

Posthumanism OR Using Digital Technologies To Analyze Online Identities In Manjula Padmanabhan 'S Harvest

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Abstract

The present research focuses on the analysis of posthumanism and online identities in Manjula Padmanabhan's play Harvest through the lens of digital technologies. The play explores the interplay between human and non-human characters in a digital and new media landscape, providing a platform to examine the complexities of online identities. One can find out that the digital technologies are depicted as integral components of the characters' lives, shaping their identities and interactions.

By utilizing digital technologies, the characters in Harvest navigate a world where online identities blend with offline realities. The play presents a critique of the potential pitfalls and dangers associated with digital technology, including the loss of agency, the erosion of privacy, and the manipulation of online personas. The research aims to analyze how Manjula Padmanabhan portrays online identities in Harvest and examines the implications of digital technologies on the characters' lives.

Keywords: *commodification, digital technologies, Harvest, identities, human and non-human, posthumanism, Katherine Hayles.*

Introduction

Technology has transformed human into posthuman. Hence, posthuman theatre explores the consequences of human interaction with technological systems. It is increasingly difficult to explain the difference between living and nonliving things in the burgeoning development of the new media. The playwrights' image of the future, in which culture and technology merge, is beautifully reflected in posthuman drama. The posthuman, as a modern concept, finds its residence in the realm of digital and new media, where interaction between humans and non-human objects is 'commonplace. In her play Harvest, Manjula Padmanabhan makes posthuman visible on stage by depicting both human and machine characters. Through her dramatic portrayal, she criticizes themes like unemployment, machine replacement of humans in the workplace, as well as the resulting alienation, and the horrific reality of organ trafficking.

Since literature deals with human experience, technical innovations have grown in importance as they have been subject of interest in literature. Besides human characters, some authors have also begun incorporating digital ones into their works. In posthuman play, human

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diversity is given as much stage time as the representation of technical devices. Distinctions between living things and inanimate objects become murky in digital environments where machines can communicate with one another.

The play takes place in Mumbai in 2010, in the tense flat of a poor family. It tells stories about Om, the main character of the play, and his family. When Om loses his job as a secretary, the whole family has a hard time making ends meet. The whole family lives in a small one-room apartment. This includes Om Prakash, a stressed-out clerk who is out of work, his wife Jaya, who has learned to live with uncertainty, Om's frustrated and self-centered mother, and his younger brother Jeetu, who secretly works as a gigolo.

The Harvest project depicts an image of a family that is enveloped in turmoil and disorder. Om and Jaya's marital relationship is unstable, and it is noteworthy that Jaya is engaging in a clandestine affair with her brother-in-law Jeetu. The character of Om's mother is portrayed as being self-centered, with her affection being primarily directed towards her eldest son, Om, due to his role as the provider for the family. The subject exhibits feelings of jealousy towards her daughter-in-law, Jaya. The aforementioned quartet is confined to a loveless and contrived relationship, resulting in a sense of confinement within the limited space of a single-room dwelling. Amidst economic adversity and emotional deprivation, Om assumes a leadership role in seeking a resolution. In order to provide for his family, Om elects to vend his bodily organ to a global corporation, receiving a finite sum of currency in exchange. Om has been employed by the multinational corporation InterPlanta to provide his healthy organs to a financially prosperous recipient from the Western region.

Manjula Padmanabhan is distinguished for departure from ordinary theatre traditions and for her involvement in posthumanism through her play Harvest, that is set in a dystopian future, with the "body" that takes center stage. The play draws a contrast between the wealthy but sickly First World body and the poor but healthy Third World donor body. The disparities between male and female bodies, between the aging and the young, and between the real and the virtual body are only a few examples of the many variations.

Harvest is an innovative play that deals with the shady business of selling organs in India. In Harvest, set in a 2010 version of Bombay, Om Prakash, a poor and unemployed husband is the protagonist of the play, used to be the breadwinner for his family but is now unemployed and accepts to sell his organs to a firm called "Inter Planta Services Inc." to get a small fortune. Om, his wife Jaya, and his mother, Ma Indhumathi, live in a one-bedroom apartment under the insensitive rule of InterPlanta and the receivers, who are focused on maintaining Om's health. In this case, the receiver Ginni, a beautiful wealthy American lady keeps tabs on the couple via "videophone or video contact module," a form of digital communication, and treats them condescendingly at first before ultimately having Om's sick brother, Jeetu, donated organs.

Padmanabhan's Harvest sheds light on the prevalent practice of organ selling in India through the portrayal of a financially disadvantaged family who resort to selling their organs as a means of survival and poverty alleviation. The term "harvest" pertains to the act of gathering or collecting crops. The title "Harvest" appears fitting in the present context, as the play delves into the matter of procurement and collection of human organs in India by specific factions that subsequently vend these organs within India and overseas. The play portrays the Om household members as being ensnared by the flesh market prevalent in India, which is primarily under the control of Western powers.

The subject matter of *Harvest* extends beyond the impact of human organ trafficking on impoverished communities, encompassing the pervasive influence of technology in human society and its ultimate governance thereof. The play portrays the conflict between humanity and technology in the struggle for dominion over individuals, and the exploitation of advanced electronic technology by economically powerful entities and intermediaries to manipulate the financially vulnerable segments of our populace. Padmanabhan's play highlights the significant role played by an individual's economic status in shaping the trajectory of their life. The Om household is compelled to engage in this abhorrent trade due to the presence of poverty and unemployment. The theatrical production commences with the characters Ma and Jaya anticipating the arrival of Om subsequent to his routine search for employment. Both parties are apprehensive about Om securing employment as failure to do so would result in their inability to sustain themselves. Om's previous employment was terminated due to his inadequate proficiency in computer-related competencies. Padmanabhan's discourse pertains to the impact of technology on impoverished individuals such as Om, who lack proficiency in computerization and technological advancements. Concurrently, the aforementioned technology has been utilized to deceive individuals, such as Om, into relinquishing their organs for sale.

Om gets a job at InterPlanta Services Inc., where, he's willing to sell his organs to a stranger under Ginni's advice. The origins of selling changed Om's family, as the family was supposed to be more comfortable, but the relationship became more exhausted than when they lived in poverty. Ginni, a computerized character, pays Om to have a healthy lifestyle so that she can harvest the organ. As Om and Ginni move in together, she begins to dictate his every waking moment, from the time he eats and sleeps to the people he interacts with and even how he uses the bathroom. With the use of the Video Contact Modular—a digital communication tool—Ginni manages to exert authority over entire family. This modular system also foreshadows India's digital transformation and its progress toward global integration. The contact modular places the most essential installation of communication between the donor and the receiver in the middle of the room. The module revolves over the room to face each corner of the room, allowing the receiver complete control over the donor (Om and his family). In the year 2010, this contact module can serve as a model for digital communication.

Themes of globalization, cultural conflict, and the war between man and machine are explored in *Harvest*. Manjula Padmanabhan demonstrates the pervasive impact of online media on our daily lives. The antagonistic character Virgil, posing as Ginni, seduces and controls the family of Om by using "Cybernetic Circuits" to reveal his identity. Donors and recipients utilize the new identifier of the digital arena. In this *Harvest* primarily reveals how the first world exploits the third through wireless communication.

Donors and recipients' use of video contact modular as a primary means of digital communication is central to the plot. Smartphones, laptops, projectors, and other digital world electrical gadgets have made global digitalization possible in the modern day. Padmanabhan explains the effects of digitalization on society by examining the way in which television influenced the development of Om's mother. This helps to illustrate how the spread of technology has altered people's perceptions and values.

The analysis of Padmanabhan's play has positioned the issue of organ trafficking within the framework of economic relationships between participants from the Third World and the First World. However, the play has not garnered much scrutiny in relation to the influence of cyberculture, which permeates the text and adds complexity to the portrayal of corporeality as a reflection of identity. It exemplifies how far-reaching the influence of new media is in

dissolving the distinction between human and technological identities. The study makes an effort to interpret Padmanabhan's play as a text that both anticipates and resists the arrival of the "posthuman." The protagonists and antagonists alike hope to go beyond their human nature and physical bodies. Recipients hope for the ability to obtain "new bodies" through the use of technological devices or organizations. Donors, meanwhile, are lulled into an unequal exchange by technologically simulated dream states of fantasy that make them willing to sell their bodies and identities to "improved" First World capitalist buyers.

The play takes place in a society where all discussions regarding the legality, morality, and ethical implications of organ sales and transplants have been resolved, and the market for organ trading has become firmly established. InterPlanta Services, a fictional multinational corporation within the play that facilitates these activities, serves as a notable illustration of the increasing significance of global capitalism.

This play draws attention to the unequal power dynamics between the First World and Third World. The donor Prakash family is lured by the promise of a better life, but this leads them to engage in the morally questionable practice of organ sales. With the promise of "instant money," Virgil, who represents a First World recipient and poses as Ginni steals the poor family's honor and identity. Padmanabhan expressed her objection to this method of operation in this play. Jaya, Om's wife, challenges this hegemonic structure by insisting on personal touch and interaction with the First World receiver. She would rather die honorably than have to give up her culture and heritage as a person from the Third World.

In addition, the play conveys another central theme that reflects technology's seductive power over contributors from developing countries, which is also highlighted as a jumping-off point for posthuman perspectives. The drama accomplishes this by employing futuristic technology and a dystopic environment. One such device is the "Contact Module," which allows us to observe Ginni solely through a screen hung from the ceiling; we never see her in person on stage.

Katherine Hayles in her book *How we became posthuman* focuses on the relationship between humans and machines, and how technology shapes our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. She argues that digital technologies, such as computers and virtual reality, have the potential to transform our notions of embodiment, consciousness, and agency. She explores these themes through the lens of posthumanism, which challenges traditional conceptions of the human as a separate and autonomous entity.

To apply Hayles' theory to *Harvest*, one could look at how the characters' interactions with technology impact their independence and subjectivity. The play raises questions about the commodification of the human body and the potential dehumanizing effects of technology. The characters in *Harvest* are both empowered and constrained by the technological systems that control their lives. This raises questions about the boundaries between human and machine, and how technology mediates our experiences and relationships.

Hayles' theory also emphasizes the materiality of the body and the ways in which embodiment is shaped by technology. In *Harvest*, the characters' bodies become objects of exchange, reduced to commodities that can be bought and sold. This raises questions about the nature of identity and personhood in a world where the boundaries between human and machine are increasingly blurred.

1.1. Posthuman and Identity

The play is a postcolonial and posthumanist protest against a scary future where people have no place. The goal of the 'technologized' body is to replace the physical person. It heralds a shift in emphasis from the individual to the collective, from balance to disequilibrium, from the physical to the mental. The shifting ideas of the western self-provide the foundation for the posthumanist assumptions that are necessary for placing *Harvest* in perspective. Throughout the play, identity is a thorny issue. Virgil, the ailing American guy of advanced years, has manifested as a blonde, fair-skinned "youth goddess" (Padmanabhan 2011, p. 217) over the course of fifty years. The yearning for a more "perfect" physical appearance is implied. Padmanabhan pokes fun at the consumerist ideals of the West which glorify and commercialize superficial qualities of our appearance and character. Ginni, with her snarky, nasal twang, and Virgil, with his "cigarette ad," smooth, and sensual accent, call to mind Marilyn Monroe and John Wayne, respectively. Posthumanist philosophy centers on the desire to transcend human limitations and faults by using biotechnology to multiply and disperse the "self." Yet, the roots of this concept can be found in American stories about people making significant changes to their lives.

Cressida Heyes's critique of these narratives as a byproduct of modern Western culture that "desperately strives to restrict the teenage, female body through exercise, plastic surgery, cosmetic creams and other types of discipline and control" is used by Danielle Dick McGeough in her essay (87,102). This preoccupation with physical transformation, however, has entered the technological age courtesy of globalization and the forces of capitalism. The concept of "cyborgology" has emerged as the new language of identity.

The field of Cyborgology, as described by scholars such as Chris Hables Gray, Steven Mentor, and Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, is focused on the analysis and characterization of the complex and intimate relationships between humans and machines. (Zylinska 2002, p. 34). For the better part of two decades, scientists and engineers in Japan, the United States, and elsewhere have been working on humanoid robots that can perform and look like humans. The goal is to build a digital stand-in for the human that can take on his characteristics and behaviors. The First World leverages its technological superiority and the spread of globalization in its dealings with the Third World. The author have made an effort to connect the play's technology to the "cybernetic circuits" (Nayar 2010, p. 8) that facilitate the separation of subjectivity and identification. Nayar argues that the body is no longer necessary for the formation of "subjectivity" or "identification". In the cybernetically enhanced posthuman state, it permeates every aspect of society. The 'Contact Module' is crucial in hiding Ginni's true identity while allowing her to keep tabs on Om's family. This keeps her at a safe distance from the squalor of the Prakash family's house, the colonization (or production) location.

1.2. Resistance to Posthumanism

In *Harvest*, the concept of resistance is explored from Ginni's point of view. In Act III, scene 2, Jaya hears Virgil's voice, and his eagerness to purchase the bodies of vulnerable Third-World donors positions him as the ultimate beneficiary of the First World. The disembodied voice emanating from the spinning and fiery Contact Module instills a sense of fear and apprehension in Jaya. Virgil replies that Ginni was a "Nothing" when Jaya inquires about her. Nobody. A wet dream that was computer-animated" (Padmanabhan 2011, p. 245). Ginni, a young, attractive woman, represents Virgil's schemes to entice his intended prey. She is a basic cyborg with no connections to the world of human physical limitations or wholeness. Throughout the play, we witness her visage and hear her trembling voice, leading Ma to affectionately call her an angel. The Prakash family perceives the gifts she bestows upon them as nothing short

of extraordinary occurrences. Due to the physical distance facilitated by her location, she always appears just beyond their grasp. Even her fleeting image remains elusive, as the Contact Module swiftly moves away whenever a donor, whether Jeetu or Jaya, attempts to touch it. Ginni embodies Haraway's predictions of a connection between humans (organisms), animals, and machines, which disrupts the established dynamics between nature and culture. This aligns with the underlying myth of the cyborg.

In Act III scene 1, it can be observed that the InterPlanta guards erroneously apprehend Jeetu under the impression that he is Om, subsequently leading to his temporary detainment and eventual return while being heavily bandaged. The realization of the separation of identity from the human body is a distressing phenomenon. The individual's attire, consisting of white garments layered upon each other, coupled with the application of bandages to his/her facial and cranial regions imbue him/her with the semblance of an unidentified apparatus, a being devoid of distinct facial features. The subject has undergone a transformation into a cyborg entity, featuring ocular implants and a visor apparatus. This posthuman form initially experiences a state of disembodiment, followed by a process of re-embodiment, ultimately facilitating a transition into an alternative consumer body. Jeetu is captivated by Ginni's imagery, which is transmitted directly to his brain. Paradoxically, the complete manifestation of Ginni, the virtual projection, to Jeetu was only achievable by transforming him into a resemblance of her machinic self. The subject projects visual representations of her physical form onto Jeetu's cognitive faculties, inducing a state of captivation that leads to his acquiescence to additional removal of bodily organs. The physical form that Ginni presents to Jeetu is merely a digital manifestation, representing the carnal yearnings of the human body. The phenomenon in question appears to be a satirical representation of the constraints imposed by the human body and its spatial boundaries.

Jaya refuses to look at Virgil when he tries to make eye contact with her via the Contact Module. When she looks back, a hologram of Jeetu greets her. Padmanabhan characterizes this 'apparition' as follows: "There is no longer any visor across his eyes, he seems entirely cured. His haircut, the revealing clothes he wears, and the way he carries himself, along with his startling new expression, hint at a metamorphosis beyond the realm of physical health" (Padmanabhan 2011,244)

Finally, Jaya speaks out against the concept of 'fluidity' in personal identity. She doesn't accept Virgil's presence in the 'body' of Jeetu she once knew. She ignores Virgil's assertions that he is in love with her and rejects his advances. He claims she has met the lips that are speaking to her now and the body that will implant a kid inside her. Jaya wonders aloud if the voice coming from inside Jeetu's body is actually asking who the father of her unborn kid is. Is the baby Jeetu's because of the body, or Virgil's because of the sperm donation? Concerns about ownership and paternity are intrinsically linked to identity issues.

Even though Virgil suggests a painless technique, Jaya insists that she wants the pain, the agony, of childbirth. As a means of liberation from the dominance of imperialist Civilization, she embraces the restrictions and unattractive features of her own body. If the InterPlanta guards knock down her door and compel her to obey, she plans to take her own life as a final act of defiance. She's figured out how to win through losing. Jaya is not willing to let the First World colonizer use her womb as a testing ground for his attempts at immortality and self-preservation.

1.3 Posthumanism in Padmanabhan's Harvest

Padmanabhan's play *Harvest* explores the concept of posthumanism through its depiction of a dystopian future where human bodies are commodified and harvested for their organs.

Posthumanism is a philosophical perspective that challenges traditional notions of human identity and advocates for the blurring of boundaries between humans and technology. In *Harvest*, Padmanabhan presents a society where the wealthy elites, known as the "First World," have the power to purchase and harvest organs from individuals belonging to the "Third World." These individuals, known as "donors," are kept in a state of suspended animation, referred to as "storage," until their organs are needed. This commodification of human bodies reduces the donors to mere objects, highlighting the dehumanizing consequences of a society driven by profit and exploitation.

The play raises ethical questions about the value and dignity of human life. It challenges the traditional understanding of the human body as a unified and autonomous entity and instead presents it as a collection of replaceable parts. The characters in the play struggle with their own identities as they confront the reality of being reduced to organ providers. It explores the theme of control and power dynamics. The First World exercises complete control over the lives and bodies of the donors, treating them as disposable resources. This power dynamic reflects broader societal issues of inequality, imperialism, and the exploitation of marginalized communities.

Posthumanists believe that the human mind serves as the source of one's unique identity, and that the human body is the original prosthesis that may be modified and enhanced in various ways. It discusses the mingling of human and technological identities in the digital age. It also recognizes the mind as an independent entity from the other parts of the human body. Hayles believes that:

From a posthuman standpoint, the human body is considered our initial prosthesis that we become skilled at manipulating. The act of enhancing or substituting the body with other prosthetic devices is seen as a continuation of a process that started long before we were born. In the posthuman perspective, the human being is seamlessly integrated with intelligent machines, erasing or obscuring the boundaries between physical existence and computer simulations, cybernetic mechanisms and biological organisms, and the goals of robots and human aspirations. (3)

