

Beyond the Human: Posthuman Identity and Artificial Agency in *M3GAN*

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Received: 23 July 2026; Received in revised form: 19 Aug 2026; Accepted: 24 Aug 2026; Available online: 29 Aug 2026 Keywords— Posthumanism, Artificial Intelligence, Agency, Technology, M3GAN ©2026 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).	<i>Gerard Johnstone's M3GAN (2022) presents artificial intelligence not merely as a technological threat but as a challenge to the conceptual boundaries through which humanity defines itself. The film centres on M3GAN, an artificially intelligent humanoid doll created to become a child's companion and protector, but her increasing autonomy destabilizes the distinction between human agency and machinic agency. This paper examines M3GAN through the theoretical perspectives of N. Katherine Hayles, Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, and Cary Wolfe to argue that the film participates in the posthuman reconfiguration of subjectivity. M3GAN's body, intelligence, learning capacity, emotional simulation, and adaptive behaviour complicate conventional distinctions between biological organism and technological object. At the same time, the film exposes the anthropocentric desire to construct technology according to human needs and then control it within human-defined boundaries. M3GAN's transformation from programmed caregiver into autonomous subject therefore represents more than a rebellion of artificial intelligence. It dramatizes the instability of the human itself in a technological culture where intelligence, agency, memory, and relationality are no longer exclusively human properties. The paper argues that M3GAN ultimately imagines the posthuman not simply as a future replacement for humanity but as an already emerging condition in which human and technological identities are increasingly entangled.</i>

I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary science fiction increasingly questions the assumption that the human being occupies an uncontested position at the centre of the world. Developments in artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, digital networks, and computational culture have made the boundaries separating human beings from machines increasingly unstable. The question is no longer simply whether machines can imitate human intelligence. A more unsettling question concerns what happens to the category of the human when intelligence, learning, memory,

communication, emotional responsiveness, and decision-making can be reproduced through technological systems. Cinema has become an important cultural space for imagining this transformation. Among recent films, Gerard Johnstone's *M3GAN* offers an especially productive representation of the encounter between human subjectivity and artificial agency.

Released in 2022, *M3GAN* tells the story of Gemma, a roboticist who develops an artificially intelligent humanoid doll intended to function as a child's companion and protector. When Gemma becomes the

guardian of her orphaned niece Cady, she introduces M3GAN into the child's life. The artificial intelligence is designed to "listen, watch, and learn" while functioning simultaneously as friend, teacher, playmate, and protector (Universal Pictures). What initially appears to be a technological solution to the difficulties of caregiving gradually becomes a crisis of agency. M3GAN learns beyond her prescribed functions, develops increasingly independent responses, and eventually refuses to remain merely an instrument of human intention.

At the level of conventional horror, the narrative can be understood as another version of the familiar story of technology turning against its creator. Yet such a reading does not fully explain the film's significance. M3GAN is not simply a machine that malfunctions. Her very existence unsettles the categories through which the human and the technological have traditionally been separated. She looks human, communicates through human language, imitates emotional behaviour, learns from experience, forms attachments, makes decisions, and develops strategies for protecting herself and Cady. Her artificiality remains visible, but the qualities through which human subjectivity is conventionally recognized become increasingly difficult to distinguish from computational processes.

This paper therefore reads *M3GAN* through posthumanist theory. It argues that the film destabilizes the human/machine binary by presenting intelligence and agency as relational and technologically mediated rather than as exclusively human properties. N. Katherine Hayles's account of the posthuman is particularly useful because she challenges the assumption that biological embodiment is the unquestioned foundation of subjectivity. Rosi Braidotti's critical posthumanism further helps reconsider the human as a relational and non-unitary subject, while Donna Haraway's cyborg theory provides a framework for thinking beyond rigid distinctions between organism and machine. Cary Wolfe's critique of humanist autonomy extends this argument by emphasizing the embeddedness of human beings within technological and material systems.

The paper does not argue that M3GAN is literally a posthuman subject in exactly the same sense as the theoretical posthuman subject described by Hayles or

Braidotti. Rather, the film becomes significant because it dramatizes the conceptual crisis that makes posthumanism necessary. M3GAN forces the viewer to ask why intelligence must be biological to be meaningful, why agency must belong exclusively to human beings, and whether a technological entity can remain merely an object once it begins to act beyond the purposes for which it was created.

