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**Reader Engagement with Third-Generation Electronic Literature: An
Affective Stylistic Study of Instapoetry**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation**

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Dedication

Our praise and warm thanks first and foremost to Allah, who guided, helped, and gave us strength to accomplish this work. To our dear parents for their endless assistance and support. This dissertation is dedicated to those who believe in and support us in one way or another throughout this journey.

To all of them, we dedicate this work.

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Abstract

This study aims to explore how Instapoetry affects readers' responses by employing affective stylistics theory to investigate the emotional, cognitive, and participatory responses to selected Instapoems. The study addresses a critical gap in literature regarding readers' response to third generation electronic literature. To achieve this, the research employs a case study design and utilises quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis, focusing on small scale selection of poems by two instapoets, Nikita Gill and Lang Leav. The quantitative findings indicated the use of reels and the selection of sensitive themes significantly tend to attract higher readers engagement, manifested by engagement metrics: likes, shares, and comments. Further, the qualitative analysis revealed that Instapoetry style affects readers' responses and invites different reactions, including emotional, cognitive and participatory ones. Additionally, the findings showcase a significant contribution to affective stylistics through the exploration of participatory responses. This involves interaction between the readers and the poet, as well as among readers themselves, as they engage in the process of co-creating the meaning. This is guided and influenced by the stylistic features embedded in the poem. Ultimately, the insights gained from this study offers potential theoretical implications to affective stylistics, as its findings can help literature and civilisation educators to enhance student engagement with this genre of literature and serve as a guide for incorporating digital literature into future educational methods.

Keywords: Affective Stylistics, Instapoetry, Lang Leav, Nikita Gill, Third-Generation Electronic Literature.

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General Introduction

1. Background of the study

Electronic literature was and still is one of the new-fangled means that enables writers and poets to share their literary works in a digital world, and it is also addressed to the readers to be read, evaluated, and analysed by them. Hayles (2008) described electronic literature as “digital born” which means it is created on the computer itself (p. 3). Furthermore, Hayles and Flores contend that digital literature, is primarily text-based that found in digital media, consists of literature presented on screen interfaces, rather than the auditory components (Flores, 2021).

To grasp third-generation electronic literature, it is important to first understand the earlier first and second generations, as they form the foundation for the third. Concerning the first-generation electronic literature, Hayles was the first person to present the concept of the first-generation electronic literature in 2004; it is also called the classic generation. According to Flores (2021), this generation started from 1952 until 1995 when there were no web or internet services (pre-web). So this genre of literature at that time was in the form of text-heavy, link-driven, hypertext, and so on. During this period, people were unable to procure personal computers due to the expensive materials that only the stakeholders had access to, like scientists, technical staff, and producers. However, the commoners used the electronic literature through physical media like CD-ROM drives (Flores, 2021). The second generation began with the existence of the Internet or the Web in 1995 and continues to the present. Compared to four decades ago, writers can now publish their original works with ease, thanks to the accessibility of the internet and the proliferation of personal computers. This advancement has been facilitated by custom interfaces and forms. Although there is a massive amount of e-literary works, the readers cannot read by themselves but only with help from plugins or reading books to deal with them, for example, Funkhouser’s *New Directions in Digital Poetry* (Flores, 2021). Finally, the existence of

the internet and the spread of personal computers played a significant role in the development of electronic literature.

According to Flores (2021), third-generation electronic literature emerged around 2005 and continues to the present. It integrates with contemporary digital platforms and technologies, making it accessible and engaging for modern readers and reaches a broader and more diverse audience compared to traditional literature. Although the second generation experienced the early phases of digital technology and the internet, they did not have the same level of access or integration into their daily lives as the third generation. Third-generation electronic literature works aim to reach readers where they already are, as they are familiar with the interface and multimedia elements of the social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as mobile apps (Flores, 2021). These works include a variety of innovative forms such as Instagram poetry, bots, apps, memes, works that utilise smartphone, touchscreen, and VR technologies. In contrast, works that do not incorporate interactive or multimedia components are considered second-generation, such as e-books, which are simply digitised versions of traditional print books, digitised literature that lacks significant integration of digital media elements, and traditional web pages (Grigar & O'Sullivan, 2021). It is important to note that both generations can coexist harmoniously. In the second generation of electronic literature, *Dreamlife of Letters* by Brian Kim Stefans (2000) exemplifies kinetic poetry, which lasts approximately eleven minutes, displaying animations of letters moving across the screen or falling down and or tumbling to create meaning (Rosales and Sarce, 2019). In the next generation, kinetic poetry is continued through GIF-based poetry, in which poets use short, looping GIFs to create moving text, similar to early kinetic poetry (Grigar & O'Sullivan, 2021).

It is widely acknowledged that the digital age has significantly changed the way literature is created and consumed, resulting in the birth of new literary forms that reflect the fast-paced and interactive aspect of modern life. Among these, Instapoetry has developed as a distinguishing aspect of

the 21st-century literary scene. It exemplifies the incorporation of digital poetry onto modern platforms (Fathima, 2025). The value of digital poetry lies in the mobility and accessibility of Instagram as a mobile application for creating and consuming digital poetry. Instagram is a social networking website or platform that enables users to post personal items such as photos, stories, and blogs. It began to evolve from photo-sharing sites to spaces for a variety of artistic expressions and provided a natural medium for poetry that could be consumed quickly and shared widely (Naji, 2018 as cited in Fathima, 2025). Furthermore, Flores (2021) proposed that the present digital landscape of sharing context with large audiences, as seen in Instagram poetry, has created a new type of electronic literature, which he calls "third generation literature." Poets like Rupi Kaur, Lang Leav, and Robert M. Drake create large followings on Instagram before publishing books of poetry that sell in extraordinary quantities.

As a modern literary genre, Instapoetry is intended to evoke an immediate response from readers, making it particularly suited for affective stylistic study. What reader-response criticism has brought to literary analysis is a whole new set of ideas, putting the reader at the centre because it is the reader who gives the literary work its value and meaning (Mihai, 2024). This concept appeared in complete opposition to the formalist and structuralist approaches, which focus only on the text and eliminate any other external factor that could influence the interpretation. In literary criticism, affective stylistics is a reader-response criticism method developed by Stanley Fish through which the act of reading a text is analysed and how this act contributes to the meaning of the text itself. It studies the relationship between a text's stylistic elements and the emotional and cognitive responses that readers experience (Fish, 1970). Further, Fish (1970) argued that meaning is not a fixed property of a text but rather emerges from the reader's experience. In essence, when a reader interacts with a text, they experience a continuous sequence of reactions formed by the unfolding of words in a specific order to guide the reader through a series of cognitive and emotional responses, reinforcing the idea that reading is an interactive process.

2. Statement of the Argument

Instapoetry is a new form of literature that emerged with the development of literature during the third-generation electronic literature genre. Like other literary works, readers engage with Instapoetry in a notable way whereas reader engagement, or reader response, is a widely discussed subject by both critics and researchers alike. Concisely, we assert that, to the best of our knowledge, most previous research papers focus on examining literature in other media platforms (not on Instagram specifically), others talk about Instapoetry and its characteristics, and fewer studies focus on affective stylistics in Instapoetry (almost non-existent). This lack of information encouraged us to conduct this research to address and add to the research that was conducted on readers response by applying an affective stylistic framework. This research seeks to analyse the emotional , cognitive, and participatory responses elicited from readers regarding Instapoetry, particularly in the field of teaching and learning literature.

3. Research Questions

This research paper addresses the main research question and three research sub-questions. These are as follows:

- How does Instapoetry affect readers' response?

Sub-questions:

- How does Instapoetry shape the reader's emotional response through affective stylistics?

- How does Instapoetry shape the reader's Cognitive Response through affective stylistics?

- How does Instapoetry shape the reader's participatory response through affective stylistics?

4. Literature Review

As a contemporary literary phenomenon shaped by Instagram, Instapoetry has attracted increasing popular attention. For example, Sanderson (2017), in an interview with Nikita Gill, revealed that Gill started posting her poetry online in 2015 through digital platforms, first on Tumblr and then on Instagram. As celebrities started sharing her work, she gained even more popularity. Foremost, Gill writes to support others and inspire them. However, Pâquet published an article entitled “Selfie-Help: The Multimodal Appeal of Instagram Poetry.” In this article, Pâquet (2019) argued that Instagram poets have so far received minimal attention from academic scholars since Instapoetry as a literary subgenre is typically viewed as being too mass-market and uncultured for in-depth analysis; it is a form that has minimal literary worth. In the same vein, Knox et al. (2023) in the article “Global Instapoetry” stated that Rebecca Watts wrote a scathing review in 2018 for the Instapoetry genre, calling out a group of rising poets, including Rupi Kaur, Nikita Gill and Hollie McNish. The poets' work was characterised by its shortness as well as the fact that it had gained popularity through shares and likes. Watts criticised this "artless poetry" for its lack of complexity, literary incompetence, and unnuanced amateurism, saying it was harmful to true poets. In yet another article by Rajoria and National Islamic University (2023), the critics have condemned several instapoets, for instance, Rupi Kaur, Nikita Gill, and Tyler Gregson. For them, these influencers only want to increase their reach and expand their followers, instead of posting something truly valuable to others. However, the study also explores that social media publication has turned literature into a fast-moving market in which authors who publish online are responsible for both creating and marketing their own work. As a result, more people have become content creators, keeping audiences engaged while they consume literature. This shift indicates that Instapoetry has become more commercialised, and that success now depends more on popularity than traditional literary quality.

Naidu (2023), on the other hand, expressed her admiration for poet Rupi Kaur and her famous collection of poems, *Milk and Honey*. She highlighted that what distinguished Kaur's poetry was its direct and visually appealing expression. Kaur's simplicity served as a means of conveying her messages to a broader audience, as she completely avoided complexity and interacted poetic imagery. This style has sparked controversy over whether her work can truly be classified as poetry. Aspany and Murni (2024) examined why Rupi Kaur's poem *Milk and Honey* has gained immense popularity since its initial publication, selling millions of copies. They argued that *Milk and Honey* features due to its ability to create a sense of connection, particularly as Kaur's poetry resonated deeply with many readers, especially women. Moreover, she accurately understood her followers' desires and referenced, shaping her subsequent work accordingly. Finally, it is arguably Kaur's poetry attracts readers with its simplicity and attractive themes.

Knox (2024) revealed that critics such as Rebecca Watts, Thomas Hodgkinson denounced the amateurism poets or instapoet-influencers as well as the apparent poor quality of poetry. Further, in one of the earliest studies in this field, by Fathima (2025), indicated that poets like Rupi Kaur, Atticus, and Lang Leav gained millions of followers and are considered iconic individuals in this genre. Critics fear that as Instapoetry grows more commercialised, it may lose its authenticity and prioritise market appeal over expressing true creative or emotional truths. Some claimed that the initial artistic goal of the genre may be diluted as poets serve the expectations of their audience rather than their own creative impulses.

One can conclude that the few previous explorations of instapoets such as Nikita Gill, Lang Leav, and the like, are only recognised as social media celebrities but not as literary creators. Further, despite the spread of Instapoetry as a literary phenomenon, academic researchers are still not engaged with it, and the research on instapoets works and their analysis is scarce. Such in-depth explorations of Instapoetry are limited in works that investigated the way in which Instapoetry shapes the reader's

response through affective stylistics. Therefore, the aims and objectives of this study are based on this gap.

5. Aims of the Study

This research has a primary aim and four key objectives. The main goal of this study is to explore how readers are affected by the Instapoetry of the two poets, Nikita Gill and Lang Leav. The study examines the readers' engagement with Instapoetry by analysing the stylistic features utilised by the two poets. Three objectives are focused on three distinct types of reader responses: how does Instapoetry shape the reader's emotional, cognitive, and participatory response through affective stylistics. Ultimately, the study will also offer recommendations for future research.

6. Significance of the Study

This study offers potential practical implications in pedagogical practices, as its findings can assist academics of literature and civilisation in promoting student engagement more effectively with this type of literature. Moreover, this study will work as a guide for our colleagues, fellow researchers, and academic staff to support the integration of such digital literature forms into future teaching practices.