Hayles also points out that posthuman established within and by particular configuration of culture and technology. She emphasizes how informational patterns are changing from the human body to other physical items. According to the principles of posthuman subjectivity, the mind is an independent entity from the physical body. Since the posthuman body is seen as a prosthetic entity that can be exploited to extend the lives of the wealthy, reconstruction is performed on this hybrid of a material entity and a collection of different components. The underprivileged people, however, have no other choice but to resort to organ trading for their own survival. Therefore, organ transplants give rise to illicit practices such as organ trafficking, abduction, and cloning. In reality, posthumanism serves as a critical alternative viewpoint that challenges human-centeredness and the unethical utilization of technology, often referred to as "technocratism." Hayles has delineated the Posthuman perspective, which highlights the augmentation of human life through technological advancements, medical interventions, surgical procedures, and digital innovations.

Even if cutting-edge innovation unquestionably improves people's quality of life, posthuman dystopian literature warns of the perils of anthropocentrism and other forms of popular humanism in order to debunk these ideas. As a devastating critique of human progress, posthumanism is an important concept. People have benefited from the innovations, but some worry that they are turning them into techno-slaves.

Posthumanism is portrayed in Manjula Padmanabhan's *Harvest* (1997), where the Prakash family must adapt to the digital technologies exported from the West. The play's author has been hailed as a pioneer of electronic writing for its use of digital technology and computer-generated characters. Padmanabhan develops works in which digital and human characters hold meaningful conversations with one another. The play's use of technology and Internet reflects the aftereffects of the posthuman on the dramatic arts. Padmanabhan develops works in which digital and human characters hold meaningful conversations with other. The play's use of technology and media landscapes reflects the posthuman's effect on the dramatic arts. Padmanabhan pushed the boundaries of playwriting in the twenty-first century by including robot characters like Video Couch, Virgil, and Ginni in his play. Rather than really being there onstage, Virgil's image is projected by the use of the electrical device Contact Module. She has even played cloned employees of Virgil's company. The actions of cloned characters are dictated by their master. *Harvest's* posthuman circumstances are damning indictments of modern culture, which uses technical artifacts and casts humanity aside. The piece also raises questions about technological obsolescence and the reduction of personal space. Instead of using cloned bodies of organ trafficking victims in her films, Padmanabhan promotes them to human status through her work. Instead of accepting death as an inevitable part of life, she may have used stem cell technology to regenerate necessary organs in labs, thus challenging the human essence of mortality and extending the death. However, the playwright continues to focus mostly on the possible risks associated with a diminishing job sector as a result of the intervention of new technology. The fact that machines and other forms of intelligent technology are increasingly replacing humans and/or configured with them in the workplace is something the world has to face. She also brings up the fundamental concerns of digital literacy in arguing what the meaning of being human is, pointing out how one group has an advantage in this area while others are left behind. The former exploits the latter while taking all the essential advantages. A bioethical dilemma is presented by the government's apparent indifference to the legalization of organ trafficking. The dramatist says nothing about the state's role in interfering with concerns of human exploitation. Padmanabhan's economically disadvantaged third-world individuals are portrayed as organ donors for affluent and sickly first-world characters like Virgil. The body in the posthuman future is just a prosthetic for the rich to live longer.

Om Prakash, a young man who was unemployed, fell prey to the flesh market operated by the fictional corporation InterPlanta. The corporation provides cloned guards with a starter kit that can be installed in the donor's residence to facilitate ongoing surveillance. The dialogue between the InterPlanta security personnel and Om elucidates his lack of familiarity with the operational mechanics of the installed apparatus. As per the introduction of the play by Manjula Padmanabhan, it is indicated that the guards are cloned bodies. This is evident from the statement, "Guard 3 is a male clone of Guard 2" (6). Virgil engages in the production of cloned bodies for the purpose of serving his needs. The individual identified as Om lacks knowledge regarding the functionality of the starter kit. The individual appears to possess a lack of knowledge regarding the operation of the technological apparatuses present within their residence.

The Prakash family's abode has been technocolonized in that the stage directions have been taken over by technology. The apartment is private and off-limits to all comers. The play's stage directions make it quite obvious that technological gadgets are meant to be portrayed onstage. The playwright's attempts to manifest how the world of technology occupies the human world are clear here. Stage directions describe how the apartment is turned into a high-tech home filled with shiny gadgets:

"There are the gadgets- TV set, computer terminal, mini-gym, an air conditioner that works. To the rear and light, there are two cubicles containing the bathroom and toilet. The changes are functional rather than cosmetic. Jaya looks better dressed than before, but not significantly altered by the change in her circumstances. Ma is wearing a quilted dressing gown and is watching TV, upstage right. Om is wearing a fluorescent Harlequin tracksuit and sits at the computer terminal". (Padmanabhan, 34)

InterPlanta's services might be seen as infrastructure for organ farming, in which the company actively pursues donors by attempting to entice and alienate their friends and family. The improved quality of life afforded by these amenities did little to heal the emotional rifts that had developed within the family. The posthuman setting of the play is reflected in the apartment's whole electronic makeover, which creates a "union of the family with the intelligent machine" (Hayles 2). With all of these gadgets around the house, it might be easy for the family's focus to drift away from one another and toward the technology. The complex technology in the Prakash's flat makes their living situation increasingly precarious. The donor's loved ones receive full service from Virgil, a computerized figure. Inadequate government protections, widespread unemployment, the power of multinational firms, and a lack of specialized education are all possible causes of family exploitation. In *Harvest*, Om plays a donor for an American Ginni and offers him with all the care he needs to keep his organs in good condition for transplant.

While international businesses are conducting commerce of organs beyond national lines, Padmanabhan avoids writing about state government. She just expresses the result of misuse of new technologies in medical fields. Despite taking place in Bombay in the year 2010, the central government plays a relatively little role in the plot. In fact, this appears to be an effort to expose the true nature of multinational businesses operating in the shadow of democracy. The playwright reflects posthuman settings in which humans are reduced to property of capitalist institutions. After Om has auctioned off his organs, Jaya reveals: "I'll tell you! He's sold the rights to his organs! His skin. His eyes. His arse. Sold them! Oh God, oh God! What's the meaning of this nightmare! (To Om) How can I hold your hand, touch your face, knowing that at any moment it might be snatched away from me and flung across the globe!" (21)

However, Om has no idea what he has agreed to in signing this deal with InterPlanta. Virgil receives an artificial organ and skin made from Om. When it comes to overcoming the effects of aging and illness, technology is a lifesaver. According to posthumanist theory, the human body is a "original prosthesis" (Hayles 2) that can be modified to accommodate artificial augmentations. Virgil is not alone in his pursuit of a longer life span through the use of prosthetics. Since Om no longer legally owns his body, Jaya feels uncomfortable touching him. Om and Jaya's marriage is strained as a result of Virgil's constant monitoring of the family's activities. The panopticon jail makes her uncomfortable, so she avoids physical contact with her husband.

ContactModule is an electronic device that is used to keep an eye on the Prakash family. Ginni keeps her family in line and tells them what to do to keep Om's organs healthy. She tells them off if they don't eat when it's time. Ginni could show up at any time through the ContactModule, which makes the family members afraid. They are trapped in a media landscape where technology is used to keep an eye on them. She is a virtual, animated character, but the Prakash family who is unconsciously under her control thinks she is a real person.

The way Padmanabhan writes about electronic characters shows how, in a posthuman world, human and non-human characters seem to be basically the same. Ginni uses a device to

show Jeetu nude photos, which piques his interest in her. As a gigolo, Jeetu believes that Ginni is a genuine individual who will offer him a favorable employment opportunity. Virgil, a technologically adept individual from the first world, deceives Jeetu by presenting him with a digitally manipulated image of Ginni, portraying her as a real woman. So, the latter gets caught up totally in a cruel plot involving a man from the first world whose organs are taken to be used in transplants later. He doesn't know the difference between a virtual body and a real one. Ginni's posthuman form is made to possess human beings' souls with technology and then the matter of their organs can be taken would be fully controlled. Using the ContactModule, Virgil gains insights into their personal lives and manipulates their emotions according to a predetermined plan. Upon discovering that Jeetu works as a gigolo, Virgil shows him explicit images of a virtual woman. During the initial phase of the organ harvesting process, the InterPlanta Guards mistakenly apprehend Jeetu instead of Om. They tamper with Jeetu's eyes, replacing them with something else. As a result, Jeetu can only perceive images of Ginni that are directly transmitted to his mind. Over time, this relentless exposure to Ginni's images compels Jeetu to develop an unwavering devotion to her, driving him to do anything she asks of him.

"JEETU: I'd never seen her, till just now! I thought she was an old woman! You never told me she was so... so young! And beautiful. Why didn't you tell me, Jaya? JAYA: You didn't seem interested"... we hardly discussed Ginni at all.

"JEETU: I saw all of her, you know! Standing there, wearing almost nothing! And she kept moving, like this, like that... wah! I could have her, right there and then! JAYA: But she wasn't real"! (72)

In reality, Ginni's body is merely a screen onto which an image has been projected. She uses the family's electronic device, ContactModule, to monitor and manage everyone's schedules and routines. Virgil manipulates Jeetu by making her fantasize about a beautiful white woman. In order to see everything, Ginni uses a device that transmits visual information from the outside world directly into his brain. In *Harvest*, we see questionable practices like organ transplantation and the use of deception to gain a patient's trust. Animated and static images are becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish thanks to technological advancements. According to the authors' claims in the book's introduction, Judith Halberstarn and Ira Livingston say: According to the authors of *Posthuman Bodies*, "Posthuman Bodies came into existence" as a result of "postmodern relation of power and pleasure, virtuality and reality, sex and its consequences" (03). A more technologically advanced group of people in society dominates those who are less advanced. After Jaya's question is answered by Virgil, the play's plot comes full circle. As a critique of the profiteering in the surrogacy and organ transplant industries, the play is effective:

"VIRGIL: We look for young men's bodies to live in and young women's bodies in which to sow their children... We lost the art of having children".