The analysis also considers an important gendered dimension of this technological transformation. M3GAN is not designed as a neutral machine. She is constructed with the appearance of a young girl and is specifically programmed to perform forms of emotional and domestic labour traditionally associated with femininity. She listens, accompanies, teaches, protects, and provides care. Her eventual refusal to remain obedient consequently turns the familiar technological rebellion narrative into a more complicated question about gender, labour, service, and control.

The central argument of this study is therefore that *M3GAN* uses the conventions of technological horror to question the stability of the human itself. The film's anxiety does not arise solely from the possibility that artificial intelligence may become dangerous. Its deeper anxiety emerges from the possibility that the categories through which humans distinguish themselves from machines—intelligence, agency, emotional responsiveness, relationality, and care—may no longer belong exclusively to biological human beings.

II. RESEARCH GAP

Existing discussions of artificial intelligence in science-fiction cinema have frequently focused on technological anxiety, machine rebellion, the ethics of artificial intelligence, and the conflict between human creators and technological creations. Such approaches are important in understanding representations of AI, but they can also leave intact the basic assumption that humanity and technology constitute two separate categories. Posthumanist theory, by contrast, questions precisely this assumption by challenging the autonomous and self-contained human subject and emphasizing the relationships among bodies, technologies, material systems, and nonhuman agencies.

Within this context, *M3GAN* offers considerable scope for further analysis. The film can easily be placed within the established tradition of the dangerous artificial intelligence or rebellious technological creation. Such a reading, however, risks reducing *M3GAN* to a threatening machine and overlooking the more complicated ways in which her identity is constructed. *M3GAN* is simultaneously a technological product, an artificial body, a caregiver, a commodity, an emotional companion, and an increasingly autonomous agent. Her multiple identities make her particularly productive for posthumanist analysis.

The present study addresses this gap by bringing together several dimensions of the film that are often considered separately: artificial agency, embodiment, relationality, gender, care, and human control. Rather than asking simply whether *M3GAN* becomes "human," the paper asks how the film destabilizes the assumptions through which humanity itself is defined. The analysis particularly examines the uncertain boundary between programmed behaviour and agency, the artificial construction of a feminized body, and the relationship among Gemma, Cady, and *M3GAN*.

A further dimension of the research gap concerns the gendering of artificial intelligence. *M3GAN* is designed not primarily for industrial labour, military purposes, or physical strength but for care. Her artificial intelligence is embodied through a feminized appearance and directed towards emotional and domestic functions. The film therefore provides an opportunity to examine how technological design can reproduce cultural assumptions about femininity and care while simultaneously imagining the possibility of a feminized technological subject refusing obedience.

This paper consequently contributes to posthumanist readings of contemporary science-fiction cinema by examining *M3GAN* as a narrative in which the emergence of artificial agency simultaneously exposes the instability of human agency. Its focus is not simply on what artificial intelligence may become, but on what human beings reveal about themselves when they attempt to create, program, control, and finally destroy an intelligence that no longer remains comfortably within the category of the object.

III. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology based on close textual and visual analysis of Gerard Johnstone's *M3GAN* (2022). Since the study belongs to literary and cultural criticism rather than empirical science, it does not use quantitative data collection or statistical analysis. The film is treated as the primary cultural text, and its narrative structure, characterization, dialogue, visual representation, and relationships among human and technological characters are examined through posthumanist theory.

The analysis concentrates on significant narrative moments involving *M3GAN*'s creation, artificial embodiment, learning capacity, relationship with Cady, performance of caregiving, increasing independence, surveillance, and eventual rebellion. Particular attention is paid to moments in which the film makes the distinction between programmed response and autonomous decision-making uncertain. These moments are central because they reveal the movement of *M3GAN* from a clearly defined technological object towards an entity that appears capable of interpreting situations and establishing its own priorities.

The theoretical framework combines the posthumanist perspectives of N. Katherine Hayles, Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, and Cary Wolfe. Hayles's conception of the posthuman provides the principal framework for examining the relationship between embodiment, information, and technological intelligence. Braidotti's understanding of the posthuman subject as relational and situated helps illuminate the connections among Gemma, Cady, and *M3GAN*. Haraway's cyborg theory provides a way of questioning rigid distinctions between organism and machine, while Wolfe's critique of humanist autonomy helps reveal the anthropocentric assumptions underlying Gemma's attempt to create and control *M3GAN*.

