

WALL Madeleine

Comparative Essay

03/04/2020

How do two authors on your OIB program explore the power of nature in their works?

Nature. Everyone sees nature differently, some see it as freedom, a free spirit. Others see it as a burden, a thing that must be tamed. Nature was here before humans and will hopefully be here after us humans are gone. The power of nature is endless, we all use it one way or another, whether it's to burn it on our fires, or plant it in our gardens as a type of therapy or just for fun, nature is also used for comparing one's emotions to something in nature or just symbolising something. The writers Margaret Atwood and Robert Frost each use nature throughout their works as a beacon for those who are lost, for those who don't realise how special nature is, how significant it is to us.

Commenté [1]: Nice, smooth lead up into thesis.

Commenté [2]: try instead defining what is special about nature-- does it reveal a source of inspiration? imagination? communication? be specific

Commenté [3]: try to avoid we/us

To begin, in Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood uses, visual imagery and similes to illustrate how nature can be seen as a way to hold power, to explain one's emotions through it, and to be use as a way to keep one's sanity. For example, the character Offred speaks of flowers throughout the novel, whether they are are real or not, she uses them as a way to keep her sanity. In chapter two, Offred speaks of "a picture, framed but with no glass: a print of flowers, blue irises, watercolour. Flowers are still allowed." (p.13.) This simile shows how Offred keeps herself occupied by describing the things she sees around her, the flowers in this photo are a type of therapy for her, she is

Commenté [4]: Excellent mini-thesis! Very clear and goes deep

calm and centered her whole attention on this picture. At the end of her description she states that “Flowers are still allowed” this could be a symbol of power, those who are higher in the hierarchy than her get to choose whether she should be **allowed** flowers, the therapeutic nature. Another great example of this sense of power is in chapter three, “Many of the Wives have such gardens, it’s something for them to order and maintain and care for.”(p.18). This quote illustrates a sense of power because only the Wives in society are aloud such luxuries of having a garden. Of having something to “maintain”, to “care for”, to “order”. Once again nature is a pherapy, a hobby, if society wishes for these women to keep their sanity, they most give them something to do, something soothing to calm their nerves after a day of judgment. As Offred says further on in the book, “Sometimes the Commander’s Wife has a chair brought out, and just sits in it, in her garden. From a distance it looks like peace.”, the Wives are given the freedom of having refuge, having somewhere have some peace. Offred was not considered important enough for such a privilege, “I once had a garden. I can remember the smell of the turned earth, the plump shapes of bulbs held in the hands, fullness, the dry rustle of seed through the fingers. Time could pass more swiftly that way.”, she remembers how it felt to have such a peaceful, calming thing. She even tells us how time used to pass more quickly with such activities, they have power over her because unless they grant her such a thing she will only have her memories for her sanity and the odd picture. With this in mind, Atwood uses a simile in chapter 27, “But I can’t believe it; hope is rising in me, like sap in a tree.”(p.174), to demonstrate how with the help of nature, emotions can be describe. In this simile, Offred is expressing the feeling of hope that is flourishing in her.

Commenté [5]: good explanation

Commenté [6]: Good. This example reinforces what you said in your last example and strengthens your argument. Nice logical sequence of ideas developed.

Commenté [7]: try "revealed" or how nature can help to uncover and understand/communicate emotions...especially in a society where real, open communication with others is impossible

Commenté [8]: can you make a mini transition paragraph here between the two works? half of it can conclude your first part and then introduce the coming part, to more clearly link the two works

Secondly, in Robert's Frost various poems, he uses similes and symbols of nature throughout his work to illustrate how nature can be a comforting friend, and how death is always following.

For example, in his poem, "An Unstamped Letter in Our Rural Letter Box", Frost uses similes to show how nature is a comforting friend, "Beneath a low-slung juniper, That like a blanket to my chin". He describes how the trees around him give him a sense of safety, warmth and comfort. In another of his poems, he also uses a simile as a way of showing comfort but this time in memories, "Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground, Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair", the nature around Frost is giving him a memory, a calm, peaceful memory of young girls playing around themselves. Another interesting example, is in his poem, "After Apple-Picking", this is a very interesting poem because Frost uses many images of nature as various symbols.

Frost speaks of "My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree", his ladder symbolizes life that is going on, the more he climbs the older he gets, and he can't stop because otherwise he would lose his balance and die anyway. The ladder isn't nature, but it is helping him climb the apple tree, which in itself is a symbol of knowledge and temptation. Frost uses these symbols to show the reader how nature guides us to the top of the tree, to get the finest apple and then to die with the knowledge gained. And in the way he explains we are all going to die there is a sense of simplicity, and calm, it is going to happen to all of us but the way he describes is almost like he is assuring his readers that they will gain from their lives, and that that knowledge gained will go with them to the top of the 'tree'.

Commenté [9]: Okay nice-- can you play more here on the shocking juxtaposition of comfort + death? perhaps to illustrate how nature can be either a comforting friend or a reminder of death

Commenté [10]: interesting

Commenté [11]: Nice analysis-- you go deep and logically sequence out your argument

In conclusion, Atwood and Frost both use nature but the **deference** is that Atwood uses nature as a way of holding one's sanity, of occupying their time, and that nature gives power to some more than others. Whereas Frost uses nature to explain how it is a calming presence in our lives and that it guides us through our lives, it gives the steps to climb to the top, which is death.

Commenté [12]: difference

Commenté [13]: can you clarify this idea?

Commenté [14]: Okay, good. See if you can extend your conclusion out further.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR OIB AMERICAN OPTION WRITTEN EXAMINATION: ESSAY

N.B. A short response may require assessment to be lowered.

Category	Below Level -0.5 or more at the discretion of the examiner	Level 0	Level 1 + 0.5	Level 2 + 1.0	Level 3 +1.5	Level 4 +2.0
Knowledge & Understanding	No true understanding or first-hand knowledge shown. Factual inaccuracies void argument.	Some understanding but superficial. Learned response replaces first-hand knowledge. Factual inaccuracies affect argument.	Satisfactory understanding and knowledge. Development may be limited with some inadvertent or minor factual inaccuracies.	Good overall understanding. Knowledge is full and developed.	Very good and thorough understanding, including some subtlety. Levels of meaning are apparent.	Excellent understanding, including some subtlety. Levels of meaning are apparent. Detailed and pertinent knowledge.
Response to the Question	Off-subject or no clear response discernible. Observation, commentary or opinion may be present but no attempt to form an argument.	Response is partial or muddled. Argument is directed at the question but may be confused or superficial.	A satisfactory response to the main implications of the question. Some aspects of the question may be ignored.	A good response. Argument addresses the question but may need more development.	A very good response. Argument is complete and well-targeted, and the question is well-understood.	An excellent response. Argument demonstrates original thought and addresses the question with clarity and depth.
Analysis & Depth (Includes discussion of style at Level 2 and above)	Plot summary or generalizations dominate. No successful attempt at analysis.	Plot summary or generalizations frequent. Little or unsuccessful analysis.	Inconsistent analysis that does not always address important elements. Analysis may be uneven or lacking in depth.	Good analysis that appropriately addresses important elements. Generally appropriate analysis of style illustrated by relevant examples.	Very good analysis. Thoughtful, pertinent analysis of style.	Excellent analysis and argumentation. Insightful, sophisticated and coherent analysis of style.
Organization of the Essay	No logical sequence of ideas. Chronological	Weak or mechanical structure. Development is	Satisfactory structure and development. Sequence of ideas	Good structure with some transitions. Sequence of ideas	Very good essay structure with solid transitions. Clear	Excellent essay structure with clear transitions. Carefully planned,

& Integratio n of Evidence	confusion. Development is so inadequate that clarity is in danger of dissolving completely.	barely adequate and examples are either impertinent or lack clear connection to the argument.	generally logical. Examples not always pertinent and integration may be awkward.	logical. Examples are generally pertinent and most often integrated appropriately.	development throughout and good integration of supporting evidence.	persuasive development throughout. Sophisticated integration of supporting evidence.
Expressio n	Meaning often cannot be surmised. The essay is very difficult to read.	Prose can be read and its meaning surmised even if hampered by weak control (or French interference).	Prose conveys the writer's ideas adequately. Vocabulary is sufficient and notions of good English usage are evident if sometimes inconsistently applied.	Prose shows evidence of good writing skills. Lapses are minor and do not impede understanding. Some care is shown in word choice and register.	Prose is clear and coherent. A rare lapse does not mar ideas or flow. Effective use of vocabulary and register.	Prose is articulate, fluid, and displays an excellent command of written language. Sophisticated use of vocabulary and register.
Totals						

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