

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS ON
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN KIND AND LIFE
THROUGH ROBERT FROST'S THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

This study focuses on Robert Frost's poem The Road Not Taken. The writer tries to evaluate the relationship between human kind and life through it. To understand the meaning of the poem, the writer cannot escape from its content and form since a poem is a special genre of literary works.

In poetry, perhaps more than in any other kind of literature, the content and the form are combined to achieve the total effect: they are inseparable elements and intensify to each other. (Lee/Gura, 1982: 323).

Here, the writer would like to present the analysis on Frost's The Road Not Taken. First of all, let's see and read the poem well in the following:

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN¹⁾
Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

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1) From Collected Poems of R. Frost. Copyright, 1930, 1939, by Henry Holt and Comp, Inc. Copyright, 1936, by R. Frost.

but you should not paraphrase the poem or worry about the meaning of individual words. The detailed meaning may be written as a continuous paragraph, but you must take every care to be accurate and to express yourself in a simple sentences. (Kennedy, 1971: 6).

In stanza one, we see there are two roads which have different directions into the yellow woods. The woods is like the world that a man lives in, and the road represents the way of life. A man should take a way of life. Those who undergo is called traveler in life just like in the poem. However, in the poem, the traveler doubts about which road to choose because in life, especially in the 20th century, many new things being invented as a sign of the development of thinking. The first road bends in the undergrowth. It symbolizes the invisible future.

In stanza two, the traveler tries to see another road meaning another choice. He does comparison. It seems to be similar as the first one but gives more hope as it is grassy and wanted-wear or full of challenge.

The situation of the society background at that time is reflected in the poem. Stanza three describes the confusion of the people when they had to choose one direction of their lives. The traveler in the poem

chooses the second road that is full of challenge though he does not know exactly what its consequences, as stated on line 14. He wonders if he could come back and start to choose the first road after taking the second one. However, this seems to be impossible to do due to the time and age.

Finally, the last stanza describes the confirmation of the traveler to himself that he chooses the less-traveled road, which is, according to him, full of challenge and originality. He thinks, if he had chosen the first road, the condition of his life might have been different from what he was at that time. This is what is meant by the last line of stanza four. Life of each person will be different from others due to their different ways of life.

It is clear there is a description of a walk in a wood in autumn which the poet, for his own reasons, wishes us to know about. However, Frost's poem, like others', is not in literal level only but also philosophical as stated above. We, as readers, can interpret it more than what is simply written down and to rightly have different vision and interpretation with the poet. "But our problem as readers is not primarily to say just what was the poet's intention; we must try to be clear

about what the experience of the poem is for us. If the poem implies for us something other, and something more, than the incident described, that implication is an important part of our experience. (Doubleday, 1949: 351). In this case, the text of poetry is productive.

It is described that the traveler is faced to two roads which he has to take one only. He eventually chooses the road less traveled, meaning that he chooses the less popular but more adventurous one. In this case, his choice has determined his entire future life. The problems occur when the roads seem the same but he has to make one choice between the two. That makes him fall into a precarious situation. He, however, is sure that the road he has taken is the less traveled one.

IV.1. Philosophical Analysis.

In analyzing the relationship between human-kind and life through the poem, the writer applies philosophical and mimetic theories. Firstly, the writer is going to analyze it through the point of view of philosophy. Iqbal states: "Poetry, in its own words, is a pure philosophical light and complete knowledge; its purpose is to help human kind in struggle against all meanness by appealing to the best elements of its (human's) nature. (Maitre,

1993: 77). So, here Iqbal implies that fundamentally poetry is a philosophical work, the real one, that helps human kind understand its abilities and weakness in order to be a wise guy.

Philosophically, human kind in the world (which constitutes its life) is actually a traveler who goes achieving his aims namely to achieve the best in life. To achieve it, he has, forcibly or voluntarily, to take one way of life.

The philosophical theory here, refers to transcendentalism. Transcendentalism is any various philosophies that propose to discover the nature of reality by investigating the process of thought rather than objects of sense experience. (Webster, 1983: 1937). Moreover the word transcendental is of transcendent quality or nature, surpassing excelling, exalted. (The Compact Edition of the Oxford Dictionary, 1971: 253). It relies on God's law as Shaw states: A form of philosophical romanticism which places reliance on man's intuition and conscience. From Latin words meaning "climbing beyond", transcendentalism held that man's inner consciousness is divine, that in nature is revealed the whole of God's moral law, and that ultimate truth can be discovered by man's inmost feelings and a morality guided by conscience. (Shaw, 1972: 382).

In Frost's The Road Not Taken, the transcendental idea can be traced from the first stanza, especially the two last lines:

And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth (L. 5)

Line 4 suggests that in seeing the world, we have to use our all capabilities, knowledge in maximum level to go through the life. Man is provided by God with knowledge to do his duty as a caliph in this world. This, then, becomes the nature of human-kind. In his book Metaphysics, Aristotle states: "All men naturally desire knowledge." (George, 1960: 66). From another source, it is stated: "It is only human-kind that is granted capability to name things¹), and also given knowledge to which not given to angels²). (Syarif, 1990: 15). So, the nature of human-kind is loving knowledge. Even in Religion of Islam, to seek knowledge is obligatory for every its follower as said by the Prophet Muhammad: "To pursue knowledge is obligatory for moslem men and moslem women." (Prophet's hadist recorded by Ibnu Majah in Almath, 1993: 207).

1) Al-Qur'an Surah (QS) Al-Baqarah: 31.
2) QS. Al-Baqarah: 32

With knowledge human-kind has, the relationship between human-kind and life is built in a good manner and order. By mastering the knowledge, men learn the past, build the present, and predict the future.

In the poem, the future life is described as a place where it is a bend of the road, meaning that the future cannot be seen by eyes.

It is common for us that when roads bend, someone cannot see their continuations; where they go, and what they look like. Frost is keen enough to describe the mystery of life in future that a man has to go through.

Frost even emphasises the sense of being mystery by adding the phrase "in the undergrowth." Undergrowth is an area that is full of shrubs, bushes and low trees; so it is difficult to see something behind or in it.

So, the future life is entirely full of mystery eventhough we try to predict it but it is still a conjecture that can be true or false. The situation becomes worse when there is another phenomenon that makes life more uncertain; we even do not know what will happen in one day. For example a war. In a wartime, people are haunted by fear and do not know what to do. It is sometimes difficult to determine and distinguish a friend

from an enemy.

It is true for us that the choice of way of mysterious life, determining of our next life, deals with knowledge. This makes the life of someone is different from someone else. The matter, however, is not only about the difference; it is also about being right or true. That is why Frost does not follow the stream of life only and he determines his way of life by himself. Being a traveler, Frost has to take the responsibility for his own chosen-choice. He cannot try other choices for life is just once. So, he has to think over before determining his choice.

Two roads ... (L. 1) suggests that the choice is more than one; many choices existing in this life. To propose choice Frost uses a symbol.

A symbol, then, is an image so loaded with significance that it is no simply literal, and it does not simply stand for something else; it is both itself and something else that it richly suggests a kind of manifestation of something too complex or too elusive to be otherwise revealed. (Barnett, Sylvant et al. 1963: 344). Here, two roads symbolize ways of life that he has to take one.

In these circumstances, human-kind has to be care-

ful of what it chooses, otherwise it will be lead astray by those fascinating choices. That is why Frost continues his first line with:

... in a yellow wood,

Wood is a place at which there are many big trees, shrubs, and bushes grow. This symbolizes the uncertainty of life. Yellow means an alert; it needs someone's care. In our present life too, there are so many offering about way of life. We have to see the advantages and disadvantages of what we are going to take from the available choices. If only we could try every choice offered in this life.

The relationship between human kind and life here becomes intense since men have a limited power.

And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood (L. 3)

Here, Frost describes human limit. As human kind, it is impossible to try every way of life without being a follower of it. If someone has determined his way of life, it means that he must be a member of it and responsible for it. He cannot get back and try another due to the age and time.

On line 3, Frost emphasizes that he, as human kind, has a limited power to choose more than one choice. He can only be "one traveler," meaning one follower of

life. The diction being used by Robert Frost here looks so proportional and appropriate.

Diction is the poet's selected chosen words. Diction is very crucial in poetry for it can characterize the poet's style in writing a poem. The words selected by the poet can have denotative and connotative meaning. Denotation is an ordinary meaning while connotation is a certain meaning which shows, compared with denotation, more the poet's intention.

