

# How does Hardy portray his grief and loss in the voice essay



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The other poem that we have been studying is called “ The Voice” and it is about the death of Thomas Hardy’s wife, Emma.

The marriage had come to an end and Emma had left Hardy. Later after the split Emma had become ill and she had died tragically. Thomas Hardy had felt remorse and sadness when she had died, as he missed her and wished that they hadn’t parted. He wished their relationship could have been better so that he could have been there at her death.

He thinks that she is contacting him as he keeps hearing her and wishes to see her. In this poem Thomas Hardy seems like he is personally speaking to Emma, who is dead. He keeps calling to her and thinks that she is around him but doesn’t know for sure but he wants to see her “ Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,” This shows that he believes she is present around him and is talking back to her as if she were in the same room as him. He also thinks that she is calling to him as he can hear her voice, he thinks that this might just be the wind though. “ Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward, And the woman calling. This shows that the wind is blowing and that it could be making a sound that is like Emma’s voice.

The title summarizes the poem by telling us what it might be about. It makes us wonder about what “ The Voice” is and how it could relate to the poem. The Victorians used to believe a lot about ghosts and afterlife. Thomas Hardy is a prime example as he believes that his late wife had come down from heaven to talk to him.

It shows how the Victorians have come to believe in ghosts otherwise he would never have believed that he was talking to his late wife. Thomas

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Hardy uses short sentences to build tension and he repeats the line call to me “ how you call to me, call to me,” this makes the words call to me stick into your head and makes you wonder who this person is who is calling to him. The “ woman much missed” tells everyone in just the first three words who the poem is about and what it is about. It tells everyone that this is a sad poem about death of a woman. It also leaves the reader in suspense as not sure about the details of this woman.

The poet, Thomas Hardy questions his wife as he would do if she were alive, he does this as he wants her to live again. He refers to how his wife was when she was alive, that she was all to him “ the one who was all to me” this shows he still misses her and that she used to be everything to him at one point. The poet keep tracking back to the time before they had split up, he only refers to the good times and none of the bad time which they’d had. He does this as he only wants to remember her for the good times and good memories they had together not the bad ones.

Thomas Hardy’s wife, Emma is referred to by Hardy as a “ Woman much missed” she obviously meant a lot to him. The poem is very sad as there will never be a chance for them to get back together as Emma is now dead. Hardy felt guilty as he may have been partly to blame for them splitting up. At the beginning of the marriage.

“ When you have changed from the one who was all to me,” This shows that Thomas Hardy felt guilty as he may have been partly to blame for them splitting up. Thomas Hardy describes his life through the weather, in the last line of the first verse he commented on when his day was fair “ But as at

first, when our day was fair. This shows that when they were first married then it was good times, he uses the word fair this just means that it was good. Thomas Hardy seems doubtful in the first line of the second paragraph as he doesn't know whether or not it is his wife trying to speak to him, he seems hesitant and he pauses a lot " Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then," it's like he wants to see her but hasn't convinced himself as it might be disturbing. He still didn't know if it was her or not so wasn't sure.

Thomas Hardy gives a detailed description of what used to happen when he was happily married to Emma at the start of the marriage. The poet uses past tense " Where you would wait for me" this shows the reader that Thomas Hardy is remembering what it used to be like when Emma was alive and what usually use to happen before her death. He also refers to Emma's dress " Even to the original air blue-gown! " this tells the audience that Thomas Hardy may have been referring to a particular day that he could remember as he remembers it in particular detail. The blue gown could have been her favourite dress as he remembers that one in particular. Thomas Hardy ends stanza two with an exclamation mark, this shows his anger and his annoyance at the fact that his wife is dead. It shows that he just wants her back like when he remembers, but he can't, this is why he is angry.

In the third stanza Thomas Hardy changes his mood from totally believing that Emma was around him and talking to her, to maybe she's isn't it might just be the breeze " Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness" this shows that he is thinking about all the options and the facts that maybe ghosts aren't real, and maybe its just the wind playing a trick on him. He is

vulnerable at that moment as he wants it to be with Emma so he can say his  
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goodbyes, this makes him believe that anything that sounds a bit like Emma could be. In the third stanza Thomas Hardy seems to have lost hope compared to stanza two he asks more questions in the third stanza. This may mean that he is not sure as he needs to know more answers.

