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to the Development of Critical Literacy

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POSTHUMANISM IN INDONESIAN SHORT STORIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL LITERACY

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Abstract

Posthumanism discusses the uncertainty of humankind's future and the changing perspectives on humanity and life. In the Indonesian context, the issues of posthumans have not been discussed, while the usage of robot and artificial intelligence technologies has been proliferating in the related industry for several years. This article discusses two Indonesian short stories, Andina Dwifatma's "Linus Damono" (2018) and Erwin Setia's "Cerita Dua Robot dan Pemuda Penyendiri" (2019). Close reading is used in the data collection and analysis of the two short stories. It reveals that the short stories display non-human subjects' narratives. The two short stories also show non-human subjects that are/ are not humanistic and humans' (total?) control over non-human subjects. Hence, the two short stories present two contradictory concerns on the projection of the human future: utopia and dystopia. The issues revealed from the short stories are essential to create awareness of the potential benefits and threats of using robotic and artificial intelligence technologies. Furthermore, this article also shows that the two short stories can be used as reading materials to develop critical literacy on posthuman issues.

Keywords: *Posthumanism; Posthumanist Literature; Critical Literacy Education.*



A. Introduction

The term posthuman, or posthumanism, was first introduced by Helena Blavatsky in her book *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). She uses this term in a fictional story about mammal evolution that reverses Darwin's theory (Schmeink, 2016). In its development, the term "posthuman" encompasses various meanings within academic discourse, reflecting diverse perspectives (Braidotti, 2017). Beyond considerations of the potential emergence of intricate machines as novel organisms poised to coexist with and shape human existence (Hayles, 1999), discussions on posthumanism extend to encompass the convergence between antihumanism and anti-anthropocentrism, prompting a reevaluation of the complex relationships between humans and other non-human entities. This reframing is particularly salient in addressing contemporary issues such as the Anthropocene era, which collective human and non-human agencies characterize in responding to ecological transformations that hold profound implications for human survival (Braidotti, 2017).

Additionally, scholars explore the evolving boundaries and implications of future scenarios involving humans, machines, cyborgs, and genetically modified entities and the potential erosion of human essence amidst technological advancements (Schmeink, 2016). Warwick (2017) further delves into integrating technology with the human biological framework by implanting specialized tools, facilitating enhanced cognitive abilities, and perpetuating consciousness within a neural network. Such advancements give rise to novel life forms, consciousness, and communication, blurring traditional distinctions between human and machine identities.

Posthuman refers to a time when humans are no longer the most important creatures in the universe because technological developments have begun to change the human species, and complex machines are also developing as new life forms (Pepperell, 2003). The main focus in posthuman is all aspects of humans and is not limited to human nature only when technology develops so rapidly that it obscures the essence and



boundaries of the human body's existence with computer simulations, cybernetics mechanisms, and the direction of robot-human life (Hayles, 1999). Posthuman discourse not only discusses the human aspect but also complexly involves several issues related to continuity and existence, the body or biology, morals, and human subjectivity (Wennemann, 2016). All this leads to uncertainty about the future of humankind and changes in the view of human nature and life.

This article explores Indonesian posthuman literature, which has received limited attention in academic discourse. Consequently, it aims to stimulate further discussion in this area. The selection of two short stories is deliberate, as they offer distinct perspectives on posthumanism, ranging from utopian ideals to dystopian realities, and challenge traditional narrative structures where humans are typically central. Additionally, the article will present arguments regarding the suitability of these stories as educational reading materials.

The recognition of the significance of integrating posthumanist perspectives into teaching and research is gaining traction globally. However, Nichols and Campano (2017) caution against a common misconception regarding posthumanism. They emphasize that the term "post" in "posthuman" does not imply abandoning humanity but rather prompts critical inquiry into which aspects of human existence require modification, reevaluation, or abandonment. It is crucial to acknowledge that the incorporation of posthumanist principles into educational settings serves not as a theoretical panacea but rather as a framework for critical reflection and analysis (Nichols & Campano, 2017).

In the Indonesian context, the demand for posthumanism reading materials extends beyond the mere absence of texts addressing posthumanist themes within school curricula. Students are increasingly encountering the integration of robots and artificial intelligence into their daily lives, often without a comprehensive understanding of the potential implications for humanity's future. By providing such reading materials,



students can cultivate their critical literacy regarding posthumanist concepts, thereby enhancing their awareness and sense of responsibility. Consequently, this article serves to bridge the existing gap in education by addressing the absence of discussions on posthumanism, particularly in light of the omnipresence of modern technology, robots, and artificial intelligence.

B. Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative methodology, utilizing close reading to analyze two short stories: “Linus Damono” by Andina Dwifatma and “Cerita Dua Robot dan Pemuda Penyendiri (A Story of Two Robots and a Loner Teenager)” by Erwin Setia, focusing on posthuman-related issues. Close reading involves meticulously evaluating specific passages within a text to discern their significance. It entails paying close attention to words, sentences, and chapters pertinent to the research objectives (Jänicke et al., 2015). Typically, close reading necessitates a critical examination of the text, often involving re-reading and making annotations such as notes, underlining, or marginalia on relevant sections (Dakin, 2013; Saccomano, 2014). This method facilitates a deeper understanding of the text’s nuances and themes.

In the context of this research, a close reading of the two short stories aimed at showing the issues of posthumanism in the stories, which is an integral part of providing learning materials related to the development of critical literacy in a time when the developments of artificial intelligence, smart android robots, and automation technology are so rapid. These issues would be beneficial in creating hope and anticipatory attitudes about events that may occur in the future (Nugraha, 2021) about posthumanism issues.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Result

Science fiction literature, while inherently speculative, plays crucial roles in building discourse within the realm of science and technology



through hopes and fears that can be presented through the world of fiction (Kotásek, 2015) as well as offering anticipation for the future (Micali, 2019). For this reason, utopia, dystopia, and an interplay between fiction and technology can appear in a literary work. When that happens, the literary approach is aimed at exploring how a posthuman literary work proposes something that departs from the existing foothold in the present to a better or gloomy future through the presence of technology. It can also be done by uncovering predictions and warnings about the future of humanity regarding technocratic interference with their bodies and lives. More than that, literary works can also be explored for the presence of a blurring or mixture of posthuman-themed utopia and dystopia (Schmeink, 2016).

Within this context, a literary work is seen in how it presents speculation about the future of the world or humans, a possible world (Micali, 2019), or how it poses questions or arguments in response to the feeling of optimism or worry from various ideas and images about posthuman life that encourages the development of technology towards the posthuman era (Bostrom, 2008). An example of this study has been conducted by Pordzik (2012) on H. G. Wells's novel *Time Machine* (1895), William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer* (1984), and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2004).

The posthumanism approach in the study of literary works emphasizes anti-Cartesian criticism and shifts in the center of speech and subjectivity for humans and other creatures (Wallace, 2010). The discussion of posthuman literature can thus dwell on the fluidity of the humanist subject. Humans in posthuman discourse show that they have always been in a state of evolution with other forms of life and are bound to the environment and now the technology (Schmeink, 2016). The issues of the conditions to undergo co-evolution with the environment and technology are part of the discussion regarding literary works with a posthuman theme. In discussions like this, the focus is placed on the extent to which environmental changes and technological advances make humans (forced) change or even become extinct. Literary works discussed contain issues



regarding the fate of humans through caution and control over science and technology (Fukuyama, 2002), the emergence of new species that can live with (or replace) humans on earth, and the salvation (or destruction) of humankind through technology (technosalvation) as seen in the TV series *Fringe* and the film *Terminator: Salvation* (Humann, 2017) or on human extinction and saving the earth (Colebrook, 2014).

Another aspect of exploring posthuman themes in literature involves examining the evolving or envisioned interactions between humans and non-humans resulting from technological interventions in human evolution. Warwick (2017) poses significant inquiries concerning shifts in human evolution and the complexities that may arise in human relationships transitioning into posthuman realms—wherein the augmentation of brain function through technological implants and its integration into neural technology networks redefine human identity. Additionally, the presence of non-human entities within human environments prompts a reevaluation of human centrality, necessitating the inclusion of non-human subjects such as humans or the coexistence of human and artificial consciousness in virtual spaces. Mahmud (2015) explores these themes through William Gibson's "Neuromancer" (1984). Haney (2006) further delves into discussions of human consciousness within computers or machines in his analysis of "Neuromancer" (1984).

Another area of exploration within posthuman literature involves speculative imagery and imaginative models that blur the distinction between the human body and machines, as well as the juxtaposition of utopian and dystopian visions of the human body. Furthermore, examining how the materiality of the body intersects with information and its relationship to human consciousness is a key focus of inquiry. In the humanist tradition, humans are distinguished from machines. Meanwhile, posthuman assumptions present several speculative scenarios regarding the blurred distinction between the body and the machine and the materiality of experience with the body versus the information that captures an organism's essentials (Hayles, 2003).

The distortion regarding the body with machines in the posthuman era, when modifications to the human body can be made, is increasingly complex with the question of whether the human mind and the body are separate entities. It is not about the human brain being preserved to create posthuman organisms; what if the human mind and consciousness could be stored and downloaded to be embodied in a new organism? In this posthuman speculation, the body is only the material that expresses information and is not part of the information. However, Hayles (2003) also examines speculative elements within posthuman themes, exemplified in Bruce Sterling's science fiction novel "Holy Fire" (1996). In this narrative, the transplantation of human consciousness into a new body leads to chaos, as the information requires the familiar body for recognition. Consciousness awakened from the experience of inhabiting a hormonal body may not necessarily recognize a body devoid of hormones. The exploration of body utopia intertwined with dystopia in posthuman literary works, as discussed by Marques (2013), offers an intriguing perspective on how utopian ideals may conceal dystopian realities and vice versa.

Another aspect that can be explored in works addressing posthuman themes is the application of a comparative approach to analyzing such themes. Chohan (2012) compares *The Matrix*, a film written and directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski, with William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. In these two works, artificial intelligence and the integration of human life into cyberspace have blurred the distinction between reality and virtuality. Another example is the comparative research by Panteli (2016), Mahmud (2015), and Hayles (2005), which used a comparative literary approach. Panteli compares how the story of Pinocchio is retold in various media to its influence on the creation of imaginative posthuman characters.

In Mahmud's research, a comparative study is carried out in the context of the development of the discourse of artificial intelligence and science technology with traditional beliefs present in the novel *Neuromancer*



(1984), some science fiction films such as *The Matrix* (1999), to the film *Robocop* (2014). For further investigation, Hayles compares three works of fiction: Henry James's novel "In the Cage" (1898), Philip K. Dick's novel "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch" (1966), and Alice Sheldon's novella "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (1973) written under the pseudonym James Tiptree, Jr. This comparative analysis explores shifts in the contrast between the information world and the tangible reality depicted in these literary works, delineating the visible boundaries between fiction and reality.

New issues also arise related to the presence of technology, which is increasingly inevitable and massive in human life, as some posthuman works portray. In this context, posthuman refers to efforts to create a new frame of reference for humans in developing artificial consciousness and the potential for human self-evolution through technological intervention. It cannot be denied that the development of technology moves exponentially and increasingly leads to the creation of artificial intelligence and life, gene manipulation, and virtual presence, for example, eroding what has previously been experienced by humans from natural situations to situations created by humans (Pepperell, 2003). This results in uncertainty regarding the direction of human destiny as technological advances are increasingly inseparable from human life and how technology can unexpectedly change humans.

In posthuman studies, the scope extends beyond speculations about future human destiny to encompass current developments and realities. Life in the future, according to Pepperell (2003), promises sophistication and a better life for humans through the presence of technology, but many people are still not aware of the implications of rapid technological developments for the human future. It is necessary to realize that human action in the development of science and technology in the present is changing the future of humankind. Pepperell (2003) raises two critical questions concerning the relentless advancement and integration of technology into human existence: Who bears responsibility for steering the



course of human life, and what objectives are to be pursued despite the acknowledgment that, eventually, humans may create machines surpassing their capabilities, with the potential to supplant them on Earth.

While humanity or human nature is commonly associated with humans, human nature is not solely defined by the presence of a biological human body. Human nature or humanity can manifest when an entity possesses a human biological body, the ability to think independently, and empathy towards others. Conversely, an entity may still be classified as a human being solely based on possessing a human biological body, even if it lacks independent cognitive abilities or empathy towards other entities. Although an animal can think for other entities and sympathize with other entities, it cannot have human nature because it does not have a human body. Applying principles observed in animals to the emergence of complex machines, such as Androids, poses challenges. Unlike animals, Androids possess artificial intelligence, enabling them to think, learn, and develop autonomously while exhibiting sentience and empathy. Additionally, they often feature human-like bodies (Seaman, 2015). Conversely, humans have the potential to adopt cyborg bodies integrated with technology, blurring the distinction between human and machine and challenging traditional understandings of the human form.

