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Investigating the Effect of Stylistic Analysis on EFL Students' Comprehension of some of Thomas Hardy's Poems

Instr. Maha B. Mohammed *
College of Arts-University of Tikrit
E-mail: primrose20072000@yahoo.com

<p>Keywords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>stylistic analysis</i>- <i>poetic language</i>- <i>EFL students</i> <p>Article Info</p> <hr/> <p>Article history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Received: 1\12\2019-Accepted: 15\1\2020 <p>Available online</p>	<p>Abstract:</p> <p>This study investigates the role of the stylistic analysis in increasing the comprehension of the EFL students of the poetic texts.</p> <p>It focuses on presenting some linguistic categories of three poems of Thomas Hardy. These poems are preceded by a test and followed by the same test.</p> <p>Then, it compares and measures the answers of the subjects to judge whether there is any improvement in their interpretation of the selected poems. It also sheds light on the distinctive features of Hardy's poetic language. Finally, the study infers that stylistic analysis has an undeniable pedagogical importance for students who study English as a foreign language.</p>
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* **Corresponding Author:** Instr. Maha B. Mohammed,
E-Mail: primrose20072000@yahoo.com
Tel: 009647701370071
Affiliation: College of Arts, Department of Translation, Tikrit University –Iraq

تقصي أثر التحليل الاسلوبي على استيعاب الطلبة الدارسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية لبعض قصائد توماس هاردي

م. مها بكر محمد

جامعة تكريت – كلية الآداب – قسم الترجمة

الخلاصة:	الكلمات الدالة: -
تقوم هذه الدراسة على أساس تحليل ثلاث قصائد للشاعر توماس هاردي تحليلاً " لغويًا" وتعزو الزيادة الحاصلة في استيعاب الطلبة الدارسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية لهذه القصائد الى هذا النوع من التحليل. تركز هذه الدراسة على تحليل القصائد تحليلاً " اسلوبياً" مسبقاً" باختبار لمعرفة مدى استيعاب الطلبة للقصائد قبل تحليل أسلوب الشاعر ويتبع التحليل بنفس الاختبار وذلك لمعرفة الفرق الحاصل في النتائج. تقوم هذه الدراسة بمقارنة وقياس اجابات الطلبة في الاختباريين القبلي والبعدي للحكم فيما اذا كان هناك اي تحسن في استيعاب الطلبة للقصائد قيد البحث. تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على الخصائص المميزة لأسلوب الشاعر توماس هاردي. وأخيراً" تتوصل هذه الدراسة الى ان التحليل الأسلوبي له أهمية تعليمية لا يمكن نكرانها في زيادة و رفع مستوى فهم الطلبة الدارسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية سواء" لهذه القصائد أو لأية نصوص أخرى.	- التحليل الاسلوبي - اللغة الشعرية - الطلبة الدارسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية معلومات البحث تاريخ البحث: - الاستلام: ٢٠١٩ ١٢ ١١ - القبول: ٢٠٢٠ ١١ ١٥ - التوفر على النت

1. Introduction

EFL students may need more than the thematic analysis of the poetic texts to understand them. They need more explanation for lines and expressions especially the new ones. The main problem these students face is the complexity of both words and sentences.

The present study aims at shedding light on the significant role of the stylistic analysis of poetry in developing the comprehension of the EFL students of the studied

poems. It assumes that analysing the poetic language will help the students of English as a foreign language get better comprehension of the literary text.

The subject amounted fifty students of twenty-one years old, male and female learners who are junior at department of English/ College of Education for Human Sciences/ University of Tikrit are the subjects of this study. They share the same social background (i.e., they all live in city centre 'Tikrit').

The data of the study are designed to be applied twice. That is to say, they are applied before presenting the stylistic analysis of the poem and after it.

The present study is limited to certain poems stylistically analysed according to three categories which are: semantic, syntactic, and phonological categories. The poems have been analysed in the study are Hardy's "The Voice", "The Ruined Maid", and "The Darkling Thrush".

It is hoped that the results of this study will be helpful, useful, and valuable for those who teach literature in general and poetry in particular. It can be considered so since it provides them with a successful way to improve the interpretation of their students of any literary text.