7. Research Methodology

This research presents a case study of two instapoets, examining the effect of Instapoetry on readers' responses draws on mixed methods research approach by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The quantitative analysis was used to describe the broader picture of readers' response to Instapoetry, while qualitative approach was employed to provide in-depth analysis of how readers emotionally, cognitively, and participatory engage with Instapoetry. The current investigation is grounded in affective stylistics theory within the broader framework of

Reader-Response Theory to analyse how the stylistic features of Instapoetry shape reader responses in the context of third-generation electronic literature.

8. Structure of the Study

This dissertation is divided into two chapters; the first one outlines the theoretical framework and a review of previous research. This chapter contains definitions and characteristics of the key concepts present in this study, which are the third generation of electronic literature, affective stylistics, and Instapoetry (with its emergence within this category). In the same chapter, we present a synthesis of previous studies on electronic literature, along with the interaction of the readers and affective responses in a digital reading environment. The second chapter includes the analysis of selected instapoems of the instapoets, who are Nikita Gill and Lang Leav, by employing affective stylistic theory. It also provides the results, interpretation, and discussion of the findings.

This study continues this line of research by investigating how affective stylistics directly affect readers' responses to this type of literature. It examines how a text's structure, as determined by the stylistic elements, shapes the reader's emotional, cognitive and participatory responses. Ultimately, this research contributes to a better understanding of the interactive relationship between textual form and reader response to Instapoetry, offering new insights into how stylistic innovations shape literary interpretation.

CHAPTER ONE

Theoretical Framework – Affective Stylistics and Electronic Literature

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Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study, encompassing several key areas. First, it defines the third-generation electronic literature, highlighting its unique characteristics and the rise of Instapoetry. This poetry genre has gained significant popularity among contemporary readers, which is discussed along with its distinctive traits. Additionally, the chapter explores the concept of affective stylistics, examining how stylistic elements influence readers' emotions, interactions, and interpretations of textual components within literary works. The second part of this chapter reviews previous studies that investigate how the features of the Instagram platform shape readers' experiences during their poetry reading journey. Furthermore, the discussion includes the democratic aspect of reader feedback facilitated by self-publishing in digital media. Finally, this chapter concludes with an overview of previous research on electronic literature and its impact on readers' emotional, cognitive, and participatory reactions to digital texts.

1.1. Understanding Third-Generation Electronic Literature

The concept of third-generation electronic literature is intriguing to researchers, and it has been defined in various ways by different scholars. This paper presents two of those definitions of third-generation electronic along with their characteristics.

Viires (2017) noted that third-generation electronic literature emerged around 2006-2007 and defined it as literature generated through social media platforms. The rise of smart devices and the expansion of social media have contributed to the emergence of this new literary generation. Viires highlighted several characteristics of third-generation electronic literature, including the democratisation of literary production (Hammond, 2016, as cited in Viires, 2017), interactive dialogue among participants, dynamic textual and narrative forms, and the blending of various media types. Additionally, it offers writers and poets an easy publishing process without significant barriers (Viires, 2017). Examples of works from this generation include Twitterature, Facebook, Tumblr poetry, and alternative literature (Viires, 2017).

Researchers have noted that the accessibility and dissemination of third-generation electronic literature contrast sharply with the aesthetic challenges posed by the first and second generations. As Clifton (2022) observed, memes can be classified as third-generation electronic literature, which does maintain some aesthetic complexity. Pressman (2014) argued that first and second-generation electronic literature reflects modernist themes, while third-generation electronic literature embodies postmodernist characteristics. The term aesthetic of difficulty refers to the way certain works present challenges that can make them difficult for readers to understand and interpret (Clifton, 2022).

Clifton (2022) stated, "Third-generation electronic literature is intrinsic to my generation's forms of entertainment, communication, and culture at large. I can define my life through my

interactions with it." (p. 6) This indicates that social media platforms represent personal experiences that go beyond mere academic scrutiny. Additionally, Clifton asserted that understanding the aesthetic of difficulty in memes requires looking beyond their surface humour, as they can convey deeper meanings that may be hermeneutic or political. Overall, Viires' definition is suitable for this study, as it offers a comprehensive understanding of third-generation literature and highlights its most significant characteristics.

According to Knox et al. (2023), the Instagram application, originally designed for capturing and sharing photos, has gained popularity among writers who now share short illustrated poems. Users of the platform have interacted with these poems, leading to a decline that affected publishing houses and the sales of poetry books (Knox et al., 2023). As a result, the sales rate of Instapoetry increased, allowing instapoets to become bestsellers in this category (Curcic, 2023).

Despite its popularity, Instapoetry has faced significant criticism. Notably, Rebecca Watts described it as "artless poetry" due to its simplicity and brevity (Knox et al., 2023). Casper (2018) characterised it as substandard and claimed that the platform focuses on quick profit rather than upholding the standards of traditional poetry, reducing it to just a business. Mehrotra (2022) noted that Instapoetry has enabled beginners to achieve quick financial success. So, there are several critics do not recognise Instapoetry as a form of poetry despite its success and spread recently.

Mehrotra (2022) discussed the well-known poet Rupi Kaur, who began publishing poetry in 2009 but did not gain fame until 2015 through Instagram, where she currently has 4.4 million followers. Her rise to prominence is attributed to her simple style. Mehrotra added that on Instagram, anyone can become a writer and quickly gain visibility without the need for traditional acceptance or publication. The COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to the popularity and increased viewership of Instapoetry.

As people were quarantined at home, they turned to social media platforms, especially Instagram, for poetry (Mehrotra, 2022).

Interestingly, Instapoetry is written in various languages beyond English, including Urdu, Arabic, and Spanish. "Within the first 100 posts of today's 'Recent Posts' for Instapoetry, only 30 are in English, and several appear to be translations from other languages" (Knox et al., 2023, p. 5). Instapoets are distinguished by their ethnic diversity, and they often rely on clear writing styles that draw readers in through personal experiences, avoiding heavy metaphor and symbolism (Mackay & Mackay, 2023). Instapoetry is regarded as the first popular form of poetry to emerge from the digital world. Miller (2021) emphasised that platforms like Instagram offer "a timeliness, agility, and expansiveness that traditional publishing modes have persistently failed to achieve" (p. 166).

Regarding Instapoetry, Mehrotra (2022) stated that it features "short, direct lines in aesthetically pleasing fonts that are sometimes accompanied by an image or drawing, with or without a rhyme scheme. Brevity is their mantra, and informality is their mood; social issues are their themes, and social media serves as their publisher" (para. 5). Manning (2020) represented the essence of Instapoetry well by stating, "Instapoetry is the hash tag-turned-aesthetic movement born out of the Instagram social media platform, a form of digital storytelling that has come to dominate print bestseller lists" (p. 264).

Instapoetry represents a contemporary evolution of poetic expression, distinctly characterised by its brevity, multimodal presentation, and interactivity. One of the defining features of Instapoetry is its brevity. Miller (2019) highlighted that the language used in this form of poetry is not only concise but also accessible, resonating with a wide audience. Instapoems are typically short yet impactful, employing subjective themes that evoke personal reflections and emotions, as noted by Smit (2020). This succinctness ensures that readers can quickly engage with and relate to the material.

In addition to its brevity, Instapoetry exhibits a multimodal presentation. Users leverage platforms like Instagram, which supports a multifaceted mode of expression (Johnson, 2017). Instapoets can utilise various visual effects and characteristic formats inherent to the app to enhance their works, yet many choose to adhere to the conventions of traditional poetry. This blend of modern technology and classical literary forms allows for minimalistic design elements, emphasising textual content over-elaborate presentations (Kovalik & Curwood, 2019). Smit (2020) affirmed this by noting that common design choices include neutral backgrounds with simple font styles that echo classical poetry aesthetics.

Interactivity is another pivotal aspect of Instapoetry. Readers can engage with poets through likes, comments, and shares, fostering a sense of community and immediate feedback (Smit, 2020). According to Smit (2020), this interaction not only allows instapoets to gauge audience response but also creates a platform for open dialogue, particularly for marginalised voices seeking to express their experiences and connect with others. The use of hash tags further facilitates community building, bridging the gap between writers and their followers, which was less feasible in traditional literary spaces (Baym, 2015, as cited in Smit, 2020).

In conclusion, the characteristics of brevity, multimodal presentation, and interactivity set Instapoetry apart from traditional forms of poetry, highlighting its unique contributions to contemporary literary culture.

1.2. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of Affective Stylistics

Affective stylistics is a theory presented by Stanley Fish, an American literary critic, and it is elaborated in his numerous significant articles, including “Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics”, “What Is Stylistics”, and “Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things About It?” These

and other essays were later gathered in a single book, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (1980).

His work *Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics* (1970) is regarded as the fundamental study where he set the core foundation to affective stylistics. Affective stylistics is often referred to as the process of reading a text, focusing on the temporal unfolding of meaning through the reader's experience with it (Fish, 1970). As a critical strategy, Mailloux (1976) pointed out that affective stylistics is defined as the shifting of the focus of attention from the spatial context of a page and its apparent regularities to the temporal context of a mind and its experience. As Tyson (2006) explains, affective stylistics is derived from analysing further the notion that a literary text is an event that occurs in time, that comes into being as it is read, rather than an object that exists in space. The text is analysed closely, to understand how stylistics affect the reader during the reading process, it achieves its goal through a cognitive analysis of the mental processes produced by specific elements in the text. This aligns with Guinto's assertion that affective stylistics follows the tradition of Reader-Response Criticism in literary criticism. It promotes the assumption that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from understanding the text (Manzanilla, 2015).

The theoretical foundations of affective stylistics are grounded in reader response theory, which gained prominence in the early 1970s. Before this, the reader was rarely considered while analysing a literary work. Rosenblatt refers to one of the most compelling examples to support this claim in her work *"The Reader, the Text, the Poem"* (1994):

On a darkened stage, I see figures of the author and the reader, with a book—the text of the poem or play or novel—between them. The spotlight focuses on one of them so brightly that the

others fade into practical invisibility. Throughout the centuries, it becomes apparent, usually either the book or the author has received major illumination (p. 1).

Reader response can be largely implicit in the analyst's application of a stylistic framework in the discussion of the meanings and effects of a text. Reader-response criticism has brought a whole new set of ideas to literary analysis that place the reader in the centre, highlights the reader's role in constructing meaning through the reading process since he is the one who gives value and meaning to the literary work. Rosenblatt (1994) contributed significantly to reader-response theory. For her, reader engagement is a transactional process where readers actively construct meaning through a transaction between the reader and the text and bring their own experiences, emotions, and backgrounds to the reading process, which influences their interpretation. Throughout the transaction, learners bridge the gaps in the text, such as actions that are not clearly explained or that seem to have multiple explanations, which allow or even invite readers to create their own interpretations to produce meaning (Marchionne Picchione & Iser, 1978).

Aside from Louise M. Rosenblatt and Wolfgang Iser's contributions, Fish's affective stylistics formed an important component of reader-response theory. Unlike traditional literary analysis, which treats a text as a static entity with fixed meanings, Fish argues that meaning unfolds moment by moment as the reader engages with the text. Also, he criticises formalist literary criticism approaches that focus only on the text. According to him, these methods overlook the importance of the reader's engagement with the text. His article affective stylistics (1970) contributes significantly to this notion. In this latter, Fish's method emphasises that a text should not be seen as a static object containing meaning but as an event that occurs between the text and the reader, in which meaning emerges through the reader's active engagement: "*The sentence... is no longer an object, a thing-in-itself, but an event, something that happens to, and with the participation of the reader*" (Fish, 1970, p. 126).

Fish critiques Wimsatt and Beardsley's concept of the affective fallacy, a concept that treats the meaning as static object in the text. Instead, he emphasises that the reader plays an active role in constructing meaning from a text (Regis, 1976). The essence behind reading activity is that it is a process and composed of processes: it is a succession of events, of happenings, of changes in the reader's consciousness as he experiences the effects which the words, one after another, bring about in his mind. The reader's response to the text is central to understanding its meaning, and this understanding develops over time as words succeed one another. The reader constantly modifies his expectations and interpretations based on what he has already read and what he expects will happen next: "*The basis of the method is a consideration of the temporal flow of the reading experience*" (Fish, 1970, p. 127). The strategy outlined above suggests reading more slowly in order to better comprehend the meaning that the text is trying to convey, as illustrated clearly by Fish; *it is as if a slow-motion camera with an automatic stop-action effect were recording our linguistic experiences and presenting them to us for viewing* (Fish, 1970, p. 128).

Another point worth raising here, according to Fish, is that stylistic choices are not arbitrary; rather, they are intentional strategies meant to influence the reader's cognitive and emotional response. He proposes that textual structures are strategies aimed at affecting the reader's thought process. As an example, he talks about how a text's syntactical ambiguities or complexity are intended to disrupt the reader's comprehension and force them to re-evaluate what they read. For instance, this sentence mentioned in *Paradise Lost*, "*Nor did they not perceive the evil plight*", exemplifies how the double negative initially causes ambiguity, confusing the reader, making him pause and interpret the meaning, and creating a moment of uncertainty that drives the reader to engage more deeply with the text (Fish, 1970). This viewpoint serves as the cornerstone of his Affective Stylistics, which examines how the stylistic features, language, syntax, punctuation, line breaks, and rhythm of the text shape the reader's

response. Rather than seeking a unified or fixed meaning, this approach examines how meaning is constructed in the reader's mind during the act of reading: *"The analysis must be of the developing responses to distinguish it from the atomism of much stylistic criticism"* (Fish, 1970, p. 127).

Essentially, affective stylistics serves as a theoretical lens for understanding how Instapoetry shapes the reader's emotional, cognitive, and participatory responses elicited by particular elements in the text as readers engage with it. By looking at these elements, we aim to gain a better understanding of how contemporary poetry influences its audience more broadly.

1.3. The Role of Digital Platforms in Reader Engagement

Social media platforms are significantly influencing the realm of digital literature by enhancing readers' access to literary works and introducing aesthetic elements to those creations. This passage illustrates this phenomenon, highlighting the effects of the features and capabilities of the Instagram application on both readers and poets.

1.3.1. Instagram Features Help in Shaping the Literary Experience

Instagram features play a significant role in enhancing the beauty of Instapoetry, which is a popular form of poetry shared on the platform. Previous studies have highlighted various Instagram features, such as filters, live broadcasting, and audio, that have contributed to the growth and popularity of Instapoetry.

Wong (2018) argued that instapoets have revitalised poetry, breaking the stagnation and lethargy that have plagued the art form for a long time. These poets have attracted a large fan base that eagerly anticipates new artistic works. She described instapoets as inspiring individuals who openly share their feelings and thoughts. Harman Kaur, a writer and spoken word artist, expressed a similar sentiment, stating, "All I was dealing with was literature, and all I didn't see in that literature was

myself" (para. 5). This idea resonates with the Canadian poet Atticus, who noted, "The nicest compliment I can get is when somebody messages me and says, 'You know, you said what I was thinking, but I didn't know how to articulate it'" (para. 10). Despite the enthusiasm surrounding Instapoetry, many still view it as nothing more than amateur poetry. However, young people often find it therapeutic, as these poems address personal topics that resonate with readers. Student Sidra Jafri commented, "We use our art as therapy" (para. 6). Additionally, Rupi Kaur's works frequently include simple drawings, a perspective supported by Professor Dale Smith, who believes that poetry can manifest through drawing, sound, or other forms. Wong concluded her article with a thought from Kaur: "If William Shakespeare were alive today, he would be on Instagram" (para. 6). This paper highlighted the ease of sharing and the effective impact of Instagram poetry on a diverse audience. However, it lacked analysis of the comments, shares, and likes on the Instagram platform, as well as an examination of how readers emotionally react by analysing the comments section .

Wilcox (2020) argued that it is possible to publish ancient literature on Instagram by utilising the platform's features and filters. Initially, these filters were designed to enhance the quality of photos taken with older mobile phones. However, over time, they have been used creatively to add an aesthetic touch to electronic literature. While not every post on social media should be regarded as a serious literary work, poets can still create engaging pieces on these platforms, whether deliberately or instinctively. Several critics have dismissed such poetry as doggerel verse. Nevertheless, these poets tackle complex and profound topics in accessible and appealing ways, maintaining a distinctive style for the past six years. Instagram has faced criticism for its lack of support for long-form writing. Yet, Wilcox cited Shelley Jackson's 2014 work, *Snow*, as an example that demonstrates the potential of the platform. In this project, Jackson published one word of her story in each post, combining the narrative with the weather; as the snow fell in real life, the story progressed. This paper examined the unique

features of Instagram and explored the potential for literary expression on such platforms. However, it also identified some gaps in the study, including the absence of readers' opinions and the lack of empirical research on the widespread consumption of Instapoetry. Additionally, Wilcox focused solely on Jackson's *Snow* neglecting to mention other prominent poets on Instagram, like Nikita Gill and Nayyirah Waheed, despite the abundance of literary works available on the platform .

Instapoetry offers several advantages, including its simplicity and brevity, which makes it appeal to a younger demographic. The publishing process has become more accessible and affordable for poets, as they can easily share their work on the platform. This personal approach fosters a closer and more interactive relationship between the poet and the reader. The next section will delve into this topic further.

1.3.2. The Democratisation of Literary Feedback

In the past, the primary method of publishing involved writers crafting their literary works and submitting them to publishing houses. At that time, authors often had to wait quite a while to learn how readers reacted to their work after it was published. However, with the rise of social media platforms, publishing has become significantly more accessible, enabling writers to handle the role of publishers themselves. As a result, they can receive immediate feedback from readers, eliminating the lengthy wait for responses. Few emergent studies have explored the concept of democratic publishing and examined how readers engage with digital literary works.

Afolabi and Zolkepli (2023) observed that the traditional publishing process often silenced marginalised voices, as these writers typically lacked the opportunity to publish their work. Traditional publishing favoured manuscripts that guaranteed profits for publishers, leaving several deserving authors unheard. However, digital platforms have emerged as a refuge for these marginalised writers,

allowing them to self-publish their works and directly engage with their readers. They acknowledged that the quality of self-published works can vary, with some being excellent, some mediocre, and others bad, emphasising the reader's role in choosing what to read based on individual preferences. Also, Rajoria (2023) explained that readers are increasingly attracted to self-published e-literature. This shift has transformed publishing into a democratic process, where the writer handled the roles of both publisher and marketer. Additionally, Rajoria mentioned poems shared on social media platforms are often simple free verses that are consumed and regarded similarly to serious literary works. In today's context, writers view serious work not just as writing and editing manuscripts, but also as engaging in publicity events, book tours, and various marketing activities. Consequently, literature is often perceived as mere marketing content in light of the democratisation of publishing.

These papers discussed that the publishing process become more accessible, allowing writers to overcome traditional constraints and self-publish their works. However, these papers presented a theoretical framework without empirical research. Additionally, they did not investigate how the language used by instapoets provokes specific emotional responses in readers, nor did they examine how readers interpret texts and engage with them emotionally, cognitively, and participatory.

Schwabe et al. (2023) examined the demographic and motivational differences among readers of print books, digital books, and those who engage with both formats. Through a survey of 779 participants, they investigated reading preferences, the number of books read, and favoured genres, aiming to determine whether digital reading methods have altered the reading process or simply cater to a specific demographic. The study reveals that digital reading methods offer flexibility, allowing readers to move around while engaged with the text. Finally, readers who are already accustomed to traditional books have expanded their reading habits through e-books, demonstrating that those who read digitally also continue to read print.

The findings indicate significant differences in gender, age, preferences, and reading contexts among those who utilise both mediums. Importantly, digital books do not replace printed books; rather, they serve as a new technological supplement. However, the study did not delve into how different media might influence readers' emotional responses, which could affect their reading choices. Finally, it overlooked an exploration of the reader's experience and immersion in both printed and digital formats.

Overall, publishing has evolved into a more democratic process. Poets now have the option to self-publish their work, and readers have the freedom to choose what they want to read based on their personal preferences. Also, readers of electronic literature are those who read printed books as well.

1.4. Prior Research on Digital Literature and Reader Engagement

There is a substantial body of studies that have been done on electronic literature and reader interaction that investigate in which way digital technologies offer new methods to interact with electronic texts, read e-books, and create narratives using multimedia and interactive features. According to studies, e-lit promotes student engagement with books in ways that face-to-face conversations cannot completely duplicate. Electronic literature also supports students' learning by reflecting cultural creation and representation. Further, scholars look at how digital culture affects modern literature, specifically how it affects narrative structures, reader engagement, and digital format understanding.

A study by Larson (2009) was released entitled "E-Reading and E-Responding: New Tools for the Next Generation of Readers", demonstrating that scholars have just lately started to evaluate the quality, benefits, and possibilities of e-books. These books are available in several formats, including CD-ROM storybooks, toy-inspired books, online texts, downloadable books and documents. Furthermore, a wide range of portable devices (i.e., the Amazon Kindle, Sony's Reader Digital Book,

and iPods) are easily transportable and offer instant access to thousands of books. A lot of e-books use multimodal features, including audio, video, and hyperlinks. Such tools allow users to physically controlling the text by adding, deleting, or modifying words; underlining, highlighting, or crossing out words in passages; making notes, attaching files, or recording audio remarks; and adjusting the page format and text size. In this context, ten of fifth-grade children participated in Larson's study. They read electronic copies of two Christopher Paul Curtis award-winning books and none of them had prior experience with e-books. According to the study's findings, all ten of fifth graders said they preferred reading e-books over traditional books, and they gave favourable feedback about their usage of e-book features, saying that they were enjoyable and inspiring and that they encouraged readers to actively engage with the text. Despite the fact that research on this medium is still in its early stages, the findings indicate that promising new technologies offer additional ways of reading, particularly for reading comprehension, as well as interacting with electronic texts.

Another example was the article "Reading Engagement: A Comparison Between E-books and Traditional Print Books in an Elementary Classroom" by Jones and Brown (2011). In this study, Jones and Brown investigated the expanded availability of numerous electronic book titles along with the flexibility of "anytime/anywhere" reading options, which have led to the growing use of e-books. The research has the capacity to assess whether the features of e-books will actively engage children with reading material. Measures of reading engagement included motivation for independent reading and comprehension as evaluated by standardised tests of print books and e-books. Many electronic books were accompanied by features such as audio of the entire text, audio of specific vocabulary terms, and automatic page turning. Students showed a preference for e-books when given the option of a wide selection of titles and the freedom to choose their preferred e-book. The findings of this research showed that the relevance of character, theme, and setting in the books, along with their alignment with

the personal preferences of the reader, hold greater significance. This provides an insightful perspective on how reader engagement with electronic literature is influenced more by content than by format, as well as the focus on the importance of affective connections between the text and the reader.

In the article, "Take It Out of Class: Exploring Virtual Literature Circles", has done by Bowers-Campbell (2011) investigated the ways in which online literacy practices might enhance classroom reading pedagogy, especially by introducing threaded discussion forums in classrooms, which foster energetic interactions between students and teachers and promote active and collaborative learning. The study employed qualitative research methods and explored how graduate students engaged with self-selected texts in online book discussions from a social constructionist viewpoint, which holds that meaning is formed by social interactions. Three student groups participated in the study. The students were enrolled in a course that modelled literary circles, allowing them to experience book club discussions while reflecting on their own reading practices. They promoted student autonomy and active engagement and provided energy to discussions. Their asynchronous format provided written transcripts that can be used for teaching and demonstrating the value of student-led discussions. In addition, virtual literature encouraged students to interact extensively with texts that face-to-face discussions cannot fully replicate.