The existence of humans with their bodies is nothing new. In history, humans have a record regarding the imagination of the human body, ranging from bodies that can transform into other creatures to forms of interspecies hybrid bodies (half human and half other creatures). The imagination of the human body does not stop with technological advances. The image of a stronger and more durable body continues to evolve as technology advances. The story of humans and technology in modern times starts from Samuel Butler's essay "Darwin Among the Machines" (1863). In this essay, Butler, who uses the alias Cellarius, writes that technology, which is experiencing the dawn of its development at that time, will one day produce a machine that is a substitute for the human species, capable of reproducing and becoming the master of the human species (Welsch, 2017).



Then, in the following article published in 1865, titled “Lucubratio Ebria”, Butler imagined that technology would help human evolution by enhancing his bodily abilities (Taylor & Dorin, 2018). The futuristic image related to the possibilities that could happen to the human body and fate, together with technological advances, gave birth to both utopia and dystopia.

In the posthuman era, humans grapple with a crisis concerning their physical bodies, enticed by the promise of perfection and immortality through cybernetic incarnation. This existence, which seeks to transcend the limitations of mortality, transforms the human body into a utopian ideal in the posthuman era. Consequently, a new posthuman body emerges, characterized by a fusion of human consciousness with a cyborg form. This transformative shift challenges conventional notions of life, death, and the afterlife. Cryonic technology, artificial plasticity, genetic modification, and the human body’s conversion will become new issues in posthuman talks (Datta, 2019).

In the posthuman concept, the human body follows the definition of perfection through technological intervention, which cannot have defects and weaknesses. The real human body can then be considered inhuman. In this pursuit of perfection, dystopia can be present at a time when posthuman beings trace back their homesickness to their original bodies (Marques, 2013). The duality of possibility between utopia and dystopia continues to exist in the discussion regarding the potential of technology to perfect human beings.

In Indonesian literature, posthuman themes are scarce, considering the rapid growth of robotic technology and artificial intelligence use and adoption in many sectors (Goode & Kim, 2021). However, the scarcity does not mean that nothing is available. Contemporary short stories written by Andina Dwifatma entitled “*Linus Damono*” (2018) and Erwin Setia entitled “*Cerita Dua Robot dan Pemuda Penyendiri*” or “A Story of Two Robots and a Loner Teenager” (2019) contain posthumanism issues. The intensity of posthuman themes in the two short stories is very strong. *Linus Damono* (LD henceforth) provides an idea where an Android has been installed a consciousness from the deceased literary critic Linus Damono, while “*Cerita*



Dua Robot dan Pemuda Penyendiri" (CDRPP henceforth) gives a story where two smart robots can write their own short stories. When people still think that Androids or robots do not have imagination and artistic abilities (Coeckelbergh, 2017; Mikalonytė & Kneer, 2022), the two short stories come up with this issue, making these two interesting.

Before deciding to become a fiction writer, Andina was a columnist for a national newspaper, *Suara Merdeka*. Andina's LD is part of VICE: Indonesia Fiction Week 2038, which allows talented young writers to write about what Indonesia would be like in 2038.

In LD, Andina features a man named Linus Damono. In this short story, Linus is a respected literary critic because he is always critical without being obscure and pithy. In the Indonesian context, the name Linus Damono comes from Linus Suryadi Agustinus and Sapardi Djoko Damono; both are writers and critics. LD's "I" character is a young female writer trying to finish her second novel. She has writer's block and the problem of finishing the second novel under the shadow of the success of the first one.

She needs Linus to help her finish her second novel. Linus is considered a suitable person to provide suggestions for finishing her novel writing. Unfortunately, two weeks after Linus's input on the draft of her novel, Linus dies of a heart attack. After Linus' death, she is stuck in the development of her writing. Linus' death is a crushing blow to her goal of completing her second novel. She feels hopeless because Linus is no longer there, with his harsh criticism and brilliant input.

Once, she receives information from her friend regarding an offer for an Android test from a Japanese company. This company offers Androids to revive scientists or artists who have died. These Androids will be filled with artificial consciousnesses of the data in the cloud uploaded by the deceased people. By inputting some sort of consciousness into Androids, it is expected to revive the deceased people with similar traits when they were still alive. She registers herself to become a volunteer in testing the Japanese company's Android product. The consciousness of the deceased person who will be asked for the Android is, nonetheless, the late Linus Damono.



