



## Post-Internet Fiction: A Critical Review of Digital Culture, Identity, and Stylistic Innovation with Reference to Patricia Lockwood's *No One Is Talking About This*

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### Abstract

This review paper summarizes the scholarly and critical responses to the book *No One Is Talking About This* (2021) by Patricia Lockwood. It puts the novel in the context of post-internet literature. Through cultural, feminist and narrative theories, the book's themes are explored by experts. Themes here are: Online identity, Internet and division of self. It also explores the experiments with internet language and the conflict between online and actual grief. The paper is organized by ideas. It explores some of the controversy about Lockwood's writing style and her employment of "the portal" as a metaphor. It also pairs the book with other contemporary authors such as Sally Rooney and Tao Lin. Lastly, the review identifies key knowledge gaps. In particular, it mentions the absence of other world perspectives on the Internet experience. It ends up suggesting that the novel is an important book of the digital era. It deserves ongoing study as post-internet writing grows into an accepted type of literature.

**Keywords:** Post-Internet Literature, Patricia Lockwood, Digital Identity, Narrative Fragmentation, Contemporary Fiction, Online Culture, Embodiment and Grief, The Portal

أدب ما بعد الإنترنت: مراجعة نقدية للثقافة الرقمية والهوية والابتكار الأسلوبي مع الإشارة إلى رواية باتريشيا لوكوود "لا أحد يتحدث عن هذا"

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### الخلاصة:

تلخص ورقة المراجعة هذه الردود العلمية والنقدية على كتاب لا أحد يتحدث عن هذا (2021) من تأليف باتريشيا لوكوود. ويضع الرواية في سياق أدب ما بعد الإنترنت. ومن خلال النظريات الثقافية والنسوية والسردية، يتم استكشاف موضوعات الكتاب من قبل الخبراء. المواضيع هنا هي: الهوية عبر الإنترنت، والإنترنت، وتقسيم الذات. كما يستكشف التجارب مع لغة الإنترنت والصراع بين الحزن عبر الإنترنت والحزن الفعلي. تم تنظيم الورقة حسب الأفكار. يستكشف بعض الجدل الدائر حول أسلوب كتابة لوكوود وتوظيفها لـ "البوابة" كاستعارة. كما أنه يجمع الكتاب مع مؤلفين معاصرين آخرين مثل سالي روني وتاو لين. وأخيرًا، تحدد المراجعة الفجوات المعرفية الرئيسية. ويذكر على وجه الخصوص غياب وجهات النظر العالمية الأخرى حول تجربة الإنترنت. وينتهي الأمر بالإشارة إلى أن الرواية كتاب مهم في العصر الرقمي. إنه يستحق دراسة مستمرة مع نمو الكتابة بعد الإنترنت إلى نوع مقبول من الأدب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** أدب ما بعد الإنترنت، باتريشيا لوكوود، الهوية الرقمية، التجزئة السردية، الرواية المعاصرة، الثقافة الإلكترونية، التجسيد والحزن، البوابة



## 1. Introduction

Patricia Lockwood is often called the “poet laureate of Twitter.” She is well-known as a unique voice in modern literature. Her writing mixes sharp wit, strange observations, and a deep understanding of internet culture (Garner, 2021). Her first novel, *No One Is Talking About This* (2021), was nominated for the Booker Prize. The book received high praise from critics. It explores online life and looks closely at human feelings in our digital world (Lockwood, 2021).

Lockwood's book was released around the same time as scholars started to take an interest in the phenomenon of "post-internet literature. Lockwood's book was published concurrently with the emergence of the "post-internet literature" trend of experts. In fact, she helped to expand this new field of study with her novel. This field explores art and writing in an era after the Internet has become commonplace. Internet has all but become a way of life these days. It is a part of everyday life – it is normal and sometimes mundane (McHugh, 2011; McNulty 2022).

Post-internet literature is not like a traditional digital story or cyberpunk. Those old books were frequently about the frightening future, or the wonderfulness of Internet spaces initially. Rather, post-internet writing focuses on the omnipresent internet. It reflects the transformation of the identity, language and perception of reality that digital life brings (McHugh, 2011).

Lockwood's writing style in his book is disjointed. Her creative nickname for the Internet is "the portal," and she is very immersed in it. This makes the novel a very relevant and significant piece of writing in this fast developing writing discipline (Lockwood, 2021).

The book isn't just about the cultural nature of the internet. It actually reproduces that culture in its style and basic concepts. The novel explores the nature of online spaces and their impact on identity and communication. It is also revealing of the influence of the internet on our deepest emotions. This makes the book an indispensable example to understand the core concepts in post-internet studies.

