

The first two lines of frost's poem goes literature review

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



All of us go through life with our own individual journeys. The path that we take is often dependent on every single decision that we make through our journey. Often, we look back through our life what might have been if we have followed a different path. But we often realize that there are no “undo” buttons in real life. There is simply no going back. Once we have made a certain decision, we cannot do anything but stick with that decision and make the most of the decision we have made.

Our journey through life has often been depicted in several literary works. It may be a poem, an essay, a short story, a drama, or a play. And, although they depict various types of journeys, they all teach us something about life and how we live through it.

Two famous literary works that illustrate our journey through life are Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken” and Jean Rhys’s “I Used To Live Here Once”. While these two literary works were written in different forms, they do contain several commonalities, especially in what they portray about the characteristic of one’s journey in life. Essentially, the two literary works reveal that the path through life involves different choices and struggles, and that once we have made a choice, there is no going back. Jean Rhys’ “I Used To Live Here Once” Frost and Rhys used symbolisms or imagery when they talk about life’s journey.

Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken” talks about a man who has reached a crossroad in his life. One of the paths is pretty worn out since a lot of people have travelled on it while the other path is very rarely travelled. He had to make a choice: whether he will go to where most of the people go, or just

follow the path where very few people go. And although he was unsure of what the two roads lead to, he decided to take the path less travelled, which led to where he was today.

“ Two roads diverged in a yellow wood

And sorry I could not travel both” (Frost, 2011)

This road symbolizes the decisions that we have to make through life. Some roads would be difficult as these lines imply:

And be one traveller, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

Undergrowth is “ low growth on the forest including seedlings and saplings, shrubs, and herbs” (Miriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011). When a road has developed undergrowth, it just means that it has not been trodden for a long time. However, the road here is still easy to follow because the traveler can still look down it as far as he could. Hence, this is probably the easier road. This symbolizes the road where most people go because the way is still obvious.

Then there is the more difficult path:

“ And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear” (Frost, 2011)

This path represents the more difficult paths or obstacles that we meet in life the path that only a few people choose because the way is hard to figure out and is difficult to go through.

Now, Frost implies in his poem that we have the option to choose either a harder life or an easier life. Of course these two roads may have their own set of challenges and difficulties, but the other is harder than the other. And we can only choose one. This was implied in the line, " And sorry, I could not travel both" (Frost, 2011).

Rhys' " I Used To Live Here Once" also used imagery or symbols to represent both the easy and difficult paths or decisions that we may go through life. Instead of using two roads, she used two stones:

" There was the round unsteady stone, the pointed one, the flat one in the middle - the safe stone where you could stand and look around. The next wasn't so safe for when the river was full the water flowed over it and even when it showed dry it was slippery" (Rhys, 1998).

The safe stone represents the period in our life where we feel safe because the stone that we are standing on has a " flat" portion in the middle where we can just go around through life without being harmed. This might represent our childhood days when we are still sheltered from our parents' protection. At this time in our lives, we rarely deal with the difficulties of life because our parents are there to work them through for us.

The slippery stone represents the more difficult life that we have to experience in life. This may happen as we grow up and start to move away

from the protection of our parents. “ When the river was full” represents the time when we reached adulthood and we have to rely on ourselves for survival. “ The water flowed over it” may represent the overflow of problems that we will experience through life that we need to survive. The stone also showed dry when it was slippery. This indicates the times in life when we think that all is going smoothly with our lives, but we do not see the underlying problems that are hidden beneath our happy lives. This might lead us to slip and fall through a river of problems.

Now, Frost stressed more on the idea that we have the option to choose a harder over an easier life and vice versa. Rhys’ short story, however, implies that the easier and difficult part of lives come by one after the other. They are inevitable. “ There was the round steady stone the next wasn’t so safe” (Rhys, 1998).

Another point that the two literary works have in common is their emphasis on the fact that we can never really go back through life and change the events that happened.

In Frost’s poem, it was written:

“ Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back” (Frost, 2011)

In these lines, the traveler was thinking about going back and following the other path someday. But he is quite unsure that this will ever happen since one way leads to another. This implies that we cannot really go back to our life's journey and change the way things happened. Every decision we make leads us to another place and gets us farther from the starting point of our journey. It will actually lead us to more crossroads, and to more major decisions, and we can never undo the things that happened as a result of our decisions.

A similar analogy of life was represented in Rhys' short story. As the woman walked towards the house that she used to live in, she noticed several changes along the way. She noticed that " the road was much wider than it used to be", that " the old pave had been taken up", that " the screw pine was gone, so was the mock summer house called the ajoupa", that " a house had been added and painted white" and that " it was strange to see a car standing in front of it" (Rhys, 1998).

All these changes that the woman saw when she went back indicate how she can never really go back to the place that she knew. In life, there is no such thing as permanent. A lot of things will change. As Isaac Asimov says, " The only constant is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is dominant in society today" (Asimov, 2011).

However through the changes that happen in our life's journey, there would be things that will still be there. This is represented by a few phrases in Rhys' story: The road was much wider, but it had the same unfinished look", and "

the clove tree was still there and at the top of the steps the rough lawn stretched away, just as she remembered it" (Rhys, 1998).

In real life, there are some things that we cannot change. This may be the persons that have played significant roles in our lives or this may be the experiences that we have had. We cannot change our parents, siblings, childhood friends, and teachers. Neither can we change our life experiences. As we go through life, these will serve as our guide posts because whenever we look back on our journey, they will appear in our memories just as we remembered them.

Another representation of the fact that we cannot go back and change our journey is when the woman tried to say "hello" to the children three times and they never responded. And then, "His gray eyes looked straight into hers. His expression didn't change. He said, 'Hasn't it gone cold all of a sudden. D'you notice? Let's go in That was the first time she knew'" (Rhys, 1998).

This would mean that after all these, the woman realized that she is actually dead - that is why the boy and girl did not respond to her. In reality, death means that you can never go back through life again and change the things that you have done.

Frost and Rhys also had similarities on overcoming life's difficult situations. In the last stanza of Frost's poem, he says:

"I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--

I took the one less travelled by

And that has made all the difference" (Frost, 2011)

In Frost's last stanza of " The Road Not Taken", he implies the satisfaction that he is feeling by choosing the road less travelled or the more difficult path. This is represented with the " sigh" that he makes whenever he shares his life's journey to others. This may mean that taking the more difficult path will bring you to success.

Frost did not actually mention that the road less travelled is the road to take that will lead you to success. He just said that taking the road less travelled has made all the difference. This further implies that no matter what path you choose in life, it will lead you to a whole different end.

Most people, however, especially businessmen use Frost's poem to stress that taking the road less travelled will lead to success. This would equate to taking chances at the more difficult challenges of life, or choosing to work harder than anybody else. A lot of people have said that working harder brings greater success. For example, Thomas Jefferson once said, " I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it" (ThinkExist. com). This is Frost's meaning of taking the road less travelled.

In Rhys's "I Used To Live Here Once", she represented the overcoming of life's struggles through imagery. She said that after passing through the safe and slippery stone, "it was easy and soon she was standing on the other side." This signifies that if we are brave enough to overcome the hurdles and challenges in life, there will come a time when life will be a whole lot better. When we look back at our life's journey, every difficult step that we have once experienced suddenly becomes easier than we have thought. The complex things in life become simpler than we have thought.

Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and Rhys' "I Used To Live Here Once" were written in different forms and style. One writer communicated his idea of one's journey through a poem, one through a short story. However, both worked to their purpose.

Frost and Rhys have a lot of personal differences that have an immense effect on the work that they write. For one thing, Frost is an American man and Rhys is a Dominican woman. And although they both lived on the same decade, they have a whole different set of experiences to draw through their literary pieces. However, both underwent a lot of difficulties in life. Frost suffered several losses in his family, including the death of his son, his sister and his two daughters (Merriman, 1996). Rhys, on the other hand, experienced a difficult life. She was a "truly a woman without a country" (Wilson, 1989). She felt alienated and exiled since "she was a descendant of white colonizers, but as a woman, colonized and excluded by the patriarchy's language" (Wilson, 1989).

There are a countless more of the differences and similarities between Frost and Rhys, but they both understood that in life, there would be difficulties and obstacles, that there will be crossroads and slippery stones. But in the end, if you are strong enough to face these challenges in life and have a steadfast mind to make good decision, triumph will always prevail.

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