

## Posthumanism in *Generation of Hopelessness*, *Klara and the Sun*, and *The Windup Girl*

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### Abstract

This paper examines three novels: *Generation of Hopelessness* (2019) by Thai author Jidanun Lueangpiansamut, *Klara and the Sun* (2021) by British author Kazuo Ishiguro, and *The Windup Girl* (2009) by American author Paolo Bacigalupi. In discussing the three novels, I adopt a posthumanist approach that regards humans as part of a world in which technologies have become an intrinsic part. Integral to this approach is the attempt to expose the destructive consequences of anthropocentric beliefs and practices, and to encourage respectful and sympathetic relationships between humans and non-humans. The key argument of this paper is that all three novels share three outstanding characteristics. Firstly, through the portrayals of the dystopian existence of humans and non-humans, the novels articulate critiques of the form of development and progress that is highly anthropocentric, unsustainable, and brings about the regression of humanity. Furthermore, embedded in the three works is the posthumanist attempt to question and challenge human exceptionalism. Ultimately, the three novels convey a utopian desire for more caring and compassionate relationships between humans and non-humans so as to pave the way for a better posthuman future.

**Keywords:** anthropocentrism, dystopia, post-anthropocentrism, posthumanism

### Introduction

Posthumanism can be defined as a new conceptualization of the human that rejects “the view of the human as exceptional, separate from other life forms and usually dominant/dominating these other forms” (Nayar, 2014, pp.3-4). Posthumanism is often equated with the end of the mainstream humanist conception of the human as autonomous and distinct from other beings. Posthumanists, on the other hand, see the human as “an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction” (Hayles, 1999, p.3). Crucially, posthumanism is hybrid and transdisciplinary in nature as it draws on critiques of the human offered in various fields, such as evolutionary biology, Marxism, psychoanalysis, structuralism and poststructuralism, science and technology studies, postcolonialism, disability, gender and queer studies (Cord, 2022, p.1). As one important characteristic of a posthumanist theoretical approach is its recognition of the immense impacts of sciences and technologies on human lives, it is particularly relevant to today’s world where scientific and technological advancements can be felt and experienced everywhere.

According to Julian Pepperell (2003), posthumanist ideas date back to ancient Greece but it is at the beginning of the twentieth century that posthumanist thoughts began to seriously undermine dominant humanist perceptions of what it means to be human and what the relationships between humans and non-humans are supposed to be (p. 55). Pepperell (2003) contends further that, in an age of posthumanism, a fixed distinction between humans and non-humans is perceived as not easily determined or demarcated and “the tendency towards

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artificial life, synthesised intelligence, and telepresence is eroding the barrier between ‘natural’ and ‘human-made’ phenomena” (p. 161). Such a view corresponds with Promod K. Nayar (2014) who argues that one of the key missions of posthumanism is “the radical decentering of the traditional sovereign, coherent and autonomous human in order to demonstrate how the human is always already evolving with, constituted by and constitutive of multiple forms of life and machines” (pp. 2-3). According to Nayar (2014), posthumanism thus “calls for a radical rethink of species uniqueness and boundedness of the human” and challenges the anthropocentric tendency of humanist beliefs (pp. 2-4). Another key proponent of posthumanism who draws attention to the need to redress anthropocentric humanism is Donna J. Haraway (2016), who encourages respect and recognition of the importance of non-human entities through her emphasis that humans and non-humans “require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations,...we become-with each other or not at all” (p. 4). In a similar light, Rosi Braidotti (2019) maintains that it is urgent to challenge anthropocentrism and foregrounds the convergence of posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism as well as the transformative effects of this convergence (p.8).

In this paper, I examine three novels written by authors from different nationalities: Thai, British, and American. I argue that even though these novels were written by authors from different cultures and backgrounds, they share thoughts and ideas that are distinctly posthumanist, and their similarities will be delineated in this paper. Towards the end of the paper I will also discuss how the novels manifest a utopian desire for a better way of being and living that corresponds with Ruth Levitas’s (2013) definition of utopia as “the expression of the desire for a better way of being or of living, and as such is braided through human culture” (p. xii). It should be noted that this definition of utopia differs markedly from a popular perception of utopia as a perfect place that exists only in the world of imagination, and from ‘socialist utopias’ that evoke the fear of totalitarian regimes. In defining utopia and utopian desire, Levitas is also careful not to associate them with a predetermined ideal goal. Instead, she emphasizes that utopia is not a goal but a method that triggers and promotes considerations “about possible futures, combined with reflexivity, provisionality, and democratic engagement with the principles and practices of those futures” (Levitas, 2013, p. xi). She also stresses that utopia should encourage us to assess conditions of our existing world and imagine a better mode of being and living (Levitas, 2013, p. xviii).

