

Ecocriticism on Robert Frost: Investigating Posthuman Thinking, Climate Change, and Diverse Planetary Concern

Arin Mantara Anggawirya¹, Evelin Giovani² and Margaretha F. Narahawarin³
^{1,2,3}English Literature Department, Musamus University, Merauke, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini meneliti karya Robert Frost melalui sudut pandang ekokritik, dengan fokus pada bagaimana puisinya menggambarkan hubungan antara manusia dan alam dalam konteks pemikiran pascamanusia, perubahan iklim, dan berbagai masalah planet. Dengan menggunakan metode analisis tekstual kualitatif, studi ini menganalisis puisi seperti "The Road Not Taken," "Fire and Ice," dan "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" untuk mengungkap bagaimana Frost tidak sekadar menggambarkan alam sebagai latar belakang atau objek pasif, tetapi sebagai entitas yang memainkan peran aktif dalam kehidupan manusia. Melalui "The Road Not Taken," Frost menunjukkan kesetaraan ontologis antara manusia dan alam, di mana keputusan narator dipengaruhi oleh kekuatan alam yang setara. Puisi "Fire and Ice" dieksplorasi sebagai alegori untuk bencana ekologis yang disebabkan oleh perubahan iklim, yang mencerminkan dualitas ancaman yang dihadapi planet ini. Sementara itu, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" membangkitkan rasa kagum dan hormat terhadap alam, sekaligus mendorong pembaca untuk mempertimbangkan implikasi yang lebih luas dari tindakan manusia terhadap lingkungan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa melalui karya-karyanya, Frost tidak hanya menyajikan refleksi puitis tentang alam, tetapi juga mengajak para pembaca lingkungan untuk merenungkan tanggung jawab manusia dalam menjaga keseimbangan ekologi di tengah krisis global.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the works of Robert Frost through the lens of ecocriticism, focusing on how his poems depict the relationship between humans and nature in the context of posthuman thought, climate change, and diverse planetary concerns. Using qualitative textual analysis methods, this study analyzes poems such as "The Road Not Taken," "Fire and Ice," and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" to reveal how Frost does not simply depict nature as a passive backdrop or object, but as an entity that plays an active role in human life. Through "The Road Not Taken," Frost demonstrates the ontological equality between humans and nature, where the narrator's decisions are influenced by equal natural forces. The poem "Fire and Ice" is explored as an allegory for the ecological disaster caused by climate change, reflecting the duality of threats facing the planet. Meanwhile, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" evokes a sense of awe and reverence for nature, while also encouraging readers to consider the broader implications of human actions on the environment. This study concludes that through his works, Frost not only presents poetic reflections on nature, but also invites environmental readers to reflect on human responsibility in maintaining ecological balance amidst the global crisis.

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Corresponding Author:

Arin Mantara Anggawirya
Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Musamus
Papua Selatan, Indonesia
Email: anggawirya@unmus.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Robert Frost is one of America's most revered poets whose works often focus on the natural landscape and man's relationship to the world around him. [1]. His seemingly simple yet meaningful poems offer profound insights into existential dilemmas, life choices, and the beauty of nature [2]. One of his most famous works, "The Road Not Taken," has been widely interpreted as a reflection on human life choices [3]. However, in the context of ecocriticism and posthuman thought, the poem opens up new opportunities to explore how nature plays an active role in human decision-making processes, and how the human-nature relationship depicted in the poem is relevant to contemporary environmental challenges, including climate change and broader planetary concerns. This study aims to analyze Frost's work through an ecocritical lens, with a focus on posthuman thought, and the ecological relevance of understanding humans' relationship to an increasingly fragile world..

In an era where climate change and environmental degradation have become pressing global issues, the analysis of literature through an ecocritical perspective has become increasingly relevant. Literary works such as Robert Frost's poetry, long lauded for their exploration of nature and the human relationship to the environment, offer more than aesthetic beauty; they provide an important basis for reflecting on human ecological responsibility. While much has been done on "The Road Not Taken" in the context of life choices and their consequences, little attention has been paid to how the poem can reflect contemporary environmental challenges and offer important insights for posthuman thought and planetary sustainability. This study, by combining ecocritical analysis and posthuman approaches, seeks to fill this gap and emphasize the importance of a deeper understanding of the human relationship to nature in the face of the global environmental crisis..

