The Road Not Taken / Robert Frost

A Short Summary

The Road Not Taken is a poem about decisions people make during their lives and the doubts they have after making their decisions - are they satisfied with their choice? Have they missed something in life? Could their life have been different if they had made another choice?

In the poem, the speaker stands in a yellow wood during the fall (the yellowing color of the leaves indicates the season). The road diverges (מתפצל) into two paths and the speaker has to make up his mind which road to choose. The decision is not easy at all (he stands there for a long time). He wishes he could take both roads, however, he knows it's impossible. He examines one of the roads, trying to see where it leads, but he can't since it bends in the undergrowth.

Finally, the speaker chooses the other road which looks as attractive as the first one, but it seems to him that fewer people have used it – "it was grassy and wanted wear". He chooses the less conventional road and it implies that he wants to do something different and not be like the others.
The speaker hopes to return one day and take the other road, but knows that once he chooses one way, it will lead to another and then another. Therefore, it is unlikely that he will ever go back to the road he has not taken.

The poem ends with a sigh. "I will be telling this with a sigh". The sigh may imply that the speaker is not satisfied with the decision he has made and regrets it, or it might be a sigh of satisfaction showing that he is pleased with his choice. The speaker knows that choosing the road less travelled by has made all the difference. It has had a great influence on his life.

Choosing the road is a metaphor for any decision that is made in life. Once a person makes up one's mind, it's almost impossible to go back to the starting point and make another decision. And even if one is satisfied with one's choice and feels no regret, one will probably continue wondering about the road not taken.

Robert Frost, the poet, took "the road less traveled by" when he decided to become a poet. He chose the non-conventional way of life which was certainly not an easy one. As a poet, he suffered many disappointments and only at an older age, did he become successful and got recognition. Frost knew from his own experience how difficult it was to make such a decision and choose the less conventional way of life that doesn't guarantee success or satisfaction.
Part I (35 points)

Answer the questions for (A) (The Road Not Taken)

A. THE ROAD NOT TAKEN / Robert Frost

Answer questions 1-3 and either question 4 OR 5.

1. What is the setting of the poem?
   
   ANSWER: …………………………………………………………………………………………..

   (5 points)

2. How does the speaker feel about the choice he has made?
   
   i) He is sorry.
   
   ii) He is happy with his decision.
   
   iii) He regrets his decision.
   
   iv) The answer is unclear

   (5 points)

3. What is the significance of the fact that the road "bent in the undergrowth"?
   
   ANSWER: …………………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………

   (10 points)
4. Is the traveler satisfied with the decision he made long ago? Support your answer with information from the poem?

For this question, use ONE of the thinking skills from the Appendix (נספח)

(10 points for the content of the answer, 5 points for the correct use of the thinking skill).

Thinking skill I chose: …………………………………………………………………………………

ANSWER: ……………………………………………………………………………………………
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(15 points)

OR:

5. a. What is the speaker's dilemma?

ANSWER: ……………………………………………………………………………………………
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(8 points)

b. How does the speaker resolve this dilemma?

ANSWER: ……………………………………………………………………………………………
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APPENDIX TO PART I

(נספח לפרק ראשון)

Thinking Skills

(כישורי חשיבה)

- Comparing and contrasting
- Distinguishing different perspectives
- Explaining cause and effect
- Problem solving
- Inferring
- Explaining patterns
1. The traveler is standing in a wood, at a fork in the road, quite early in the morning in the fall, as the yellowing leaves indicate.

2. iv) The answer is unclear.

3. The undergrowth obstructs the vision of the traveler and he can't see where the road leads. This image expresses the idea that the future is unknown, mysterious and surprising and one can't know what it will bring.

4. Thinking skill I chose: **Distinguishing different perspectives**
   
   The answer is unclear. The traveler sighs when he refers to the decision he has made. The sigh may indicate **two different attitudes**. It can be a sigh that shows he is **looking back** at his choice with **satisfaction and relief**, that he is happy with his decision. It may also be interpreted as a sigh of **regret**, which may mean he is sorry he made that choice and perhaps it would have been better for him if he had chosen the other way.

   OR:

   Thinking skill I chose: **Inferring**

   The answer is unclear and one can come to two opposite **conclusions**: One may **conclude** that the sigh the speaker mentions in the poem is a sigh of satisfaction and relief, and the speaker is happy with the choice he has made. But one may also **conclude** that this is a sigh of regret and sorrow and that the speaker feels perhaps he should have taken the other road.

   OR:

5. a. The speaker has to choose between two roads: both are pretty,
both are covered with leaves and it seems that no one walked on them that morning. As a matter of fact, there is very little difference between the two roads and the speaker finds it hard to decide which road to take.

b. He decides to choose the road less traveled by, the more challenging road.