

Date 11 / 23 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / LyricTitle "The Road Not Taken"Author / Director / Robert Frost

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I have obviously heard about this poem and have read it many times, and, while browsing Shmoop, it came to my attention that I should do a log on it.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc?)

"The Road Not Taken" is about a speaker who has come to a fork in the road, and he or she does not know which path to take. The speaker wishes that he or she can take both roads but decides to take the one that looks less travelled after observing both of them, though "the passing there / Had worn them really about the same." After taking this path, the speaker wonders whether one day he or she will be able to return and to explore the other path; however, he or she doubts it will ever happen. Rather, he or she will continue on the same path because it will have "made all the difference."

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

"The Road Not Taken" revolves around the concept and importance of choice, and the fact of its inevitability and consequences. Life is full of so many choices, oftentimes ones that are blind and could lead to unexpected results; nevertheless, when a decision comes along, a choice must be made. Moreover, the choice that someone makes is very important and needs to be considered because it directly affects the rest of a person's life. Once a choice is made then there is no turning back, and even more choices and decisions arise that complicate the ability to choose the other path. Many people believe that "The Road Not Taken" is more of a poem about seizing the day and being a nonconformist, inspiring people to venture out of their comfort zones and to explore new things. However, even the speaker claims that both paths were just as equal, making this "seize the day" theory simply an assumption. Thus, the poem is predominantly about discernment and making the correct choices so that a person's life is ultimately changed for the better. Decisions remain with people forever.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"The Road Not Taken" contains four stanzas of five lines each (quintains), each with the rhyme scheme ABAAB. It is written in iambic tetrameter (4 iambs per line) for the most part, but the rhythm often departs from this basic scheme. In terms of symbolism, the two seemingly equal diverging roads obviously represent the many tough choices that humans are faced with throughout their lives.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

"The Road Not Taken" is quite intriguing because it is again one of those poems that has a meaning that is different from what it outwardly appears. The one thing that is a little bit hazy is the fact that the speaker chooses a path, or makes a decision, that is influenced by direct choice but mostly by chance, considering the paths are relatively equal in his or her perception. When critically evaluating this past choice, he seems to believe that his choice was the one that is not made by most, and it is ambiguous as to whether he is satisfied with this unique decision or if he isn't. By making the choice he did, he completely led a life different than he otherwise might have, and this small difference made a huge difference later. However, the interpretation of whether he preferred his choice or not is left unclear. This poem somewhat relates to the choices made by Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. While pursuing superior knowledge about the world, he makes some decisions that he regrets for the rest of his life, but these choices only further his ability to discern and make better choices in the future. For example, although making a female monster for his creation would cause his tormenting to cease, he anticipates the results that a new creation would have for the rest of humanity. He chooses to destroy this new creation in its process of being made; however, he will never be able to know which choice would have been the best. This poem is poetic because it speaks to the very heart of human nature. People, even after much discernment, are bound to make wrong decisions in their lives, but it is through these decisions and the consequences that they invoke that people should be able to learn to choose wisely, even in ambiguous situations. Life is ultimately a gigantic learning process.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)