The Road Not Taken – R. Frost Essay, Research Paper

Who Needs Directions?

In his poem “The Road Not Taken” Frost’s theme is about how the choices one makes affect life. When we come to a fork in the road, a decision needs to be made. Both paths are different and choosing the right one if there is a right one will depend on where we have been. Each choice that we make plays out differently in our lives. We can look back and wonder what would have happened if we choose differently. But that is outweighed in what we would have missed. Each choice affects who we are, where we are going, and moreover our lives.

The persona had two roads to chose from and wonders what would have happened had he taken the other road. Frost s title reflects this. The first three lines, “Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, / And sorry I could not travel both /And be one traveler, long I stood”, tell us the speaker must choose between two roads he finds equally appealing. It is apparent the narrator has a difficult choice to make and is carefully considering his options.

In the first stanza, the emphasis is on the road that was not traveled. The persona wants to travel both roads, but he cannot and be one traveler. There is a strong sense of wonder before the choice is made because he knows that in one lifetime he cannot travel down every road. And that at this point in time one of the roads must be chosen.

After the choice of roads is described and considered, Frost writes “Oh, I kept the first for another day! /Yet knowing how way leads on to way, /I doubted if I should ever come back.” This is where the narrator makes his choice. Here, he knows he is bound by that choice. He wants to hold on to the other possibility, but knows this cannot be. His choice becomes the road taken. The choice he did not make, becomes “The Road Not Taken.” He takes the other road that is grassy and wanted wear. The road he chooses has a better claim, because it is the road that is less traveled on. By taking this road, a clue to his personality is revealed. He is the type of person that wants to try something new and different. He makes the choice based on who he is and what choices he has made in the past. Knowing that this choice will again change his life and bring him new experiences.

In the third stanza, the image of the leaves that cover the ground have not been stepped on and no step had trodden black, indicates that no one has walked down the road since the leaves have fallen, therefore describing a road not traveled. That path does not fit who he is at this juncture in life. I kept the first for another day, relates to his desire to travel down both paths. knowing how way leads on to way, means that he is aware that all future life choices will be affected because of the road he chooses to travel. In this stanza he realizes that once his decision is made there is no turning back. With the sigh that he makes, it might seem that he is unhappy with his decision, he is not. I took the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference, means that he does not regret choosing the less traveled road because if he had not, he would not have had the life experiences that he did. The choice that he has made allows him the freedom and the ability to see that it was a good choice at that instance in time.

This poem is about choices: because of our inability to take two paths at once. But more than that, it is about the choices one makes at a certain point in their life. The experiences that they have gained from pervious choices brings them to this choice, as this will lead to many other choices. “The Road Not taken” gives us insight to and reflects this theme. It is a reminder that one decision in life can change everything.