In this review paper, I will be discussing the academic and critical response of Patricia Lockwood's book, *No One Is Talking About This*. It examines in detail the ways that online identity is depicted in the book. It also discusses the fragmentary writing in the book and the conflict between online experience and human emotions.

This review, by compiling present studies allows the reader to see the importance of the book in culture and literature. It points out the main arguments about the novel. It also offers new paradigms to be followed in future research on internet writing.

## 2. Overview of the Novel



The book, *No One Is Talking About This* (2021), by Patricia Lockwood is somewhat unique in its two-part structure. The structure is crucial for the main ideas and critics' evaluations of the book (Lockwood, 2021). In Part One, the reader is plunged immediately into the disjointed, weird, and frenzied life of the protagonist. The Internet is her “portal”, and her life is almost completely affected by it.

This section has a writing style that is more of a stream of consciousness. It perfectly copies the feeling of endlessly scrolling through social media. There are a lot of rapid thoughts, viral posts, memes, silly conversations online, in the pages (Lockwood, 2021). The main character is an anonymous writer. Her hilarious and insightful blog posts made her an oddball Internet star. She lives in an online world where her ID is constructed and communicated via her online profile. This is the first part which definitely explains the mental state of constant use of the internet. It brings the thrill as well as the superficiality of online life (Chigbu n.d.).

Part Two of the book has a sudden and large shift in tone and emphasis. With a significant family crisis thrusting her out of her virtual world, the main character is quickly taken aback by her virtual life and its main character. Her baby niece is treated for a rare and severe disease. In the midst of this grave sickness, sadness and actual suffering, she has to rethink her relationship with the online world. It draws attention to significant concepts such as the existence of physical bodies, human fragility and the constraints of online communicating with real life pain (Lockwood, 2021).

As a result of this, the writing style of Part Two is more realistic, thoughtful and emotional. It shows the seriousness and urgency of the situation. Lockwood is an “extremely online” poet, as is her colleague, writer, and creator. She is well known for her razor-sharp wit and very witty remarks on internet culture. This context provides her a unique and real perspective on these challenging concepts (Garner, 2021). The latter part appears to be quite distinct from the former. It will serve as a useful counterpoint, though. It puts the story into real life and helps to tie in with the more important message of the book about the digital age. This contrast is highlighted in most of the expert reviews. They will consider the ways in which the ephemeral online universe and the inescapable physical reality are joined in the novel (Lockwood, 2021).

### **3. Defining Post-Internet Literature**

The notion of “post-internet literature” is now very relevant in the field of modern art and literature. This approach provides essential understanding of the impact of digital technologies in today's society. To grasp this concept completely, post-internet literature needs to be differentiated from other literary types that have been around for a while before the internet, such as digital fiction and cyberpunk. The early digital fiction (as opposed to the works of Will Wright) tended to



emphasize stories that played out in virtual reality or focused exclusively on uses of digital tools. A defining trait of cyberpunk was also its bleakly pessimistic depiction of what the future would look like with the domination of high tech. The writing of the post-internet starts, however, with a totally different premise. (McNulty, 2022).

Post-internet literature is an internet work, in so far as it assumes the internet to be a fact of everyday life. The Internet is not seen as a novelty, future concept or an exciting new object anymore. In contrast, it has been considered as an ordinary situation that is normal, regular and ubiquitous. It is important to distinguish between it and 'post Internet' as this term does not imply a time beyond the end of the internet as defined by Gene McHugh (2011). Instead, it's a cultural state that's a result of the internet's total acceptance into society.

In this concept, the virtual and real environment are seamlessly integrated. The online space isn't the place where people go to use the internet. Rather it is now a way of life (McHugh, 2011). This outlook has a profound impact on writer attitude to technology. The internet doesn't just serve as a tool, or as a setting. On the contrary, it is similar to the air we breathe, and is in constant interaction with thoughts, culture, and art of human beings.

In the book *Aesthetics of Interaction in Digital Art*, Katja Kwastek (2013) builds upon this entangled reality and investigates the interconnections between people and technology under the heading of 'post-digital'. She believes that there's a blurring of the lines between the physical and the digital. In many instances the two realms are indistinguishable (Kwastek, 2013).

This is a mix that shows that digital technology has become a tool within the tool. On the contrary, it has been introduced into human experience, its impact on people's ways of information retrieval, world perception and communication. The post-digital state is a state that takes away the conflict between the online and offline worlds, and makes them combine. Thus, today's writers are charged to investigate this complicated reality and to chart a world in which the Web is an integral part of humanity.

#### **4. Critical Themes and Scholarly Debates**

Some of the themes of the book have been pointed out by critics in Patricia Lockwood's *No One Is Talking About This*. All these ideas have started to be academically discussed. They also offer a number of ways of thinking about the book's interaction with the culture of the present day Internet.

The major topics covered in the book are: Identity online, the peculiar style of writing and the book's exploration of "Grief" to the highest degree. These crucial points are the focus of all the studies of Lockwood's work.

##### **4.1 Digital Identity and the Self**



4.2 The Information Economy and the Information Explorer Digital identity continues to be a key and controversial issue in literary criticism, as it is in the discussion of the current work of *No One Is Talking About This*. The novel is about the self being divided due to the omnipresence of digital. The narrator's life is defined by her digital presence, and herself is constantly divided. This results in a phenomenon where her real and cyber self are increasingly merging and intertwining (Lockwood, 2021).

This is a concept that corresponds to basics internet theory. This phenomenon was described by Sherry Turkle in her groundbreaking work, *Life on the Screen*, in 1995, which talks of the internet allowing a "split sense of self. The divide enables people to test out various facets of their identities in virtual places. This is evident in Lockwood's narrator, whose identity is not fixed, but is continually being produced and reproduced both in her social media posts and in the "portal" (Turkle, 1995) of her society.

This disintegration is aggravated by the paradox of connectivity and loneliness. In the *Swarm: Digital Prospects*, Byung-Chul Han (2017) claims that there is an overwhelming flow of information for online users. This state instills a sense of isolation, according to Han, even as people become more hyper-connected, the kind of connection is incompatible for human connection. The internet can instead serve to highlight a "swarm" of random data, and promote feelings of alienation (Han, 2017).

A. C. Chigbu agrees with this view, claiming that in Lockwood's novel, the digital world makes the human being "messy and broken. The narrator is diminished to just an element of the commonplace, shallow mind, thus making him feel "out of this world" while doing identity in a virtual space, Chigbu suggests. Lockwood effectively illustrates the potential separation of subject from his or her actual experience here (Chigbu, n.d.).

The conflict within the novel is the one between a sense of freedom in the online avatar and the sense of loneliness and loss of self. There are many critics that point out the narrator's failure to comprehend the difference between the internet world and the real world, and also the words and logic of the internet will get into her mind and her physical conversation. This indicates that the digital world is not just another part of human life, but a major part of it that influences the way that human lives live. This transition, therefore, has a great impact on mental health and social relationships (Weeks Mahoney 2022). The novel thus provides a valuable resource for the examination of the mental and philosophical implications of an 'extremely online' life, in which the boundaries of the self are constantly shifting, if not disappearing altogether, when it comes to the web.

#### **4.2 Narrative Style and Formal Innovation**



The narrative is one of the most original and interesting elements of *No One Is Talking About This*. The novel's first half is a close mimicry of the rhythm, structure and pacing of the internet. Uses a fast-paced series of disconnected sentences, incomplete thoughts, viral expressions and memes that mirror the cluttered, fast speed of a social media feed (Lockwood, 2021). Some critics say that this is the novel's representation of the online experience, while others doubt its sustainability as a style, dubbing the second half of the novel as a "bait and switch.

Writing about the novel, G. Garilli (2024) has a complex reaction to the approach, calling Lockwood's style "perfectly funny" and the novel itself "always falling apart". "It is also a book that is somewhat satirical and somewhat participatory," Garilli writes, "a parody of sorts, and a book that speaks to digital culture." This combination of elements gives it a humorous but serious tone (Garilli, 2024). This attitude shows that the novel is not just satirising the internet or copying its tropes, but is complex and critical towards the digital sphere. The voice is shaky and urgent, and readers are compelled to think about what they are doing themselves in the digital actions that are being shown on the page.

This narrative style, much like stream of consciousness or other modernist methods, is an innovation Lockwood brings to the scene: the "stream of scrolling. This form is not only a reflection of the internal mental state of a person, but also the way the inflow of information from the Web affects and influences the human mind. In today's day and age, this "binging" is an alternate coping strategy as described by Michael Dango in his book entitled, *Crisis Style: The Aesthetics of Repair* (2021). This means when the quantity of information an individual is taking in is too much, and they feel forced to consume information at a faster rate than usual (Dango, 2021). This is an appropriate description of the first part of the novel, in which the reader is swamped by a barrage of posts reflecting the protagonist's online life.

While some critics like C. Tan (2022) have doubted the viability of literature deeply connected to the language of the internet, most scholars have found Lockwood's style to be a powerful means of expression for the feeling of being "extremely online" (Tan, 2022). The novel is a masterpiece of narrative, a genuine writing of the web that has taken a rather strange shape of literature. Its linear plot and character development depart from traditional conventions, forcing readers to think differently about storytelling, moving from the traditional to a new paradigm that's more reflective of the now-fractured world of digital media.

### **4.3 The Portal as Literary Metaphor**

In *No One Is Talking About This*, Patricia Lockwood repeatedly calls the internet 'the portal. This central metaphor has been the topic of much scholarly attention because of its capacity to reimagine the digital world. Lockwood avoids the term



“internet” altogether, creating a somewhat strange digital world—sometimes magical, otherworldly, and even frightening, as it is a familiar, commonplace place (Lockwood, 2021). By making this selection of terms, the readers are forced to think about how they interact with online platforms, to think of them not as tools, but as powerful agents that have a strong impact on the human mind.

The term "the portal" has many interpretations, each of which highlights a facet of the digital experience:

- The portal symbolizes the constant draw of the Internet, as a symbol of addiction. It points to the challenge of unplugging from the constant flow of information, updates and social confirmation (Lockwood, 2021).
- A Shared Mind: It sees the portal as an immense network of consciousness in which the individual's mind blends with a collective, or "swarm" (Han, 2017).

This second view is more in line with the theories of Byung-Chul Han with the annihilation of the individual within a digital network. From this perspective, these networks are seen as a process of the degradation of the “I” in the collective of a faceless online community. As a result, the portal serves as a place where real life—“Real Life”—is lost for the sake of ongoing connection.

Moreover, the portal is a threshold; it is a place between the subject and the outside world. It's a piece of land that's close at hand yet far away. Users are connected to a global network, but they often feel very disconnected from what is happening in the here and now, and from the emotions themselves (Lockwood, 2021).

Academic work often revolves around the nature of this "duality" of digital life that this metaphor embodies. Often there is superficial, transactional interaction in the promise of a permanent connection and a sense of being everywhere at once which can leave people feeling disconnected from their bodies. The portal is a living part of the story, shaping the choices and thoughts of the characters. Because of its inherent ambiguity and ability to be read with many and deep meanings, it is a central component of the critical discourse about the novel.

#### **4.4. Grief, Embodiment, and the Digital**

The scene changes to real life crisis in the second part of *No One Is Talking About This* is the most important and impactful change in the novel. The story suddenly moves away from the comic disjointed logic of “the portal” and into the extremely personal writing on the topic of grief and the body. The protagonist's family tragedy starts with a rare, life-threatening diagnosis for the young infant family member, her niece. The first part (Lockwood, 2021) shows a shallow, ephemeral world that contrasts with this situation. This dramatic turn in the book is frequently considered the emotional heart of it, revealing the human weakness aspect of the book and the inevitable aspect of physical suffering.



This is the juxtaposition of the reality of physical suffering and the irrelevance of a digital discussion, that throws up important questions on the ability of digital culture to deal with or understand such a tragedy. Throughout the first half of the novel, the main character lives in a world where pain can be bought and sold: it becomes a meme, a viral post or a fleeting expression of performative outrage.

But in the second half, the protagonist's own grievances lead her to and from the furthest limits of the digital sphere, and the reader along with her. The internet is not a working place when faced with real, heartfelt crying. In this contrast, the nature of human experience is called into question, and the areas of true life are reflected. The novel suggests that online platforms can offer a form of distraction or a sense of connection, but they do not offer protection from the realities of life and death (Lockwood, 2021).

There are two main questions with which the academic discussion of this focus on grief tends to focus. Or is it a direct condemnation of the Internet, arguing that electronic existence is superficial and "no way" to connect to the "real" world of pain? In the first place, is the novel a condemnation of the Internet as a totally superficial way of life that fails to connect with real-world pain? Secondly, is the function of the shift to make the protagonist more human, to assure us that even the most "extremely online" can be said to still have a body to be in and universal human feelings (Weeks Mahoney, 2022)?

These issues of the virtual and the real, the artificial and the existential constitute a primary theme of critical evaluations of the novel. These conversations bring up the complex point that the life of the body in the here and now is a paradox: technology creates an experience of "connectivity," but it can't experience the flesh and blood body. Finally, the novel implies that birth, suffering and death are all very physical experiences and that they cannot be experienced within the portal.

#### **4.5 Feminist Readings and Online Culture**

*No One Is Talking About This* has often been seen through a feminist lens, revealing the particular circumstances of a female internet personality. The novel is about the particular gender aspects in "the portal", tracing the treatment of women's voice, image and story on the web. In the digital world these elements are often exacerbated, critically appraised, and transformed into products available for purchase and sale (Lockwood, 2021). As the narrator gains much attention in the online world, she is extremely susceptible to these gendered pressures and expectations. The internet is a hungry, public audience – her blog is always being read, reviewed, and analyzed.

These dynamics are analyzed in various ways, such as using cyberfeminist theory to assess the impact of online platforms on female identity. This framework is not just based on any single post the narrator has made, but considers how her identity



is built through the responses of her followers and the culture that is entrenched. The idea of "performativity" is central to such a discussion, as it involves individuals who self-create and self-exhibit a certain image to the public. The double edged nature of women's online visibility is explored, as the portal allows a means for women to express themselves and create a community but also leaves them open to high intensity scrutiny, harassment and pressure to keep up the image of a perfect digital presence (Chigbu, n.d.).

These gender politics are deeply rooted in the structures of an "extremely online" life. It is frequently discussed how the novel uses the digital "male gaze" to objectify and gaze at women's bodies and mind, classify and categorize them, and stereotype them. Furthermore, the commercialization of a woman's voice and image presents a significant challenge. Although online platforms offer women the opportunity to build a personal brand, corporate tech platforms ultimately exploit this content for profit.

Lockwood's work questions the actual power women hold within these digital spaces, suggesting that while the portal offers a visible stage, it also imposes rigid, predefined rules on how women must act and how they will be judged (Weeks Mahoney, 2022). Ultimately, feminist readings demonstrate that the novel serves as a powerful critique of image, power, and gender in contemporary digital culture.

#### **4.6 Postcolonial and Non-Western Perspectives**

The major gap in current studies is that most researchers focus only on Western views of *No One Is Talking About This*. This, in turn, is true of a much broader area of online writing. The lack of postcolonial and non-Western perspectives is evident throughout the current scholarship.

Lockwood's description of "the portal" is heavily weighted in favor of the Western world. It demonstrates a certain culture, level of wealth, and tech setup which is not necessarily shared by everyone (Lockwood, 2021). This narrow approach misses those living in the Global South and in other non-Western countries. These communities use, are impacted by, and have unique understandings of digital technology.

Consequently, there is an urgent need for studies on these themes outside of Western countries. This environment is where concepts such as online identity, fragmented stories, and the power of the internet must be re-examined. Researchers should determine if these ideas are similar or different in other regions of the globe. For instance, how does unequal access to the internet affect this? Furthermore, what is the significance of different cultural norms surrounding privacy, community, and self-expression to the concept of being "online"?



Roopika Risam's (2018) highly significant book, *New Digital Worlds: Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis, and Pedagogy*, is a wonderful resource to fill this void. Risam calls for a fresh approach to digital studies. She challenges the power dynamics embedded in digital platforms. She further examines the factors of maintaining global inequalities or questioning them through such technologies (Risam, 2018).

Building on this framework, new research might examine the hidden implications of "the portal." It appears to be for everyone, but it could actually operate for the benefit of old colonial systems. It does that by promoting Western means of talking, making content, and sharing culture.

However, studies might also identify cases of users from outside the West adapting these platforms to their own needs. Often they take advantage of them to create and develop their own forms of protest and resistance. Non-Western users can use social media apps in other languages or in separate regional groups. The comparison of these differences enables valuable insights into worldwide internet writing (Gall et al., 2023).

Finally, this type of research does not necessarily have to be confined to the field of book analysis. It helps to make a clearer and more balanced picture of the influence of the digital age on the world culture. A limitation of current research is the absence of these perspectives. A different method is needed to gain in-depth knowledge of internet stories.

## **5. Lockwood Within the Post-Internet Literary Tradition**

The book by Patricia Lockwood (2021) *No One Is Talking About This* is similar to other books written in the modern world. These writers are all involved in the conversation of the millennial identity, digital communication and how the 21st century is so lonely. It's best to compare to the likes of Sally Rooney, Tao Lin, and Ottessa Moshfegh. The study of Lockwood's work offers a glimpse into his distinctive role in today's internet literature landscape (McNulty, 2022). Examining Lockwood's digital emphasis in relation to or development of the themes of these three contemporary writers demonstrates this unique position.

### **1. A comparison with Sally Rooney. A comparison to Sally Rooney.**

Sally Rooney is an Irish novelist whose debut novel, *Beautiful World*, is set to be published in the UK later this year. Her second and third novels are respectively *Where Are You* (2021) and *Normal People* (2018), which were published in Ireland. She has in common with Lockwood. They both write about relationships in their early years and difficulty in communicating in a world saturated with technology (Rooney, 2021; Schwartz, 2019). The two writers are very skilled at presenting characters stuck in the problems of their day. Their characters do not get along well with being close to each other, being politically aware, and



expressing their characters in the digital world with a constant judgment. Rooney's books are centered on what goes on in the minds of her characters. She delves into their emotions and the subtle skirmishings between people.

But they've got very different writing styles. Rooney's style is concise and contemporary and she maintains a traditional narrative approach. Meanwhile, Lockwood's style is a lot more experimental. She imitates the broken, meme-heavy and silly slang of the internet as a direct copy (Lockwood, 2021). The difference illustrates that Lockwood's emphasis is on the nature of online talk, rather than on the nature of the changes it brings to relations. She is a writer at the fringe of the way that we write about online life.

