
**THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF “THE ROAD NOT TAKEN” BY ROBERT
FROST**

I Wayan Indrayana

email: sendruw666@gmail.com

Program Studi Sastra Inggris Fakultas Sastra dan Budaya Unud

Abstrak

Robert Frost adalah seorang penyair yang sangat populer, bahkan bisa disebut super populer, dan, puisi-puisinya yang dibuatnya nya sangat baik. Pada akhir hidupnya ia mencapai status yang disebut legenda hidup. Dalam puisinya yang berjudul The Road Not Taken, diceritakan ada seorang yang melakukan perjalanan berdiri di hutan, mempertimbangkan suatu persimpangan jalan. Kedua jalan tersebut sama-sama dan sama-sama terpakai dan tertutup oleh dedaunan yang tidak terinjak-injak. Ia memilih salah satu jalan dan berkata pada dirinya sendiri bahwa ia akan mengambil jalan yang satunya lagi pada suatu hari kelak. Ia tahu bahwa tidak mungkin ia akan memiliki kesempatan lagi untuk melakukannya. Ia menegaskan bahwa ia telah mengambil jalan yang jarang dilalui. Ada dua teori utama yang diadopsi dalam penelitian ini. Pertama adalah Knickerbocker dan Reninger (1955: 309) yang menyatakan bahwa sebagai langkah pertama dalam memahami puisi, akan sangat membantu untuk membuat parafrase arti yang sederhana. Arti dari setiap bagian dari puisi bisa membantu untuk menentukan makna isi puisi tersebut secara keseluruhan, dan pada akhirnya seluruh isi puisi akan membantu menentukan arti dari masing-masing bagian. Dan yang kedua adalah teori dari Wellek dan Warren tentang pendekatan biografi untuk menemukan hubungan antara kehidupan nyata dari para penyair dengan isi cerita yang mereka katakan dalam puisi mereka.

Melalui puisi ini, Frost sedang berbicara kepada orang-orang tentang kehidupan yang unik dalam kehidupan manusia di mana setiap hari mereka dihadapkan dengan suatu keputusan yang harus dilakukan. Mereka menimbang pilihan mereka dan mencoba untuk memprediksi apa hasil dari keputusan tersebut. Sayangnya, mereka tidak bisa memprediksi masa depan. Mereka melihat ke bawah ada satu jalan yang harus dipilih sejauh mana mereka dapat memprediksi apa yang terjadi setelah menempuh jalan tersebut, namun akan selalu ada bermacam-macam hal yang selalu mencegah kita untuk terlalu jauh melihat ke masa depan. Jadi sulit atau mudahnya dalam hidup manusia, tergantung pada pilihan yang telah dibuat.

Kata kunci: persimpangan, prediksi, keputusan

1. Background of Study

Knickerboker & Reninger, (1963; 307) says that “poetry is the hymn of praise”. Good talk about poetry is nevertheless rare and even the best of it will rest on fallow ground until we ourselves have learned how to penetrate the inner life of a few poem”. Poem is a medium not only to express the feeling of the poets but also to make us enter into these feelings about the things, persons, situations or ideas in the poem. Poetry is

able to give entertainment, satisfaction, pleasure and enjoyment to the reader. This is because there is great difference between language in a poem and our daily language, in that poetic language is stylized with aesthetic or artistic effect.

Actually there are a lot of things that can be talked about poetry. But in this article the figurative language of poetry is focused on. Figurative language is sometimes called metaphorical language or simply metaphor because its Greek ancestor “metaphoric” means to carry meaning beyond its literal meaning (Knickerbocker, 1955:637)

Frost is a poet who is very, very popular, even superstar popular, and, his poems are very good. By the end of his life he achieved the iconic status of living legend. His *The Road Not Taken* explains that the speaker stands in the woods, considering a fork in the road. Both ways are equally worn and equally overlaid with un-trodden leaves. The speaker chooses one, telling himself that he will take the other another day. He knows that it is unlikely that he will have the opportunity to do so. And he admits that someday in the future he will recreate the scene with a slight twist: He will claim that he took the less-travelled road.

2. Problem of the Study

In this study, Robert Frost’s poem was analysed. The title of the poem is *The Road not Taken the*. His poem, entitled *The Road Not Taken* explained that the speaker stood in the woods, considering a fork in the road. Both ways were equally worn and equally overlaid with un-trodden leaves. The speaker chose one, telling himself that he would take the other another day. He knew that it was unlikely that he would have the opportunity to do so. And he admitted that someday in the future he would recreate the scene with a slight twist: He would claim that he took the less-travelled road.

