

Research paper

## Bodies Under Scanner: AI, Surveillance and Gendered Resistance in Manjula Padmanabhan's Harvest

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### ABSTRACT

Manjula Padmanabhan's one of the most remarkable plays, *Harvest* (1997), is a family dystopia in which global capitalism, technology, biopolitics, and gendered identity intersect to commodify the human body. The constant use of artificial intelligence and surveillance technologies in everyday life deeply impact common human beings which is very well substantiated through the play *Harvest*. The paper critiques bodily control and intersected identities by raising pertinent ethical and social concerns. This paper critically examines how the play's technological equipment — particularly the Contact Module, and the disembodied figure of Ginni — functions as a means of surveillance and commodification, thereby reducing the body to a mere transferable commodity in the global marketplace. The current study examines the theoretical concepts of surveillance in conjunction with feminist theories of body politics. The paper also highlights how female characters, especially Jaya, resist technological and patriarchal control through strategies of bodily autonomy and refusal. With its focus on interwoven multiple narratives the paper attempts to situate *Harvest* within contemporary debates on AI ethics, bio capitalism, and gendered agency. The paper focuses on the intersections of AI, surveillance and gender in *Harvest*. On the other hand, it also examines the dehumanizing effects of techno-capitalism and provides a framework for imagining resistance. The play thus becomes an essential cultural text for interrogating power, technology, and the politics of the gendered body in the twenty-first century.

**Keywords:** AI and surveillance, body commodification, gendered resistance, techno-capitalism, body politics, bio capitalism

Manjula Padmanabhan's play *Harvest* (1997) revolves around the question of 'Body' and how it becomes the subject of discussion in post humanities. With reference to this, the concept of 'Bíos' becomes foundational in posthuman biopolitical studies. Esposito (2008) defines the concept of 'Bíos' which according to him offers a critical lens for understanding how the state and technology govern life today, making the body commodified through surveillance and AI control (p. 4). This paper explicates how Padmanabhan's play *Harvest* delves deeply into the practice of surveillance and artificial intelligence in people's lives, along with the biopolitical control of the state over the body in today's times.

According to post-humanists, the human body is dependent on technology and preserved with its help. Bodies are not seen merely as biological entities but are also processed through a network of external stimuli. Each 'body' possesses 'techno subjectivity', a term coined by Nayar (2014) in his book *Posthumanism*, and it cannot be viewed in isolation without talking about the impact of technology on human body and self (p. 19). This paper argues how *Harvest* dramatizes the posthuman dystopian society in which AI-enabled surveillance and neo-colonial bio-

economies commodify the human body. This study also attempts to question the centrality of human beings and dismantles the belief that they are a superior dominant force. It analyses each character of the play to scrutinize the relevance of bodily autonomy and gendered resistance in the global market. It also examines how the subtleties of bio capitalism and gendered power dynamics intersect within the narrative. In *Harvest*, the use of surveillance and artificial intelligence reinforces biopolitical control over the body, while simultaneously providing space for gendered resistance through acts of refusal and autonomy.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Post-humanities refer to a new discipline that emerged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the efforts of theoreticians, philosophers, authors, environmentalists, and many others. The futurist R. Kurzweil, in his seminal text, *The Age of Spiritual Machines* (1999), discusses the indispensable role of machines in human lives. He writes that “machine intelligence would become so pervasive, so comfortable, and so well integrated into our information-based economy that people would fail even to notice it” (p. 55). The impact of Cybernetics in the technological global market has created creatures which are half human and half machine, and it is defined by the famous post-humanist, Donna Haraway, in her book *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) as she writes, “Contemporary science fiction is full of cyborgs—creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted” (pp. 5-6). According to her, “A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction” (1991, pp. 5-6). As technology has taken over the human body, the distinction between the human body and the automated reality becomes blurred. In the words of Haraway (1991), “we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism—in short, cyborgs” (p. 7). This paper aligns with the views mentioned in her book *Cyborg Manifesto*. It looks at technology and the female body as “hybrid and resistant identities. As the impact of technology is undeniable today, Haraway (1991) herself says, “Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess” (p. 66). In her work, she introduces the cyborg as a hybrid of organism and machine—as a symbol of boundary-breaking identity. Her concept of cyborg breaks down the notions of traditional binary oppositions, such as human vs. machine, male vs. female, nature vs. culture, and physical vs. virtual. By challenging the essentialist ideas of womanhood, Haraway proposes that identity is constantly constructed and, at the same time, is fluid and hybrid, rather than being biologically determined. Haraway's "cyborg feminism" incorporates differences and multiplicity. She views technology as a tool for liberation and a potential site of empowerment, creativity, and subversion, rather than considering it a hindrance to growth. In this process of cyborgization, current systems of information and communication technology are reshaping human identity and politics. Manjula Padmanabhan's play explores the concept of “cyborgization” and attempts to investigate whether the characters become figures of resistance against biopolitical control, capable of rewriting the boundaries imposed by patriarchy, capitalism, and technoscience.

In this context, Esposito (2008) also explores the philosophical approach to “biopolitics” and foregrounds how state and political systems control and manage an individual's personal life. Esposito borrows distinctive concepts from thinkers like Michael Foucault, Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben, and Nietzsche, and examines how *biopolitics*, which is meant to protect life, often ends up introducing death. This framework mirrors the dynamics in *Harvest*, where power operates through Inter Planta Services over the bodies of Om, Jaya, and other family members under the guise of providing sustenance and improving living standards. Esposito also introduces terms like “immunitary paradigm” and “thanatopolitics”, which means “a system supposedly designed to safeguard life”, but in the process snatches an individual's autonomy and thus continues “politics of death” respectively. According to Esposito (2008), the state and the government have the power to control one's life and decide “who will live and who will die” (pp. 4-15). The paper attempts to investigate and critically examine *Harvest* as a powerful example in which life is managed through technological and political control, ultimately transforming it into a completely alienated entity.

The concept of ‘biopolitics’ is first presented in the final chapter of the introductory volume to Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978). Sven-Olov Wallenstein comments on Foucault's ideas of “biopolitics –or biopower”, and according to him “it is understood as the “other side of an anatomico-politics of the human body,” in a way that remains “closely connected to discipline.” (Wallenstein, 2013, p.11) He further described Michel Foucault's ideas on biopolitics and governmentality, which according to him have been influential in redefining our understanding of modern power, governance, and subjectivity, as well as surveillance and biopower. The critical essays connect his theories to global capitalism, surveillance technologies, and biosecurity, particularly in relation to digital governance and health control. His ideas reflect how current phenomena, such as data collection, algorithmic control of life, and the medicalization of life, have left the individual not as an autonomous entity but as an entity co-evolving with other species (Wallenstein, 2013, pp. 11-13).

Post-humanists also discuss the extension of human limitations, which they refer to as transhumanism. The concept of “transhumanism” as introduced by Max More in his essay “The Philosophy of Transhumanism” collected in the book *The Transhumanist Reader* defines it as “Philosophies of life (such as extropian perspectives) that seek the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and human limitations by means of science and technology” (p. 3). It also emphasizes the use of science and technology to enhance human capacities and transcend biological limitations (More, 2013, p. 4). Similarly, Braidotti (2022) defines the state of posthuman and writes that “Becoming posthuman consequently is a process of redefining one’s space: urban, social, psychic, ecological, planetary as it may be”. She also says that “biological addiction” to another body or forced affiliations is the final step towards birth of the posthuman (pp. 56-60). Consequently, human agency becomes inconceivable when humans are set to be partners and companions with their non-human counterparts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The antecedents of post humanist fiction lie in the genres of sci-fi especially cyberpunk by Philip K Dick, William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Neal Stephenson, Rudy Rucker, David Brin. Philip K. Dick’s novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* inspired the movie *Bladerunner* which talks about a postapocalyptic world. In this post-apocalyptic world humans move to Mars, and some stay back. Issac Asimov’s fiction popularized new science of robotics, which eventually became the mainstay of much 21<sup>st</sup> century popular cinema and fiction. Post Humanist thought is shaped by views expressed by thinkers like Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti etc. All these thinkers believed in fluidity, hybridity and intersectionality (Bulut, 2015). However, Literary Posthumanism had its seeds of origin in the writings of various writers, such as Mary Shelly’s *Frankenstein* (1818), in which Victor gives birth to the monster as he says, “I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created” and thus he challenges the natural process of reproduction (ch. 5, para. 3). Cyberpunk fiction showcased the merger of machines and humans, but also demonstrated the hegemony of techno-capitalism, where the capitalist class utilizes technology to dominate governments, societies, and control individuals. The contemporary sci-fi and speculative fiction’s posthuman themes include the role of multiple and fluid identities, such as cyborgs and hybrids.