Also, Rosales and Sarce (2019), in their article "Reader Response Theory: Students' Encounter and Challenges with E-Literature", investigated the overall experience of learners with e-literature, and they identified the textual elements that contributed to the students' learning process. The study discovered how e-lit reflects cultural production and representation to facilitate and support students' learning. Regarding the methodology, before conducting participant interviews to get the necessary data, it examined a few samples, including text tula (hyperpoem), which is mediated through SMS format, and kinetic poetry. As a result, the following outcomes were achieved: participants felt more

comfortable creating meaning with text tula which is than with kinetic poetry. Because text tula is stable, it is viewed as more basic. Kinetic poetry, on the other hand, is said to be more complex due to the animation in which the words and phrases move from side to side across the screen, and dancing like it is alive. The contrast between text tula and kinetic poetry illustrates the diverse range of forms seen in the e-lit field. As a result, the designs of both e-lit can be bring inside our classroom because of animations and digital computation to preserve the traditional forms of literature. Likewise, they imply that they would be able to give birth to visual and virtual literacies. Additionally, we should take into account the students' linguistic and different backgrounds because these might help them in comprehending new forms of e-lit and preserve the significance of their culture embedded in the Electronic

Hebden's (2023) thesis, "Poetry in Digital Media: Investigating the Remediation of Poetry through Critical and Creative Practice", explored how digital mediation affects reader engagement and mainstream poetics, which has historically been centred around print and oral performance. It employs two interconnected methods: a critical analysis of four smartphone applications and a portfolio of experimental digital reading interfaces. Initially, it examined in which way the device as a platform influences the presentation of poems in their two main medial forms, which are oral performance and written word. It also looked at how much the app's functionality and design influence the reader's experience with the text. The results show that although these applications offer new ways of interaction, the poems themselves maintain a conventional structure, which sets them apart from electronic literature. That is, the poetry app incorporates a variety of the device's affordances into the design of its reading interface, but it does so in a way that aims to influence the reader's perception or understanding of the poem. Therefore, the applications make use of mobile devices' multimedia affordances to improve interactivity; yet, it may be argued that the other interface features in each app

might detract from, rather than merely alter, the engagement with the poems. The portfolio additionally investigated how digital capabilities influence structure through experimental programming, interactive poetry interfaces, and compositions that respond structurally. The thesis concludes that these applications encourage an exploratory experience with poetry by utilising mobile devices' multimedia affordances to make them more appropriate settings for reading poetry and influencing poetic expression through their special technological capabilities.

M. Ligan Ma. Francesca (2023) presented a comprehensive framework for analysing the literary stylistic elements of selected Instapoetry. This included an exploration of phonological and lexico-semantic devices, as well as an examination of affective stylistics about reader emotions. She employed a qualitative research design to investigate how these stylistic elements elicit affective responses, as evidenced by the comments section of their posts. Her findings indicated that the authors' word choices significantly influence readers' emotional evocations and personal experiences. However, the study had certain gaps. While it adeptly addressed the emotional engagement of readers, it did not explicitly explore the cognitive and participatory responses. Finally, the research was grounded in qualitative approach, which, while valuable, missed the benefits that a quantitative analysis could offer.

Zafar et al. (2024) also conducted a valuable study titled "The Implications of Digital Culture for Contemporary Literature: Navigating new Narratives, Forms, and Reader Engagement in the Digital Age". This article examined the impact of digital culture on contemporary literature, with special attention paid to narrative structures, reader engagement, and comprehension in digital formats. Additionally, the impact of interactive, multimedia digital texts on reader behaviour and cognitive engagement were being examined. The target population of this study was digital readers, and it used a quantitative approach. The research combined surveys with 500 participants and content analysis of 20 digital texts, including hypertext fiction and multimedia narratives. From the findings, the hypertext

fiction forms did elicit much higher engagement levels from their readers than the linear forms of communication that distinguish the traditional forms of texts. Content analysis showed that 75% of the selected digital texts contained multimedia elements, while 65% included hyperlinks, indicating how common these aspects are in modern digital literature. The analysis also found a significant positive correlation between digital media familiarity and preference for interactive narratives. From the demographic breakdown, the findings provided evidence that digital natives, especially the 18-30-year-olds, showed significantly higher engagement. The new generation is brought up in an era brimming with media and is used to a sea of interactive and multimedia environments that guarantee their fluid interaction with digital texts.

Synthesising the evidence discussed in the previous exploration of digital literature and reader engagement, it is evident that the majority of studies provide insight into reader engagement with regard to digital literature in general, but not with regard to literature created and posted on Instagram, particularly poetry. There is undoubtedly a research gap in this area. Thus, since this point was not covered by any of the earlier research, more research is required to fill this gap.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter explored the concept and characteristics of third-generation electronic literature, focusing on the popularity of Instapoetry. Additionally, it examined Stanley Fish's theory of affective stylistics; and how the platform's features help in shaping the literary experience. While several research papers highlight the effects of publishing democracy and reader interactions with digital literature, most studies in this chapter rely on a qualitative approach and lack quantitative analysis. Additionally, there is a notable absence of studies specifically focused on poetry published on Instagram. One research paper employed the affective stylistics approach but primarily concentrated on emotional responses, neglecting cognitive and participatory responses. This highlights a gap in research. To address this, we use the theory of affective stylistics, which aims to understand the reader's response to the styles chosen by the writer. Our objective is to analyse how stylistic features affect readers emotionally, cognitively, and participatory, through readers' responses in the comments section.

CHAPTER TWO

Empirical Study – Affective Stylistic Analysis of Instapoetry

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Introduction

In the first chapter of this study, which focuses on affective stylistics and electronic literature, previous research regarding the interaction between readers and digital literature was reviewed. This serves as the foundation for identifying the research gaps this study aims to address, particularly concerning how readers engage emotionally, cognitively, and participatory with literature shared on Instagram, namely in the realm of Instapoetry. Focusing on two poets, Nikita Gill and Lang Leav, as case studies, this chapter presents quantitative analysis of the data extracted from poetry posts on their profiles. The chapter further incorporates a qualitative approach to analyse readers' comments, seeking to understand how Instapoetry affects readers in the process of reading, engaging through likes, shares, and comments. Finally, the results obtained are presented and discussed in relation to previous empirical findings presented in the first chapter.

2.1 Methodology

In this chapter, the approach taken in this study is outlined, starting with a quantitative analysis followed by a qualitative approach.

2.1.1. Quantitative Analysis

In the quantitative analysis, posts featuring poetry by both instapoets Nikita Gill and Lang Leav were examined, which were originally sourced from their personal profiles (@nikita_gill & @langleav).

2.1.1.1. Nikita Gill

As mentioned in the literature review in the general introduction above and according to Sanderson (2017), Nikita Gill is a British Indian poet raised in a house full of books and began writing in school. Plus, among her most significant works are *Your Soul Is A River* (2016), *Where Hope*

Comes From: Poems of Resilience, Healing, and Light (2021), and These Are the Words: fearless verse find your voice (2022).

Horne (2024) in an interview with Nikita Gill for ROADBOOK, he explored Gill's journey with publishing Instapoetry on Instagram and her work, which focuses on themes like femininity, healing, and mythology. Moreover, Horne gave an overview of Gill's upbringing and how her multicultural background influences her poetry, making her reflect on identity, borders, and love.

A selection of ten poems from the poet Nikita Gill's profile has been curated, encompassing themes such as love, despair, and longing. The following table shows the publication date, the number of likes, the total number of comments, primary and secondary comments, and the number of shares of these poems.

Table 2.1.1.1.1

Statistical Snapshot of Nikita Gill's Instapoems

Themes	Date of Posting	Nature of the Post	#of Likes	#of Comments	Primary Comments	Secondary Comments	#of Shares
Love	May 11, 2024	Photo	36,7k	155	120	35	778
The Origin of Human Beings	May 24, 2024	Reel	36,1k	236	200	36	5581
Self-	June 01,	Photo	37.1k	172	139	33	2465

esteem	2024						
Inner Child	July 06, 2024	Photo	28.1k	226	164	62	1413
The Origin of Human Beings	November 01, 2024	Photo	18,8k	221	165	56	3075
Advice	November 10, 2024	Photo	30.4k	126	99	27	5596
Survive	November 13, 2024	Photo	22.1k	287	243	44	2927
Nostalgia	December 13, 2024	Photo	21.7k	152	124	28	3448
Self-esteem	January 05, 2025	Reel	27,6k	108	79	29	2256
Injustice & Justice	March 04, 2025	Photo	31.3k	169	132	37	10.1k
Women	March 08, 2025	Photo	35.8k	157	133	24	8318
Hope	April 02, 2025	Photo	14.6k	84	65	19	2699

Note. There are two rows (the second and fifth) for the same post and two other rows (the third and ninth) for the same post. The second and ninth rows show the post published in reel format, featuring an animated background and music. The third and fifth rows display the post reposted in a standard format with a white background.

The table above illustrates the number of interactions (likes, comments, and shares) for ten poems published by Nikita Gill. Each post covers a different topic, including love, self-esteem,

nostalgia, resilience, justice and injustice, women, hope, and advice. A notable observation from the data is that the poetry addressing justice and injustice achieved the highest level of reader engagement in terms of shares, garnering 10.1k shares. Conversely, the love poem received the least interaction, with only 778 shares. However, despite its lower share count, the love poem attracted a significant number of likes, reaching 36.7k, just shy of the self-esteem post, which received 37.1k likes. When it comes to comments, the numbers ranged from 84 to 287, with the poem focusing on survival receiving the most comments. The second and ninth rows indicate that the post utilising the Reel feature, with an animated background, flashing lights, and calming music, received the highest engagement. These posts showcase a significant increase in likes, comments, and shares compared to the same content published in a classic format. Overall, it can be concluded that themes such as love, justice, and resilience resonate most with readers and significantly boost their engagement, and the use of reel format on Instagram further enhances viewer interaction.

2.1.1.2. Lang Leav

Lang Leav is a poet and best-selling author worldwide. She was born in a Thai refugee camp when her family fled the Khmer Rouge Regime. Like many migrant children, she naturally assumed the role of translator for her parents. From an early age, she learned to simplify language. Her poems have been significantly impacted by her early realisation of the importance of clear communication. She is a very talented artist who has been labelled as an instapoet for being phenomenally popular for her poetry on this platform. As well, her books continue to top bestseller charts in bookstore worldwide and lullabies, was the 2014 winner of the Goodreads choice award for poetry (Ismail & Bahrain, 2022).

Her first poetry collection, *Love & Misadventures* (2013), marked her poetic debut. *Lullabies* (2014), *Memories* (2015), *The Universe of Us* (2016), *Sad Girls: A Novel* (2017), *Sea of Strangers* (2018), *Love Looks Pretty on You* (2019), and *September Love* (2020) are among her seven published

works to date. The Qantas Spirit of Youth Award, Churchill Fellowship and Goodreads Readers' Choice Award have all gone to Lang Leav. Moreover, her poems are regarded as to be helpful for most of her young readers, especially in the cases where the blooming and loss of love, self-awareness and feminism are involved.

Table 2.1.1.2

Statistical Snapshot of Lang Leav's Instapoems

Instapoems	<i>Date of Posting</i>	Nature of the post	# of likes	# of comments	Primary comments	Secondary comments	# of shares
Anxiety	March 26, 2019	Photo	31.6K	692	607	85	75
Acceptance	May 22, 2019	Photo	31.7K	195	168	27	138
Regrets	July 25, 2019	Photo	27K	210	170	40	77
Ingredients of a poem	May 04, 2020	Photo	23.7K	197	167	30	36
Dear February	February 01, 2023	Photo	13.2K	73	66	07	20
Stardust	September 27, 2023	Reel	5.813	95	66	29	832
Broken Hearts	October 13, 2023	Reel	6.286	90	84	06	960
My Place in the Universe	February 05, 2024	Photo	7.960	46	41	05	914
Devotion	April 20, 2024	Photo	26.1K	198	171	27	2.670

IN THE END	November 02, 2024	Photo	9.187	76	53	23	836
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The table of selected poems reveals significant differences in audience interaction, as measured by three main metrics: likes, comments, and shares. Most of the poems have a title that is shown in the picture itself. Each post covers a different theme, such as love, heartbreak, self-healing, anxiety, existential realisation, inner conflict, or loss. The poems were posted in two different formats: photo posts featuring poetry on a white background and reels, which feature soothing music, flashing lights, and an animated background. "Stardust" garnered 5,813 likes and tackled the theme of love, while "Broken Hearts" received 6,286 likes and tackled the theme of heartbreak and self-healing. These two poems are used as models for reels in this analysis.

In 2019-2020, several poems received more likes and comments, but fewer shares. This could suggest that the share to story feature was not as popular as it is now. However, more recent posts in 2023-2024 have higher share rates, possibly due to improved sharing features. One poem in particular, "Devotion", dealt with love theme, distinguished by a high number of shares (2,670) despite a moderate number of comments (198). It should be noted that this poem is part of a collection and individual data cannot be extracted for each poem. Both "My Place in the Universe", which deals with the existential realisation theme, and "Broken Hearts", have a relatively low number of likes but a high number of shares. This suggests that readers may have found them worth sharing, even if they did not directly engage with them through likes. The theme of anxiety seems to dominate in terms of total comments and primary engagement, indicating a strong reader response and discussion. This latter coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; a time marked by global uncertainty and psychological distress. This background probably helped to increase the poem's level of engagement.

Overall, it can be concluded that themes like anxiety, inner conflict (Acceptance poem), and regrets are the themes that resonate most with readers and significantly boost their engagement. However, the data extracted from the table suggests that the nature of the post may not have played a significant role in determining the level of engagement. This is due to the variation of results in three metrics between the two different formats. Instead, it appears that the emotional appeal and theme of the poetry are more closely associated with the interaction patterns and level of engagement.

2.1.2. Qualitative Analysis

In this qualitative analysis, there are two types of analysis: the first one was the analysis of the poems as they exist. The second was concerned with the affective stylistic analysis through the reader's comments. These comments were analysed, categorised, and linked to how two different instapoets used stylistic features that evoked emotional, cognitive, or participatory responses.

2.1.2.1. Nikita Gill

This section is about the affective stylistic analysis of the three selected poems of Nikita Gill; these poems are as follows: Hope, Love, and Inner Child.

Figure 2.1

Poetry about Hope



The world is burning
and I'm writing about hope still.
My mother told me as a child
"Do not give up on this world."
And I never learned how to.

Everyone I love is still fighting
and refusing to give up on the light.
It takes a deep kind of courage,
to look at a burning world and say
"I will keep fighting for you.
Even here. Even now."

- Nikita Gill

This untitled poem explores the themes of hope and resilience in a world affected by war, crisis, and instability. Its emotional impact on readers is heightened by various linguistic techniques. Also, the mother's advice to her daughter highlights a profound truth determination and patience can be inherited across generations. This inherited strength helps to preserve great values amid the chaos and destruction led by conflicts in the world today, for instance, the wars in Palestine and Ukraine. Though the circumstances are difficult and unstable, the poem poignantly asserts, "Everyone I love is still fighting." This reflects a choice made by loved ones and family to resist, despite the disorder around them, signifying that hope remains within them. Such resilience can inspire others to adopt a similar mind-set. It is from this foundation of determination and hope that meaningful change can emerge, starting with the individual and spreading outward to the world.

In Figure 2.1, Gill employs numerous stylistic features, particularly through phrases that convey actions, such as “The world is burning” and “I will keep fighting for you”. These expressions evoke emotions and foster a deeper connection with readers. The use of the first-person pronoun “I” serves a significant purpose; it acts as a pivotal point in the poem, shifting the focus from the external world to the internal self. The poem begins in despair, transitions to hope, and ultimately concludes with a resolution for change, illustrating a transformation from a negative environment to a more positive perspective. This stylistic choice directs the reader’s attention to the essence of the message, emphasising the intrinsic connection between the reader and the unfolding events in the external world. Additionally, the placement of this pronoun within the lines is designed to visually engage the reader's attention.

Furthermore, Gill employs various stylistic deviations, notably through her unconventional sentence structure. For instance, she writes, “I’m writing about hope still” instead of the more standard phrasing, “I’m still writing about hope”. This choice is intentional, aiming to stop and reflect on the word “still”, which conveys a sense of perseverance during the chaos of the world. Moreover, her omission of punctuation marks reflects the blending and overlapping of thoughts and emotions that occur in real life. The ambiguity in her style is further highlighted by the phrase, “I never learned how to”, inviting readers to interpret and deduce its deeper meaning independently. Quotes like "Don't give up on this world" are interpreted as direct advice, enhancing the poem's impact.

In Instapoetry, the use of simplified language and straightforward structure engages the reader, and this poem exemplifies that by making the content easily accessible and engaging. The contrast between hope and despair deepens the reader's understanding, illustrating that while despair exists, hope emerges from it. This overlap generates tension and excitement for the reader. Also, repetitive phrases like "do not give up", "refusing to give up", and "Even here. Even now" make the reader pose

and think of the point of these phrases, which may have been the persistence and determination. Finally, the deliberate choice to conclude with the phrase "Even here. Even now" invites readers to embrace this sentiment for themselves.

N.B. The definitions of the themes are provided in the appendix.

2.1.2.1.1. Emotional Responses

2.1.2.1.1.1. General Appreciation

@rachelgonzalessart: I love your writing so much ❤️❤️❤️

@queen.of.swords.poetry: Your voice brings hope to many ❤️

@agasser: This is powerful

The use of phrases that contain action verbs significantly may have affected the reader's response. These responses may indicate that the chosen phrases effectively may have conveyed the depth and strength of the message, and the writing style may have received high praise. Also, omitting punctuation marks can create a sense of harmony in a poem, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the text and engage with its words without interruption. The contrast between ideas and the blend of hope and pessimism, starting with a tone of despair and then transitioning to one of hope, may also create a sense of suspense during the process of reading the poem, contributing to the emotional response generally and to the appreciation of the poem.

2.1.2.1.1.2. Emojis

@solpinermisa: ❤️🦋🕊️📢

@terriedeville: ❤️

@maureenoflynn57: 🔥🔥👏👏

Readers may use emojis to express their emotions in response to the theme. For instance, a fire symbol might represent enthusiasm for embracing the poet's ideas, while the white dove can symbolise peace. War is a current reality that several people experience or frequently hear about in the news,

prompting readers to share their feelings about global conflict and destruction through these emojis. Other emojis, such as the heart, applause, trumpet, and butterfly, may reflect the reader's encouragement to the poet not to give in to these challenging circumstances. This appears in the participatory responses section.

2.1.2.1.2. Cognitive Responses

2.1.2.1.2.1. Philosophical Thinking

@stephybump: Where would we be without it? Who would I be? I cannot imagine surviving this world .if I gave up on hope, ravaged as I am

The use of the pronoun "I" may have impacted this cognitive response. Essentially, the reader expressed that if he abandons hope, it could endanger the world. As mentioned in the analysis of the poem, the use of the personal pronoun may have made this reader feel that her essential role in changing the world because she is a part of it, as if she was the one who spoke in the poem. This idea suggests that positive change begins with the individual and then extends to the community. To affect the world positively, there is a need to start with small and individual efforts. Additionally, repetition may have played a significant role in this poem since this repetition is to the metaphor " The world is burning" repeated twice in the poem. This may have made the reader stop and reflect on the danger that this metaphor holds, which appears in the suffering of the world today under war and crisis. As observed, the meaning here is not fixed, but it is temporal according to the personality of the reader. Finally, The reader expresses this in her response, showing that, despite the challenges and obstacles faced, she will hold onto hope.

2.1.2.1.2.2. Cognitive Reflection

@ ruwaidah597: This is Gaza

This cognitive response suggests that the reader is maybe either Palestinian or supportive of the Palestinian cause. The reader may have been affected by the direct quote of the mother's advice as inherited advice through the decades. Starting from this point, the quote may have represented the steadfastness and struggle that Palestinians have carried and inherited through generations. Besides, the deviation used with the adverb "still" may give the reader a sense of steadfastness and determination for

resistance. This could lead him to consider the resilience of the people of Gaza, who continue to resist despite the destruction and devastation they face.

@ nokeskatie: ❤️ We live in hope for a better world 🌍✌️

The deviation of the adverb "still" in the poem might have resonated with the reader, reflecting a sense of hope that things will eventually improve and stability will return to the world. The word "live" as the reader uses it, suggests a constant and on-going commitment, not a temporary state. Also, the incomplete sentences in the poem may have had an impact on the reader. The commentary suggests that the reason for living with hope in life is justified, as this reader desires a world free from wars and conflicts, a world where everyone lives in peace.

2.1.2.1.3. Participatory Responses

@globalnomadness: ❤️ as always thank you

I will hold on to Hope & believing something good is waiting @nikita_gill: @globalnomadness: thank you for these lovely words! ❤️

Repetition, particularly at the end of the poem, significantly may have impacted readers, as illustrated by the participatory response above. This technique encourages the readers to adhere to hope, both in this moment and in all times and places because the repetition forces the reader to stop and think of the meaning. Also, the deviation of the adverb "still" may have encouraged the reader to persevere, hold onto hope, and await positive outcomes, as was said in the analysis of the poem. The writer's response expresses gratitude with a red heart emoji for the reader embracing the poet's perspective, which is precisely what she aimed to accomplish through her stylistic choices, and this is shown in her response to her reader. Finally, what is noticeable from this response is that the reader expects the best when she is hopeful. This means that the reader highlights the importance of hope and helps the writer in conveying the intended idea, meaning that the reader becomes a co-creator of the meaning rather than a reader only.

Figure 2.2

Poetry about Love



I asked him years later
"do you still think about me?"

And he said,
"A sea cannot forget the water
that fills its depths
The clouds cannot forget
the sky they have called home."

- *Nikita Gill*

This untitled poem explores the themes of longing and love. Upon first reading, it becomes evident that there was a past love affair between the two individuals, as illustrated through the clear dialogue style. The man's response reveals that this relationship remains etched in his memory. This profound connection appears in the two phrases: "A sea cannot forget the water that fills its depths; the clouds cannot forget the sky they have called home." Here, it is clear that the other partner is an integral part of the speaker's being, even over time. This resonates with the reality many face today, where individuals often long for their past relationships, especially those that were sincere without hidden purposes. The closer these themes resonate with people's hearts, the more they provoke emotions, spark affection and motivate them to engage with this type of poem, full of deep and meaningful significance.

In this poem, Gill employs various stylistic features to enhance the reader's connection to the work. The poem begins in a dialogue format, which allows the reader to feel as though they are

listening to or participating in a personal moment. This style emotionally engages the audience, as starting with a question conveys the woman's feelings of longing and vulnerability, along with a fear of being forgotten.

The ellipsis of punctuation marks in these two metaphors "A sea cannot forget the water that fills its depths The clouds cannot forget the sky they have called home" is intentional. Instead of using a semicolon or a logical connector, Gill chooses to present the ideas without interruption, creating a sense of fluidity that allows the reader to immerse themselves in the thought smoothly. Additionally, the poem blends prose with lyrical poetry. While the question is presented in prose, the answer unfolds through poetic language. This technique reflects the poet's rhetorical power, encouraging readers to reflect, interpret, and appreciate the imagery at a deeper level.

Lovers often draw connections between their feelings and nature, which is evident in Gill's use of nature-inspired symbols like "sea, water, clouds, and sky." These symbols form a profound connection, mirroring the intertwined elements of honest human relationships because these relationships are memories that are deeply embedded and not easily forgotten. Plus, the repetition found in the metaphors serves to reinforce the central ideas, making them more unforgettable. Ultimately, the poem concludes with the simple yet powerful word "home", which evokes themes of loyalty, longing, and the desire to return to one's homeland after a long absence.

2.1.2.1.4. Emotional Responses

2.1.2.1.4.1. General Appreciation

@wordings.of.heart: Beautiful ❤️

@thehaikumuse: Loved reading this one...

@mazegazer: Masterpiece ❤️

The language's beauty, filled with metaphors and symbols, may have impressed readers, as seen in the emotional responses above. Metaphors inspire readers by encouraging them to imagine and contemplate deeper meanings because they create a sense of adoration and love in them. The use of symbols further engages the reader in the poem. Additionally, the ellipsis of punctuation marks and logical connections may enhance the reader's immersion and evoke a stronger sense of the feelings and expressions present in the poem, as there are no interruptions to distract from their engagement with it.