## **2. How to compare to Tao Lin.**

Tao Lin has been regarded as a precursor of “internet style” fiction. In his novel Taipei (2013), he conveys a chilly, sarcastic and hyper-aware sense of online life. He includes chat logs, emails and social media updates in his story (Lin, 2013). Lin's work is often based on his own life. He portrays characters with a completely bound identity to their internet profiles. Lockwood agrees with Lin's objective of "show people internet language, feelings. Both writers are adept at capturing the monotony and profound concern that can be associated with being connected to the internet for a long time.

But Lockwood's virtual life is charged with an even more passionate emotion. That is clearly reflected in Part Two of her book. This section isn't just about demonstrating the nature of “Internet Culture.” Rather, it is the grief of human beings that is deep. It is a fusion of the online and the real, raw, physical life, real and raw human experiences (Lockwood, 2021; Chayka, 2021). Lockwood is a more emotional character than Lin. Implies a more nuanced combination of personal emotions and a digital life.

## **3. A comparison of Ottessa Moshfegh**

Ottessa Moshfegh has become popular for her distinctive voice in her books such as My Year of Rest and Relaxation (2018). She deals with issues of isolation, retreat from society and what we think of our bodies today (Moshfegh, 2018). She frequently depicts her leads as trying to overcome the burden and stresses of contemporary society. At times they resort to extreme measures. As a result, Moshfegh's characters are constantly fleeing; actively running away from the world in search of comfort in being alone or asleep.

Lockwood's narrator, on the other hand, is very immersed in the world via the “portal.” Moshfegh's physical departure from the world and Lockwood's digital immersion present a contrast in understanding of modern-day life. Despite being immersed in the online world, Lockwood writes that it is possible to feel a sense



of "detachment. The online detachment is later disrupted by the inescapable reality of experiences in the real world, however (Weeks Mahoney, 2022).

Ultimately, these comparisons highlight Lockwood's singular talent to make what it means to be "extremely online" feel palpable as a story. Her novel deals with more than just the internet as a topic. The structure, language, and the character's thoughts are built like the internet. This gives a reading experience that feels exactly like digital life. The book balances richly at the same time by delving into the actuality of grief. It demonstrates how far the internet can go when it comes to showing the limits of humanity. This is a huge facet of her writing that captures the digital world but also brings a universal human experience to it, making her a vital player in internet writing. She takes the field beyond using the internet as a mere theme, turning it into a deeper exploration of digital reality and what it does to human spirits (Lockwood, 2021).

## 6. Reception and Critical Response

*No One Is Talking About This* (2021) made a significant impact when it was published. The book was met with praise from critics for its fresh and true portrayal of today's internet life. They were very fond of the humorous and the broken-up nature of being online, enhanced by the sharp wit and insight into that nature (Garner, 2021). Lockwood's unique voice was also commented on by reviewers. They enjoyed her ability to capture the fast, meme-ful conversation of social media. This style was dubbed a "significant achievement in writing" (Garner, 2021; Chayka, 2021).

When the book was shortlisted for the 2021 Booker Prize, the success of the book increased even further. The novel was popularized through this famous award. This demonstrated that the "internet novel" was beginning to be recognized as a great genre of modern literature (Lockwood, 2021). The novel became known to a much wider audience around the world thanks to being shortlisted. It also generated increased interest from the mainstream audience as well as academic scholars. This resulted in more discussion of the themes and style of the book.

However, this widespread praise did not mean everyone was in full agreement, as clear distinctions emerged between everyday readers and academic critics. There were apparent distinctions between general reviews and professional research. The book received many common reviews that it was relatable and timely. Expert reviews examined more in-depth ideas, on the other hand. They spoke of the importance of her writing to the history of literature.

This division created two distinct sides of the argument. On one side, the fans commented on the book being a milestone book. They felt it completely illustrated how digital life influences our minds and thoughts. On the other side, the doubters had reservations. They feared the book was too much of a niche book or too dependent upon fads (Tan, 2022). For instance, some critics questioned whether



she could sustain her experimental approach over the long haul. They believed it could seem like a relic of the past sooner than later with the changing trends of the internet. Conversely, fans said that this is the book's very strength. They believed that documenting the ephemeral character of online conversation was an ideal means to demonstrate the veracity of the fleeting nature of the online age (Garilli, 2024).

Ultimately, these ongoing debates highlight the novel's status as a highly significant cultural artifact. Thus, the response to the book provides important clues towards the manner in which literature has blended with the digital world. It celebrates the obstacles and opportunities of making internet life accessible to traditional books. It also depicts the transformation of experts' understanding of books that combine online and real life. The overall response has been mixed – good points have been made, but there are other things which have not been worked out as well, as the book does make people think and talk. This helps to ensure the importance of this early 21st-century piece of culture.

## 7. Gaps in Current Scholarship

Despite the increasing body of research on Patricia Lockwood's *No One Is Talking About This* (2021) and web-based writing, there is still considerable research to be done. The gaps occur because it is still a relatively new book; that is why experts are beginning to study it. It's crucial to identify and address these missing areas. It will enable us to better comprehend the impact of the book and to enhance the research of contemporary Internet literature. In particular, current literature reveals four major gaps, stretching from regional limitations to unexamined disciplinary intersections:

### 1. The failure to incorporate postcolonial and non-western perspectives.

What is lacking in the existing studies is a postcolonial and a non-western perspective. The book is the subject of most reviews from the Western perspective. This is a snapshot of the life and culture of those surfing the web in rich countries. This focus is very limited and overlooks how technology is used and understood by people outside of the Global North and non-Western regions.

There is a serious need for research and studies in other parts of the world regarding the effect of themes such as online identity, broken up stories, power of the internet etc. Provide examples of how the digital divide and varying cultural norms about privacy affect the field of being “online”.

That is an important book that will help to remedy this gap: *New Digital Worlds: Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis, and Pedagogy* by Roopika Risam (2018). Risam is calling for a postcolonial approach to digital studies. She challenges the dynamics of power embedded in digital technologies. She further examines the role of such technologies to reinforce or question global inequalities



as well (Risam, 2018). The new studies might reveal ways in which the “portal” could assist and reinforce the traditional colonial structures, with a particular bias towards “western” devices of discussion and production of products. The latter could, on the other hand, demonstrate how these platforms are innovatively reimagined by non-Western users to voice their opinions and resist (Gall et al., 2023). So unintentionally overlooking these views is a huge problem and it's crucial to address if we are to have a truly global and fair sense of internet stories.

## **2. Missing Psychological Studies**

Very few deep psychological studies have been undertaken to consider identity and Lockwood's novel. Yet, there is a split of the self and online profiles with which critics engage, but I believe this requires more studies based on mind science or media psychology. This would provide us with factual information regarding the effect of "portal" thinking on the mind of the individual and mental health.

What effect does the constant exposure to a memetic world, which is now broken up, have on our thoughts, emotions and identity? Further research is needed in the following areas: mental consequences of 24/7 on-line life, psychological influence of internet likes on self-esteem and the effect that screens have on the brain. The region offers a lot of possibilities for study of books in combination with psychology.

## **3. Lack of comparisons with non-English texts.**

Another thing that's not there is a comparison of this book with non-English internet fiction. It's easier to try to compare with English language authors such as Sally Rooney or Tao Lin at this moment. But a broader perspective, encompassing books in languages and cultures other than English, reveals that internet writing is an indeed international phenomenon.

These research studies might uncover common principles of online life which can transcend borders. Meanwhile, they could feature different cultural perspectives. This would take the field away from its present concentration on books in English and provide a more balanced perspective of literature on the Internet.

## **4. Unknown Long-Term Impact**

Lastly, due to the recentness of the book, the long-term effects of the book on culture are not known. Additional research is required to trace the development of the novel into subsequent literature, talks by experts and public perception of Internet culture. With the internet's evolution, so will the significance and meaning of Lockwood's work.

Finding these gaps shows great areas for new research. It maintains the study of internet writing vibrant, just, and worldly. This intensive investigation is needed



to understand what it means to live in our digital world, as depicted in contemporary books.

## **8. Evaluation of Critical Approaches**

Reviewers are asked to write in the form of a style that they are used to responding to literary works. To a degree, these reviews can be studied to reveal their merits in terms of the book's comprehension. It also reveals their shortcomings in the sense of capturing its deep meanings. This section will examine the best arguments, and it will identify the areas of agreement and disagreement among experts and give a clear stance on debates.

### **8.1 Strongest Arguments: A Balancing Act**

The best are the studies by G. Garilli (2024). The novel is a "joke" that always falls apart, according to Garilli. This is a good argument because it is a reflection of the intention to create tension in Lockwood's writing. She mocks about internet on one hand, and gets involved with it on the other.

Garilli's perspective is beyond the binary of "joking about the Internet" vs. "being all things Internet. Instead, it emphasises the book's multiple interactions with its digital object. It is essential to get a point of view on the nature of Lockwood's humor. It doesn't just exist for entertainments! A kinky device which makes readers confront their very own web usage. Garilli's reading highlights the distance that is being traversed, and therefore the conflicting and mournful impact the book has on the reader. This is another essential component for the comprehension of Lockwood's distinct voice.

