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Analysis of the Poem, the Road Not Taken By Robert Frost

The poem *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost is simple to read yet complicated, because it is contradicting itself to the point that it may flat out. The poem has four stanzas with five lines each, and the rhyme scheme is ABAAB. The poem represents a commentary of life choices. The narrator expresses himself through choosing the path that is less travelled to indicate his courage. He claims that his choice has different consequences compared to the second choice of a more travelled path. He distinguishes the two paths after travelling for many years and realizes that the only similarity they have is the beauty. The poem focuses on a man's decision to explore in order to reach his dreams in the natural and human worlds.

The title of the poem gives a direction into its interpretation. It focuses on the road that the speaker left; hence, he lost opportunities. The poem points out the less travelled road ambivalently. At one moment, one road is more grassy, but then both appear to be equally covered with fresh leaves (Frost 2-3). During the autumn, both roads look good, even if he waits for years to tell the story again. However, the speaker makes a choice in favor of the less travelled path and leaves the other path. Metaphorically, the speaker refers to the choices in his life and their effects on daily life. With the help of describing the two paths, the author highlights the complexity of choices and opportunities that humans have.

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The poem has both complicated and simple forms. It consists of four stanzas with five lines where each stanza has a line rhyme scheme of ABAAB:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, (A)

And sorry I could not travel both (B)

And be one traveler, long I stood (A)

And looked down one as far as I could (A)

To where it bent in the undergrowth; (B) (Frost 1-5)

The rhythm is tricky, because a stressed syllable follows an unstressed one. At the same time, the author creates rhythmic variation by using a stressed syllable after two unstressed syllables. In the third feet, 'In' and 'a' are unstressed syllables, and the other four feet are iambic. The variation of rhythms in the poem allows assuming that the author deliberately departs from the norm a bit in order to emphasize the variation of the speaker's choices of his path. The poem turns out to be as unique as the narrator's personal life choices. Usually, unlike *The Road Not Taken*, a typical metrical poem has longer lines and shorter stanzas. Thanks to the use of short lines and long stanzas, the rhythm of the poem becomes steady. It makes the readers feel as if they were in the company of the narrator and walked in the woods with him. Through the poem, the readers feel that the speaker is walking carefully and at a slow pace, since he is not sure about his preferred path. In the last stanza, the speaker repeats the word 'I', and it sounds like the speaker has paused a bit, and the birds in the woods have also stopped singing. It is a planned way out for the speaker to end the poem.

The poem has more to understand and feel than what the eyes can see and read. The poet uses various symbols and imagery to develop the theme of his poem. For example, the road is a metaphor that means various choices that people make in their daily lives. Frost specifies that

preferring one road to another, a person must leave the not taken one behind and be ready to both positive and negative changes in one's life. Afterwards, a person can only wonder what would have happened, if they had taken the other road. The first line in the poem is the key metaphorical fork and the literal road that confuses the speaker. The metaphor of choice reveals when he gets to the woods where the road splits. The narrator prefers to discuss his road of choice throughout the entire poem, and therefore, it turns into an extended metaphor. The speaker has travelled for long, and at the current point, he has to make a firm choice to follow only one path. The road in the fourth and fifth lines is a metaphor used to show the future as indicated by the path in the woods. The consequences of the decisions are felt in the future.

The narrator decides to change his long travelled route to another, the one he views as interesting too. This decision is a metaphor for a random change of mind. When one makes a decision and decides to change, it means that there is hope for a better life of the same kind of experience, even though the reasons behind the change may not be clear. The narrator wishes to take both roads, but the nature of the roads create a challenge, "And both that morning equally lay" (Frost 11). At the end of poem, the narrator is already too far to try taking the other road. This would require him to come back to the starting point, which is challenging. The narrator's inability to return is metaphor of previous decisions, which one can never reverse. Anyway, the narrator's optimism about his chosen road shows that one must never feel regret about different choices, because a chosen path is the only path a person has.

The poem is set in the forest with yellow wood. The color of the trees is changing, and the leaves are falling. The place may be pretty, considering the approach of autumn, but this may indicate some personal crisis in the narrator's life. In an early morning, there are freshly fallen leaves on the road, and one of the roads is grassy, but it looks deserted, because it does not seem

that other people use this road often. This aspect may show that narrator is tired of human society; he is bored and seeks for something new and undiscovered in his life. In turn, the imagery, such as fresh air, yellow wood, grassy road, help the author describe the narrator's romantic mood associated with his anticipation of some new experiences.

Finally, the poet uses various analytical subjects to develop the poem and give it different thematic dimensions. The narrator has to make a choice on the path to follow. Likewise, everybody has a responsibility to make their own choices. It fits the subject matter of preferences, because the narrator is taking a free walk in the woods but not hiking up a mountain. His struggle is not physical but psychological, because he understands that he will hardly have a chance to go back and take another road. By this, the author emphasize that choosing one's way in life is always hard, and it is important to know that for each decision that a person makes, there are consequences that affect the rest of one's life either positively or negatively.

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Work Cited

Frost, Robert. "The Road Not Taken." *Bartleby.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 July 2014.