

# Comparing robert frost's poems: the road not taken and a question essay



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The two popular poems by Robert Frost - The Road not Taken and A Question - focus on experiences and hardships that a person should undergo before a decision is made. Although they rely on the problem of difficult choices, they are a number of differences in their viewpoints on philosophical conception of life. In particular, The Road not Taken focuses on the events that influenced the narrator's choice and provided the rationale for his actions.

In contrast, A Question deliberates on what has already been done. Specific attention requires the question about the value of death and life, as well as about the reflection on previous experience. Hence, the leading aspects and themes discussed in both poems are associated with the difficulties in decision-making, influence of life experience on the choices, and consequences of our actions. All these themes are represented from the viewpoint of the narrator who is concerned with the problems of being.

The structure and size of the poems differ significantly. In particular, The Road not Taken is a four-stanza poem with five lines each. The rhythmic pattern is iambic tetrameter which coincides the ABAAB scheme. Rhymes are masculine and straight, except for the last line where the stress is put on the last syllable.

A Question has only one stanza with four lines, but it also has iambic structure. Although the poems are from different collections, they indicate similar features in terms of themes, characters, and philosophical outlooks on life. Biographical features in both verses are explicitly illustrated.

Although the author focuses on natural phenomena, most of subjects relate to the human feelings, experiences, and emotions.

Description of life experience is, probably, at the core of all literary works introduced by Frost. According to Bloom, " Frost's verse is often so apparently paraphrasable as to seem the précis for some short story: a domination of plot that takes up the slack seemingly left by an overly straightforward, honey, and blunt language" (87-88). Presence of metaphysical elements, as well as reflection on the sense of existence, is also associated with autobiographical features of Frost' poetic work.

Decision-making is, apparently, the prevailing theme in Frosts' poem because both literary pieces focus on this issue. The problem is highlighted almost in similar figurative manner because Frost refers to the ideas of decision-making through representations of metaphorical comparisons. Thus, in the first poem, the author compares choices with paths in the forest: " Two roads diverged in a yellow wood/And sorry I could not travel both" (The Road not Taken 9).

While interpreting this, the author assumes that an individual cannot made two opposite decisions, just as it is impossible to take roads simultaneously. Similar to this poem, A Question also relies on metaphorical comparisons while deliberating on the matter of choice: "...tell me truly...if all the soul-and-body scars were too much to pay for the birth" (A Question 45). In the passage, the author compares " soul-and-body scares" with the consequences of the decisions that people made during their lives.

Influence of life experience on people's choice is also brightly demonstrated in both verses, but at different angles. In particular, both poems refer to such feelings as regret and frustration while questioning the outcomes of the choices made. At the end of *The Road not Taken*, Frost makes use of the word "sign" to render his disappointment with the decision he made in life: "I shall be telling this with a sigh/...I Two roads diverged in a wood and I - I took the one less traveled by" (9).

At the same time, negative experience is interpreted in the second poem, in which the poet compares human knowledge with "soul-and-body scars" that should be paid off. With regard to these metaphorical interpretations, it should be assumed that both verses unveil the author's viewpoint on the concept of life, in which experience defines the goals of human existence. It also creates understanding of what role free will and fate play on our lives.

Consequences of our actions shape our future. Frost refers to human lives with irony because all our decisions are largely limited by the existence of choices in front of our paths. In the majority of cases, people are under the influence of circumstances that make them choose the path they go.

Nevertheless, Frost constantly questions the inevitability of the choices made and justifies the chosen solutions in life. At the same time, he thinks that people are not the only ones to blame in their searching. In particular, there are other supernatural powers that do not depend on circumstances created by humans. In both poems, external powers are represented, but in different capacities.

In conclusion, Frost's verses analyze the role of decision making in human lives, as well as how it is affected by personal wisdom and external circumstances. Although both novels relate to different epistemological dimensions, they discover such problems as the matter of choice, importance of life experience, and consequences of human actions. While investigating these topics, the emphasis has been placed on literary devices that the author employs, including metaphors and irony.

Frost, Robert. "A Question". *A Witness Tree*. Robert Frost. US: J. Cape. 1943. 45. Print.

Frost, Robert. "The Road not Taken" *Mountain Interval*. Robert Frost. US: Henry Holt, 1916. 9. Print.

Bloom, Harold. *Robert Frost*. US: Infobase Publishing, 2003. Print.