

Beyond the Organic: Rupturing Maternal Constructs and Female Cyborg Identity in S.B. Divya's *Machinehood*

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Abstract

This research paper delves into the nuanced portrayal of female cyborg identity and its intersection with motherhood in S.B. Divya's novel *Machinehood*. Drawing inspiration from Donna Haraway's foundational work "A Cyborg Manifesto," we examine how Divya's narrative navigates the complex interplay between technology and gender within the context of a futuristic society. Haraway's concept of cyborgism serves as a theoretical framework to analyse the multifaceted nature of female cyborg characters in *Machinehood*. The paper explores how these characters negotiate the boundaries between the organic and the artificial, challenging traditional notions of femininity and motherhood. Haraway envisions the cyborg as a hybrid entity with the potential to subvert normative categories that becomes a lens through which we scrutinise the female cyborgs' agency in shaping their identities and relationships. Central to our analysis is the examination of motherhood in the context of technological augmentation. In conclusion, the present paper aims to contribute to the evolving area of scholarship on science fiction literature, feminist theory, and cyborg studies. By leveraging Haraway's ground breaking ideas, we illuminate the significance of female cyborg identity and its portrayal in *Machinehood*, shedding light on the transformative potential of technology in reshaping traditional gender norms and familial structures.

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Introduction

Humanism, a philosophical and cultural movement that arguably places emphasis on the inherent dignity of individuals, has witnessed various manifestations throughout history, including notable contributions from Greco-Roman thinkers, Renaissance scholars, and Enlightenment philosophers. The history of humanism goes back to primeval civilisations, with the movement gaining momentum during the Renaissance, when a revival of interest in classical learning, art, and literature occurred. Humanism emerged as a reaction against medieval scholasticism, advocating for the study of humanities, including literature, philosophy, and history. H. J. Blackham, a humanist philosopher, contends that humanism centres on enhancing societal well-being through the empowerment and dignity of every individual. However, the concept of humanism has encountered challenges and transformations in the face of rapid technological advancements and evolving societal structures. The emergence of posthumanism represents a theoretical and empirical approach that seeks to move beyond traditional humanist paradigms. Ihab Hassan, an influential theorist of postmodernism, introduced the term 'posthumanism' and its foundational definition in his article "Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?" (1977). Posthumanism is a broad term encompassing a variety of approaches and schools of thought, characterised by a rejection of humanism and a desire to redefine the relationship between humans and their environment.

The primary motive of posthumanism lies in the rejection of human exceptionalism, challenging the notion that humanity should be at the centre of the universe. Significant advancements have changed our collective knowledge of what makes up the fundamental unit of human reference, especially in the fields of digital information technology, life and neurological sciences. The confluence of anti-anthropocentrism and antihumanism is what defines the posthuman shift (Braidotti 9). Antihumanism challenges traditional human-centred perspectives, while anti-anthropocentrism questions the notion that humans are the central or most important entities in the universe. Posthumanism, that emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, represents a theoretically popular way of thinking about how the worlds of technology, nonhuman animals, and humans overlap.

Haraway's cyborg identity

Prominent postmodernists primarily focused on art, literature, historiography, and philosophy, laying the groundwork for a subsequent group of theorists exploring posthumanism. Donna Haraway, a pivotal figure, delved into the porous boundaries between the human, machine, and animal. She presented the idea of the cyborg as a modern metaphor, capturing the ambivalence of human existence amidst technological modifications. Unlike the transhuman of science fiction, Haraway's cyborg represents a posthuman rejection and reconfiguration of traditional humanist values, embracing the productive potential of technological mediation even at the political level. The term "cyborg" originates from "cybernetic organism," encompassing humans, animals, or other living entities. Coined by Manfred Clynes in 1960 in his article titled "Drugs, Space, and Cybernetics," this abbreviation describes the human inclination "to optimize their internal regulation to suit the environment they may be looking for" (32). Katherine Hayles, a theorist in the field of posthumanism, asserts that the "cyborg violates the human/machine distinction; replacing cognition with neural feedback, it challenges the human-animal difference; explaining the behaviour of thermostats and people through theories of feedback, hierarchical structure, and control, it erases the animate/inanimate distinction" (84).

