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1. Introduction

Instagram, a fusion of “instant camera and telegram” (Linnea Laestadius 574), was founded in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger as a photo-sharing-application. It is precisely on this platform that *Instagram poetry* emerged as a literary phenomenon. Instagram poetry or Instapoetry is nowadays so popular that fans have tattoos of their favourite Instapoem on their bodies (Niels Penke 473). Instagram poetry’s popularity can also be deduced from the fact that successful Instagram poets are celebrity figures or at least friends with celebrities. African American poet Cleo Wade (@cleowade (700,000 followers), British writer Yrsa Daley-Ward (@yrsadaleyward (178,000 followers), who is of West Indian (Jamaican) and West African (Nigerian) heritage, and British poet Charly Cox (@charlycox1 (44,100 followers) have influential profile followers on their Instagram accounts such as US-congresswoman Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, director Ava DuVernay, supermodel Ashley Graham, and activist Rachel Elizabeth Cargle among others. Instagram poetry is not a niche phenomenon anymore, but this type of poetry is nowadays a well-established and an indispensable part of literary markets (Kristin L. Matthews 2019; Lili Pâquet 2019; Penke 2019). To just name the most famous example, Punjabi-Canadian Instagram poet Rupī Kaur has been publishing Instagram poetry since 2013 and is a writer of three highly successful poetry volumes, namely *milk and honey* (2015), *the sun and her flowers* (2017), and *home body* (2020). Kaur’s *milk and honey* is even “the most successful poetry collection of the 21st century¹ (Penke 469, my translation) with 2.5 million sold copies worldwide. Rupī Kaur is also a writer that, from the beginning, wrote about taboo topics such as menstruation or sexual violence in a new manner, combining short poems with visual elements. This new type of aesthetically innovative and socio-political poetry by Kaur and other Instagram poets has prompted new ways of reading and has led people who were previously uninterested in literature to Instagram poetry and to poetry in general (Penke 468).

At the heart of this thesis lies this kind of new poetry, namely, Instagram poetry, a kind of poetry that connects social media affordances (e.g., the use of hyperlinks), visual strategies and aesthetics with socio-political issues. #Metoo, Black Lives Matter, or mental health campaigns are topical issues that Instagram poets write about in their poetry and/or actively engage in as

¹ “bis dato erfolgreichste Lyrikband des 21. Jahrhunderts” (Penke 469)

activists. Charly Cox (@charlycox1), Yrsa Daley-Ward (@yrsadaleyward), and Cleo Wade (@cleowade) are examples of such Instagram poets that use visual features to convey socio-political issues. They challenge misogyny, anti-racism, and mental health stigma through multimodal poetry. In my thesis, I will shed light on the relationship between visual elements and socio-political messages in Instagram poetry. I will examine how Charly Cox's, Cleo Wade's, and Yrsa Daley-Ward's Instagram poems advocate gender equality, anti-racism and an awareness for mental health issues. Moreover, I aim to analyze how the engagement of Instagram poetry's online community, i.e., users in the comment sections, is an example of a "participatory culture" (Henry Jenkins 4). According to Jenkins, a participatory culture "is a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, [...] is also one in which members believe their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another" (4). Extending my analysis of Instagram poetry to the comment sections, I set out to demonstrate how Instagram enables a participatory culture also in the field of poetry, thus engendering interaction between poets and readers.

The introduction of my thesis serves to explain the research rationale and outline of this master's thesis. Chapter 2, the literature review, provides an overview of academic studies that have been written so far about the connection of Instagram poetry and socio-political as well as technological mobilization. Chapter 3, then, introduces the theoretical framework of this thesis, namely fourth wave feminism, critical race theory, and Foucault's power/knowledge theory combined with feminist psychiatry studies. Chapter 3 also presents the methods of this thesis, namely multimodal discourse analysis as developed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen and netnography as proposed by Robert Kozinets. Chapter 4 ("Advocating Fourth Wave Feminism in Instagram Poetry"), Chapter 5 ("Advocating Anti-Racism in Instagram Poetry"), and Chapter 6 ("Advocating Mental Health Awareness in Instagram Poetry") present analyses of selected poems. They are divided along the three types of socio-political movements that this thesis examines. Overall, fourteen poems and a prose text are analyzed throughout the thesis with five texts per socio-political movement and five texts per Instagram poet. After the analysis chapters, the conclusion summarizes the findings of this thesis.

2. Literature Review

While mass media have extensively reported on Instagram poetry (Thomas Bronwen 88), academia ignored this in 2010 newly formed poetry practice in its first years and during its 2013 peak with Rupi Kaur (Kate Kovalik and Jen Scott Curwood 186; Lili Pâquet 296; Niels Penke 452-453; 465). Academic research on Instagram poetry and associated phenomena on Instagram mainly developed from 2018 onwards (see Crepax 2020; Holowka 2018; Kovalik and Curwood 2019; Matthews 2019; Pâquet 2019; Penke 2019). According to Pâquet the still scarce research corpus on Instagram poetry and the almost decade-long lack of academic research is due to the fact that a majority of academic scholars have regarded Instagram poetry until recently as a field of popular culture with “little literary merit” (296). Presently, there is an increasing academic interest in Instagram poetry and in its literary value.

2.1. Defining Instagram Poetry

It is important to mention that academia defines Instagram poetry in various terms, which exemplify different perspectives on its value. Niels Penke argues that Instagram poetry is a part of popular culture thanks to its immense success (“a popular phenomenon of contemporary poetry,” 451). According to the literary scholar, this fact sets it apart from other contemporary poetry and renders it necessary to examine in detail. Another researcher in the same field, Lili Pâquet describes Instagram poetry as a “subgenre” of “poetry and self-help literature” (296). This particular poetry genre essentially explores typical self-help-literature’s themes such as spirituality, self-love, and healing according to Pâquet (296). While I agree that Instagram poetry is popular and, in fact, includes self-help topics, Instagram poetry is distinctly defined as literature and, more specifically, as poetry in this thesis.

Literary scholar Kristin L. Matthews defines Instagram poetry as “contemporary poetic practice and reception” (Matthews 400). She declares that the medium in which literature is published influences not only poetry conventions but also reading habits heavily. Thus, she calls Instagram poetry “an accessible and radical form of reading,” by which she refers to the fact that nearly anyone can become a consumer or an author of Instagram poetry if provided with an internet connection (400). The author argues that Instagram poetry belongs to an activist

community of Black² feminists on online platforms. My own thesis will expand on Matthews' work, especially when considering activism as an essential element of Instagram poetry.

Another author that looks at Instagram poetry in the light of feminism is Rosa Crepax (75). She argues that Instagram poetry is a digital feminist achievement as it is mainly created by young female artists. Crepax believes that feminist Instagram accounts, including Instapoets, draw upon a specific digital feminist aesthetic, which can include 'girly' features such as glitter or sparkling, pastel-colored fonts. I agree with Crepax insofar that some Instagram poetry belongs to digital feminism and that Instagram poetry overall exemplifies a distinct aesthetic.

Kate Kovalik and Jen Scott Curwood (185) see Instagram poetry as a "literacy practice in digital spaces," which is marked by multimodality, accessibility and mobility (185). The scholars mainly argue that Instagram poetry allows adolescents to explore, analyze, read, and write poetry. This means that Instagram poetry is a gateway into the literary world for the youth (185). While I agree that Instagram poetry can be useful for pedagogy, I will focus on its participatory practice within online communities.

Thomas Bronwen (88), a professor of English and New Media, stands in line with the aforementioned scholars who see the literary value of Instagram poetry (e.g. Pâquet 2019; Matthews 2019). He defines Instagram poetry as a "distinctive poetic movement" of poets who assist each other in their endeavors and who are defined by commonalities (87). Community participation and the medium of Instagram are these commonalities according to Bronwen.

Here, I want to shortly present the public debate on Instagram poetry's value before I move on to specific scholarly arguments about Instapoetry. So far, Instagram poetry's value was often heavily debated and dismissed in public debate. The most famous example of this sentiment is Rebecca Watt's essay "The Cult of the Noble Amateur," which was published in the prestigious literary magazine *PN Review* (2018). In this heavily debated article Watts (2018) uses terms such as "artless poetry," "rejection of craft," and "the complete stagnation of the poet's mind"

² I capitalize mentions of "White" and "Black" throughout my thesis to highlight that race is a social construct (Delgado and Stefancic 2017). In doing so, I join scholars such as Carla Freccero, who wrote in her essay "Our Lady of MTV: Madonna's 'Like a Prayer'" (1992): "The use of initial caps in writing 'Black' is a deliberate political gesture on my part, referring not to a color but to a political designation" (163).

to describe the artistic oeuvre of Instagram poets such as Hollie McNish. She also compared Instagram poetry's popularity to Donald Trump's populist politics. Contrary to this view, this master's thesis perceives Instagram poetry as a valuable and distinctive literary form and practice, which is rooted in various forms of activism. The impact of Instagram poets can be, for example, seen in the fact that Instagram poetry enabled new processes of publishing.

2.2. Alternative Publishing and the Rise of Marginalized Voices

To date, literary and cultural scholars such as Kristin L. Matthews (400), Lili Pâquet (301), and Niels Penke (464) have pointed to the impact Instagram poetry has had on publishing cultures. As they rightfully argue, Instagram poetry has revolutionized the poetry publishing industry. Traditionally, poets relied on established publishing houses and literary critics to be published and read (Matthews 400; Pâquet 301; Penke 464). Instagram poets altered this process by means of the social media platform their poems inhabit. Usually, Instagram poets gather a significant number of followers on their Instagram poetry accounts, possibly self-publish a poetry collection, and only then acquire book deals with publishing houses such as Andrews McMeel Publishing, as Penke (468) describes. Pâquet (301) explains that a massive shift in deciding power has happened in the publishing industry. This is due to the fact that "traditional gatekeepers," namely literary critics and publishing houses, do not solely determine the publishing value of poetry anymore. They are partly replaced by online audiences (301), whose reading practices in regards to Instagram poetry indicate future book sales. Clearly, Instagram poetry now forms an important constituent of the literary world, its power expanding into the decision-making process of publishing houses.

Scholars such as Thomas Bronwen emphasize that Instagram poetry has contributed to a 'poetry revival' by altering the perspective on a genre which has been previously considered as a suffering "niche activity" (89). Instagram poets use innovative multimodal tools, distribute their poems among large, participatory online communities, and often include clear socio-political references in their poetry (Matthews 400). These altered poetry practices have led to an immense success, an innovative appearance and a promising future according to Matthews (400). Moreover, previously unnoticed writers and audiences from marginalized communities are now set at the center of attention (400).

Niels Penke states that thanks to the democratic potential and accessibility of the Internet and

Instagram, a smartphone can potentially enable anyone to become a poet (453; 455-456). The scholar (453) also explains that audiences which have been structurally excluded from literary production and which have overall disregarded poetry and literature before, now read and create Instagram poetry as a consequence (453). Bronwen (89-90), Holowka (188), Matthews (395), and Pâquet (305) therefore argue that social media sites allow for the creation of spaces where marginalized groups are able to participate in literary production as well as other art forms. Young women, predominantly millennial women of color, lead the Instagram poetry movement as writers, writing about topical societal issues such as immigration, domestic violence, sexual abuse, Black womanhood, and body image among others (Bronwen 89; Pâquet 305). Matthews proposes in her discussion of contemporary Black feminism that social media specifically offer women of color outstanding and long overdue “representation” and “the space black women needed to voice and respond to their particular struggles” (395). According to Matthews (395-400), this is why particularly women of color engage in “writing as resistance” (Kovalik and Curwood 193). Numerous poetry accounts around issues such as Black Lives Matter are the result of these new technological developments (Matthews 395-400).

Rosa Crepax also argues that social media in general provide the possibility of debate on topics that are valid for marginalized communities but are otherwise often neglected. In addition, she states that social media sites allow “for the negotiation of marginalized identities” (79). These ideas, however, did not only emerge with the start of Instagram poetry but can be traced back to earlier phenomena. In her exploration of female “online cultures” before the advent of Instagram poetry, Anita Harris (213) explains that young and marginalized women create spaces and innovative routes in activism through the use of new technologies. Hence, Instagram poetry seems to follow this tradition. To be clear, the young female leaders of Instagram poetry in this thesis are Charly Cox, Cleo Wade, and Yrsa Daley-Ward.

Matthews (404) and Bronwen (90) have ventured the hypothesis that it is exactly the fact that the reasons for the dismissal of Instagram poetry lie in the circumstance that Instagram poetry is largely led by young women (of color). According to Matthews (404) this disapproval of young women’s art can be traced back to male and Western principles. Moreover, the visibility of marginalized and ignored groups means that female poets are often chastised “for writing self-indulgent pieces, or for wallowing in their own misery” according to Bronwen (90) and Pâquet (305). Furthermore, Bronwen (90) proposes that this is not an insular incident, but he

connects this condemnation to a tradition of dismissing young, female authors “for being overly personal or emotional.” He (90) adds that a readership, which mainly consists of women, intensifies this criticism.

2.3. Instagram Poetry’s Affordances and Characteristic Features

Critics from communication science, literary studies, and interdisciplinary fields of research such as Crepax (72), Laestadius (574-575), and Penke (454) have discussed the characteristic features of Instagram poetry as a visual genre, pointing to the affordance of new technologies. It is important to discuss these visual features because they influence the aesthetic of social media poetry on Instagram. Pâquet (301) states that although each writer demonstrates a particular style, there are several common features which characterize Instagram poetry.

Several scholars (Kovalik and Curwood 185; Pâquet 309; Penke 461- 463) agree that Instagram poems are marked by “multimodality,” which means that poems may incorporate numerous visual elements such as text, photographs, selfies, inanimate objects, illustrations, sound, video, filters, and hashtags. According to Penke, a “picture-text-collage” is the fundamental design element of Instagram poetry (463), while collaborative efforts with other artists, illustrators, for example, occur frequently (Pâquet 299; 309). In this thesis, I regard multimodality as an inherent and innovative element of Instagram poetry, which will be further explored in its connection with activism in the analysis chapters (see Chapter 4, 5, 6).

Another characteristic feature of social media poetry is its brevity, which can be ascribed to Instagram’s internal logic. Penke explains that the photo format on Instagram only allows for a certain number of words in a post so that the post is legible on a smartphone screen (461). Furthermore, Penke states another reason for the poems’ brevity. He describes that “readers will peruse the poems on their smartphones” (303), while being confronted with a vast amount of other information in their ‘feeds’ (461). Thus, it is easier to read short poems in such an information-filled environment. Interestingly, Rupi Kaur mentions her specific literary heritage as a reason for the brevity of her poems, citing literary role models such as Maya Angelou and Khalil Gibran and her Sikh heritage, which ultimately inspired imitators (471). Short Instagram poems also receive the greatest attention in the form of likes and shares in contrast to longer poems (Penke 473). It must be noted though that some poets break these governing ‘rules’ by cleverly circumventing this logic of brevity through alternative designs. For example, some poets use a smaller font to fit a longer text into the frame of one Instagram picture, others use

so-called ‘carousel posts’ with multiple pictures, and yet others post a video poem or a sound poem that projects text onto the screen.

Moreover, as Niels Penke (461) points out, a unique and visible feature of Instagram poetry is its represented materiality. Pâquet agrees by stating that Instagram poets often utilize a certain “nostalgia and vintage aesthetics” (299). This means that typewriters and their fonts, post-its, analogue notebooks, and calligraphy among other techniques are depicted and used to signify a connection with the ‘traditional’ literary industry according to Penke (464; 469- 471). Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (44-50) previously investigated this phenomenon of a purposeful stylistic or content-based reference to an older medium, which legitimizes the existence or the positioning of new, digital media. In their classic *Remediation. Understanding New Media* (2001), the media scholars call this technique, which can express admiration for certain types of media, “remediation” (Bolter and Grusin 45). This virtual nod to the traditional paraphernalia of writing also serves the function of foregrounding the writing process, as Bronwen (89) and Penke (464) declare. Charly Cox, for example, features photographs of handwritten poems on her Instagram page and in her printed books (Bronwen 89), which could be also labelled as a case of “remediation” (Bolter and Grusin 45). A further instance of nostalgia for non-digital media lies in the fact that fans have Instagram poems tattooed on their bodies, which reveals the audience’s desire of a permanent manifestation of their favorite poetry, as Pâquet (307- 308) and Penke (473) logically claim.

Another essential feature of Instagram poetry is community participation and community building according to the scholars Matthews (404), Penke (456), and Pâquet (309-310). Reader participation may take the form of comments or other forms of engagement such as likes, shares, follows, reposts of poems, and hashtags. Popular hashtags such as #poetry or #poetrycommunity help the online community to locate specific poems in Instagram’s big data-realm and they, thus, exemplify Instagram’s community-building logic (Penke 456). These hashtags can connect people with similar interests according to Bronwen (84). Moreover, Matthews (405) declares that a sense of community can translate into activism, which can be essential for marginalized groups such as women of color. In this thesis, community building will be explored when looking at the comment section and in connection with Henry Jenkin’s concept of “participatory cultures,” and in relation to Instagram poetry as a socio-political channel (4).

2.4. Instagram Poetry as Activism: Feminism, Mental Health, Anti-Racism

Several scholars state that it is important to investigate Instagram poetry's potential for activism (e.g. Crepax 2020, Matthews 2019). Kovalik and Curwood (193) accentuate that Instagram poetry's supportive community assists in the formation of poets' identities rooted in the maxim of "writing as resistance." Besides the strong community solidarity, other reasons can explain Instagram poetry's role as a politically outspoken channel. Bronwen argues, for example, that Instagram poetry enables fast reactions to present political and cultural issues through a personal perspective, which he describes as "intimate shared experiences" (89). These reactions result in topical poetry written about socio-political conditions at a time when activist action is still possible.

Bronwen (89) and Pâquet (302) furthermore refer to the fact that a majority of Instagram poets write about mental health issues, specifically about body image. Charly Cox, for example, describes her anxiety and depression in her poetry, while highlighting emotional states and her on-going battle with these illnesses. This relatability may initiate feelings of community and belonging and/or result in discussions about mental health among the predominantly female audience as Bronwen argues (89). In this thesis, I will investigate how mental health poems by Cox and Wade refer to mental health struggles and whether discussions about mental health actually take place in the online comment sections of Instagram poems.

Eileen Mary Holowka explores an online phenomenon that is centered around bodies in her research, and which exemplifies the intersection of feminism and mental health. The "sad girls" of Instagram, a group that publishes sad selfies of themselves on social media, display different body types. The workings of this group confirm that representing difficult mental states can be used in favor of a feminist resistance according to Holowka (184). Young women consciously decide how they represent their own bodies and mental health on social media (185). In the same fashion, Instagram poetry also aims at feminist objectives, which will be argued in this thesis (see Chapter 4). In order to delve deeper into Instapoetry's exploration of the body, it is first helpful to examine the history of its relationship with it.

Pâquet argues that the exploration of the body in Instagram poetry began with Rupi Kaur's menstruation-photo-series, which challenged societal expectations of women's bodies and Instagram's censorship by exhibiting pictures of period stains on clothes (298). In addition,

Kaur also wrote other body-related poetry, namely poems about body image issues according to Pâquet (298). The scholar adds that several Instagram poets presumably followed into her footsteps in this case, which resulted in other feminist Instagram poetry about bodies among others.

The interdisciplinary scholar Rosa Crepax writes about such digital feminist efforts on Instagram, which she terms “Instagram feminism” (76). She explains that this movement as such is concerned with the intersectional representation and description of different body types, thus, with “inclusive representation” (76). In addition, Crepax claims that depictions of the female gaze such as descriptions of female sexuality are a part of a multitude of visual artworks that women create online. She also emphasizes that Instagram poetry belongs to the efforts of digital feminism, which is a claim that this thesis follows and examines in regards to feminist poetry. To clarify, sexual abuse, domestic violence, healing, self-love, and the aforementioned theme of gendered bodies plus mental health issues prevail as feminist and mental health themes in Instagram poetry (Crepax 75; Pâquet 309).

Considering online spaces for women, Matthews declares that specific online spaces for women of color are necessary outlets to organize social change (395-406). She argues that historically “white feminism” ignored the struggles of Black women and continues by saying that “white centering” continues until today (396). She mentions, for example, that Tarana Burke’s role as the founder of the #Metoo movement was neglected with the popularization of #metoo. Matthews argues that Black feminism especially focuses on providing Black women “the space [...] needed to voice and respond to their struggles” (395-396). Black feminism on social media includes “sex and body positivity” (406) and is concerned with anti-racism to a great extent as it draws attention to “neocolonialism, police brutality, [...] and racism” (401). Instagram poetry with its large community of women of color, including Nayyirah Waheed or Aja Monet, also focuses on racism when it addresses current political situations in connection with the anti-racist movement Black Lives Matter (401-406). Thus, it can be argued in concordance with Matthews (401-406) that Instagram poetry considers the concerns of Black feminism. Certain poets’ Instagram pages are seen as activist spaces and as contributors to important societal and political transformations (392).

Matthews (394-397) also explains that the connection between Black feminism and activism is

rooted in historical and collective literacy efforts. An extensive history with notable figures such as Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Black women's book clubs in the civil rights movement leading up to Oprah Winfrey on TV proves that there is a lineage of "black literacy and feminist activism" (394). It is therefore remarkable and logical to note that the founders of Black Lives Matter, Alicia Garza and Patrice Cullors-Khan, were both inspired to engage in activism after reading books on social justice by Mildred Taylor and Audre Lorde (405-406). Matthews (397) accordingly argues that online spaces such as Instagram poetry are a first step into activist action, especially when "self-affirmation, community-building, and political organizing" (397) lie at the core of political online communities and art expressions. Consequently, various Instagram poetry accounts in this thesis can be said to continue this feminist, anti-racist activism and other types of activism such as mental health-oriented efforts.

As regards the filling of the research gap in this thesis, there is scarce research on Charly Cox, Yrsa Daley-Ward, and Cleo Wade, even though their poetry reflects body image issues, current societal movements, mental health struggles and other important aspects. These authors' poems suggest a preoccupation with mental health awareness, feminism, and anti-racist activism, which I will investigate in detail. While Daley-Ward and Cox have at least garnered a mention in academia with respect to Black feminism and mental health struggles (Bronwen 89; Matthews 391), there is an absolute lack of research on Cleo Wade. I will now attempt to fill this gap in this thesis by looking closely at the named writers' Instagram poems in connection with their poem's aesthetic and their community engagement in order to examine how these poems function as literature within a socio-political frame.

3.Theoretical Background and Methodology

This chapter's aim is to outline, on the one hand, the theoretical foundation, and, on the other hand, the methodology of this thesis in which my analysis of Instagram poetry will be grounded. It firstly explains this thesis' theoretical framework, which draws on fourth-wave feminism, critical race theory in connection with the Black Lives Matter movement, and Michel Foucault's (1972-77) power/knowledge theory combined with studies in feminist psychiatry. These correspond with the three types of activism that I will analyze (feminism, anti-racism, mental health awareness). In addition, Henry Jenkins' concept of "participatory culture" (4) is an integral element of this thesis' analysis of Instagram poetry when it comes to addressing the role of the online community. Secondly, Gunther Kress's (2010) and Theo van Leeuwen's

(1996) multimodal discourse analysis plus Robert Kozinets' method of netnography (2010; 2015) are established as the methodological base of this thesis.

3.1. Theories

3.1.1. Micropolitics and Activism

At first, before exploring the specific theories underlying this thesis, I will explain the concepts of micropolitics and activism. While micropolitics refers to individual decisions with political meaning in everyday life, activism describes purposeful, collective efforts to change socio-political conditions. I argue that both elements can be present in Instagram poetry.