Interestingly, Andina chose her imagination for 2038 with Androids made by foreign countries like China, Japan, and the US.

“Beberapa negara seperti Tiongkok, Jepang, dan Amerika Serikat sudah mulai menggunakan robot sebagai tenaga kerja di pabrik dan kantor. Jepang, sebagai pelopor teknologi robot, tentu saja terobsesi untuk menyempurnakan robot buatannya agar semakin mirip dengan manusia. Seri terbaru yang sedang diuji coba ini menggunakan teknologi kecerdasan buatan dengan algoritma machine learning memanfaatkan big data berupa teks, foto, video – pokoknya apapun yang pernah seseorang unggah ke cloud”. (Several countries, such as China, Japan, and the United States, have started using robots as workers in factories and offices. As a pioneer of robot technology, Japan is obsessed with perfecting its robots to make them more like humans. The latest series being tested uses artificial intelligence technology with machine learning algorithms that take advantage of big data in text, photos, videos – anything anyone has ever uploaded to the cloud.)

The Japanese presentation in the short story with its year 2038 setting as the provider of the Android reflects the Indonesian inferiority complex. The inferiority complex is a long-lasting Indonesian postcolonial issue (Mrázek, 2018) that even the idea of the advancement of technology among Indonesians can only be found in other parts of the world (Kuitenbrouwer, 1979). The role of the Japanese in this short story shows the existing issue. The independence from the Dutch in 1945 with the help of the Japanese and the diminishing inferiority complex before the West with the invasion of the Japanese to throw out the Dutch colonial government (Ken’ichi, 1996) is only to project another inferiority complex, which is to the Japanese.

After sixteen weeks of waiting, the Android Linus Damono finally arrives. She is happy because she hopes that the process of completing her novel will start again with the arrival of this Android. Unfortunately, the Android Linus Damono is not like the late Linus Damono. This Android, Linus Damono, is very religious. This Android changes religion almost every day, only to attend religious gatherings of different religions. Unlike the late Linus Damono, the Android is also very patient. The Android is

also reluctant to criticize the novel script she has developed, which ruins the primary purpose of bringing Linus Damono back to life through this Android.

Noting something was wrong, she sent a letter to the Japanese company to complain about the Android Linus Damono. The company replies to her letter. The company suspects that there must be an error in the late Linus Damono's data integration into the consciousness of the Android Linus Damono. The company asks her to return the Android Linus Damono for adjustment. However, she never sends the Android back to the company. She begins to like the Android and finds it attractive to keep friends with the Android even though she knows that her novel may never finish.

The next writer, Erwin Setia, is known as a prolific essayist and short story writer. The scope of Erwin's writings is vast. He writes about Indonesian literature and politics. Erwin's short stories have been published in national and local newspapers such as *Koran Tempo*, *Media Indonesia*, *Padang Ekspres*, and *Jawa Pos*. From many short stories he has written, *CDRPP* is unique because it contains a posthuman theme. This short story was published on 25 May 2019 in *Koran Tempo*.

In *CDRPP*, Erwin Setia presents the story of a loner teenager named Gustam with his creations of two smart robots, Noel (code number ES-2033-GRK) and Rom (code number ES-2034-SRA). Both robots are stuffed with chips containing short and long stories by writers from all over the world. Noel is programmed to be intelligently brighter than Rom.

This short story is a combination of four short stories: Noel's story, Rom's story, Gustam's story, and the narrator's. These four stories tell about one incident that happened one morning at Gustam's house. It starts with Noel's story, who is furious because Rom disturbs the morning show on TV, reporting the crying Raja Eskar. Rom bullies Noel as stupid for following the story. To make it worse, hot liquid gushes from Rom's mouth when he is laughing at Noel and splashes Noel's body. Noel gets angry and pushes Rom. The two of them scuffle. Noel breaks Rom's leg. Gustam, who hears the fight between Noel and Rom, leaves the room. Gustam is angry that Noel and Rom are fighting over something that has nothing to do with



them. Before returning to the room, Gustam angrily and disappointedly says to the two of them:

“Kalian mempertengkarkan hal yang sangat tidak penting. Bagaimana mungkin sepasang robot bertengkar karena berita seorang raja yang menangis. Kalian seperti manusia saja, bertengkar karena hal yang bukan hanya tidak penting, tapi juga tidak ada kaitannya sama sekali dengan kehidupan kalian”.

(You guys were fighting over very insignificant things. How could a pair of robots fight over the news of a crying king? You are just like humans, fighting over things that are not only insignificant but also have nothing to do with your lives)

The story closes with Noel, or the “I” in this first short story, who hears from the announcer on television that Raja Eskar is crying because his tongue can no longer taste sweetness.

The second story is Rom’s version of the same incident that morning. Rom says he consistently fails to wake up early and that Noel is to take control of the TV set every morning. It makes him fail to watch cartoons in the morning because Noel prefers to enjoy the news on TV. Rom is also annoyed because it has been several days since the news has always been about a king named Eskar continuously crying, and the cause of the crying has not been known yet. Rom, in this short story as the storyteller, is bored with this repeated news. That morning, he leaves Noel to brew his favorite hot tea in the kitchen. After that, he returns to the sofa near Noel, in front of the television.

In this story, Rom tells the readers that he broke Noel’s hand. He does not talk about his broken leg because of the fight. In contrast to Noel’s story, in Gustam’s part of getting angry, Rom feels insulted when Gustam thinks that he is like a human because of the fight with Noel. Rom’s short story closes with Rom’s plan to make another extra hot cup of tea, this time with lots of sugar, as he finds out that Raja Eskar is crying because of a trivial thing, namely the loss of ability to taste sweetness.

The third short story is a story written by Gustam. He is a loner teenager. He does not like hanging out with people. His parents have died and left him some money to support him for many years to come. He uses this money to assemble two smart robots as friends. He initially thinks that



robots are different from humans because robots will not irritate and interfere with his life.

Gustam's version of what happened that morning begins when he wakes up from a beautiful dream of meeting his parents. He wakes up falling out of bed because of a fight between Noel and Rom. He leaves the room with an aching body from a falling and broken dream and scolds Noel and Rom. The two robots defend themselves as the wronged party. Gustam gets angry at the two smart robots and advises their ridiculous human-like behavior for fighting over something trivial that has nothing to do with them.

The fourth short story, the closing story of this story combined, features the narrator who tells the events in Gustam's dining room that morning. He tells the readers that Gustam gathers his two smart robots and advises them not to repeat doing silly things. It is also told that the harmony between Noel and Rom in the house for Gustam is just like a usual tongue for King Eskar.

The short stories LD by Andina Dwifatma and CDRPP by Erwin Setia are examples of the influence of posthuman themes on Indonesian literature. The use of terms such as machine learning, big data, and cloud in LD shows the influence of the development of technology and information technology. Meanwhile, the term smart robot CDRPP can be said to be influenced by the development of robotic technology and artificial intelligence from terms such as smart machine (Kallinikos, 2010) or smart robotic, which has emotions even though it is different from human emotions (Perkowitz, 2004). These two short stories prove the findings of Wellner (2018) that [human and] the posthuman imagination follows technological developments.

Moreover, the two short stories demonstrate a departure from humans as the central focus of the narratives, a characteristic feature of posthuman fiction. In Andina's short story, "Linus Damono" is an Android. Similarly, in Erwin's narrative, two of the four storytellers are smart robots named Noel and Rom.



Table 1. Comparison between LD and CDRPP

No.	Posthuman Themes	
	LD	CDRPP
1.	Bringing back the dead; Injecting the memories and the consciousness of the dead	Artificial Intelligence: Living with intelligent machines
2.	Android (human-like artificial body)	Smart Robot
3.	Issues with human control and calculation; the dead coming back alive is not the same	Issues with human control; the robots have their own direction

Both short stories feature imaginary speculations related to human life with machines. In the short story LD, Andina presents an android filled with human consciousness. As for the following short story, CDRPP, Erwin presents a smart robot with emotions and habits like humans. Even though he has different images of machines in the house, Andina presents an Android while Erwin imagines a robot; both short stories display imaginations of machines as human friends. The expectation that technological advances can create machines to become friends is not new. Research conducted by Dautenhahn et al., (2005) reveals that the desire to have smart robots as friends at home is not uncommon for people.

Posthuman theme and cultural imaginations are indeed in different positions regarding machines that can be like humans but are always under human control that machines cannot move forward with their agenda in their lives can be found in Isaac Asimov's short story entitled "Little Lost Robot" (1947) or the film *I, Robot* (2004) directed by Alex Proyas. The issue of human control over machines, both androids and smart robots, as in Andina and Erwin's short stories, is an issue that always haunts robotic technological development. Andina's short story expects the Android Linus Damono to resemble the late human Linus Damono, while Erwin's short story wants a smart robot to not behave like humans. These two short stories do not provide simple endings.

Control and friendship are complex issues in the imagination of machine friends. Self-control is different from the concept of making

friends. On the other hand, humans always want to be able to control their machines. The doubt that machines can become a friend to humans like ordinary humans when machines are given artificial consciousnesses and cognition like humans is expressed by Emmeche (2014).

Andina's short story shows a lack of control over the Android Linus Damono. Not only a matter of control, human consciousness that is transplanted into Androids or smart robots, which are expected to produce entities such as humans with original consciousness, has previously been discussed with skepticism, for example, by Hayles (2003). Meanwhile, in Erwin's short story, it appears that the two smart robots are still robots under Gustam's control. However, the fact that the two robots have human-like consciousness and cognition is beyond Gustam's initial programming. These short stories question whether machines grafted with artificial consciousness and cognition, such as humans, are deemed incapable of producing human-like consciousness and cognition (Haney, 2006).

Apart from skepticism regarding the potential for machines to be truly human or friends like human friends, the essence of Andina and Erwin's short stories aligns with what Danaher (2019) says. Danaher emphasizes that humans need friends, and philosophical arguments about machines as humans and original friends sometimes are not entirely relevant to the existence of any available friend. We can also compare this with the research findings of Melson et al., (2009) on some practical benefits and positive receptions of children towards friendship with robot dogs compared to actual dogs. However, there is no guarantee for the utopia that these machines will always become our friends in the future. That is when the utopia of humans living with machines and having control over the machines depicted by posthuman literary works such as those two short stories by Andina and Erwin also poses latent dystopia of how the situation might not be as imagined or expected.

The issues about critical literacy for the posthuman world, as the world progresses in that direction (Leander & Burriss, 2020), need to be acknowledged and incorporated into school curricula. Besides issues on



digital literacy and other literacies in Indonesian schools and universities (Nugraha & Octavianah, 2020; Nugraha & Sufanti, 2023; Nugraha & Suyitno, 2020; Rahmawati et al., 2022), posthumanism issues are still non-existent when the world is heading to a posthuman world. Thus, Indonesian schools must introduce these issues and encourage critical literacy development in the coming posthuman world. Stories like LD and CDRPP would provide students with a futuristic situation they can imagine experiencing. They serve as simulations of ‘what if’ scenarios. Thus, it will prepare them to anticipate the future.

Anticipating what the future would look like is essential. There is more than just a life in the future with robots and artificial intelligence in posthuman discourse. Providing Indonesian schools with LD and CDRPP would also develop students’ imagination on their future contribution to the advancement of technology. It would benefit Indonesia for its robotic and artificial intelligence research and industry progression. Moreover, this, or the introduction of posthuman themes into our education, is something that cannot be avoided, as Snaza et al., (2014) believe, because the whole world is going forward to witness “the evolution of a new kind of human being, the post-human-being”.

D. Conclusion

With the increasingly rapid development of technology and the increasing dependence of humans on technology, the future of humankind has become a subject in posthuman talks and literary works. Although speculative, these literary works develop and contribute to shaping contemporary cultural imaginations and proving the potential for mutual influence between fictional literature and technological development. These can be seen in two contemporary Indonesian short stories, LD and CDRPP. Moreover, these findings enrich the studies of posthumanism in literature.

On the other hand, posthuman literature also presents two contradictory things about the human future: utopia and dystopia. Utopia



continues to spur technological development, while dystopia creates the need for anticipation regarding technological advances. The short stories discussed present speculation and uncertain outcomes when robots with artificial intelligence and androids live with humans. These issues are essential things to know for people as they are going to live (now living) in the posthuman world.

The two short stories can become suitable reading materials in schools and universities in Indonesia to make their future generation critical, anticipating, and aware of posthuman issues. It is crucial because Indonesia is predicted to become one of the potential key players in the world's robotic and artificial intelligence industries.

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