### **8.2 Some criticisms of the "Gimmick" View**

But others deride the experimental approach to writing in this book as a ploy or a fad. It is a very deep writing and is rooted in a theme to explore and these reviews tend to miss the point. As C. Tan (2022) pointed out, such criticisms, which question Lockwood's broken, ungrammatical prose, miss the point. Not only does she use the internet vernacular, she also crafts a somewhat disjointed story. They're needed to demonstrate what it's like to be "extremely online. These reviews usually disparage these things as "noise" and forget about considering the overall concept of the book's structure. The style is quite reflective of the digital fragmentation and information overload it entails. This adventurous style is an artist's will to strengthen better studies. Beyond the boundaries of ordinary books! It defies the traditional notions of plot and character development and depicts a new kind of mind formed by digital media (Weeks Mahoney, 2022).

### **8.3 Areas of Agreement and Disagreement.**

There's one lesson everyone seems to have learned from this book, and that's that the book does a nice job of capturing the essence of digital life. It's a



comprehensive deal, Lockwood has managed to make the internet's disjointed logic coherent into a well-organized literature. She portrays all the stealth fears, craziness and feelings in online life with a straight face. But, the emotional core of the book can be a point of contention. This is unexpected transition to Part Two and the strong emphasis on grieving. This change is widely regarded as a significant “human touch”. They feel it demonstrates the shallowness and weakness of the Internet when suffering from real world pain. However, other professionals question whether this change is in sync with the preceding funny character, or whether it only looks as if it's another story (Lockwood, 2021). The tension between these two elements is the primary puzzle for the reader: How can they come together in this book, with such sharp and funny internet humor juxtaposed with such a serious examination of personal tragedy?

#### **8.4 The next steps in my learning and my position as a researcher.**

My point of view on these discussions is that Lockwood's book is a very significant book. It successfully helps us navigate through the labyrinth of digital and real world. The book creates different visions of its style and themes, which is what gives this book its richness, mystery and depth. I believe this clean division between Part One and Part Two isn't a typographical error. Rather, it's a conscious decision that mirrors the central theme of the book: Despite all the internet technology, there is still a sense of real connection, vulnerability and sorrow in real life experiences. The Internet affects our mind but it can't save us from the profound realities of human life.

Thus, further research is needed that investigates the moral and philosophical implications of "the portal" as a "shared mind. Research needs to explore the impact it has on our moral rules, relationships and empathy in the present. Moreover, the emotional combination of go-wherein-versus-go-whenever in the book would reveal why it speaks to us. Lockwood's novel invites us to know the internet more than just as a novel. It makes us aware of ourselves in its huge grip, and therefore it is an essential text for the contemporary book studies.

#### **9. Conclusion**

In *No One Is Talking About This* (2021), Patricia Lockwood presents a groundbreaking exploration into the digital world through a sharp and penetrating look. Existing research has been reviewed to prove that the novel charts and reconciles the intricate relationships between digital identities, disoriented narrative and the highly charged tension between digital and human existence. The book moves from being thrown into the bizarre meme-laden world of “the portal” to a moving, surprising turn into the world of sorrow. Through this, Lockwood's writing encourages the reader to look at the consciousness of the Internet, and what impact it has had on the capacity to connect with others in a meaningful way.



The formal innovations of this novel put it in a prominent position in the field of post-internet literature. This is particularly true in the way it mimics internetese and describes it as a “perpetual parody,” a concept that is lost on anyone who’s not a troll. It is not just a reflection on the digital context, but the online structures themselves - and that is disruptive of literary conventions, and extends the narrative beyond the traditional. Further, the theme of digital identity explored throughout the text has implications for the impact that online environments have on and produce an identity as well as a sense of community. All of these elements have interesting parallels with the theories of Sherry Turkle (1995) and Byung-Chul Han (2017) on the fragmented self and the isolating “digital swarm,” respectively.

The novel has been widely praised by the critical reception, but important blind spots in existing scholarship stand out, including its literary qualities and its authentic portrayal of an atmosphere and voice quite different from those of any other novel. There is a need for more research in postcolonial and non-Western theories as well as more in-depth psychological and comparative studies, suggesting fertile fields for future research. These interdisciplinary and globally informed attempts will add to the comprehension of the effects of “the portal” on various populations around the world. Furthermore, these future studies will follow post-internet fiction as a truly global genre of literature.

*In fact, No One Is Talking About This* is one of the most introspective works of literature trying to cope with digital culture. As knowledge about post-internet fiction increases, Lockwood's novel will be a central and important reading experience for the internet's profound influence on the modern subject's reading, writing, and feeling. It's always been so compelling because of its ability to describe the paradoxes of a hyper-connected and disconnected life and to serve as a mirror and criticism of the digital age.

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