Thomas Hardy uses personification in this stanza to describe the breeze as being listless “ Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness” listlessness usually describes how a human is feeling, which is having a lack of energy. The breeze is described as listlessness which tells us that the breeze was very gentle. In the third stanza Thomas Hardy uses coinage of terms to create the word wistlessness, this is a made up word to rhyme with listlessness to keep the mood of the poem and for it to flow easier. In the third stanza Thomas Hardy uses words that sounds like the breeze, he uses lots of S’s and Z’s in the stanza “ You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness” this produces sounds that sound like a breeze or a small wind to make the poem more interesting.

He may have mistaken his wife for the wind because he describes his wife as being “ wan”, this mean she may have been of pale complexion and may have been exhausted. He also describes the breeze as gentle which they both have in common. Thomas Hardy uses alliteration in the last line of stanza three by repeating the sound OR “ Heard no more again far or near? ” the use of the OR sound makes him think that no matter where he chooses to be he wont hear her again. Thomas Hardy ends the stanza with a question, this shows that he is unsure about her presence or ghost near him, ending the sentence like this makes Thomas hardy think whether she is really gone or not.

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Thomas Hardy changes his focus in the fourth stanza. In the third stanza Thomas Hardy focuses mainly on Emma and her ghostly presence but in the fourth stanza Thomas Hardy mainly thinks about how he would be affected by her death. He describes himself as “faltering forward” this shows how he would have to carry on life after her death, stumbling and not as sturdy without his rock, Emma. He wouldn't be as strong without her.

Thomas Hardy also mentions the weather. “Leaves around me falling” This reminds him of autumn and the fact that winter is coming, this is a worry to Thomas Hardy as he would have to survive the winter, vulnerable and alone in the cold harsh conditions. The leaves falling symbolises the fact that it is an end to summer and that the leaves are dying off ready for winter.

Thomas Hardy can relate to this as he too is letting part of him die, Emma and starting a new life on his own. In the fourth stanza Thomas Hardy uses the words “oozing thin” to explain to the reader the sound that the wind is making. He comments on the wind “oozing thin through the thorn” this could mean that the wind is making an “oo” sound through the thorn bush, the sound that is like a woman calling.

In stanza four Thomas Hardy uses a lot of negative language like “Thus I; faltering forward,” this shows a lot of negative language as it is telling us that he will be weak and will be stumbling forward in life. Another example of negative language is “Leaves around me falling,” this shows it is an end to summer and that the leaves are dying off ready for winter. This is negative as it relates to how he is feeling as well. The negative language affects the reader's view of Thomas Hardy as they now can see how distraught and depressed he is after the death of his wife.

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Thomas Hardy doesn't come to a conclusion at the end of his poem as he leaves it open, he still isn't sure whether or not it was Emma calling as it leaves the reader wondering. Thomas Hardy starts the poem with " And the woman calling. " This is important as he doesn't mention a woman calling in the poem until the start. The whole poem is based around the fact that she is talking to him. Thomas Hardy structures the poem dividing the poem into four stanzas. In each stanza he uses quatrains.

This gives rhyme to the poem by adding structure. I think that Thomas Hardy's grief was genuine, because he wrote the poem about his grief and feelings for Emma. Thomas Hardy had felt guilt for not speaking to Emma over their marriage break up, he felt that he should have made peace with Emma and become friends again before she died. My first impressions of the poem is that it is very sad and all about death. The poem was obviously about a woman who had died, and about a man who was grieving her death.

At first the poem was confusing and didn't make a lot of sense but it all fitted together when you read it a couple of times. I think that it was confusing at the start because it had used words I had not been familiar with before. I now think that the poem is easier to understand now that I know what most of the words mean and the basic storyline to it. I think that my understanding and impressions of the poem has changed as I can now understand it better and I think that this poem is very good.