2.1.2.1.4.2. Emojis

@sophdiana: ❤️

@thepoetabdullahjabarihassan: 🔥🔥🔥🔥

@amelancholicsoul: 😭😍

The theme of the poem, which talks about love, may have resonated with lots of people, prompting them to engage with it and express their feelings through emojis. The red heart and fire emojis likely represent deep admiration and love. Besides, the crying emoji signifies feelings of longing and sadness. These reactions may reflect the readers' personal experiences and relationships, as they may also have their own connections with loved ones, which make them feel nostalgic.

2.1.2.1.4.3. Hyperbolic Expression of Resonation

@duamuskaan99: *my heart sink in depths after reading this* ❤️

@ankiwinki: *I mean, just touched my soul* 💕

Answering poetically and not answering directly, like just saying yes, may have attracted the readers' attention since they may have been affected by the imaginative way of answering. So, this may have made them feel the love and longing between the lines of these words. Additionally, the use of symbols' nature, as mentioned earlier in the analysis of the poem may also have triggered them to feel a deep passion.

2.1.2.1.5. Cognitive Responses

2.1.2.1.5.1. Cognitive Reflection

@mr.instapooch: *That was beautiful! If only my husband could be so kind.*

What may have affected this reader was the response that conveyed metaphorically deep feelings and emotions from the male partner in the poem because the majority of men are not adept at expressing their feelings and often just respond with yes to such a question. From her cognitive response, it may have appeared that her husband belongs to this group of men. Or, she may have thought of her suffering with her hard man. Here, this reader expresses her personal wish for her husband so kind as this man, and this cognitive response, of course, reflects also her own experience with her man.

2.1.2.1.6. Participatory Responses

@zappafarms: I googled how to heal the feminine wounds and your poetry on wild woman

shows up ❤️👩🏻🌸 @nikita_gill: @zappafarms: thank you! ❤️

The conversational style and the use of the first-person pronoun "I" may have made a strong impact on this reader. At the time, she may have been searching for healing from a previous relationship. When she read the poem, she may have felt as though she were the one asking this question and receiving this particular answer she had been seeking for years. The poet expressed gratitude for her comment, as her work may serve as a remedy for lots. This is a motivated response for the poet to continue her writing because she has an audience that interacts with her and motivates her to publish more similar pieces.

Figure 2.3

Poetry about Inner Child



I'm just trying to become
someone who the child inside me
will not hate. I'm trying to
be everything she needed
and did not receive.

She is so lonely still.
It's not fair that she is so lonely still.

- Nikita Gill, *Excerpt*

This untitled poem explores the on-going wounds of childhood. The speaker articulates deep pain stemming from unmet childhood needs, a suffering that continues into adulthood. Within her resides a child longing for love, tenderness, and care. The incomplete phrase "be everything she needed" signifies a huge emptiness within her. This highlights the strenuous and often unfair nature of the healing process, as reflected in the closing line, "It's not fair that she is so lonely still". The child, having received insufficient attention and support, embodies the experience of neglect that several suffer, leaving an ineradicable mark. Such themes resonate deeply with those who have experienced similar hardships, evoking memories and fostering empathy for those who have not.

This poem showcases a set of stylistic features, starting with its fragmented structure, evident in phrases like "and did not receive" and "I'm trying to". These elements draw the reader into the intellectual whirlpools and psychological conflicts involved in the speaker's quest to heal old wounds, allowing the audience to sense the speaker's brokenness. Also, The poet initiates the poem with the

first-person pronoun “I”, enabling the reader to witness these personal and internal confessions. The readers may also consider this poem personal because they may carry the same confessions inside them.

Additionally, the poet isolates certain phrases, like “be everything she needed”, which illustrates the speaker’s distress. This isolation forces the reader to pause and engage with that feeling or reflect on the meaning. The deliberate choice of words and expressions like “hate, need, lonely, it’s not fair” powerfully impacts the reader’s emotions, as these honest sentiments strike directly like arrows to the heart, provoking an immediate response. Besides, the deviation used with the adverb “still” in the phrase “She is so lonely still” emphasises the feeling of loneliness is still continuous.

Moreover, the existence of the punctuation marks makes the readers stop and think of the meaning of the sentence and in what way it affects them. Repetition is employed with the phrase “She is so lonely still” to convey the persistence of pain, emphasising it to ensure the reader feels its weight and significance. Finally, the poem is left open-ended, evoking a sense of oppression and injustice, prompting reflection and inquiry about its conclusion.

2.1.2.1.7. Emotional Responses

2.1.2.1.7.1. General Appreciation

@kamadochick: That's beautiful Nikita ❤️

@livingthatotownlife: Beautiful words 🥺

@gabriellamanolache: I love this. ❤️

Readers often express admiration and amazement for the poem's style through emotional responses. In this poem, the poet's choice of words may have conveyed sincere and profound emotions, particularly when depicting pain and suffering with precise language. This may have made them feel

the pain, suffering, and misery of the speaker. The repetition of the sentence, as mentioned in the analysis of the poem, "She is so lonely still" may have affected those readers to feel deep sadness about her psychological state.

2.1.2.1.7.2. Emojis

@meredith_86_: 

@neidin_76: 

@dechchet: 

The theme of the poem likely influenced the group of readers who used emojis to express their feelings. For instance, the readers who chose the purple and red hearts emojis could reflect their support for the poet and admiration for their writing style. Maybe they felt gratitude and appreciation for this piece of work. On the other hand, the crying emoji may signify sadness, either because the readers may feel this story as it is their own due to the use of the personal pronoun "I" or because the poet's words may resonate with them deeply because they create a sad atmosphere.

2.1.2.1.8. Cognitive Responses

2.1.2.1.8.1. Cognitive Reflection

@globalnomadness: *Such hauntingly beautiful yet sad truth.*

*I frightened her the other day as I briefly listened to a lot of negative talk That 10yr old panicked then
tired to take charge
She is still frightened & yes she is also lonely as well
If only all our inner kids could get together*



The use of the first person pronoun may have affected this reader. From her cognitive response, it appears that she is experiencing a similar experience so she thought and declared this in her own response, as her inner ten-year-old continues to struggle with loneliness and fear. Also, the structure of the poem, with thoughtfully placed phrases in each line, and the use of punctuation marks may have

pushed her to stop and think of her inner child and her hardship too, as mentioned in the analysis of the poem above.

2.1.2.1.9. Participatory Responses

@zoemazahmusic: Feeling this deeply. On this journey since some years and it feels very good

@nikita_gill: @zoemazahmusic healing takes long, but it's so good for the soul ❤️

The theme of the poem and the first personal pronoun may have triggered a personal response in her, as indicated by this participatory response. It is evident that the commentator has experienced a similar situation in the past and has successfully overcome it after putting in considerable effort. The poet's response indicates a positive interaction with the reader. While this theme provokes sadness, the writer also may seem to convey that although the journey is challenging, it is necessary to endure it to achieve recovery. This represents the interaction between the poet and their readers.

2.1.2.2. Lang leav

The comments left by readers will be examined, grouped, and connected to the ways in which Lang leave employs stylistic features that affect reader engagement from various perspectives.

Figure 2.4

Poetry about IN THE END



IN THE END

I was ready to give it all up—everything. I was half out of my mind with love. And I didn't think twice about what I was throwing into the fire, as long as I could keep it burning for just another minute—if only I was allowed to sit awhile longer beside its pale glow.

That was how I loved you in the end. With my body cold and shuddering. With empty hands over smoldering ash, counting out the minutes.

The first noticeable thing in this poem is its title, IN THE END, which is written in all uppercase letters, and that serves as a graphological deviation that immediately captures the reader's attention. It visually stands to make the title more noticeable and prepares the reader for a dramatic theme, aligning with the idea of endings. Also, Leav widely used the first-person pronoun "I", which aims to engage readers, encouraging them to perceive and build emotional intimacy with the poem. Using em dash in two situations where the poet takes breath to underline the word "everything", the latter shows the gravity of what she was ready to give and before "If only I was allowed to sit awhile longer besides its pale glow". Em dashes are employed to emphasize the situation and make them hang in the reader imagination a second longer.

Additionally, this Instapoem uses several metaphors like "throwing into the fire", "keep it burning", and "sit a while longer beside its pale glow." These metaphors capture the heart-breaking cycle of giving, fighting, and mourning in love. This passion that the poet sacrifices everything blindly for, it is for the sake of keeping the relationship alive a little longer. Although the fire is now only a pale glow, not a strong flame anymore, it shows the speaker refusing to leave, even though the love has almost disappeared. Along with "empty hands", "smouldering ash", and "body cold and shuddering"; these phrases all allude to the speaker's sense of emotional death. Her hands stretching over the ash further indicates that all everything she cared about have already burned away. The previously discussed metaphors foster the readers' senses to evoke vivid images in their minds throughout the process of reading. These latter contrast with the earlier warmth of the fire, and they convey emotional depletion and loss after giving everything. The concluding sentence "counting out the minutes" holds deep meaning, since the speaker feels every painful second without love; life now has become only for surviving, not living it. Moreover, the metaphor reinforces the theme of emotional obsession and desperation that the poem seeks to create.

The preposition "with" is repeated twice at the beginning of two sentences which called Anaphora to affect the rhythm, slow down the text, expresses a strong feeling of sacrifices, and may impact the readers by remind them of the past events. Additionally, there is a deviate from punctuation rules in this line “.And I didn't think twice” that starts with “And” which is grammatical deviation. Leav purposefully utilises it to foreground the sentence and draw attention to its message.

2.1.2.2.1. Emotional Responses

2.1.2.2.1.1. General Appreciation

@tas_musings: This is so beautiful written.

@nawel.toumi.39: Such a beautiful poet ❤️

The emotional responses reflect users' affective responses to the poem and the writer. This kind of appreciation is closely linked to the poem's writing style and language, which is rich in emotional tone. The use of em dashes in the poem reflects strong emotion, which is mirrored in the readers' responses, showing strong appreciation for the poem's style and language. Since language connects emotionally with the reader in a way that feels personal and heartfelt, it may motivate readers to respond with gratitude and praise.

2.1.2.2.1.2. Emojis

@swairah.iar: 😞

@nutei_thv: 😞

@nanally.3: 😞😞😞

Many readers express their emotional connection to the poem's themes of love fading, holding on, and finally letting go by responding with emojis of sad or tearful expressions. Additionally, the use of em dashes, like in "just another minute—if only I was allowed to sit awhile longer", emphasise the pain situation, creates pause in the readers' mind, and make them linger in their imagination for a moment longer, much like the poet wished to remain a little longer next to its pale glow. These small

pauses could be reflected the emotional weight of the poem's themes and their emotional reflection on readers.

2.1.2.2.1.3. Expression of feeling Affirmation

@geleenfaye: *I felt that in my bones* 🥲

@thetiffanyseries: *It's like you were writing my story* 🥲 *you have such a way with words*

The effect of the poem's stylistic elements is emphasised in both comments, especially the use of the first-person pronoun "I" in the poem, which might encourage readers to perceive and develop an emotional intimacy with it. Further, the repetition of the preposition "with" slows down the text, and it could grab the reader's attention to deeply feel the theme of sacrifice.

2.1.2.2.2. Cognitive Responses

2.1.2.2.2.1. Cognitive Reflection

@brushandpentaes: *This is breathtaking. The imagery of love a fire burning down to ash, yet still holding on, is haunting and unforgettable. It says so much in so few words.* ❤️

@robincraig: *Your words paint a picture*

The readers' cognitive responses suggest that metaphors succeeded in stimulating their imagination and evoke vivid images in their minds. They understand what the writer meant beyond the literal words, especially the first when she says, "It says so much in so few words", recognising that it is something that means more than its literal meaning. Further, they may have experienced similar sacrifices, this shows a strong sense of empathy. The first comment indicates the reader admiration of using metaphors which suggests her familiarity with poetic devices. The second reader indicates the clarity of language and the style of writing that Leav uses to paint a picture that forms meaning in the reader mind, which aligns with Fish's view that meaning is temporary and constructed during the process of reading.

@auth.orshipinprogress: *A difficulty is I live this, but it's not because the fires dying, but because I act with blind desperation. My eyes have been blinded by a life before him.*

The reader's choice of these words indicates that she is not passively reading, but she is mirroring her lived experience into the reading space and showing that meaning is temporary, which is constructed through active reading. By saying “I act with blind desperation”, the reader uses this metaphor to describe her own situation. This is a shared metaphor with the poem's previous metaphor, “I didn't think twice about what I was throwing into the fire”, showing that the reader reshapes the poem's metaphor through personal experience.

2.1.2.2.3. Participatory Responses

@jameson.nz : Miss @langleav for almost a decade now, you have never once failed to impress me. Every time. @langleav: @jameson.nz yes, Memories turns 10 next year which is insane.

By saying “for almost a decade now” and Leav's reply “Memories turns 10 next year”, the reader's response shows a strong emotional connection built over time; also, she has been following the writer and her poetry for nearly ten years. This means she was likely read this book when it first came out and are still connected to it. It highlights not just loyalty to the poet, but also the beauty of her style and the lasting impact of her words in the reader's mind.

@mari_ces_10 :I could almost say the same thing now. I think, I am seeing the end of the line.@langleav: @mari_ces_10 so sorry to hear. Please take care ❤️.@mari_ces_10:@langleav: thank you

The response expresses a deep and personal connection to the poem, which indicates that the reader sees her own experience reflected in the poet's way of writing. Further, Leav's reply shows she understands the emotional reach of her words, and she is aware her poetic style touches readers on a personal level. This relationship is powerful because it is based on shared affective space when the reader becomes a co-creator of meaning. This shifts the meaning of “In the end” from a finished thought in the poem to a shared one, where the reader adds her own experience.

Figure 2.5

Poetry about Acceptance



One standout feature of Lang Leav's poem *Acceptance* is its usage of simple diction, and everyday language to express deep and complex emotions. It tends to be extremely short, with multiple short lines. The confusing nature of human emotions and inner conflict when the human feelings are torn between nostalgia and regret are the discussed themes. Generally, an enjambment is a poetic technique used in this poem to establish the flow and create surprise, as readers have to keep reading to know what the author is saying. It gives the writing a sense of urgency and enhances involvement with the poem by encouraging the readers to read it through to the end.

Both stanzas of the poem employ parallel construction in which presents two opposed feelings using the same grammatical structure. At first, the speaker concedes to the thought that "There are things I miss that I shouldn't", as she misses chances, people, or experiences that logically she shouldn't miss because these might be unpleasant memories or things that are no longer good for her. At the same time, there are things or people do not miss, even though we feel that, logically, we should,

it is indicated in this line "those I don't that I should". This latter highlights the contradiction between what she feels deeply inside and what she believes supposed to feel.

In the second stanza of the poem, Leav deepens the emotional complexity of the poem. She moves from missing things to desiring and loving. In these lines, she applies antithesis by contrasting the impossible desires with possible realities. In this line "Sometimes we want what we couldn't—" means we often desire things that are impossible for us to have or out of reach. The stylistic feature is used to make it easier to understand the complexity of the situation. Additionally, "Sometimes we love who we could", suggests that sometimes love is shaped not by deep passion but by possibility for instance we love the people we can have, even if they are not our true heart's desire. In both parts, parallelism is used to intensify the rhythm of language and make the poet convey the complexity of human emotions in a clear and engaging manner. Also, it is persuasive as it emphasised emotional depth and makes the ideas more memorable through using this structure.

In the opening lines the poet uses the pronoun "I" to express personal emotions. This uses of First-person pronoun "I", allows the readers feel invested in her story and feels the speaker's private struggle with regret and conflicted feelings. However, in the concluding lines of the poem, the pronoun "I" shifts to "We". This switching from "I" to "we" expands the feelings from a personal confession to universal one. Since everyone feel this way sometimes, the reader might also feel a soft comfort, recognising them as part of the collective human experience. The poem employs a vague and open style that fosters flexible interpretation and actively invites the reader to engage with its different meanings. Its message unfolds through ambiguity, encouraging personal reflection.

2.1.2.2.4. Emotional Responses

2.1.2.2.4.1. General Appreciation

@morning_beast: ❤️ *I didn't know words could be put together this beautifully.*

This emotional response reflects an aesthetic response to the poem's simple structure and diction. It used simple words to express the deep and complex human emotions. The beauty lies in how a poet arranges ordinary words in an emotionally resonant way. Further, the parallel structure creates a lyrical flow that makes the poem clear yet emotionally powerful. Together, the reader admires the way the poet arranged the words into something emotionally powerful and rhythmically elegant.

2.1.2.2.4.2. Emojis

@amayavtec: 😭😭💔

@lalengsc: 😞😞😞

@angeladamaso: 😞

Readers' emotional responses demonstrate how strongly they relate to the poem's theme, which captures the internal struggle between how people feel and how they ought to feel, by responding with sad, tearful, heartbroken emojis. Furthermore, the readers' response may be influenced by the writing style "Parallel structure" which creates a lyrical flow and may reflect the emotional weight of the poem's theme and its reflection on readers.

2.1.2.2.4.3. Expression of Feeling Affirmation

@kmbryngl: *It hit me.* 😭😭😭😭

@maegretchen: *My heart broke when it shouldn't* 😭

@bajebaje1267: *So beautiful.. exactly how I feel .. tears.. thank u for your words well put together*

@ifyouseiso_: *This is so true. Your words never fails to wake me up from the nightmare I'm having.
Thank you so much for writing all of these wonderful piece.*

Since a personal feeling is transformed into a shared one by moving from "I" to "we" in the poem, it may allow the readers in the comments to feel seen and comforted as members of a greater human experience. This technique and its repetition attract the reader's attention, which is clearly

reflected in these statements: "It hit me", "My heart broke when it shouldn't", and "Exactly how I feel, never fails to wake me up from the nightmare I'm having. "The latter indicates highly affective responses from readers, and the shifts to the first-person pronoun "we" reflects the poet's creation of the sense of empathy about the human emotions and their inner conflict as shared feelings.

2.1.2.2.5. Cognitive Responses

2.1.2.2.5.1. Cognitive Reflection

@zubairaminata: sometimes it's tough to accept some things and many times we just accept anything.... Life is tough, Love is hard but then again, it's what you see and accept. Love looks pretty on me.

The response uses short, parallel construction, just like the poem, showing that the structure itself guides the reader's thought process and even influences his style of response. The reader's interpretation "Sometimes it's tough to accept some things, and many times we just accept anything" reflects the reader constructing meaning shaped by perception and understanding during the process of reading. This corresponds with Fish's view that reading is not about uncovering fixed meaning but about constructing meaning in the moment of reading.

@writingtoinspire: Life is strange, indeed. We live and learn . 

The cognitive response reveals the reader is responding to the poem's open and vague style by inviting the reader to reflect on their own experience and it leaves space for her personal interpretation. This openness encourages thoughtful responses, indicated in her comment, where the reader connects the poem's message to a broader truth about life.

2.1.2.2.6. Participatory Responses

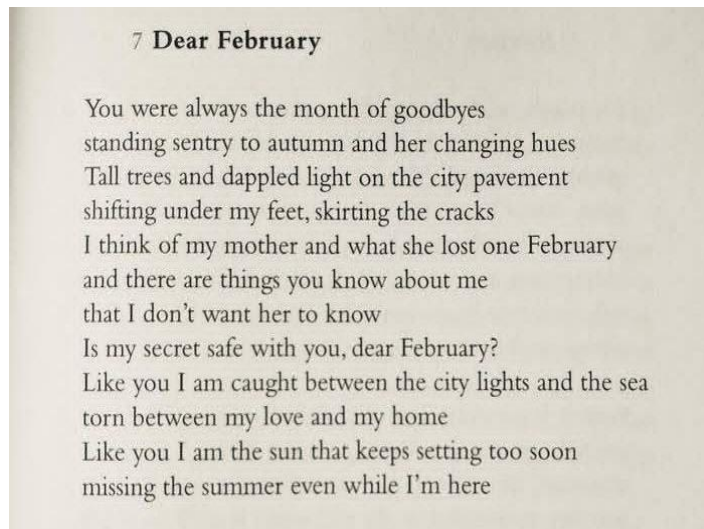
@la_fille_du_nord11: darn! straight to my shattered heart thanks @lang you are an inspiration to me. @david.alyoshin: @akoclalen so inspirational.

These reactions demonstrate how strongly the poem touches readers' emotions. The fact that one reader responds, "so inspirational", and another writes, "darn, straight to my shattered heart ... you are an inspiration to me", may suggest that the poetry relates directly to their emotional experiences. These remarks further demonstrate how the poem not only expresses inner conflict but also could invite

emotional engagement and create a shared space where readers feel they are understood and build a sense of connection between the readers.

Figure 2.6

Poetry about Dear February



In her poem *Dear February*, Lang Leav deals with themes of memory, loss, and emotional conflict. That is February is portrayed as a month that symbolises both personal and seasonal transitions, a time of farewells and endings. It tied closely to personal grief of the poet which is a something significant happened in February for her.

The poem's title makes it clear from the beginning that the frame is a letter. In it and through the poem's progression, February is personified and treated as if it was a trusted friend who can listen, guard secrets, and understand the speaker's emotions, like, "Are things you know about me." Moreover, in this verse "You were always the month of goodbyes", February is seen as a symbol of loss, when individuals depart or things come to an end. Additionally, it personifies as a guard witnessing the

change of seasons "Autumn and her changing hues." The reader is given a vivid visual by the colour variations, which signify emotional changes and symbolises autumn as a season of deterioration.

Leav uses visual imagery in "Tall trees and dappled light on the city pavement" to paint a peaceful urban scene when tall trees filtering light that dances on the pavement. It appeals strongly to the sense of sight. Then, the speaker depicts as carefully walking to avoid cracks, the act of avoiding cracks metaphorically represents as if trying not to trigger or fall into old memories or emotional wounds. Moreover, this line "I think of my mother and what she lost one February", introduces a deep emotional connection and a shared grief between the speaker and her mother. The phrase "what she lost" is intentionally vague. The vagueness creates suspense, inviting the reader to imagine the nature of the loss. On the other hand, the repetition of the word "February" throughout the poem carries more emotional weight and reminds us that the month symbolises time of loss and a keeper of grief.

Anaphora is figurative language used in "like you" repeated twice to emphasis the sentence and show empathy. The speaker recognises that she is becoming like her mother, in sacrifice, or in emotional conflict. The latter leaves room for broader interpretation, most likely, her mother since the speaker reflects on "what she lost one February", to the month itself treating like a person or by calling upon the reader directly, though, Leav positions her poem as a dialogue, rather than a monologue. Thus, can evoke emotions, captivate an audience, allows for readers immediate reaction.

Further, strong diction and images are used for instance, "Caught" and "torn" as juxtaposition which evokes sorrow and conflict. Likewise, "my city lights and the sea" and "my love and my home" these moments in the poem capture the immigrant experience that Leav has experienced, or more generally the universal human feeling of longing for home while trying to build a new life elsewhere. Then, the poet compares herself to "the sun", usually a symbol of warmth and life, but here it "sets too

soon", becoming a metaphor for a life touched by loss. Furthermore, the verse "missing the summer even while I'm here" is a paradox because it expresses a contradiction when someone missing something while being present in it. This highlights the speaker's emotional disconnection and inability to feel joy despite being in a joyful time. The use of this device engages the reader further into a text by creating a temporary confusion. Enjambment purposefully uses in this poem. Leav chooses to express the concepts continuously rather than with a semicolon or period, which adds surprise because reader has to keep reading to know what the author is saying and creates a feeling of fluidity that enables the reader to easily become immersed in the topic.

2.1.2.2.7. Emotional Responses

2.1.2.2.7.1. General Appreciation

@mlb.IfnsI: loveeee thiiiis! ❤️❤️❤️

@jeremaedicrz: Aww, love this one! 💖

@sonniamwriting: Beautiful ❤️

The responses reflect readers' emotional responses to the poem, and their appreciation is closely linked to the poem's language, poetic technique, strong diction, and the repetition, which showcase its emotional weight as well as attract the readers' attention. Aforementioned may make the readers feel motivated to respond with gratitude and praise.

