'The Voice' illustrates the theme of relationships. In particular we learn about the breakdown of relationships. The beginning of the poem suggests that the persona's relationship is over: 'Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me...' The phrase 'much missed' implies that the speaker is grieving for a dead partner and the alliteration of the 'm' sound draws our attention to the depth of his sorrow and longing. Many critics of the poem suggest the poem draws inspiration from the death of Hardy's wife, Emma. Towards the end of their relationship Hardy was no longer attracted to his wife and to some extent, neglected her. Perhaps this neglect is hinted at in the impersonal address of 'woman'. He does not refer to the addressee by name and this could imply the distance between Hardy and his wife in later years. The general word 'woman' could also suggest that Hardy did not want to make the poem personal - instead he wanted it to be a warning to all men to appreciate every 'woman' while they are with them. I feel that the repetition of 'call to me' could have multiple interpretations. The 'voice' in the poem could be that of the speaker's dead wife. Alternatively, this voice could be the guilty conscience of the speaker. He treated his wife poorly in life, was shocked by her death and subsequently he is consumed with guilt that he neglected her. So here we have the literal breakdown of a relationship – through the neglect of a partner and because of the death of a partner. In the poem the relationship between the speaker and the 'voice' also disintegrates. Stanza 2 begins 'Can it be you that I hear?' and reveals the speaker's doubt. He is uncertain that the voice he hears is that of his wife. Stanza 3 starts 'Or is it only the breeze...' and provides an answer to his previous question. The speaker now thinks it is merely the wind he hears. This could be a reflection of his real life relationship with his wife. At first he listened to her, then he stopped listening. It could also be an admission that he is ready to move on and leave the memories of his dead wife. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah....