. / This is how we keep turning our girls into wildfires" (6–8). What Gill achieves at the end of the poem is to advocate the need for a learning process whereby women embrace from an early age their power and understand that standing up for themselves might be an effective way to prevent abuse and rape. Given that sexual assault is a global phenomenon, she underlines in the concluding line that the ordeal dealt with in the poem goes beyond the individual or locatable experience, and she does so by transforming the poetic voice into a collective "we" that appears to call for a transnational ethics of care.

The interpenetration of the individual and the collective is a key element that allows Gill to articulate a representative poetry aiming at a transformative feminist social action. In the poem "Death Threat," she takes the crossing of the private/public boundary to its ultimate consequences to stress that her poetry is neither an unfounded condemnation of patriarchal misjudgement nor a fanciful representation of women's resilience.

As she explains in the caption, the backbone of this poem is an intimidating message she received from an unidentified man that, as reflected in the initial line, urged her to "stop writing poems for women" (1). In brief, the poem shows that the male interloper was vexed at the fact that Gill is writing a poetry that, in his view, makes women "an endangered species" (7). He cannot fathom the idea of a woman that mightily fights for her rights because it contradicts his slanted view of an impeccable woman as "obedient and docile" (6), a mother qualified to "serve men like [him]" (10), and a "sort" that can be easily tamed (12–13). It should be noted that sixteen out of the twenty-two lines comprising this poem are either paraphrases or direct quotes from the unfruitful conversation between Gill and the male intruder, and in this case the prominence given to the altercation that took place via direct message contributes to building a sense of immediacy and relatability that allows for a more active reader engagement. When direct speech is used to represent the sexist remarks made by the male sender (lines 5–13), it may reinforce the rigidity of his beliefs.

As is the case with the suggestion quoted in "What I Dread Most," "Death Threat" urges women to be both wary and critical of a worn-out discourse characterized by rigidity and avail themselves of an alternative mantra that highlights their resilience. What is more, the use of direct discourse draws attention to the relatability of this personal experience insofar as her readers—especially non-male—are likely to receive similar messages from strangers bent on devaluing their identity. In accordance with her effort to elicit social action, Gill finishes her caption by making heard that her particular response to such verbal aggressions has been transforming them into a poem recurrently. Though not explicitly persuading her followers to write, the author may be using her remark that making poetry out of a distressing experience is restorative as an excuse to encourage her implicit addressees to turn their particular pains into narratives of resilience and protest. Once again, the Instagram post stands as a meeting place where the experiences of the author and her readers converge, thus giving rise to a collective effort to build a transborder network of feminist solidarity. Remarkably, this poem was Gill's most commented post in 2021, with nearly six hundred comments that discuss everyday relatable experiences ranging from receiving unwelcome requests for sex in the workplace to being intimidated by a male artist for an inoffensive comment on a tattoo thread.

The massive response from Gill's readers is a telling example of how social media platforms amplify the subversive message of her feminist digital poetry as they facilitate encounters and connections that can bring about social change. The multilateral dialogue that her Instapoetry promotes—both between the text and the reader and among readers—stimulates a sense of transnational solidarity that turns a confessional little

narrative by a victim of neglect into a powerful and inspirational narrative that may lead to resilience at both an individual and a collective level. Such a transition from seeming insignificance to far-reaching impact is illustrated by the poem "Written on a Bar Napkin on December 17th 2016." In the caption of the post, Gill recalls that this compressed yet deeply moving piece of poetry was conceived as she was sinking into depression. In brief, the cumulative effect of a toxic love relationship and an employment that curtailed her creativity led to a growing alienation. She explains that on the night of December 17th, she confronted her estrangement by heading for a bar just for the sake of being surrounded by people. As she was drinking a glass of wine, she scribbled this poem on a napkin and, at that moment, it dawned on her that she felt empowered because she realized that her decision to take herself out was an act of self-care. As a product of self-reflection, this poem captures the enabling revelation that the author had on that night:

> The ghosts of all the women
> you used to be are all so proud
> of who you have become,
> storm child made
> of wild and flame.
> ("Written on a Bar Napkin" 1–5)

A preliminary reading of these lines displays that Gill's conversation with herself tries to counteract the feeling of helplessness induced by trauma. First, instead of showing herself as a disengaged subject, she lays bare that she is a polycentric entity composed of different women who represent different stages in her life. All these women seem equally relevant for the formation of the resilient self portrayed in the shorter lines that round off the poem, and this is emphasized by the anaphoric repetition of "all" in the first two lines. Once she has verbalized the transition from paralysing inertia to vehement agency, she seems to be putting her self-reflection into dialogue with other stories of women's resilience. Indeed, as happens in "The Women I Know," she concludes her caption stating, "I give it to you," and this contributes to turning this meditative poem into a dialogic narrative that fosters transnational feminist solidarity. Considering this move towards a far-reaching dialogue, the addressee alluded to in lines 2 and 3 could be read as an all-encompassing "you" that demands every woman reading this poem commit not only to the practice of self-care but also to empowering other women.

The close reading of Gill's selected Instapoems has made evident that the appeal to mutual nurturing is a driving principle behind her art. As she declared in a tweet posted in 2018, her work is aimed at "women

empowering other women" (@nktgill), therefore corroborating that it instigates an encounter whereby women from different nationalities and walks of life can learn to care for both themselves and others. Just as the beginning of "Written on a Bar Napkin" draws attention to the multidirectional influence of a number of women who are part of someone's (hi)story, the poem "For Our Daughters and Their Futures," written in celebration of the 2021 International Women's Day, starts by acknowledging: "(…) [W]e are the direct result of women / who have endured centuries of trauma and fight / to bring us to this light" (2–4). Later, the collective poetic persona mentions some key figures to whom, in her view, women owe their freedom to raise their voices for justice and gender equality: "We owe it to Mary Wollstonecraft, Rosa Parks [,] / Bell Hooks and Sojourner Truth. / We owe it to Sylvia Pankhurst, Audre Lorde, / Toni Morrison and Maya Angelou" (13–16). The main effect of this catalogue, which brings together some key feminist icons from variegated cultural backgrounds, is to highlight that feminism is a transnational phenomenon where any effort to improve women's lives matters, whether it has been turned into a tangible story or obliterated by systems of power (Gill, "For Our Daughters" 5–6); whether it represents the culmination of a process leading to a "warm, bright liberty" (7) or is one among a hundred skirmishes "fought in the cold" (8); whether it is an unplanned five-line reflection scribbled on a frangible napkin or a thought-out hardback monograph.

What is highlighted in this inciting poem, which works as a summary of the main points tackled in this chapter, is that the combined effort of both well-known and invisible women from different nationalities and epochs has created, is creating and will create a network of feminist solidarity that can bring about women's empowerment. In the lines that follow the acknowledgement of these feminist icons' influence, the collective poetic voice declares that present-day women should take the "torch" (17) bequeathed by their foremothers and proceed as follows: "[T]urn it into a wildfire through our daughters / and granddaughters, an epic warsong [sic]" (19–20). In a similar way to the mother's prospect in "What I Dread Most," the collective "we"—an inclusive voice encompassing both Gill and her readers as representative of women's daily struggle—advocates teaching future generations of women to assert their power. In this case, it is encouraged to transform the legacy of centuries of feminist revolution into a flame-like song of war that could be said to stand for poetry. The collective voice promises that they will build a world "from the embers and the ashes" (26) where these daughters and granddaughters may feel that their voice is respected (28). This collaborative project seems to be pointing to Nikita Gill's Instapoetry, a borderless and dialogic literary endeavour that, using Rifkin's term, builds a "global relational consciousness"—or, more

precisely, a transnational and transmodern feminist consciousness—that is strengthened through the unrelenting interpersonal and intercultural encounters facilitated by social media platforms.

Note

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