



AN ANALYSIS OF ROBERT FROST'S POEM: "THE ROAD NOT TAKEN"

Ankit Tyagi

(PhD Scholar, SRM University, Sonepat)



ABSTRACT

Robert frost is one of the supercalifragilisticexpialidocious American poets of 20th century. He won four Pulitzer prizes during his life time. He gained lot of popularity not only in England but also in whole Europe. His poetry dealt with elements of nature, personal and social aspect of human beings. His themes are very inspirational and innovative. The aim of this paper is to analyze Robert Frost's poem "The Road not taken". This analysis is helpful in understanding the basic concept of poem that presents a contrast between right and wrong choices in life.

Article Info:

Article Received 07/9/2015

Revised on: 27/09/2015

Accepted on: 15/10/2015

Keywords: *Style, Symplicity, Methaphor, Desicion, Life.*

Citation:

APA Tyagi,A.(2015).An Analysis of rober Frost's Poem:The Road Not Taken.*Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature- JOELL*, 2(4), 66-68.

MLA Tyagi Ankit. "An Analysis of rober Frost's Poem: The Road Not Taken."*Veda's journal of English Language and Literature-JOELL* 2.4 (2015):66-68.

© Copyright VEDA Publication

INTRODUCTION



Robert Frost is one of the most popular and honored poet of America. His poem reflects his broad outlook and realistic approach. The poem "The Road not taken" is written by Robert Frost and is one of the prettiest poems in the English language. "The Road Not Taken" is basically a lyric of four stanzas of five lines each, and every line has somewhere around eight and ten syllables in a roughly iambic rhythm; the lines in each stanza rhyme in an abaab pattern. The popularity of the poem is largely a result of the simplicity of its symbolism. In the book, 'Linguistic Guild to English Poetry', Leech differentiates poetic language with common language. He writes —poetic language may violate or deviate from the generally observed rules of the language in many different ways, some obvious, some subtle. (Leech,1969).

Frost wrote the poem in the first person, which brings up the issue of whether the speaker is the poet himself or a persona, a character created for the purposes of the poem. According to the Lawrance Thompson biography, *Robert Frost: The Years of Triumph* (1971), Frost would often introduce the poem in public readings by saying that the speaker was based on his Welsh friend Edward Thomas. In Frost's words, Thomas was "a person who, whichever road he went, would be sorry he didn't go the other."

TITLE OF THE POEM

The title of the poem is the key to its understanding. The road not taken is a suitable title as the whole poem circles around it. We can justify the title in two ways. If the title is "The Road Less Travelled", it means that the poet selects the less frequented road and that has made all difference. He rejects the majority of choice and chooses an adventurous road for journey of his life. But if we focus on the title "The Road Not Taken" it means that the poet is repenting on why he has opted the less frequented road. The poet justifies his decision by saying "I will be saying this with a sigh" also supports this.

Another interpretation of the poem is that Robert Frost had not taken any of the stated roads. Rather, he selects the middle path or does not choose any road for him as the title of the poem suggests. Frost himself warned "You have to be careful of that one; it's a tricky poem —very tricky".

The fact is that there may be many interpretations of the title due to the multidimensional nature of literature. According to Aristotle history deals with what happens, but poetry deals with what may happen.

STYLE OF THE POEM

The style of Robert Frost in 'The Road not Taken' is based on a search for understanding of things that are apparently hidden from the view. The selection of roads is a simple matter but the poet does not know where his selection leads him in future. Frost uses the simple words and phrases but through irony, antithesis, symbolism and metaphors, the poem takes the deeper meaning. The ordinary meanings of the poem are different from the intended meanings. This ambiguity gives a sense of mystery to Robert Frost's work that is difficult to find in ordinary works of literature.

METAPHOR

We know from the start that the poem is a metaphor, however, that metaphor is so realistic that we feel we are really remaining there. We can feel the freshness of the atmosphere and perhaps even hear the rustling of the yellow leaves on the trees. We might even feel that this event is actually happening to us. This ostensibly simple metaphor is only saying that the traveler came to a place where two roads figuratively diverged and he had to choose one or the other. However, Frost makes the reader see and feel that setting by his detailed description. For example:

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

ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

Frost's poems create a memorable and pulchritudinous impression by the overwhelming presence of nature. In his poetry, we find a skilful combination of outer lightness and inner gravity. Frost is of the view that a poem begins in delight and ends with a wise idea.

The poem revolves around the main theme of making choice in the life. The poet in the poem is travelling and comes at the spot from where road is divided into two. Here he has to decide which path he has to adopt for travelling for future of his life. He was confused at this point and it is difficult for him to decide. The destination of both the roads is unknown. But the poet has to choose one of them as he cannot travel on both the roads at a time. He



looks down on one road, as far as he can to where it bends in a dense growth of shrubs. Then he looks at the other road which is as fair as the first one. Perhaps it has a better claim because it is grassy and it needs to be used.

That particular morning both the roads are unused. Both the paths are covered by leaves. They are still in yellow color. It indicates that nobody has used the roads up to that time. The poet wants to take the first road on another day. He comes to the decision of taking the second road which is less trodden path. He will save the other road for another day. He observes, however, that he probably will never pass this way again and thus will never have an opportunity to take the other road.

The decisions taken in life are often final. There is no turning back. The poet tells this with a sigh that what will happen later with his choice. He has selected the road which is less travelled. That is the difference between the first road and second road. There is an adventurous spirit in his decision.

Actually, The Road not taken speaks of how we are often forced to make decisions involving alternatives. The theme appeals to everyone, as the need to choose the right path. It is a problem often faced in life. There are two roads that lead away from a common point. The person standing at the junction is in a dilemma whether to go by this road or that road. Though the roads appear to be attractive, the traveler has to take a decision.

The poem goes through the past, present, and future about Frost's decision.

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

The repetition of "Two roads diverged" in the first and the last stanzas is the reminder of the opportunity to decide and to make a choice. In the last stanza the speaker has left the fork in life's journey and is looking back on it. Nobody knows where the road not taken might have led, but I think we can all be glad the poet didn't take it.

As Mark Richardson writes, "Our paths unfold themselves to us as we go. We realize our destination only when we arrive at it, though all along we were driven towards it by purposes we may rightly claim, in retrospect, as our own" (182). "A

close analysis of the poem reveals that it stands not only for his courage to be oneself, but also presents an unique example of man's self-encounter and self-division" (Triakha 113). Robert Frost shows how a person's everyday decisions determine the rest of his life. Frost's poem invites us to forget peer pressure. If we choose to lead our life simply like other people, we will never permit ourselves to make a difference. If we want success than we must abstain from amiss path.

CONCLUSION

Frost displays a greater variety of shades and textures in his perception of nature. His method is economical and his tone is much less impassioned. He often feels a close kinship with nature verging on warm friendliness. He is not overwhelmed though he is aware of the magic pull of nature. He tests his courage and human worth when nature poses a challenge to his manhood. He is conscious of the tensions not only between man and nature, but also between natural objects themselves, tensions which constitute the very process of nature. Nina Bayn writes, "Frost is interested in human truth in nature; yet such truth need not be transcendental."

Montgomery has rightly observed that Frost's poetry is concerned with the drama of man in nature. Prof. Trilling has called Frost "a Terrifying poet" while Robert Graves has called him "a Master poet"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By the divine of God I completed this article. I am deeply indebted to my teachers and parents for their encouragement and guidance in completion of this article.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Adejare, O. Language and Style in Soyinka: A systematic Text and Linguistic Study of Literary Dialect. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books. 1992
- [2]. Charles B. "The Hidden Terror of Robert Frost". The English Journal 58.8
- [3]. Leech, G. A linguistic guide to English Poetry, London: Longman. 1969.
- [4]. Nitche, 'Human values in the poetry of Robert Frost' Durham, N C: Duke University press 1961.
- [5]. Sumera ,Batool, et al "Stylistic Analysis of Rober Frost's Poem: The Road Not Taken" *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics (JEL TAL)* 2.4 (2014):52-64
- [6]. William Delaney, "Inside a methaphor" <http://www.enotes.com/>