Based on the background mentioned above, some problems could be formulated as follows:

1. What metaphorical meanings are found in Robert Frost’s *The Road Not Taken*?

2. What is the meaning of the metaphorical words of the poem?

3. Aims of the Study

Based on the problems formulated above, there are three aims to be achieved in this article. They are as follows:

1. To identify and describe the metaphorical meanings which are found in Robert Frost's poems
2. To analyse the meaning of metaphorical word used in the poem.
3. The last is an academic aim that is to apply the theory of literature studied in the English Department and to give contribution to this department, so this article writing can be used as reference for the student who takes the same topics.

4. Research Method

A method is a systematic procedure in analysing an object of research in accordance with the approach being used. There are three aspects of the research in this study; they consist of data source, data collection and data analysis.

4.1. Data Source

In this article the source of the primary data were taken from the website through internet. The poem used as data source was *The Road Not Taken* written by Robert Frost (http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/robert_frost/poems/528.)

This poem was chosen as a data source because the poem was constructed by the various elements which were very interesting to learn.

4.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data were collected through reading the story intensively and noting down all the information relevant to the poem then the data were identified in

accordance with their type then they were descriptively presented. They were several types of collecting data:

1. Reading the poem carefully, selecting and taking note the selected items based on the related topic
2. The metaphorical meaning of the three characters was to be found out.

4.3. Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The analysis correlates to the problems that were formulated. The method for analysing the data was descriptive. The data were collected from the data source and through the data collection, it was analysed by using the theory of Smith, Sybille entitled *Inside Poetry* (1985) and a theory proposed by Knickerboker & Reninger, entitled *Interpreting Literature* (1963)

5. Analysis

The poem entitled *The Road Not Taken* talks about a traveller who is walking in the woods and has come upon two roads. Both ways are equally worn and equally overlaid with un-trodden leaves. The traveller cannot choose both of the roads and he must make a decision which one to walk. He evaluates both of the roads and chooses the road less travelled realizing that he would probably never come back. This poem stated that the traveller "took the one (road) less travelled by, and that has made all the difference". (Line 20)

The Road Not Taken means that people do not always take the "easy way" or the short cut. If a chance is given, taking the hard way will work better in the long run. This is an interesting poem. After reading and studying the poem, the first two lines in the last stanza can be seen that basically they say that, years and years from now I will look back on this choice and sigh (I shall be telling this with a sigh-Somewhere ages and ages hence: Line 16-17). When he looks back and says that it has made all the difference, he is not saying good or bad, this choice, like many others, made a big difference in his life one day.

Whether it was a good or bad ending is left out on purpose, the point is that one's decision, for examples, to continue studying at the university or not, marries or not can affect the rest of his or her life. Just as in life nobody can know what would have happen if they made a different decision at a critical point.

The whole poem is about choices, hard or easy, what your life is depends on the choices you have made.

The literal meaning of this poem by Robert Frost is quite obvious. A traveller comes to a fork in the road and needs to decide which way to go to continue his journey. After much inner conflict, the traveller picks the road "less traveled by."

The metaphorical meaning is not too hidden either. From the poem, the metaphorical meaning found is the title of the poem *The Road Not Taken*, it symbolizes a person's life and two roads diverged in a yellow wood (Line 2) means the decision to two diverging roads. The traveller anticipates his own future insincerity he needs, later on in life. In fact, he predicts that his own future will be giving up this moment of decision. The traveller took the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference. Rather, he may say this, but he will sigh first; for he won't believe to himself. Somewhere in his mind, it remains the image of yellow woods and two equally leafy paths.

And I shall be telling this with a sigh / somewhere ages and ages hence (Line 16-17), these lines are ironical, because the traveller knows that he will tell the odd story with a sign of choice that made all the differences. The poem describes the difficult choices people stand for when traveling the road of life. The words "sorry" and "sigh" make the tone of poem gloomy. The traveller regrets leaves the possibilities of the road not chosen behind. He realizes he probably will not pass this way again.

6. Conclusion

Through this poem, Frost is speaking to the unique path people all travel in life. Every day they are faced with decisions. They weigh their options and try to predict what the outcome of a decision might be. Unfortunately, they cannot predict the future. They look down one path as far as they can "to where it bends

in the undergrowth". or as far as they can predict however there will always be variables preventing us from seeing too far into the future.

The whole poem is about choices, hard or easy, what in life depends on the choices one has made.

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