Many Indian dystopian texts portray a future in which surveillance is normalized. It is exemplified through multiple apps, biometric Ids and real-time tracking systems. Samit Basu’s *Turbulence and Resistance* in which surveillance drones and biometric databases function as tools for global political manipulation. Similarly, *The Wall* by Gautam Bhatia is a contemporary sci-fi in which citizens are monitored and confined within an enclosed city-state. Here also the citizens’ freedom is regulated through digital data systems. Total surveillance through cameras has become even more common today than ever before (Muciaccia & Macchia, 2025, pp. 4-6). In Indian cinema, Prayag Akbar’s *Leila* also portrays surveillance cameras, purity tests, and biometric checkpoints, reinforcing the idea of class structure in a futuristic setup of Delhi. With the widespread use of AI, bodies are often treated as mere commodities, and various corporations capture their value (Katz, 2026, pp. 2-6) more common today than ever before. It has become a recurring theme in many Indian dystopian texts, where characters attempt to disrupt the AI system, challenge digital hierarchies, and reclaim bodily autonomy. In *The Wall*, Gautam Bhatia’s characters refuse to be subdued and resist through secret networks. Similarly, according to Bhatia, in his review of *Machinehood* by Divya (2021) highlights AI and pharmaceutical enhancements that transform human labourers into optimized, monitored bodies. These bodies resist oppression and challenge the corporate surveillance system and due to this often “the self-contained human body is on the verge of breaking down” (para. 7). Thus, these texts highlight different forms of resistance that challenge “the concentration of technological power” and reclaim agency within hyper-surveillance environments (Sarkar, 2025, p. 3).

This paper attempts to situate Manjula Padmanabhan’s *Harvest* (1997) in a similar theoretical and literary context. It explores the criticism of global capitalism and body politics in Manjula Padmanabhan’s *Harvest*. It examines how postcolonial society becomes a site of exploitation within transnational economies. In contrast, the Third World people are subjected to exploitation as biological raw material for the consumption of the First World. Ania Loomba, an Indian Scholar working as a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, writes in her book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998) that the effects of colonialism have not yet been overcome; instead, they appear in different forms within contemporary globalization, capitalism, and cultural production (Loomba, 1998, pp. 3-20). Likewise, the play deals with the postcolonial inequality that evolves into techno-capitalist domination, where the Global North exploits the bodies of the Global South through medical technology instead of military rule. It also highlights how Western corporations still control the lives, labour and even the bodily organs of poor people

in the colonies and thus support the global organ trade. The power exercised by the First World countries over the Third World demonstrates economic and cultural control.

The paper also considers Donna Haraway's cyborg feminism and Rosi Braidotti's posthuman theory to interrogate the gendered vulnerability under techno-capitalism. It investigates how female characters form hybrid identities shaped by technology, global capitalism and patriarchal norms (Dalgaldere, 2026, pp. 1-2). Similarly, Jaya, in *Harvest*, can be seen as a posthuman feminist subject who refuses to yield to technological control, as evidenced by her acts of refusal, speeches, and bodily autonomy. Jaya's defiance is seen as a representation of the agency and resistance that is essential to challenging global capitalistic control. Jaya's gendered resistance to the domestic oppression within the family structure, as well as technological surveillance and commodification by the global corporate world, presents her as a woman with female agency to dismantle the structure created by the patriarchal techno-capitalist class.

Braidotti, in her work *Post Human Feminist Theory* (2022), considers Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* as the first "feminist techno-utopia" of the twentieth century (p. 676). Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) examines the relationship between biological oppression and economic oppression, arguing that both must be eradicated for genuine liberation. According to her, men have benefited from this male tyranny, which is created by biological conditions, and it can be erased with the use of new technology and fertility control. She envisioned a society not just free from male privilege but eradicating the cultural significance of sex differences, creating a "pansexual" society where reproduction is shared equally by both the genders. Thus, she anticipated that new technology may free women from biological constraints but can also reinforce oppression if the social system remains exploitative (pp. 9-10). She mentions in her book *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) that the "sex class system may have originated in fundamental biological conditions" however, it "does not guarantee that once the biological basis of their oppression has been swept away, women and children will be freed". On the contrary, she says, that "the new technology, especially fertility control may be used against them to reinforce the entrenched system of exploitation" (p. 10). Jaya in *Harvest* is on the verge of becoming a passive victim of both the capitalist male and the new technology, which can make her fertile against her wishes. However, she constantly struggles to retain her agency over her autonomous self instead of being a reproductive slave. Similar context is discussed in the article "Transforming Bodies" that bodily size, shape, and the control of others become governing force to form an identity and desire for something else (Nehushtan, 2026, pp. 2-8).