2.1.2.2.7.2. Emojis

@justjo.rish: 🥹👏

@naddimusic: 🥹

These readers' responses demonstrate how strongly they relate to the poem's theme, which captures the memories, loss, and emotional conflict. Furthermore, the readers' response may be influenced by the poetic writing style; enjambment, for instance, creates a feeling of fluidity that

enables the reader to easily become immersed in the topic. Thus, the poem's theme and the writing style could reflect the emotional weight of the poem on readers.

2.1.2.2.8. Cognitive Responses

2.1.2.2.8.1. Cognitive reflection

@asburrell_verse : Love this letter/poem! Elements remind me of Hopkins ("dappled")- beautiful work!! 🔥🔥

In this cognitive response, the reader first expresses appreciation for the poem, calling it a beautiful work. Then he sees strong visual imagery in "Tall trees and dappled light" which reminds him of Hopkins ("dappled"), who praises the beauty of things that are speckled.

@prettygirlsdiggravess : The way you write is just magical ❤️

The reader's commentary likely stems from the way Leav's use of enjambment, repetition, rhythm creates a sense of fluidity, drawing the reader in and enhancing the poem's emotional impact that enables the reader to easily become immersed in the topic. The reader further stated that it is just magical since Leav employed powerful diction, precise language and vivid, evocative imagery in the poem that evoke emotion and create a picture in the reader's mind.

@sweetscentrima : i'm crying now, Sixteen years ago, we lost my father to a vehicular accident. He met an accident on Feb, 14, passed away on Feb. 19 and since then, I have not been celebrating my birthday every Feb. 22. These lines just got me: "You were always the month of goodbyes...I think of my mother and what she lost one February..." ... and I can't stop my tears from falling now...

The reader was deeply moved by the personification and imagery in the poem, particularly the way February is personified as a figure of loss and sorrow because she lost her father in this month. Additionally, she reveals that she no longer celebrates her birthday on February 22. Although she is physically present each year for her birthday, the emotional weight of loss makes her unable to truly engage with and enjoy the occasion. The stylistic use of paradox in the poem thus mirrors the reader's emotional reality, where being present does not mean feeling present, and this shared disconnection is what made the poem resonate so deeply with her. Moreover, Leav wrote "I think of my mother and what she lost one February", and she left it intentionally vague inviting the reader to imagine the nature

of the loss. However, the reader rewrites, “I think of my mother and what she lost in February”, clearly referring to the death of her father. The poem’s strategic ambiguity allows space for the reader’s own grief to surface, leading her to assign personal meaning to the line. Thus, the vagueness does not distance the reader, but it draws her closer, allowing her to participate emotionally by imagining or reliving the nature of the loss.

2.1.2.2.9. Participatory Responses

@ariaaaannnnnee: I was waiting for this ❤️❤️❤️. @langleav: @ariaaaannnnnee.

@ariaaaannnnnee: @langleav I knew in my heart you would post it. I was really waiting. Your words have been with me since Love & Misadventure.

The reader reveals that she has been connected to the poet’s work for a long time when she says, “I was really waiting” and “I knew in my heart you would post it”. It means she was eagerly anticipating this poem and is confident that the poet will share it. Furthermore, she has been reading Leav’s work for years when she mentions Love and Misadventure, an earlier book, which indicates the reader has a strong and enduring connection with her writing that demonstrates the reader’s admiration and loyalty towards the poet.

Overall, the findings offer valuable insights into how Instapoetry shapes the emotional, cognitive, and participatory responses of readers through affective stylistics. The analysis of the selected instapoems reveal the shared stylistic features that were extracted, showcase a frequent use of figurative language, including metaphors, personification, symbolism, and imagery, to vividly depict the themes and emotional undertones of the poems. Furthermore, the use of First-person pronoun, repetition, parallelism and enjambment. The poets often rely on these elements to convey layered meanings and complex emotions. Their richness in the text helps to create a deeply immersive reading experience that resonates with readers, encouraging them to engage emotionally, cognitively, and participatory with the poems in the comment section. Theoretically, this aligns with Fish’s explanation that the use of stylistic features are intentional strategies meant to influence the readers’ minds; simultaneously, the meaning is constructed in their minds through their active engagement process.

Hence, our current study represents a major contribution to the field, as it is one of the first that specifically investigates how does Instapoetry shape the reader's participatory response through affective stylistic. In it, the interaction between the reader and the poet's is fundamental, as the reader participates in co-creating the meaning with the poem, transforming the interpretation into a shared experience between the poet and the reader or among the readers themselves. Moreover, this research examined how, due to Instapoetry's stylistic features, readers are emotionally and cognitively influenced throughout the reading process, as highlighted in the stylistic analysis of Nikita Gill and Lang Leav.

The current findings reveal that readers often express devotion to the poets and emphasise the lasting impact of their words on their minds. This aligns with earlier researches (Rajoria 2023; Wong 2018); concurrently, it contributes to the conversation regarding the democratisation of literary feedback in digital literature. These days, poets can easily share their works online without needing traditional publishing houses. The act of self-publishing encourages a more interactive relationship between the poet and the reader. As a result, literary worth is now influenced more by reader involvement than by validation from institutions. Further, devoted readers aid in promoting and supporting the poets' work, showing profound impact these texts have on their minds. Ultimately, publishing houses may lose some of their power, as they are no longer the only ones who determine what considers as "literature" because readers and online communities play a significant role in shaping what becomes popular and meaningful. Additionally, the findings indicate the platform features, functionality, and design, especially the wide variety of forms have a big impact on reader engagement. Instagram Reels stand out as a noteworthy example in this regard since they are more frequently shared and have a wider audience. This observation is consistent with earlier research conducted by Rosales

and Sarce (2019). These insights contribute to Stanley Fish's Affective Stylistic theory and deepen the understanding established by previous studies.

Conclusion

In examining affective stylistics impact on reader engagement in the realm of instapoems, it becomes obvious that the instapoems investigated give insights into the ways that particular stylistic features would elicit certain responses throughout the reading process. From a broader academic viewpoint, the investigation of these stylistic features in instapoems enriches audiences' awareness of their influence on readers' interaction with digital literature.

General Conclusion

This dissertation provides insights into third-generation electronic literature, which is integrated with contemporary digital platforms. Instapoetry is a genre within this form of literature. Despite its spread as a literary phenomenon, academic researchers are still not engaged with it, and the research on instapoets' works and their analysis is scarce, whereas most existing research addresses electronic literature generally. In this regard, this study is grounded in affective stylistics theory to analyse how the stylistic features of Instapoetry shape reader's responses in the context of third-generation electronic literature. To achieve this, this research presents a case study of two instapoets, Nikita Gill and Lang Leav. It draws on a mixed methods research approach by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The quantitative analysis was used to describe the broader picture of readers' response to Instapoetry by selecting ten poems from each. The findings indicated that the use of reels and the selection of sensitive topics significantly tend to attract more reader engagement, as indicated by likes, shares, and comments. The qualitative approach was employed to provide in-depth analysis of how readers emotionally, cognitively, and participatory engage with Instapoetry.

The core concepts of affective stylistics theory, as coined by Stanley Fish, played a crucial role in the analysis of the three poems of each. Fish sees that meaning is temporary and constructed during the process of reading, where the reader's emotion and understanding of the poems change through the act of reading. In the stylistic analysis of the poems, the focus was on how different stylistic features might affect the readers' responses, which make the meaning unfold during the act of reading. Then, the analyses section of the readers' comments revealed that stylistic features affect readers' responses and help to create a deeply immersive reading experience. Further, it proves that because reading is not about uncovering fixed meaning but about constructing meaning in the moment of reading, readers are

emotionally and cognitively influenced throughout this process. Moreover, participatory responses revealed the reader acts as a co-creator of meaning in this engagement.

This study was not without limitations; we encountered several challenges in this study, one of which was the lack of access to necessary source materials. Further, we faced difficulties in accessing statistical data from several poems due to restrictions imposed by the poets. Additionally, we faced issues with determining where posts shared by readers were originally published, for example, whether they appeared in stories or were sent via messages. This information is private and only accessible to the publishers. Throughout our university study, the theory that we applied in this study remained largely theoretical in our understanding, as we had few opportunities for practical application. Despite these challenges, they did not hinder the completion of this study.

In the end, we encourage future researchers to continue exploring Instapoetry and its impact on readers, as this study focused on only two poets. This research may also be valuable for educators who wish to introduce digital literature, particularly Instapoetry, into their curriculum.

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Appendix A

Type of Response	Definition	Sub-Type of Response	Definition
Emotional Response	This reflects the emotional responses of readers, evoking their feelings, whether they are sad or happy.	Emojis	Emojis have been designed primarily to communicate nonverbal information. These allow the readers to express their emotions vividly.
		Expressing of feeling affirmation	It means that the poem resonates with the reader in a way that confirms their emotions or self-worth, making them feel emotionally supported and valued. This affirmation is often shaped by both the content of the poem and its style.
		General appreciation	It is a theme based in the comments section, where readers show appreciation for the style, the topic, or the

			poem.
		Hyperbolic Expression of Resonation	Readers describe the poem's deep impact using excessive and metaphorical language.
Cognitive Response	It shows that readers guess, analyse, and interpret the figurative language used in the poem. They connect words together and infer the poem's meaning.	Cognitive reflection	It is a kind of cognitive reaction that focuses on analysing and interpreting the contents and message of the poetry. This procedure frequently fosters a strong bond between the reader and the poetry, which may profoundly mirror the reader's own life.
		Philosophical thinking	It involves philosophical and metaphysical thinking, prompting the exploration of profound questions that elude simple yes or no answers.

Participatory Response	It shows the interaction, which happens among readers or readers and the writer with or without tagging.		
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يلاقى شعر انستغرام اليوم اقبالا و اهتماما كبيرين من طرف مستخدمي منصة انستغرام، وهذا ما أدى الى ازدهار الشعر في الآونة الأخيرة. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف مدى تأثير الخصائص الأسلوبية على تفاعل القراء، وذلك بالاعتماد على نظرية الأسلوبية العاطفية لمعرفة كيف لشعر الانستغرام ان يؤثر على القراء بشكل عاطفي وذهني وتشاركي. وبالإضافة الى ذلك فإن هذه الدراسة تعالج فجوة نقص البحوث الادبية في ما يتعلق بتفاعل القراء مع شعر انستغرام، وذلك للتوصل إلى رؤى حول هذا التفاعل الفريد الذي يحدث في إطار الجيل الثالث للأدب الالكتروني. ولقد تم تطبيق في هذه الدراسة دراسة حالة تتضمن اساليب للتحليل الكمية منها والنوعية في إطار صغير مختارات شعرية كتبت من طرف شاعرتين هما نيكيتا جيل ولانق ليف. أشارت النتائج الكمية إلى أن استخدام خاصية الريلز في الشعر واختيار المواضيع الحساسة يجذبان بشكل ملحوظ تفاعلاً أكبر من القراء، ويتجلى ذلك في مقاييس التفاعل: الإعجابات، والمشاركات، والتعليقات. علاوة على ذلك، كشفت النتائج النوعية أن السمات الأسلوبية تؤثر على استجابات القراء وتساعد على خلق تجربة قراءة غامرة من خلال تشجيعهم على التفاعل بطريقة عاطفية ومعرفية وتشاركية مع القصائد. كما تُظهر النتائج مساهمة كبيرة في هذا المجال، إذ تقدم رؤى قيّمة حول الاستجابات التشاركية. وهذا يشمل التفاعل بين القارئ والشاعر، وكذلك بين القراء أنفسهم، أثناء مشاركتهم في عملية صياغة المعنى. ويسترشد هذا ويتأثر بالسمات الأسلوبية المضمنة في القصيدة. في النهاية، تقدم الرؤى المستخلصة من هذه الدراسة تطبيقات عملية محتملة، حيث يمكن أن تساعد نتائجها الأساتذة المختصين في الأدب والحضارة على تعزيز تفاعل الطلاب مع هذا النوع الأدبي، وأن تكون بمثابة دليل لدمج الأدب الرقمي في أساليب التعليم المستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوبية العاطفية، شعر الانستغرام، لانق ليف، نيكيتا جيل، الجيل الثالث للأدب الالكتروني.