

Literary Analysis 1: Figurative Language

Writers Frost, Angelou, and Piercy use figurative language—language that implies more than its literal, word-for-word meaning. Figurative language makes writing more interesting for readers because it connects an abstract idea—such as the value of meaningful work—to a concrete image—such as the image of an ox pulling a cart through mud.

DIRECTIONS: Consider the following lines in the context of each work. Then, in your own words, describe the abstract and concrete ideas that are being compared in each passage.

“The Road Not Taken”

Example: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by,/And That has made all the difference.

Concrete Image: two roads that separate in the woods

Comparison: The writer compares two roads in the woods and the choice a traveler makes between them to an important decision a person makes and the life he or she has led as a result.

“The Road Not Taken”

1. Oh, I kept the first for another day!/Yet knowing how way leads on to way,/I doubted if I should ever come back.

Concrete image:

Comparison:

“To be of use”

2. The work of the world is common as mud./Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust./But the thing worth doing well done/has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.

Concrete image:

Comparison:

“New Directions”

3. In her words, “I looked up the road I was going and back the way I come, and since I wasn’t satisfied, I decided to step off the road and cut me a new path.”

Concrete image:

Comparison: