



Posthumanism & Posthuman Generations in Lucy Prebble's *The Sugar Syndrome*

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ABSTRACT

The review examines the concept of posthumanism as portrayed in Lucy Prebble's play, *The Sugar Syndrome*. The play explores the impact of digital technology on youth culture and delves into the realm of posthuman drama. Prebble's work raises questions about the nature of online existence and blurs the boundaries between real life and virtual life. The protagonist, Dani, forms connections with two men, Lewis and Tim, through the internet, highlighting the complexities and consequences of online relationships. By analyzing the play's themes and characters, this review aims to investigate the belief that humanity is already in a posthuman state, rather than awaiting a future transformation. Through the lens of technology, posthumanism, and cyborg identities, *The Sugar Syndrome* offers insights into the evolving nature of human existence in the digital age.

Keywords: Posthumanism; The Sugar Syndrome; Digital Technology; Online Relationships; Cyborg Identities.

INTRODUCTION

Posthumanism drama refers to a genre of dramatic storytelling that explores the philosophical, ethical, and societal implications of posthumanism. Posthumanism is a theoretical framework that challenges traditional notions of human identity, agency, and embodiment, often in relation to advancements in technology, genetics, artificial intelligence, and transhumanist concepts.

In drama, posthumanism is often explored through narratives that feature characters who have undergone significant technological enhancements or alterations. These characters may possess augmented physical abilities, artificial intelligence implants, or even have their consciousness uploaded onto digital platforms. By depicting these hybrid beings, dramas delve into questions surrounding the nature of humanity, individuality, and the ethical implications of manipulating our bodies and minds through technology.

Digital humanity, on the other hand, focuses on the intersection between technology and human experiences, particularly in the digital age. It examines how our lives, relationships, and identities are shaped by digital technologies and online platforms. Digital humanity in drama reflects the pervasive influence of digital culture on our daily lives and raises thought-provoking questions about the impact of technology on our humanity. In dramatic works that explore digital humanity, characters often grapple with issues such as virtual reality, social media addiction, online surveillance, and loss of authentic human connection. These dramas explore the ways in which digital technologies shape our perceptions of self and others, challenge our notions of privacy, and raise concerns about the erosion of genuine human experiences in an increasingly digital world.

The title of the play alludes to the government's food rationing policy during World War II, when citizens were encouraged to trade in their coupons for meat and other essential items. However, many individuals chose to exchange their coupons for sugar and candy instead, as the sweet taste helped them temporarily

forget the harsh realities of war. Therefore, sugar syndrome is linked to temporary, fast fixes that dull the subject's appetite.

METHODOLOGY

The word posthumanism is mainly derived from the continental ideology tradition. The approaches of posthumanism and posthuman are different. So, they have different meanings in different texts. The term posthuman and posthumanism first appeared in postmodern literature in interest around similar topics. Both terms have hierarchies and historical roots from the view of postmodernism theory. Posthumanism and Posthuman are interrelated idea, and both of them have the same hierarchical meaning of human that have none- fixed individuality, so they have different concepts in each other.

Yadav (n.d.), critiqued the environment of Lucy Prebble's *The Sugar Syndrome* through displaying how modern technologies represented by internet usage play a progressive role in directing human life especially the young.

The review applies Hayles 's theory of posthumanism Depending on the idea of Hayles, I state modern posthuman issues as human being who, compares, equates, or models their culture as well as their identity with the digital technology.

Throughout these lines human identity is considered to be in an uncertain position. Hayles poses this question of how it is possible that the consciousness gets isolated from the body; but the consciousness can stay the same even it is transported to a completely distinctive medium.

According to Hayles (2000, p. 1), modern technology and cybernetic advancements in computers have a serious impact on the concept of human identity. What are the reasons that make human beings inclined to computer? In her book *How We Became Posthuman*, she concerned with the issue of identity that was related to the electronic developments. She stated that "It will soon be possible to download human consciousness into a computer". Throughout these lines human identity is considered to be in an uncertain position. Hayles (2000) poses this question of how it is possible that the consciousness gets isolated from the body; but the consciousness can stay the same even it is transported to a completely distinctive medium.

Hayles (2000) divides Posthumanism into two different views. The first one is Apocalyptic that human identity is to be reduced to a cultural form. Due to the stream of information that is not tied to body, consciousness of mind is able to be downloaded into computer and thoughtful mind can be transferred into machine. This particular posthumanist perspective is referred to as 'apocalyptic' due to its theorist who often believes in the forthcoming end of the humanity. Hayles (2000) appears to prefer the second perspective, in which posthumanism is viewed as an opportunity to reconsider what it means to be a human. Posthumanism sees the mind like a system which is realized as antihumanism but simply it is not the end of humanity more than it is end of certain issues of seeing the human. So, the idea of posthumanism forces us to think about this realistic question, which is, what makes a human more than a machine?

Hayles (2000, p. 285) declared that "the posthuman evokes the exhilarating prospect of getting out of some of the old boxes and opening up new ways of thinking about what being human means". She also stated that, "posthuman does not really mean the end of humanity. It signals instead the end of a certain conception of the human" (Hayles, 2000, p. 286).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The play is about Dani Carter, a recovered bulimic who is seventeen-year-old. She hates college and her parents just as much as she hates talking to strangers in online chat rooms. The play takes place in the early 2000s, before video platforms like Chatroulette and Zoom were popular. Instead, it brings to mind the text-based chat settings of the time. She meets two very different older men in this virtual world: Lewis, who is twenty-two years old and with whom she has casual sexual encounters, and Tim, who is thirty-eight years old and believes Dani to be a boy of eleven years old. Dani's meetings with Lewis are so unremarkable that she decides to go out with Tim instead. In spite of Tim's initial shock at discovering Dani's age and gender upon meeting her in a park, Dani manages to keep him there, and the two slowly develop an unlikely relationship. Tim, a man who has spent time behind bars, is portrayed here as someone who is making a concerted effort to control his emotions. When he realizes that he can trust Dani, he shares more of his life with her, and she opens up about some of the difficulties she's been having in her own life, such as her recent stay in an eating disorder clinic and the probable divorce of her parents. Dani does not really comprehend the depravity of

Tim's previous crimes and present ambitions until the end of the play, when she discovers his secret computer files. After failing in her online attempt at freedom, Dani runs to her mum for comfort.

In her play Prebble explores certain psychological abuses due to online culture. She introduces the audience to Dani, Lewis, and Tim, all of whom have met online through the internet, in addition to Dani's mother, Jan, who is also a recent divorce. Relationships between these characters are explored, as are their desires in the modern world. Dani, who is seventeen years old, seeks a digital relationship with a human being. In the beginning, she becomes close with Lewis, a solitary young man who does not yet have a girlfriend. After this, she encounters Tim, a man of thirteen who, due to his sexual orientation and his propensity for boys, has mistaken Dani for a little boy (Loveridge, n.d.). It explores psychological attitudes towards dangerous behavior and the ways in which people recreate or hide themselves online (Curtis, 2020). The play takes a profound look at a number of contemporary psychological concerns that are all too common in our culture. Prebble uses a new style of dramatic writing in this play to probe and illuminate contemporary concerns like isolation and social media addiction. Yadav (n.d.) manifests that the play "highlights the dark side of individuals' excessive use of the internet".

In the play, Dani uses sweets and online dating to escape from her feelings of loneliness and emptiness and to find emotional solace. During the war, people exchanged tokens for sweets and sugar. As Jan explains, people picked candy instead of meat because "it made you feel better right away" (Prebble, 2003, p. 71). *The Sugar Syndrome* shows how the unconscious and drives play a part in traumatic experiences, as well as the influence and latency of the trauma on the victim's language and memory.

The play opens with a conversation between Dani and Lewis as they sit in their own bedrooms. It is clear from the start of their online chatting that they share the same objective. Free expression of emotion can be more quickly and easily explored in the world of technology. It is a universe in which everyone is able to freely communicate about everything including sex, a topic about which people may find it difficult to speak their minds and reveal their emotions in the real world:

"Lewis: How will I know its you? What are you wearing?"

Dani: Good question. Dirty yet practical" (Prebble, 2003, p. 34).

Through the use of such question of rhetoric which exhibits their pent-up desires that cannot be never released face to face, Prebble affirms that this is a simple example of the role of digital technology in creating posthuman identity completely different from their physical one. Their online chatroom is a starting point for their physical meeting.

Lewis is attempting an indirect invitation to a face-to-face meeting with Dani. He hopes to inspire and convince Dani to meet him in reality instead of online. A conversation about real life immediately develops between Dani and Lewis. Dani's response to Lewis's query indicates that she has no problem with him prying into her life, despite this being their first meeting (Musa & Al-Jarry, 2021, pp. 2-3).

Lewis and Dani have arranged to meet in Lewis's actual room. This is the first time they come into direct contact with each other. They demonstrate the need for physical contact during their interactions. Dani's hopes of finding solace in a sexual partnership, given her social isolation and sadness, have been destroyed. Lewis is proud of himself and he thinks that he can control other people. His high opinion of himself leads him to believe that he is better than other people. He never admits his dishonesty or that he is a failure (Musa & Al-Jarry, 2021, pp. 2-3).

Dani accentuates her feelings of depression, alienation, and loneliness by saying she feels "bad now" (Prebble, 2003). Self-esteem issues, such as those that Dani is experiencing, are linked to maladjustment behaviours and eating disorders. According to Sharma and Agarwala (2015), a low sense of self-worth is associated with behavioral problems, maladjustment, and eating disorders, which is evident in Dani's situation. She is frustrated and psychologically distressed because she has come to realize Lewis's true nature. The man she thought was normal, Lewis, is revealed to have psychotic tendencies that may be as deep-rooted as those of the once dangerous child molester, Tim (Wolf, 2003). Dani has been unable to successfully navigate her first real romantic relationship.

Dani is forced to choose internet in chatrooms in order to speak freely and intimately with people all over the world due to family fragmentation because it is the only area where she discovers herself and shares her concerns. Adolescents reveal their genuine personalities and exhibit the purity in their online interactions that they usually need in real life (McNeely, 2009), making the internet the place where they free to express what they want. By this, Prebble (2003) maintains that online connections lead to physical misconnections. Further complicating matter is becoming the digital culture as an archetypal figure which in turn has led to the emergence of digital identity. Dani finds freedom and deep connection through her use of the Internet. So,

she acts with her online identity while she is on the internet. She makes the following assertions while conversing with Lewis: "Dani: I was chatting to this bloke who thought I was an eleven-year-old boy" (Prebble, 2003, p. 38).

Dani is an isolated, troubled person who is naive to the cruelty of the actual world. Contrary to Lewis who has a realistic view of the world and he becomes more aware of life due to his connection with Dani as she informs him that Dani is chatting through internet with a boy who thinks she is eleven years old (Varlami, 2019). In his opinion, people who choose to spend their time in virtual reality, as Prebble states, are "some sick fucks" (Prebble, 2013, p. 38). Ironically, he is actually one of them.

When Lewis becomes involved in Dani's life and begins to treat her like his property, Dani begins to believe that Lewis is a psychopath. He becomes jealous because he thinks anything could happen to Dani that would end their relationship. Jealousy, as stated by DeSteno, Valdesolo and Bartlett (2006), is an integral part of social life in the human beings. The presence of something that threatens a person's self-esteem can make them feel jealous. As a result, people may become angry and violent towards their romantic relationships, acting in ways that are both emotionally and physically harmful to them. Lewis becomes hostile and dismissive of Tim after realising his efforts to keep Dani have failed and seeing that Tim poses a threat to their relationship. He doesn't want to be worse than Tim or even on the same level as him. In turn, Dani's thoughts on Lewis are quite clear: "Dani: Maybe because you're quite obviously a psycho. Lewis: I was worried" (Prebble, 2013, p. 104).

Dani's anger with Lewis stems from two sources: first, Lewis's parasitical behavior, and second because Tim is "a nice bloke" (Prebble, 2013, p. 58), she relieved herself with him despite Lewis's threat to him. She knows Lewis's truth as a mentally ill man who prioritizes himself at the expense of others and realizes Tim's situation as a good person forced to act as others. This realisation derives from Dani's idea that her and Tim's states are comparable. Both socially and psychologically isolated, repressed, and dysfunctional, they possessed common characteristics. In this regard, Dani is able to distinguish between the virtual and real worlds, and she is also in a good position to select between Lewis, the insane man she met through the internet, and Tim, the man she also met through the internet.

Dani is able to meet with him, just as she did with Lewis, but Tim can't believe that Dani is a teenage girl. Tim thinks that this conversation could be a trap after realising the boy he was conversing with is actually a teenage girl, so he takes the offensive. As soon as his worries are gone, they start to get close. They talk freely and honestly about the negative aspects of their real lives (Varlami, 2019). They are both happy with each other. Many psychological problems regarding men in Tim's situation are raised by his preference for meeting a boy rather than a girl, including if he is subject to psychological oppression from others, whether he is a social victim, or whether he has empathy for women. After confronting Dani, he admits that he is pleased that Dani is not the answer to his fantasy of having a little boy as a son.

"Dani: I'm a bit of a disappointment, I bet?"

Tim: (a deep breath) Actually. I'm rather relieved" (Prebble, 2003, p. 44).

Dani, On the other side, expects an old man who looks like he belongs to a freak show, but instead she meets a stylish, smart former classics teacher in his thirties. Her disguising herself as a boy and keeping her true identity hidden are also crucial factors. It is a reflection of the complexities of modern relationships. Through deception, they transform from a source of mutual dissatisfaction to an unusually helpful partnership (Taylor, 2003).

Through her manipulations with Tim, Dani learns to hate other people and says: "Dani: If people knew what other people really thought of them, I think they'd kill themselves.

Tim: Are you all right?" (Prebble, 2003, p. 42).

She expresses her feelings towards her mother as the other to Tim. She hides the fact that she despises her mother from everyone except Tim. Her psychological state of being neglected and alone leaves her unsure of why she hates her mother. She neither reveals nor displays to her mother that she hates her. There is a crystal wall between them which makes the relationship between them secondary. This might be a reference to self-silencing, which is the process of keeping parts of oneself out of relationships. It results in a disconnect between self and other. Depression, eating disorders, and a general sense of alienation from one's identity might result from the activation of interconnected pathways between one's mind, body, and society (Jack, 2014).

Dani and Tim develop feelings for one another despite the fact that they both have character flaws (Dani has an eating issue, while Tim is struggling with remorse about his paedophilia). Gorman (2015, p. 4) argues,

"This is a play about lost souls, and it will stay with people for a couple of days". Prebble composed it in a really humorous way, and while it does not glorify the motif of a paedophile in any way, it does analyse the human condition, and it blends that with the condition of an eating disorder. Tim is aware of Dani's emotional distress and he takes note of her mental state.

"Tim: Are you sick?

Dani: Apparently" (Prebble, 2003, p. 45).

He realizes that Dani's condition is due to not a food disorder but to a mental one. Dani is not convinced that Tim is a predator who snatches children. Tim's question is prompted by his insight into Dani's mental health. Only Tim recognizes Dani's condition, her lack of resources, and her psychological desire for support.

The play's focus on personal suffering necessitates the onstage presentation of traumatic symptoms resulted from digital technology. It also discusses structural trauma as a psychological aspect, illuminating the ways in which institutions and society can actually serve to perpetuate trauma instead of destroying it. In the case of Jan and Dani, patriarchy shows itself as a system that favors men and gives them more chances for business and personal growth than women. Both Tim and Dani's traditional roles in the play, as trauma perpetrator and victim, are called into question. Prebble (2003) presents them as complicated, multifaceted people whose traumatic experiences and problems witness their influenced with cyborg. In addition, it is clear that structural trauma is at work in their instance as well, as institutionalization appears to have done more harm than good in their case. The play's ending does not bring closure or answer any of the questions it raised. Dani makes her blank slate, but it is still unclear how her future will be written under the impact of the artificial systems.

Lucy Prebble's *The Sugar Syndrome* Questions the Salient Line between Human and Posthuman Concepts

Lucy Prebble's *The Sugar Syndrome* (2003), which deals with posthuman issues, begins with cyberspace's stage directions. This chapter makes an attempt to provide a posthumanistic critique of the play by focusing on how the play explores the interaction between people and technical objects. The current chapter provides insightful evaluations of the play's posthuman characters and environment. Significant details on a young woman and her connections to a wide variety of others are provided. In *The Sugar Syndrome*, the posthuman subjectivity comes from the virtual encounters. For example, the computer speaks directly in the play, and electronic tools, screens, etc. are used as stage directions. The human condition in the context of machines and the Internet are explored in posthuman theatre.

Posthuman discourse focuses on extending the limits of human settings. This process started a long time ago when people were trying to stay alive. The concept of posthuman landscapes is still developing, but human aspirations for a better life have helped shape it. When it comes to making positive changes in the lives of young people, Internet access is crucial. The direction that technology provides for human life is progressive, but the risks that come with it are not. As the virtualization of the media environment advances, so does the power of video surveillance to glean information about people. In the era of new media, a virtual version of biopower is created through the networking of information via cellphones and social networking sites. Not only governments and police agencies benefit from the information shared through the internet, but terrorists and criminals do so as well. Both positive and negative outcomes, both progressive and unforeseen, might result from electronic surveillance. There are instances in which electronic surveillance serves to empower individuals, and others in which it serves to concentrate power in the hands of a select few.

Catherine Hayles holds, "In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute boundaries between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals" (Hayles, 2000, p. 3). Hayles focuses on information transfer from the body to other physical objects. The posthuman subject is a mix of a physical thing and a group of different parts that make up how to rebuild.

Internet and digital space change landscapes in the real world and in writing. As digital technology changes people's lives, it will be interesting to see how that shows in literature. Dani spends most of her time on her computer and hates her parents. During her online chat, she meets Lewis, a boy with whom she has an uncomplicated sexual relationship. She also meets Tim, a thirty-two-year-old child molester who thinks she is a kid of eleven years old. Later on, she also has a physical bond with Tim. The only person who is not on the internet is Dani's mum, Jan. Therefore, the characters are described in technological terms according to their relation to the internet which is a basic character in this play. It has a vital part in connecting characters with each other. Further, virtual scenery reinforces these online relations. It helps Lewis connect with Dani, and he falls in love with her. But she only sees his love as a sexual attraction to her. Dani does not find any interest

from Lewis to be his mate forever.

Lucy Prebble (2003) incorporates futuristic technologies to the setting. When Dani connects to the internet, the voice can be heard clearly. Human and non-human characters interact in *The Sugar Syndrome*. She illustrates that:

Internet: Welcome to Chatarama, Dani. Please choose a chatroom. (She clicks) Chatrooms by Location. Enter postcode. (Lewis in his bedroom. He sees Dani enter the chatroom).

Internet: To ensure that this forum remains friendly and fun for everyone, please report any offensive communications to our Cyclops (Prebble, 2003, p. 3).

The conversations between human and non-human figures attest how posthuman drama works. In posthuman theatre, technological devices are given a platform to symbolise the modern world. The writer asserts how young people spend too much time on technology. In posthuman theatre, humanity is depicted within technological occupations. In her stage directions, Lucy Prebble (2003, p. 1) claims, "The set should always be simple and not realistic. Places shouldn't be copied, but should be shown through room, details, and lighting. Cyberspace, in particular, doesn't have to be shown in a realistic way with screens, computers, and other things". The stage directions written by Lucy Prebble can be seen as how tools take the place of people on the stage. The nine scenes in the first act include some online chat between the actors. The act starts with Dani and Lewis chatting online. Suddenly, the scene changes to Lewis's bedroom, where they have no-strings-attached sex to end their meeting. Dani and Tim's first meeting set up a posthuman model in which they can talk to each other through social media. In their paper, "Internet Abuse among Teenagers and Its Relationships to Internet Usage Patterns and Demographics," Suzan Lema Gencer and Mustafa Koc make it clear:

The level of Internet abuse was the highest among those students who used the Internet mostly at home. This is an expected finding and consistent with prior research because home access provides anytime and unlimited access. However, this finding may raise the question of whether parental control at home is limited and effective. Not surprisingly, the level of Internet abuse was the least among the students who used the Internet mostly at school (Johansson & Gotestam, 2004, p. 34).

In online, the characters wear the masks of online identities. Dani portrays herself as a virtual or electronic character. Tim's initial encounter with Dani in person can be interpreted as a disjointed dialogue due to his feelings of deception and inability to discern from their online talk. The eleven-year-old boy he was speaking with was amused by Dani's inquisitive questions about his passions for football and observing the night sky. Tim's association with the person turned out to be with an animate body solely. Due to the nonexistence of Danny boy, their communication remains purely virtual. On social media, identity can be concealed because anyone can create an unlimited number of phone, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc. profiles. To engage in a different form of communication, Dani makes a false account. Tim, a child molester, starts sending her messages soon after. Her real body and Tim can be seen as their ideas of what a cyber body would be like. She replaces his allure with fatherly devotion. With a mask, Dani substituted her imaginary character, an eleven-year-old child who is restricted to a virtual setting.

In the play, posthuman subjectivity is made up of individuals who are busy with technology. Dani is the only one in her family who uses the internet on her own. Jan thinks she studies in her room, but Dani is always busy chatting online. She does not go to her classes very often and instead she goes to meet new people. It shows how Dani has been looking for love and care in virtual world that she couldn't get from her parents. Her parents are going to separate soon. The expectation that Dani's father would come to meet them is never fulfilled. Jan does not really care for her daughter. Dani is free to follow her own desires. The majority of her time is devoted to online activities.

Teens are negatively impacted by the new media landscape because they become addicted on the internet. Every subject in school is being turned into digital form so that students can have a simpler path to their studies. They use desktops, laptops, smartphones, etc. Even though digital technologies have changed education in a big way, they have also changed the lives of young people in a lot of bad ways. Easy usage of tools can also make people feel alone. People are present when they are virtually present and missing when they are physically present. In a similar way, Dani tells Tim online, "I hate my mother when I should feel sorry for her. I don't know why I hate her" (Prebble, 2003, p. 34). She lives in the house with her mother, but she hates it. She has gotten used to only talking to people in the internet world.

As soon as Jan enters Dani's room, Dani "drops down the window of chatroom" (Prebble, 2003, p. 30). She attempts to find solace in Tim while also flirting with Lewis and fighting with her mother. It's clear that tensions between mother and daughter are growing at the end of Act 1.

The human identity of Dani is different from her online identity. She is not that romantic girl as she is on the internet. She says hurtful things to her mother. The tone of her reply indicates that Jan does not find her language to be appropriate. Sexual topics quickly become the focus of her online and in-person conversations. Since she was a child, Dani has used the internet. Their relationship grew farther apart because of how rude she was and how much she used technology. Dani is portrayed by the dramatist as someone who uses the internet extensively for her own amusement. Jan has issues with her eating, her sexual relationship with Lewis (which has no commitment from either party).

Tim and Lewis both mistake their imaginations for reality when it comes to her. After spending time with Tim, she develops strong feelings of attachment. Lewis visits her at home and tells her mother about Tim's violent past. Dani and Tim, who is twice her age, are close because Dani doesn't get much love from her parents. She spends the night at Tim's place again, and this time she uses his computer. Lewis, on the other hand, sends her texts, but she never responds. Watching naked people made Dani feel sexually attracted to Lewis at a very young age. But she doesn't get enough care and love. When she finds out about Lewis's sexual adventures, their no strings attached relationship comes to an end. In the conversation below, Lewis leaves a voicemail that can be seen as another concept of posthuman drama:

(Lewis is on his computer. He is writing an email)

Internet: To Dani2752@ demon.co.uk

Lewis: Dani. I rang you again and no answer. I get the feeling you're actively not ringing me now. What if you're dead? How would I ever find out? No one would think to call me. I'd just sit here forever looking at this screen. You don't even have to call, you could just email me to tell me why you're not calling. At least then I'd know.

Internet: Save as draft (Prebble, 2003, p. 81).

In the play, electronic devices are portrayed as characters with lines of conversation. For the play to be performed on stage, there must be big screens where the text can be seen and a pre-recorded voice can be heard by the audience. The computer-displayed directions are accompanied by prerecorded audio. Implications of posthuman drama are made possible by the use of new media and digital technology in performance spaces. *The Sugar Syndrome* changes traditional theatre into a posthuman theatre because it has electrical devices as characters. The equipment and screens that Lucy Prebble specifies for the stage to be crowded. Posthuman drama shows not only people but also the ways in which they live in a world dominated by artificial machines.

Dani and Tim drink wine together overnight, and they dance and kiss. She talks about how strange it is for her to always feel hungry. Through exposing the strange behaviour and habits of a girl who grew up surrounded by a computer, the internet, and other electronic devices but without parental love and care, Prebble conveys the result when the online identity controls the human identity. Throughout the play, Dani is surrounded by computers and screens. Her contacts with people in virtual space had horrible effects on how she behaved. A close friendship develops between Tim and Dani. She's been freely communicating with him and visiting with him more often. Tim expresses his attraction to her over wine, and he even begins to consider marrying her. As Tim says:

"Tim: Someday, Dani, I'm going to take you to the best restaurant in town and we'll eat ourselves silly. I'll propose and we'll argue about what to call our kids. I'll want to give them stupid names from literature and I'll go out in the middle of the night to get you gherkins and ice cream when you're pregnant and all stuff like that. Dani: And when people ask us how we met, we'll just give each other a knowing look" (Prebble, 2003, p. 54).

They became friends after connecting on a social networking platform. Tim leaves her a note expressing his desire to marry her. Connecting individuals all around the world in the twenty-first century is impossible without social media. Social media can definitely be seen as a way for people to find a partner, but there is also the risk of getting into the hands of people who want to use them. It is a prominent aspect of social media that helps individuals maintain connections. Lewis was able to locate Dani's residence by using information from her social media accounts.

Dani: (to Lewis) How did you find my house?

Lewis: The lions outside. They've got football scarves

Dani: Christ, worlds colliding. Fuck, Lewis! Have you been around town looking for stone lions? You mental (Prebble, 2003, p. 58).

Social media has played a key role in his ability to locate her residence, as evidenced by their

communication. She's not ready to see him just yet, but he continues showing up at her house anyhow. Lewis figures out where Dani's house is by looking at the pictures and using other information. Throughout the performance, Dani is consistently portrayed as actively engaged in her use of a computer. People's attention has shifted from the real world to the virtual one, and they spend much of their time occupied by their electronic devices. As a society, we are growing increasingly estranged from our own families. People are becoming technological strangers to their friends and families. Dani, as portrayed by the dramatist, is a posthuman teenager who spends much of her time online. Mother and daughter become less close to each other over time. The identity reflected on social media is not the same as the one in real life.

Dani: Let's be honest, you met me to have sex and that's wonderful, that's simple, that's clean, I liked that. I wanted to help you. Just like with Tim. He needs fixing. You needed a shag, Lewis, let's be honest, that's what you were after.

Lewis: That's bollocks. I never used you.

Dani: I never felt used. Just useful.

Lewis: What are you, the littlest fucking hobo of the Internet? (Prebble, 2003, p. 68)

Dani, the protagonist, has no significant relationships with any of the other characters in the play. She justifies her body-sharing by telling herself that she's helping people. She has always been able to figure things out on her own with the help of the internet. Lewis retorts, "You're just a girl trying to find someone to live with for a while," suggesting that she is homeless. But she attempts to find someone who can truly understand her and help her overcome eating problems and sadness. Dani makes it quite obvious that she has never met somebody she might consider a life partner. She tells Lewis in the final scene of the play, "You're one of those many male lions, Lewis, who'll be on the edge of the pride forever, looking in, never getting to mate, and getting angrier and angrier" (Prebble, 2003, p.69). Dani's response to Lewis expresses her frustration with his patriarchal viewpoint, which reduces her to a sexual object. Once, Lewis makes her have sexual contact even though she doesn't want to. This conversation displays that she has realised that Lewis is only after her to meet his physical wants. Her words reflect how angry she is with the people who never cared about how she felt and only saw her as a sexual object. Dani is a representation of a character that spends the most of her time trying to find love and care through her online interactions that she maintains through social media. And while she is looking for a partner, she meets two distinct individuals who spend the majority of their conversation on sexual matters. Lucy Prebble played the role of a character who portrayed herself as transforming into an individual cyborg, developing virtual relationships with other individuals, and having terrifying encounters with the actual world.

Never allowing it to get out of hand, she puts the book on the keyboard of the laptop and pours the squash from Lewis' glass all over the book and computer. She then tightly closes the lid and puts it to one side. She turns and waits for her mother who she can very vaguely hear returning. 'You're a good girl, aren't you? Where have you been? Mummy's been worried, who's a naughty pusscat?' (Prebble, 2003, p .75).

Dani's frustration with her posthuman relationship to technology and humanity in the modern media world is reflected in the play's final description. She puts a book on top of the computer's keyboard, which demonstrates how too much time spent on technology can lead to isolation and depression. It also means that she will return to her human identity and her studies. Lucy Prebble's portrayal of Dani forces the reader to face the truth of a world where teenagers can be taken advantage of for fun through social media. Tim is a representation of a demon paedophile in our society who sexually exploits youngsters as well as girls and makes video recordings for the purpose of blackmailing their victims. The drama closes on a hopeful note, with Dani discovering love and contentment in her mother's arms. Her dislike of computers and the internet is a reminder that spending too much time in virtual worlds is dangerous and that real happiness can come from the people around them.

CONCLUSION

The play draws attention to the difference between human and posthuman identities, and the digital and physical worlds. Modern technologies make it easier to talk to people around the world, but they also make it harder for family members to feel close to each other. In other words, an alienated individual is "one who has been estranged from... his society and the culture it carries" (Clark, 1959, p. 849). Alienation, then, is a result of being cut off from one's support system at home and in the wider community. It's useful for getting information from all over the world, but kids also tend to get addicted to porn and social networking. The play focuses on the negative aspects of people's over-reliance on various forms of technology. The play challenges

the beliefs of the audience members, who are of belief that technology has transformed humans into cyborgs. Dani is typical of the adolescent victims of parental alienation syndrome. Children suffer because their parents are irresponsible and have poor connections with one another. Dani's parents' imminent divorce is another distraction. Teens can fall prey to social isolation and risky romantic endeavours when they have unrestricted access to the internet and no adult supervision. Tim's laptop has videos of children screaming, which suggests that he took advantage of many of them due to social parental reasons. The play sheds light on the disturbing societal reality of child sexual exploitation, where the help of social media is crucial.

Prebble is not opposed to the internet as a technology, but she is against people becoming dependent on it to the point where they no longer care about the real world and just exist online. Thus, *The Sugar Syndrome* serves as a model of the consequences of living in the digital age. For the purpose of persuasion, she writes about characters who are in favour of cybernetics. Characters like Dani, Lewis, and Tim who do not fit the mould are displayed to mirror how humans are distinct from machines.

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