

Representation of Conflicts Regarding Choices in Human Life in ‘*The Road Not Taken*’ by Robert Frost

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ABSTRACT: Robert Frost is considered as the greatest modern poets in American literature. During his life, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize four times for his outstanding contribution in poetry. He is regarded “The Voice of America.” He discusses natural, personal elements and the social piece that are related to the human being very aptly and minutely in his poetry. His poetry begins with delight and ends in wisdom. The themes of his poetry are very inspirational and innovative. Critics, scholars, and the general people cite his famous poem ‘*The Road Not Taken*’ as one of the mesmeric poems. The poem is about conflict regarding two possible choices in human life. Life is not a bed of roses; a man has to fall in indecision regarding choice. He has to take the right decision. In ‘*The Road Not Taken*,’ the speaker believes that he will not put up with any grief due to his decision in the future. The purpose of the paper is to amplify conflicts regarding choices in human life with the assist of his renowned verse ‘*The Road Not Taken*.’

Keywords: Choices, Conflicts, Challenging Realities, Destiny

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INTRODUCTION:

In American literature, Robert Frost is the most eminent and respectable rhymesters not only in the USA but also in England. President John F. Kennedy said that Americans will eternally increase joy and understanding through Robert Frost’s eternal verse. His broad outlook and realistic approach are reflected in his lyrics. In 1915, “*The Road Not Taken*” was first printed in *The Atlantic Monthly* and in 1916; the poem appears as a preface to his little volume entitled *Mountain Interval*, when Europe was engaged in the First World War. America joined in the war next year. Frost’s friend Edward Thomas wrote a poem “Roads” that reminds the host of men for returning to the streets they departed merely as anticipated apparitions. Thomas says-

Now all roads lead to France
And heavy is the tread
Of the living; but the dead
Returning lightly dance.

When many men were in confusion whether they would return to what they had left, Frost wrote down the poem at that moment. Edward Thomas received the poem in the letter and joined in the war. After two months, he was executed in France. Substantial evidence proves that in 1914 Frost and Edward Thomas would stay at Gloucestershire in England. Both of them often went on foot together through the forest. Thomas was continually in conflict regarding the exact road they ought to accept. Frost would reproach Thomas for his second thoughts. Frost’s stimulation for “The Road Not Taken” came from his friend Edward Thomas. Frost wrote a letter to Louis Untermeyer, in which he acknowledged that he would not gamble with people for saying readers who knocked out and where he was smashed in his ‘The Road Not Taken’ (Pritchard). Through the pronoun “he” the poet refers to is none other than Thomas, because when they would stroll unruffled, Thomas reprimanded himself for not selecting another road than the previous one they had chosen (Pritchard). Frost wrote another letter to Susan Haves Ward in 1912, he said that he visited frequently “two lonely cross-roads” in winter. Frost would observe that the paths are lying less visited after a blizzard for diurnals. Frost went on to say that he was wondered seeing a shadow in the remoteness coming to him at one twilight. Mysteriously, he perceived that he was advancing to his own picture in a distorted glass or as though the two images were hovering together. Finally, the poet wrote that he had stood in stupefaction (Selected Letter 45). That knowledge has created the obscurities which have mystified bibliophiles of the verse. “*The Road Not Taken*” reveals the narrator’s meeting with his replica. On the contrary, Robert Frost wanted to say that the poem was only his secretive joke (Bassett).

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This article is a creative work from the author’s genuine interest in American literature. Different journals, texts, magazines’ extracts and a vast resource line from the internet have contributed immensely to form this analysis. A lot of personal discussions with

experts, analytical apprehension of the topic, subjective reading and perspectives as well as experiences and planned thoughts have also been considered. This paper is an investigating approach towards the very root of the text from a different angle.

DISCUSSION:

Robert Frost's "*The Road Not Taken*" is the most beautiful verse in world literature. It is a melodic poem having four couplets of five lines. Each line has around eight and ten syllables with a coarsely iambic rhythm; every stanza rhyme is an abaa form. The poem's sound effect is interesting and amusing to comprehend the poem well. Frost has used figures of speech like assonance with a view to helping his bookworms conceive the poem more meticulously. As an instance, Frost uses the sound effect with uttering "fair and wear." Besides, "lay, day, and way."

The poem has got much popularity due to the easiness of its allegory. Leech segregates poetic language with the common language in his popular book, 'Linguistic Guild to English Poetry.' He says that the observed rules of the common language may be interrupted or diverged by the poetic language in various ways, few apparent, few elusive (Leech, 1969). Adejare (1992) remarks about the statement that style is a vague term.

Frost began the poem in the first person point of view that makes anonymity for marking the narrator. According to the view of the Lawrence Thompson biography, *Robert Frost: The Years of Triumph* (1971), Frost would often say that the speaker in the poem was his friend Edward Thomas. The poet would say that his friend was always in confusion while they were walking through the wood.

The heading of the poem is the vital thing to its accepting. The whole poem rings around the title. The justification of the heading comes from two means. If the designation becomes "The Road Less Traveled," it refers to select the less visited path which craves every change. Frost refuses the most choices and takes an audacious path for the traveling of his life. On the other hand, if we notice to the heading "*The Road Not Taken*", we find that Frost is regretting for opting the less traveled road. His uttering the word 'sigh' also supports his decision. Other amplification of the verse is that the poet did not take any mentioned paths. Relatively, according to the heading of the poem, he has chosen the medium road, or has not selected any path for him. Frost warned the readers that they should be very careful regarding the poem as the poem is very tricky. Since the publication of his "*The Road Not Taken*", the analysis of the verse has become a matter of controversy which has led to its being stereotyped as a poem about "following his [the speaker's] instinct, choosing the road less traveled by" (Booth 1057 and Sampley 197). In fact, the multidimensional nature of literature is liable to the diversity of interpretations of the poem. Regarding the diversity of explanations, Aristotle says that history discusses what happens, but poetry discusses what may happen.

We have to face obstacles while taking a decision in our life. For the changing future, the speaker of the poem is at a crossroad regarding his choice in life. The poet uses a stunning metaphor in the poem. The metaphor is so clear that we really feel our presence in the wood. We, readers feel the fresh air and hear the rushing sound from the creamy leaves of the trees. We might even think that is the predator of this incident. This apparently simple metaphor is about standing the crossroads of one's life and a choice that might be taken. However, Frost has made us convince that setting with his graphic narration. Different endings will be produced by the selections that we are presented with. Our choices would be tougher. The poet says-

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.

The choices selected in our life are frequently last. We can not come back. The poet is confused about his choice and he expresses this with a sigh. He has chosen the less visited road because the road had been dilapidated. That is dissimilarity between two roads. Robert Frost has a courageous spirit about his choice.

The poem "*The Road Not Taken*" narrates a figure of a lonely voyager who is in confusion regarding the choice of a road in his travelling. The matter of decision making has become a subject of controversy. Many critics reveal that the poet very indecisive while describing the dissimilarity between two roads and it has made a challenge regarding the presence of a less visited road. The detraction of a less traveled path from in the poem creates an equivalence of a number of explanations for reactions. However, the explanations of the poem creates diversity to the explicator themselves. Patrick Bassett, a writer of the literary journal *The Explicator*, reveals that the poem is a mysterious poem and it expresses the mystical selections of the soul. According to Bassett, the soul will visit any place according to its wish and this random expedition of the soul is identified as independence.

Human beings believe that one can visit merely one path at a time. All the alterations in the end leave us to contemplate and astonishment. According to psychological belief, choice making has a relation to the cognitive procedure which results in the choice of credence or a sequence of achievement among several substitutions that are helpful for making a choice satisfactorily. Robert Frost wants to say in the poem that we should have to pick out our own life.

The poem deals with irony and it discusses a decision in the earth ruled by predispositions as well as restricted potentials (Faggen). Many men want to stop choosing the right path and some persons expect them to. We are compelled to take any decision by peer pressure. However, in "*The Road Not Taken*," Robert Frost hints at us that he has taken the decision himself.

At last stanza, Frost has used the word "sigh" that could really confuse individuals. The poet wants to point out that sigh may be a symbol of liberation; otherwise probably it would be a symbol of repentance. Frost would be exultant regarding his choice, or he would be remorseful for his chosen path. The poem can be analyzed in many ways. Frost never hints at anyone in the end of the poem what he wants to understand the readers with the word "sigh". He says-

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:

In fact, Robert Frost's choice is reflected in the poem. At the outset, the poet explicates what his condition was. However, at the end of the verse, the bookworm perceives that he is in the present, narrating how he feels regarding his taken choice. The poet's decision making deals with the past, present, and future condition of a man's life in the poem. He says-

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

Reiteration of "Two roads diverged" in the beginning and the final stanzas are the recap of decision making in our life. "Actually, the main theme of "*The Road Not Taken*" is to take decisions involving replacements. The theme charms us as we have to select the precise track while facing any challenge in life" (Tyagi). "*The Road Not Taken*" is a verse covers worldwide theme and delinquent" (Sumera).

Mark Richardson comments that we can feel our target only when we reach at it because our roads disclose themselves to us. "The poem analyses a unique instance of man's self-meeting and self-detachment" (Triakha). The poet points out that one's decisions define the rest of one's life. "The subject interests of everybody, as the need to pick the correct way. It is an issue regularly looked in life" (Radhika). "Robert Frost's "*The Road Not Taken*" deals with mental insinuations of repentance and uncertainty about taking decision in life" (Judkins). "Frost's verse offers the readers to overlook peer stress. We should not make a variance whenever we want to lead our simple life" (Pavani).

CONCLUSION:

Robert Frost has presented conflicts very nicely in his eminent verse "*The Road Not Taken*" through Nature. The conflict is about taking decision in human life. He has pointed out that we should continuously have the valor to select the veracious way in spite of the road being lumpy and thorny. The poem reminds us regarding the decision of life. All of us have to take a right selection while facing obstacles in life. That decision defines our fate. The poem encourages us how to cover-up the perplexing truths of life. Robert Frost has tried to inspire booklovers to defeat the fear of the mystery. He also suggests that someone should try to be the first person for achieving a new thing.

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