## Research Objectives

This paper aims to illustrate how the three novels, through the adoption of the dystopian mode:

1. convey critiques of the form of development that is highly anthropocentric, unsustainable, and brings about destructive impacts.
2. attempt to question and challenge human exceptionalism.
3. articulate a utopian desire for more caring and compassionate relationships between humans and non-humans so as to pave the way for a better posthuman future.

## Literature Review

A number of literary critics have discussed both Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun* (2021) and Paolo Bacigalupi’s (2009) *The Windup Girl* from a posthumanist perspective. K. Ajeesh and S. Rukmini (2022), for example, argue in their study that that *Klara and the*

*Sun* conveys a posthumanist perception of AI that no longer subscribes to a conventional view of AI as a lifeless and emotionless machine. The central aim of their study is to explore the way *Klara and the Sun* draws attention to the question of what it means to be human and what happens when an AI also has human characteristics. Similarly, Lopamudra Basu (2022) observes in her article that the world in *Klara and the Sun* belongs to a posthuman future where the boundaries between humans and AI characters are no longer clear-cut as the latter can be highly sensitive, caring, and devoted while the former become increasingly soulless and machine-like. Basu (2022) also shares the view that, in this novel, Ishiguro encourages the reader to contemplate the question about what constitutes the human and what happens when machines are equipped with human attributes. In another intriguing article on *Klara and the Sun*, Agnibha Banerjee (2021) contends that the exploitation of Klara and other Artificial Friends is a form of slavery that bears a striking resemblance to the enslavement of Africans. The key aim of this article is to investigate the construction of posthuman races in this novel and how the plight of posthuman beings such as robots and androids is hardly different from that of oppressed Africans in the past.

Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2009) has also been examined from a posthumanist lens. In her dissertation, Sarah Kelly (2013) offers a posthumanist reading of *The Windup Girl* and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* by proposing that the two novels bring to the fore the precarious and near extinction state of the liberal humanist subject and foreground the necessity of the move towards a posthuman future. In another thought-provoking study, Daniel Bedggood (2022) argues that *The Windup Girl* depicts the futuristic posthuman world in which the position occupied by the animals in the human-animal relationship no longer remains the same and needs to be seriously reconsidered. Bedggood (2022) also maintains that *The Windup Girl* draws attention to problematic issues caused by biological neo-imperialism and forces that seek to oppose it. The key problematic issue foregrounded in the novel is the labelling of scientifically created living entities as things that are fearful and must be wiped out or got rid of.

Importantly, critics have yet to compare *Klara and the Sun* (2021) with *The Windup Girl* (2009) in order to identify their similarities. Furthermore, as Jidanun Lueangpiansamut's *Generation of Hopelessness* (2019) is a relatively new novel originally written in Thai, to date it has not been the center of academic discussion. This paper thus hopes to contribute new reflections and insights concerning the shared aspects and ideas conveyed in the three dystopian novels, particularly through the lens of posthumanism.

## Research Methodology

Textual analysis starts with close reading of the three novels: *Generation of Hopelessness* (2019) by Thai author Jidanun Lueangpiansamut, *Klara and the Sun* (2021) by British author Kazuo Ishiguro, and *The Windup Girl* (2009) by American author Paolo Bacigalupi. In discussing the three dystopian novels and identifying their shared characteristics, I draw on Thomas Moylan (2000)'s observation that dystopian fiction depicts a world worse than the world of reality while simultaneously encouraging the reader to see a parallel between existing problematic issues and the fictionalized ones (pp. xi-xiii). Contrary to popular perception, dystopia is not the opposite of utopia and dystopian tropes can function to underline urgent problems of the real world and trigger the hopeful imagining of alternatives (Baccolini & Moylan, 2003, pp.1-8).