## ANALYSIS

Padmanabhan's play *Harvest* is a dystopian and science fiction novel which is set in Mumbai, with its characters described by Padmanabhan as "slum dwellers" (1997, xiii). The story of this play revolves around a small family of four members who become entangled in the organ donation trade. The central character, as well as the breadwinning member of the family, Om Prakash, signs a "Faustian contract" with Inter Planta Services, a "shadowy International corporation" that buys healthy organs from poor donors of the developing countries to supply them to wealthy Western clients. The real drama begins when the contract is signed and the corporation starts 24/7 surveillance to monitor and control the donor's autonomous agency. This visual control and monitoring is done through an invasive technological device called the CONTACT MODULE, with which the receiver, as well as the western client Ginni, often appears in their home as a holographic figure.

Ginni's constant presence through the CONTACT MODULE regulates what all the family members do, eat, how they live, and with whom they interact, ultimately reducing them to mere commodities to be bought, sold, and controlled. The utterly bizarre question arises when Om's brother Jeetu is mistaken for the donor and is forcibly taken away by the guards for organ extraction and fulfilment of the contract, which clearly exposes the failure of the corporate system, its mechanical activity and complete indifference to individual human beings. The final act of the play ends with Jaya resisting the oppression of the buyer's attempt to exert full control over her body for reproductive purposes. Her refusal to yield to the dominant patriarchal oppressor and technological governance sets her apart from other characters in the play.

This powerful dramatization of the events in *Harvest* reveals how global techno-capitalism transforms human bodies into mere objects through the mechanism of continuous surveillance and artificial intelligence. The invasive presence of the CONTACT MODULE throughout the play and the stereoscopic presence of Ginni exemplify what Michael Foucault calls the "biopolitics of the population" (1978, p. 139) which introduced "a whole technology of control which made it possible to keep that body and sexuality. . . under surveillance (1978, p. 126). According to that, monitoring done by technological systems creates ripples by disciplining and reshaping the intimate experiences of everyday existence. The control of Inter Planta Services over Om's movement and actions mirrors Esposito's concept of "immunitary paradigm" in which the rhetoric of protection becomes a strategy of domination (2008, pp. 45-46). The corporate organization's claim to safeguard the donor's health reduces the donor's body to a mere object of biomedical extraction.

The play opens with a dilapidated room in view where the sound of the city's humdrum is audible. The writer describes it, "The sound of inner-city traffic: grimy, despairing, poison-fumed" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 9). The family around which the whole play revolves around has characters who look distraught. They are indifferent to each other and remain emotionally detached from one another. The populated households in the neighbourhood also are a subject of discussion amongst characters. It highlights the lack of privacy in the inner household structures of poor families and the challenge of maintaining personal space. However, Jaya's response highlights the more subtle problem of the post-humanistic era, where people do not truly exist in life and blood but merely pretend to be living, as she says, "That's because I live with two people who pretend the other two don't exist" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 11). It is a bitter commentary on post human societal change that has taken over people.

The beginning of the play brutally lashes out against the horror of the organ trade in India, and the traders are mainly from the Western capitalist market. The critical scenario of standing in a queue to get tested for a suitable donor job is reflected through Om as a job hunter. Perhaps the lure of the lucre or his poverty-stricken status is the reason why Om agreed to sign the contract without understanding the terms and conditions. The moment he enters the interview hall; he feels as if he is in heaven. The picture critically attacks how a poor person is lured by such luxuries that he becomes ready to sell even his body organs to buy temporary happiness. Here, the control of the state seems to be ruling over the bodies of all the people waiting in queues to get selected. The door in the waiting hall sets the divide between the individual's body and the outside world. The instructions are shared with Om in the form of a sign, "REMOVE CLOTHING", and he follows without having any autonomous identity or control over his body. Om's description in the text blurs the boundary between humans and technology. He does what he asked to do like a machine. It clearly indicates the diminishing role of humans' decision-making ability in the face of external control of the power-driven environment. It also highlights the body's vulnerability to external factors and bio political control.

The impact of globalization and corporatization is also evident in the food habits of common human beings. As agricultural lands are converted into theme parks, skyscrapers, condominiums, and other developments, they impact the lifestyle of ordinary people. What we eat, how we lead our life, dressing habits, even the thought process, etc, get shaped by the corporate giants and thus bring in effect Foucault's concept of "biopower" (1978, p. 140). The impact of biopower over individual human beings leads to the total collapse of identity, autonomy, and individuality, ultimately dismantling the typical social structure. After the contract is signed, the characters are given "coloured pellets, pills and powders" as a food supplement to kill their hunger. This food is provided to them solely for survival, rather than enhancing the nutritional value of their bodies (Padmanabhan, 1997, p.17). Thus, bodies are mechanically grown rather than having natural or organic growth.

The presence of the CONTACT MODULE in the play is a premonition of the dystopian times to come. The men from the Inter Planta Services install the device in Om's house, which continuously hampers the characters' regular lifestyle. The central character opposing this installation is Jaya, who constantly questions the Guards as they dump the kitchen items into the cartons. For Jaya's sense of belonging comes from the kitchen articles, and she feels displaced by the installation of the CONTACT MODULE as well as arrangement of food supplements in the kitchen. Jaya gives a third person's viewpoint in her conversation with Om and Ma in the presence of the Guards. The robotic approach of Guards leaves the readers in a daze. Jaya constantly questions, "Who said you can touch my things? (*tugs at his arm*) Stop that!" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p.19). Jaya's continuous probing into the Guard's mind reveals that they function like a machine as they hardly pay heed to what she says.

The play raises pertinent questions about the survival of the characters; however, in the process of this organ trade, there are hardly any living beings left. The Guards employed by Inter Planta Services act as mediators between the corporate sector and individual bodies. Bio capitalism begins to exert its power over the characters and their lives when Om yields to the capitalists' demands. The Robotic Guards convert real human beings into posthumans. Domestic life is transformed into a corporate organization, where everything is monitored through technical surveillance to favour industrial houses. The food served to each one is measured, and the only available options for food are "goat-shit pills and some strange powders," as Jaya often mentions. "But it's not... natural – it's not real food" (Padmanabhan, 1997, pp. 43-44).

Surveillance in terms of gender is also evident through the portrayal of Jaya. She is subjected to different forms of control in the play. Her reproductive body is meant for potential use which reveals how techno-capitalist power establishes the hierarchy and inscribes itself upon female bodies. Jaya is oppressed within the domestic sphere by her mother-in-law for her infertility which raises grave concerns over the hormonal imbalances in women's body due to the change in eating habits today. The unconcerned generational gap is seen between mother and daughter-in-law. Jaya's extra marital relationship with her husband's younger brother Jeetu is constantly questioned by her mother-in-law. Om's signing of "faustian contract" is an act of disobedience according to Jaya and they are bound to reap its consequences afterwards. Jaya is constantly searching for a posthuman feminist identity in Om's house, where she appears to be an outsider. She also struggles with her own emotions, and this struggle is exacerbated by her constantly changing relationship with Om. Despite being a subordinate patriarch outside, Om tries to control

Jaya, showing his authority. The organ-selling contract has instantly altered the most intimate relationship between a man and a woman, that of Jaya and Om. Om introduces her as his sister and his younger brother Jeetu as Jaya's husband. It is a clear indication towards the fluidity of post human relationships.

Jaya constantly seeks survival mechanisms in Om's corporatized household. The play does not explicitly state the reason for Jaya's inability to conceive whether it is Om who is sterile or Jaya who is responsible for it. However, there are strong undercurrents which suggest that Jaya's sexuality is unquenched. The dialogue shared between Jaya and Jeetu in Act I scene III, where she says to her brother-in-law Jeetu, "You care—you care—but not enough! A woman wants more than just. . . satisfaction" for which Jeetu is also unable to give any specific answer and says, "You women are gluttons for satisfaction—that's the bare fact of it! You cry when you don't get it—and when you do, you cry that it's not often enough!". Jaya answers this by saying, "I cry because – because you satisfy one hunger while awaken the other!" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 42). Jeetu's statement here sounds to be male chauvinistic, negating any point of men being sterile when he says, "That other hunger is insatiable. A man has to protect himself against that hunger or he will find himself sucked dry by new little mouths, screaming 'Papa! Papa! Little mouths with big appetites. Oh no! I'm afraid of that other hunger! Mortally afraid!" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 42). On one hand there are women like Jaya who are subjected to criticism for being infertile by their mother-in-law, there are also men like Jeetu who boast off their virility.

In developed countries, the state takes control of and provides care for its citizens, whereas in developing/underdeveloped countries, its citizens often depend on subsidies and complimentary services. The amenities provided by Ginni prepare a suffocating oppressive political structure. She appears on the screen of the CONTACT MODULE once she takes "biopolitical" control over Om's family. The CONTACT MODULE appears to be the "transhumanistic" extension of their body where Ginni represents the capitalist political class or may be called Haraway's "Cyborg". She is Haraway's half-human, half-machine figure, devoid of human emotions and conditioned by preset algorithms according to the dictates of the corporate world and it is the primary reason for her inability to differentiate between one character from the other.

The play also raises post-humanistic concerns about the anthropomorphic relationship between animals and humans. The cattle in developed countries are much more privileged than human beings in developing countries. For instance, cattle in developed countries have access to material comforts like air conditioners, exclusive lavatories, and music from loudspeakers. On the contrary, people in developing countries often lack necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. It is one of the key reasons why organ trade has become more or less the accepted norm in Indian households that make an earnest attempt to move up the social ladder of life. Jaya also understands the reality as she mentions, ". . . How do their beef cattle live? Air-conditioned! Individual potties! Music from loudspeakers – why, they even have their own psychiatrists! All to ensure that their meat, when it finally gets to Ginni's table, will be the freshest, purest, sanest, happiest—" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 67). It is clearly contrasted with the existing conditions of Om's family, where Jeetu's body is oozing with pus, and his own brother Om is unwilling to touch him and even suggests that Jaya should wear hand gloves before touching him. The affordability of luxurious things changes people's living standard. It is only when Om avails monetary support that his family can afford luxuries and the entire description of his house changes in the play. Act II, scene I, describes the same room of Om's family but with a lot of transformation. "*The same room but transformed into a sleek residence. . . The furniture is largely of the convertible kind (bed-cum sofa, etc). . . In addition, there are the gadgets – TV set, computer terminal, mini gym, an air-conditioner, the works*" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 49). In fact, Jaya's appearance also changes—"*She looks better dressed than before, . . . MA is wearing a quilted dressing gown and is watching TV, upstage, right!*" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 49). They didn't even have a proper toilet in their house earlier. However, after the favours received from the corporate giants in return for their service to them, Ma can buy things with the click of a button.

The main objective of the corporate world is to convert the whole world into a mechanical setup, which is why even though Jeetu has a diseased body, they forcibly take him away to transform him into a complete non-entity dependent on the corporation. Jeetu is used as a guinea pig by the family due to his non-compliance with the corporate organization throughout. Ma lacks emotions for Jeetu and, being a phlegmatic woman, prioritizes the survival of her family at any cost, so she is willing to sacrifice her younger son, Jeetu, to save her elder son, Om, the breadwinner of the family. Jaya, guided by emotions, still nurtures the hope of spending the rest of her life with Jeetu instead of her husband, Om. In fact, in the posthuman world, mother-son relationships are crippled and lack depth and gravity. Ma is more concerned with getting more comforts in the evening of her life rather than caring for her younger son. When the agents of Inter Planta Services take Jeetu away, Ma is hardly bothered, as Jaya rightly points out, "Your son goes off to the slaughterhouse and you're just worried about your TV!" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 82). However, amongst all the characters, Jeetu is the one who understands life well. Often, he is seen as a misfit, and in fact, anyone who is unable to adapt to the changing scenario may face similar consequences. Jeetu is also addressed as a "health hazard" by his brother and even the family members discard him like an old, tattered cloth piece. In the post humanistic society people aren't concerned about each other and think only about what interests and benefits them. Jeetu knows real freedom, which according to him rich people

often fail to experience sitting in confined cabins throughout the day. The conversation between Jeetu and Ma in the play highlights the clear contrast between the two brothers, Om and Jeetu- Om, who sells his body to buy the comforts of the Brave New World and to become rich, while Jeetu lived a carefree life throughout.

The impact of biopolitics and bio capitalism in the posthuman world is effectively captured by the playwright, when Jeetu's body undergoes significant transformation after the transplant. He appears to be completely insane after losing his eyes. All the characters come completely under the control of Robotic Ginni in the play. There is the overpowering control of twin forces of Capitalist corporation and its politics over humans. Therefore, the glamour of Ginni in the post humanistic world dazzles Jeetu's eyes. Jeetu also starts admiring Ginni's big palace like house viewed through the CONTACT MODULE, which was only a dream for him to see. He says, "It's a palace. . . . I can't help but like it". For Jaya, it came as a surprise because Jeetu couldn't understand life when he had eyes, but he could see reality far better when his eyes were taken away. In fact, technology extends the capacity of seeing beyond what others could not; that is why Ginni says to Jeetu, "That's right Auwm – it's me you're seeing 'coz I'm beaming my video image straight into your mind! So, you can see me right in front of you, all of me, for once, nor just my face...well? What do you think?" (Padmanabhan, 1997, pp. 94-95).

As the play progresses toward the final act, it explicitly elaborates on the scenario created by technological advancement. It critically analyzes the impact of technology on the human body and how its limitations can be leveraged to create enhancements. Jeetu's mind is transferred to the robotic form of Virgil in the final act. Jeetu's human body of flesh and blood was unhealthy and full of incurable diseases to an extent that he even became untouchable for his own family members. However, technology frees him from such bodily bondage and utilizes his memory in a transformed robot figure that can look and act like Jeetu. The old and diseased body of Jeetu is replaced with the "young body" and which may be able to eliminate death from the Earth. Such exigencies may lead to chaos and may challenge the eternal truth that Death is evident and comes to all. This final interface of Jeetu's robot with Jaya transcends the reader into something charismatic that technology has created. However, it raises pertinent questions related to the extension of human life and the victory over death, which may make technology more powerful than humans and potentially replace them completely in the long run. A similar dread was posed in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where the monster becomes more powerful than the creator and thus challenges humanity.

The final act also raises serious concerns over the use of technology and its excessive capacities, which are beyond the imagination of human beings. The figure of Virgil speaks about its incomprehensible powers, as it says, "I listened in to you, Zhaya. I heard every word said in the room. Even when the Module was off, it recorded" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 114). It becomes very concerning that such surveillance, where privacy is filtered through technological advancement, may claim even the safety and security of human beings. The automated device in the form of the CONTACT MODULE could hear even beyond what was noticeable. Even if it was in the off mode, it still recorded the data, and that's why it could distinguish automatically between Jeetu and Om without any knowledge of the participative characters.

The futuristic dystopian society highlights the scarcity of childbearing women. It also portrays the futuristic dilemma among people, where the basic purpose of marriage is lost and it becomes a cause of the systematic failure of the institution. The probable causes of reproductive shortcomings can be the impact of ecological crises and excessive use of technology, which may have led to their adverse effects on the female body and reproductive organs. Virgil's voice reaffirms this to Jaya, "The environment you live in is too polluted for me, Zhaya" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 119). The ecological crisis is comparatively caused by the technological advancements of developed countries, while developing countries bear its abusive effects due to the lack of economic advancement in comparison to developed countries. For this reason, men from developed countries are more interested in women from the colonies, as Virgil says, "We're interested in women, where I live, Zhaya. Childbearing women" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 115). He also says that "We look for young men's bodies to live in and young women's bodies in which to sow their children" at which Jaya asks, "What about your own?" and Virgil answers, "We lost the art of having children" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 116). It has clear indications of a dystopian world where women lose their reproductive ability due to automation and robotic life. When Virgil persuades Jaya to impregnate her, she says she is infertile as predicted by astrologers. Virgil asks her to do so with Jittoo's body which hints at Jaya's husband Om being sterile and lacking virility. However, the gendered lens of her mother-in-law never allows her to question male reproductive organ conditioned by social factors and always accuses Jaya for not providing an heir to her family. The social stigma attached to her body may be removed by Virgil's implantation offer that can be done within her fertile cycle. However, Jaya's body is more anxious to undergo the pain of childbearing instead of mechanical intervention as she says, "The pain tells me that I'm alive. I want the pain" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 119). Jaya longs to live an ordinary human being's life which is merely a dream in a capitalist market.

Everything appears to be mechanical in this capitalist and corporate world. Even sex is commercialized, and it is no longer a pleasure-giving activity meant for reproduction but merely a mechanical exercise. Virgil says, "It can take the usual nine months if you want, with diet and exercise and medical personnel to monitor you-

(Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 119). Even the machine-like device in the form of Virgil's body claims to give sexual pleasure to Jaya as she would want it from Jeetu's body as he says, "Zhaya we can even be. . . intimate!" and at this point Jaya answers, "I want real hands touching me. I want to feel a real weight upon me!" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 120). This illusion created by machine-like device is completely broken when Jaya manages to hit at the technical device directly and "there is a shower of sparks and a crack of electric light. The CONTACT MODULE abruptly switches off; the whole room flickers in purple and blue light" (120). The culmination of the last act happens when Jaya threatens to kill herself with the piece of broken glass. It is then she wins over technology as a human being and does not allow it to play with her body. She asserts her body and its desires by challenging the biopolitical control of the machine-like male patriarch Virgil. By choosing death over her reluctant surrender to the Capitalist patriarch, she wins as she rightly speaks to Virgil's voice, "I've discovered a new definition for winning. Winning by losing. I win if I lose. . . . You took everything I have had away from me. So I can't lose any more! . . . my life. It's not really mine anymore. The only thing I have which is still my own is my death. My death and my pride -" The technical device in the form of Virgil considers pride mere a fancy for a poor man. He says, "what is the use of dying if you won't be alive to savour that victory -" but according to Jaya she will be happy to die with her pride instead of losing herself as a "poor, weak and helpless woman" (Padmanabhan, 1997, pp. 122-123).

