

B.) Explore in what ways two OIB works create a vivid sense of place or landscape.

Thesis: In The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood, Atwood depicts very shocking and realistic places and landscapes to illustrate the need to be alert and aware in a society, such as Gilead, where the slightest slip up can mean immediate death, whereas, in Robert Frost's Poems, Frost paints vivid landscapes and places to demonstrate how little details carry great significance in the larger scheme of things and how nature can help us find ourselves. Thus, Merget's vivid depictions reflect Offred's horrific surroundings, while Robert's poems lean more towards praising the beauty of nature.

nic!!

Paragraph 1: The wood pile

Paragraph 2: The Tuft of Flowers

Paragraph 3: The Handmaid's tale (moment room)

Paragraph 4: The Handmaid's Tale (moment wall)

+ conclusion

very beautiful paragraph
flow, logic easy to follow, persuasive

Description is one of the most important elements of stories that writers, poets use to create vivid pictures for the reader to access your story and imagine themselves within it. In The Handmaid's Tale by Margret Atwood, Atwood depicts very shocking and realistic places and landscapes to illustrate the need to be alert and aware in a society, such as Gilead, where the slightest slip up can mean immediate death, whereas, in Robert Frost's Poems, Frost paints vivid landscapes and places to demonstrate how little details carry great significance in the larger scheme of things and how nature can help us find ourselves. Thus, Merget's vivid depictions reflect Offred's horrific surroundings, while Robert's poems lean more towards praising the beauty of nature. ✓✓

Firstly, in Frost's Poem "The Woodpile", Frost depicts a swampy area then zooms into smaller parts of it linking it to the existential question: why do we work? Does anyone benefit from it? When the poem first starts off, it states, "Out walking in the frozen swamp one grey day". Frost uses the words 'frozen, swamp, and grey' to emphasize the feeling of the wintery atmosphere. 'Frozen' is a term usually used as a metaphor for death and shows that the landscape is fixed in time like in winter. This shows a vivid image of the climate close to the swamp. This is tactile imagery because it describes the numbing feeling of how cold it is making the reader feel the sensation or at least imagine they do. In addition, swamp and grey are two words that can symbolise danger and gives off a very dismal and desolate atmosphere. Frost uses these terms to create a dangerous atmosphere creating a sense of suspense. This realistic painting of the area carries the reader instantly into the story. 'Walking' is a metaphor for 'life, and journey' and Frost utilizes this word to demonstrate how life isn't always sunshine and flowers and how that is okay because even the ugliest sceneries have something beautiful about them. Another striking example is when Frost describes how a wood pile is made, "It was a cord of maple, cut and split and piles and measured, four by four by eight". This shows how attentive Frost is to little details and how he finds beauty in even the most bleak places. Cut, split, and piled are verbs in past tense that depict work. Frost enables us to imagine a person working and creating this pile of wood and then meticulously describes it 'four by four by eight' emphasizing on how perfect it is. This wood pile is a symbol of the work and effort produced by each person. Lastly, when he observes the wood pile even more he states, "[...]leave it there far from a useful fireplace To warm the frozen swamp as best it could with the slow smokeless burning of decay,". This shows how all this work and effort that someone does never goes to waste. Frost shows this idea through a detailed description of the wood pile in nature. His illustration of this landscape goes as far as describing the most subtle movements in it such as the smoke emitted from the decaying wood 'smokeless burning of decay'. Decay is a shocking word that normally demonstrates death which is a lachrymose image but Frost uses it to illuminate ideas about life and how everything that dies creates something new. Once again demonstrating the beauty of nature. All these examples show that Frost utilizes description as a way to create vivid places and landscapes to bring answers to our unanswered questions and to make us see the beauty in everything. ✓✓

very beautiful paragraph -
fluid, logic easy to follow, persuasive

Additionally, in the poem "Tuft of Flowers" by Robert Frost, a field of mowed flowers is portrayed. When a lone farmer arrives to turn the grass he thinks, "The dew was gone that made this blade is keen Before I came to view the levelled scene [...]. As where some flowers lay withering on the ground". Visual imagery is used to describe the scene 'dew, levelled scene'. This demonstrates how flat and clean a field is after someone mowed it early in the morning. In addition it also illustrates how the farmer is imagining how the mower's blade must have cut. A flower is a symbol of joy and hope and in the landscape Frost is describing the flowers lying on the ground showing a very miserable and sorrowful scenery. These descriptions cause the reader to feel and

her senses to be able to see all this

"My room, then. There has to be some space, finally, that I claim as mine, even in this time. I'm waiting in my room, which right now is a waiting room. When I go to bed it's a bedroom. The curtains are still waving in the small wind, the sun outside is still shining, though not through the window directly. It has moved west."

This certifies that Offred owns nothing and for the first time she gets her own room something she can call her own. She gives her room a different name every time she does something different in it. She wants to own something but Gilead has even taken her name; it doesn't even belong to her; she has lost her identity and has been dehumanized by this dangerous environment. The word 'still' is repeated several times showing how long she had been waiting. She gives a visual image of the curtains blowing in the wind and the sun going down slowly. This gives the reader the sensation of having been waiting in the room for a long time and just sitting waiting for something to happen. Offred illustrates the movement in her room without any emotions making it feel like an out of body experience. To survive in the Gilead society and not go insane it is best to not be present and to get lost in your own subconscious. In addition the phrase "moved west" depicts the sun's course in a day. This gives the reader a vivid image of a day going by. As the light shines indirectly through the window the reader can feel a warm sensation of the sun rays covering their body, but Offred then states that it doesn't go into her room showing an absence of warmth, and a chilling sensation. Going back to the phrase "It has moved west", this infers that the sun is no longer seen and that it is night time. This descriptive passive illustration of time passing and Offred observing subtle changes in the wind and the course of the sun gives the reader an image of loneliness and a feeling of being frozen in place not being able to do anything just watching the rest of the world moving leaving her behind showing a bleak landscape of the Gilead society.

Lastly, Offred's room in The Handmaid's Tale is used as a way to communicate with others about her situation because she is unable to explicitly state her discontent with her current conditions. Oppression and the totality of the control that the government has over Offred is shown through this scene:

"I explored this room, not hastily, then, like a hotel room, wasting it. I divided the room into sections, in my head; I allowed myself one section a day. This one section I would examine with great minuteness: the unevenness of the plaster under the wallpaper, the scratches in the paint of the baseboard and the windowsill, under the top coat of paint, the stains on the mattress, for I went so far as to lift the blankets and sheets from the bed, fold them back, a little at a time, so they could be replaced quickly if anyone came."

Offred reflects on her past stating that she used to visit a hotel room very quickly not savouring the moment and now that she has been taken by Gilead this has made her see life differently she now sees opportunity in every moment to distract herself from her present situation. She divides the room into sections just like how military soldiers clean rooms to find terrorists. The term "allowed" is very shocking saying that Offred is restricting herself from pleasure and this outlet of escape. She's controlling herself one of the few things she has left illustrating now controlling the government is over her. In a way, this to Offred is freedom, being able to command herself. This gives the reader a sensation of uneasiness, discomfort and pity towards Offred seeing the conditions she has to live in. The phrase "great minuteness" indicates the amount of attention she is bringing to each and every part of the section she is uncovering. She then goes on to describe her room though a stream of consciousness narration depicting the 'unevenness of the plaster under

see this landscape and feel an intimate connection with the images portrayed. The phrase 'levelled scene' gives off a feeling of loneliness showing that there are no trees, no flowers, nothing but only a bleak field and a farmer questioning his loneliness and life. Another striking example is when he observes on this flat field a tuft of flowers, "A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared". This tuft of flowers symbolise hope because it is the only patch of flowers left emphasizing loneliness even more. This group of flowers is described metaphorically as a "leaping tongue of bloom" showing a very hopeful image. The term 'tongue' is a weird characteristic to give to a flower, maybe this shows that the flower can talk. In that case maybe Frost characterized it as such so it can communicate the answer to the existential question: Am I alone? "A leaping tongue of Bloom" also represents a kinetic imagery illustrating how the flowers are moving and maybe swaying illustrating a subtle breeze. This gives the reader a sensation of feeling wind on their skin emphasizing even more on this vivid landscape. Furthermore, the farmer feels a connection to the mower who spared this tuft even though they are so far apart making him feel accompanied, "But glad with him, I worked as with his aid, And weary, sought at noon with him the shade". This exhibits a feeling of union and togetherness produces a sensation of warmth. The word 'shade' indicates that the sun is out and that it is very hot making the reader feel sunlight falling over the body. Even though the anonymous mower isn't there with him, he says "sought at noon with him the shade". It appears he is imagining this and indicates that he senses a strong link between him and this stranger. He no longer feels alone instead he feels aided. All these images depict a bleak field with dying flowers then a glimpse of hope through a tuft of flowers swaying followed by a sunny and gleeful landscape. Frost's detailed painting of this scenery gives the reader a feeling of being transported into an eye opening scene filled with different types of emotions both heartbreaking because of loneliness and comforting due to finding the answer to the existential question. He opens the reader's mind on the subject of ~~loneliness~~ *good transition* through nature. ✓✓

Then, while Frost focuses on praising the beauty of nature through vivid imagery, Atwood does this to illustrate the government's control over Offred and her role in a dangerous society. An example of this can be seen when Offred first sees her room in the commander's house:

"This could be a college guest room, for the less distinguished visitors...for ladies in reduced circumstances. That is what we are now. The circumstances have been reduced; for those of us who still have circumstances. [...] The door of the room—not my room, I refuse to say my—is not locked. In fact it doesn't shut properly."

↓ nice sentence! ✓
This depicts a house, not a home. Offred compares the room to a guest room for "less distinguished visitors" which shows a negative image of the room making it not welcoming. She analyses her situation 'a lady in reduced circumstances' knowing that she has no choice and that others don't have it as good as her. This gives the reader a sensation of helplessness and of fear knowing that women don't control their lives. In Gilead women in general control nothing so being given a single room can be seen as a privilege but this is meant to deny them communication. The punctuation "-" emphasizes the reflection Offred has on the room. She may not be able to decide much in her life, but she can control her possessive pronouns. This shows that she refuses to think of the room she's been assigned as hers. She refuses to be assigned a role in this society and to fall into the trap. In addition to this the first thing she notices is the lock and how it doesn't work. This shows how attentive she is to her surroundings and how if she wanted to escape through a window she wouldn't be able to do so in security. This bleak place/room is described as not individualized and in a way a prison cell. The author uses these details to create a sensation of how unfortunate Offred's situation is. Another striking example is when Offred is waiting in her room:

women are also victims of this cruelty for disobeying the laws of Gilead such as infidelity, unchastity, and attempted escape. 'Purpose' is another term that is very important because that means that these hooks exist for the soul purpose of hanging death bodies amplifying the feeling of terror. Another striking example is when Offred gives a nightmarish description of the bodies:

"It's the bags over the heads that are the worst, worse than the faces themselves would be. It makes the men look like dolls on which faces have not yet been painted; like scarecrows, which in a way is what they are, since they are meant to scare. Or as if their heads are sacks, stuffed with some undifferentiated material, like flour or dough. It's the obvious heaviness of the heads, their vacancy, the way gravity pulls them down and there's no life any more to hold them up. The heads are zeros."

This shows how the bodies hanging on the wall have lost their identity and are now indifferent. The word 'worse' is repeated multiple times indicating that the white back that is placed on the heads look more terrifying than the actual faces. Gilead is doing this on purpose. Offred then uses similes to compare the heads to dolls with no faces or scarecrows and sacks of flour or dough. This depicts horrific images that seem so real that it gives shivers. These bags create suspense and mystery because no one knows who the victims are. She then depicts how their heads are being pulled down by gravity which is a symbol of how Gilead is pulling down women and making a hierarchy where there are different statuses and levels emphasising even more the way Gilead work and how dehumanizing it is. The phrase 'no life' describes the bodies and how they no longer move but in a way Offred sees herself through them she also has no reason to live for she has lost everything; she is alive but deep down she is lifeless walking without purpose. In addition to this, Offred refers to the heads as zeros which is very significant because zero means nothing and this refers to the way Gilead is dehumanizing women taking away their identities and making them blank slaves. (Zero choice and zero control) These nightmarish images and descriptions elevate the sensation of fear that the reader feels.

All in all, both the novel and the poems illustrate realistic and vivid places and landscapes to get a point across. While Frost uses this to elevate the idea that nature is beautiful and that it can enlighten us, Atwood utilizes it to demonstrate the danger and fear Offred has to live in in order to survive. Both works enable the reader to imagine being transported into the story and experience the thought, desires, confusion, fear, and comfort of the characters.

Wow!!