I then employ a posthumanist approach that perceives humans as part of a world in which technologies have become an intrinsic part, and that a fixed distinction between humans

and non-humans cannot be easily determined (Pepperell, 2003, p. 161). I also draw on another important posthumanist view that regards anthropocentric beliefs and practices as detrimental to the well-being of non-humans and the peaceful coexistence between humans and non-humans (Braidotti, 2019 & Haraway, 2016). Lastly, in arguing that hope or a utopian desire is embedded in all the three novels, I utilize Ruth Levitas's (2013) conceptualization of utopia as "the expression of the desire for a better way of being or of living" (p. xii) and as a method that encourages us to assess conditions of our existing world and imagine better possible futures (Levitas, 2013, pp. xi-xviii).

## Results and discussion

### *Generation of Hopelessness (2019)*

*Generation of Hopelessness (2019)* by S.E.A. Write Award-winning Thai author Jidanun Lueangpiansamut is set in a fictionalized city of the future where class inequality is extremely palpable. Lower-class humans are confined to squalid, crowded, and dilapidated sections of the city and are forced to sacrifice their labor and health for the sake of the upper classes who control and make use of means of production to finance a luxurious and extravagant lifestyle free from any work obligation. Available in this city are highly advanced technologies utilized by the upper classes to increase their wealth and to ensure that the exploited classes remain at the bottom rungs of society. These technologies make possible the transformation of sleep into capsules that are later sold to those who can afford them. The sleep contained in the capsules is painfully extracted from lower-class humans who struggle to survive by selling their sleep and who are thus referred to as sleepers. Sleepers suffer terribly as their job requires them to sell their sleep every day, leaving them exhausted and ill-stricken. The upper classes who buy sleep capsules so as to experience the bliss of sleeping without having to actually sleep are not spared from the dangers of this technological innovation. This is because addiction to sleep capsules can cause serious mental and emotional issues.

In this fictional world, the lower classes are not the only group of people who lead an appalling existence. As there are technologies that make possible the manufacturing of highly efficient robots, it has become a norm for the affluent classes to have robots as servants. The robots, who are sentient beings capable of feeling love, fear, and pain suffer worse plight than the lower classes of humans. The rich upper classes employ robots to help them with household jobs and robots are not allowed to do anything beyond performing tasks assigned to them by humans. When the robots are no longer able to perform to their full capacity, they are taken away from the homes of their human masters, auctioned off, and subjected to horrific maltreatment.

It can be seen that scientific knowledge and technological progress as portrayed in this novel are utilized to benefit only the privileged sections of the human population. Specifically, technologies have become a tool of the upper-class capitalists to exploit both lower-class humans and robots. Such utilization of technologies and scientific knowledge functions to maintain class inequality while at the same time it betrays its anthropocentric nature. In conveying the traumatizing ordeals of the oppressed through the points of view of the lower classes and the robots, the novel implicitly criticizes the misuse of sciences and technologies for the benefit of the privileged minority at the expense of the majority. Arguably, the dystopian conditions of this fictional world serve to issue an urgent warning about the bleak future of humanity if we are still in pursuit of progress or development that perpetuates inequalities among humans and does not take into account the welfare of non-human entities.

Also significant in this novel is the characterization of non-human characters, particularly of the robot named Megan, who is kind, loyal, and devoted to her master. She also plays an important role in making Joel, one of the human protagonists, become more sympathetic towards robots. The passage below dwells on Joel's recollection of Megan's care and genuine concern for Oliver, her human master. The passage also reveals Joel's recognition that robots are not emotionless and that they possess valuable attributes that many humans have lost because they are too preoccupied with materialistic pursuits. He also finds himself comparing Megan with ordinary teenage girls and realizes that she is no different from them:

Joel does not know Megan very well, but he still recalls the way Megan looked at Oliver that day when Oliver was at his piano playing that ferocious music. Her dark eyes were full of anxious concern for her master and he remembers that she had said that that kind of music pierced into her heart. Even though she is a robot, it seems she can experience all kinds of feelings....

Joel begins to realize that Megan is capable of all sorts of precious and complicated feelings—feelings that are no longer experienced by humans who can do anything for money....

...she is no different from an ordinary girl, and she wants to wear beautiful clothes like the ones worn by those women she often sees through a window. (Lueangpiansamut, 2019, pp.182-183)<sup>1</sup>

While robots like Megan are portrayed as having traits conventionally associated with humans, many of the real humans in the novel can be seen as machine-like, as either sleep deprivation or addiction to sleep capsules has turned them into mere empty shells without autonomy or self-determination. Many upper-class humans are also depicted as heartless, self-serving, and unable to empathize with or extend compassion to anyone. Such characterization of humans and non-humans functions to blur the boundary between non-humans and humans, and this echoes a posthumanist contention against human exceptionalism or clear distinction between humans and non-humans. In addition to the attempt to blur the clear-cut boundary between humans and non-humans, what can be discerned in the novel is the hope for a better posthuman future—the kind of future not marred by an unbridged class divide and ruthless class exploitation, and at the same time a future that allows for the peaceful coexistence between humans and non-humans. I argue that this hope resembles what Ruth Levitas (2013) refers to as a utopian desire for a better way of being and living (p. xviii). Levitas (2013) stresses that utopia is not a goal but a method that encourages us to envisage possible futures and assess conditions of our existing world in order to try to come up with a better mode of being and living (pp. xii- xviii). In order to make the reader realize that utopia is not out of reach even within the dystopian world of the novel, the author suggests that strong human-human and human-non-human bonding, once established, can make constructive things happen. This is conveyed through a positive change triggered by the friendship between Oliver, an upper-class character, and Joel, who belongs to a lower-class. Despite the vast differences in class and status, Oliver and Joel are able to develop genuine friendship over time and together they manage to rescue the robot Megan before she gets maltreated by the humans who are eager to inflict suffering on her once they know that she is no longer useful as a servant.

The novel also ends on a positive note as it shows that sciences and technologies can be used for positive goals that benefit humans and non-humans alike. Out of guilt and regret,

<sup>1</sup> The English translation is my translation.

the scientist who invents the technology that enables the transformation of sleep into capsules has decided to take action to alleviate the harm and suffering caused by this technology. To counter the effects of addiction to sleep capsules and to help sleepers free themselves from the vicious cycle of selling sleep, he uses his knowledge to help produce special pills and distribute them to sleepers and those who are addicted to sleep capsules. The newly invented pills enable humans to naturally derive pleasure from sleep and thus hold the promise that many humans will eventually be set free from the ordeals of selling their sleep to earn a living and from addiction to sleep capsules. This same scientist also initiates a plan to protect robots from being maltreated by humans and to find a safe and comfortable shelter for them. This dystopian world is thus not without hope and there is the possibility that a better posthuman future where compassion and care for others, both human and non-human, is not too far-fetched. In the discussion of *Klara and the Sun* that follows, even though dystopian conditions dominate the pages of the novel, a utopian desire is also articulated.

### ***Klara and the Sun* (2021)**

As in *Generation of Hopelessness* (2019), in *Klara and the Sun* (2021) by Kazuo Ishiguro, anthropocentric development is shown as bringing about diminished goodness and compassion among humans. The novel depicts a world in which advanced genetic engineering techniques make it possible for scientists to improve genes of children to ensure that they will become accomplished high achievers. The anthropocentric motive behind such use of technology is discernable, as it aims at ensuring the dominance of humans over other living species and the natural environment.

This genetic improvement, however, comes at a great risk because some children could die from it. Nonetheless, it has become the norm that the citizens of this fictional world must allow the state to improve the genes of their children otherwise the whole family will be stigmatized and categorized as citizens of the lowest class. Children whose parents reject genetic improvement for them are also deprived of several opportunities in life. In other words, the state succeeds in making genetic improvement for the young become the norm that everyone must submit themselves to. Those rebelling against this norm lead a very difficult life as they experience prejudice and discrimination and are treated as outcasts.

It can be argued that advanced genetic technology of the world in *Klara and the Sun* resembles the technological innovation that allows for the manufacturing of sleep capsules in *Generation of Hopelessness* in that both technologies purport to improve human life yet what they achieve is the opposite. They actually bring about the moral degradation of humans and the suffering of the humans and non-humans who occupy the lower rungs of society.

Also existing in the fictional world in *Klara and the Sun* are Artificial Friends—scientifically created robotic youths whose job is to be a companion of young humans. An Artificial Friend or AF can also serve as a replacement for children who die from genetic improvement so as to give consolation to sorrowful parents. To qualify as a replacement, an AF must learn to perfectly imitate behaviors, manners, and habits of a child who is at risk of dying from genetic improvement and shows clear signs of health deterioration. Ultimately, however, AFs are discarded when their human friends no longer require their company.

The exploitative treatment of AFs and the vicious discrimination against dissidents indicate that in this dystopian world little compassion and tolerance is left and only the strongest and the most capable humans are valued. Non-humans merely exist to serve humans and once they are seen as no longer useful, they are disposed of. The novel also shows how

this society, though highly advanced in scientific progress, has citizens who become less autonomous as they have to obediently adhere to the state's strict guidelines and rules so as to prove that they are worthy citizens. They are also losing the ability to maintain bonding or develop genuine friendships with others. Indeed, throughout the years they spend together, the AF Klara is portrayed as much more devoted, caring, and loyal than Josie, the young human who owns her. From the very beginning of her time with Josie, Klara strives to be the girl's loving and caring friend. As Josie is in poor health after she has been through genetic improvement, Klara tries her best to protect her both physically and emotionally. When Josie's health deteriorates, Klara is informed that she can become a replacement for Josie if Josie cannot survive the genetic improvement process. This means that Klara is given a chance to take the place of Josie and live the life of a real human. However, Klara does not want to take that chance. On the contrary, she keeps praying to the sun, whom she believes is the most important source of nourishment, to nurse Josie back to health. She also tries every possible way to approach the sun so that she can appeal to him to renew Josie's health and strength. Eventually, for reasons not made clear, Josie's health improves and Klara believes that the sun has kindly answered her prayers. Sadly, however, as Josie becomes stronger, she needs Klara's company less and less. The healthier and older Josie shows no sadness or concern when a few years later Klara is removed from her home and transported to a junk yard.

Through the characterization of Klara as a non-human who is capable of love, compassion, and loyalty, it is noticeable that, similar to *Generation of Hopelessness*, this novel attempts to subvert the common assumption that non-humans lack moral qualities perceived as intrinsic to humans and can never display complex emotions and sentiments the way humans do. To put it another way, both novels no longer subscribe to the conventional view that there is a clear-cut boundary between humans and non-humans.

On a more positive note, *Klara and the Sun* resembles *Generation of Hopelessness* in that both works draw our attention to the fact that even within the dystopian settings of the novel, not all humans have become totally focused on the pursuit of personal fulfillments, achievements, and status until they lose the ability to sympathize with others. Some humans are still able to maintain meaningful connections with others and extend their compassion to both humans and non-humans. The manager of the shop where Klara and other AFs are displayed before being chosen by young humans is a caring and sensitive person who has a genuine concern for her AFs. Towards the end of novel, it is revealed that she often visits junk yards where AFs who are no longer considered useful for their human friends are dumped, hoping to find some of the AFs who used to be in her store. The novel ends when the manager has found Klara in one of the yards. Her unarticulated yet heart-breaking sadness upon seeing one of her AFs being abandoned there conveys a powerfully moving message that encourages us to consider and assess whether our own relationship with non-humans is also based on exploitation and self-serving motivations, not dissimilar from the one Josie has imposed on Klara. While Klara accepts her plight without protest, we cannot help asking whether such a self-sacrificing, loyal, and devoted friend like Klara deserves to be treated as a machine that can be disposed of anytime once the owner no longer requires its service. Certainly, in a more caring and compassionate world, Klara's devotion and loyalty will be reciprocated and valued, and human existence will not lead to the exploitation and harming of other beings. In other words, the final section of the novel can be seen as aiming at triggering in the reader a desire for a kinder world, or, to borrow Ruth Levitas (2013)'s contention, "a utopian desire for a better way of being or of living" (Levitias, 2013, p. xii):

### *The Windup Girl* (2009)

American author Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2009) is set in the world of the near future in which energy shortage and global warming have severely threatened humans' livelihood. In this dystopian world, ruthless capitalism has led to inequalities and exploitation in various forms. The major villains of this world are megacorporations driven by profit-making goals that aspire to control the world's food supply so that they can wield absolute economic power. Those corporations secretly create and spread plagues that kill naturally grown plants to ensure that they are the sole resource of agricultural produce. The only crops that thrive and have immunity against plagues are those grown from the seeds sold by those corporations. With help from an eccentric geneticist, Thailand is the only country able to grow its own crops and maintain its economic independence. Nonetheless, Thailand's strategy, which is to isolate itself from the rest of the world and strongly safeguard its traditions and way of life, proves to be an unsustainable solution. The country is increasingly infiltrated by spies from foreign megacorporations that hope to destroy its self-sufficiency, and the corruption and power struggle of the Thais in the ruling classes worsen the situation.