JAYA: How can it be?

VIRGIL: We began to live longer and longer. And healthier each generation. And more demanding... soon there was competition between one generation and the next old against young, parent against child. We older ones had the advantage of experience. We prevailed. But our victory was bitter... We support poorer section of the world while gaining fresh bodies for ourselves.

JAYA: And it works? You live forever?

VIRGIL: Not everyone can take it. We fixed the car, but not the driver! I'm one of the stubborn ones. This is my fourth body in fifty years". (Padmanabhan 86)

A sick American man named Virgil has used four different bodies as prosthetics. He is fitted with a novel prosthesis in order to extend his life. He encourages Jaya to start a family so that they can harvest their organs and repopulate their desolate planet. During this metamorphosis, Virgil is unable to reproduce. "The posthuman body is a technology, a screen, a projected image; it is a body under the sign of AIDS, a contaminated body, a deadly body, a techno-body; it is, as we shall see, a queer body." Virgil's body is a hybrid of different types of bodies that have managed to stay alive for a long period of time. Virgil is a highly developed technological being who uses cloned bodies and needs to harvest organs to keep himself alive. The playwright's questioning of the causes of things like declining fertility rates and unethical organ transplants is one interpretation.

It is revealed in the play that Om's mother is also addicted to the world of machines. She has ordered a "SuperDeluxe VideoCoach model XL 5000," a fictional self-sufficient electronic equipment that, as Agent 1 explains, offers a variety of amenities to its user. In the play, the Agents are the identical cloned bodies that perform the role of Guards. The device is delivered after they modify their look. Padmanabhan describes the Agents in the cast list as "space-age delivery-persons" whose "uniforms are fantastical touching on absurd," similar to the attire worn by servers in upscale restaurants in far-flung countries. In many ways, they perform the same functions as the Guards, but it is important to make it clear that they are not part of the same organization (6). Cloning involves creating a body to act as a conduit between the donor and the recipient. The wealthy donor's family is distracted from their gratitude by the array of high-tech gifts that the first-world recipient presents. Om's mother becomes estranged from her children. Eventually, she stops caring about anything beyond the VideoCoach. An Agent elaborates on the capabilities of the electronic device, saying:

AGENT1: This is the organic-input interface, the hydration filter, the pangro-meter! Here you see the Lexus Phantasticon which is programmed to receive seven hundred and fifty video channels from all over the world! There are ten modes seventeen frequencies, three substrate couplers, extra sensory feedback impulses and cross-net capturing facilities! All media access: satellite, bio-tenna, visitelly and radiogonad. (Padmanabhan 78)

By using VideoCoach, Om's mother (Ma) is able to be more independent despite her physical restrictions. The play develops as a reflection of the dramatic shifts inside the Prakash family. In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Donna Haraway describes a cyborg as "a mix of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction," and thus Ma becomes a cyborg (149). Ma gives up trying to help her son and instead focuses on enjoying her newfound ease and luxury. She spends the entire performance occupied by her self-contained technological device. She is physically onstage, but she totally focuses on VideoCoach. To Om, she embraces machines and she has become a loveless woman. She spends all of her time inside the artificial environment, cutting herself off from society outside of it.

The widespread availability of electronic devices for amusement has undoubtedly contributed to people's growing sense of isolation in recent decades. In posthumanism, we question what causes individuals to become reliant on technology like smartphones, tablets,

desktops, videogames, etc. Excessive use of technology transforms humans into techno-aliens. New media creates an oppressive environment for the family in the play. Virgil uses technology to exert power over others so that he can harvest their organs and extend his own life span.

Padmanabhan is against the commodification of economically disadvantaged individuals in the developing globe. She raises doubts about all story devices through Jaya's performance. She criticizes the Guards when they install electronics in their flat and finds the InterPlanta food to be revolting. Jaya takes extra precautions to avoid falling into the digital abyss. Over the course of the play, she avoids turning on the tube. She insists that she has not used VideoCouch on her mother-in-law. Through the ContactModule, Virgil comes to Jaya in the final act, looking identical to Jeetu. "I am elderly and I was sick until I got into this young body," Virgil explains (86). In dystopian literature, concerns about the human body persist. Padmanabhan sees through the American organ receiver's ploy to trick the Prakash family by using high-tech gadgetry.

After successfully receiving Jeetu's organ transplant, Virginia is a character who remains enigmatic throughout the play, interested in acquiring other bodies. Because he is always on the lookout for new bodies, he suggests that Jaya try e-sex without ever touching him. Jaya politely declines his offer and tells him to go. Virgil flatters her by promising to help her have children. When technological development reaches a stage where even sex is done via the Internet, the world has entered the phase of actual danger. Padmanabhan disposes a battle between technology and humans. Therefore, *Harvest* might be seen as questioning the unethical means of obtaining personal data. Since ContactModule limits family interaction and eavesdrops on private conversations, it is both panoptic and voyeuristic. The play's voyeur, Virgil, monitors the family's daily activities using various surveillance devices. In fact, he is aware that Jeetu and Jaya are involved in an incestuous relationship. She mocks him as a ghost, but he persists in trying to convince her. Jaya rejects the suggestion of artificially inducing pregnancy and instead states, "I want actual hands touching me." "I want to be slammed down by something substantial" (89). She refuses to give in to the dominance of the online world and instead threatens suicide, which she sees as a win.

In the context of posthumanism, *Harvest* questions the boundaries between humans and technology. The play suggests that in a future where the body can be commodified and manipulated, the distinction between the natural and the artificial blurs. It raises concerns about the potential loss of human agency and the erosion of human values in a world dominated by technology and capitalist interests. Overall, Padmanabhan's *Harvest* engages with posthumanist themes by presenting a dystopian vision of a society where the commodification of human bodies challenges traditional notions of identity, autonomy, and ethics. Through its exploration of power dynamics and the blurring of human-technology boundaries, the play prompts audiences to reflect on the implications of a posthuman future. The play depicts the donors as individuals whose identities are stripped away, reducing them to mere vessels for organs. This loss of individuality reflects a posthumanist concern about the potential erasure of human subjectivity and the devaluation of personal identity in a technologically-driven society.

The dystopian character of modern technology is a shock to the readers of Manjula Padmanabhan's futuristic play. Francis Fukuyama expresses his concern about the future of biotechnology in the following way in his book *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (2002): "We need to start thinking concretely now about how to build institutions that can discriminate between good and bad uses of biotechnology and effectively enforce these rules both nationally and internationally" (10). In *Harvest*, Virgil

acquired Jeetu's skin and organs, setting up a tragic cycle in which the survival of one character depends on the death of another.

Matthew Causey uses the term "postorganic model" as a synonym of "posthuman" to describe "the expansions and challenges to our bodies and identities brought about by the achievements of new technology" (53). Virgil is successful in postponing his own demise and he argues against the finite essence of human existence. Threatening alterations to the family tree are also reflected in the play. And as Virgil himself admits, "we lost the art of having offspring" (Padmanabhan 86). In difficult times like harvest, we see the struggles that humans face in order to keep their species alive. People in Padmanabhan's posthuman settings are just like us, on the lookout for healthy bodies to inhabit and young women from which to start a new generation and repopulate the old one.

Conclusion

These aspects of posthumanism in *Harvest* invite audiences to contemplate the ethical, social, and philosophical implications of a future where technology, commodification, and power dynamics reshape human identity and relationships. The play serves as a cautionary tale, urging us to critically examine the trajectory of our society and the potential consequences of devaluing human life and agency in the pursuit of progress. The play presents gendered power dynamics, where women are disproportionately affected by the commodification of their bodies and the control exerted by the First World. This intersectional lens prompts discussions on how posthumanism may exacerbate existing gender inequalities and challenges the notion of a universal posthuman experience. These additional facets of posthumanism in "*Harvest*" deepen the exploration of the play's themes and provoke further discussions on the implications of a posthuman future. By examining the intersections of technology, identity, ethics, and power dynamics, the play encourages audiences to reflect on the direction in which our society is heading and the potential consequences of our choices in shaping a posthuman world.

Padmanabhan's play extrapolates a future civilization in which the pursuit of immortality leads to disaster. The play's characters all come into the play with unique viewpoints on how to handle technological issues. Om agrees to become an organ donor so that his family can continue living, but his brother Jeetu tragically dies from not knowing about the option. Om's mother develops an independent lifestyle and withdraws from her son's life. Her pursuit of a luxurious lifestyle eventually separates her from her loved ones. She has no idea what is happening to her kids. Jaya is the play's lone sane protagonist because she challenges everything that happens and stresses the importance of taking control of one's technology environment rather than letting it control them. She is Padmanabhan's mouthpiece to warn people against total dependence and blind confidence in machines. By exposing the peril of today's technologies and how they've pushed the Prakash family into disarray, *Harvest* drives home the point.

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