In the poem, Frost uses the word "traveler" and does not use, say, "wanderer." Why so? In our sense, traveler sounds good, and someone who is traveling usually has a special purpose and destination. From this point, we will understand that before starting to go, he must prepare his stuff and himself carefully, otherwise he will not achieve what he strives for. It is different from wanderer as he is a man who goes from place to place without any special purpose and destination. So, it is unsurprisingly if he has not had any preparation before. From this reason, Frost is more likely to use the term "traveler" than "wanderer."

Nowadays, in a post cold war, the situation does not change into a better order; on the other hand, it is

more difficult for us to choose the right way of life. The war has not stopped yet. It is true that we have escaped from the big threatening open nuclear war, but we are now trapped in a small scattered long lasting war. The condition of people where the war takes place is very poor. The tragic one is that the war is not merely weapon-war but, being principle, it is a war of ideology, the way of life.

The civil war in Rusia, violance in Bosnia, crisis in the Middle East between Israel and Arabic states are examples of conflict which are caused by the different ways of life.

The conflict of life actually emerges from the conflict within human-kind itself. This is a special right given by God to human-kind that, unlike other creatures, it is free to determine its own way of life. Since human-kind is provided with mind, it is entitled to use it to decide its own way of life. As a consequence, it must bear a responsibility of what it has determined.

Stanza one is offering one alternative of way of life. Human-kind has to think over of what it is going to take. Hence, stanza one of the poem is filled with inner conflict of the traveler who represents the human's inner conflict in real life. Here, Frost's poem has the tone of

reflective conversation, meaning that it is full of consideration. The conflict is continuing in the following stanza.

In stanza two, the traveler tries to see another alternative. He compares it with the first one. This is a common phenomenon that in real life, we do comparisons. We differentiate one thing from another. We distinguish and separate right thing from the wrong one. Therefore, the life is dynamic as it is filled with different, sometimes contradictory things and those bring different activities and consequences.

In determining our choice, we should be fair enough to ourselves. When we choose one without clear consideration, the choice will not avail anything, even it can cause us fall into troublesome or, being worse, into danger.

Man is sometimes under control of his lust rather than his heart and mind. In this case, the relationship between human-kind and life will not be in balance because man does not think others' concerns anymore; he just thinks about his own benefits. He destroys the environmental atmosphere despite others' loss. From this view, we can see that he takes the wrong way of life. He may be lucky for destroying environment but it will not

last long as the environment will influence him when, for instance, he is sick because of drinking, say, polluted water, or his house is swept away by flood because his company has cut all trees in the forest and so on. So, concerning the consequences which are following our choice, we have to consider first the right way of life we are going to take.

It is described on line seven that the second road may have a better claim because it is grassy and wanted wear. To the traveler, the second road seems to invite his sense of adventure. As a traveler, he likes things in original state very much, not things which has been used.

Here, Frost uses the word grassy metaphorically. It is covered by grass.

Metaphor takes the comparison ... it identifies the two sides of the comparison. (Hollingworth, 1967: 20). This is a part of figure of speech as a way to propose imagery. Imagery is applied to arouse readers' imagination or to make an image clearer. By using imagery, what the poet means to readers can be caught up hopefully easily and more exactly. It deals with our senses such as sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch.

Brooks, as quoted by Tarigan, stated imagery as "the calling to mind of something perceived by the

senses." (Tarigan, 1986: 30). The word grassy arouses the sense of sight and gives the impression of road that is seldom passed by. It also excites the sense of touch, giving an impression of being wild.

The traveler compares the road, which is grassy as the way of life which is not yet taken much by many people as he knows that it is seldom trespassed and covered by grass, with the first road that bends. For the traveler, the second road seems to be interesting to take.

Besides being original, the road is full of challenge, too. It is denoted by the phrase wanted-wear. The grassy and wanted-wear road attracts the traveler's intention. He thinks that the road which is full of challenge and originality is the best one to take. This will make his journey meaningful, attractive, and interesting. For the same reason, life is also, actually, challenging, full of risk and problems. The point is not how to run away from the problems, but on the other hand, how to face and solve the problems that block our way. In life, we should not assume problems as problems but, being a thinking man, problems as opportunities. The way we handle problems will characterize our existence in life.

So, in this case, man is partly a determiner of the way of life he chooses eventhough life also gives influences on him but the decision still in man's hand. The relationship between the two is, then, reciprocal but not in a strict way. It is true that life influences man but man holds the control of life and that makes decision.