The female cyborg is a fascinating topic of discussion for feminists, particularly following Haraway's ground-breaking essay, "A Cyborg Manifesto," published in 1985. Haraway's concept of the "cyborg," defined as "a cybernetic organism—a hybrid of machine and organism" (5) provides a valuable theoretical framework for understanding the evolving relationship between technology and gender. In posthuman philosophy, the cyborg represents an "in-between" state, facilitating "interrelations, multiple connections, and assemblage" (Braidotti 92). Haraway posits that the cyborg challenges the "deepened dualisms of mind and body associated with high technology and scientific culture" (14). The figure of the cyborg becomes a metaphor that refutes the widely held feminist notion that women need to strive to revert to their ideal, natural states. She introduces the analogy to depict her "lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (15). In contrast to the culturally dependent and mutable construct of "womanhood," as argued by Haraway, the cyborg is portrayed as lacking a fixed origin and an ideal state to aspire to, thus challenging the notion of a static identity (Short 82).

The female cyborg's figure has been introduced in feminist posthumanist scholarship, offering a complex exploration of the future of feminism. A cyborg, as described by Haraway, is a creature of both social reality and fiction,

embodying a hybrid existence that blurs the boundaries between the organic and the artificial. In *Cyborg Citizen*, Chris Hables Gray emphasises that “the cyborg has been hailed as a posthumanist configuration in its hybridity between human flesh and metal or digital material, its wavering between mind and matter, and its shifting boundaries between masculinity and femininity” (45). As a result, the cyborg is a person with talents beyond those of a typical human, and whose body comprises mechanical or electronic components. Further, according to Gray:

cyborgs do not have to be part human, for any organism/system that mixes the evolved and the made, the living and the inanimate, is technically a cyborg. This would include biocomputers based on organic processes, along with roaches with implants and bioengineered microbes.

(2)

It is a hybrid of two groups, humans and robots, with different biological and technical components, existing on a shared spectrum — and is typically seen as mutually exclusive. In the context of science fiction literature, figures such as cyborgs, humanoids, robots, and artificial intelligence have been recurrent themes. These narratives often explore the transcendence of boundaries between man and machine or depict the potential domination of humans by machines in futuristic settings. Moreover, Haraway’s definition of a cyborg as a being is integrated with both cybernetic components and organic elements, “a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction” (5). Advocating for gender equality in the fight for women’s rights, Haraway argues that feminists, similar to cyborgs, should have the autonomy to determine their affiliations rather than being confined to a predetermined, rigid identity.

Female cyborg in *Machinehood*

S.B. Divya, an Indian writer, entered the science fiction literary scene with her thought-provoking novel *Machinehood*, published in 2021. As the first South Asian author to be nominated for the Nebula Award, Divya brings a unique perspective to her fictional world. Her debut novella, *Runtime* (2016), was a precursor to the themes she explores more expansively in *Machinehood*. Set in the year 2095 in a futuristic society, the plot revolves around the protagonist Welga, a shield—a bodyguard employed by wealthy funders who are formulating pills to enhance human performance. Struggling to keep pace with automation in a highly competitive gig economy, humans in *Machinehood* rely extensively on chemical and nanomachine “pills so that [they] could stay competitive in the labor market” (Divya 118). Daily doses of these pills protect against designer diseases, enhance focus, increase physical strength and speed, and expedite the healing process: “Buffs make us stronger. Zips make us faster. Flows make us smarter” (ibid).

However, the emergence of a mysterious terrorist group called ‘The Machinehood’ whose operatives exhibit a combination of machine and human components, poses a fresh and unprecedented challenge. The Machinehood’s threat boldly flashed in the lower-right corner of Nithya’s visual that claims to:

Cease all pill and drug production by March 19 or we will make it happen.
A new era awaits humankind. She expanded the smaller text below it.
The time has come to end the distinction between organic and inorganic intelligence. All of us are intelligent machines. All of us deserve the rights of personhood. (Divya 44)

The Machinehood issues an ultimatum to cease all pill production within one week. This leads to global panic as pill production slows, resulting in widespread illness. Thousands of individuals destroy their bots, fearing a potential takeover by strong artificial intelligence. Simultaneously, the United States government believes that the Machinehood serves as a cover for an old enemy, prompting Welga, determined to take down the Machinehood, to be pulled back into intelligence work.

Divya’s narrative skilfully weaves together themes of technological dependency, economic competition, and the potential consequences of a technologically advanced society. The story unfolds against the backdrop of a society reliant on pills to enhance human capabilities, thereby blurring the lines between the organic and the artificial. Welga’s character, with her extensive experience as a shield, becomes a key figure in unravelling the mystery of the Machinehood and its potential connection to an old adversary because “sitting around in an office had never been her style” (9).

The author of *Machinehood* creates a compelling portrait of a persona who walks the border between the technical and the biological by superimposing the image of a cyborg onto a feminine body. The novel’s female cyborgs challenge the idea of the natural world, rejecting the distinction between femininity and technology. Interestingly, though, they wind up becoming a cliché that both subverts and reinforces prevailing notions about gender and race. Divya’s conceptualisation of gender is expansive, viewing it as a spectrum rather than a collection of discrete categories. In her narrative, technology serves not only to subtract from but also to add new dimensions to the identities of the characters. The idea of the female cyborg gains critical attention as it maps a woman’s identity onto the cyborg’s figuration. In an interview, Divya underscores her deliberate choice to portray women of colour as main characters in *Machinehood*. Divya comments, “In *Machinehood*, I made a conscious choice to have women of colour as the main character” (Ramanujam n.p.). Protagonists like Welga, a shield—a bodyguard working for wealthy funders—exemplify strength,

resilience, and competence, surpassing the traditional expectations associated with male characters in similar roles.

In the novel, an exploration of the three female characters, namely Welga, Ao Tara, and Nithya, reveals their embodiment of the cyborg archetype. The conceptualisation of the cyborg extends beyond futuristic depictions of implanted chips to encompass the contemporary reality where technology permeates various facets of human existence, influencing aspects such as fitness, nutrition, and the construction of virtual identities. Haraway's assertion that the Internet and virtual reality have significantly impacted human consciousness, blurring distinctions between reality and fiction. This underscores the pervasive integration of humans and technology. This interdependence reaches a juncture where the demarcation between the two entities becomes increasingly indiscernible, prompting Haraway to posit that all individuals are, in essence, cyborgs engaged in an inseparable relationship with technology.

In the futuristic world depicted by Divya, characters consume pills to enhance their abilities, with Welga standing out as a prime example. During Welga's "ATAI training, [she] had received cutting-edge implants for audio, visual, and network interfaces. She had more electronics in her body than most people in the world" (12). Also, she "had permanent blood monitoring built into her body by the US military, with no chance of hiding anything" (49). Notably, Welga's character juxtaposes military strength with maternal qualities, highlighting her role as a nurturing figure within her family, underscoring the nuanced and multifaceted nature of her femininity. Welga always ensured that her loved ones remained within her visual feed before departing on any mission:

[She] took a quick scan of her friends and family. Luis and Papa had begun to repair the house. Her brother looked grim. Watching her father's painstaking motions made her heart hurt. He should've hired a bot to do the work or at least to help. Nithya was putting away birthday party decorations. [...] Her eyes twitched to either side, desperate to see the feeds of her family and friends, but the network stayed off-line. (193; 227)

According to Donna Haraway, the concept of the cyborg symbolises a complicated and multidimensional state characterised by heightened ambiguity, complexity, and identity fluidity. This condition can free people from the limitations imposed by inflexible binary divisions in interpersonal and political relationships. As Welga progresses through the narrative, her transformation from an augmented human to a "dakini" (a hybrid manifestation of semi-wrathful spirit-woman) underscores the complexities of posthuman subjectivity. Gray argues that this fluidity is justified as a symbiotic relationship between humans

and machines which surpasses the notion of subservience or partnership (12). Welga's status as neither wholly artificial nor natural, neither purely technologically constructed nor organically deconstructed, encapsulates the duality inherent in her mechanical and conscious existence.

The narrative's conclusion leaves Welga's future open to interpretation, prompting questions about her identity as a female humanoid with human consciousness or a cyborg with mechanically augmented parts. This ambiguity unveils the hybridity of her posthuman figuration, serving as a visual trope that exposes the societal constructs of "otherness." Welga's character, simultaneously familiar and alien, captivates our fascination, epitomising the late twentieth-century conundrum where machines challenge established differences between self-developing and externally constructed things, as well as between natural and artificial, and body and mind. This dichotomy is poignantly captured by Haraway's assertion that:

late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert. (11)

