Critique Of The Road Not Taken Essay, Research Paper

Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken” shows the uncertainty as to which road of life a person should choose. It raises the evident question of whether it is better to choose a road in which many travel, or to choose the road less traveled and explore it yourself. In this poem the speakers tone, diction , and setting help to illustrate the struggle a person goes through in their lives to pick the right road to travel.

In the first verse of the first stanza, Frost says “Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,” which is seemingly a very important part of the poem. This line is a metaphor in which Frost uses the woods to represent life. Using this as an image helps to have a better understanding of the complexity of the problem that the speaker is facing. If you were standing at the edge of some woods you would not be able to clearly see what was ahead of you, because it would be obstructed by trees and branches. Life is like those woods because no one can clearly see or predict what will happen in the future, only hope to choose a path that will lead you to good fortune and happiness.

Another interesting part of this verse is how he describes the woods as yellow. A word that strongly helps out the imagery, helps to describe the uncertainty of the speaker, and implies that he may be scared to even choose a path. Evidently he does not want to decide upon the wrong road and mess up the rest of his life. I believe that as he stands before these two roads he is really confused and scared as to which road to pick. All he can do is look as far down each road as possible, and hope that he decides upon the right one. This is exactly what he does when he looks down the first road, at the end of the first stanza.

The second stanza starts off with the speaker talking about the other path, and how he looked just as hard, just as long, and just as fair on this path as he did the first. Meaning that he took exactly every step analyzing this road as he did the other. It is about this time when I first notice a change in the speakers tone. It becomes a little more confident, not much, but definitely less confused and scared than he was earlier. The first glimpse of this change in tone is in the eighth verse where he says, “because it{the second road} was grassy and wanted wear.” It also shows that the speaker may not want to be like everybody else, a follower, but instead choose a different road and be himself, a leader. This verse also says that the road wanted wear, like he was drawn to path not just out of his own desire to be different, but maybe out of some pity. That pity being that the road is traveled less not because it is not appealing, but that people are to afraid to be different. Verse 12 is interesting when the speaker says that, “In leaves no step had trodden black,” which I take to mean that the few people who did choose to take the road less traveled did not come across any difficulties or obstacles. He then goes on to say that , “Oh, I kept the first for another day,” as to say that it took him a long time to make his decision. Actually it may have been months or even years before the speaker chose a road. He knew that the decision he made would determine the outcome of his life, and that he would have to be devoted to the road he chose. Once he made his decision he would probably never be able to turn back.

Again in the third stanza, the speakers tone seems to change. This time his tone seems to be filled with confidence, and the confused and scared tone is gone. I believe this confidence is shown in verse eighteen, when the speaker repeats the first verse, except he leaves out the word yellow. I think he purposely left out the word yellow to show that he had gained confidence, and that he was no longer scared. I also believe that the word yellow was used to show the lapse of time between when he was first faced with the decision to the time he actually made his decision. Using this imagery, in the first stanza yellow meant the color of the trees foliage, and in the third stanza they are no longer yellow.

Also in the third stanza he says, “I shall be telling this with a sigh somewhere ages and ages hence.” I don’t believe he said this is in a negative way, as to show that he chose the wrong road. Instead I believe it helps to show that he chose the right one, and the sigh was to show that it had not been easy. It helps to show that through the years he stuck with the path he chose no matter what the situation, or how hard it was to stay on it and keep going. Finally in the last two verses the speaker tells us that he did choose the road less traveled, and that it has made all the difference. By this I believe he meant that since he decided to be different it lead him on the road to a good life. One that was full of confidence, happiness, and independence.

After you read this poem you realize that below the middle diction and simplistic look that the poem is actually very deep. It supplies us with a situation that each person has to face at least once in their life. That situation being that each person has to struggle to try and put their life on the right road. The road which leads them to what they believe to be happiness.