Thus, Jaya challenges the patriarchal corporate world where again a woman remains oppressed and confined in the obligatory role to perform the act of a passive agent to male supremacy. She calls Virgil in front of her in human form who claims himself to be Jeetu whom she desires to be alive and threatens to take the pills as she says, "I'll take my life. If you do anything other than, come here in person. I'll take my life!" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 123). Thus, Jaya asserts her body by accepting death and refuses to yield to the advancement made by male whims and fancy. She also threatens Virgil cum Jeetu device to pronounce her name correctly as she says, "I want you to practice saying my name correctly: It's Jaya - 'j' as in 'justice', 'j' as in 'jam' -" but the device keeps calling her "Zhaya" which infuriates her further. It complicates Jaya's identity as a woman who becomes merely a commodity in the corporate world created by men. Thus, Jaya, at the end of the Act III scene ii, "settles down comfortably in front of the television, bolstered by cushions" (Padmanabhan, 1997, p. 124). She rejoices in her own body, whether dead or alive, and does not yield to technological superpower and its potential threat to humanity. The play ends with a lot of insight into the disturbing disillusionment that technological advancement may bring in future. However, it has positive remarks about human beings' reluctance to live and let live, and if they die - die peacefully, which is an eternal truth, rather than meddling with the universal fact of the cycle of karma and the eternal truth of life, death, and rebirth.

## CONCLUSION

Technology has taken over humankind in the 21st century, ushering in a posthuman world. Artificial Intelligence has made man dependent on technology and manual labour is being replaced by machines, resulting in a dearth of jobs that are exclusively for humans. Continuous research on surveillance and AI in contemporary dystopian fiction sheds light on the mechanisms of power at work in today's times. Its clear representation in Padmanabhan's play highlights that the use of technology as a medium of authoritarian governance is excessively used for controlling human beings without giving them any autonomous agency. They are viewed merely as bodies and are continuously monitored, disciplined, and instructed through digital scanning. It is a manifestation of techno capitalism, and the use of the CONTACT MODULE and Ginni's disembodied presence for remote surveillance bridges the gap between domestic space and technological intrusion. It also reveals how Western corporations monitor and control the domestic lives of Indian donors for their own benefit. Harvest, thus, becomes a powerful tool to demonstrate the embodied experience that restructures intimacy, autonomy and agency, especially within the family structure.

The important aspect of posthuman biopolitical system is partnership through trade, in which the body must change. The trade of genetic material becomes a key theme in this play. The monster (Capitalist class) survives by trading genes and genetic material. In this arrangement, partners exchange goods or services, and a contract is signed. This partnership involves certain body parts that are donated in return for economic value, and thus, the donor is in control of the buyer. In Manjula Padmanabhan's play, on one hand, the self of the capitalist class is created by procuring the body organ, while the self of the dominated class is destroyed by taking away the bodily autonomy. Thus, Harvest critiques powerfully the system of surveillance capitalism and biopolitical control.

Manjula Padmanabhan's themes of science fiction and dystopia in the play provide a strong vehicle for representing gendered body politics and female resistance in the play. It is Jaya who ultimately becomes a figure of female resistance, autonomy when she is lured to yield to the sexual advancement made by Jeetu's clone. The act of surrender might have left Jaya devoid of having any reproductive right over her own body. However, Jaya successfully escapes the temptation and still considers human relationships and family integrity meaningful for individual identity and mental peace. Her resistance aligns with Donna Haraway's cyborg feminism, asserting

female agency at the intersection of technology and corporeality. By giving Jaya autonomy over her body and assertion against the omnipresent technological gaze, the play critiques the combined presence of AI, capitalist exploitation and patriarchal control which suggests that embodied resistance can become possible even within hyper-surveilled biopolitical systems.

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The Data collection has been done authentically and is true to my knowledge.

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### **Data availability**

The research has been conducted based on available research papers and authentic books. All the ethical measures have been observed in this regard.

### **AI disclosure**

In the structure formation of the paper and for revision purposes the AI tool ChatGPT has been used. However, the ideas presented in the paper are author's own.

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