“Micropolitics” is a concept that was proposed by cultural theorist John Fiske (10) in *Reading the Popular* in 1989. Gender studies scholars have also used this concept in more recent studies. The sociologist and gender studies scholar Shelley Budgeon, for example, is concerned with micropolitics in her study of young women's feminist views (7-27). She defines micropolitics in her article “Emergent Feminist (?) Identities: Young Women and the Practice of Micropolitics” (2001) as “the level of the individual self where the meaning of that self is relational” (18). She explains that the relation to “the self” and to other human beings is essentially dependent on certain “discourses” such as “race, sexuality, and gender.” According to Budgeon these discourses are politically relevant insofar as they decide upon the power structures of social relations. For instance, individuals create meaning by relating to their own and others' position in a certain gender discourse.

As regards resistance at the micropolitical level, Budgeon explains that young women can express resistance to aspects of gender discourses at the level of micropolitics through thorough examinations of discourse norms and through subversive choices in everyday life. For instance, the expression of feminist attitudes in conversations with others is such an act of resistance (7; 18-19). I argue that some Instagram poetry falls under this category of “micropolitics” (Budgeon 18-19) when poems and their captions re-evaluate ideas about gender, race, and mental health. When poems raise awareness or deconstruct taboos but do not specifically ask the community to sign petitions, attend protests, or donate to organizations, which would be characteristic of activism, they exemplify “micropolitics” (18-19).

As regards activism, feminist studies scholars Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (295) explain in *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000) that “activism” is rooted in calls to actions and that it is marked by tangible strategies and actions, (“clear intention, a realistic plan, and an identifiable constituency”). They consider activism to be inherently different from politically motivated but unsystematic undertakings. Activist efforts might include the organization of demonstrations, a call for donations to a charity or a planned happening in front of a governmental institution, for instance (Jonathan Dean and Kristin Aune 389). I argue that Instagram poetry is activist if Instagram poets include references to socio-political campaigns in their poem(s) or in the captions underneath, and if they animate their followers to participate in activism. These two concepts will help shed light on the cultural and political work of Instapoetry and will be used throughout my analyses.

3.1.2. Fourth-Wave Feminism

The first theoretical background explained here is fourth-wave feminism. According to Diana C. Parry, Corey W. Johnson, and Faith-Anne Wagler (3), Jenn Brandt and Sam Kizer (118), Prudence Chamberlain (461- 463), Jonathan Dean and Kristin Aune (381; 391) there is a general agreement that the term “fourth-wave feminism” describes a movement of feminism into the digital sphere and social media. The detailed definition of fourth wave feminism and controversies around it, the movement’s characteristics and central tenets, current examples, and its relevance are illuminated in the following subchapters.

3.1.2.1. The Four Waves: An Outline

Following the common wave metaphor, fourth-wave feminism is a feminist movement that is seen as subsequent to the first, second, and third waves of feminism. I will now shortly outline the typical concerns and types of activism of each wave of feminism.

The first wave mainly revolved around women’s suffrage and other legal concerns of women in the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century such as education or property and employment rights (Baumgardner 2011; Brandt and Kizer 2015; Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 2019). The organization of women’s rights conventions such as the Seneca Falls Convention (1848) in the US, demonstrations, hunger strikes, the disruption of public meetings, and militant tactics were aimed at achieving gender equality in law (Brandt and Kizer 115). Emmeline Pankhurst, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul, and Francis Harper were leading activists.

The second wave, with influential figures such as Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, and Carol Hanisch emerged from the civil rights movement in the 1960s and continued until the late 1980s (Baumgardner 2011; Hanisch 1970; Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 2019). Hanisch's (1970) statement "The Personal is Political" dominated the second wave and laid grounds for the establishment of women's studies in academia (Betsy Crouch 2012). The women's liberation movement focused on a multitude of concerns related to gender inequality such as reproductive rights, sexual freedom, domestic violence, motherhood, and labour rights (Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 3). Second wave feminists realized their goals through collective activist action in consciousness raising groups, in which women shared their personal experiences of oppression in order to understand patriarchy (Brandt and Kizer 2015; Larson 2014). One of the main points of criticism levelled at the second wave was its neglect of women that were not "White, middle-class, heterosexual" (hooks 2000; Parry Johnson, and Wagler 2019).

The third wave is often described as an individualistic, feminist movement that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s (Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 4). It focused on the representation of powerful women in pop culture, on sex positivity, the disruption of gender stereotypes, and reproductive rights (Baumgardner 2011; Brandt and Kizer 177-188). The intersection of gender and race ("intersectionality"), as proposed by Black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), was another concern. Subcultural movements such as the feminist punk group Riot Grrrls expressed feminist ideals in music. Prominent third wave feminists were Rebecca Walker, Barbara Smith, and Anita Hill (Baumgardner 2011; Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 4-5). Typical types of political engagement during the third wave were the appropriation of slurs (e.g. "bitch"), consciousness-raising through popular culture, and the creation of feminist zines (Baumgardner 2011; Harris 2012; Sowards and Renegar 2004).

According to some researchers (Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 2019; MacLaran 2015) the present fourth wave, which emerged in 2008 (Baumgardner 2011), unites the collective activist action of the second wave and the individual, micropolitical expressions of the third wave. Typical concerns of the fourth wave of feminism include sexual misconduct and assault, reproductive rights, equal pay, domestic violence, and sexism in online spaces (Shiva and Kharazmi 2019). These issues are addressed in online campaigns with the help of hashtags or in informative videos on activists' social media profiles that motivate others to attend offline protests (Dean

and Aune 2015; Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 2019). Leading activists are Tarana Burke, Sonya Barnett, and Heather Jarvis (Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 9; Shiva and Kharazmi 137).

3.1.2.2. The Wave Metaphor

The rhetorical figure of the wave here is described by Diana C. Parry, Corey W. Johnson, and Faith-Anne Wagler in the following terms: “After arriving ashore, this wave then rolls out, collects more water, and rolls back in – symbolizing the way in which new ideas and suggestions are incorporated with previous contributions”(2).As this quote illustrates, the image of the wave symbolizes and unites feminist achievements, anchors important episodes in time but represents them as part of a movement marked by a continuum of knowledge. Thus, the wave metaphor provides a common framework for various feminisms and conceptually draws important feminist achievements together.

However, the authors Parry, Johnson, and Wagler also mention that there is a rightful dispute within academia concerning the terminology of waves to describe feminist accomplishments (3). Critics of the wave metaphor argue that it abridges multifaceted narratives by uniting various feminisms. In addition, feminist concerns that do not conform to the storyline of a specific wave are then neglected (3).³ In addition, the chronological nature of this metaphor suggests that previous feminist achievements are of a lesser value than current ones, while the differences and boundaries between the phases are in fact anything but definitive, which results in classification issues (3). Nevertheless, Parry, Johnson, and Wagler agree to use this definition since it is a fact that the wave metaphor is widely used by activists “on the frontline” and by the public (3). Moreover, gender studies scholar Prudence Chamberlain emphasizes in her article “Affective Temporality: Towards a Fourth Wave” (458) that scholarly research in the field of feminism has strong ties to activism. Hence, the use of the wave metaphor in academia establishes a proximity to tangible practices of feminism. This is why this thesis also utilizes the wave metaphor as it focuses on current feminist politics and takes into account feminist practices outside academia. Jennifer Baumgardner (2011) appropriately says, “I believe that the fourth wave exists because it says that it exists” (250), which points to a self-referential terminological practice whose purpose is to carve out a space for the current generation of

³ For example, second wave feminists largely disregarded important differences between women for the sake of a homogenous storyline. This means that specific concerns of Black or queer women, were mostly not considered (Dean and Aune 2015; Dean 2009; Parry, Johnson and Wagler 2019).

feminist activists.

As regards the fourth wave specifically, there is an argument as to whether it really exists as a ‘separate wave’ (Negar Shiva and Zohreh Nosrat Kharazmi 130). For example, Anita Harris holds the view that we are in the midst of a third wave in her article “Online Cultures and Future Girl Citizens,” while Ealasaid Munro (25) is uncertain whether to describe the new developments in feminism as a fourth wave. A counterargument to an extended third wave is that current, feminist endeavors tend to be organized collectively, which undermines the often cited individualism of the third wave. Jennifer Brandt and Sam Kizer describe the current online activism as rooted in the fourth wave of feminism in their essay “From Street to Tweet. Popular Culture and Feminist Activism” (2015).

In this thesis, I follow Brandt and Kizer’s and Parry, Johnson, and Wagler’s (2019), Chamberlain’s (2016; 2017), Negar Shiva and Zohreh Nosrat Kharazmi’s (2019), and Blevins’ (2018) view that the present changes in feminism can be classified as a fourth wave. As these articles and book(s) chapters were only published in the recent years (2016; 2017; 2018; 2019) and as it is generally accepted that internet culture changes rapidly, I would argue that these academic contributions represent a current direction in academia that I aim to follow here due to its timeliness. I would also argue that the wave terminology facilitates discussion about numerous, current feminisms and their similarities by giving them a common framework through the wave metaphor.

3.1.2.3. Central Tenets of the ‘Fourth Wave’

This master’s thesis mainly follows Parry, Johnson and Wagler’s four central tenets of fourth wave feminism (6-8).

Firstly, “blurred boundaries across waves” (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 6) are a main feature of fourth wave feminism in that the fourth wave combines qualities of the second (collectivity) and of the third wave (micropolitics). In addition, it is constantly developing as a movement by the addition of new foci or innovative hashtag trends, which is also reflected in the variety of feminisms with individualistic or community-oriented efforts (2). This constant evolvement can be seen as in step with the online world itself, which is naturally comprised of “ever-changing

geographies of digital culture” (6). The internet per se heavily determines and supports the existence of the fourth wave.

Secondly, “technological mobilization” (6) is another central trait, which specifically refers to social media as a space of socio-political agitation and change. Social media is indispensable for social justice endeavors as an activist instrument (Brandt and Kizer 118) that can be used to challenge sexism and misogyny (“call-out”), and which exposes local, feminist campaigns to international audiences in order to mobilize them to further actions (6). Facebook, Instagram and Twitter enable the organization of large online communities around important issues through the platform’s in-built features such as hashtags. These fast-paced and large-scale campaigns would have perhaps not been possible otherwise (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 6; Brandt and Kizer 120). Dean and Aune (384) and Chamberlain (462) also emphasize that, thanks to the internet, marginalized women are able to participate in activist spaces as leaders, from which they have been historically excluded.

Online activism on social media enables an “interconnectedness through globalization,” which is fourth wave feminism’s third tenet (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 7). On the one hand, this refers to the multiplicity of feminisms that the fourth wave brings together (e.g. Black feminism, pop feminism), through its global reach(2). Black feminism, for example, which will play a role in some of my analyses, pertains to specific issues women of color experience, and reacts to those through activist actions (Matthews 396). Furthermore, fourth wave feminism expands beyond a local level into a global phenomenon that unites activists and politically interested people “across racial, ethnic, and national divides,” as gender studies researcher Ann. E. Kaplan (55) says.

Another key element of fourth wave feminism is “intersectionality,” as famously proposed by Black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), and which describes different categories of oppression that operate simultaneously in one person (e.g. gender and race). The frequent use of the term “intersectionality” means that fourth wave feminism draws attention to the struggles of a multitude of women, women in different economic classes, cis- and trans women, disabled women, religious women and women with(out) mental health issues (Chamberlain 462; Dean and Aune 383; Parry, Johnson and Wagler 7). Parry, Johnson and Wagler refer to this as an “interconnectedness of the global inequalities” (7).

Finally, fourth wave feminism is characterized by “a rapid, multivocal (i.e. humorous, angry, sad, reflexive) response to sexual violence” (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 8). Thus, fourth wave feminists critique and challenge sexual misconduct against women in a fast-paced manner on social media (Chamberlain 461-462; Dean and Aune 386-387). These days, artists, celebrities but also ‘ordinary’ women and men respond to calls for action and share their personal experiences with sexual harassment and victim-blaming online, for example, which generates a community of understanding and support (8). Brandt and Kizer (124-125) and Katie Blevins (91-108) declare that consciousness-raising, a central idea of second wave feminism, is a chief objective of digital feminists, which means that the fourth wave clearly harks back to the second wave’s ideals. The scholars also accentuate that visibility for feminist causes is created by digital platforms. According to Dean and Aune (2015) and Matthews (2019) fast replies to social justice issues do not only result in critical stances and community building but often lead to communities organizing themselves around concrete ends. Further, the topic of equal pay, reproductive rights, motherhood, body image, and misogynist language are also prominent topics in fourth wave feminist efforts (Dean and Aune 390-391; Parry, Johnson and Wagler 2).

Examples which illustrate these features include the Hollaback campaign, which is an online map allowing users to write about their experiences with sexism in public spaces and locating them (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 6). A heightened sense of sensibility towards the pervasiveness of sexism in the public space is the objective. Other instances of fourth wave feminism are the famous #MeToo-movement and the Women’s marches in 2017 (Shiva and Kharazmi 137). The “Slut Walk,” an initiative originating in Canada to combat victim-blaming, is such feminist resistance to common practices women experience when confronted with sexism within the fourth wave of feminism (Chamberlain 461-462; Parry, Johnson and Wagler 8). Currently, the (inter)national organization of demonstrations by Polish women on social media to oppose government regulations that curtail abortion rights in Poland, the so-called “Strajk kobiet” (Women’s protest), can be counted here as well. Moreover, these central tenets will serve as a basis for my analysis of feminist Instagram poetry since these are useful and relevant concepts to enlighten Instapoetry’s activist potential.

3.1. 3. Critical Race Theory

The second, relevant theory in this master’s thesis is critical race theory as developed by Derrick Bell among others (Delgado and Stefancic 6). Here, it serves the function of providing a lens

to look at anti-racism advocacy in and through Instagram poetry, mainly in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. I will lay out critical race theory's proponents, concepts, and relevance to this thesis in this section.

To start with, an entry in *A Dictionary of Geography* (Susan Mayhew 114) defines critical race theory as a "theoretical approach used to deconstruct racial ideologies, and analyse the politics of 'race'." Critical race theory is a movement founded by legal scholars and activists which, broadly speaking, investigates the role between race(ism) and power (Delgado and Stefancic 3). Since it is mainly a US-centered theory, the following assumptions apply to racism and power in the USA, more precisely to racial discrimination targeted at people of color. However, its central tenets and its propositions can certainly be translated to a UK-context as well, which this thesis will do when analyzing anti-racism resistance strategies in UK-based Instagram poetry.

According to Delgado and Stefancic, critical race theory (CRT) can be divided into two schools of thought (21-32). The first school of critical race theory is focused on discourse, mental categories and is called "idealistic" (21). This means that the idealistic strand of CRT attempts to understand the construction of racist attitudes in society to be able to ultimately combat racism. For example, this school of thought is preoccupied with attributes that attach to Black women in a given culture, and how these negative perceptions may be changed (Slatton and Feagin 296). Critical race studies scholar Brittany Chevon Slatton (2014) also identified in her research that some White men view Black women as "unwanted" due to a "deep racist frame" (Slatton and Feagin 296). Other central issues here are intersectionality, identity and "microaggression," so small forms of racism in everyday encounters (Delgado and Stefancic 41;140). Following this CRT strand's view, race "is a social construction, not a biological reality" (21).

The second school of thought is material or economic determinism, to which Delgado and Stefancic refer as the "realists" (21), which is concerned with how racism is intertwined with economic capital and how it benefits certain constituents in a society. In contrast to the first school of thought, this strand of CRT is less concerned with racist attributes but views racism as "a means by which society allocates privilege and status" (Delgado and Stefancic 21). For example, scholars in the realistic strand of CRT examine how White US-Americans profit from

a racist system that systematically excludes people of color from socio-economic privileges (Delgado and Stefancic 21; Slatton and Feagin 288-292). Slatton and Feagin call this type of racism “institutional” or “systemic” racism (290). Typical concerns are the judicial system and the “wealth divide” along ethnicities (Delgado and Stefancic 140). These issues are analyzed in order to eventually improve the socio-economic situation of people of color. My analyses of Instagram poetry will draw on various concepts from both strands of critical race studies, to the extent of their specific usefulness for the study of specific poems.

In general, it is highly important to highlight that critical race theory is activist at its core, developed with a view to altering the conditions of a racist society so as to attain social justice (Delgado and Stefancic 8; Slatton and Feagin 290-291). Critical race theory originated in the 1970s at a time when the civil rights movement stagnated (Delgado and Stefancic 4). Legal scholars and activists gathered to discuss theories about ‘race’ in order to ultimately change society’s racist conditions in law and other areas (Angela Onwuachi-Willig 2009). These thinkers were inspired by concepts from critical legal studies and radical feminism and eventually developed CRT (5-6). This proximity to the practice of activism is the reason why this theory is used in this master’s thesis to analyze Instagram poetry, much of which deals with real-life events and experiences of racism. Also, CRT is highly concerned with community as the scholars themselves are to a large degree members of the communities they describe (6-7). Prominent figures include legalists Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, also, Patricia Williams, Angela and Cheryl Harris, Mari Matsuda, Devon Carbado, Angela Onwuachi-Willig, and Paul Butler (6). The significance of the representation of issues pertaining to people of color by scholars that are themselves members of the community is highlighted by the “voice of color-thesis” (Delgado and Stefancic 11).

3.1.3.1. Central Tenets of Critical Race Theory

The main tenets of critical race theory, as listed by Delgado and Stefancic and as relevant for this thesis (8-11; 61-66; 31), are the acknowledgement of racism’s pervasiveness throughout society, the social construction thesis, intersectionality and the ‘voice of color’- thesis. These will form the foundation for the analysis of anti-racism in Instagram poetry and will be explained in more detail.

The first tenet of Critical Race Theory describes the normality of racism in society. CRT scholars Delgado and Stefancic argue that it is important to acknowledge the “ordinariness” of racism since “racism is difficult to [...] cure because it is not acknowledged” (8). They further argue that this CRT principle has to be especially considered with regard to problematic arguments of “color-blindness” that conceal the root issue of racism and therefore hinder change (8-9; Slatton and Feagin 291). Color-blindness is the belief that “race is immaterial” (Subini A. Annamma 2017). According to CRT scholars, this ideology perpetuates “white supremacy” and racism (Annamma 2017; Neil Gotanda 1995).

Secondly, the argument that race and racism are constructs created and dismissed by societies “when convenient,” is the basic premise of the social construction thesis (9). Delgado and Stefancic argue that these constructs consist of “pseudo-permanent characteristics” such as the connection of specific physical features to personality types. Even though these characteristics are not rooted in scientific claims, they are ascribed to a certain ethnicity to create ‘race’ (9). In summary, CRT strives to uncover how race and racism are socially constructed.

In addition, intersectionality, a concept developed by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 describes the idea that multiple layers levels of oppression and subordination are united in one person such as race, sexuality, gender, and class (Crenshaw, *Demarginalizing the Intersection* 139-167; Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins* 1244-1291). Black womanhood, a “double minority”, is an example of intersecting identity categories, namely race and gender (Delgado and Stefancic 65). According to Crenshaw (1989; 1991) and Delgado and Stefancic (61-63) these categories and their intersections are crucial to consider as these are layers of identity that represent specific notions of subordination (61-63).

Another central tenet mentioned here and reflected in the identity of CRT scholars is the “unique voice of color”-thesis (11), also discussed as “experiential voices of people of color” (Slatton and Feagin 292). This theory argues that it is relevant to include the experiences of the oppressed as they grasp racism with a “competence” that outsiders do not possess (Delgado and Stefancic 11). In this thesis, poems addressing racism will be analyzed with the help of these tenets. If poems specifically include anti-racist advocacy, they can then be subsumed under resistance strategies.

3.1.3.2. Resistance Strategies

Strategies to resist racism include critical race theory in itself as an analytical tool but also techniques of deconstruction such as “counter storytelling” (Delgado and Stefancic 49-51) and “counter framing” (Slatton and Feagin 297-298). These are strategies to encourage public testimony when it comes to racist experiences in order to reframe harmful societal preconceptions about people of color and subsequently combat racism. To be precise, the named resistance strategies are employed in opposition to “deep frames” (296), which are stories that project negative stereotypes. For instance, the perception of Black women as “sexually licentious, naturally immoral, diseased, animalistic, and masculine” is a “deep frame,” a “white racial frame” (296-298). Counter storytelling would then attempt to re-invent Black womanhood, which Black feminism essentially does. This is particularly significant in legal situations when prejudices about criminal offenses and minority groups possibly influence judicial statements (Delgado and Stefancic 50). CRT scholars (Delgado 503-548) use counter storytelling as a device to counteract racist presumptions by “pointing out that white-collar and corporate/industrial crime - perpetrated mostly by whites – causes more personal injury, death, and property loss than does all street crime combined” (Delgado and Stefancic 50) I argue that Instagram poetry sometimes makes use of counter storytelling when advocating anti-racism.

Moreover, this thesis examines topical fields in which counter storytelling is absolutely necessary, as these are areas where racist problems currently occur (in the US and UK). It is relevant to look at these areas and their racist issues in the context of this thesis because Instagram poets write about these difficulties in their anti-racist Instagram poetry. These difficulties are issues pertaining to the connection of race, class, the socio-economic deprivation of Black people, environmental inequality, hate speech and “policing and criminal justice” (Delgado and Stefancic 113-129). The last field is especially relevant to this thesis and refers to the fact that disproportionately high numbers of people of color are imprisoned, with more young, male adults in prison than in college (120). This is due to racial profiling by the police and a racist criminal justice system (120-122). Another reason for these high numbers of imprisoned young men of color is the definition of crime, which is not objective but racially biased (120-121). Delgado and Stefancic argue that crimes that “young black [...] men are prone to do, such as congregating on street corners [...] or scrawling graffiti in public places, are energetically policed” (120). An additional factor determining disproportionately high numbers of young men of color in prison is that prisons in the US are mostly private companies

aimed at profit at the expense of the underprivileged and disadvantaged population (123). Slatton and Feagin call this type of racism at an institutional level a “systemic racism” (290). Violence against people of color acted out by the police has recently prompted resistance in the form of activist movements such as Black Lives Matter, which aim to cast a spotlight on the extent to which “backstage racism” has turned into “frontstage racism” (Delgado and Stefancic 124; Slatton and Feagin 294). In the following, Black Lives Matter (BLM) will be discussed in some depth.

3.1.3.3. Black Lives Matter

It is important to locate the BLM movement within the framework of critical race theory as CRT attempts to explain the underlying premises which have led to this movement (Delgado and Stefancic 124; Slatton and Feagin 290). The BLM movement aligns with the objectives of CRT as its main objective is to depict racist mechanisms in order to subvert them.

Black Lives Matter is an antiracist movement initiated by Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi and Patrisse Cullors-Khan to oppose racially motivated police violence against people of color (Matthews 406; Adrienne D. Dixon 240). The movement was initiated as a reaction to the murder of Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old teenager, by George Zimmermann. The murderer was set free, while the victim was blamed for his own death afterwards. This induced the BLM founders to launch the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM) in 2012 in response to these and other similar, tragic events and to organize national demonstrations (Dixon 240). These, in turn, grew into a much noted international movement following the brutal death of George Floyd in 2020, which was caused by a police officer.

It is crucial to state that this anti-racist movement is “youth-led” (Dixon 213) and facilitated by social media. Without the prevalence of social media, the hashtag #blacklivesmatter would not have had a medium to inhabit. The emphatic response of Instagram poets to BLM thus mirrors the mechanisms of the movement itself. Further, Black Lives Matter also seeks to take account of intersectionality. Intersectionality in BLM is an important, official goal, represented through the co-founders Garza and Cullors-Khan as these are queer, Black women of color (Dixon 234). In general, BLM can be linked to both schools of critical race theory, to material determinism, thanks to its treatment of systemic racism, and also to discourse-oriented CRT, thanks to its use of terminology such as intersectionality.

To conclude, this thesis will use critical race theory in order to explain Instagram poetry's critical response to racism. Additionally, I will look at resistance strategies as an integral element of anti-racism advocacy in Instagram poetry within the framework of Black Lives Matter. The current 2020 developments allow for a nearly real-time analysis of the relation between BLM and Instagram poetry, which has not been addressed in research so far. The relevance of this approach will become clear in the analyses of the poems of Cleo Wade and Yrsa Daley-Ward, who are both women of color.

3.1.4. Feminist Psychiatry and Foucault's Power/Knowledge- and Resistance Theories

This master's thesis utilizes the specific combination of Michel Foucault's power/knowledge (1972-77; 1980) and resistance theories together with feminist psychiatry in order to analyze Instagram poems which are focused on mental health issues. These are distinctly present in Charly Cox's poems. This specific, theoretical blend was introduced by Alisha Ali in her academic essay, "The Convergence of Foucault and Feminist Psychiatry: Exploring Emancipatory Knowledge-Building" (2002), and which serves as an important building block in the theoretical framework of this master's thesis. Ali proposes that knowledge-building is an epistemological endeavor predicated on power, which means that the author(ite)s of a knowledge corpus have to be critically investigated and disputed (233). She suggests "emancipatory action," a re-evaluation of knowledge-building and power within the field of psychiatry, uniting feminist theories and Foucault's considerations on power and knowledge (*Power-Knowledge* 233). This endeavor is particularly important in the field of psychiatry, according to Ali (233-234), as members of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups often experience mental health issues. Ali (233-234) also argues that the proposed theoretical framework is highly significant because its central principles are applied to realistic, difficult situations of individuals, particularly women.

I will first outline Foucault's power/knowledge-hypothesis and then describe how Aisha Ali refers Foucault's power/knowledge theory to the field of feminist psychiatry studies ⁴ to then

⁴ Other feminist theorists across various scientific disciplines who deal(t) with Foucault's power/knowledge theory include political scientist and women's studies researcher Nancy Hartsock's essay, "Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women?" (1990).

explain feminist psychiatry's ambition. Michel Foucault analyzed constructions of knowledge by powerful "political and economic apparatuses" such as by the "university, army, writing, media" and by dominant institutions (*Power/Knowledge* 132).⁵ He argued that these institutions, psychiatry, for example, stipulate and control not only societal norms and directives, but also their consequences (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 1972-77/132; *Madness and Civilization* 1988). Ali concurs with Foucault's opinion by saying that if definitions of aberrations (of individuals) are also historically and societally constructed by those in power, psychiatry amounts to such a "power-based distribution of knowledge" (Ali 235), which is built on a certain "régime of truth" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 131). Foucault emphasizes that every community possesses such a "régime of truth" and it is dominated by powerful actors. The French philosopher explains that it determines "types of discourse [...] which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms [...] which enable one to distinguish true and false statements," penalties for acting against the truth, the manner in which truth is obtained, and "the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (131). Ali agrees with Foucault and points out that it is crucial to consider those powerful actors and spaces of knowledge and truth-production consciously, as this is exactly where a possibility of resistance lies (237-238).

Foucault also put forth the concept of "subjugated knowledge," which Alisha Ali connects to patient-centric perspectives on mental health and identifies this as another moment of resistance (*Power/Knowledge* 237-239). Foucault's notion of "subjugated knowledge" essentially refers to localized, historically neglected, knowledge productions (*Power/Knowledge* 82). He clarifies that "subjugated knowledges" are "low-ranking knowledges, [...] disqualified knowledges (such as that of the psychiatric patient, of the ill person, [...])" (82). Foucault adds that it is criticism's responsibility to facilitate a "re-appearance" and "insurrection" of "subjugated knowledges" within powerful institutions (e.g. psychiatry). Ali supports this notion of "subjugated knowledges" and the use of this concept in psychiatric practice and expands on it by introducing principles of feminist psychiatry in order to ultimately empower psychiatric patients (233-242).

⁵ I want to add here that Foucault describes psychiatric institutions specifically in his work *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (trans. Richard Howard, 1988), which was originally published in French in 1961.

Feminist psychiatry⁶ can generally be explained as a US-centered effort in the fields of psychiatric study and practice, aiming at an “emancipatory epistemology” (Ali 234), which includes a more comprehensive picture of illnesses and their causes in order to provide better health treatment for women. For example, this strand of psychiatry considers the influence of societal patriarchal principles on women’s health and the personal perspective of the female patient in the treatment process. At the center of feminist psychiatry lies a desire to restore “subjugated knowledge” and to enable a “dialogical construction of knowledge” to combat unevenly dispersed power in psychiatric knowledge-production (Ali 233-242). In addition, female-centered health issues such as eating disorders are especially considered in feminist psychiatry (239-242). On the basis of Foucault’s power/knowledge principles, feminist psychiatry has advocated for three central strategies to achieve a more inclusive construction of knowledge.

3.1.4.1. Central Strategies

The three central strategies of Ali’s theory are “integrating the localized and the collective,” “redefining expertise,” and “subverting power differentials in knowledge-construction” (238-39).

Firstly, “emancipatory knowledge building” includes the notion of a locally defined knowledge as laid out by Foucault, which is combined with the understanding of collective community building as coined by (second wave and fourth wave) feminism (238). This means that psychiatrists link individual patient experiences (the local level) to a group’s reality (the collective level) during the treatment and recovery process. For example, occurrences in the lives of women are related to the lived realities of women overall. According to Ali (238) this is revolutionary as it creates new knowledge focused on marginalized groups, here, women, by adding layers of patient-centered experience and context to the already existing knowledge in psychiatry.

⁶ Phyllis Chesler’s *Women and Madness*, which was originally published in 1972 is one of the foundational texts of feminist psychiatry studies. The professor of psychology and women’s studies described how gender inequality in society and in the field of psychology and psychiatry influenced the health conditions of female patients.

Secondly, feminist psychiatry's objective is to integrate clinicians' and patients' observations as essential elements in psychiatric practice. This is rooted in a restoration of "subjugated knowledge" (Foucault 82) and is a means of resistance as it includes the viewpoint of the previously disregarded and vulnerable patient. The subject-object dichotomy then does not exist anymore as boundaries begin to blur in favor of a communal effort aimed at the patient's recovery (Ali 239). In summary, the objective of feminist psychiatry is to equip patients with "expertise" and to create collaborative treatment options (238-239).

The last central strategy is a subversion of "disempowering forces", of power hierarchies and structures in society, which strive to suppress the perspectives of marginalized people with mental health problems (Ali 239). Ali emphasizes that these "disempowering forces can be subverted to create new forms of knowledge which are based on reflecting [...] silenced voices" (239). The goal is to firstly detect these powerful forces and then to destabilize them to finally reach a "plurivocal nature of knowledge production." Through this inclusion of multiple voices in the production of important knowledge, a destabilization of dominant power mechanisms in psychiatry occurs, which subsequently alters knowledge production in a vital manner.

I will examine these strategies in the analyses of mental health poems. To illustrate the poems' subversive potential and the authors' reclaiming of their health situation, these central tenets as proposed by Alisha Ali will illuminate Instagram poetry's role in challenging mental health stigma. In addition, the community's commentary underneath Instagram poems will be included in the analyses.

3.2. Methodology

The proposed methods for analyzing Instagram poetry include, first of all, a multimodal discourse analysis, which will be used to highlight Instagram poetry's aesthetic and its function(s) (Kress and Leeuwen 1996; Kress 2010; Kress 2011; Machin 2007). Subsequently, I will discuss netnography or digital ethnography to describe the online community's contributions to Instagram poetry (Kozinets 2010; Varis 2015).

3.2.1. Multimodal Discourse Analysis

This thesis applies multimodal discourse analysis as developed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in their book *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996), and in Kress's

Multimodality. A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication (2010). I will also consult David Machin's book *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis* (2007). In a nutshell, multimodal discourse analysis is a method embedded in the theoretical framework of social semiotics and it is concerned with the meaning of multimodality and modes. This method is relevant for this master's thesis rationale as it helps to answer how Instagram poetry's aesthetic is a central element of its political message. The following paragraphs will explain this approach in some detail.

3.2.1.1. Multimodality and Modes

Multimodality is a feature of a text that is studied via multimodal discourse analysis. Kress argues that "multimodality" is multimodal discourse analysis' "domain of enquiry" (*Multimodal Discourse Analysis* 38). He explains that "'language' is just one among the many resources for meaning making" (38). Interdisciplinary researcher Carey Jewitt agrees with Kress and emphasizes that multimodal texts or "multimodal ensembles" use a variety of "modes" to convey a specific meaning (76). Multimodal discourse analysis then interprets these meaning-making modes in light of their meaning.

Elements of all senses and feelings, namely, vision, sound, space, and embodiment can be analyzed with the help of multimodal discourse analysis (Kress, *Multimodality* 2010). It is crucial to highlight that multimodal discourse analysis extends the focus beyond words when a text is examined so as to illuminate the relationship between various elements, modes, but also between reader and text. Multimodal discourse analysis or MMDA also considers how the social and historical context of a certain mode influences the meaning of a text (Jewitt 70). "Modes" certainly lie at the heart of multimodal texts and are basic units of a multimodal discourse analysis. I will now explain them in some detail (Kress, *Multimodality* 80).

To begin with, I will provide a definition of "mode" and then I will explore relevant examples. Gunther Kress defines mode as "a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning" (80). Semiotic resources, in turn, are "actions, materials and artefacts" that are used for meaning making (van Leeuwen 285; Jewitt 72). Modes can thus be understood as culturally and socially organized resources. A mode can be a text, layout, sound, image, gestures, font or color. Different cultures and societies have varying modes as they have

different communication schemes (Kress, *Multimodality* 18; Jewitt 71). This is why, contextual information should always be considered when deciphering modes.

Moreover, modes have certain requirements to fulfill to count as a mode –so-called meta-functions⁷ (Michael Halliday 1978; Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). A mode has to include an ideational meaning, so a mode has to be able to denote certain ideas expanding its limits, such as a color pointing to a nation, for example. Secondly, it has to be able to relate to readers of a certain text and create relationships with them. For example, the use of the color red on a warning sign or a horror movie poster signals danger to drivers and viewers (interpersonal meaning) (David Machin 17-18; 65-67). Jewitt explains that the interpersonal meaning is created through “resources used to orient viewers or interactants to a text or to one another;” (Jewitt 73). Thirdly, a mode has to fulfill a textual function or “organizational meaning,” so a mode has to achieve coherence in a text. For instance, a website layout with certain heading colors has to organize content in a logical, coherent and structured manner.

Relevant modes analyzed in this thesis include layout, color, composition, typography, and hypertext. To begin with, color is deemed a relevant mode in the analysis of Instagram poems in this thesis. This mode’s meaning-making elements are brightness, saturation, purity, modulation, differentiation, luminosity, hue and color harmony (Machin 70-79). In addition, typography is another important mode here, a “meaning potential” (Penke 469-471). Weight, expansion, slope, curvature, connectivity, orientation, regularity, flourishes, and line spacing and alignment are its analysis touchpoints, which were examined in this thesis (83-108). Furthermore, layout plays a vital role in Instagram poems and relevant aspects of a layout analysis were considered in this thesis’ multimodal discourse analysis, including salience, types of compositions, and framing (129-162). I also analyzed hyperlinks, including, hashtags, as modes with their function to contextualize a poem or to “indicate participation in a community” (Nancy Katherine Hayles 72; Linnea Laestadius 72). I considered the mentioned factors in the analysis of Instagram poetry and now I will explain the concept of “modal affordance” before I will outline the process of a multimodal discourse analysis.

“Modal affordance” refers to the possibilities and limitations of a certain mode (Jewitt 72). For

⁷ Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) adapted Michael Halliday’s (1978) three meta-functions of language (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) to modes (Jewitt 73; Machin 17-18; 65-67).

example, Jewitt mentions that, according to “social conventions”, the mode of speech or speech sounds is confined to the “logic of time.” She explains that words are spoken sequentially/one after the other. In this sense, social media pages can be conceived as multimodal ensembles with their own specific affordances. As a visual medium, Instagram confines its posts to a certain frame: it is intended for photographs of a certain size. Thus, Instagram favors short and visual poetry because this type of poetry fits into the frame and set-up of Instagram posts (Penke 461). This affordance of Instagram partly explains the relative brevity of and the common use of visual elements in Instagram poetry. To sum it up, certain modal affordances influence how Instagram poems can be designed.

To return to the mechanisms of multimodal analysis, the questions that were used as guidelines during the analysis, are: How are modes such as color, layout, typography used to construct meaning within Instagram poetry? How do these modes interact to realize the meaning of Cox’s, Daley-Ward’s and Wade’s texts? Which modes does it offer to function as a site of resistance – specifically to support fourth wave feminism, anti-racism, and mental health awareness? The results of their examination will be presented in the analytical chapters and now I will shortly outline the process of the multimodal analysis.

In general, a multimodal analysis’ first step is the gathering of multimodal data, which I realized with the help of screenshots (77). Subsequently, I studied the data intensively to identify relevant modes in view of my research objectives. I then analyzed individual modes in terms of their functions, technological affordances, societal context, features, and role in Instagram poetry’s meaning-making process (80). Finally, I considered how different modes interacted to realize meaning within the theoretical framework of fourth wave feminism, critical race theory, and the combination of Foucault’s power/knowledge theory with feminist psychiatry studies.

3.2.2. Digital Ethnography / Netnography

Digital ethnography, as defined by Piia Varis in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Digital Communication* (2015), is an academic method for investigating communication in the World Wide Web. Robert Kozinets describes the same method as “netnography,” which he defines as “a specific approach to conducting ethnography on the internet” (*Netnography Redefined* 2015). As netnography exhibits a focus on online communities, this master’s thesis will henceforth use the term netnography to refer to this method.

Netnography, a qualitative research method, can be split into several elements according to Kozinets (2010; 2015). I followed Kozinets' guideline in regards to my "netnographic research project" (*Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research* 61). I will now explain which steps I took during and after data collection.

To begin with, Kozinets states that, firstly the researcher has to verbalize research questions and has to find an online community. The first research question of this thesis considered how Instagram poetry's media aesthetic relates to its role as a channel for socio-politics and to activism in the areas of feminism, anti-racism, and mental health awareness. The second research question, which was particularly relevant in the netnographic analysis, investigated how the online community supported the socio-political and/or activist ideals of Instagram poets in the comment section of Instagram poems. I also consulted criteria of a "participatory culture" to evaluate such community engagement (Jenkins 4).

Secondly, Robert Kozinets formulates certain criteria for an online community that it ought to meet so it can be studied via netnographic methods (Kozinets, *Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research* 89). I propose that Instagram poetry's online community fulfills these standards. In other words, this specific online community is characterized by dynamic and consistent user interaction and is carried by a substantial number of different people (89). Also, the available data in the Instagram poetry comment section provided a sufficiently large basis for research (89).

Subsequently, I collected data directly through the use of a laptop, while I observed interacting and commenting users. I used screenshots as the primary documentation tool in this thesis as proposed by Kozinets (*Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research* 95-117). Kozinets also argues that participant observation should go hand in hand with researcher immersion, another central tenet of netnography. For this purpose, I have created a separate Instagram account, @magdalena.e.korecka that enabled transparency of research purpose in the researcher-observed communication. With the help of this Instagram account, I explained my research rationale and the reasons for using Instagram comments in my analysis to users, and I only asked them for permission to use their comments in my thesis afterwards. Indeed, some Instagram users asked further questions before giving consent. Thus, @magdalena.e.korecka served as a tool of communication with the observed individuals and enabled to obtain their

informed consent (see “Ethical Considerations”).

To return to Kozinets’ explanation of netnography, I analyzed and interpreted the collected data according to the research questions (*Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research Online* 89). I focused on specific aspects of user responses in the comment sections of selected Instagram poems by Charly Cox, Cleo Wade, and Yrsa Daley-Ward. These aspects included whether a comment was supportive or critical of the socio-political messages that specific Instagram poems convey. Another aspect I shed light on, were comments that contained users’ personal experiences which related to the poem at hand. In addition, I paid attention to the type of accounts that commented on selected Instagram poems, including public and private accounts. More specifically, I described whether a celebrity, an artist’s, a poetry or an activist’s profile commented on a poem. I also included personal demographic information of commenting users such as age, gender, and ethnicity in my analysis. Interactions between users were also observed. These aspects helped to explain the workings of Instagram poetry in the comment sections of specific poems.

The advantage of netnography lies in the fact that data is often directly available and can easily be collected through screenshots, for instance (Varis 61-64). On the other hand, ascertaining the authenticity of demographic information and ethical considerations posed certain challenges. That is why it is important to outline here how I proceeded with regards to ethics in this thesis.

3.2.2.1. Ethical Considerations

The main unit of analysis in this thesis, namely the Instagram poem plus caption and commentary underneath, was analyzed in an ethical manner. My analysis of Instagram poetry followed the University of Vienna’s data protection guidelines, namely DSGVO regulations, and also the ethical guidelines of the Association of Online Researchers (2020). The consideration of ethics in the poem analyses involved several steps.

Firstly, I clarified legal premises about data use through communication with the DSGVO-consultant of the University of Vienna. As the data at hand was only used for research purposes and was not forwarded to third parties, I was allowed to process it. However, certain users had private accounts or belonged to vulnerable groups. In such a case, the guidelines of the

Association of Internet Researchers (2020) were consulted as well. In addition, Kelsey Beninger's essay, "Social Media Users' Views on the Ethics of Social Media Research" (2017) and Robert Kozinets' considerations in "Conducting Ethical Netnography" (*Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research* 2010 136-156) provided helpful advice in this respect. I have obtained informed consent from users with private accounts if their user names, demographic information, and comments were quoted (Beninger 71-72). When participants did not agree to the use of their user name, demographic information or a direct quote of their comment, I offered participants the possibility to use their data anonymously (Beninger 2017; Kozinets 2010). In such a case, I described their comment and Instagram profile in general terms without mentioning specific names and data. Additionally, I did not use direct quotations in the case of desired anonymity. Furthermore, apparently vulnerable users such as underage participants have been excluded from this analysis as they, in general, cannot give sufficient informed consent and consequences of non-anonymised data might entail that direct quotations lead to specific user profiles (Beninger 71-72).

This chapter explained the underlying theories and methodologies of this master's thesis. The subsequent analyses of fourteen poems and one prose text by Yrsa Daley-Ward, Cleo Wade, and Charly Cox, from the period 2015-2020, draw on these concepts and methods. The analyses are organized into three chapters, each of which centers on a particular socio-political movement: fourth wave feminism, anti-racism, and mental health awareness. The three authors' works will be discussed across these thematic chapters.

4. Advocating Fourth Wave Feminist Activism in Instagram Poetry

This chapter analyzes the themes of reproductive rights and body image within fourth wave feminist activism in Instagram poetry. Central concepts as laid out in the previous chapter serve as a solid base for the analysis. In the first place, I will examine the topical issue of reproductive rights. I want to point out that each author's Instagram page and persona will be shortly described in this first analysis chapter.

4.1. Reproductive Rights

The first poem I will discuss is an untitled Instagram poem by Cleo Wade which was published on the 16th of May 2019. Before I will explain its context, I will shortly introduce the author. Cleo Wade is a 31-year-old African American Instagram poet and activist, who writes about

reproductive rights, intersectional feminism, self-love and anti-racism. She is also known for her offline activism such as the ‘Are you okay?’-booth project, where she created a community space to discuss personal problems (Wade 2018).

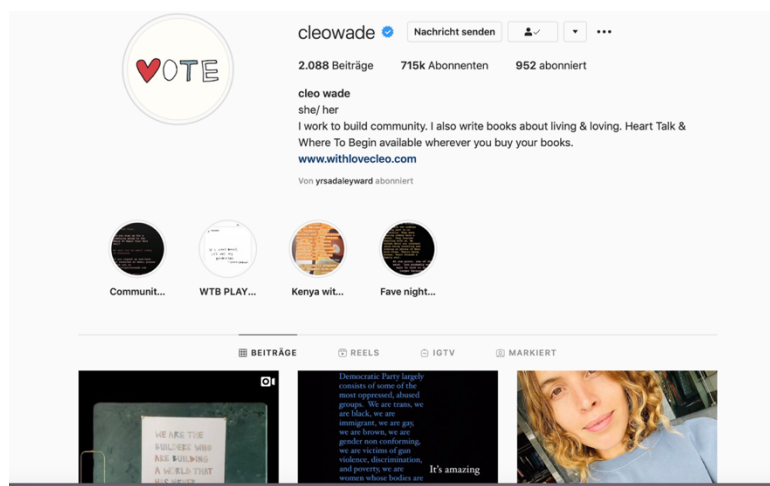


Figure 1. Cleo Wade's Instagram Profile.

Wade's Instagram profile (@cleowade) is followed by 715,000 people, and the self-presentation in her biography, the text that shortly explains one's account, reads: "she/her I work to build community" (see Figure 1). The inclusion of her preferred gender pronouns ("she/her") is a sign of her

progressive understanding of gender and the normative power of language in the construction of gender identities. This self-description also indicates her self-understanding as an activist who has a large following that she can influence. Her profile icon exemplifies such activism, as it includes the words "VOTE," thus, encourages followers to use their voting rights. Artistically, her profile's 'feed aesthetic' is marked by an alternating pattern of selfies, texts, pictures and videos. The occasional post about her products such as framed poems on canvasses, which are printed versions of her Instagram poems that she sells via Instagram, alludes to the economic entanglement of Instapoetry (Penke 461; 469).

Returning to the primary object of analysis, I will firstly explain the poem's social context (see Figure 2 and 3) to illuminate the poem's central message as this is a rightful part of the multimodal analysis as a method (Kress 2010). The poem refers to existing anti-abortion laws and to the planned curtailing of abortion rights in the US. In the caption, Wade specifically mentions the "nearly 300 abortion restrictions filed in state legislatures across America" in 2019 (see Figure 3; Wade 2019).⁸This fast online response to ongoing restrictions on women's rights is typical of fourth wave feminism according to Parry, Johnson, and Wagler (2019).

⁸ To be precise, at the time of the poem's publication (May 2019), the 'fetal heartbeat' abortion law was passed by Governor of Georgia, Brian Kemp (Patrizia Mazzei and Alan Blinder 2019). The law forbids abortion "when a fetal heartbeat is usually detected" (2019). Wade presumably refers to this law as she explains the "latest assaults on abortion rights" in Georgia (see Figure 3).



Figure 2. Untitled Poem by Cleo Wade, 16 May 2019.

Wade writes a clearly politically outspoken poem about female, bodily autonomy, which opposes the planned curtailing of reproductive rights, and she mentions her own acts of resistance in the caption (see Figure 3). She explains that she signs petitions by Planned Parenthood and actively supports organizations such as Prochoice America, The Yellowhammer Fund in Alabama, and ACLU Nationwide. The call to action that frames this poem can be said to belong to an “activism” as proposed by Baumgardner and Richards (295), as the listing of her motives for support and tangible actions includes strategic communication and planned activism.

The caption is part of Wade’s politically charged literary communication and helps the reader to understand the poem. Thus, the caption is a so-called “paratext” (Gérard Genette 2001; *Seuils* 1987). Literary scholar Gérard Genette’s notion of “paratext” describes liminal texts that frame the ‘original’ literary text. Genette describes the purpose of paratexts by arguing that they are “at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it” (2). Paratexts typically include the foreword and afterword of a book. In Wade’s poem, the paratext, thus, the caption, guides the reading of the poem. Although abortion is not directly mentioned in the poem itself, its immediate context, i.e., the paratext, makes the reference clear. In the following, I will explore the meaning of this poem with reference to fourth wave feminism’s four tenets, also looking at the role of the modes typography and hyperlinks.

To begin with, the hyperlinks (here: ‘mentions’) in the caption underneath Wade’s poem lead to the abovementioned pro-choice organizations. Thus, a reference to community efforts

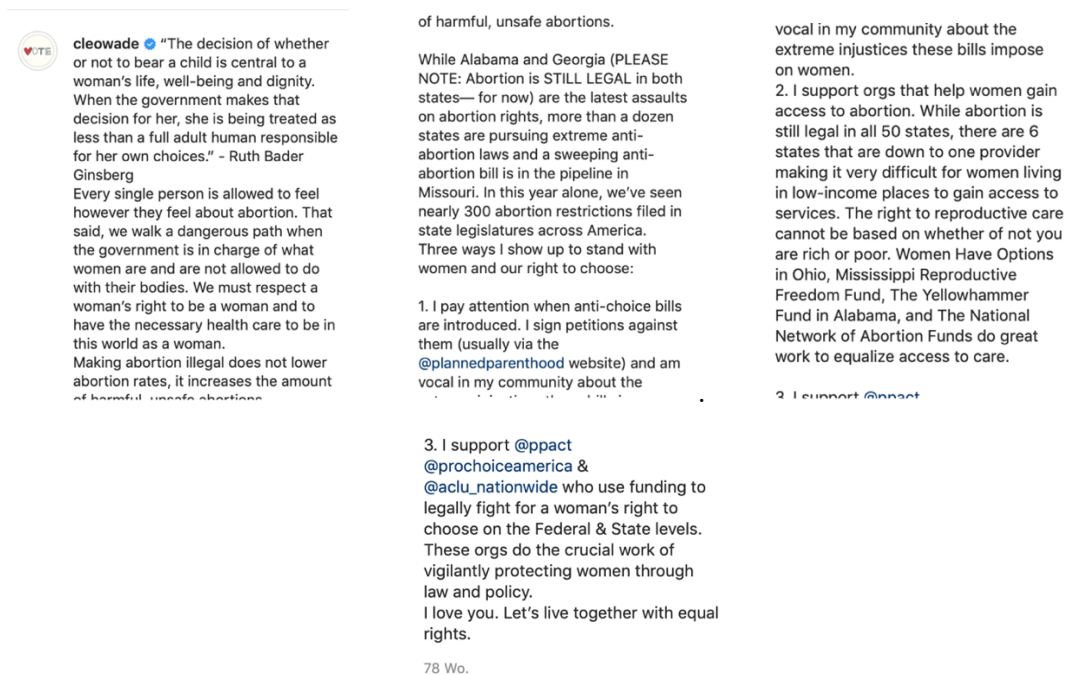


Figure 3. Caption Underneath Untitled Poem by Cleo Wade, 16 May 2019.

emphasizes collectivity, while the chosen typography as a mode points to a personalized poem. As such, Wade's poem reflects the tendency of fourth wave feminism to integrate the second wave's collectivist efforts with the third wave's emphasis on personal experience (Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 6).

The underlined "SHE" obviously highlights the importance of individual women's agency. Interestingly, the use of a font that is reminiscent of a handwritten manuscript, evoking a "nostalgia and vintage aesthetics" (Penke 299), also renders the right to abortion each woman's personal choice. In other words, this font evokes handwriting, and, as such, a strong subjectivity. B-alliterations further emphasize women's right to autonomy by highlighting the Bs in "BE" and "BOSS". Typography functions here as a claim to agency and – by extension – to the women's right to decide about reproductive health in general. Line spacing and alignment, which are significant aspects of the mode typography (Machin 105), are uneven on both sides (though fairly symmetrical) and create the effect of a spontaneously written poem. This seeming spontaneity evokes a "work in progress" (Bronwen 90) and makes the writing relatable to the reader. Also, the flourishes (Machin 102) in "BOSS" with the B and O colored in, stand out and highlight the word, putting it on a par with "SHE", which is also emphasized visually. This, in turn, contributes to Wade's emphasis of and insistence on a woman's reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. Moreover, the capital letters used throughout the poem amplify this effect even further.

Furthermore, Wade clearly makes use of “technological mobilization” in her text and paratext (Parry, Wagler, and Johnson 6-8). The ‘mentions’ (hyperlinks) in the captions act as signposts for activism. Wade’s text thus effectively demonstrates how the unity of a social media poem and its paratext can simultaneously provide an aesthetic experience and a call to activism, and how Instagram poetry can thus become a prime manifestation of technology-enhanced feminist activism of the fourth wave.

To conclude, Wade’s deployment of the modes hyperlinks and typography turn her poem into a site of resistance and a pledge for fourth wave feminist values. Together, these modes enact a form of present-day consciousness-raising,” (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 2) a fourth wave feminist tool that was also used in the poem’s comment section, which I will now analyze.

I conducted my netnographic analysis of community reactions via an Instagram account specially created for that purpose (@magdalena.e.korecka). 235 comments (20 November 2020) were left underneath Wade’s poem. Commenting users were between 18 and 55 years old⁹ and of different ethnicities (White, Black, Hispanic). It is salient to mention that the majority of comments stems from women, which is not surprising considering the topic of women’s rights and the fact that women account for a high proportion of Instagram poetry followers (Pâquet 305).

Reactions to the poem at hand mostly include support for the pro-choice argumentation of Wade’s text. They incorporate affirming emojis, short expressions of gratitude, and a few, longer messages expressing feminist values. An example of this type of comment is @chelsepeppe’s¹⁰ response to the poem. The user, a self-professed brand specialist at Planned Parenthood, wrote “<3 you,” to which Cleo Wade answered, “thank you for your email!” The fact that a user who works for the biggest US-American non-profit organization in the field of

⁹ I assume this age range because of users’ profile pictures and other specific profile information concerning age. There is the possibility that users state a different age than their ‘true’ age, i.e., the age that is given on their birth certificates, or that they use pictures that indicates a different age than their ‘true’ age. For this thesis, I assume, however, that users’ age corresponds with the age given on their profiles.

¹⁰ This user, like all other users quoted here individually, has given her consent to being quoted in my thesis.

reproductive health resources, commented on this poem reveals the reach of Cleo Wade's Instagram poetry. The community responses indicate that a "participatory culture" (Jenkins 4) exists in the online community of Instagram poetry as mutual support of "civic engagement" was expressed through user interactions. In other words, some users tagged others, presumably friends or acquaintances, demonstrating the interconnectedness within the feminist community (Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 6-8).

Another example shows how female users organize themselves in the comment section to initiate change within the field of women's rights. @shebrandliz, a user named Liz Dennery, commented on the poem with the following words: "We also need to encourage more women to run for office. Of the 25 Republicans who signed the bill in Alabama, ALL of them were white men. Zero diversity, zero women. It's appalling." This politically outspoken comment is a clear example of "technological mobilization," (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 8). It is a reflection of the poem's content and it includes advocacy gender equality in politics. This indicates how Instagram poetry can be a source of socio-political motivation for some users.

To conclude, Cleo Wade's poem and its caption advocate for the freedom of reproductive rights in the midst of a planned curtailing. Hyperlinks and a simple font amplify Wade's notion of strong women and her call to act against the planned reversals. The presented socio-political endeavors are supported by the online community through appreciative comments. In addition, the comment section suggests that users organize themselves with the help of the 'tag feature' in order to disseminate a feminist message. Thus, the interaction suggests that Wade's poem and its caption are of actual socio-political importance to the online community.

Besides reproductive rights, other important topical issues of fourth wave feminism are body image and gender norms, which are covered in the poetry of Charly Cox and Yrsa Daley-Ward and will be explored in the following subchapter.

4.2. Body Image and Gender Norms

To begin with, I will continue with an analysis of an untitled poem by Charly Cox which highlights female agency. Wade's and Cox's poems are similar in so far as they both refer to female bodies and how women can reclaim them. However, Cox's poem focuses on gender norms in everyday life, particularly as regards outward appearance rather than on fundamental

human rights. The topical issue of personal choice and appearance will be further explored in this subchapter after I have introduced the author.

Charly Cox is a 25-year-old White British Instagram poet, who writes about mental health, relationships, gender norms, and her personal experiences as a young woman. Her presentation as an Instagram poet with a mental health focus is immediately detectable in her Instagram biography (see Figure 4). It says: “Poet, really [...] and @mqmentalhealthambassador.” Thus, Cox discloses her self-image as a poet and her involvement with a mental health charity. She refers to the Instagram profile of the UK-based *MQ: Transforming Mental Health*-charity, which she supports by acting as an ambassador for them. This organization’s objective is to expand research on mental health disorders such as depression, by organizing funds via supporters and researchers (MQ 2020). Cox’s public involvement with this mental health charity demonstrates that she has a high degree of self-awareness as an influencer with 45,900 followers, which she educates on the topic of mental health. She also explores mental health in her published poetry collections *She Must Be Mad* (2018) and *Validate Me: A Life of Code-Dependency* (2019). These collections, however, will not be analyzed here as this thesis focuses on digital poetry, but it once more goes to show how contemporary poets often work across media.

Besides educating the public on mental health, Cox explores body image and gender norms such as in the untitled poem at hand (see Figure 5). She presents such poems in a visually appealing manner. Considering Cox’s aesthetic, the poet utilizes the media of photography, graphic illustrations, text and videos to disseminate not only her educational but also sometimes humorous messages. Her ‘feed’, in general, is composed of colorful posts and mainly includes photographs (see Figure 4). This aesthetic is in so far dissimilar to that of Wade’s feed as it incorporates more photographic elements. I will now continue with the poem’s analysis.

To begin with, I claim that this poem (Figure 5)¹¹ presents the reader with a subversion strategy concerning the role of the female body as an object by evoking a powerful female subjectivity. To be more precise, first person personal pronouns are mentioned five times (four times “I” and “mine”) in total, while a reference to a potential viewer is mentioned only once in the poem

¹¹ Concerning the screenshots, I decided to only show comments by users who gave their informed consent to the processing of their comment(s) (see Chapter Ethical Considerations). This is why all other comments are hidden in the screenshots.

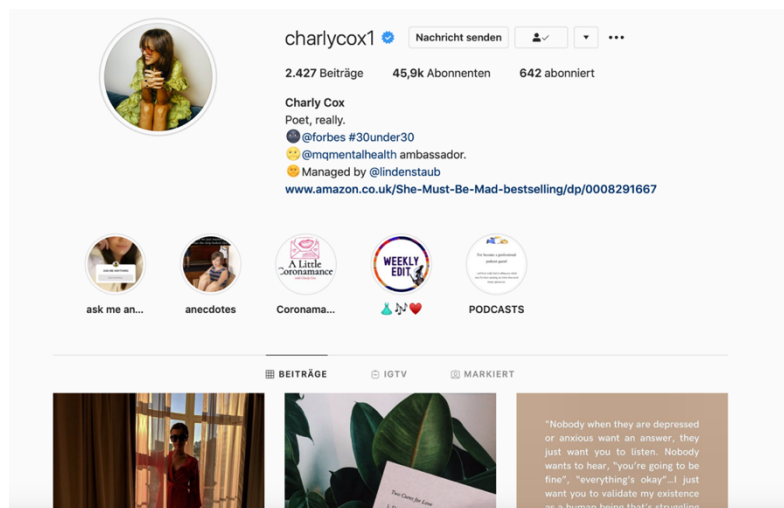


Figure 4. Charly Cox's Instagram Profile.

(“yours”). Even though the poem does not contain a single instance of a female pronoun, I deduct from the author’s sex that the poem’s speaker can also likely be understood as female. I come to this conclusion because Cox’s poems are autobiographical to a certain extent. For instance, in her poem “Venlafaxine” she

describes her experience with medication, which she indicates in the caption (Cox 2019).



Figure 5. Untitled Poem by Charly Cox, 22 May 2019.

The mode of color also points to a female speaker and to a distinct female perspective in the untitled poem by Charly Cox . The color in the poem can be described as a light rose, a shade of pink. To detect the meaning of this visual element, it is

useful to look at a mode’s “communicative uses” (Machin 65). The communicative function of color I will examine here is the “ideational function” (Machin 65). This function denotes the socio-cultural meaning of color and I would argue that the color *rose* in Cox’s poem refers to a societally deeply ingrained type of femininity. This type of womanliness is associated with a cliché image of women as interested in beauty, fashion, and household matters (see also “association” Kress and van Leeuwen 1996; Kress 2010). Traditionally, it stands in opposition to the color blue, denoting a

career-oriented and strong picture of masculinity.¹² Thus, these connotations highlight that the speaker is female .

I claim that stereotypical notions of femininity connected to the color rose exemplify a feminist stance in the poem, although this may seem a paradoxical idea at first glance. First of all, rose and its obvious connotations are used to highlight the existence of everyday gender norms, which influence such ‘trivial’ matters as clothing. In other words, clothes are color-coded along gender lines. Secondly, the color rose is used in a subversive manner: it exemplifies a specific strand of digital feminism, namely “Instagram feminism” (Crepax 71). Rosa Crepax explains this in her article *The Aestheticisation of Feminism: A Case Study of Feminist Instagram Aesthetics* (2020). I see Instagram feminism as part of digital feminism, as Crepax does, but also as essential to fourth wave feminism. Crepax (71-81) describes that “girly” aesthetics such as the color pink, glitter, dreamy tones are often used in order to draw attention to feminist messages. This means that digital feminists are reclaiming the clichéd color for their own critical purposes. Essentially, this type of aesthetic makes use of light-heartedness, thus, it incorporates the “girly” color pink that is on some level associated with innocence, to critically address highly important issues such as body image or a woman’s sexuality. This is why I argue that the use of rose in Cox’s poem is subversive as the cliché color supports a text that highlights an important issue and therefore subverts its original, stereotypical meaning and the associated objectification of female body in the poem as well.

Returning to the role of the speaker in this poem, the strong female subjectivity in the poem substitutes potential viewers’ objectification of the female body and thus, their power over it. This feminist perspective essentially insists on the right to choose over the meaning of one’s own body. Analogous to this claim to ownership, the speaker reclaims female sexuality, an element fundamentally connected to the body. This is especially visible in the last three lines of the poem (“is that I am/ mine /to feel sexy”). The presentation of a strong female subjectivity in the poem is politically relevant because it changes the woman’s role from object to subject and, thus, grants women the power of decision-making. This is important since it enables

¹² It is important to note the malleability of such connotations. Pink used to be regarded as a ‘masculine’ color many decades ago. For example, in the 18th century this shade of red was perceived as a strong “statement” and thus, ‘suitable’ for boys (Puja Bhattacharjee 2018).

readers to critically examine the gender norms the poem evokes, to point out how the female body and sexuality are defined by others and how they can be reclaimed. As such, Cox's poem can be understood as an instance of "consciousness-raising" (Brandt and Kizer 124-125), i.e., a first step towards deconstructing given gender norms.

Interestingly, the slightly dimmed aspect of the color here adds a personal note to the poem's meaning and intensifies the female subjectivity professed on the content-level. Professional graphics often use fully saturated colors and dimmed color elements stand in contrast to that (Machin 75). The poem conveys a certain amateur aesthetic as if someone took a picture of a scribbled poem in a notebook, which enhances relatability with the female respondents and reiterates the subjective perspective of the speaker. Bronwen declares that it is a typical feature of Instagram poetry to showcase "work in progress" (90). The poem might also be relatable to readers on the text-level since the poem's speaker flags her uncertainty by declaring that she has knowledge that is less "finite" ("the most finite of/ knowledge that I / can keep steady").

Together with color, typography is a fundamental mode contributing to the poem's meaning. Expansion, weight, angularity, connectivity, and line spacing are relevant typographical dimensions in this context (Machin 93-107). Expansion and weight respectively refer to thickness and "heaviness" of individual letters (94). These two features are highly pronounced in the poem's typography and consequently signify confidence and boldness. This fact, in turn, intensifies female agency as the central idea of the poem. Thus, these dimensions enhance the text's meaning. But the irregular, small white spaces within the frame of individual letters point to artistic freedom and an artistic soul (100-102).

As regards the netnographic analysis, the poem was commented on by only seven users, six were female users between the ages of 18 and 45 years old with a White majority (20 November 2020). The majority of comments underneath Cox's poem are positive and thus support Cox's depiction of a strong female subjectivity and a subversion of gender norms. A typical example is a comment by the user @_fletch94, which states "I love this ❤️." By observing information stated on this user's account, I was able to determine that Fletch is a White, British, and female model, singer, and writer, working as a drama coach for children. She is also active in a charity called *Nacoa UK* (@nacoauk), which helps children of alcoholic parents. Fletch's comment signifies appreciation for the poem's feminist message. Thus this user supports another user's

creations, namely Charly Cox's feminist efforts, as is usual in participatory online cultures (Jenkins 4).

Interestingly, another female user retells personal, negative experiences from a relationship with a man. She claims that he could not accept the fact that a woman dresses sensually for her own purposes.¹³ The user added that she continued to dress in her own way and directly encouraged Cox to follow her. It is highly relevant that these comment sections underneath poems are used by respondents to share their own personal experiences related to the poem. This means that the proposed female subjectivity in the poem extends to the comment section as some female readers feel confident enough to publicly share personal information with others. As this comment also gained a few likes, it shows that this public sharing of experiences resonates with other users. Another instance of interaction underneath Cox's poem shows two young women marking each other in the comment section of the untitled poem in order to draw attention to the poem. These two instances show how readers with feminist values organize themselves online around a particular poem. This suggests that Instagram poems and their comment sections inspire readers to participate in feminist reflection and interaction.

To conclude, Cox's poem demonstrates a strong female subjectivity on the visual and on the content-level. The subversion of gender norms presented in the poem seems to continue in the comment section as users support the poem's feminist principles and add their own reflections, thereby organize themselves around feminist values. I will now move on to Yrsa Daley-Ward and her Instapoetry about gender norms.

Yrsa Daley-Ward is a 35-year-old Black British poet of Jamaican and Nigerian heritage. She identifies as a member of the LGBT+ community and writes about her struggles with depression (Eve Barlow 2017; Daley-Ward September 2018). Daley-Ward's Instagram poems are about mental health, racism, sexuality and religion. 180,000 followers regularly read her poems that are published on her Instagram account (@yrsadaleyward). With this high number of followers, the poet is a celebrity figure among Instagram poets. She even co-wrote Beyoncé's visual album *Black Is King*, which featured poems by British-Somali poet Warsan Shire (Daley-Ward 27 July 2020). I consider it important to outline a few elements of Daley-Ward's Instagram page

¹³ Consent could not be obtained here; this is why this comment remains anonymized.

in order to fully grasp the meaning of Daley-Ward's poems. Now I want to look at Daley-Ward's biographical information, as stated in her Instagram profile.

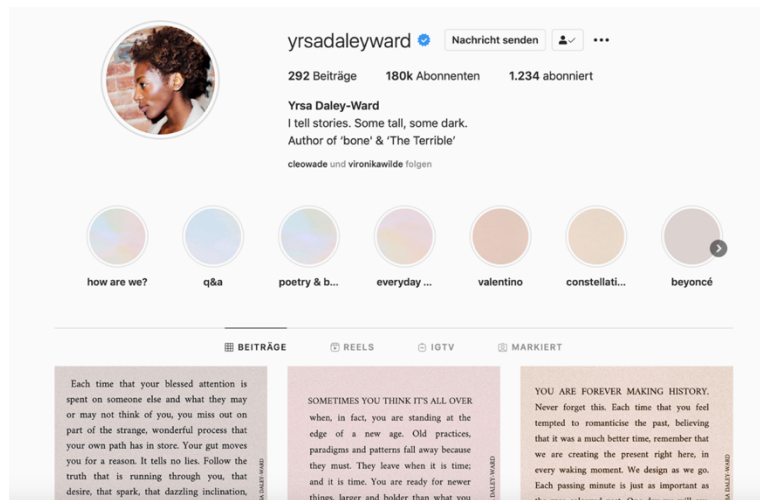


Figure 6. Yrsa Daley-Ward's Instagram Profile.

names both of her print publications in the biography section. She mentions her poetry collection *bone* (2014) and her highly acclaimed memoir *The Terrible* (2018). This mention of print publications on her Instagram page, a space that is dedicated to digital poetry, illustrates that she, just like other Instagram poets, works across various media. Yrsa Daley-Ward's self-description also contains some indication of her poems' content. "Some tall, some dark" refers to her often-quoted poem "intro," which was initially published as the first poem in her poetry volume ("I am the tall dark stranger/those warnings prepared you for," Daley-Ward, *bone* 1). This poem is essentially about racism and a reclaiming of a racist stereotype. The reference to this poem in the biography section, the section that introduces an Instagram poet, indicates that Daley-Ward's Instagram poetry is overall socio-political.

Daley-Ward's 'feed aesthetic' is highly sophisticated – it includes pastel-colored posts in different shades of pink, blue, yellow, red, and green (Daley-Ward 2020). Her posts alternate between computer-written and handwritten poems, between professional photographs and selfies, and between written poems and short poetry films. It has to be noted here that the alternation between these different poems appears to be purposeful. Even the length of Daley-Ward's poems is coordinated with each other, thus, some poems in the feed have a similar layout concerning length and line spacing in order to appear symmetrically on the overall Instagram feed. Although Daley-Ward's feed is very consistent in regards to color and composition, the feed's overall outlook changes every few months. This stands in opposition

Daley-Ward states in her account's biography section: "I tell stories. Some tall, some dark. / Author of 'bone' & 'The Terrible'" (see Figure 6). This information reveals that Daley-Ward clearly sees herself as an author. It becomes immediately clear to new followers that this is a writer's profile. In addition, she

with Cleo Wade's Instagram feed, which is rather consistent throughout (Wade 2020). It seems as if Daley-Ward re-invents her Instagram poetry aesthetic regularly, which is not unusual in the ever-changing world of digital communication (Penke 2019).

Another important feature is Ward's Instagram story-highlight-section. The poet actively uses Instagram stories and regularly creates story-highlights. She saves Instagram stories, i.e., pictures or videos that were only visible for 24 hours, in the highlight-section, and thus, makes them available for a longer amount of time. One story-highlight is named "how are we?" and includes saved pictures, videos, and screenshots of discussions with users from the community on the topic of mental health (Daley-Ward 2020). Another highlight-section is called "q&a" and contains screenshots of questions from the community and answers to these questions by Daley-Ward. Her answers are recorded in a video format or typed as a written text. The posed questions range from curiosity about the life of a writer to requested advice on mental health struggles. I claim that Daley-Ward's Instagram page in itself exemplifies a "participatory culture" because it fulfills certain criteria of these cultures (Jenkins 4). To be precise, "social connection" between members of the community, "strong support [...] for one's creations," and "low barriers to artistic expression" characterize this Instagram poet's account. These features are especially visible in the named story highlights and in the user interaction that is portrayed within them but also within the online community's communication underneath Daley-Ward's poems that I will examine in the netnographic analysis. I will now turn to the analysis of Yrsa Daley-Ward's Instapoem "A Fine Art."

"A Fine Art" was published on the 25th November of 2019 on Daley-Ward's Instagram account (see Figure 7). It was previously already a part of the poetry collection *bone* (2014). In the multimodal discourse analysis, I will explain how the modes typography and 'line-spacing and alignment' contribute to the feminist idea of gendered behavior as an unnatural phenomenon. I will carry out this analysis in relation to the theory of fourth wave feminism. Afterwards, I will conduct a netnographic analysis to evaluate the role of the online community in the establishment of a supportive feminist environment.

To begin with, the poem "A Fine Art" is essentially about how women ("You may have learned from your mother or any other hunted woman") learn certain gendered behaviors and strategies in order to live and to survive ("Smiling at devils is a useful, / learned thing. / Swallowing

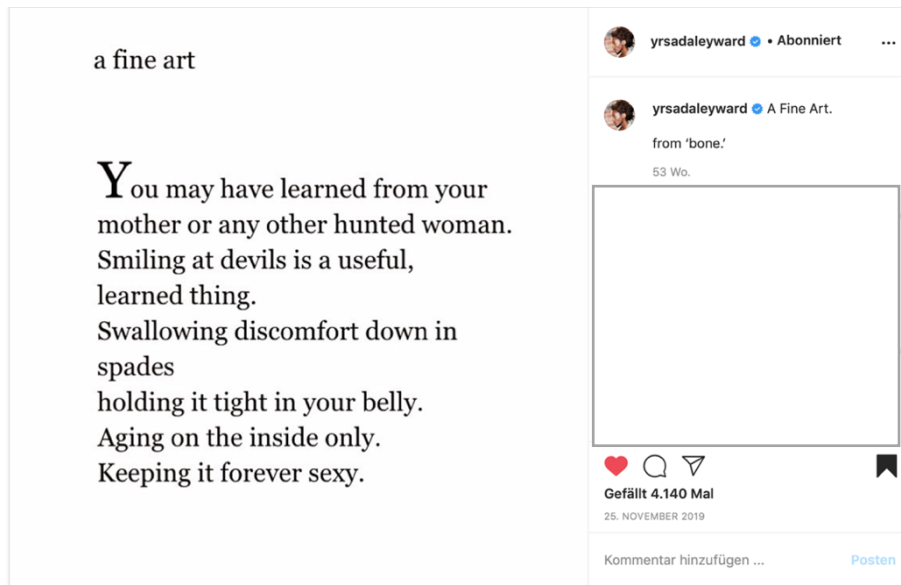


Figure 7. "A Fine Art" by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 25 November 2019.

discomfort down in
spades/holding it
tight in your belly.
/Aging on the inside
only. / Keeping it
forever sexy"). This
learned behavior
involves a certain
type of
submissiveness,
namely the
suppression of

unpleasant feelings, which is illustrated through the fact that the named actions are all silent ones – for example, “Smiling” and “Swallowing.” In addition, the learned behaviors, as stated in the poem, also include another kind of submissiveness, i.e. subordination to ideals of outer appearance (“Aging on the inside only. / Keeping it forever sexy.”).

Various elements in the poem strongly emphasize that gendered behavior is learned and unnatural. In fact, the text literally states that (“hunted”) women’s behavior is a “a useful, / learned thing.” In addition, the rhythmic and repetitive pattern, which is produced through a use of verbal nouns ending in the suffix *-ing*, emphasizes the fact that these gendered actions (“Smiling,” “Swallowing,” “Aging,” “Keeping,”) need to be learned. In other words, the repetitive pattern in the text symbolizes learning processes that involve repetition. Such learning processes constitute gender according to the famous gender studies scholar Judith Butler. Butler rightfully argues in their essay “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory” (1988) that “gender is [...] an identity instituted through *a stylized repetition of acts*” (519-520). This means that the reiteration of gendered acts in the poem alludes to the constitution of gender as unnatural. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990; 1999), Butler speaks of a “performativity” of gender that involves “a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization” in (xv). Thus, seemingly natural gendered behavior is revealed as unnatural in Daley-Ward’s poem because the process of its “naturalization”, the reiteration of acts, is revealed (xv).

Another element in the text that alludes to the unnaturalness of said behavior is the implication in the text that gendered beliefs and behaviors are passed down through generations of women (“You may have learned from your mother”). The mode ‘Line spacing and alignment’ (Machin 105) also highlights this repetitiveness of behavior that is needed so that certain behavior becomes a habit. Indeed, the five action verbs that describe women’s learned behavior are placed underneath each other. Through this placement, the text gives weight to these gendered habits and this repetitive alignment of words implies that the named behaviors or survival tactics of “hunted women” are learned habits. Lastly, the title “A Fine Art”, the paratext, even amplifies this notion of unnaturalness and artificiality by adding the word “Art” to the poem.

Following the presented arguments about “A Fine Art”, I argue that the poem is clearly feminist because it reveals that gendered behavior is learned and not natural. To achieve that, the poet applies present-day consciousness-raising, thus, a tool that is currently used by the fourth wave feminist movement to draw attention to women’s issues (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 2019). I would also call the poem feminist on a micropolitical rather than an activist level since it demonstrates how women function within a gendered discourse rather than showing how to act against it (Budgeon 2001). This demonstration of gendered behavior then allows readers to realize functions of *gendered* behaviors and to question them. If readers recognize that gender is created through reiterated acts by reading the poem, “gender transformation” can possibly be achieved through a “subversive repetition” of these acts (Butler, *Performative Acts* 520).

A specific way to encourage critical thinking in the poem’s readership is the use of the mode typography. One aspect of typography requires special attention here as it structures the relationship between poem and reader and, thus, illustrates how the interpersonal function of typography works in the poem (Halliday 1978; Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). The element that I refer to is the letter “Y” at the beginning of the poem (“You may have learned from your mother or any other hunted woman.”) This letter is written in bold and in a bigger font size than all the other letters and words within the poem. Thus, font places special attention to “Y” and “You” (Machin 92). Machin also mentions that boldness in font “can be a warning.” It is therefore possible that the “You,” which directly addresses readers, issues a warning about the causes and effects of gendered behaviors. More importantly, the highlighted “You” involves the reader and encourages them to evaluate if the behaviors in the poem are also present in the reader’s life, in female figures or within themselves (“mother,” “hunted woman”). It has to be

noted here that it is possible that a female reader, a female “You,” is implied. As I already mentioned, the poem declares that gendered behaviors are passed down through generations, so the “You” might speak to another woman who is confronted with gendered behavioral norms. Exactly here lies the possibility of resistance, a female reader has the possibility to actively reflect upon these learned behaviors and can then possibly make decisions that differ from learned gender norms and habits. Present-day consciousness-raising as a tool within the frame of fourth wave feminism allows for these reflections.

Moving on the netnographic analysis, I want to firstly consider the users who commented on “A Fine Art.” Daley-Ward’s poem was mainly commented on by women in the age range of 18 to 55 years old. There were four exceptions, i.e., of all 33 comments (2 January 2020) two were written by male users, one comment was written by a collective and another response was posted by a company. Since the Instagram poem deals with gendered behavior in women, it is not surprising that women feel encouraged to comment on the poem. In regards to ethnicity, the comments were distributed among White and women of color quite evenly, which is in line with findings by a Pew Research Center study on social media use (2019).¹⁴

Before I turn to a more detailed analysis of individual comments, I want to point out that all comments were supportive of Daley-Ward’s poem. A majority of users used emojis or words such as “truth” to show support, while other users wrote longer comments. I will now outline how the users @gmdosolorio, @nadineawahab, and @rootscollectivegh supported Daley-Ward’s poem and through that, demonstrated how a community of women organizes itself online around a particular poem.

A young woman of color by the name of Puchi,¹⁵ owner of the private Instagram poetry account @gmdosolorio, commented on “A Fine Art” by writing: “The gag.” Through this mention of the restraint of speech she, another Instagram poet, expressed disgust at the gendered actions of women in the poem and demonstrated that she grasped the feminist premise of the poem and openly supported it. This “strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations” through an

¹⁴ The study’s results stated that 73% of White, 70% of Hispanic, and 69% of (US-)adults “use at least one social media site,” thus, indicated that social media use is quite evenly distributed among ethnicities.

¹⁵ I base the claim that the user is a woman of color on the profile picture. There is of course a certain possibility that users create ‘avatars’ of a different ethnicity or gender than their own. However, I consider this on the whole unlikely and I assume within the context of this thesis that the profile pictures are actual photographs of users.

Instagram comment is a trait of a “participatory culture” (Jenkins 4). Puchi’s comment was also liked by Yrsa Daley-Ward, which is indicative of user interaction and participatory cultures.

Another user, a woman named Noodles and owner of the private account @nadineawahab, commented on Yrsa Daley-Ward’s poem in the following way: “Grace is in raging when angered, aging with time, and smiling at the devil in your own head.” “Low barriers to artistic expression,” a typical feature of participatory cultures and simultaneously an Instagram affordance, prompted this literary response (Penke 453; Jenkins 4). @nadineawahab’s comment not only shows support for the work of Daley-Ward but is also a personal, feminist reflection. This particular comment is an example of the effects that consciousness-raising can have within fourth wave feminism (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 2019). In other words, the fact that @nadineawahab included a certain subversiveness of gender norms in her comment is indicative of critical thinking about feminist issues. Indeed, “Aging on the inside only” in Daley-Ward’s poem becomes “aging with time” in @nadineawahab’s response. Hence, feminist Instagram poems are able to influence some female readers and to inspire them to think critically about gender.

The activist group @rootscollectivegh also supported “A Fine Art.” They marked another user, a Black, politically outspoken female poet in the comment section. This is then how feminist principles of Instagram poems are disseminated among a variety of readers (Kress, *Multimodality* 27). Returning to the commenting account, @rootscollectivegh is a Black, indigenous, environmental justice group that advocates for economic self-sufficiency of people of color. The fact that this activist collective commented on Daley-Ward’s poem and marked another user in the comment section suggests that Daley-Ward’s work within the frame of fourth wave feminism appeals to activist communities.

In summary, I deduce from the multimodal and netnographic analysis of “A Fine Art” that the modes line spacing and typography helped to emphasize how certain behavior is gendered. This revelation of gendered behavior as unnatural inspired the above mentioned readers in the comment section to not only support the poem’s feminist topical issues or to share it with other readers but to also elaborate on the poem through a literary feminist reflection. It seems that the Instagram poem allows women to find an empowering space in the comment section where they can openly share positive feminist sentiments and reflections.

4.3. Sexual Misconduct

Another topical issue of fourth wave feminism is sexual misconduct (Parry, Wagler, and Johnson 2019). Fourth wave feminists, including Instagram poets, typically react to sexual assault via “fast responses” (8). More specifically, Instapoets respond via feminist poetry and/or calls to action, via micropolitical and/or activist efforts (Budgeon 18-19; Baumgardner and Richards 295).



Figure 8. Untitled Poem by Cleo Wade, 21 September 2018.

Cleo Wade wrote an empowering poem (see Figure 8) about the force of women, which she compared to the strength of a hurricane (“I know power/ I have watched a hurricane/ from the center/ I have seen a woman/be/ a

woman”). I will examine this comparison in more depth in a few paragraphs, but I firstly want to contextualize this poem. To begin with, Wade published the untitled poem under analysis on the 21st September of 2018, at a time when psychology professor Christine Blasey Ford accused US supreme court nominee Brett Kavanaugh of sexual assault. For that, she not only received death threats and harassment, but a full FBI investigation into the sexual assault case was rejected by US president Donald Trump. Blasey Ford then demanded a full FBI investigation as a condition to speak in a public, “nonpartisan” hearing (Peter Baker, Sheryl Gay Stolberg and Nicholas Fandos 2018).

Cleo Wade promptly reacted to these claims by writing a poem about female power, and by proposing “tangible actions” in the sense of “activism” (Baumgardner and Richards 295) in the caption. Thus, the above mentioned “fast response” to sexual violence, and “technological mobilization,” both central tenets of fourth wave feminism, are at play here (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 6). In the caption, Wade encouraged the online community to act: “Call your senators:

202-224-3121 and demand they support Dr. Ford's request for an FBI background investigation before the hearing." The poet emphasized that the FBI investigation was important in order to prevent "a bias process." In addition, Wade directly addressed her followers in the paratext by stating that they should believe female sexual assault survivors ("Stand with her and all survivors."), who are often not believed due to "toxic masculinity." The mention of this type of masculinity reveals that the Instagram poet not only understands harmful notions that serve patriarchy. But she also actively opposes these notions through her poetry and the accompanying paratexts that frame the poem.

In the caption, the Instagram poet also utilized a hashtag (#thisisamerica), so a type of the mode 'hyperlink' (Hayles 2004), as part of 'mobilization in action'. According to scholar Linnea Laestadius a hashtag is a technical tool that is used "to indicate participation in a community or provide context for an image" (576). Thus, through the use of #thisisamerica, Wade participates in a community of users that criticize US American politics. The hashtag is highly popular on Instagram since nearly 750,000 search entries appear when the hashtag is typed into Instagram's search engine. Here, it was used to criticize politics that does not take female survivors of sexual assault seriously. The hashtag makes Wade's stance towards Blasey Ford's treatment clear; it even amplifies her written criticism. Hence, the hashtag is an example of "cyber feminism", thus, "online activities" that are concerned with "an active engagement with feminist politics" (Brandt and Kizer 118-119).


As part of the multimodal discourse analysis, it is not only important to consider social context and paratext, but also the mode 'line spacing and alignment' (Machin 105-107). This mode plays a crucial role in Wade's poem and the line spacing and alignment in the poem overall are "uneven on both sides and not symmetrical" (107). Machin argues that such an arrangement of line spacing and alignment conveys energy. When I apply this argument to this poem, I see that the poem's form mirrors the shape of a hurricane, which is, in turn, a powerful manifestation of intensity and energy. To be precise, the dynamic distribution of words symbolizes this energy. In other words, the 'middle' part of the poem mirrors the center of the hurricane, which is a highly powerful constituent of a hurricane according to Wade ("I know power/ I have watched a hurricane / from the center"). Following from these observations, I argue that the visible accumulation of most words in the middle part of the poem, so the center of a hurricane,

marks the center as an important meaning constituent and the dynamic distribution of words in the poem symbolizes the overall energy of a hurricane.

It is precisely at the center of the poem, and at the center of the hurricane, that “a woman” is placed. This means, at a formal and at a content level, that the power of a woman is compared to a natural force, to a hurricane’s strength at its center. For this purpose, the following words are strategically placed in the ‘middle’ part of the poem: “I have watched a hurricane/ from the center/ I have seen a woman.” A hurricane’s center, “the eye,” is the calmest part of a hurricane, but changes in its structure and size directly influence the accompanying “eye wall,” i.e. the strength of storms in a hurricane (*Unidata* 2021). Thus, the “eye” reigns calmly and powerfully over the whole hurricane. When the speaker in the poem compares a woman to an “eye,” it essentially means that reigning power is handed over to women. It suggests that, if women such as Blasey Ford are calm now, they are only accumulating power to cause ‘storms’ that will inevitably follow. The parallel sentence construction of the second (“I have watched a hurricane”) and fourth line (“I have seen a woman”) here amplifies the named comparison because it again leads to an equation of “hurricane” with “woman.” In the first and last sentence, “I know power” is even equated with “a woman” through a symmetrical, a left-justified, use of alignment. The fact that “a woman” is given a separate line, the last line, also gives importance to women. In consequence, with the help of all of these format and content features, women are presented as powerful beings. Women are specifically empowered through the poem and the caption to speak up against perpetrators (“call-out), to protect and support sexual assault survivors, and to act politically (Brandt and Kizer 118).

The netnographic analysis of the comment section underneath the analyzed poem yielded the following results. The comment section of Wade’s poem suggests that certain Instagram poems inspire some female users to reflect upon feminist activist efforts and to discuss these with a community of women. It also indicates how some users support feminist activism as proposed by Wade in the poem’s caption or by other commenting users. The majority of the 171 comments (2 January 2020) were written by women in the age range of 18 to approximately 55 years old, with a roughly equal share of women of color and White women. Most comments were positive and encouraging of Wade’s call to action to listen to sexual assault survivors. One female user even shared a personal experience with sexual violence and demonstrated how relevant feminist activism is for sexual assault survivors. A high number of commenters also

tagged their friends and acquaintances in the comment section, which means that the poem potentially gained new readers. This interaction between users also indicates that information about the call to action was spread and more people were mobilized to participate in feminist activism. This mutual support seems indicative of a “participatory culture,” a culture with a high support of one another (Jenkins 4). In addition, some users shared politically charged hashtags such as #istandwithchristineblaseyford, #women, #riseup, thereby, positioned themselves as members of a feminist and activist community (Laestadius 576). Hashtags and individual reflections upon the legal system’s treatment of sexual assault survivors exemplify how “consciousness-raising” was used as an activist tool within the comment section of Wade’s poem (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 2019). The community of supporters here extends to a few celebrities which commented on the Instagram poem, for example @nicolamar, another Instagram poet. It seems that the online community here is not limited to private users. I will now describe two comments in some depth to illustrate the diversity of commenting users.

Firstly, the user @saadia.peerzada, a Kashmiri and a writer for the online magazine the-edict.in, commented on Wade’s poem by stating “so much respect” and then, also, adding “” in a second comment. I conclude that this poem’s comment is a supportive comment written by a user that expresses her appreciation for outspoken testaments of sexual assault survivors and for feminist politics. Essentially, this comment suggests that the user agrees with the statements in Wade’s poem and caption and supports “call-outs” of public personae within the framework of fourth wave feminism (Brandt and Kizer 118). Considering @saadia.peerzada’s personal demographic information, the user’s biography states that the user is a “Kashmiri” and the profile picture is a red dot. This red dot is a politically charged symbol for the #RedforKashmir movement that opposes the integration of Kashmir into India (Samira Sadeque 2020). I argue that this is also a type of “technological mobilization” but not in the field of fourth wave feminism. It generally appears to be a pattern that politically engaged individuals are avid readers of Wade’s politically outspoken poetry. The user’s biography also includes other information such as the statement “excerpts from beloved poems,” indicating that the user is interested in poetry. I therefore classify this Instagram account as a profile of a politically outspoken person that is interested in literature.

Secondly, a public, activist profile that also left a comment under Wade’s poem is @rosearmy, an online movement created by actress and producer Rose McGowan. This profile commented

on the poem with the hashtag #RoseArmy, which is a hashtag that was started by said actress and which is used to share stories of sexual assault. It is similar to the #metoo-movement, the most ‘famous’ example of fourth wave feminism. Rose McGowan, the initiator of #RoseArmy, is a relevant celebrity figure within fourth wave feminism. She was one of the first survivors to share her personal story of how Harvey Weinstein sexually assaulted her. Rose thereby paved the way for other women in Hollywood to publicly share their stories. The fact that her own movement’s profile commented Wade’s poem means that Cleo Wade is also an acclaimed figure within digital feminism. I argue that the comment #RoseArmy is an example of two tenets of fourth wave feminism, namely, “technological mobilization,” since #RoseArmy’s preferred method is a hyperlink. It also exemplifies a “fast response” to sexual violence because #RoseArmy is a hashtag that encourages survivors to speak out against sexual violence (Parry, Johnson and Wagler 6-8). This comment indicates that celebrity activists also feel empowered by Wade’s poem and call to action to share hashtags to mobilize other women and sexual assault survivors to speak out.

To sum it up, Cleo Wade’s poem postulates that women are powerful through the prominent connection of women to the “eye” of a hurricane, which is achieved with the help of line spacing, alignment and typography. This empowerment of women extends to the caption, in which Wade supports sexual assault survivors and calls to specific actions to change Blasey Ford’s situation. Commenting female users participate in feminist activism through the use of hashtags or just support these through the use of emojis, which corresponds with Crepax’s view that Instagram poetry is an essential part of digital feminism (75). Thus, the comment section seems to be a ‘safe space’ for feminist thought and activism, Wade’s poem does not only exemplify “consciousness-raising” and “technological mobilization,” but these tenets of fourth wave feminism are also present in the poem’s comment section. This means that Cleo Wade’s Instagram poetry inhabits a high position within the socio-political online community that organizes itself around Instagram poetry.

4.4. Intersectionality and Black Feminism

A poem that unites feminist and anti-racist efforts is Cleo Wade’s untitled poem about the issues of women of color (see Figure 9). It was published during the summer of 2019 (18 July 2019) and, establishes, as is typical of Wade’s writing, a connection to real-life events. At first, I want to look at the social context of the poem that is illuminated through the caption. Then, I will

explain the relevance of the concept intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989; 1991) and move on to the mode typography.

Firstly, the events that prompted Wade's poem were Donald Trump's racist tweets targeted at four US Congresswomen of color, namely Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Ayanna Pressley, and Ilhan Omar. After these tweets, attendees of Trump rallies shouted racist slogans such as "send her back" (Al Jazeera 2019). In addition, Ilhan Omar, Somali-born US Congresswoman of Minnesota, was specifically attacked for her Muslim beliefs. After that, the hashtag #istandwithilhan was born. Wade uses this hashtag, which is essentially a type of the mode 'hyperlink', in the captions, the paratext, to mobilize her followers to stand with women of color and to acknowledge their specific struggles. #istandwithilhan is an instance of technological mobilization that relies on the framing of the poem with reference to a current event in American politics that pointed to the intersection of racist and misogynist discourse. Wade essentially connects the racist and misogynistic attacks on Ilhan Omar to the struggles of Black women in general.

The meaning that is at the core of Wade's poem ("The future of feminism/ is only as powerful/ as the future of/ anti-racism") entails that feminism has to consider struggles of a variety of women in order to have a "future." Those struggles extend to other categories of identification such as ethnicity - 'race' ("anti-racism"). More specifically, the struggles of women of color have to be acknowledged within feminism according to the poem (Matthews 2019). A type of feminism that is particularly concerned with struggles of Black women is Black feminism. A concept of Black feminism that can explain the premises laid out in Wade's poem is "intersectionality" (Crenshaw 1989). The notion of intersectionality was proposed by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s and essentially describes how different layers of oppression "intersect." In the poem and in the captions, 'gender' and 'race' are the visible, intersecting categories of oppression that are united in the personhood of Black women. In Wade's untitled poem, Ilhan Omar represents 'Black womanhood' and the attack that Black women suffer. Wade calls all feminists to advocate for Black women, thus, focuses on the

global “interconnectedness” between various women (Kaplan 55; Parry, Johnson and Wagler 7).¹⁶

Interestingly,
Wade’s poem and
the caption portray
a historical timeline
of
“intersectionality.”.
Wade first
mentions James
Baldwin, a Black
writer and civil
rights movement
activist, and then
establishes a connection



Figure 9. Untitled Poem by Cleo Wade, 18 July 2019.

to Angela Davis, a Black feminist icon of the 1970s. Wade retells an exchange of letters between these two icons, and, through that, she connects the intersecting issues of racism and feminism (“Our issues are connected. We are connected.”) I also want to add here that the mention of Angela Davis and James Baldwin, both famous writers and activists, grants Wade’s own politically outspoken writing a certain legitimacy as if she, a woman of color herself, would follow in their footsteps. To return to the presented timeline of “intersectionality”, I argue that Wade introduced an instance of intersectionality in the past that she now connects to the present through the mention of Ilhan Omar in the caption (“When you stand with @ilhanmn you stand for yourself and your family and all generations to come.”) Subsequently, the Instagram poet refers to the “future” of “feminism” and “anti-racism” within the poem, which seems important as the word “future” is spelled out twice. I argue that the past and present descriptions of issues of “intersectionality” (in the caption) showcase a former and present “state of the art,” while the future of issues pertaining to intersecting identities remains open. This means that it is exactly here, in the future, which is still a blank sheet, that resistance and change can happen.

¹⁶ Critical race theory scholars also make use of the concept of intersectionality. Another notion that they use to describe the specific struggles of Black women is “double minority” (Delgado and Stefancic 65). This term implies, similarly to intersectionality, that Black women face challenges as *women* and as *Black people*.

This openness for change and possibility of resistance is highlighted through the mode typography in the poem, namely through the use of ‘all-caps.’ This use of all-capital letters and the brevity of the poem are drawing attention and are reminiscent of protest signs. I associate this poem with protest signs because Cleo Wade herself utilized her poems on protest signs during the 2018 Women’s March (Wade, January 2018). In addition, Wade’s readers continue to use her poetry during various social justice events such as Black Lives Matter protests (Wade, July 2020).

The way typography is used in the poem evokes a certain relatability with the Instagram poet and poem. The font in the poem at hand is reminiscent of careless handwriting since there is a lot of space between individual letters. For example, even though some effort is given to color the “o’s” and “r’s” black, the coloring is not precise and seems unfinished. This “work in progress”-style is typical of Instagram poetry according to Bronwen (90) and fulfills an interpersonal function because it draws the reader closer to the poem (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). Brevity, another typical feature of Instagram poetry, adds to this effect of carelessness and relatability. This means in the context of fourth wave feminism that this kind of typography helps readers to identify with complex, feminist matters because the content is made to seem relatable and approachable.

The netnographic analysis of the comment section underneath Wade’s poem demonstrated the awareness of users in regards to intersectional feminism. The comment section also revealed the ways in which Instagram poetry can inspire users to reflect on their own lives in the light of certain poems. The untitled poem was commented 57 times (2 January 2020), predominantly by female users within the age range of 18 to 55 years old. Most comments used emojis such as hearts to signal support for the poem’s message, thus, for intersectional feminism. Some users also tagged other people in the comments, which points to the fact that users with similar values exchange opinions on issues presented in Instagram poetry. Instagram poetry can also inspire to connect personal experiences with presented concepts in the poems. Here, one user related the concept of intersectionality to her life and added” the category “anti-ableism” to intersecting layers of oppression (Crenshaw 1989; 1991). Through this public comment, she not only demonstrated that she understands the concept of intersectionality but she, unconsciously or consciously, informed others where else it is possible to apply intersectionality. Thus, the comment section provides a space to reflect the poem’s messages in

a public way, which is similar to an online forum. I will now describe a comment in some detail in order to demonstrate how another user related intersectionality to her personal life.

The user Ché Elizaga Castro (public account @checreates), a woman of color, commented “Yes 🍌🍌🍌 and if you shakin your thang at a Lizzo concert you better march next to your colored sisters for their rights, too.” Lizzo is a popular Black singer that is outspoken about her identity as a Black, body-positive woman. I argue that this comment shows that the female user not only understood that the speaker of the poem advocates intersectionality, but she also integrated it in her daily life experiences by describing situations at concerts. She did this critically via a call to action to other users (“you better march next to your colored sister for their rights, too”), thus, she mobilized them to take action. @checreates’s comment reveals how a certain Instagram poem can influence readers to critically reflect topical issues of feminism and to even mobilize others.

To conclude, this short poem of Cleo Wade demonstrates how the critical concept of intersectionality can be amplified in an Instagram poem and its caption through the use of visual elements such as hashtags and typography. Moreover, the poem reveals that it can inspire readers in the comment section to critically reflect on intersectional feminism and to relate it to personal life experiences.

5. Advocating Anti-Racism in Instagram Poetry

I will now analyze anti-racist Instapoetry by Yrsa Daley-Ward and Cleo Wade with the help of critical race theory as proposed by Delgado and Stefancic (2017) among others. In addition, a multimodal discourse analysis according to Kress’ (2010) principles (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996), and a netnographic analysis in accordance with Kozinets’ premises (2010; 2015), yielded meaningful results, which are presented below.

Before the specific poem analysis, I want to mention a few factors that pertain to all five poems in this chapter. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), the voice-of-color-thesis is the belief that people of color have a special “competence” to talk about racist issues. In accordance with this concept, I argue that Daley-Ward and Wade have a special competence to discuss racism because they are both women of color and therefore have a “voice-of-color” (11). Another element that is visible throughout Chapter 5 is that all analyzed poems were written

between the end of May 2020 and throughout June 2020. The reason for that is that these anti-racist Instapoems were written in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. The movement resurged internationally after George Floyd, an African American, was brutally murdered by a police officer on the 25th of May 2020. The anti-racist movement organized large-scale protests against racialized profiling and police violence in the US and in other parts of the world. I describe in detail how the following Instagram poems by Yrsa Daley-Ward and Cleo Wade can be considered as forming part of the BLM movement and how Instagram poetry advocates anti-racism in the following section.

5.1. Black Lives Matter

The first poem I analyze here is an untitled poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward that was published on the 5th of June 2020 (Figure 10). It was written in the context of the Black Lives Matter protests that followed the death of George Floyd. I demonstrate with the help of CRT-concepts and through a multimodal discourse analysis that the poem's anti-racist message is particularly visible in the use of hyperlinks and the layout.

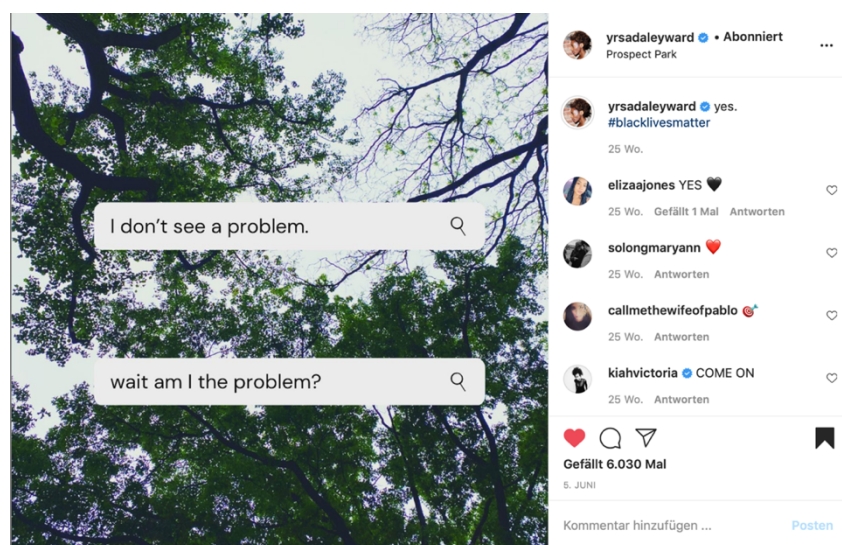


Figure 10. Untitled Poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 5 June 2020.

To begin with, a hyperlink as a mode is visible in the caption, the paratext of Daley-Ward's poem. It is crucial to consider paratexts since they frame the poem's socio-political meaning. Here, a variant of the hyperlink, namely a hashtag, is used. To be precise, the hashtag

#blacklivesmatter, which the Black Lives Matter movement has been using since 2012, links the poem's content to the BLM movement (Dixon 240). In addition, Daley-Ward located the poem in Prospect Park with the help of a location tag. Prospect Park is a public park in Brooklyn, a district of New York City, and was a place of several BLM protests (Naveen Dhaliwal 2020). This is another established connection between the BLM movement and the poem.

The poem's central meaning is structured through the mode layout, more specifically, through "contrast" and a "centre composition" (Machin 148). In this poem, the words "I don't see a problem / wait am I the problem?" are placed within two separate frames that resemble an online search engine (see Figure 9). These frames are, in turn, positioned at the center of the Instagram poem. The words are foregrounded through this center composition as immediate attention is drawn to the words' "symbolic meaning," to the ignorance of racism in society (Machin 2007). In addition, the salience of the words' meaning is amplified by the stark contrast between the framing of the individual words and the nature background. The background here is a photograph of trees in the sky and displays Prospect Park in Brooklyn, NY, which is given as the location of this Instagram post.

Contrast also signals difference. At a symbolic level, protesters gather in Prospect Park (background photograph), while the speaker of the poem ignorantly resides in another place, namely in an online engine, which is visually illustrated by the words in the named frames. While some people are politically active in the context of BLM and social justice, others seemingly do not realize the salience of the issue at stake here, namely, of racism: "I do not see a problem" exemplifies such an ignorant response to BLM and to racism. Thus, I argue that this sentence refers to an overall denial of racism and possibly to "color-blindness," thus, a denial of systemic racism, on the speaker's part (Slatton and Feagin 291). As regards the image of trees, the upward perspective suggests a denial of the events that are happening on the ground, thus, a blindness to racialized police violence. Such ignorance, unfortunately, can contribute to the prevalence of racism (291). In essence, the poem is a critique of ignorant and possibly color-blind attitudes in society, which can contribute to the continuation of (systemic) racism. Such a critique and an acknowledgement of society's racism is indispensable to counteract racist attitudes, as Delgado and Stefancic argue within the framework of critical race theory (8-9). Thus, Instagram poems such as this poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward are important anti-racist efforts. After the initial rejection of anti-racism, the speaker in the poem realizes then, "wait am I the problem?", to which Daley-Ward answers in the captions, "yes. #blacklivesmatter." Here, at the latest, it becomes entirely clear that the topical issue of the poem, the "problem," is racism in the context of BLM, i.e., racism in the criminal justice system. The second sentence of the poem seems to indicate that the speaker realizes some kind of accountability in regards to their position within a racist society. This realization was possibly prompted by active online

research, as is exemplified by the online search engine frames. I claim that by showcasing such a development, the poem offers readers a chance to identify with the speaker and their development and hence encourages them to similarly reflect on their own role in racist US-American society. Here, socio-politics functions at a micropolitical level (Budgeon 2001). Readers are encouraged to reflect upon their attitudes in regards to any type of racism, for example, “systemic racism” or “microaggressions” (Delgado and Stefancic 2017).

The netnographic analysis revealed that the total number of comments was 40 and a majority of comments was written by women of color between 18 and approximately 50 years of age (27 December 2020). These responses to the poem were highly supportive. Mostly, emojis were used to show support (e.g. hearts), but users sometimes commented on the poem by writing short sentences. This means that the comment section of this particular Instagram poem prompted users to publicly declare support for anti-racist efforts within the context of Black Lives Matter. Some of the responses were also liked by Daley- Ward, which indicates some degree of user interaction around anti-racist Instagram poems. This support by commenting users and their organization in the comment section of Instagram poetry contribute to the distribution of BLM’s messages and thus, to the success of the movement. If more users post comments underneath BLM-Instagram poetry, more people will see the poems’ anti-racist messages and comments. This is because Instagram’s algorithm favors posts with a high number of comments, and these are more likely to appear on Instagram users’ feeds (Laestadius 2017). Now I will look at several examples in more depth in order to demonstrate how users promote anti-racist ideals in the comment section.

For instance, a young, female, Latinx user, a woman of color, wrote the following comment with her private account: “And then the third line ‘but I’M not a racist because XYZ’👩.” This comment demonstrates that the user has presumably previously heard statements that deny racism, which are similar to the speaker’s arguments in the poem. I deduce that from her comment because her comment describes another excuse people use when they are confronted with accusations of racism. Thus, the user demonstrates an understanding of color-blindness as she was able to detect it in instances in her personal life, so, she related the poem’s meaning to private circumstances. The user seems to follow Delgado and Stefancic’s (8-9) strand of CRT insofar as she seems to understand that it is important to demonstrate the mechanisms of racism in daily life (its “ordinariness”). Thus, some Instagram poetry in the context of Black Lives

Matter enables users to detect instances of racism in their own lives. #blacklivesmatter, the hashtag in the poem's caption probably already attracted such politically engaged women to the poem. This and other similar comments could inspire users that visit Daley-Ward's profile and look at this poem's comment section, to reflect on their own role in regards to (anti-)racism. A few public accounts by women of color also wrote supportive comments underneath Daley-Ward's poem. African American activist and singer @kiahvictoria commented on the poem by writing "COME ON," artists @kaymontano used the 'raising hands-emoji' to express support "🙌," and Black British journalist @claraamfo utilized another emoji, a target ("🎯"), to show that she also agrees with the anti-racist efforts presented in the poem and caption. The target emoji symbolizes that the user considers the Instagram poem's description of racism's denial and subsequent realization of one's own role in racist systems as highly accurate. It seems to be the case that this particular poem by a woman of color, by a "voice-of-color," speaks first and foremost to the community of women of color and that these especially reflect on its anti-racist meaning in the comment section (Delgado and Stefancic 11).

To conclude, the analyzed Instagram poem by Daley-Ward is an example of anti-racist poetry that establishes links to the Black Lives Matter movement through visual elements such as hyperlinks or location tags. The comment section here enables especially women of color to express support for the Instagram poem's anti-racist stance, which corresponds with Matthews' argument that Black women use social media and Instagram for socio-political causes (397). It also helps women of color to reflect on colorblindness and racism's denial that they encounter in their personal lives. In addition, anti-racist Instagram poetry as such can draw attention to BLM and its goals by using Instagram's logic. Since the poem uses a hashtag that places the poem in an anti-racist online community and the comment section is filled with a lot of supportive responses, more users likely see them and the anti-racist messages in the poem as well.

Another anti-racist poem written by Yrsa Daley-Ward and published via Instagram on the 11th of June 2020 is "Example of the Work" (see Figure 11). The title already hints at the fact that the poem presents anti-racist efforts to end racism. I draw this conclusion because of the connection between the word "Work" in the title and the location tag "BAM." In other words,



Figure 11. "Examples of the Work" by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 11 June 2020.

"Work" implies goal-oriented tasks and the location tag "BAM," a progressive, anti-racist arts center that is connected to the Black Lives Matter movement, provides the objective for said goal-oriented tasks, i.e., the end of racism.

Thus, I conclude that

the goal-oriented tasks are anti-racist efforts that strive to combat racism.

Aesthetically, the modes color and typography signify the importance of such anti-racism strategies. According to Machin (79) bright colors indicate "truth" and "optimism." Thus, the bright color yellow, which is the color of the font in "Example of the Work" adds an optimistic element to the anti-racist efforts that are presented at a content level ("Listening. Reading. Learning"). In addition, the color contrast between the yellow font color and the dark, green background color signals levels of importance (Machin156-157). Hence, salience is granted to the list of anti- racism strategies ("Organising your new materials. Honesty. Speaking out when / necessary.") through a stark contrast between the colors yellow and green.

Several other visual signifiers support the importance of anti-racism strategies that are presented in the poem. First of all, I want to point out that the title is a collective description of specific anti-racist efforts. This is important to know since great emphasis on the title means that great importance is granted to such anti-racism efforts. In fact, all letters of the title are written in a bold font, which draws attention to the letters and the meaning they display. In addition, the title is written in all capital letters and separated spatially from the rest of the text, thus, it is marked as important and clearly discernible. The caption, an instance of paratexts, explains the meaning of the title, "Examples of the Work," a bit further: "The Work has a million faces. / Take care of yourself to take care of this world." The fact that the "Work" is capitalized, amplifies the importance that is given to the listed anti-racism strategies in the poem

because the noun “Work” collectively describes those strategies. Another instance of paratext, the location tag, acts as another visual signifier of the anti-racism strategies’ importance because, as previously mentioned, this location tag links the strategies to the BLM movement. In this particular instance, the location tag of the poem is BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), a progressive arts center in Brooklyn, which has ties to various associations, including BLM. This link renders the meaning of the “Work” clearly anti-racist. I present the anti-racism strategies now in some detail.

First of all, the anti-racist efforts in the poem are not only listed randomly, but this list showcases a rhythmic pattern that is achieved by the use of gerunds and regular punctuation (a dot) that is placed after each anti-racism strategy (“Checking in. Checking out.”) A regular habit of anti-racist work paired with balance (“Sleeping.”) is implied through this repetitive pattern that puts rest on the same level as energetic activities. Actual anti-racism strategies that are implied within the poem and laid out by critical race studies scholars Delgado and Stefancic (2017) and Slatton and Feagin (2012) are “counter storytelling” and opposing “deep frames” (“Organizing your new materials. / Honesty. Speaking out when / necessary.”). To clarify, “deep framing” is “our common-sense worldview,” including racist perceptions such as of Black women as “unwanted” or “poorly educated”. These exemplify “white-structured, racialized, gendered, and classed pseudo-knowledge” (Slatton and Feagin 97). In the poem, “Speaking out when / necessary,” refers to a resistance against such racist perceptions. Other anti-racist efforts that are implied within the poem are acknowledging and combating “microaggressions” and “backstage racism” and “frontstage racism” (“Noticing.”), educating yourself on the social construction of ‘race’ and participating in groups such as the Black women’s club (“Listening. Reading. Learning.”) among others (Delgado and Stefancic 2017; Slatton and Feagin 2012). Thus, Daley-Ward’s poem proposes specific anti-racism strategies that readers can implement in their personal lives and, through that, contributes to the efforts of the Black Lives Matter movement.

The netnographic analysis revealed that poem was commented on 90 times (27 December 2020) and the majority of answers came from women in the age range of 20 to 55 years, with a large proportion of women of color. These answers were highly supportive of the anti-racist work proposed in the poem. For example, @mikaela_sinclair, a young woman of color, commented on the poem with “love this” and Daley-Ward responded with heart emojis. This comment, thus, demonstrates support for the proposed anti-racism strategies in the poem. Another account

of a woman of color, @to_loeve_from_me commented on the poem with a black heart, which symbolizes Black solidarity. This response is logical in this case as the user also utilizes a black background as her profile picture, thus, actively supports the Black Lives Matter movement. Daley-Ward also responded here with heart emojis, namely with a black and a white heart. Two other women of color that also expressed positive attitudes towards the poem in their responses also have a black background as their profile picture, which symbolizes their support for the BLM movement. Thus, the comment section of this Instagram poem seems to be a supportive online space where Black women have the opportunity to express their support for anti-racist efforts and to clearly position themselves as part of an anti-racist community.

A public account that commented on Daley-Ward's poem with a heart emoji is @gurlstalk, a feminist organization that supports the mental health of women. It was founded by a woman of color and features numerous posts geared towards young women of color. That this organization commented on the poem of Daley-Ward signals some type of supportive online community and participatory culture between politically outspoken Instagram poets and online activist groups in the context of mental health and anti-racism. The poem's treatment of rest as an anti-racist effort ("Resting. Prioritising your health.") possibly resonated with @gurlstalk as their objective is to support Black women's mental health. Daley-Ward's poem seems to be an important and influential constituent of a supportive and politically outspoken community if organizations with 306,000 followers such as @gurlstalk or other public accounts (e.g. Black musician @serpentwithfeet) comment on this poem.

To conclude, Daley-Ward's poem presents anti-racism strategies in the context of Black Lives Matter and emphasizes their importance through visual features such as color and composition. The poem's message seems to specifically resonate with a highly supportive online community of women of color.

Yrsa Daley-Ward published another poem on her Instagram page on the 6th of June 2020. Interestingly, the untitled poem was published in different colors (see Figure 12, 13, 14, 15). Considering the poem's meaning, the poem essentially deals with mental health within anti-racist activism, more specifically, with the need for rest.

The poem's meaning is expressed through the modes hyperlink, color, and the paratexts. Firstly, the hashtag #blacklivesmatter appears twice – once, in all capital letters as part of the poem and another time as an element of the caption, written in all small letters. Thus, it is clearly visible that the text (“If you are tired”) and the caption (“rest is a weapon”) refer to BLM activists when they mention rest as an element of anti-racist activism. In addition, the hashtag #poc is mentioned within the caption, the paratext that shapes the poem. Daley-Ward even places a call to action in the caption: “If you know someone that needs this, please tag/share.” Hence, the post, consisting of the Instagram poem and the caption, was created as a tool for anti-racism and as a reminder for BLM activists to rest.

Secondly, the fact that a slideshow of the poem with different background- and font colors was created, suggests that Daley-Ward created a tool for anti-racism, namely a personalized, shareable template for a variety of BLM activists. The first version of the poem is marked by softer colors (beige background and green font), while the latter three versions are bolder (dark brown background with white font; bright green background with yellowish-white font; red background with white font). I argue that the last version is the boldest as red signifies utmost importance (Machin 2007). Depending on the personal use of recipients, these versions of this Instagram poem could be printed and possibly brought to use as posters, protest signs or just daily reminders of the power of rest within activism.

I now present the results of the poem's netnographic analysis. 135 comments were left under this untitled poem (27 December 2020). The majority of users were women, mostly women of color between 18 and 55 years old. They wrote supportive comments and sometimes added politically charged signs like black hearts or hashtags such as #blackpowernaps. Through such signs and hashtags users positioned themselves as part of a supportive anti-racist community and participatory culture (Laestadius 2017). Some users also acted as disseminators of the poem's idea of rest as a necessary part of activism as they tagged friends in the comments to draw their attention to the content. In essence, they reminded other presumably politically engaged individuals to rest and, as such, extended the poem's message to their personal lives. They followed Daley-Ward's call to action: “If you know someone that needs this, please tag/share.” Daley-Ward's poem can be said to help in the advancement of Black Lives Matter's goals as it highlights the importance of rest for successful activism, which is an idea that the online participatory culture disseminates among its members.



Figure 12. Untitled Poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 6 June 2020.



Figure 13. Untitled Poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 6 June 2020.



Figure 14. Untitled Poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 6 June 2020.



Figure 15. Untitled Poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 6 June 2020.

For instance, the young, White, female user @daria.dee wrote: “#🙌🏻❤️🙌🏻/I needed this !!! / Whole wide and long world needs it. / Thank You ever so @yrsadaleyward.... / THANK YOU !” This comment indicates an appreciation for the poem’s message and an understanding of the importance of rest within activism. The user’s support for the BLM movement is immediately detectable as she uses a black heart in her comment. The fact that the user’s profile picture contains a symbol, a lightning, that represents the women’s strike in Poland, proves that the user is generally involved in online activism and understands how to support efforts of online activism.

Another user’s comment demonstrates how a user relates the Instagram poem’s message of rest as activism to her own life and how highly appreciated this message is within the online anti-racism community. @thewildreverie wrote: “Thank you SO much for your words, they’re a real gift. 🙏 This came in a timely moment. I’ve been feeling a lot these days, (I’m sure we as a collective do) and experiencing frequent headaches. My heart hurts so much but at the same time my tears let me know that what we’re doing right now is changing the world.” The word “collective” indicates that the user positions herself within a community and the fact that the comment was liked by three people, including Daley-Ward, strengthens her claim of a “collective.” Other comments confirm the existence of a community that values Daley-Ward’s Instagram poem and its message. For example, @marianela_ch27, wrote: “I needed this, I love you, thank you ❤️,” to which Daley-Ward replied “Sending you so much love! 🧡🧡🧡🧡.” A lot of other accounts, private and public, also thanked Daley-Ward for the call to action for rest through appreciative words and frequently through heart emojis. These comments and

interactions suggest a supportive poet-reader relationship and participatory culture that was inspired by an Instagram poem. This culture essentially encourages readers to rest as part of anti-racist activism and thus, helps the community to continue to be politically engaged. Considering the various visual conceptions of the poem, I argue that the poem attempts to involve a variety of people in this participatory anti-racist and supportive culture.

To sum it up, Daley-Ward's poem speaks to a variety of BLM activists and supporters of the movement and calls them to rest, which is considered to be valuable for anti-racist activism within the online participatory culture. Visually, BLM hashtags and calls to action in the caption encourage readers to use the poem as a tool for anti-racism. The varying versions of the poem seem to also suggest that the poem is meant to be disseminated, which can be observed in the poem's comment section.

The next text I investigate was written and published by Yrsa Daley-Ward on the 16th of June 2020. It is spread over 2 slides and is a so-called 'Instagram carousel post' (Figure 16 and 17). Although this text is not a poem, I nevertheless include it here because Daley-Ward's poems blend in almost seamlessly with her more straight-forward prose statements on Black Lives Matter such as this text here. Namely, the visual design is similar in regards to composition, font, and color. In other words, line spacing (e.g. "even on the left only"), the choice of soft or bold colors to convey meaning, specifically with the help of green, and the style of typography are alike (Machin 106). Therefore, I consider the previously analyzed poems and this prose text a unit of meaning.

This long text contains politically charged elements, calls to action and it is essentially a critique of self-loathing behavior. The text's social context, thus, the BLM protests of June 2020, and the location tag BAM, a progressive art organization establish a connection between the text and the BLM movement. This is important to mention in order to understand that the text indirectly refers to racist behavior ("wrongdoing") and anti-racist efforts (Accept responsibility and take action.") within the context of Black Lives Matter. The poem's speaker basically wants the reader to move beyond the stage of 'being sorry,' so that energy and time is spent on actual anti-racist action.

Moreover, the modes color and layout contribute to the text's meaning. The speaker in the text

criticizes that activism or support for change should not stop after an apology for misbehavior.



Figure 16. Untitled Poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 16 June 2020.



Figure 17. Untitled Poem by Yrsa Daley-Ward, 16 June 2020.

This argument is visible in several instances: “Whether we like it /or not, it is very convenient to be *sorry*,” “we remain in a place of inactivity and / self-interest,” “we continue to center our own feelings and experiences rather than someone else’s,” and the speaker also describes this as “a fruitless place of self-loathing; the enemy / of positive change.” The tone is rightfully serious, but the layout and color used here soften the tone of the text to some extent. This softening works to establish a close relationship between the text’s speaker and audience. The pastel green background color is very soft and therefore conveys a subtle, gentle, and peaceful mood according to Machin (70). Machin (107) claims that a “line spacing and alignment” that is “even on the left only,” such as in this poem, signals a “relaxed feel” (107). Thus, layout and color serve an “interpersonal meaning” here, their function is to help to establish said close speaker-

reader relationship (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). This relationship, in turn, is important so that the audience identifies with Daley-Ward's texts.

Considering Daley-Ward's text as socio-political, it is important to mention that the text's speaker proposes to follow these activist actions: "dismantle old systems, shift / paradigms and unlearn our most deadly/ beliefs." "Deadly" in the context of racism and BLM likely refers to police violence and a racialized criminal justice system, which functions at the expense of Black lives (Delgado and Stefancic 2017). Acknowledging the existence of harmful, racist behaviors is a resistance strategy that Delgado and Stefancic also propose (2017).

Now I present the results of the netnography analysis in order to demonstrate how the text inspired readers to reflect on their own stance towards self-loathing behavior in the context of anti-racist activism. The 130 comments underneath Daley-Ward's text were written by female users of different ethnicities in the age range of 18 to 60 years (27 December 2020). The distribution among White, Black and other users was fairly equal. Most responses were highly supportive of the text's message. Some users even thanked the author for the needed reminder to stop apologizing and to start actively engaging in activism. A participatory culture with a close "social connection" between members who express a desire to support the BLM movement is seemingly at work here (Jenkins 4). For instance, "organizer and cultural worker" @carla_verita, who identifies as "Queer, disabled, #AfroLatinx Diaspora" commented on the text by stating, "This is very gentle wording and yet a direct reminder. I don't want to be sorry anymore, I want to be proactive." Another comment by a female, White user states "Agreed. White guilt is fruitless and toxic." This comment indicates that the user is rather progressive because she understands "White guilt." These two comments exemplify positive attitudes toward actual activist action, and they were presumably prompted by Daley-Ward's call to action. The users seem to be willing to participate in political engagement in the context of Black Lives Matter. However, I want to emphasize here that these two comments are only a performance of intent that does not necessarily correspond with actions. I have to conclude that the influence of Instagram poets is visible in some users' attitudes towards activist action.

To conclude, Daley-Ward's prose statement is an example of a number of texts that have been published on Black Lives Matter. Visual components such as composition or color work to establish a close relationship between text's speaker and audience. This relationship helps

readers to identify with the text's meaning, as is visible in the comment section. Users agree with the speaker's attitude to stop apologizing and to start acting in the context of anti-racist work. They profess this agreement via supportive comments and performances of intent.

The last poem that I discuss in this section is Cleo Wade's untitled, anti-racist poem that was published on the 28th of May 2020 (Figure 18). This politically outspoken poem was released only a few days after George Floyd was killed. The speaker makes use of various calls to action in the poem and Cleo Wade uses such calls in the caption to motivate readers to engage themselves in anti-racist activist work. The poem's speaker states that racism can only be ended when individuals start to look at racism's pervasiveness within everyday life, when they detect

its "ordinariness" (Delgado and Stefancic 2017): "Start by / healing it in your own family," "Start by / having the first conversation at / your own kitchen table." The speaker also adds that love for others can only develop out of a love one has for oneself

("Love yourself / so

much that you can love others / without barriers / and without judgment.") For the speaker of the poem, self-love is also a tool for anti-racism. For a White reader of the poem, self-love could be a starting point to turn inward and acknowledge one's own role in a racist society. Since most comments were written by White readers, this possibly applies here. For Black readers and women of color, who are frequently confronted with racist societal beliefs, so-called "deep frames," self-love means something different (Slatton and Feagin 297). For Black readers, self-love is an indispensable resistance strategy against assumptions that Black women are "overweight," for instance. This use of self-love as a tool for anti-racism applies to Black readers.

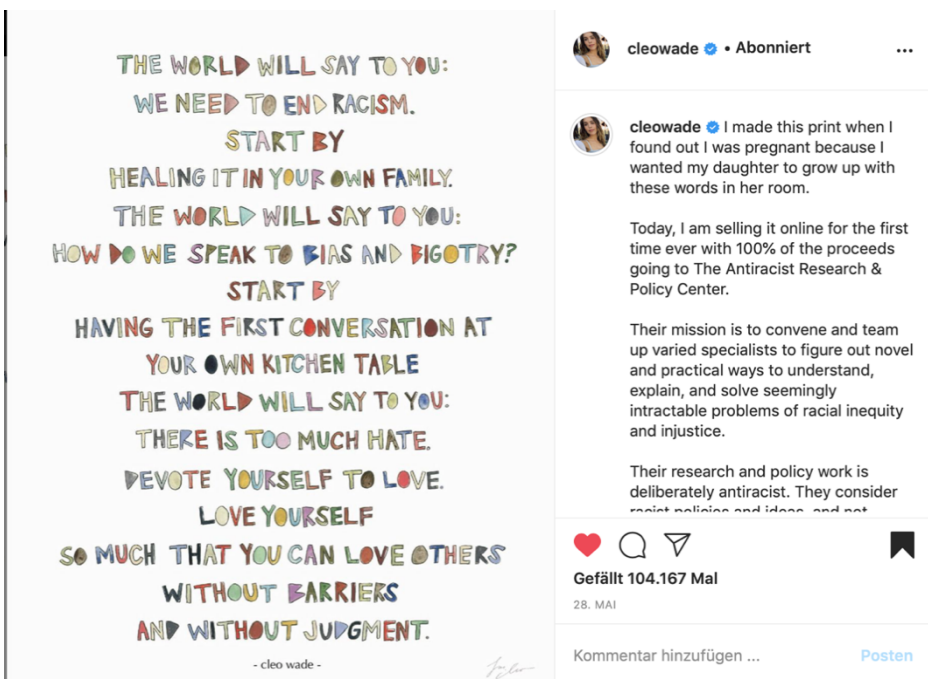


Figure 18. Untitled Poem by Cleo Wade, 28 May 2020.



cleowade 🌟 I made this print when I found out I was pregnant because I wanted my daughter to grow up with these words in her room.

Today, I am selling it online for the first time ever with 100% of the proceeds going to The Antiracist Research & Policy Center.

Their mission is to convene and team up varied specialists to figure out novel and practical ways to understand, explain, and solve seemingly intractable problems of racial inequity and injustice.

Their research and policy work is deliberately antiracist. They consider racist policies and ideas, and not

their research and policy work is deliberately antiracist. They consider racist policies and ideas, and not certain racial groups, to be the racial problem.

They strive to build an antiracist society of racial equity and justice.

Please join me in supporting their critical work.

Prints is 11x14 and available now on www.withlovecleo.com or link in bio

I love you.

27 Wo.

Other important elements of the poem are its paratext and color, which act as relevant meaning-making modes. Firstly, the poem's paratext is a highly important element of the unit of analysis. Wade explains in the caption that she supports *The*

Figure 19. Caption Underneath Untitled Poem by Cleo Wade, 28 May 2020.

Antiracist Research and Policy Center through the donation of her sold prints. She motivates her online community to do the same as she includes a call of action here: "Please join me in supporting their critical work." Secondly, color as a mode amplifies the activist dimension of the poem. The mode of color signals a certain dynamic in the poem. Various, bright colors that color individual letters are foregrounded through a contrast to the white background. Hence, meaning and power is granted to the colorful letters. The use of so many different colors also evokes energy and action, thus, features that are associated with activist work (Machin 79).

Considering the results of the netnographic analysis, the poem was commented on 845 times by female users, mainly by White women, between 19 and 60 years of age. (27 December 2020). This high number of comments is above average and can possibly be explained by the fact that Wade's poem was published only three days after George Floyd's death, thus, at the time of the BLM movement's resurgence. The White majority among the commenting users can also be traced back to the last peak of the Black Lives Matter movement. It was at the end of May 2020 and during June 2020 that large numbers of White people started to support BLM's anti-racist effort, (Jesse Washington 2020).

The majority of comments were positive and supportive of the poem's anti-racist message. To name an example, a young, White, woman named @itsjuliakathyryn commented on the poem that "The connection between self-love and racial justice is so important. Self-love is necessary for dismantling white supremacy. Thank you for sharing this." This comment indicates that the poem's and the caption's calls to action inspired the user to reflect upon the poem's meaning

and to ultimately understand self-love as a tool to combat racism. Many other individuals also reflected upon racial justice or anti-racism in their comments and others used emojis to express support for the poem's anti-racist message in their responses or to simply express gratitude for Wade's work. The poem's comment section also contains comments in which users tagged each other. Through tagging, new readers are attracted to the poem and this Instagram feature essentially serves to disseminate the poem's anti-racist stance among users and profile visitors. To conclude, this poem generates a supportive, self-reflexive and affectionate community that agrees with the poem's idea that self-love is, in fact, an activist tool.

To sum it up, Wade's poem uses color and paratext to emphasize the importance of anti-racist efforts. In addition, calls to action that advocate anti-racist activist action are an integral part of the poem and its caption. The poem's speaker also points to self-love as a relevant activist tool, which is in accord with users' sentiments in the comment section. The responses indicate that Instapoetry is an effective means of spreading socio-political ideas, statements, and calls to action.

6. Advocating Mental Health Awareness in Instagram Poetry

This chapter analyzes Instagram poems by Charly Cox and by Cleo Wade that deal with mental health struggles such as depression or anxiety. The theoretical framework here is based on Aisha Ali's (2002) conceptualization of feminist psychiatry studies with Michel Foucault's power/knowledge theory (1972-77; 1980). I use the following concepts that Ali proposed in her article "The Convergence of Foucault and Feminist Psychiatry: Exploring Emancipatory Knowledge-Building" (2002). Firstly, I will use the concept of "emancipatory knowledge building," which refers to the fact that individual experiences of women are connected to the collective group of women. Secondly, I draw upon the concept of "patient expertise", which is highlighted in feminist psychiatry studies in contrast to 'traditional' psychiatry. In addition, I use Foucault's notion of the restoration of "subjugated knowledges." Thirdly, I consider a subversion of "disempowering forces" and hierarchal structures for the establishment of a "plurivocal nature of knowledge production" within psychiatry (Ali 239). I use these theoretical concepts within a multimodal discourse analysis and within netnography.

6.1. Struggles with Depression

This section introduces Instagram poems that were written about struggles with depression. To begin with, the poem "Venlafaxine," which was published on the 30th December of 2019, is an

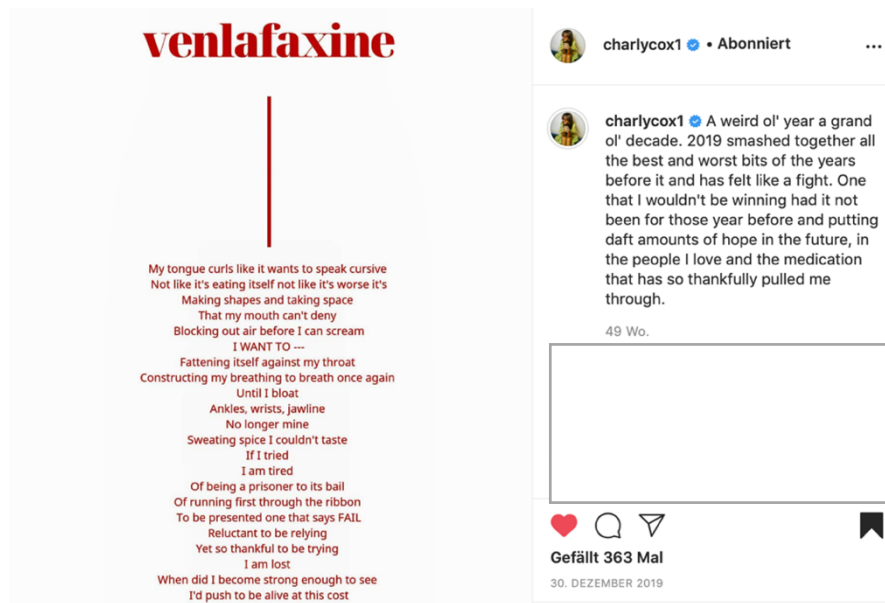


Figure 20. "Venlafaxine" by Charly Cox, 30 December 2019.

inner monologue of a speaker that struggles mentally but is eventually helped by the medication 'venlafaxine', an anti-depressant. To be exact, the beginning of the poem describes a loss of control over speech ("My tongue curls like it wants to speak cursive"). The speaker also mentions a loss of control over other body movements ("Ankles, wrists, jawline/ no longer mine"). After a while, in the second half of the poem, the speaker mentions that she is "tired" and that she is "reluctant to be relying" but "yet so thankful to be trying." Finally, she realizes that she is "strong enough." It seems to be the case here that the speaker felt mentally unwell but then tried medication, even though she did not want to be considered a failure because of that ("FAIL"), and ultimately felt better through the use of medication. The poem's meaning, therefore, seems to indicate that medication can be helpful in difficult mental situations.

Several features construct the meaning of Cox's text. I argue that paratexts are of paramount importance here as they help to understand the poem. The mention of "medication" in the caption helps to understand that it is, in fact, medication that helps the speaker in the poem to survive a difficult mental health crisis. This explicit mention makes the poem's reference to medication clear. It is important to emphasize that only the title ("Venlafaxine"), another instance of paratext, and the caption ("medication") name the anti-depressant. Without these paratexts, the poem's meaning, thus, the importance of medication, would not necessarily be clear for readers.

The poem's individual elements are not isolated but are linked in the text to clarify the object of the speaker's inner monologue. Namely, the poem's layout is a mode that establishes a visible connection between the title, thus, the medication's name "Venlafaxine," and the content

of the poem. The relevance of the title and the main text is emphasized visually through a certain composition and font size. To clarify, the “centre composition” of the poem symbolizes a certain “salience” that is granted to the text and the title’s enormous font size draws immediate attention to the title (Machin 2007). Another visual element, a vertical line, then establishes the connection between title and text in form and content. Thus, much focus is put on this link between the medication’s name and the main text with its speaker as main protagonist. Hence, it can be said that a connection between the named medication and the speaker itself is also established. It becomes clear that the speaker talks precisely about venlafaxine in the poem’s inner monologue through these visual elements, although the name of this medication is never mentioned in the main text.

Considering the poem’s speaker, I assume a female speaker here because I equate the poem’s speaker with the author, who is a woman. I draw this conclusion as Charly Cox, the author of this poem, usually writes autobiographical poems, which is a fact that she frequently discloses in poems and their captions such as in “Selective Felling” or in the poem at hand (Cox, 4 April 2018; 30 December 2019). Here, in the caption, Cox gives the reader relevant information to understand how the posted poem is related to her personal life. She describes her last year of life (2019) and mentions “the medication that has so thankfully pulled me through.” Hence, it becomes clear that the “I” in the poem is actually Cox’s personal voice or is at least influenced by her personal experiences.¹⁷

Through the description of medication intake and feelings during and prior to this healing process, the poem’s female speaker offers a valid “patient expertise” (Ali 239). Her feelings prior taking medication and also during the intake of medication are revealed as valid because attention is given to them throughout the poem. Historically speaking, it is highly important to allow such a patient perspective because this viewpoint was neglected and ignored for a long period of time in which only professional, sometimes harmful, psychiatric diagnoses by professionals were considered as valuable. Thankfully, nowadays, these “silenced voices” and “subjugated knowledges” of patients come to the forefront through Instagram poetry and other digital efforts. In the poem at hand, the mode of color supports this “foregrounding” of patient

¹⁷ I assume a female speaker in all mental health poems by Charly Cox in this section due to the mentioned reasons.

expertise.¹⁸ In this instance, red, the color of salience, is used throughout the poem and thus, highlights a patient perspective (Machin 79). Color, therefore, amplifies the importance of a patient-centered viewpoint. Additionally, high saturation levels of the color red in the poem indicate boldness, which again highlights the relevance of a patient expertise (Machin 71-72). Even though the patient perspective dominates the poem, it does not stand completely alone. The patient expertise builds a collaborative union together with the implied perspectives of professional, medical practitioners such as psychiatrists, which is a collaboration that is desired by feminist psychiatry studies (Ali 238-240). Although medical practitioners are not mentioned in the poem or its caption, the mention of medication in the paratexts alludes to them since medication can only be taken if prescribed by medical professionals. The Instagram speaker seemingly trusts the implied medical practitioner's expertise, which is visible in so far as she takes the prescribed medication. The union of a patient-centered and doctor-centered perspective contributes to the building of a "plurivocal nature of knowledge production" in psychiatry, which is "emancipatory" and inclusive knowledge production according to Ali (233-242).

As regards the netnographic analysis Even though the poem was only commented on eight times, the responses in the comment section were rather long and meaningful (1 January 2021). Overall, seven out of eight comments were written by White women in the age range of approximately 19 to 45 years. These comments can be described as supportive since they approve of the poem's message, some use emojis to express this approval. Additionally, five of these comments disclose personal experiences that relate to the treatment of mental health struggles with medication. Thus, the Instagram poem seems to have inspired users to share personal stories of mental health struggle and subsequent medication use within a supportive online space. This ability of Cox's poetry to help users identify with certain struggles or to be able to voice certain concerns considering mental health, is also an argument that Bronwen (89) rightfully claimed. I provide more examples of comments that were placed underneath "Venlafaxine" in the following paragraphs.

¹⁸ Mad Studies is an interdisciplinary field of scholarship that comprehensively considers the history of "survivor" perspectives in psychiatry among other issues pertaining to the field of "madness." Scholar Richard Ingram, who coined the term "mad studies," explains this interdisciplinary movement in his essay "Doing Mad Studies: Making Non(sense) Together" (2016).

A user that commented is a British writer and journalist. She stated that Venlafaxine helped her survive, two other female commenters agreed. For instance, @demllyod, a young woman interested in poetry, wrote: “Venlafaxine has saved me this year 💕.” Another commenting user mentioned the medicament “duloxetine,” and described it as another example of helpful medication as regards mental health problems. The users’ responses add patient-centered viewpoints about medication, thus, valuable information on personal experiences with mental health struggles and helpful medication, to the knowledge-corpus on mental health. This information is an addition to the professional medical expertise and knowledge they denote (e.g. “my doctor suggested”). Only this type of collaborative “knowledge-building,” thus, the consideration of professional- and patient-knowledge can be genuinely inclusive and “emancipatory” according to Ali (2002).

To sum it up, Cox’s poem focuses on the role of medication (“Venlafaxine”) with respect to mental health struggles. Venlafaxine is seen as helpful and its importance is highlighted via color, font, and layout in the poem. The netnographic analysis demonstrates that this kind of poetry helps readers to reflect on their own personal histories with medication and mental health struggles. In essence, the poem, its caption, and the comment section refer to a collaborative and “emancipatory knowledge building,” (Ali 237-239).

Another poem that I will examine is Cox’s Instapoem “Dysthymia” (see Figure 21). I state that the poem and the paratexts illustrate a patient-centered perspective. To begin with, the first instance of paratext, the poem’s title (“dysthymia”), reveals the reason for the unstable behavior of the poem’s speaker. The reason for the speaker’s unstable mental health is the illness “dysthymia” or chronic depression. She describes dysthymia symptoms as “uncomfortable, blunt language” and “screams and swearing.” The poem does not only include a description of the symptoms, but the speaker also adds how her mental state impacted her personal relationships. She mentions that although she cannot completely control this behavior (“[...] this thing / That I lost the remote for”), she is sorry that it hurt another person (“As I repent on how this thing / That I lost the remote for / Could ever make you feel I didn’t love you / In the deepest way I could.”)

In the caption, the second instance of paratext here, Cox adds that mental illness causes these

kinds of behaviors, but she stresses that “you are always accountable for how you make people feel and you are always capable of owning that and apologising, learning from it, doing better.” This means that she adds personal advice on how to cope with



dysthymia

It is uncomfortable, blunt language
No apology screens sincere
Enough for the screams and swearing
Of what it's made me do
It circles on my tongue
Bitter furs and tangs of acid
As I repent on how this thing
That I lost the remote for
Could ever make you feel I didn't love you
In the deepest way I could.

 Charly Cox

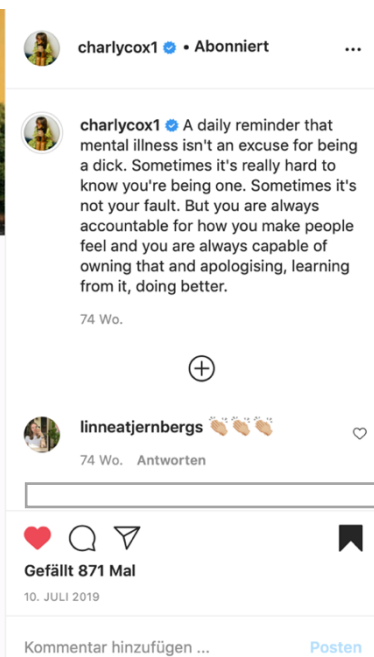


Figure 21. "Dysthymia" by Charly Cox, 10 July 2019.

dysthymia's effects on relationships. I argue that the individual perspective presented in the poem and the paratexts, i.e., the title and caption, illustrate Ali's notion of a "patient expertise" (2002). It lends power to the patient because it gives the patient freedom of (self)-identification to a certain extent.

The poem's layout exemplifies a typical Instagram poetry aesthetic. Namely, the visual mode of layout, thus, a "picture-text-collage" is a popular choice for Instagram poems (Penke 563). In the case of the poem "dysthymia," the photo-text combination was a collaborative effort between the writer Charly Cox and the photographer Peyton Fulford (@peytonfulford). This collaboration is made transparent through Instagram's "tag-feature." Cox tagged Fulford in this post, thus I can conclude that they worked together. Such collaborations between different artists are also a typical element of Instagram poetry. Thus, I argue that through these features Cox clearly positions her poetry within the wider field of Instagram poetry and the community of Instagram poetry writers.

A significant layout feature is the poem's strong visual contrast between photograph and text. While the photograph employs bright colors with low saturation that symbolize happiness and a relaxed mood, the text is written in serious monochromatic black on white (Machin 70). It is important to note that the photograph also contains text, namely a chain of rose-pastel letters that are put up on a yellow building that reads, "I fuck up a lot but I love you." This sentence

mimics the poem's last lines (As I repent on how this thing / That I lost the remote for / Could ever make you feel I didn't love you / In the deepest way I could). However, the tone of the text in the photograph is less serious due to the colors in the photograph. These bright colors lighten up the mood and add a light-hearted component to the highly serious text. To conclude, a 'humorous element is cleverly added to the photo-text combination, to a mental health poem.

As regards the netnographic analysis, the poem "dysthymia", similarly to "Venlafaxine," was also not commented on by many users. Only eleven comments were placed underneath "dysthymia" in total (1 January 2021). Comments underneath "Venlafaxine" were, however, long, while this poem's comments are rather short. Ten out of eleven comments were written by women, which supports Penke's (2019) notion of a predominantly female Instagram community. The female users are more or less between 19 and 35 years of age. Most of these users are White women, only two are women of color. The group of these women is comprised of two illustrators, a writer, a literary agent and writer, and another creative person, thus, numerous artists commented on this poem. The poem's creative aesthetic with its photo-text combination and humorous undertone possibly attracted these specific types of users. All of the comments underneath the poem at hand are supportive. For example, young, female writer @hana_walker_brown added three heart emojis to show support. Others used the emoji 'clapping hands' or appreciated Cox's writing style. I argue that "a strong support for creating and sharing one's creations," a feature of participatory cultures, is present in this poem's comment section (Jenkins 4). In summary, commenting users under "dysthymia" belong to a creative community of women that shares a high support for mental health awareness.

To conclude, "dysthymia" presents the serious issue of a patient-centric perspective on mental health in a visually appealing way. A photo-text combination with a humorous element presumably attracted female users from the creative industry to comment on this poem. The highly appreciative comments signify an online participatory culture that values individual and creative expressions of mental health struggles.

6.2. Generic Mental Health Issues

In this section, I will introduce two poems by Charly Cox that are about general mental health issues and do not contain a clear referent to a specific mental illness. The first poem under analysis was published on the 1st February of 2018. I want to state first that although this specific

Instagram post of the poem does not contain the poem's title (see Figure 22), the same poem was published several times on Charly Cox's Instagram page, each time with a different layout (e.g. Cox, 15 May 2019). Cox used the title, "Store of Strength" for the other versions of the same poem, this is why I am applying this title here as well. The title is just a direct quote of the poem's third and fourth line ("There's still a store of / strength").

Layout and color mirror the poem's content as they symbolically act as signifiers of a certain dark mood, which is caused by mental health problems. To begin with, Machin declares that monochromatic colors such as black



Figure 22. "Store of Strength" by Charly Cox, 1 February 2018.

and white signify "timelessness," "emotional intensity," and "uncertainties" (78-79). The scholar adds that the use of black and white is "symbolic rather than descriptive," which means that the poem's black and white aesthetic is highly symbolic, thus, the photograph is a symbol for the speaker's mental state. To clarify, a descriptive use of black and white would not ascribe any symbolic meaning to color but would only picture black and/or white elements as they naturally appear. When applying Machin's arguments to the poem under analysis, it becomes clear that, symbolically speaking, the photograph with the poem is a snapshot of a mental scene, thus, of the speaker's current mental state. The monochromatic colors achieve the effect of a snapshot of the speaker's internal world: A black and white filter ("timelessness") is applied to the following scene: Lots of pill packaging is spread on a blanket and an analogous notebook that is opened on the page of a handwritten poem, is placed at the center. When looking closely, one sees that someone must have popped some pills out of the medication packaging. The black and white dichotomy adds a stillness to the highly stylized scene, a "timelessness" but at the same time it conveys a dark, mystic, and sad mood ("emotional intensity") (Machin 78-79;

148). In addition, the monochromatic color scheme adds “uncertainties,” which are reflected at the content level of the poem: “Your mind is biased / And your brain is blind.” This means that the first half of the poem, the first two lines, are desperate and sad because the speaker experiences mental health problems. This dark mood is precisely visualized through the modes layout and color.

Despite the poem’s overall dark mood, the poem also includes an optimistic tone. The second half of the poem (“There’s still a store of / strength / left in you to find”) conveys a rather optimistic and hopeful attitude that stands in contrast to the first, negative half of the poem. I argue that the optimistic second half declares that even though there are sad times, “strength” can “still” (!) be found. The second half does not reject the statements of the first two lines but makes it clear that if someone experiences those “bad” times and struggles mentally, they are “still” strong. This statement is amplified by the use of paratext. Cox writes in the caption that “what you feel isn’t stupid, what you think isn’t daft, so what you say IS important.”

Following from the presented paragraphs, I say that the poem and the paratext imply that it is important to acknowledge the perspective of those with mental health problems. According to Ali, it is highly relevant to consider patient-centered perspectives in order to achieve a more inclusive picture of mental health struggles within feminist psychiatry and overall society (238-239). Eventually, such an inclusive picture should lead to better and more humane treatment options of mental health issues within psychiatry but also to a better perception of mental health problems within society.

This poem was only commented on five times, which results in a very short netnographic analysis (1 January 2021). Four poems were written by young females between 18 and 25 years of age and one was written by a young man, who is presumably 25 to 30 years old. One of the users seems to be a woman of color, while the others are White. All of the poems were highly supportive. For instance, @linneatjernbergs, a young, female graphic designer, commented on Cox’s poem with the following words: “Still one of my favourites,” which was liked by Cox herself and another user. Other users also complimented Cox’s poetry through supportive words or/and emojis. Thus, the meaning expressed in Cox’s poem and caption is supported by the small online community that commented on this poem here. They essentially support the acknowledgement of patient-centric perspectives that are presented in the poem (Ali 2002).

To conclude, this particular version of Cox's "Store of Strength" relies on certain visual features such as layout and color to convey a dark mood, which was caused by mental health struggles as the poem's text implies. The poem ends with an optimistic remark and this positive attitude is mirrored by the supportive online community, which seems to agree with patient-centered perspectives of mental health problems.

Another poem that deals with general mental health problems is "Selective Feeling," which was also written by Charly Cox (see Figure 23). The poem essentially describes mood fluctuations and various, contrasting mental states that the speaker experiences. These mental states are described with the help of the following words: "lazy," "sad," "defeated," and "bouncing off walls." Another mental state ("But then I'll start to hear / voices") is highlighted visually through dots around the noun "voices." Thus, the speaker outlines the inner perspective of a person that struggles with "extremes" throughout the poem. This Instagram poem is an appropriate medium for conveying mental health issues as it allows the poem's speaker to express difficult emotions through text and other visual markers.

The caption and the title, the paratext, and the hyperlinks guide the reading of the poem and help readers to grasp the poem's meaning. In the caption, Cox self-identifies with the speaker of the poem by mentioning that it is her experience that she describes in this poem. Thus, the reader knows that the presented information in the poem is autobiographical. In the caption, Cox declares that the above-mentioned fluctuations between mental states are caused by a loss of control, by the brain. She adds that "sometimes these extremes are powerful and productive and other times just punishing." Cox goes on to declare, "God would it be great if they could be selective feelings." This last word ("Selective Feeling") is also the title of the poem and indicates that Cox wishes to control the named mental states ("these extremes") by choosing those that are positive or helpful. Cox concludes her ruminations with three hashtags ("#poetryofinstagram, #poetry, #poetrycommunity"), thus, with the mode of hyperlinks. These hyperlinks not only add that it is, in fact, poetry that the reader sees but these hashtags link Cox's poem to other Instagram poetry and help to establish a supportive community ("#poetrycommunity") of writers, a participatory culture, in which members connect with each other and appreciate each other's work (Jenkins 4). The hashtags essentially help Cox to position herself as an Instagram poet.

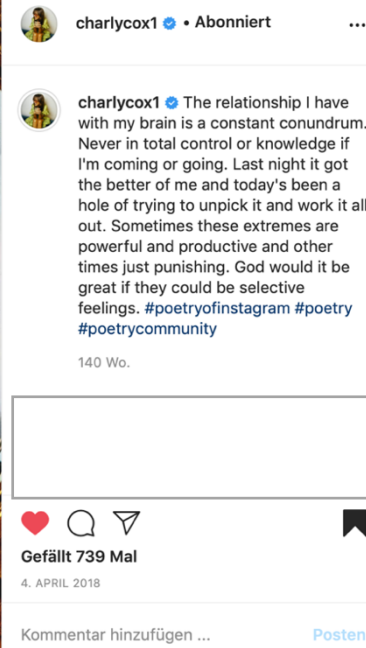
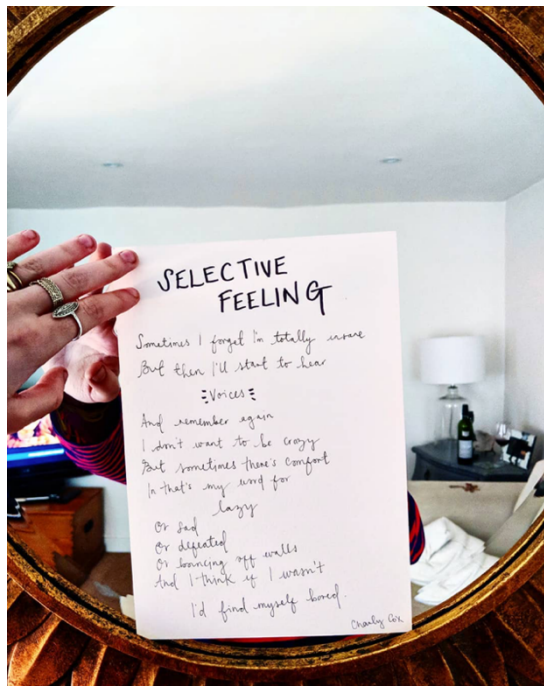


Figure 23. "Selective Feeling" by Charly Cox, 4 April 2018.

Another important factor that frames the poem's meaning is typography. Here, it is, interestingly, an actual handwritten poem on paper that is photographed and then posted on Instagram. The handwriting is very artistic, sophisticated and

contains flourishes. These flourishes are loops or circles for the letters, 'f', 'g', 'o', 'y', and 'z.' Their function is to evoke 'traditional' literature and a certain "nostalgia aesthetics" (Machin 102-103; Penke 299). I argue that the poem "remediates" its literary "predecessor" (Bolter and Grusin 45; Bronwen 89) since the purpose of this specific font is to express admiration for 'traditional' literature. Some aspects of traditional literature are subsequently transferred to the mental health poem. Through "remediation," the poem under analysis is then associated with seriousness and authority to a certain extent. This, in turn, grants authority to the speaker of the poem, the "patient" and her knowledge production (Ali 2002). It is henceforth easier to battle stereotypes about mental illnesses through such an acknowledgement of authority in the voice of patients.

Considering the results of the netnographic analysis, it has to be said that the poem was commented on by five users such as the last analyzed poem (1 January 2021). A White and a woman of color wrote two comments and two male users also posted two responses underneath Cox's poem.¹⁹ Gender is evenly distributed here, however, this distribution is not significant due to the low number of comments. Users are between 19 and 30 years of age and all comments are supportive of Cox's poem and its message. For instance, a woman of color thanked the

¹⁹ For one comment, it was not possible to assign gender as crucial information is missing, i.e., the person did not use a photograph as a personal profile picture.

Instagram poet for the poem. Another user wrote, “Thank you for putting stuff I hate about myself beautifully into words so I could try to love myself a bit more,” to which Cox responded, “such a lovely thing to say, thank you. Keep fighting the good fight. Ps 10/10 profile pic. X.” The latter comment indicates a high degree of identification with the poem’s speaker and their mental struggles. Thus, I add that “patient perspectives” on mental health within Instapoetry seem to help other patients as well. A supportive user interaction in this and two other comments also indicates an evolving participatory culture (Jenkins 4). This could be verified if the poem would gain more comments.

To conclude, Cox’s “Selective Feeling” and its caption simultaneously exemplify a nod to literature and digital features. The mental health poem visually refers to traditional literature with the help of its font, but the caption is comprised of distinct digital features such as hyperlinks that position the poem within the field of Instagram poetry. Concluding from the comment section, users identify with the expressed mental health struggles in the Instagram poem and highly appreciate this mental health poem.

6.3. Struggles with Anxiety

A poem about anxiety that I will investigate in this section is Wade’s untitled poem that was published on the 1st of May 2018 (see Figure 24). The unit of meaning, thus Wade’s poem and the caption, demonstrates a high degree of self-awareness. Wade claims the following in the caption: “I suffer with pretty intense moments of anxiety (I try not to say “I have anxiety” The unit of meaning, thus Wade’s poem and the caption, demonstrates a high degree of self-awareness. Wade claims the following in the caption: “I suffer with pretty intense moments of anxiety (I try not to say “I have anxiety” because I do not like to use my words to affirm what I am working through. I find the more power I identify with something the more power it has.” I argue that this self-awareness as regards naming habits is not only an example of a patient-centered perspective and “expertise” about mental health struggles that is brought up. The fact that the term “I have anxiety”, which is more commonly used in ‘traditional’ medical settings, becomes “I suffer with anxiety,” thus, a term that the patient herself chooses, is also an example of a subversion of “disempowering forces” (Ali 239). The poem mirrors this idea of rejection and subversion of ‘traditional’ labels when it comes to mental health problems, thus, “disempowering forces,” in line 1 to 3 at a content level (“This is not you. This / is something



Figure 24. Untitled Poem by Cleo Wade, 1 May, 2018.

which can be subverted, while others are “silenced.” In fact, Wade says in the caption that definitions are powerful. Thus, it is exactly at the level of definitions where Wade uses the ‘power of resistance’ as regards certain “norms of thought.” She does that through an incorporation of her own definition about her mental health status and thus, contributes to a “plurivocal nature of knowledge production” in feminist psychiatry in regards to mental health status(239).

Another element that I want to point out here is that Wade works to establish a close relationship with the online community, the followers. Wade writes in the caption that she “just wanted to share incase you might need it today. I love you.” Thus, she addresses her readers very affectionately as if she knew them personally. These words suggest a close relationship between author and audience. In addition, the mode font in the poem contributes to an also seemingly close relationship between the poem’s speaker and reader. The font resembles handwriting and contains a few visual hiccups such as “O”’s that are not perfectly colored (e.g. the first “O” of “door” in last line). These imperfections create a picture of “work in progress,” which is a technique that evokes relatability and seems to work to render the relationship with the audience even closer (Bronwen 90). This method, an establishment of relatability with the audience through imperfections, is used in various poems by Cleo Wade.

The poem is signed in a font with “a personal touch” that is reminiscent of handwriting (Machin

moving / through you.”) Ali explains that “forces of disempowerment function [...] at the societal level to silence certain modes of thought.” This means that definitions about mental health status also contain “certain modes of thought,”

98-99) and states: “Love Cleo.” It seems as though the speaker wrote a personalized note to someone. The poem’s brevity, a popular feature of Instagram poetry according to Penke (461), amplifies the image of a note. I argue that the font communicates a distinct subjectivity here, so it could be regarded as an attempt to personalize and humanize a text in the digital realm. This style of font also works to establish a close relationship to the online community.

As regards the netnographic analysis, the above-mentioned close connection between the speaker’s poem and the online community generated an extraordinarily high number of comments. 1030 comments were written underneath this poem by celebrities such as @katewalsh, by artists and writers, and by private people (1 January 2021). The majority of users were women of different ethnicities between the 19 and 60 years of age. When looking through this large number of comments, it becomes clear that the majority of comments is supportive and appreciative of the poem’s message. Some users shared personal experiences, some just supported the poem’s ideas, and others reflected on further notions that could alter perceptions of mental health. Numerous users tagged other users, thus, shared Wade’s idea as regards the naming of mental health struggles. I now present a couple of comments in some more detail.

User @olgamirt wrote: “🙏 Love you too ❤️ Also suffer from anxiety (+ more)”, which is a comment that relates the poem’s meaning to the personal experiences of the reader. This comment firstly suggests a close relationship between the online community and Cleo Wade. Affectionate language (“Love you too.”) suggests this closeness. Secondly, @olgamirt utilized Wade’s preferred way of naming mental health problems (“suffer from anxiety” instead of “have anxiety”). Thus, I argue that the user supports Wade’s idea, the patient-centric and empowering perspective and her rejection of “disempowering forces” (Ali 239). As such, this comment demonstrates the influence the Instagram poet seemingly has over her followers.

Other examples of supportive and personal comments include @earth_a_may’s two comments: “did even realize it but I really needed to read this today. This also applies to many other mental health issues” and “@cleowade thank you and we love you too! 💕💕.” The Canadian, 26-year-old woman establishes a connection to her personal life upon reflecting the poem’s and caption’s content. She also agrees with Wade’s arguments of a “patient expertise” and even suggests extending powerful patient-centric perspectives to “other mental health issues.” I argue that this reflection of mental health at the micropolitical level reflects the discourse of

feminist psychiatry (Budgeon 2001).

@nasimehe's, an artist's comment, "¹⁰⁰. I am so on board to change the entire conversation around mental health from 'I have to' to 'I am experiencing.' Like a cold, a fever, a cough – mental malaise can also come and go, and we (or at least many of us) have far more control over it than we have been led to believe. I truly believe this, Love!" further supports Wade's notion of a patient-centered perspective on language in regards to mental health.

These are only a few examples of a multitude of comments that signify how an individual woman's choice, namely the conscious choice to refer to one's own mental health struggles in a particular, empowering way, also empowers other women to think in the same way. This is why I argue that "emancipatory knowledge building" around mental health issues is at work here (Ali 238). Following Wade's argument about the power of wordings to change attitudes, I argue that the named examples together with many other instances prove that Instagram poetry as a verbal medium has such a power to influence societal perceptions of mental health.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, I have demonstrated in this thesis how Instagram poetry can advocate equality, anti-racism and an awareness for mental health issues. Fifteen texts by Instapoets Charly Cox (@charlycox1), Cleo Wade (@cleowade), and Yrsa Daley-Ward (@yrsadaleyward) proved that Instagram poems, their captions, and comment sections are, in fact, aesthetically appealing online spaces that work to combat racism, women's oppression, and mental health stigma. Concepts from fourth-wave feminism, critical race theory in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement and Michel Foucault's power/knowledge theory have helped to shed light on the socio-political dimension of Instagram poetry. They revealed how Instagram poets engage with current societal developments or react to certain socio-political events such as public sexual assault allegations in the field of politics or racialized police violence as in the case of George Floyd's death. Cox's, Wade's, and Daley-Ward's poems referred to rather current socio-political circumstances as the analyzed poems were published in the last five years, namely between 2015 and 2020. In essence, the analyses demonstrated that Instagram poems serve to deconstruct racist and misogynistic attitudes and prejudices about mental health struggles. Instagram poems by Cox, Wade, and Daley-Ward seem to empower readers to reflect on socio-political issues and/or to engage in activist action such as in protests or in petitions.

In the analysis, it became clear that visual features in Instagram poetry contribute to the dissemination of politically outspoken and/or activist messages. The results indicated how much meaning visual elements of Instagram poetry convey and that they are indispensable to achieve said socio-political objectives in the realm of fourth wave feminism, anti-racism, and mental health awareness. Theoretical concepts such as Genette's notion of "paratext" (Genette 2001), for instance, were extremely useful in the analyses to explain how meaning in Instagram poems is negotiated between various multimodal elements and accompanying descriptions such as the caption, the location disclosure and/or titles.

Methodologically, a combination of a multi-modal discourse analysis and netnography helped to examine the role of Instagram poetry's aesthetics. Photo-text combinations, photographs, and innovative 'carousel posts' are examples of such visually appealing Instagram poems. I discovered that certain modes such as typography, color, hyperlinks, and layout function as particularly relevant meaning-makers in Instagram poetry. The multimodal analysis shed light on the numerous visual elements that Instagram poets utilize to create a new kind of poetry. It has also demonstrated how visual and technical elements are able to emphasize certain parts of a poem or just connect one poem with a whole community through the addition of a hashtag, for example. These technical elements are precisely those where online activism comes into play and where poetry can easily become activist. Some Instagram poets, however, still hark back to 'book poetry' and use modes that are reminiscent of 'traditional' literature. Classical rhetorical devices were, of course, also considered and found throughout Instagram poetry. The second method, the netnographic analysis, yielded qualitative results about the online community's role as a highly supportive entity of fourth wave feminism, anti-racism, and mental health awareness. This method also proved that the largely female online community appreciates the efforts of Instagram poets to change socio-political circumstances. Several users related the socio-political messages to their own lives or disseminated the message by sharing the post with other users. Following a qualitative approach, I described separate comments in detail. In the future, it would be highly interesting to perform an additional quantitative study in order to (dis)prove if the qualitative findings are translatable to a bigger set of comments and data. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see how many commenters, in fact, translated their supportive statements into political action thanks to Instagram poetry.

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9. Appendix

9.1. Abstract

This master's thesis investigates the literary phenomenon of Instagram poetry in the light of its role as a socio-political channel and in regards to its visual aesthetic, which, in turn, is perceived as indispensable for the poems' socio-political meanings. With the help of a multimodal discourse analysis according to Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, fourteen Instagram poems and one prose text by Anglo-American poets Cleo Wade (@cleowade), Charly Cox (@charlycox1), and Yrsa Daley-Ward (@yrsadaleyward) are analyzed. To be precise, this thesis investigates the function of relevant modes such as hashtags, color, layout, text composition or typography within specific Instagram poems. The theoretical framework of fourth wave feminism, critical race theory in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement, and a combination of Michel Foucault's power/knowledge theory with feminist psychiatry studies serves to examine how the analyzed Instagram poems advocate gender equality, anti-racism, and mental health awareness. Moreover, this thesis also showcases how the online community, thus, Daley-Ward's, Wade's, and Cox's largely female Instagram followers, portray supportive participatory cultures in the comment sections of selected poems. For this purpose, Robert Kozinets' method of netnography is applied in this thesis. More importantly, the objective of this master's thesis is to contribute to the closure of the research gap in the field of Instagram poetry and of certain Instagram poets. This also thesis attempts to demonstrate how innovative visual modes convey socio-political meaning within Instagram poetry.

9.2. Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Masterarbeit untersucht das literarische Phänomen der Instagram Poesie (Instagram Poetry) unter den Gesichtspunkten des sozio-politischen Engagements bzw. Aktivismus und der visuellen Ästhetik, die hier als maßgebend für die sozio-politischen Botschaften der Instagram Gedichte erachtet wird. Vierzehn Gedichte und ein Prosatext der

anglo-amerikanischen Lyrikerinnen Cleo Wade (@cleowade), Charly Cox (@charlycox1) und Yrsa Daley-Ward (@yrsadaleyward) werden mithilfe einer multimodalen Diskursanalyse nach Gunther Kress und Theo van Leeuwen untersucht. Mit dieser Methode zeigt diese Meisterarbeit auf, dass relevante Modi, wie zum Beispiel Hashtags, Farbe, Layout, Komposition des Textes oder Schreibstil eine bestimmte visuelle als auch soziopolitische Funktion in bestimmten Instagram Gedichten erfüllen. Mithilfe der Theorie der vierten Welle des Feminismus, der Critical Race Theorie im Kontext der Black Lives Matter-Bewegung, und einer Kombination von Michel Foucaults Macht/Wissen-Theorie mit feministischer Psychiatriekritik kann festgestellt werden, dass diese visuellen Modi zu feministischen, anti-rassistischen Bedeutungen und einem Bewusstsein für psychische Gesundheit in den jeweiligen Instagram Gedichten beitragen. Außerdem wird die Rolle der Instagram-FollowerInnen der genannten Lyrikerinnen in den Kommentarfeldern ausgesuchter Instagram Gedichte betrachtet. Eine zentrale Aussage hierbei ist, dass vor allem weibliche Instagram Followerinnen hier eine partizipative und sich gegenseitig bestärkende Gemeinschaft im Rahmen der Instagram Gedichte bilden. Dazu werden Kommentare mithilfe der Methode der Netnographie nach Robert Kozinets analysiert. Das Ziel der Arbeit ist es, einerseits, die Forschungslücke im Bereich der Instagram Poesie - insbesondere in Bezug auf die genannten Lyrikerinnen- zu schließen und andererseits aufzuzeigen, wie neuartige, visuelle Elemente sozio-politische Bedeutungen im Rahmen der Instagram Poesie tragen können.