Several previous studies have examined one of Frost's works, 'The Road Not Taken' from various perspectives, including the theme of life choices and their consequences, poetic ambiguity, and nature symbolism. For example Frost's poems are intentionally indeterminate, creating a complexity of meaning that leaves readers in unresolved ambiguity, reflecting the contradictions within human experience [4]. For example, "The Most of It" is ambiguous in its portrayal of nature and women, allowing for interpretations that are both supportive and critical [5], none have explored in depth how nature in this poem functions not only as a setting but also as an active entity that is equal to humans in the decision-making process. This study seeks to fill this gap by offering a new perspective through the integration of ecocriticism and posthumanism, which will provide insight into how nature influences and interacts with humans in the context of modern environmental challenges and planetary sustainability.

Contemporary studies have shown that human relationships with nature are increasingly seen in a more complex and interconnected context, especially in the face of modern environmental challenges. For example, Robert Frost's poetry often integrates nature as an essential component of the human experience, challenging the traditional hierarchy that separates humans from the natural world and reflecting a posthuman perspective. His work frequently highlights the interconnectedness of humans and nature, portraying nature not just as a backdrop but as an active participant in human life, as seen in the pervasive influence of nature across his poems [6]. Frost's ambivalence towards nature, depicting it as both a nurturing and destructive force, further complicates the human-nature relationship, presenting a view that is less anthropocentric and more reflective of the complexities of environmental interactions [7]. From an ecocritical standpoint, Frost's poetry offers a range of human responses to nature—whether to coexist with, resist, or yield to it—illustrating a posthuman approach that recognizes nature's agency and significance beyond human control [8]. Additionally, Frost uses nature as a philosophical backdrop to explore deeper human emotions and decisions, aligning with posthumanism by blurring the boundaries between humans and the non-human world [9]. This dynamic is evident in poems like "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," where the interaction between human experience and nature underscores the integral role of the natural environment in shaping human understanding and truth-seeking [10].

In addition, ecocritical and posthuman approaches to literature are becoming increasingly important in new studies of climate change and planetary sustainability. Literary approaches that incorporate environmental dimensions help to understand the complexity of human relationships with nature, especially in the context of the global ecological crisis. In Frost's case, the use of nature as a symbol not only reflects individual experiences but also raises questions about human collective responsibility for the environment. Frost, through "The Road Not Taken," shows nature as an entity that cannot be separated from human life, strengthening the argument that posthuman thinking is essential to understanding in the modern context. Therefore, a deeper ecocritical analysis of the role of nature in Frost's work not only broadens literary understanding but also provides important insights into current debates on sustainability and climate change.

This study confirms that Robert Frost's work has profound relevance in the context of contemporary environmental challenges. By combining ecocritical approaches and posthuman thought, this study not only broadens our understanding of how nature functions in this poem but also highlights the importance of viewing nature as an equal entity in human decision-making processes. While many previous studies have examined various aspects of this poem, few have truly explored how the symbolism of nature in Frost's work reflects the broader and more complex relationship between humans and the environment. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap, offering a new perspective that is more relevant to global issues such as climate change and planetary sustainability. Ultimately, this study not only contributes to literary studies but also emphasizes the importance of deep reflection on human responsibility in maintaining ecological balance. Frost, through his meaningful depiction of nature, invites us to not only reflect on individual choices but also consider their impact on an increasingly fragile world that requires collective attention.

2. METHOD

Ecocritical approaches to literature have become increasingly relevant in the context of climate change and global environmental challenges. Literature that places nature as an integral part of human experience reflects a posthuman view that challenges the traditional hierarchy between humans and nature. This approach emphasizes that nature is not a neutral or passive object, but has a real influence on human life. This discourse by showing that Frost's poem can be seen as an example of the way in which human decisions are made in dynamic interaction with the natural world, where nature has the capacity to influence the narrator's choices.

In recent decades, attention to environmental issues has increased significantly, and this is reflected in a variety of literary works that explore the relationship between humans and nature. Ecocriticism allows researchers to analyze how literary texts can express ecological concerns, show the impacts of human exploitation of nature, and advocate for more sustainable thinking and action [11], [12].

For example, Buell [11] argues that literature has great potential to raise awareness of the environmental crisis by highlighting the consequences of human actions on nature. Heise [12] further develops this idea by claiming that ecocriticism can help deepen our understanding of climate change, by analyzing how narratives about climate change are constructed and how they influence public perceptions. More recently, Nixon [13] introduced the concept of "slow violence" in ecocriticism, which highlights environmental damage that occurs slowly and is often invisible, but has destructive long-term impacts.

In this context, ecocriticism is not only relevant but also essential to understanding how literature can serve as a mirror and critique of environmentally damaging practices. This approach encourages readers to see nature as an entity that is intrinsically connected to human life, not just as a backdrop or passive object, but as an actor that influences and is influenced by human actions. This is especially important in an era where climate change is a pressing global issue, and where literature can play a role in shaping more environmentally friendly attitudes and policies. [14], [15] .

Ecocriticism allows for the analysis of how literary texts not only reflect ecological concerns but also shape the way societies understand and respond to environmental change. In this context, literature serves as a medium that can explore the impacts of the exploitation of nature, show the interaction between humans and the environment, and offer critiques of practices that damage ecosystems. [16], [17].

Research in ecocriticism has shown that literary works have the power to change public perceptions of the environment and promote ecological awareness. Glotfelty [17] notes that literature can influence readers to see nature as a living and valuable entity, in need of protection and care. Coupe [16] reinforces this idea by showing that literary texts that focus on environmental crises can trigger changes in environmental awareness and even in public policy. This suggests that ecocriticism is not only important as a tool of academic analysis, but also as part of a broader movement to promote sustainability and the preservation of nature.

Furthermore, ecocriticism also serves to bridge the gap between the humanities and environmental sciences, connecting literary narratives to scientific facts about climate change and environmental degradation. By combining textual analysis with ecological knowledge, ecocriticism can deepen understanding of how cultural practices contribute to the

environmental crisis, and how literature can play a role in promoting a more responsible response to nature. [18], [19]

Posthumanist thought then expands this scope by challenging the traditional distinction between humans and non-humans, which often underlies the exploitation of nature. Posthumanism proposes the idea that humans can no longer be seen as the center of the universe, but rather as an integral part of a wider web of life. In this context, ecocriticism and posthumanism together encourage a reading of literature that focuses not only on humans as the main agent, but also on nature as an entity with its own voice and interests.

By combining ecocriticism and posthumanism, literary analysis can more deeply explore how literary narratives do not simply depict nature as a passive backdrop or object, but as an actor that interacts with and influences human life. This is especially important in the face of global environmental challenges, where understanding the interconnections between all forms of life is becoming increasingly urgent. For example, in works such as the poetry of Robert Frost, this approach allows researchers to see how nature and humans exist in an equal relationship, where human decisions cannot be separated from the wider ecological context [20], [21]

An approach that combines ecocriticism and posthumanism not only broadens our understanding of literary texts, but also offers new perspectives that are relevant to understanding and responding to environmental crises. By treating nature as an equal entity, literature can play an important role in shaping a new, more inclusive and sustainable ethic in human relations with the environment [22].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Posthuman Thinking in Frost's Poetry

Robert Frost's poems often depict nature as an entity that interacts with humans, rather than as a backdrop or passive object. In the context of posthumanism, which challenges the distinction between humans and non-human entities, Frost's work can be seen as an attempt to blur the boundaries between humans and nature. For example, in the poem "The Road Not Taken," human choices are confronted with elements of nature that are equally influential in their decisions. Nature is not only a backdrop, but also plays an active role in the decision-making process, indicating an ontological equality between humans and nature.

"The Road Not Taken" is one of Robert Frost's most famous poems, often considered a meditation on life choices. In the poem, the narrator is faced with two roads through a "yellow" autumn forest, and he must choose between them. Traditionally, the poem is read as a metaphor for life choices and their consequences, but through the lens of ecocriticism, we can see how the elements of nature play a significant and even defining role in this decision-making process.

In this poem, nature—in the form of two diverging roads—is not merely a passive backdrop for the narrator's choices. The two roads are depicted as nearly identical, both in their condition and their appeal. Frost is careful to note how the two roads "stretched out under the shade of new-fallen leaves," creating a near-equivalence between the available choices. Nature, through these two roads, seems to force the narrator to recognize the equality of these choices, and thus the final decision is not about the "right" or "wrong" path, but about the act of choosing itself in the context of an equal and empowered nature.

The depiction of these two paths can also be interpreted as a representation of the complexity of the ecosystem that humans cannot predict. Nature, in this poem, contains elements of chance and uncertainty that are equal to human free will. In doing so, Frost subtly challenges the anthropogenic view that places humans above or separate from nature. Instead, the narrator is forced to acknowledge that his choices are made in a context influenced by nature, where there is no human domination over nature, but rather a mutually influencing interaction.

Within the framework of posthuman thought, where humans are no longer seen as the center of everything, but as part of a wider network of life, this poem highlights the ontological equality between humans and nature. Nature in "The Road Not Taken" is an equal entity in decision-making, demanding recognition of its active role. The narrator's decision to choose one of the roads is a decision made in the context of an ecosystem that is inspired not only by human will but also by the dynamics of nature as equals. This reflects the concept of posthumanism that seeks to overcome the dichotomy between humans and non-humans, affirming that nature has an equal voice and influence in the decisions we make

3.2 Climate Change and Frost's Vision of Nature

Although Robert Frost wrote in the context of the early 20th century, contemporary ecocritical analysis can find relevance in Frost's views on nature and its relationship to climate change. His poems often reflect seasonal changes and extreme weather, which can be interpreted as early reflections of an awareness of environmental change. The poem "Fire and Ice," for example, can be seen as an allegory for the ecological disasters caused by climate change. Through the use of metaphors and symbolism of nature, Frost depicts the devastation that can be caused by uncontrolled natural forces, which in a modern context can be linked to the climate crisis.

"Fire and Ice," a short but powerful poem by Robert Frost, offers a meditation on two potential ways in which the world could end—by fire or ice. Traditionally, the poem is understood as a meditation on the destructive power of passion (represented by "fire") and hatred or indifference (represented by "ice"). However, in the context of modern ecocriticism, the poem can also be read as an allegory relevant to contemporary environmental issues, particularly climate change.

In this poem, Frost uses "fire" and "ice" as symbols for opposing but equally destructive forces. "Fire," with its obvious association with heat and burning, can be interpreted as a representation of global warming—a phenomenon driven by increased greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. This global warming, if left unchecked, could lead to drastic climate change, including extreme heat waves, widespread wildfires, and melting polar ice caps that threaten life around the world.

On the other hand, the "ice" in this poem can be seen as a symbol of extreme cooling or even freezing, which may reflect the consequences of global climate disruption. Phenomena such as extreme weather events causing snowstorms or regional cooling due to changes in ocean and atmospheric current patterns can cause ecological disasters of no less severity. In some scientific interpretations, major disruptions in the global climate system could trigger drastic cooling effects in some areas, even though the planet is warming overall.

By depicting the world potentially ending either through “fire” or “ice,” Frost symbolically captures the duality of the threats our planet faces from climate change. Disasters caused by global warming (fire) or by other effects of ecological imbalance (ice) are both the result of environmental destruction triggered by human action. In this sense, Frost’s poem serves as a warning about two equally dire disaster scenarios, both rooted in human disregard for the balance of nature.

This interpretation is in line with the ecocritical view that sees literature as a tool to expose and critique human exploitation of nature. "Fire and Ice" touches on deep fears about the destruction of the planet due to irresponsible human actions, whether through excessive consumption of resources (fire) or through indifference and neglect of the environment (ice). This poem, therefore, becomes a reflection of the climate crisis that the world is currently facing, where humans must face the consequences of their actions towards nature.

In addition, using simple language and powerful symbolism, Frost conveys a message about the fragility of the earth and the dangers that lurk if we fail to care for our planet. Both fire and ice are, in their own ways, metaphors for the ecological disasters that could destroy the earth's fragile balance if humans do not act soon

3.3 Diverse Planetary Concern in Frost's Work

Frost's poetry often emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living things and the planet as a whole. In a world increasingly aware of the need for global environmental stewardship, Frost's work can be revisited to highlight the importance of a planetary perspective. Poems like "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" evoke a sense of wonder and reverence for nature, urging readers to consider the broader implications of their actions on the environment. The imagery of a vast, indifferent universe in Frost's work also encourages a reflection on the role of humanity within the larger ecological system, promoting a view of the earth as a shared, diverse habitat that requires careful consideration and respect.

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is one of Robert Frost's most cherished poems for its simplicity and captivating beauty. At first glance, the poem appears to be a simple description of a man stopping by the edge of a wood to enjoy the beauty of nature on a snowy evening. However, if we dig deeper, the poem conveys a more complex layer of meaning about man's relationship with nature and how it can inspire us to reflect on the impact our actions have on the environment.

The poem depicts a horseman pausing near a snow-covered forest, enjoying the silence and beauty of the surrounding nature. With brief yet dense descriptions, Frost manages to create a magical and peaceful atmosphere, where nature is seen in its purest and most undisturbed form. The narrator observes the forest owned by someone living in a village, highlighting the isolation and fragility of nature that is often overlooked in everyday human life.

This sense of awe and reverence for nature is evident in the way the narrator describes the moment: “The woods are lovely, dark and deep,” a phrase that reflects the profound and mysterious beauty of nature. There is an almost sacred stillness to this scene, where time seems to stand still and nature seems to offer the narrator (and, through the narrator, the reader) a chance to reflect on their own existence and their relationship to the natural world.

But beneath this beauty lies a more subtle element of warning. The poem, with its emphasis on the depth and darkness of the forest, can be seen as a metaphor for the complexities

and mysteries of nature that we often overlook or misunderstand. The deep, dark forest represents a force of nature that is greater and older than human life, reminding us that nature has depths and secrets that we may not be able to fully understand or control.

The narrator who stops to observe this beauty must eventually continue on his journey, reminded of promises and responsibilities still to be fulfilled: "But I have promises to keep, / And miles to go before I sleep." In this context, the poem can be read as a reflection on the tension between the human desire to connect with nature and the need to fulfill social and economic responsibilities that often distance us from a deeper connection with nature.

In this way, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" can be seen as a reminder of the importance of taking time to appreciate and reflect on nature, even when we are caught up in the routines and demands of modern life. The poem invites readers to reconsider their relationship to the natural environment, and how their everyday decisions may be affecting it. There are strong ecocritical implications here, as Frost seems to be encouraging readers to consider the long-term consequences of human actions on this fragile and beautiful natural world.

The poem can also be seen as a subtle call to sustainability, reminding us not only to enjoy the beauty of nature, but also to consider how we can protect and preserve it. The narrator's eventual need to continue on his journey shows that while we should respect nature, we also have a responsibility to maintain a balance between human needs and environmental protection.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Robert Frost's works, especially "The Road Not Taken," "Fire and Ice," and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," have profound relevance in the context of contemporary environmental challenges. By integrating ecocritical approaches and posthuman thought, this study successfully shows that Frost does not only depict nature as a passive backdrop or object, but also as an active entity that plays an important role in human life. Through a close analysis of these poems, it is clear how Frost blurs the boundaries between humans and nature, presenting nature as an actor that has ontological equality in the decision-making process.

The poem "The Road Not Taken" illustrates how human choices cannot be separated from the broader ecological context, while "Fire and Ice" serves as a powerful allegory for the potential ecological disaster of climate change. Additionally, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" prompts a profound reflection on humanity's relationship to nature and the importance of sustainability in maintaining the balance of the planet. Through the lenses of ecocriticism and posthumanism, this study argues that literary works such as Frost's poems can serve as important tools for understanding and responding to the global environmental crisis.

Thus, this study not only contributes to a deeper understanding of Robert Frost's work but also underlines the importance of ecological reflection in literature. Frost, through his rich depiction of natural symbolism, invites us to consider the long-term implications of human actions on the environment, as well as encouraging collective responsibility in maintaining ecological balance amidst increasingly complex global challenges. Therefore, it is important to continue exploring how literature can play a key role in shaping sustainability ethics and fostering a more harmonious relationship between humans and nature

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