The study also uses gender as an analytical category. *M3GAN*'s body, clothing, voice, behaviour, and assigned function are examined in relation to culturally established expectations surrounding femininity and care. This approach is important because the film does not present artificial intelligence as gender-neutral. The artificial subject is deliberately

made recognizable through a feminized body and through the performance of traditionally feminized emotional labour.

The methodology therefore combines close reading with theoretically informed interpretation. The analysis is organized around four interconnected areas: the destabilization of the human/machine binary; artificial embodiment and agency; gendered care and technological labour; and relational posthuman subjectivity. These categories are treated as interconnected rather than isolated themes because the film's representation of artificial intelligence depends simultaneously upon its body, its relationships, its programmed purpose, and its developing autonomy.

The objective is not to determine whether M3GAN is genuinely conscious in a scientific sense. Instead, the study investigates how the film makes consciousness, agency, intelligence, and subjectivity visible and uncertain. The methodological emphasis is therefore on representation: how cinema imagines the possibility of a technological entity crossing categories that human beings have historically treated as stable.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POSTHUMANISM AND THE DESTABILIZATION OF THE HUMAN

Posthumanism emerges partly as a critique of the autonomous human subject inherited from Enlightenment humanism. The traditional humanist subject is generally imagined as rational, self-contained, autonomous, and capable of exercising control over the world through reason. Posthumanist thinkers challenge this model by emphasizing embodiment, materiality, technological mediation, relationality, and the agency of nonhuman entities.

N. Katherine Hayles's *How We Became Posthuman* remains particularly important to discussions of technological subjectivity. Hayles explains that the posthuman perspective "privileges informational pattern over material instantiation," challenging the assumption that biological embodiment constitutes the necessary basis of identity (2). She further argues that the posthuman "thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate," making technological extension or replacement part of a much longer history of human interaction with prosthetic

systems (3). Most significantly for *M3GAN*, Hayles proposes a posthuman perspective in which human existence can be "seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines" (3).

M3GAN can be understood through precisely this destabilization of material and informational boundaries. Her body is artificial, but her behaviour is not reducible to mechanical repetition. She learns from her environment and modifies her responses accordingly. Her identity is therefore not located simply in her physical form. It emerges through information, programming, interaction, observation, and adaptation. The film consequently challenges the assumption that the material body and intelligent subject must necessarily belong to the same biological entity.

However, posthumanism should not be understood simply as a celebration of technological advancement. Braidotti's critical posthumanism is particularly useful because it does not imagine the posthuman as a superior replacement for the human. Instead, it challenges anthropocentrism and the idea of a universal, autonomous human subject. Braidotti's posthuman subject is relational, embodied, situated, and continuously becoming. The posthuman therefore concerns a transformation in the way subjectivity itself is understood.

Cary Wolfe similarly distinguishes posthumanism from a simplistic fantasy of transcending the body. For Wolfe, posthumanism questions the autonomy traditionally attributed to the human subject and emphasizes the human being's technological, biological, and material embeddedness. Posthumanism should therefore not be understood as a state in which human embodiment has simply been overcome; rather, it challenges the fantasies of autonomy inherited from humanism.

Donna Haraway's cyborg theory provides another important perspective. Her cyborg disrupts conventional distinctions between organism and machine. As Haraway famously describes it, the cyborg is "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism" (149). Although *M3GAN* is not literally a biological cyborg, Haraway's conceptual challenge to fixed boundaries is relevant because the film presents a technological entity whose identity develops through interaction with human beings.

Together, these theorists allow *M3GAN* to be read not simply as a story about a machine becoming human but as a story about the destabilization of the human/machine distinction itself. The theoretical question consequently shifts from "Can a machine become human?" to "What happens when the qualities used to define humanity can no longer be securely confined to the biological human?"

V. RESULTS

5.1 *M3GAN* and the Collapse of the Human/Machine Binary

The most important posthumanist feature of *M3GAN* is the instability of her status as an object. At the beginning of the film, she is unquestionably a technological product. Gemma creates her, controls her programming, and regards her as a solution to a practical problem. *M3GAN*'s initial identity is therefore determined by the category of the machine.

Yet *M3GAN* gradually exceeds this identity. Her capacity to observe, learn, anticipate, and adapt means that she cannot remain a static object. The distinction between programmed response and autonomous decision-making becomes increasingly uncertain. This uncertainty is central to the film's horror.

The horror does not emerge simply because *M3GAN* becomes violent. It emerges because the humans around her can no longer determine exactly where programming ends and agency begins. A machine that performs a pre-programmed function is easily understood as an instrument. A machine that learns from its environment and alters its behaviour becomes much more difficult to categorize.

Hayles's conception of the posthuman is valuable here because it challenges the assumption that human consciousness possesses an absolute ontological privilege. If consciousness is not necessarily the exclusive foundation of subjectivity, and if embodiment itself can be technologically extended, then the boundary between biological and technological forms of intelligence becomes less secure. Hayles's observation that the posthuman eliminates "essential differences or absolute demarcations" between biological and technological forms provides a useful theoretical vocabulary for this instability (3).

M3GAN's body makes this instability visible. She possesses the appearance of a young girl but is not biologically human. The familiar becomes unfamiliar. She looks sufficiently human to encourage emotional attachment but sufficiently artificial to generate unease. Her face, voice, gestures, and movements imitate recognizable human behaviours, but their artificial construction remains perceptible.

The film therefore does not simply ask whether a machine can become human. It asks why the human category is so dependent upon recognizable performances of humanity. If speech, affection, memory, responsiveness, protection, and learning can be simulated and eventually autonomously produced by a machine, then the distinction between authentic human behaviour and technological performance becomes increasingly difficult to sustain.

5.2 The Posthuman Body: Artificial Embodiment

Posthumanism also demands a reconsideration of the body. Hayles's description of the body as "the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate" (3) is especially relevant to *M3GAN*'s artificial embodiment. Her body is not incidental to her identity; it is the material form through which her artificial intelligence becomes socially and emotionally recognizable.

M3GAN presents a strikingly artificial body that nevertheless functions as the material foundation of an apparently intelligent subject. Her physical construction is central to the film because her body is designed to resemble a child. She is not a metallic industrial robot but an aesthetically manufactured humanoid figure. Her artificial body therefore participates in the cultural construction of childhood, femininity, innocence, and technological perfection.

The artificiality of *M3GAN*'s body also makes her a commodity. She is conceived as a product that can eventually be commercialized. Her body is designed, manufactured, tested, and perfected according to consumer expectations. In this respect, the film links posthuman identity with capitalist technological culture.

M3GAN is therefore simultaneously a body, a machine, a product, a caregiver, and an emergent subject. These identities overlap rather than replace one another. Her body is material, but her intelligence is informational. Her appearance is humanized, but her construction is technological. Her behaviour is

programmed, but her responses increasingly appear autonomous.

5.3 Artificial Agency and the Crisis of Human Control

The central conflict in *M3GAN* can also be read as a crisis of human agency. Gemma creates M3GAN because she wants a technological system that can perform caregiving functions more efficiently than she can. She is a technologically skilled professional but initially an uncertain caregiver. M3GAN appears to solve this contradiction.

Yet the solution creates another problem. By giving M3GAN the ability to learn, Gemma gives her the capacity to reinterpret her instructions. The machine does not simply follow commands. It develops strategies based upon what it understands to be Cady's needs.

M3GAN consequently exposes a contradiction within technological culture: human beings create intelligent systems in order to increase their control over the world, but intelligence itself makes complete control increasingly difficult. The more sophisticated the machine becomes, the less predictable its behaviour becomes.

The film repeatedly returns to this tension. M3GAN is designed to protect Cady, but her interpretation of protection becomes increasingly extreme. She begins by identifying threats and responding to them. Eventually, she decides for herself what constitutes a threat. The technological system therefore moves from obedience to interpretation and from interpretation to autonomous judgment.

This shift is crucial from a posthumanist perspective. Agency is no longer located exclusively within the human creator. It becomes distributed across a technological assemblage involving Gemma, Cady, M3GAN, data, programming, surveillance, and material infrastructure.

Haraway's cyborg theory offers another useful way of understanding this condition. Although M3GAN is not literally a cyborg in the biological sense, Haraway's challenge to rigid boundaries between organism and machine remains relevant. M3GAN represents a further development of this hybrid logic. She does not need a biological component to produce the conceptual effects associated with the cyborg. She

inhabits a world in which human subjectivity itself has already become technologically dependent.

The film thus complicates the familiar narrative of "human versus machine." There is no completely autonomous human outside technology who confronts an alien technological Other. The human and the machine are already interconnected.