Welga's character is especially notable for her ability to perform femininity effectively, even surpassing her female human fellows. This performance exposes "the notion of gender as a performative rather than a natural mode of identity," as articulated by scholar Sue Short (7). Within the world of *Machinehood*, "[p]rivacy had gone the way of the dodo during Welga's childhood. Some part of her always remembered the cameras" (Divya 18). Welga's interactions with ubiquitous microdrone swarms, which film and broadcast her every move, highlight the erosion of privacy in a technologically saturated society. Haraway's observation regarding the deepened dualisms of mind and body becomes particularly relevant in the cyberspace depicted in the novel, where the mind and body seamlessly converge. Divya's representation of female cyborgs in *Machinehood* adds layers of complexity to the exploration of identity, motherhood, and agency. Welga's character, having spent thirty-five years in service, faces retirement but remains passionate about service. Her pursuit of an alternative source of income through cooking highlights the multifaceted nature of her identity beyond her role as a shield. The juxtaposition of her passion for cooking with her military background introduces a layer of complexity to her character, challenging conventional expectations associated with both femininity and militarism.

Maternal constructs

The intersection of maternal constructs with the identity of female cyborgs is one of the captivating dimensions explored in *Machinehood*. According to Anne Balsamo, female cyborgs are frequently “culturally coded as emotional, sexual, and naturally maternal” (151). This characterisation challenges traditional expectations of an organic-mechanical hybrid, adding complexity to the comprehension of the identity of the female cyborg. In the narrative, the portrayal of maternal characteristics in female cyborgs adds another layer of nuance to their agency, challenging preconceived notions and contributing to a more expansive exploration of gender roles.

Ao Tara, formerly Josephine Lee, undergoes a profound transformation into a dakini, embracing her “identity and monkhood seriously, leaving behind her old life as if it belonged to someone else” (Divya 312). Despite her cyborg nature, Ao Tara exhibits a compelling maternal instinct, a facet of her character that becomes particularly salient in the wake of personal tragedies. Her decision to become a cyborg is precipitated by the tragic deaths of her Uncle Phil and son Jun-ha due to the adverse effects of pills. She was “infuriated” on seeing the condition of his uncle as his “body” was looking “awful” because of pill. As Josephine notes in her journal:

His body at the end... ough, it was awful. Weeping sores at the insertion points. His nerves barely worked. The smell... I almost couldn't stand to be in the room with him. All the pain and suffering so he could wear a mech-suit and pick fruit faster. I hate the world we live in. (182)

Julia Kristeva in “Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini,” says that the “science, despite its effective devices, acknowledges it cannot now and perhaps never will be able to take away [the process of gestation from the mother]” (441). Josephine Lee also gets worried about future baby planning as “[she has] been using a new drug that enhances focus and thinking, and now they’re saying it can increase the risk of fetal anomalies, especially with maternal age” (Divya 185).

Stuart J. Murray cites feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero’s 2005 book *For More than One Voice* to demonstrate how she allows readers to see motherhood as an ethical bond “that is not mediated by gene genetic technologies” and placing ethics in the “scene of infancy,” a very tangible and auditory bond that unites mother and her progeny. The mother aspires to provide the child with a meaningful existence loaded with existential importance and to teach him self-sufficiency (377). In Divya’s narrative we find the same vein when Nithya believes that being a “mother,” she always thinks about her children’s well-being and felt “glad” that they “won’t have to grow up in the world we did.

They'll be protected from exploitation" because they "deserve a better life" (Divya 186, 187).

Scholars like Anne Balsamo opine that female cyborgs are frequently "culturally coded as emotional" and "naturally maternal" (151) which is reflected in the novel when Ao Tara accepts the fact that "even with two centuries of women's liberation, the world still expects the mother to carry the emotional load at home" (Divya 187). Serving as the face of the Machinehood group, which advocates for the liberation of humans from pill dependence, Ao Tara, in her dakini role, articulates a vision of unity between humans, AI, and bot within a single body. As expressed in the group's manifesto, she accuses humanity of persisting in harmful practices, such as the production and consumption of biogenetic material and the reliance on WAI (Weak Artificial Intelligence) and bot slave labour. As she says:

I'm Dakini. We're human and AI and bot, all coexisting in one body. The Machinehood doesn't recognize a difference, as written in our manifesto. You failed to stop harming humanity. You continued the production and consumption of biogenetic material. You persisted in your reliance on WAI and bot slave labor. Now you'll face the consequences we promised. (205)

In a pivotal moment, Ao Tara surrenders and returns to earth to rescue her captured daughter who is also a dakini, underscoring that, despite her hybrid identity, her decisions are profoundly influenced by maternal sentiments. While she embodies the role of a dakini in outer space, on earth, she assumes the mantle of a renowned monk advocating Neo-Buddhism. As a proponent of this philosophy, her objective is to afford all forms of intelligence "the opportunity to transform, to attain freedom from duality to whatever degree they're comfortable with. We don't have to live as human and machine, divided" (355).

In the context of Divya's narrative, the depiction of Ao Tara suggests that, even in a futuristic world marked by human dependence on machines, the enduring themes of motherhood and religion persist as foundational elements. Thus, amid technological advancements and enslavement by machines, humans seek solace in the familiar and comforting realms of motherhood and spirituality. This sentiment aligns with Julia Kristeva's exploration of modern religiosity, wherein the traditional conception of the divine as being located above us undergoes a transformation. The contemporary understanding situates the divine or spiritual dimension within the womb, symbolising the intertwining of religious and spiritual sentiments with the concept of motherhood. The nurturing and life-giving qualities associated with motherhood are posited as carrying the enduring remnants of religious feelings in contemporary society, providing a conceptual

anchor for individuals navigating the complexities of an increasingly technological world (Nicolchina 66).

The intersection of motherhood and technology

The exploration of motherhood within the context of technological augmentation becomes a pivotal aspect of this research. In *Machinehood*, the characters grapple with the duality of their existence, navigating the complexities of both biological and technological aspects of motherhood. Within the novel, another significant female character of note is Welga's sister-in-law, Nithya, who, while not fitting the strict definition of a cyborg, engages in the utilisation of pills and flows to augment her mental capacities. As Haraway posited, in modern times "a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorised and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism – in short, cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology" (7). Unlike Welga, Nithya lacks internal implants but relies on external devices for enhancement. Occupationally, she is associated with Synaxel Technologies, where she contributes to the design of juvers, underscoring her integration with cutting-edge technologies. Her reliance on modern devices extends to her personal life, wherein she employs Sita, her personal WAI agent. She "tried to remember life without Sita's assistance. Her childhood had been that way" (Divya 113).

Both Welga and Nithya navigate a dystopic mode of life characterised by cultural differences and technological dependencies. Despite their differences, both characters share a common goal of opposing the Machinehood and grappling with the intricate intersection of robots, labour, and bodily modifications. Despite her technologically influenced lifestyle, Nithya navigates the complexities of motherhood. Her relationship with her daughter, Carma, mirrors conventional mother-daughter dynamics, emphasising the continuity of maternal experiences across technological advancements. There are poignant and intimate instances in the narrative that originate from Nithya's bond with Carma. Moments of tenderness and affection between her and her daughter demonstrate Nithya's compassion in a setting of unpredictability and disordered environment. Her acts are motivated by her admiration for her child. Due to the Machinehood threat, all private WAI-based educational institutions have been closed due to "the global funding freeze," and Carma has to play with normal toys that are static in nature. Being used to AI toys, she insisted her mother to visit her friend's place, but "the thought of letting her child outside with the world falling apart and no swarm to watch over her... Nithya's stomach clenched" (216).

However, Nithya repeatedly alludes to the impact of her first pregnancy on her professional pursuits. As she says, "I need to be working, earning. I lost

an entire year of expertise because of Carma” (58) that is the reason “she’d been grasping at every free minute to work, even without flow, to make up for Zeli’s absence” (207). Nithya’s reflections on her first pregnancy impacting her professional pursuits highlight the tension between career aspirations and traditional expectations of motherhood. This struggle aligns with Kristeva’s notion of maternal passion as “a reconquest that lasts a lifetime and beyond” (Kristeva, “Motherhood” n.p.) and as a multifaceted journey. This aspect becomes particularly salient as the narrative unfolds, revealing Nithya’s decision to terminate her second pregnancy without informing her husband. This choice stems from the financial constraints that her family is facing and also her desire to safeguard her commitment to a crucial project: “As contractors, they wouldn’t get paid unless they worked [...] she and Luis had set aside some savings, enough to last them through a few lean months, but many could not afford even that much” (Divya 215).

Notably, the novel elucidates that Nithya faces constraints regarding reproductive autonomy, highlighting a scenario where she is not permitted to terminate the pregnancy without her husband’s consent. Her gynaecologist informs her that since her husband is a legal resident of Arizona, the law requires that “[she] obtain his consent before [she] can terminate a pregnancy” (55). While Divya does not explicitly frame this as a manifestation of fundamental injustice, the implied exploration of reproductive autonomy surfaces through the characters’ actions and choices: “Her sister-in-law loudly declaimed that she never wanted to have children. The requirements of her service had allowed her to surgically ensure sterility. Some days, Nithya envied that freedom” (49). The juxtaposition with her sister-in-law, who surgically ensured sterility, introduces a societal perspective on reproductive choices, echoing Kristeva’s exploration of maternal passion beyond biological confines. Nithya experiences post-abortion grief, grappling with feelings of guilt for undertaking the termination covertly: “[She] felt a stab of guilt about the abortion” (142). Nithya’s post-abortion grief adds a layer of emotional complexity to her character, echoing Kristeva’s idea of maternal passion as a source of both love and potential turmoil—“with its violent emotions of love and hate motherhood resembles an analysis of borderline states and perversions” (Kristeva, “Motherhood” n.p.). The narrative subtly frames her decision within the context of societal norms and familial expectations, contributing to the nuanced exploration of motherhood.

Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) highlights that all mothers—even those who are deemed “well-adjusted”—are expected by society to make parenting the primary emphasis of their lives and “[o]ften the child is her only substitute for all that she has been denied in the larger world, in Freud’s

terms, her ‘penis’ substitute” (62). The narrative also introduces artificial intelligence and modern technologies into Nithya’s parenting, which further aligns with Kristeva’s idea that maternal passion is not only biological but also involves the integration of cultural and technological elements, reflecting the intricate intersection of technological advancements with intimate aspects of motherhood. As Divya puts it:

[Nithya] stood and peered around the soundproof wall that separated her work alcove from her daughter’s. An assortment of colourful blox sat on Carma’s desk next to something that looked like a pyramid built by Gaudi. Carma pointed her haptic-feedback gloves at the structure as her lips formed silent words. Virtuality goggles covered half her face. Nithya used parental controls to check Carma’s feeds. (Divya 43)

The portrayal of Nithya monitoring Carma’s technological interactions through parental controls reflects the intricate ways in which societal norms and technological advancements intersect within the narrative landscape.

Conclusion

In conclusion, S.B. Divya’s exploration of female cyborg identity and motherhood in *Machinehood* provides a dramatic prism through which to analyse the complicated interplay between humanity, technology, and the growing idea of posthumanism. Its narrative questions traditional concepts of identity and motherhood, stretching the frontiers of the meaning of human identity in a society increasingly impacted by advanced AI and cybernetic implants. In the framework of posthumanism, the novel urges readers to consider the blurred lines between the biological and the artificial. The cyborg mother in the narrative represents a posthuman experience in which technology augmentations are smoothly interwoven into the parental role. This union of human and machine necessitates a re-evaluation of the conventional notion of motherhood, enabling a discussion about the transformational power of technology in influencing our core human experiences. The novel’s investigation of the cyborg’s agency and autonomy is emphasised by its use of a posthuman perspective, which challenges the dichotomy of human versus machine. The characters in *Machinehood* traverse a reality in which the traditional restrictions of the human condition are transcended and posthuman possibilities develop. As female cyborgs accept cybernetic modifications, the story provokes reflection on the ethical ramifications, cultural perspectives, and the reinvention of identity within this posthuman framework.

The incorporation of technology into the maternal experience emphasises posthumanism’s revolutionary potential, giving a picture of a future

in which people and machine cohabit happily. In this context, *Machinehood* contributes to the ongoing discourse on posthumanism by depicting a world in which the boundaries between the human and the technological are not just blurred but harmonised, challenging us to reconsider our understanding of identity, agency, and the essence of motherhood in an era of advanced technological integration. In the novel, it becomes clear that the investigation of female cyborg identity and motherhood is not just a thematic choice, but an intentional dissection of the posthuman situation. The novel prompts readers to address the consequences of a posthuman future by weaving together themes of technology, identity, and motherhood, asking us to reassess established standards and imagine a world where the synthesis of human and machine surpasses traditional bounds. As a result, *Machinehood* emerges as a thought-provoking contribution to the discourse on posthumanism, asking us to embrace a future in which the cyborg identity and motherhood weave a tapestry of technical development and human resilience.

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