The inhabitants of this futuristic world include "New People"—creatures scientifically created in Japan whose genes have been tampered with and manipulated by scientists. New People occupy the lowest rung of the power hierarchy, as they are created to serve humans with submissiveness and obedience being ingrained in them. Some of them are used to fight in wars for humans, while others are slaves in factories. Among the "New People" are the 'windup girls', feminine and exquisite-looking creatures brought into existence by great advances in biotechnology in order to provide companionship and sexual pleasure for men. Emiko, the windup girl who is the protagonist of the novel, has traits that remind us of Klara in Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* and the robot Megan in *Generation of Hopelessness*. Due to her genetic constitution, Emiko is initially a creature that is totally obedient and devoted to her human master, and is satisfied with her life and duties. After being abandoned in Thailand by her master, however, she suffers severe hardships, is atrociously abused, and is eventually forced to work as a prostitute for the sake of survival.

Despite being perceived as a lowly non-human creature by the Thais, Emiko's characterization vitally functions to undermine human exceptionalism and blur the clear-cut boundary between humans and non-humans, as she exhibits traits commonly perceived as human attributes. Her relationship with Anderson, a foreigner who works with one of the megacorporations called Agri-Gen, shows that she is able to form a close relationship with humans and fully capable of love, loyalty, empathy, and compassion. Anderson is initially drawn to Emiko because he finds her attractive but as they get closer, he becomes emotionally attached to her and wants to help her. Later on, when he is dying, she cares for him compassionately until his last moment.

Like Megan in *Generation of Hopelessness* and Klara in *Klara and Sun*, who have performed their duties at their best, Emiko tragically ends up being maltreated by humans, and she eventually realizes that serving and being loyal to humans does not bring her any reward. Worse, it causes her unspeakable suffering. She recalls the way she has been brainwashed from the beginning to submit herself to human will, and is determined to free herself from the life of servitude and exploitation. Of note is that Emiko's recognition of the brainwashing process she had been subjected to as well as her desire for freedom and her determination to have control over her life renders her a being with a desire for self-directing freedom or autonomy—a characteristic that reflects the posthumanist rejection of the binary distinction of humans as autonomous and non-humans as nonautonomous.

As the world is encountering severe disasters precipitated by human greed and selfishness, the wind-up girls and other scientifically created creatures become more resilient and prove much stronger than the humans who created them. The extinction of the human race seems close at hand yet towards the end of the novel, a glimpse of hope for a better posthuman future is visible. The epilogue depicts Emiko's encounter with the geneticist who has been helping Thai people by making their crops immune to human-made plagues. It is a friendly encounter as the geneticist has no intention to master or harm Emiko. On the contrary, he treats her with respect and shares with her his vision of a new world in which humans and non-humans will peacefully coexist, and humans will have to relinquish their supremacy over other beings. He also reveals to her that New People will thrive and will no longer be second-class citizens. While humans like him will cease to occupy the top position of the power hierarchy, their knowledge can still be constructively utilized for the benefit of this posthuman future. In other words, it is a future in which humans and non-humans can live together without exploiting and oppressing one another, and one in which scientific knowledge can be utilized in a constructive and life-affirming way:

He smiles. "A strand of your hair would do. You cannot be changed, but your children—in genetic terms, if not physical ones—they can be made fertile, a part of the natural world."

Emiko feels her heart pounding. "You can do this, truly?"

"Oh yes. I can do that for you." The man's eyes are far away, considering. A smile flickers across his lips. "I can do that for you, and much, much more." (Bacigalupi, 2010, p. 505)

## Conclusion and recommendations

As discussed in the above section, the three novels are comparable in three significant aspects. They all utilize the dystopian mode as a means to articulate critiques of the way humans pursue unsustainable development that perpetuates inequalities among humans and subjects non-humans to horrific exploitation. The authors foreground the atrocious consequences of the misuse of scientific knowledge and technological inventions to profit certain groups of humans while forcing the majority of humans and non-humans to endure hardship and suffering. Furthermore, the three novels envisage a move towards the posthuman future where post-anthropocentrism has replaced anthropocentrism, and the relationships between humans and non-humans are based on mutual respect and recognition of each other's value and significance. In portraying non-human characters as having attributes conventionally associated with humans, the novels also undermine the belief in human exceptionalism or the absolute distinction between humans and non-humans.

In discussing the novels written by authors from different cultures and by showing how they share important posthumanist ideas, this paper hopes to encourage vigorous research on posthumanism and how it influences literary works from across cultures. Such a research project that approaches world literature from a posthumanist perspective can offer a valuable contribution to the study of contemporary world literature, which is an important academic field in Thai universities and many other universities abroad.

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