Transcendental idea holds that God has given men a freedom to choose, determine and decide anything good or bad. God grants men mind and various stimuli by which, with their efforts, men can achieve and handle any possibility. (Syarif, 1990: 18). So, Islamic concept of human-kind as a caliph in the world matches the nature of life. Frost also implies that men determine life. His subject may seem to be nature but his theme is man. (Drew, 1959: 31).

Human kind in this world, being a caliph, has to take care of the world. It should keep the world in a good order. It has got a power to rule the world where it lives. However, besides a caliph, man is also a servant of God. Therefore, man has to obey God's commands, because man is under control of God's rule. So, he is not supposed to act tyrannically in this life for he will have to take responsibility before God of what he has

done. That is why man has to take not only the right but also the true way in this life.

Unfortunately, the choices offered in this life seem all similar to us. In the poem, the similarity is described on line 9 and 10:

Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same, (L. 10)

Eventhough the second road is grassy, there appears passing path that make it similar with the first one, meaning that it might have been as common as the first.

So, in these lines, Frost tells us that the two 'different' roads do not look really different. It suggests that the action of choosing really needs a deep thinking nevertheless we will fall into disappointment.

These lines describe that, as a matter of fact, there is no real, objective evidence that one road is indeed "less traveled by." The traveler really wants to choose the less traveled-by road. This second reading complicates the meaning of the poem and makes the speaker's position far more precarious. Since he has no rational basis for choice, he is thrown back on whim or impulsive desire to "decide" which is the less used road. He must choose his direction in life on little more than a hunch. Yet he must take responsibility for the consequences.

In real life, it indeed happens that we are often trapped in the matter of choices. In this situation, the relationship between human-kind and life is on the spot of difficult time. Men are tested whether or not they act wisely.

Human-kind, as a perfect-shaped creature, must be able to distinguish between the good and the evil, right and wrong, true and false, in life. Again, we have to bear responsibility of what we have done in this worldly life and before God.

Stanza 2 contains the condition of the second alternative road. Eventhough it seems different from the first road, the passing there has worn them really about the same. It is indeed difficult to determine the direction of life in this world especially if we do not have a certain basis for it.

A stanza of poetry is comparable to a paragraph in prose, in that it is often a major unit of thought; as much, it is an important factor in the organization. A stanza also may be a unit of sound. (Lee/Gura, 1982: 369).

The first stanza describes the first alternative, the second one the second alternative. The poem of Robert Frost is very special as it is written in a colloquial

speech but still keeps a metrical pattern. The unit of sound is neatly arranged. It can be seen from the rhyme of the first and the second stanza.

Rhyme usually occurs at line endings in poetry and consists of words which have the same sound; the letters preceding the vowel must, however, be unlike in sound. (Kennedy, 1970: 20). The words wood/both/stood/could/undergrowth of stanza one constitute rhyme a/b/a/a/b. It is too far to relate this kind of rhyme with the content or meaning of the poem but since a poetry is a unity of the content and form --they cannot be separated-- so, the writer tries to reveal the connection.

The alternating rhymes, with continuous or double one in the middle (line 3 and 4) suggest the change of life. The immediate same rhyme (line 3 and 4) means that the changes of life need a long and deep consideration for us to choose our direction in life. Of course, it is no doubt that this style of is for Frost's freedom to make his poetry sounds poetically good in colloquial speech but it is by no means wrong to have opinions that this kind of rhyme is to support the content of the poetry itself, namely life is full of shadowy alternatives that need our deep consideration to make decision

competed to get things they desired. They used high technological tools to exploit nature including men in it. Hence, there were no moral values to control the human's attitude, or if there were, they would be neglected; there was only competition to get what they wanted despite others' concern. Tragically, this kind way of life had many followers. Because of that, in the poem, Frost did not want to simply follow the stream of such life. When men just exploit nature, the relationship between human-kind and life is not in a good balance.

It is good enough for the traveler as he does not simply choose the way of life because it has many followers. The basis for his choice, however, is not suitable. It means that he seems to gamble with what he chooses. In real life, we have to hold one guidance firmly. The guidance should guarantee our future life, nevertheless we will go astray. It is not wise to rely our decision on conjecture. It can bring us to whether good or bad condition. Our future is not safe and clear, then. Actually, the traveler in the poem realizes this consequence. On line 16, the traveler describes and expresses his feeling:

I shall be telling this with a sigh (L. 16)

A sigh is to inhale and exhale a deep breath that can be

heard indicating sadness, tiredness, and relief.

The traveler knows that his choice brings some consequences. Someday he will be disappointed because he did not take the first road. He will also think, if only he chose the first road, he would also be disappointed for he had not chosen the second one. He will regret for what he did not choose and be sorry that he cannot take all choices in life. In short, he will be sorry for what he did not take. The title The Road Not Taken is very unique, then.

Modern men can live whatever they intend to, but they do not know "how they should be" because they themselves have no idea about why it is so. (Syariati, 1992: 38).

Men are often disappointed of what their conditions are. Someone who has a profession as, say, a doctor may be sometimes jealous of, say, an engineer and might think why I did not take technical school; and reversely the engineer might look the doctor jealously, thinking why I did not take medical faculty. This happens to most of men. On line 17, Frost describes the process of being regretful:

Somewhere ages and ages hence: (L. 17)

To choose a way of life based on conjecture will

bring something mysterious and risky to the chooser. It does not guarantee. The traveler considers that. However, in the time which was full of uncertainty, being existence in our own choice was good enough, at least we had our ground to stand on, not just followed the stream of common life.

Lines 16 and 17 suggest that the traveler is regretful for having to take one choice but he is satisfied for he has taken his own decision. It means that it is not life that determines his fate but it is he who forms and shapes the life eventhough he relies it on conjecture.

It is true that men are granted knowledge by God. The conjecture the traveler relies on can be one kind of knowledge. He might also use his intuition --as one type of the metaphysical practices-- but his intuition does not stand on the ground of what it is called the Absolute Truth.

To reach the Absolute Truth, we have to use the absolute mean. In the poem, the traveler uses conjecture or at least intuition but unguided one. It can be seen on lines 14-15. This is different from what the writer relies on to live in this real life.

In real life, we have to hold a certain guidance.

To deal with empirical phenomena, we can trust science because this is its field but still has to care about moral values. To deal with reality beyond this visible world or fact, we have to consult something more divine, that is human's consciousness or intuition.

Human's knowledge is, however, limited. (QS. Bani Israil: 85). Most men can only know phenomena. They cannot reach nomena that is what things really are. (QS. Al-Rum: 7). Human's consciousness itself, then must be guided by certain values that do not only deal with empirical world or fact, but also the transcendental world.

In Islamic concept, there is no guidance that is true and right but the revelations of God (Allah) which are unified in Holy Qur'an and hadith which consists of the memoirs of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, concerning the sayings, doings, and tacit approval by him of the conduct of his companions. Holy Qur'an is a guidance for men living in the world who eagerly seek something true and right.

This is a perfect Book; there is no doubt in it, it is a guidance for the righteous. (QS. Al-Baqarah: 2).

So, in choosing way of life, we should use right guidance. Holy Qur'an as God's revelation --of course it

is a divine Book-- is undoubtedly true and is proved anywhere and anytime.

The traveler in the poem is, however, not wholly wrong. The decision he makes which does not want to simply follow others' way is really right. He chooses the less traveled road though he does not know how to distinguish them. The ground that he does not want to be a slave of custom is good. It is stated in Holy Qur'an: "And if thou obey the majority of those on earth, they will lead thee astray from Allah's way. They follow nothing but mere conjecture, and they do nothing but lie." (QS. Al-An'am: 116).

It means that those who simply follow the major way of life, they will be lead to the wrong path, at least the way they do not intend to choose. If someone's life does not suit the intention of his heart, the relationship between human-kind and life will be inappropriate.

Moreover, the relationship must be constructed and built in a harmonious way. That men as caliphs have the authority to rule the worldly life is all right, but as servants of God they have to obey His command. So, in this case, human-kind, dealing with life, should not give way to its emotion and desire. It should pay attention to

God's rule, otherwise the world will be destroyed. Holy Qur'an states:

"And if the Truth had followed their desires, verily, the heavens and the earth and whosoever is therein would have been corrupted." (QS. Al-Mu'minun: 71).