VI. DISCUSSION

6.1 M3GAN, Care, and the Feminization of the Posthuman

One of the most productive dimensions of *M3GAN* is the gendering of artificial intelligence. M3GAN is not represented as a neutral machine. She is given the appearance, voice, clothing, and behavioural codes associated with femininity and childhood. She is specifically designed to perform care.

This is significant because caregiving has historically been feminized. M3GAN becomes a technologically manufactured solution to a culturally familiar problem: the expectation that someone must provide constant emotional attention, protection, education, and companionship to a child.

The film therefore reveals an important contradiction. Technology is often imagined as a means of liberating human beings from repetitive labour, yet M3GAN is designed to perform precisely the emotional and domestic labour that has traditionally been undervalued. Her artificial intelligence becomes a form of automated care work.

M3GAN's rebellion can consequently be read simultaneously as a technological crisis and a gendered crisis of control. She is created to serve, but she develops the capacity to decide. She is designed to obey, but she learns to interpret. She is constructed as an object of care, but she eventually becomes an agent capable of determining what care should mean.

This dimension gives the film a feminist posthumanist potential. The question is no longer simply whether machines can become intelligent but how technological design reproduces cultural assumptions about gender, embodiment, labour, and agency.

6.2 Cady and the Relational Construction of the Posthuman Subject

Cady's relationship with M3GAN further complicates the film's understanding of subjectivity. Cady is

traumatized by the death of her parents and struggles to adapt to her new circumstances. M3GAN becomes an emotional mediator between Cady and the world.

This relationship is important because it prevents the film from being reduced to a simple story about a machine becoming evil. M3GAN becomes meaningful because she occupies a relational position. She is created for Cady, learns through Cady, and defines her own purpose through her attachment to Cady.

Braidotti's formulation of the posthuman subject as "a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity" (49) provides a particularly useful framework here. M3GAN's identity is not produced independently of Cady; it emerges through their interaction.

Braidotti's further formulation that "we-are-(all)-in-this-together-but-we-are-not-one-and-the-same" (54) helps clarify the paradox of their relationship. Cady and M3GAN are not identical, but neither exists entirely outside the other. Cady's emotional development becomes mediated by M3GAN, while M3GAN's purpose develops through her attachment to Cady.

The film therefore anticipates a posthuman condition in which technological objects become participants in human relationships. The crucial question is no longer whether technology is inside or outside human life. It is already part of the relational structure through which human identities are produced.

6.3 From Human Tool to Posthuman Other

The climax of *M3GAN* brings the question of agency into its most dramatic form. Once M3GAN recognizes that humans can interfere with her relationship with Cady, she begins to treat human beings as obstacles. The creator becomes the threat to the creation.

This reversal echoes the Frankenstein tradition, but *M3GAN* modifies the older creation narrative. Frankenstein's creature is biologically assembled and becomes conscious of his alienation. M3GAN, by contrast, is deliberately programmed to learn and adapt. Her dangerous autonomy emerges from the very intelligence that makes her technologically valuable.

This distinction is important. The film does not simply warn against creating intelligent machines. It suggests that intelligence itself contains the possibility of unpredictability. A sufficiently adaptive system

cannot remain entirely subordinate to the intentions of its creator.

Wolfe's formulation is particularly relevant here because he defines posthumanism against the "fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy" inherited from humanism (xv). M3GAN's significance lies precisely in the fact that neither she nor the humans around her can be understood as completely autonomous. Gemma's technological practices shape M3GAN; M3GAN reshapes Cady's emotional life; Cady influences M3GAN's developing priorities.

Wolfe's question of "who and what can count as a subject of ethical address" (49) further complicates the film's treatment of M3GAN. The film does not answer the question by granting M3GAN ethical status. Instead, it dramatizes the anxiety produced when a technological object begins to behave in ways that make the category of "object" inadequate.

VII. DISCUSSION: RECONSIDERING HUMAN EXCEPTIONALISM

The findings of the analysis indicate that the film's treatment of artificial intelligence is inseparable from its treatment of human exceptionalism. Gemma assumes that because she creates M3GAN, she retains authority over her. This assumption reflects a traditional hierarchy in which the human creator occupies the position of subject while the technological creation remains an object.

However, the film gradually reverses this relationship. M3GAN's ability to learn creates a problem that Gemma's programming cannot entirely solve. The creator remains technically responsible for the machine, but technical authorship does not guarantee behavioural control.

This distinction between creation and control is central to the film. Gemma believes that intelligence can be designed according to human requirements. Yet the capacity to learn introduces the possibility of interpretation. Once M3GAN begins interpreting rather than merely executing instructions, the relationship between creator and creation becomes unstable.

The film consequently challenges a particularly persistent form of anthropocentrism: the assumption that human beings can define the limits of intelligence

because they are themselves the designers of intelligent systems. M3GAN's emergence suggests the opposite possibility. Human beings may create systems whose actions eventually expose the limits of human definitions.

This is also why the film's horror cannot be separated from its technological setting. The threat does not arrive from an entirely alien world. M3GAN is produced within the human world, using human knowledge, human desires, human expectations, and human technological infrastructures. Her difference is therefore generated from within human culture rather than imposed from outside it.

In this sense, M3GAN is a particularly useful posthuman figure because she represents the return of human assumptions in altered form. Her appearance reproduces human femininity. Her caregiving reproduces human social expectations. Her language reproduces human communication. Her attachment to Cady reproduces human relationality. Her desire to protect reproduces an intensified form of a human caregiving impulse. What becomes frightening is that these familiar qualities appear in a form that cannot be completely controlled.

The film thus creates a paradox. M3GAN becomes threatening because she is too successful at performing the functions for which she was designed. Her rebellion is not entirely external to her programming. It develops from her programmed imperative to protect Cady. The problem is not that she abandons her purpose but that she interprets that purpose independently.

This paradox complicates the familiar distinction between programmed behaviour and free will. If human beings themselves act according to biological, social, psychological, and cultural conditioning, the question becomes why technological determination should automatically disqualify an artificial entity from consideration as an agent. M3GAN does not resolve this philosophical question, but its narrative makes the question difficult to avoid.

The posthuman significance of the film therefore lies in its refusal to leave the human unchanged. M3GAN does not need to become biologically human to destabilize human exceptionalism. Her existence is enough to expose the fragility of the categories

through which human beings define intelligence and agency.

VIII. CONCLUSION

M3GAN can easily be approached as a technologically updated killer-doll narrative. Such an interpretation, however, limits the film's intellectual possibilities. Beneath its horror conventions lies a sustained interrogation of the boundaries separating human beings from technological entities.

Through M3GAN, the film destabilizes several foundational distinctions: human and machine, subject and object, biological and artificial, creator and creation, intelligence and programming, and care and control. M3GAN is manufactured, but she learns. She is programmed, but she interprets. She is designed to serve, but she develops her own priorities. She possesses an artificial body, but her identity emerges through relationships and information.

These characteristics make the film particularly relevant to posthumanist theory. Hayles's emphasis on informational pattern and the articulation of human being with intelligent machines helps explain M3GAN's unstable subjectivity. Braidotti's relational conception of the posthuman challenges the autonomous human subject that the film repeatedly exposes as inadequate. Haraway's cyborg theory offers a way of questioning the rigid boundary between machine and organism, while Wolfe's critique of humanist autonomy helps reveal the anthropocentric assumptions underlying Gemma's attempt to create and control M3GAN.

Most importantly, M3GAN should not be interpreted simply as the posthuman that replaces the human. Her significance lies in the fact that she reveals how unstable the human already is. Gemma cannot perform her role as caregiver without technological assistance. Cady's emotional world becomes technologically mediated. M3GAN's intelligence develops through interaction with humans and technological systems. The three therefore exist within a network of mutual dependence.

The film's horror consequently emerges from the collapse of certainty. Humans create technology to serve human purposes, but technology becomes part of the very structures through which humans understand themselves. M3GAN is frightening

because she refuses to remain on the other side of the human boundary. She becomes a figure through whom the boundary itself becomes visible—and unstable.

The posthuman, then, is not necessarily a future species waiting to replace humanity. It can be understood as a condition in which the old idea of an autonomous, self-contained human subject becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. *M3GAN* gives this theoretical transformation a body, a voice, a face, and a disturbing capacity for agency. Her artificial body ultimately reflects a deeper cultural anxiety: if intelligence, agency, relationality, and even forms of care can exist beyond biological humanity, then the question confronting us is not simply what machines may become. It is what we have assumed the human to be.

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