2. The Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.1 The Language of Literature

According to Sapir (1921: 14), "language is the medium of literature as marble or bronze or clay are the materials of the sculptor". Since each language has its own literature that has its own distinctive features which are never the same as those of another. Every language is a collective art of expression by itself. There is concealed in it a particular group of esthetic elements: phonetic, rhythmic, symbolic, and morphological.

An artist ought to utilize the native esthetic resources of his speech. The phonetic groundwork of language is only one of the features that give its literature a certain direction. Far more important are its morphological peculiarities. It makes a great deal of difference for the development of style if the language can or cannot create compound words, if the structure is analytic. The major characteristics of style, in so far as a style is a technical matter of the building and placing of words, are given by the language itself (ibid.).

Morphological features are undoubtedly a branch of the great tree of lexical categories. Concerning the poetic language of Thomas Hardy, which will be analysed in this study, his diction has often been criticised as awkward but deeper understanding can reveal the linguistic reason that justifies the choice (Jackson 1986). Among other distinctive features of Hardy's poetic language is the use of coinages. Other times he sticks to use some antique poetic words (Abrams 1978). Another distinctive feature of his language is his interest in using social regional dialect.

2.2 The Teaching of Literature

Sesnan (2000: 22) believes that the linguistic problems are among the biggest problems that obstruct the process of the teaching of literature. These problems are

about students' ignorance of the words, phrases, and expressions of the literary work. To deal with such, and other, problems, there are many different ways. These ways according to Maley (2001) are:

Emphasis on the teaching of language vs. emphasis on the teaching of the literature.

Pragmatic focus vs. academic/ analytical or intellectual focus.

Stylistic analysis vs. literary criticism.

In fact, to analyse the style of any writer is a significant key to unfold his intended meaning (Guerin et al 2001).

2.3 Why Thomas Hardy?

To choose Thomas Hardy has not occurred accidentally. The first reason behind this selection is his being a poet and a novelist, so the results reached in this study can be expanded to be applied to selected extracts of any of his novels. Being a link between the Victorian and Modern eras of poetry is the second reason in spite of his tendency to the modern poetic diction more than the traditional Victorian one. Critics have long called him a transitional figure between these two eras. Another important reason is that many of Hardy's poems are taught within the academic syllabus.

2.4 The Thematic Analysis of "The Voice"

Hardy opens his poem with a lyrical flowing rhythm when the persona addresses the specter of his late wife using the word "woman". This word reflects no great emotions and makes the reader feel that the poet is not really in love with his wife. This sense is confirmed through the rest of the first stanza when the persona reminds her how much she had changed from the woman he fell in love with at first. This is to say, he reminds her how she looked old and less beautiful than before.

The second stanza presents how the persona is longing to the past or the days when she was younger and prettier. He is eager to meet her again in the place where she used to wait for him wearing a blue gown. In the third stanza, he recognises that the phantom is gone when he uses the words "dissolved" (l. 11) and "no more" (l. 12).

The last stanza is almost chaotic. The reader can feel how the poet is in a mess faltering forward because of his qualm. In spite of his compunction and sorrow, he decides that Emma's voice is imaginary and he must move forward. The last line "And the woman calling" (l. 16) brings the reader to the opening scene of the poem and to the conclusion that he can hear her. This shows the cycle of life which always ends up where we begin.

This is the preliminary analysis of the poem before taking into consideration the analysis of the poem's language (Web source 1).

2.5 The Stylistic Analysis of "The Voice"

No doubt that poetry has been used for ages as an extremely successful method of language teaching. Billows (1961) reflects this meaning when considers poetry as a part that cannot be left out of a language course and to neglect it, is to renounce a significant and powerful aid for the students that enables them to figure out their experience of the language. Bottom line, teachers who make the language of poems, especially the unusual features of poetic language, the focus of a language course helps their students extend their own language awareness and gradually develop their interpretive skills.

This study tries to reveal that the reverse is also true. That is to say, language is a part that cannot be left out of the study of poetry.

The analysis of Hardy's "The Voice" falls into three categories according to Widdowson's approach to stylistic analysis (1974) which are: semantic categories, syntactic categories, and phonological categories.

2.5.1 Semantic Analysis

Starting with the semantic or lexical relation of words, one should admit Hardy's distinctive use of connotation. He associates unusual words just as in "air-blue" (l. 8) instead of the usual collocation "sky-blue". The positive symbolism reflected through the unique association of "air-blue gown" (l. 8) is replaced by the negative combination of the "wet mead" (l. 10) and the verb "dissolved". (Thorne, 2006: 26). This is to reflect the shift from the charming vision to the bleak reality.

2.5.2 Syntactic Analysis

The syntactic category includes morphological and grammatical features. Dealing with morphology, it is important to draw reader's attention to Hardy's creation of the word "wistlessness" (l. 11) and the new collocation "air-blue". The use of coinage here emphasises the state of the speaker who is a man mourning for his dead wife and uttering irregular combination and a word that is never heard before.

Concerning the grammatical features, the first thing to mention is the use of vocative "woman" (l. 1). Opening the whole poem with this vocative emphasises the sense of absence. Another grammatical feature that has an effective role in creating a sense of vision and reality that Hardy tries to make his readers aware of. He achieves that by gathering the past participle "missed" (l. 1) and the present tense "call" (l. 1) side by side within one line (Thorne 2006: 28). The use of a four lines long question has its own role in serving Hardy's sense of uncertainty. The verb "dissolved" (l. 11) cannot give a complete guarantee that the poet's illusion has faded since it has come in a question. As a matter of fact, the use of the question mark (?) reflects the poet's confusion and doubt.

In the last stanza, the concept of contrast is created by the incomplete grammatical forms. The emphatic verbless clause "Thus I" (l. 13) shows the return of the poet to the reality, but unrest feelings are depicted by using non-finite clauses where present participle makes up an ongoing cycle of no conclusion (ibid.). The juxtaposition of these two grammatical structures serves the reader's belief that the poet finds his salvation in his vision and illusion especially when he ends the stanza with the present participle "calling" (l. 16) that echoes the opening scene of the poem when the poet has been talking to his dead wife's voice from which he cannot escape.

2.5.3 Phonological Analysis

The poet does not only use words with similar sounds, but also with the same final syllables just as in "call to" (l. 1) and "all to" (l. 3), "view/ you" (l. 5), and "know/ you" (l.7). The use of assonance confirms the reader's conclusion that the poem has a cyclic sorrowful sense. For example, "dissolved/ wistlessness" (l. 11), and "thorn/ norward" (l. 15) (Thorne 2006: 30).

Hardy adopts the strong-weak pattern of metre. Notice the following examples:

- "call to" (l. 1)
strong weak
- "now you" (l. 2)
strong weak

He sticks to this metrical form in the first three stanzas. Yet, the repetitive regular metre and length of lines are all destroyed in the final stanza with the words "Thus I" (l. 12) to be strong-strong stress pattern. This shift in the metre is an alarm to the shift from the past to the present.

2. 6 The Thematic Analysis of “The Ruined Maid”

This poem is a conversational one of six stanzas. In this conversation, there are two speakers: one of them asks and the other answers. It is a conversation between two rural girls. The first girl is nameless, while the second one is identified with a girlish name “Melia” who has left the country-side to live in a city. Through their conversation, Hardy reflects the social distinction of the Victorian age.

The girls have not seen each other for a long while and they have met by chance in the street. Both of them have used a dialect of low social class.

The first stanza shows the sudden meeting of the two girls in a town. In the second stanza, the first girl rises the memory of Melia’s past life after the big change she noticed on her. After showing the physical change of Melia, her friend expresses her surprise because of the big change in Melia’s language in the third stanza. In the fourth stanza, the unknown girl shows again her surprise in the total change of Melia’s appearance.

In the fifth stanza, Melia talks about her feelings and how sad she was in the farm in comparison with her happiness in the town. In the last stanza, the matter of discussion is changed and Melia's past is no longer mentioned and Melia's friend tells her that she is eager to be like her. The main themes of this poem are: 'Women and Femininity', 'Man and Natural World', and 'Society and Class' (Web source 2).

2.7 The Stylistic Analysis of "The Ruined Maid"

2.7.1 Semantic Analysis

The words used in this poem have been chosen carefully. The poet has used words that share the same components of meanings like 'bracelets', 'dress', 'gloves', 'weeping gown'. There is no doubt for the reader that these words are semantically related. They are associated with women's clothing and can be regrouped under the term 'female clothing'. Along with these semantically connected words, Hardy uses repeated expressions and words usually related with femininity such as "my dear", "delicate cheek", "delicate face", and "feathers". These terms serve the theme of womanhood and femininity.

Another semantic feature used by Hardy in this poem is the use of words such as "thee" and "thou" that are part of the Victorian poetry.

The use of expressions like "digging potatoes", "spudding up docks", and "barton" is an obvious evidence of the image of the country-side life that Hardy wants to reflect through the poem.

The usage of informal language expressions and words such as "you aint ruined", "thik oon", "theas oon", "t'other", "ee". The usage of such words and expressions serve the theme of 'Society and Class'. It is well known that Hardy was an interested observer and fond of country folk and their way of speaking (Dominique, 1993: 217-18).

2.7.2 Syntactic Category

The structure of the sentences appears to be built in an interesting way. It seems that the grammatical structure of the first clause in a sentence is repeated in the second clause of the same sentence. So, the clauses seem as a mirror of each other. That is to say, Hardy tends to use twin-clauses within the sentences of his poem. This distinctive way of building a sentence makes it so harmonic and easy to remember just as a nursery song. Here are some examples"

And you('d sigh), and you('d sock)

Conj. S. (NP) P. (VP) conj. S. (NP) P. (VP)

Tired of (digging) (potatoes) and (spudding up) (dock)

V.ing

NP

conj.

V.ing

NP

3. a- (you) (left) and (now) (you) ('ve)

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

b- (you) (used) But (at present) (you) (seem)

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

S. V.(ed) Conj. Temporal adv. S. V.

4. Your talking quite fits 'ee' for high company

NP Tr.V pre. NP.

And your little gloves fit as on any lady

NP Tr.V pre. NP.

In addition to the identical sentence patterns, Hardy's use of tenses is also distinctive. As a matter of making comparison between the out-looking of the country-side girl in the past and her appearance in the present, it is expected to find past and present tenses side by side in one stanza. Each single stanza starts with past tense then the speaker moves to the present except the first stanza which starts with present tense then the speaker moves to use past tense remember the past events and memories (Dominique, 1993: 218-19).

2.7.3 Phonological Category

The complete rhyme-scheme of this poem is:

a	c	d	e	f	a
a } /aun/	c } /Dks/	d } /au/	e } /i:k/	f } /i:m/	a } /aun/
b	b	b	b	b	b
b } /i:/	b } /i:/	b } /i:/	b } /i:/	b } /i:/	b } /i:/

The use of the hyphen(s) within the words like (prosperi-ty), (compa-ny), (la-dy), and (melancho-ly) is intentionally used by the poet to emphasize that the final syllable carries a tonic accent.

The consonants /d/ and /t/ that are found in lines (no.5 and 6) are explosives. /s/ and /z/ which are also explosive consonants are found in the same line in these words: /s/ is found in ‘us’, ‘socks’, and ‘docks’, while /z/ is found in ‘tatters-shoes’, and ‘potatoes’. Through the choice of lexis characterized by sounds of hardness and harshness represented by explosive sounds, the poet intends to show how harsh and miserable was the life in country-side (Dominique, 1993: 220-1).

2.8 The Thematic Analysis of “The Darkling Thrush”

The first stanza is a reflection of the poet’s thoughts and feelings. The poet in this stanza describes the bitter hopelessness of a cold winter’s evening. The reader can feel the lack of joy in the poet’s vision of life.

The second stanza is a continuation of the first one. In the third stanza, the song of a thrush might be seen as a sign for optimism into the poem. Thrush rising from the depths of the winter winds with their singing a beautiful song, reflects hope.

In the final stanza, the idea of religious faith is conveyed through the Christian virtues, faith, hope and charity (love). Although Hardy can see no reason for joy, he can hope, that the thrush can see something he himself is unable to perceive. The Darkling Thrush is thus finely balanced. It suggests there may be hope, and the voice of the thrush and its defiance of the prevailing moods reflects the existence of a tragic hope; life maybe threatened, its physical existence at risk, but its spirit is invincible and cannot be crushed easily. The main themes of this poem are: ‘Despair and Frustration’, ‘Isolation’ (Isolated man), and ‘The Destruction of the Traditional Agricultural Society by Industrialization’ (Web source 3).

2.9. The Stylistic Analysis of Hardy’s “Darkling Thrush”

2.9.1 Semantic Analysis

One of the most distinctive features of Hardy’s style is his coinages. In this poem, he uses a coined word which is ‘spectre-gray’(Napierkowski & Ruby, 1997: 75). This word suggests a haunted landscape. Hardy calls such words, that are created for a single use and occasion, “nonce words”. In “The Darkling Thrush”, he uses some of these words like “outleant, “blast-beruffled”, and “spectre-grey” to fit the metre and rhyme scheme of the poem (ibid.: 77).

2.9.2 Syntactic Analysis

In the whole poem the poet is symbolized by the thrush. Yet the poet disappears in the third stanza. The poet’s absence from the third stanza is precisely accompanied by the temporal adverb ‘At once’. The readers can easily suppose that the thrush’s song is not more than subsequent to the poet’s leaning; ‘At once’ means that the bird’s song proceeds with another action. That moment must be the poem’s only moment, the moment in which the whole poem has been concentrated, in which the one event has been the poet’s leaning on the gate. The

poem and the song of the bird start at the same time. The poem fills in a moment, and so does the song which a cry of happiness and ends in a moment (ibid.: 82-3).

2.9.3 Phonological Analysis

This poem is written in iambic tetrameter, with lines: one, three, five, and seven having four stressed syllables, and the even lines: two, four, six, and eight carrying three stressed syllables (ibid.: 77).

3. The Analytical Framework of the Study

Here is the presentation of the analysis and discussion of the data:

- Item No. (1):

Concerning this item in the pre-test, it is found that (75%) of the answers have concentrated on one part of the item, which is (vision) represented by the voice, neglecting the second part that deals with (reality), which is reflected when the poet remembers his past. The remain frequency which is (25%) presents correct answers dealing with the two parts of the item, but the subjects have used some expressions mirrors their uncertainty like "I think" and "in my opinion". In comparison with the answers of the post test, it is noticeable that such uncertain expressions have been removed and the incomplete answers have been replaced by complete ones.

- Item No. (2):

(58%) of the answers of the pre-test consider line No. 12 as the point at which the poet returns to reality when he says "Heard no more again" forgetting that it is not more than a question and the poet is not sure of what he is saying. The remain answers that form (42%) explain that the poet returns to reality when he talks about himself using the first person singular pronoun "I" mentioning nothing more about the voice. After analysing the poem stylistically, the first group of the subjects has changed its answers taking into consideration the metre. The second group of the subjects has enriched its answers benefitting from the information they have got from analysing the poem stylistically.

- Item No. (3):

All of the subjects (i.e., 100%) determine that Hardy has drawn a conclusion that lies in the last line. They believe that Hardy concludes that he can hear her voice calling him. That is to say, he decides not to forget her. While the answers of the post test are completely different from the answers of the first one. The subjects turn to believe that the use of present participle gives the readers a sense of continuity to which there is no conclusion. The other reason that disproves the concept of conclusion is the use of the same verb "call" he has used in the first line transforms the readers to the starting point from which he has begun. These two points, which the subjects become aware of after

the presentation of the poem's stylistic analysis, falsify their first belief of drawing a conclusion.

Item No. (4):

Concerning this item in the pre-test, it is found that (90%) of the answers have focused just on two themes of the poem which are: 'Woman and Femininity' and 'Man and Natural world'. The rest (10%) mentioned only the 'Woman and Femininity' theme in their answer. In comparison with the answers of the post test, it has been noticed that the whole subject involved the third theme, 'Society and Class', in their answer in the second time. Those (90%), who mentioned only two themes in the first test, have all involved the third theme in their answer in the second test. The (10%), who have mentioned only one theme have added another theme after the stylistic analysis of the poem.

Item No. (5):

In the pre-test, (84%) of the subject concentrated on the theme of the destruction of nature by industrialization since it was the most common themes in most of the poems of the Victorian Age. The rest (16%) have mentioned the other themes of 'Despair' and 'Isolation'. The missing two themes in the answer of the (84%) of the subject have appeared in the post test, after the stylistic analysis of the poem. The reason of the appearance of these themes lies behind the semantic and syntactic analyses of the poem. The semantic analysis serves the theme of 'Despair' because the poet has coined many new special words that reflect despair and unhappiness like 'spectre-grey' and 'blast-beruffled'. The poet makes such combination to emphasise the amount of despair and sadness. Whereas the syntactic analysis of the poem serves the theme of 'Isolation' or the 'Isolated man' when the poet combines himself with the thrush singing alone (in isolation) at the gate.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The first step to reach the highest level of interpretation is the understanding of the meaning of words. The other important way to get rid of the difficulties that obstacle students' interpretation is the removal of the grammatical complexity of the sentences. So, this study concentrates upon the semantic and syntactic functions of the structures with shedding a humble light on the phonological function of the stress.

The present study proves that stylistic analysis is helpful to be familiarised with the distinctive features of the poetic language of the poets. In addition to its importance to increase the EFL students' awareness of language due to it is a good way to manipulate what they have taught.

This study concludes that the analysis of the poetic text stylistically plays an important and noticeable role in clarifying some ambiguous ideas and leads to better understanding of the intended meaning of the poet. So, stylistic analysis can be considered as a successful way of improving the ability of the students who study English as a foreign language to interpret the analysed text. These results are not exclusive to poetry. They can be generalised to embrace the non-poetic texts (i.e., novels, plays, or short stories).

After all, we can infer that the presentation of the thematic analysis of the literary text followed by the stylistic analysis of it has been proved as being a reliable technique in teaching literature by virtue of which students can get better understanding.

4.2 Recommendations

The study recommends teachers of literature to get benefit from this method and apply it in the classroom to obtain better results. Although the scope of this study is limited to a poetic text, this method can be expanded to be applied to the fiction.

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Website Resources

<https://e.notes.com> › Thomas Hardy

<https://sparknotes.com> › Thomas Hardy

<https://poemanalysis.com> › Thomas Hardy

- Appendix 1:

The Voice

“Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me, 1
Saying that now you are not as you were
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then, 5
Standing as when I drew near to the town
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,
Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze in its listlessness
Travelling across the wet mead to me here, 10
You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness,
Heard no more again far or near?

Thus I; faltering forward,
Leaves around me falling,
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward, 15
And the woman calling.”

(Thorne, 2006:250)

- Appendix 2:

“The Ruined Maid”

"O Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!
Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?
And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?" -
"O didn't you know I'd been ruined?" said she.

- "You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;
And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers three!" -
"Yes: that's how we dress when we're ruined," said she.

- "At home in the barton you said 'thee' and 'thou,'
And 'thik oon,' and 'theas oon,' and 't'other'; but now
Your talking quite fits 'ee for high compa-ny!'" -
"Some polish is gained with one's ruin," said she.

- "Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak,
But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek,
And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!" -
"We never do work when we're ruined," said she.

- "You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,
And you'd sigh, and you'd sock; but at present you seem
To know not of megrims or melancho-ly!" -
"True. There's an advantage in ruin," said she.

- "I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,
And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!" -
"My dear—a raw country girl, such as you be,
Isn't equal to that. You ain't ruined," said she."

(Halley, 2017: 128)

- Appendix 3”

“The Darkling Thrush”

“I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,

In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.”

(Halley, 2017: 119)

- Appendix 4:

The test items:

How does the first stanza reflect the images of vision and reality side by side?

How can we consider lines (12-15) a return to reality?

At the end of this poem, does Hardy draw his conclusion?

What are the main themes in Hardy’s “The Ruined Maid”?

What are the main themes of Hardy’s “The Darkling Thrush”?