So, with the admonition of Allah, men hopefully will count what they are going to do. They will not exploit the worldly life, which is also including other men, cruelly. Actually, when human-kind treats its life tyrannically this is it that is treated tyrannically itself. We, the human beings, as the caliph as well as the servant of God should not behave based on the phrase as long as. For example: as long as we have much money, we can satisfy ourselves as much as possible without caring others' concern; as long as we have authority, we can use it to order or even oppress someone else. In short, we should not use our capability to do exploitation.

The Law of God is revealed to the world to make the worldly life go properly, then the relationship between human-kind and life will turn smoothly, meaning in harmonious way. The men, however, have freedom whether or not they follow and obey God's command; of course with the consequences.

"Admonish, therefore, for thou (Muhammad) art but

an admonisher; Thou hast no authority to compel them (the men)." (QS. Al-Ghashiyah: 21-22).

From this point, we can conclude that eventhough God has revealed His Law but still human-kind itself that has authority to determine its way of life. In this case, human's consciousness is highly honored.

The last three lines of the poem describe the confirmation of the traveler in determining his way of life and its consequences.

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference. (L. 20)

On line 18, the traveler repeats the phenomena he faces that is two roads, meaning two alternatives in life. He repeats the very beginning line of the poem with the omission of the word yellow and addition and I before and after the word wood. This is called repetition though not in a strict way.

Repetition is to be found in poetry which is aiming at special musical effects or when a poet wants us to pay very close attention to something. (Kennedy, 1971: 16).

So, in this poem, Frost' wants us to pay a close attention to the fact that in life, we are always en-

countered by many alternatives and we have to choose one out of them.

The omission of the word yellow before the word wood can mean that now, to the traveler, the alternatives are no more warning or dangerous for he has made his mind up.

The addition and I, beside it gives the musical effect (it rhymes sigh), it also suggests that the action of choosing wholly belongs to him. It is he who determines his own way of life. He shapes life, not reverse-ly. The word I is also repeated on the next line, with the confirmation that the traveler has chosen the less traveled road.

On this line, it seems that he wants everyone to know that he does not just follow common way of life. He does not want to be a slave of custom. In the time of chaos, he has his own decision.

His own way of life brings him into the situation that is different from others. The difference shows his existence in life.

To us, as the inhabitants of the earth, should have our own way of life, meaning that we do not follow a certain way of life just because many people choose it. We have to take one way of life after we think over and

consider it; so we know the reasons and consequences of what we take.

There are so many alternatives way of life in the world. This is not bad; on the other hand, it is good because with so many choices, the world is not quiet. The world is dynamic, then. As a result, the relationship between human-kind and life can be built in various ways. We, however, have to remember that in transcendental point of view, the relationship should be built in harmonious way considering the Law of God. In this condition, the whole world will be peace and prosper.

IV.2. Mimetic Analysis

This thesis, besides philosophical analysis, applies mimetic analysis, that holds the work of art is an imitation of life through an author's imagination and experience. From this reason, it is necessary to know what happened when the poet wrote the poem.

Let's see first stanza one, that describes the autumn situation in a forest. We can see that it was in autumn from the colour of the trees in the forest. The green leaves turned into yellow.

The change of the colour of the leaves can symbol-

gies, even the faith.

People were confused about their lives. In this poem, Frost describes the people as travelers. They traveled in the world facing many choices.

When we see the life of Robert Frost himself, it seemed that he also faced many choices and he had to take one. His grand-father, as stated in Chapter III page 24, wanted him to be a lawyer, but he did not follow him; he took another choice and to be a poet. It showed that the freedom to choose direction of life was highly honored.

Frost might intend to describe his own life in this poem, through his experience. He thought that the two choices between a lawyer and a poet might be different even though not in strict way. That is why, Frost describes on line 6-7:

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim, (L. 7)

Frost uses the word perhaps because he did not know either, whether or not a lawyer was better than a poet. This also showed the uncertainty of life.

At that time, the situation was not clear, at least as soon as the war ended. Frost as a man did not know if as a poet he could live better or worse. He did not have any idea either whether to be a lawyer would ameliorate his life. So, here the relationship between

human-kind and life becomes intense. What Frost decided would determine his future life. He had to be careful of that. All choices in life seemed to be similar, moreover to those who had no or little knowledge. On line 9-10, it is stated:

Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same, (L. 10)

Frost's experience when he was in childhood inspired these lines. He never went to school until he was about 12 years-old. He thought that being an educated boy and uneducated boy was similar. His condition did not change. However, after being able to read, reading had opened his eyes and heart that it was important to study. The interesting thing here was more he read books, more choices he found, and this made him consider deeply what he was going to do.

For poem is a reflection of life, the situation of Frost's experience had also struck most of people at that time. On one hand, the freedom to choose way of life was highly honored, on the other hand, it gave uncertainty to the people. The more choices, the more confusing.

Industrialism was also confusing at that time. On one side it gave the prosperity to the people but on another side, it caused poverty as the technology ignited

the making of weapons for war to be sophisticated killing men. Men have seen the bad impact of technology at that time such as Civil War and World-War I.

Since poetry, from the point of view of literature, also has universal values, so, what is in the poem can strike the people of nowadays. In the era of post Cold-War and post modernism, people are sometimes still confused of their own lives. It is undoubted that the standard of living of today's society is far higher than that of yesterday's society. However, the conflict of choosing way of life still goes on and it is more complex. Maybe the causes are different from those of a long time ago, but the effect is similar, namely people are encountered by such many choices that they do not know exactly which one to choose.

Here, Frost is very keen to symbolize the uncertain and confusing situation with the phrase two roads diverged. To human-kind, life itself is a road to one destination that is to seek the truth.

In stanza three, Frost describes the confusion of people at that time. People had to decide their own one life direction, but they did not have their own reason. The freedom to choose a world-view seemed not to be supported by adequate capacity. The conflict became

worse, then. They thought, if only they could try every life direction. It is clearly shown on line 14-15:

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back. (L. 15)

Frost himself had experienced unexpected happening. Though he had determined his direction of life as a poet, he did not know exactly how life would go. He, once, went to Europe to make his life better with his family. He might think at that time, if he had not been a poet, he would have been like this or like that. When the war broke out, he return to America. It showed the uncertainty of life at that time. From his experience, Frost poured his idea into this poem. Again, the title of the poem as The Road Not Taken is unique.

The poet also represented people in choosing their way of life at that time, especially in United States. The effect of Civil-War (1861-1865) still haunted on people's mind. The situation got worse when the World-War I broke out in 1914. There was a chaos. Men did not know exactly which alternatives of life they would choose despite of the freedom to choose they highly honored.

Realizing the point that people were not sure about what they chose for their way of life, they might be disappointed someday. Frost describes it in the last stanza of his poem.

I shall be telling with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence: (L. 17)

The people who have determined their lives would be tired of choices. After all, they did not know exactly the future. The chaos at that time added the uncertain situation. Men could not see clearly the future, moreover to those who did not have knowledge.

It is natural that in the time when everything seemed similar, like in the post World-War I, men wanted to be outstanding. It is described in the poem as the traveler who wants to take the less-traveled road. People wanted to be noticed. Therefore, there were many teachings that offered their own outstanding traits. Some of them were existentialism popularized by J. P. Satre, and Marxism by Karl Marx.

The teachings tried to uncover the uncertainty of life at that time. Everyman regarded their own teaching as the best one. Men were free to choose one of them. The problem was not wholly on the teachings but on the ground where people stood. They did not have strong and firm reason for choice they chose.

People, then, just chose one because they had to, since in life, they must have one choice as direction of life. In the poem, it is described:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
 I took the one less traveled by,
 And that has made all the difference. (L. 20)

The difference can have two senses. Firstly, difference that is meaning simply not the same as the other; secondly is that is really different from the other. The first meaning may have no or little value. The second one must contain heavy value. The latter uses the capacity of a human-kind as maximum as possible to understand life. These two conditions describe the situation at that time and may continue up to now. At that time, some people were not the same as the others, some were indeed really different from others. In the same time, these two poles of the sense of difference show the difference itself.

In the poem, Frost tends to use words that deal with nature, such as 'road', 'wood', 'undergrowth', 'grassy', 'leaves'. To the writer, this is because Frost lived in a farm-land. His childhood was much influenced by the experience playing outdoors.

The mimetic orientation, the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of aspects of the universe. (Abrams, 1976: 8). It means that a man cannot escape from his life. Frost, being influenced much by natural background, in writing poems then, uses words that still deal

with nature. In this case, the literary approach that takes the mimetic theory matches the topic analyzed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS