



AP[®] English Literature 2002 Sample Student Responses

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To Hardy, the loss of the Titanic was no frustrating result of combined ~~vanity and~~ human vanity and human fragility before tremendous natural forces. Instead, it was Destiny, the realization of some grandiose, divinely-conceived cosmic drama.

The precise ~~and~~ ^{simple} syntax, almost Biblical in its simplicity, lends an air of dignity and grandeur to the poem. The reader is never distracted by superfluous diction. Images burn through, undiluted. ~~by~~

The trim, regular meter contributes to this effect as well. The stanzas do not ramble, or stand beside each other in disharmony. They are pillars, clean, uniform and imposing. Their sequential numbering, in Roman numerals, recalls Biblical verse, or some other passage of exceeding dignity.

Next, the elevated, sometimes archaic diction, removes the poem to a level higher than that of a simple man's account of the disaster. The ship didn't 'go down burnin'' rather it sunk alight with 'Salamandrine fires.' The ocean's current on the sea floor is described as by 'rhythmic tidal lyres.' Instead of 'what the heck?' or some similarly colloquial expression the fishes 'query' about the 'vaingloriousness.'

As important as the descriptive diction — 'gilded gear' and so forth — and the elevated verbs — 'couches,' 'thrid' — is the speaker's use of epithets. The 'boat wasn't built,' rather 'planned' by the 'Pride of Life,' the 'Innate will,' the 'Spinner of Years.' Invoking Fate or God as

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responsible for the sinking elevates the disaster above a terrible accident. It makes that night transcendent, something of superlunary design. (This, also why the ship's resting place is portrayed in an ethereal light, with 'moon-eyed' fishes.)

stanzas 6-11.

Carry on the idea of the ship's sinking being of divine will. That iceberg wasn't just 'out there'; it was 'prepared' for an 'intimate wedding of later history.' Its fate, and that of the ship (the ship, rather than the passengers, because the ship is larger than life, a thing 'gaily great') are 'twin halves of one august event.' They are the 'twain' fated to 'convergence.'

So the ship sails grandly, but is stalked 'in shadowy silent distance' by the iceberg. When 'consummation comes' at the Spinner's command, it is a huge, cosmic convergence. It 'jars two hemispheres.'

Other devices, chiefly persistent alliteration and A-A-A rhyme, contribute to the poem's symmetry, harmony and order.

Like the Titanic and the iceberg, what the speaker says and how he says it are 'twin halves of one.' The poetic devices outlined above establish symmetry, harmony and order; these three elements are vital to the poem's dignity; this dignity is demanded by the elevated, cosmic theme the poem speaks of.

As tragic as the loss of fifteen hundred lives is, Thomas Hardy takes a different ^{Stance} ~~take~~ on the sinking of the Titanic in the poem "The Convergence of the Twain." Hardy emphasizes the inevitability of the event by noting the arrogance of man, the ~~powerful~~ forcefulness of nature, as well as the ~~powerful~~ ^{influence} impact of fate.

Hardy ~~describes~~ ^{describes} the process through which the "smart ship grows" ~~to show the wastefulness of man.~~ ^{to show the wastefulness of man.} The ship is filled with all of ^{the} luxuries that Hardy argues, ~~perhaps~~ ^{perhaps} are not meant for a ship. He creates images of extravagant mirrors, exquisite jewels, and other "gilded gear," which he refers to as coming, "Deep from human vanity." Also, Hardy ~~some~~ ^{some} ironically refers to the ~~the~~ Titanic as the "smart ship," noting its growth in stature, grace, and awe. However, the builders of the ship, as well as its inhabitants, had not even considered that ~~the~~ the ship was not as invincible and protected as it was gaudy.

Hardy's disdain of man's vanity is ~~re~~ ^{re} reaffirmed by images ^{of nature which} contrasting those of the ship. He portrays the ship as being ~~the~~ sunken, and instead of ^{the} "wealthy and affluent looking into the mirrors and jewels, it is the sea-worm and ^{and 'dim moon-eyed fishes.'} ~~the~~ Through the use of alliteration, Hardy also ^{He personifies the fish to ask, "What does the ungloriousness do in here?"} describes these jewels as being "lightless, all their sparkles bleared, ~~black~~ and black and blind." ~~There, the crown~~ Such blatant contrasts in imagery ~~the~~ makes the statement that man ^{has} ~~had~~ been too prideful, and accordingly, nature has put man back in his place.

The sinking of the Titanic is further portrayed as being inevitable through the presence of a fatalistic force. Hardy ~~re~~ ^{re} makes an allusion to destiny and God

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through his reference to "The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything." A similar allusion is made in the last stanza in which the "Spinner of the Years / Sward "Now!" " thereby causing the paths of the ship and the iceberg to cross. In the ninth stanza, Hardy also foreshadows the influence of a supernatural being by contrasting it with the use of the word "mortal." While no "mortal eye could see / The intimate welding of their later history," it was destined to be.

The poem depicts a battle between "the "Pride of Life" and a "Shape of Ice," ^{through the use of imagery, alliteration and personification} based on man's excessive ~~weak~~ hubris and nature's incomparable strength. Ultimately, ~~these~~ such circumstances, in conjunction with a godlike power, ~~was~~ made the sinking of the Titanic unavoidable.

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E₁

In "The Convergence of the Twain," Thomas Hardy discusses ~~the~~ the ill-fated sinking of the Titanic in 1912. ~~Through~~ Through various literary devices such as ~~personification~~ ^{personification} and ~~metaphors~~ ^{metaphors}, Hardy portrays the sadness associated with the tragic sinking of the Titanic.

As the Titanic lies ~~at~~ the bottom of the sea, it serves as a dwelling place for many creatures of the sea. Although the ship was deemed "unsinkable," it now lies sunken, "... In a solitude of the sea, / Deep from human vanity..." (line 1-2) Hardy is commenting on the fact that people were too vainly ~~deep~~ thinking that the Titanic was indestructible. Hardy personifies the fish to prove this point: "... Dim moon-eyed fishes near / Gaze at the ~~gilded~~ gilded gear / And query: 'What does this vaingloriousness do down here?' ... " By personifying the sea life Hardy ~~shows~~ points out that even the sea life felt that the Titanic was unsinkable, yet they also felt that ~~too~~ too much vanity went into making this ship, instead of steel.

Aside from using personification, the ~~pre~~ other important poetic device is the use of metaphors. Hardy compares the collision of the Titanic and the iceberg to a dark wedding: "... The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything / Prepared a sinister mate / For her - so gaily great - ..." (lines 18-20) Hardy's epic comparison paints a

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twisted picture about how this collision was fated. Hardy often draws in the fact that there is an ~~higher~~ ^{higher} being in charge, the force that controls all: "... Till the Spinner of the Years / Said 'Now!' And each one hears / And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres." (lines 31-33) Hardy once ~~again~~ again compares the crash to ~~marriage~~ ^{dark} marriage - one full of hurt and pain, ultimately ending in death.

By using such poetic devices, Hardy ~~portrays~~ portrays the attitude that although the Titanic was a great ship, it was deemed with a high standard. And although something may seem indestructible, one must always remember, "Man proposes, but God disposes."

