Edexcel GCSE English Literature

Your notes

The Woman in Black

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The Woman in Black: Plot Summary

Written by Susan Hill in 1983, the Woman in Black is a pastiche to traditional Victorian Gothic stories. The novella is split into twelve chapters, with the first chapter set in the narrative present and the rest set in the past.

Arthur Kipps, the narrator of the story, joins his family in the drawing room on Christmas Eve, where his step-children are sharing ghost stories. The children urge Arthur to share a story but Arthur becomes agitated and abruptly leaves. As he walks outside alone, he reflects on a past experience that has left him scarred and horrified. He decides to record his story in the hopes that it will exorcise the demons that have haunted him.

Arthur begins to relay his story, which begins in London. He is a young lawyer who is told to travel to a town called Crythin Gifford to deal with the funeral of a client called Mrs Drablow. During his travels, he meets a man called Mr Samuel Daily. Samuel, who lives in Crythin Gifford, discloses that he knows Mrs Drablow but does not wish to elaborate. Samuel offers to drive Arthur to the inn where he will be staying and he accepts.

The next day, Arthur meets Mr Jerome, who accompanies him to Mrs Drablow's funeral. During the service, Arthur notices a sickly looking woman dressed in black and when he mentions her to Mr Jerome, he appears unsettled and distressed. The men hurry back to town and Keckwick arrives to take Arthur across the causeway to Eel Marsh House. While exploring the grounds, Arthur stumbles upon an abandoned graveyard whereupon he sees the woman dressed in black once again. Convinced she is a ghost, Arthur begins to explore the house and finds Mrs Drablow's extensive papers. He decides to leave and as he is walking, he hears the distressing sound of a pony and trap becoming stuck in the marsh, along with the terrifying cries of a child. Frightened, Arthur returns to the house where he remains until Keckwick rings the doorbell to bring him back to town.

The following morning, Arthur meets Samuel Daily, who invites him to dinner. After dinner, Samuel warns Arthur not to return to Eel Marsh House but Arthur does not heed his warning. Defeated, Samuel offers Arthur his dog named Spider for company and he accepts. Arthur returns to Eel Marsh House. He finds a packet of letters addressed to Mrs Drablow from a woman named Jennet. The letters reveal Jennet had an illegitimate son who she was forced to give over for adoption to Mrs Drablow. Spider begins to growl and, while Arthur is outside, he hears the sound of the pony and trap again. He realises that these are ghostly apparitions. He returns to the house where he finds a neatly preserved nursery. He retires to bed.

The next morning, Arthur takes Spider for a walk and she becomes trapped in a marsh. After saving her, Arthur carries her back to the house and sees the Woman in Black in the nursery window. This causes him to collapse. He wakes to find a concerned Samuel standing over him and they both return to town. Arthur, safe in the Daily's home, returns to Jennet's letters where he finds death certificates for a boy, a nanny and Jennet. Arthur realises that Jennet was the boy's mother who died due to her grief and madness over losing her child. Samuel reveals that Jennet's story is common knowledge and that her ghost has haunted the town, causing children to die suddenly. Arthur recovers from an illness and returns to London.

A short time later, Arthur is married to Stella and they welcome their first child. A year later, the family attend a fair. As Arthur happily watches them on a ride, he sees the Woman in Black. The Woman in Black steps in front of a pony and trap carrying his family and the carriage

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crashes into a tree. The child dies instantly and Stella is left paralysed. Stella never recovers and dies from her injuries ten months later. Arthur states that the Woman in Black has got her revenge and abruptly ends the story.



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Examiner Tips and Tricks

You will not be allowed to take a copy of The Woman in Black into the exam with you. Therefore, you need to make sure you have a solid understanding of the plot. You will be given an extract to analyse but the examiner expects you to use your knowledge of the whole text to answer the question successfully.

For example, if the question asks you to comment on Arthur Kipps' experiences with ghosts, you will be expected to give a number of examples from the text to support your view such as Hill's use of a frame narrative, Alice Drablow's funeral and the pony and trap. It is therefore imperative that you have a good grasp of the plot and the events that unfold.

Chapter-by-chapter plot summary

Chapter 1 – Christmas Eve

- A retired Arthur Kipps spends Christmas Eve with his family at Monk's place
- He becomes uneasy as his step-children are sharing ghost stories around the fire and he leaves abruptly
- Outside, he decides to confront his past by writing down his own experiences with the supernatural as a type of exorcism

Chapter 2 – A London Particular

- The narrative moves to the past to Arthur as a 23-year old lawyer, working in London during a foggy November
- His boss, Mr Bentley, assigns him to handle the estate of a deceased client, Alice Drablow, in the rural town of Crythin Gifford
- Mr Bentley explains the assignment and instructs Arthur to attend Mrs Drablow's funeral
- Arthur accepts the assignment and prepares to leave

Chapter 3 – The Journey North

- Arthur begins his journey with enthusiasm at the train station
- Another passenger, Samuel Daily, joins Arthur in the compartment
- Upon seeing Arthur's envelope, Samuel mentions the late Mrs Drablow and shares insights about her reclusive nature
- Samuel assures Arthur of the village's hospitality

Chapter 4 – The Funeral of Mrs Drablow

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- Samuel leaves Arthur at the Gifford Arms and gives him his card
- Inside, Arthur mentions Mrs Drablow to the landlord and he reacts in an unusual way
- The next day, Mr Jerome collects Arthur for Mrs Drablow's funeral
- During the service, Arthur notices a mysterious woman in black
- He points her out to Mr Jerome, who almost collapses in shock, and they both leave the funeral in a hurry
- Mr Jerome advises Arthur to stay at the inn rather than at Eel Marsh House but does not offer a reason

Chapter 5 – Across the Causeway

- Keckwick arrives at the Gifford Arms with a pony and trap and takes Arthur to Eel Marsh House
- Before entering the house, Arthur explores the serene surroundings and discovers ruins and a graveyard
- Arthur encounters the same woman in black and feels malevolence emanating from her
- In fear, Arthur returns to the house and is convinced that she is a ghost
- He begins to search the house for Mrs Drablow's documents
- Overwhelmed, Arthur decides to leave and begins walking back to town

Chapter 6 – The Sound of a Pony and Trap

- Arthur walks hurriedly down the drive, wary of the Woman in Black following him
- On the causeway, Arthur becomes disorientated by the sea mist and decides to return to the house
- He hears Keckwick's pony trap approaching but realises it's moving away and hears a child crying in distress
- Unable to help, Arthur returns to the house and illuminates the lamps to signal for help
- Exhausted, Arthur falls asleep and is awoken by the arrival of Keckwick, who explains the delay due to the fog and tide
- Arthur realises someone else must have been in distress in the marsh
- They return to the inn, where Arthur has disturbing dreams of the events at Eel Marsh House

Chapter 7 – Mr Jerome is Afraid

- Arthur visits Mr Jerome to seek assistance with the Drablow estate, but Mr Jerome refuses
- Mr Jerome shares information about Keckwick's knowledge of Eel Marsh House and its history
- Arthur resolves to continue with the estate despite Mr Jerome's warnings



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- He updates Mr Bentley for the delay caused by the extensive papers at Eel Marsh House
- Arthur borrows a bicycle and sets out to explore the countryside



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Chapter 8 – Spider

- After a rejuvenating bicycle ride, Arthur prepares to return to Eel Marsh House
- On the way back, he meets Samuel, who invites him to dinner
- Samuel warns Arthur again about the dangers of the estate but Arthur remains determined to return
- As a compromise, Arthur agrees to take Samuel's dog, Spider, as a companion

Chapter 9 – In the Nursery

- Arthur awakens after a fitful sleep and receives a call from Mr Bentley, who insists he continue his work at Eel Marsh House
- Arthur returns to the manor and begins to sort through Mrs Drablow's papers
- He revisits the graveyard and returns to the house to continue his work
- That night, Arthur experiences eerie occurrences and hears Spider growling at a locked room
- Arthur tries to open it but is unable to
- He discovers a packet of letters written by Jennet Humfrye to Alice Drablow and realises Alice adopted Jennet's child
- Arthur hears the sound of the pony and trap
- He realises it is a ghostly apparition and that a child had previously died in the marshes
- He discovers the previously locked room is now unlocked and that it is a perfectly preserved nursery
- Arthur feels a sadness in the room and retires to bed

Chapter 10 – Whistle and I'll Come to You

- Arthur is awakened by a strong wind and hears the cries of a child on the marsh
- He retrieves a torch from his bedroom but accidentally breaks it
- Despite his fear, Arthur enters the nursery to retrieve a candle and experiences overwhelming emotions of grief and despair
- Returning to his room, Arthur lights the candle and attempts to read until dawn
- In the early morning, Arthur takes Spider outside and she gets trapped in the mud of the marsh
- Arthur saves Spider and attempts to carry him into the house
- As he does so, Arthur sees the Woman in Black in the nursery window and collapses

Chapter 11 – A Packet of Letters

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- Disorientated, Arthur awakens in the parlour with Samuel by his side
- Samuel helps Arthur gather his belongings and the packet of letters, and they leave Eel Marsh House together
- Arthur discovers crucial information about Jennet Humfrye and the tragic events at Eel Marsh House
- Arthur shares the full story with Samuel, who reveals how the curse of the house has affected the town for decades
- Samuel tells Arthur about the Woman in Black's connection to child deaths in the town
- Arthur becomes ill and is haunted by the nightmares of the child's drowning
- After twelve days, Arthur recovers and is visited by Stella, his fiancée, who takes him back to London

Chapter 12 – The Woman in Black

- Arthur returns to London with Stella
- They marry within six weeks and have a son named Joseph Arthur Samuel
- A year later, Arthur and Stella take Joseph to a fair, where Arthur sees the Woman in Black
- The Woman in Black causes an accident with a pony and trap, which results in Stella becoming paralysed and Joseph dying
- Ten months later, Stella dies from her injuries, marking the culmination of Jennet Humfrye's revenge

Sources

Hill, S. (2011). *The Woman in Black*. Vintage Books.



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The Woman in Black: Themes

For your Component 2 exam, you will be expected to show an understanding of how key themes are presented in The Woman in Black. It is therefore imperative that you have a solid understanding of the key themes and use that knowledge to help you answer the question.

Below you will find some of the key themes from The Woman in Black:

- Isolation and trauma
- The past
- Fear

Isolation and trauma



Isolation is a common theme in the Gothic genre and the novel's central characters are physically and emotionally isolated due to their experiences. Hill highlights how isolation and loneliness result in traumatisation and suffering.

Knowledge and evidence

- The theme of isolation is evident from the beginning as Kipps is unable to participate in his family's discussion:
  - He leaves their company to walk in "a frenzy of agitation" due to his trauma
- Kipps is also isolated from the residents of Crythin Gifford as they are part of a conspiracy of silence:
  - None of the residents disclose any information regarding the supernatural but try to subtly warn him instead
  - However, he does not heed their warning and he is physically and emotionally isolated as a result
- Eel Marsh House is also isolated from the rest of the town when the tide comes in, thereby cutting off access:

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- This means Kipps is not only emotionally isolated but also physically isolated from society, leaving him vulnerable

- Kipps is isolated once again at the end of the novel when the Woman in Black kills his son and his wife:
  - The trauma that Arthur experiences due to their death haunts him forever
- Other characters are also isolated and traumatised due to their experience with the Woman in Black:
  - Keckwick is isolated as his father also died on the same day as Jennet Humfrye's son
  - Mr Jerome is described as having a "shuttered expression", highlighting his isolation and his extreme reaction at the mention of the Woman in Black conveys his trauma
- Jennet Humfrye is also a victim of isolation and trauma:
  - **Stigmatised** by society, she is forced to give up her son to her sister
  - However, upon her return, she witnesses his death from the nursery window and the trauma of the accident drives her to insanity
- Jennet's pain and grief isolates her and, after her death, she returns as a ghost to haunt Eel Marsh House:
  - The trauma of her son's death causes her to seek vengeance on those who isolated her
- The town of Crythin Gifford is also isolated from the rest of society as they keep the secret of Jennet Humfrye to themselves:
  - No one outside of Crythin Gifford is aware of the hauntings, which is why Kipps was so vulnerable during his time there

What is Hill's intention?

- Hill highlights the isolating effects trauma can have on individuals
- Through the character of Jennet Humfrye, Hill demonstrates how extreme trauma and isolation can lead an individual to draw others into their pain and suffering:
  - These individuals perpetuate an endless cycle of pain, isolation and trauma
  - Keckwick, Mr Jerome and Arthur Kipps are all a part of Jennet's cycle of isolation and trauma and their behaviours have been altered as a result
- Through Arthur Kipps, Hill highlights the lingering effects of trauma and the persistent inability to fully overcome it, despite outward appearances:
  - They are therefore always isolated from both society and their family





Examiner Tips and Tricks

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In your exam, you may be asked to look at a particular theme in relation to a character or an event. For example, you may be asked to explore how Hill has created fear in an extract and the novella as a whole. Therefore, you need to make sure you understand each theme and how it is presented.

It is also important to remember important quotes for each theme and "The Woman in Black Key Theme Quotations" section will help you do this.

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The past



The past is a significant theme in the novel as many of the characters are haunted by their past and unable to move on. Their experiences have had an impact on their futures and their actions are influenced by their trauma.

Knowledge and evidence

- The frame narrative highlights how Kipps is forced to relive his past and reflect on an incident that changed him forever:
  - The fog in Chapter 1 also reminds Kipps of his past, creating a sense of suffocation, as if the memories of his past are inescapable
  - The older Kipps clearly does not wish to revisit the past but he also knows that the "experience would never leave" him
- During Kipps' time at Eel Marsh House, he is forced to uncover the history of the house:
  - Through Jennet's letters to Alice Drablow, Arthur understands why the house was haunted by the Woman in Black
  - The haunting sound of the child dying on the pony and trap is repeated, reminding him of the terrifying incident that occurred 60 years prior at Eel Marsh House
  - The perfectly preserved nursery is also a reminder of the past and the impact of the child's death, highlighting how the house is entrenched in the past
- At the end of the novel, while Kipps has tried to "exorcise" the demons of his past, it is evident that he has still not been released from the pain of it:
  - The abrupt ending of "enough" indicates that he still finds it painful

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- The use of the pony and trap strongly connects the present to the past as Keckwick uses it to travel to and from Eel Marsh House:
  - The pony and trap were also used when the boy died at Eel Marsh House and mirror the carriage style in which Arthur Kipps' child dies
- The Woman in Black is also trapped in the past as her pain and desire to avenge her son's death do not allow her to move on


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What is Hill's intention?

- Hill emphasises how one can never truly escape the painful experiences of their past and how it can influence their future:
  - Through Arthur Kipps and Jennet Humfrye, Hill illustrates how past experiences can have a negative impact
  - By using a frame-narrative, Hill emphasises how the past can have a lasting impact that can influence the individual's future
- Hill links the past to the present through the use of the pony and trap, highlighting how one's present is always influenced by the past

Fear



The Woman in Black is a pastiche of a Gothic novel and so fear is a prevalent theme. It is presented as both individual fear and also collective fear through the residents of Crythin Gifford.

Knowledge and evidence

- Kipps' individual fear is evident from the beginning as his past trauma resurfaces and he leaves his house to compose himself:
  - The fear depicted in this chapter causes a physical reaction as the memory of his past results in "agitation"
- However, he does not initially acknowledge his fear after his first supernatural encounter:
  - His determination to finish his assignment overpowers his initial fear and shock

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- Kipps' fear also highlights his vulnerability as he unaware of the supernatural presence at Eel Marsh House:
  - While overcome with fear, he has to enter the nursery in an attempt to understand the events unfolding
- As he continues to stay at the manor, his fear becomes extreme:
  - He is "paralysed" due to the noises at Eel Marsh House and leaves with a "fever" that makes him bedridden for days
- This same physical reaction is evident through Mr Jerome, whose reaction to the mention of the Woman in Black causes him to almost "collapse":
  - Mr Jerome's own trauma has impacted his behaviour and silences him
- Mr Keckwick is also silent about his father's death and his knowledge of the Woman in Black and her child:
  - The residents are silent due to either their trauma or their fear of becoming another victim, such as the innkeeper or Mr Daily
- The Woman in Black is the source of fear and controls the other characters through her evil actions:
  - Mr Daily stated that a child dies every time she is spotted and so the residents of Crythin Gifford dread her appearance
  - Her final, deliberate act of killing Kipps' wife and child heightens the fear around the Woman in Black as she seeks out Kipps' child after he thought he had escaped

What is Hill's intention?

- Through Kipps, Hill demonstrates how rational people can be affected through fear:
  - The frame narrative is effective as it shows that the older Kipps is still haunted by his past
- Hill is showing how there are different layers of fear:
  - The residents of Crythin Gifford are all part of a conspiracy of silence and do not speak of the Woman in Black
  - Victims are also in a constant mental anguish due to their encounter with the ghost
  - Characters like Mr Jerome are also physically affected by the mere mention of the Woman in Black

Sources

Hill, S. (2011). *The Woman in Black*. Vintage Books

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The Woman in Black: Characters

It is important that you fully understand the characters in Susan Hill's The Woman in Black as they represent important themes and ideas. Each character is important in driving the plot forward, so it is essential that you consider how the characters are presented, the relationships between characters and what they might represent or symbolise.

Below, you will find detailed character analysis for the main characters in the novella, as well as a summary of other significant characters.

Main characters
Arthur Kipps
The Woman in Black/Jennet Humfrye
Samuel Daily

Other characters
Mr Jerome
Keckwick
Alice Drablow

Arthur Kipps

- Arthur Kipps is the narrator and protagonist of the novel
- The frame narrative begins with Arthur, who is now retired, being forced to remember his past horror and trauma:
  - He describes it as an "old wound" that is "woven" into his "very fibers" but something that he tried to ignore until it resurfaced
- The second chapter begins in the past when Arthur was a confident new lawyer who has been sent on an assignment to Crythin Gifford:
  - Arthur is content with the assignment, which highlights his self-confidence and eagerness to please
- As he is told about the assignment, he ironically states that the information sounds like "something from a Victorian novel":
  - Arthur's character is a stereotypical gothic character who does not initially believe in the supernatural but instead chooses to focus on logic and science
  - His arrogance and ambition is evident in this chapter as he does not take the conversation seriously
  - It foreshadows Arthur's experiences at Crythin Gifford
- Upon his arrival to Crythin Gifford, Arthur finds that the mention of Alice Drablow unsettles people:

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- However, his confidence and eagerness to complete his assignment means that he ignores the subtle warnings to turn back and continues with his task

- In Chapter 4, the older Arthur talks in hindsight about how his life changed after that peaceful night's sleep:
  - He reflects on his "innocence" and how he seemingly ignored the warning signs that resulted in him losing his innocence forever
- During Alice Drablow's funeral, Arthur sees the Woman in Black for the first time and is concerned for her wellbeing:
  - Mr Jerome's extreme reaction confuses him but does not worry him enough to stop or investigate further, highlighting his naivety
- However, when he sees the Woman in Black for the second time, he is "filled with fear" as he is able to feel her evil presence:
  - It is only then that he realises she must be a ghost
- Arthur's strong will and pragmatism meant that he still continues with his assignment despite Samuel Daily's attempts at dissuading him
- Eventually, he realises he cannot complete his task as the Woman in Black's presence is too disturbing
- At the end of his story, readers finally understand his trauma as he discloses that his first wife and child were killed by the Woman in Black:
  - The abrupt ending of "enough" highlights his sadness and desire to not dwell on the painful memory
- Arthur's character is realistic and a typical example of an educated Englishman from the early 20th century, characterised by his rational mindset rather than superstition:
  - Readers are able to sympathise and identify with his character as a result

The Woman in Black/Jennet Humfrye

- The Woman in Black is the ghost of Jennet Humfrye
- Jennet Humfrye was Alice Drablow's sister, who gave birth to a baby boy approximately 60 years before Mrs Drablow's funeral:
  - Her baby, Nathaniel, was taken against her will and adopted by Alice Drablow
  - Her son was killed which drove Jennet mad with grief and anger and she eventually died of heart failure
- Her ghost, which the locals call the Woman in Black, haunts the people of the village:
  - As an act of revenge, everytime she is sighted, a child dies from an accident or sudden illness
  - The locals are all acquainted with her story but do not discuss it out of fear
- She is seen by Arthur Kipps during Alice Drablow's funeral and later at Eel Marsh House:


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- His final sighting of her results in the death of his wife and child

- Arthur Kipps describes her in detail and as having a "wasted face" and a "desperate, yearning malevolence":
  - She appears to be searching and yearning for something and hated "whoever had taken it"
  - The Woman in Black does not speak, which makes her more sinister and menacing
- The origins of the Woman in Black become clear when Arthur Kipps discovers letters from Jennet Humfrye to her sister, Alice Drablow:
  - The letters reveal a dark and desperate side to Jennet as she struggles with the idea of giving up her child
  - While she allows Alice to adopt him, she is unable to move on emotionally
  - The letters give the Woman in Black a voice and the temporary shift in narrative offers an insight into her desperation and pain
- Arthur Kipps learns that Jennet became obsessed with her child and had decided to run away with him, only to witness him die in a terrible pony and trap accident from the nursery window:
  - The nursery encapsulates the Woman in Black's grief and sorrow, which Arthur Kipps senses when he is in the room
- His final sighting of the Woman in Black results in his child and wife dying:
  - Arthur's child dies in similar circumstances to Jennet's, on a pony and trap, and he watches on in horror as she had once done

Samuel Daily

- Samuel Daily is an older businessman whom Arthur meets on his way to Crythin Gifford:
  - Daily acts as a mentor and father-figure to Arthur during his time at Crythin Gifford
- He is thoughtful and caring from the beginning and offers Arthur his business card:
  - He is aware of Arthur's assignment and that he may be need to keep him safe
- Arthur describes him as having "good common-sense" and his wealth becomes a topic of conversation as he acquires all available land:
  - However, Arthur discovers that he is not interested in buying Eel Marsh House
- Arthur is part of the conspiracy of silence as he chooses to "fall silent" when Mrs Drablow is mentioned:
  - His reluctance to speak about her explicitly could reflect his own personal fear and belief in the ghost
- He tries to warn Arthur not to go to Eel Marsh House and gives Arthur his dog when he refuses to listen



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- Samuel Daily's kindness and concern is evident when he travels to Eel Marsh House in order to check on Arthur:
  - He discovers Arthur collapsed and saves him from the Woman in Black
  - Daily eventually discloses what he knows about Jennet Humfrye, which helps Arthur to piece the mystery together
- A bond is created between Arthur and Samuel as Arthur recovers in the Daily house after his experiences:
  - Samuel becomes godfather to Arthur's first child, highlighting the importance of their friendship



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Other characters

Mr Jerome

- Mr Jerome is Alice Drablow's agent and escorts Arthur to Mrs Drablow's funeral
- He is a nervous and reserved man who does not give much away:
  - He is also part of the conspiracy of silence and does not tell Arthur about the Woman in Black
- Mr Jerome has an extreme reaction to hearing Arthur mention the Woman in Black but does not disclose the reason why
- Mr Jerome warns Arthur not to stay at Eel Marsh House during the night and also tries to discourage him from returning to the house
- He is reluctant to help Arthur with Eel Marsh House and tells him that no one in the town would be willing to offer their assistance:
  - Mr Jerome has a tendency to "panic" and become agitated, which reveals his discomfort over speaking about Eel Marsh House
- It is only later that Arthur discovers that Mr Jerome is a victim of the Woman in Black's vengeance:
  - He lost his own child to the Woman in Black; therefore his reservation and fear is justified

Keckwick

- Keckwick is the driver who is instructed to take Arthur to and from Eel Marsh House:
  - He drives a pony and trap and is the only character who is willing to travel through the causeway to the manor
  - He was the only link between Mrs Drablow and the outside world as he transported things to her house
- He is described as a man of few words with "bumps and lumps and warts" covering his face:

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- He does not show emotion and he speaks "matter-of-factly", which is in contrast to Arthur

- He saves Arthur from his first encounter of the Woman in Black at Eel Marsh House:
  - However, he "did not wish to hear" what happened to Arthur, showing a lack of concern and disinterest
- Keckwick also experienced loss as his father was driving the pony and trap that killed Jennet's son:
  - His father died in the same incident
- It could be suggested that Keckwick, along with his pony and trap, are the only connection between the land of the living and the land of the dead



Examiner Tips and Tricks

It is important to think of the characters in The Woman in Black as conscious constructs that Hill has created to perform certain functions within the narrative.

For example, Hill has used a frame narrative from the perspective of Arthur Kipps to tell his story. Try and think about why she has done this and how it builds suspense in the story.

Sources

Hill, S. (2011). *The Woman in Black*. Vintage Books.

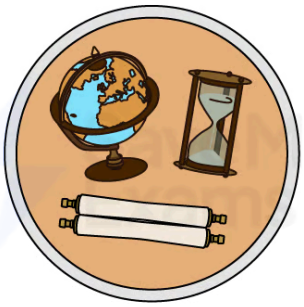


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The Woman in Black historical context



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Susan Hill wrote The Woman in Black in 1983. However, the novella is set during the start of the Edwardian era (approximately 1901–1910) and is a pastiche of the Gothic genre.

However, Hill also used her personal experience of her fiance and child dying as inspiration for her novel. She also used the marshes around the Suffolk coast to inspire the setting of Eel Marsh House.

Therefore, the ideas in the novella reflect both the views of Edwardian society and her own personal experience.

The Woman in Black social context



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Many of the views held by Edwardian society are reflected in the novella and some of these views are included below.

The role of women

- Women were treated very differently to men during the Edwardian era:
  - Middle- to upper-class women were seen as second-class citizens with men assuming dominant roles in society
  - They were educated differently and possessed fewer rights

- Working-class women were expected to work while still taking care of their children

- The expectation was for women, especially from the upper classes, to enter into advantageous marriages in order to secure a comfortable life:
  - Upper-class women were expected to conform to the stereotype of the "angel in the house", underscoring the expectation for purity and domesticity
  - Women were prohibited from engaging in relationships with men and were expected to maintain their virginity until marriage



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How this links to The Woman in Black	
Gender expectations	Jennet Humfrye was marginalised and rejected by her family for having a child out of wedlock. Left without help to raise her child, she was forced to give him up. This circumstance drove her to insanity and became the reason for her spirit to seek vengeance. Mrs Drablow failed in her care of the child and, as a result, became a recluse who died alone. Both women fail in meeting societal expectations, leading to lives devoid of happiness.
	In contrast, the women presented in a positive light are those who are married and have children such as both Kipps' wives, Stella and Esme, and Mr Daily's wife. All of these women possess maternal instincts but have minor roles within the novella. This reflects the norms of the Edwardian era; women were to be seen but not heard.

Modernisation

- The Edwardian era saw a time of great modernisation with many people embracing these changes:
  - Automobiles as well as electricity were becoming increasingly popular
- Modernisation also saw a change in how things were manufactured with machinery being used to increase production and efficiency
- The start of the 20th century saw an increase in the desire for new inventions:
  - The Wright Brothers made their first successful flight in a petrol-powered aeroplane and improvements were made with other methods of transportation such as trains
  - Household items such as vacuum cleaners were invented to improve and revolutionise everyday life
- The RMS Titanic was also seen as a symbol of modernity and progress and many people felt anger and grief when it sank in 1912

How this links to The Woman in Black

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Limitations of modernity	Characters such as Mr Daily have automobiles in addition to their horses and carriages, indicating the transition from old to modern methods of travel. Kipps takes a torch to Eel Marsh House; however, when it breaks, he resorts to using candles.
The significance of the past	The novel switches from modern to old to link to the theme of the past, highlighting its enduring influence on the present. Characters such as Mrs Drablow and Jennet Humfrye (the Woman in Black) are fragments of the past but they still haunt and influence the present day despite attempts to move on.



Your notes

Religion versus science

- Broad advancements were observed in the understanding of physics, biology and the natural world:
  - The Edwardian era saw discoveries in the theory of relativity and quantum theory
- Many people attempted to find the balance between religion and science with many "modernists" such as George Bernard Shaw trying to create non-Christian liberal religions:
  - Others opposed these attempts as they believed they betrayed the true spirit of their religion
- This resulted in tension between science and religion as some felt that they were unable to believe in both:
  - Science promoted a belief in the real, logical and tangible whereas religion focused more on spirituality and a belief in the unseen

How this links to The Woman in Black	
Limits of science	The protagonist, Arthur Kipps, is a young, educated lawyer who uses fact and logic to understand things. However, upon his arrival at Crythin Gifford, he is faced with fear and an entity that defies scientific explanation. This adds tension and suspense to the novel as he is dealing with something that he is unfamiliar with, making him more vulnerable to the Woman in Black.

The Woman in Black literary context

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The Woman in Black is a pastiche of a Gothic novel and is written in a similar style to a Dickens novel. Susan Hill was also inspired by Henry James' novel, The Turn of the Screw. Hill uses many features of the Gothic genre and knowing what these are can help your analysis of the text.

The features of Gothic literature

Let's explore some of the features used by Hill in the novella:

Feature/device	Definition	In The Woman in Black
Architecture	An important feature of the Gothic genre is the location of the story in order to create atmosphere. Buildings usually include imposing castles, ruins or graveyards	Eel Marsh House is isolated from the rest of the village and can only be accessed by a long causeway. Access to and from the mansion is cut off during certain times of the day, adding to the sense of isolation and fear
The weather/atmosphere	The weather can be used to create a sinister atmosphere filled with tension. An example of this is fog obscuring a character's vision or the wind howling around them	From Chapter 1, fog is used to signify Kipps' isolation from those around him. It also surrounds him in a sinister way, creating a feeling of suffocation and entrapment. This could be mirroring Kipps' feelings of entrapment in his own mind as well as physically. At certain parts of the novella, it could also signify impending disaster and danger for Kipps
First-person narrative	A first-person narrator is used when a character is telling the story from their own perspective and uses words such as "I" and "me"	The novella is written as a frame narrative: Arthur Kipps is writing his story in the past tense This is effective as readers are not only able to see the impact his encounter with the Woman in Black

		has had on him, but also able to experience the same fear and tensions that he experiences
Sensory language	Using language to do with the five senses to create tension and add to the atmosphere. In gothic literature, characters may hear something they cannot see, for example	An example of sensory language is when Arthur Kipps hears the cries of the child dying as the pony and trap is stuck in the marsh. This increases fear and panic as he is unable to see anything in the distance, leaving him weak and frightened



Your notes

Eduqas-specific tip

Eduqas examiners frequently point out that while aspects of context will always be relevant to the questions set, there are no context (AO3) marks awarded in the Post 1914 Prose/Drama question.

Be careful, then, to not waste valuable time in your exam by needlessly reciting historical knowledge. Instead, only use your knowledge and understanding of certain contextual influences to add depth to your analysis. This will help you to demonstrate a "perceptive understanding of the text" (AO1) by making "assured references to meanings and effects" (AO2).

Sources

Hill, S. (2011). *The Woman in Black*. Vintage Books.

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Your notes

The Woman in Black: Writer's Methods and Techniques

In order to truly be able to understand a text and analyse it in detail, you need to understand why a writer has chosen to use particular literary devices and methods for their narrative and the impact of these choices. This is an important element of your revision as examiners expect you to comment on the language, form and structure of the text.

Susan Hill has used language and structure to achieve effects and it is important to make reference to the writer in your response to keep it focused. Below you will find some examples of how Hill uses literary techniques in her novella.

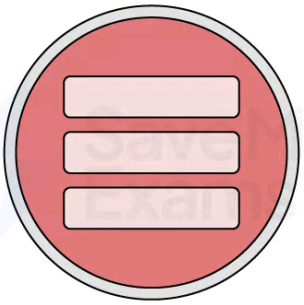
- Narrative perspective and structure
- Gothic language and setting
- Symbolism
- Imagery

Examiner Tips and Tricks

Writing about language and structure is not about feature spotting as examiners are not interested in whether you can pick out a metaphor or sensory language. Instead, what they are looking for is whether you can explain **why** that metaphor is important and what effect it creates in the narrative.

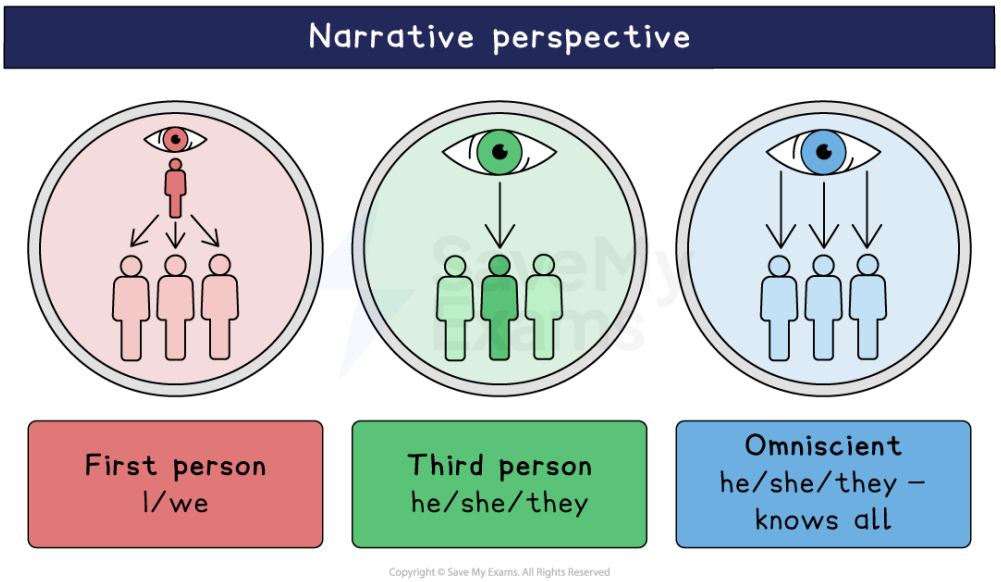
For example, if the question is asking you to look at how sympathy is created for Arthur Kipps, there is no need to talk about the fog in London as it has nothing to do with the question. Instead, look at the idea of the conspiracy of silence or his fear and isolation at Eel Marsh House.

Narrative perspective and structure



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- The story is written in first-person narrative from the perspective of Arthur Kipps:
  - Through this, the reader is able to view the negative impact that his experiences have had on his mind and life
  - As Hill does not hint at the death of Stella or Kipps' child until the end of the narrative, it is only then that the reader understands why Kipps' is so affected by the idea of the supernatural
- First-person narrative is a common feature in the Gothic genre:
  - It is written from the perspective of an intelligent man of science who does not believe in the supernatural
  - His mind changes when he confronts the Woman in Black and this has a negative impact on his life
- The novella is split into twelve chapters and can be classed as a frame narrative:
  - A frame narrative is a story within a story and it begins and ends in the current time of the narrative with Kipps as an older man
  - However, the main narrative is set in the past when Kipps' was younger and details his experience with the Woman in Black
- The narrative perspective changes temporarily to offer an insight into Jennet Humfrye's mind as Kipps reads her letters:
  - Through this temporary narrative, Kipps and the reader are able to understand why and how Jennet Humfrye transformed into the Woman in Black
- Using a frame narrative helps to build suspense and tension as the reader is not immediately told about Kipps' experiences:
  - The reader has to wait until the end of the novel to understand how the Woman in Black has directly impacted Kipps' life



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Gothic language and setting

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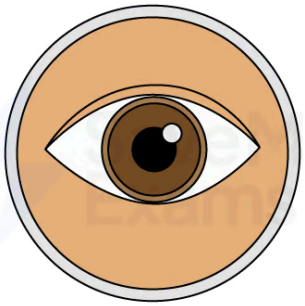
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- Gothic literature is a genre that emerged in the late 18th century and some of its key elements include:
  - Gloomy settings such as ruins and religious buildings like churches and abbeys
  - Mysterious and supernatural occurrences
  - Omens and curses
  - Emotional distress such as nightmares and feverish dreams
  - Death and decay
  - Madness/possession
  - A villain or a supernatural being that is unknown
- The Woman in Black is a pastiche of Victorian Gothic and is written in the style of traditional Gothic novels:
  - The supernatural, such as the ghost of the Woman in Black and an abandoned manor house, links to traditional Victorian/Edwardian ghost stories
  - Most of the narrative includes supernatural occurrences at night, which contribute to the eerie atmosphere
- Gothic literature focuses on the horrifying, supernatural and macabre:

- While the Woman in Black was written in 1983, it is set in the Edwardian era, which was a time of tighter morals and less rights for women
- This makes the tragic story of Jennet Humfrye more believable as she was stigmatised by society, which resulted in her transformation into the Woman in Black

- Foreshadowing is used to create tension and to hint at the sinister events that will follow:
  - In Chapter 1, it can be inferred that Kipps encountered the supernatural in his past as he experiences extreme fear when his step-children share ghost stories
  - "The truth is quite other, and altogether more terrible" suggests that Kipps has knowledge of the supernatural that his step-children do not and that his experience was harrowing
- The novella features a "conspiracy of silence" whereby other characters in the story do not disclose what they know to the main character:
  - This further isolates Kipps and causes him frustration as he naively continues to complete his job at Eel Marsh House:
    - Mr Jerone, Keckwick and Mr Daily are a part of this

Symbolism


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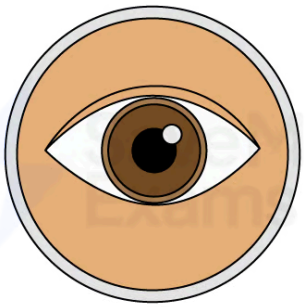
- Symbolism refers to figurative language that uses an image, object or idea to represent something other than its literal meaning:
  - The Woman in Black uses symbolism throughout the novella to help create a sinister and tense atmosphere
- The symbol of mist and fog is used to hint that something evil is about to occur and indicates impending evil:
  - In Chapter 1, Kipps comments on the fog the night before Christmas
  - Soon after, he flees his home, haunted by the painful memories that have resurfaced
- Another example is in Chapter 2 when Arthur travels to his workplace and is told about Alice Drablow and the business trip he will be taking:
  - The fog is described as "a filthy, evil-smelling fog", and civilians are described as "ghost figures" walking around outside, creating a sinister image

Your notes

- It hints at Arthur's isolation and encounter with ghosts later in the novella

- Hill uses the **pony and trap** to symbolise the past and connect past events to Arthur's narrative:
  - He observes many pony and traps during his time at Crythin Gifford
- Keckwick drives Arthur around in Crythin Gifford in a pony and trap, which could symbolise how Arthur moves from the land of the living to the land of the dead:
  - During his stay at Eel Marsh House, Kipps hears the sound of a pony and trap and the sound of a child screaming as they are being sucked into the marsh
  - This scene continually reoccurs as Arthur discovers the child to be Jennet's, who died many years before in the marsh on a pony and trap
- Finally, at the end of the novella, Arthur's first wife and young child are killed on a pony and trap after he sees the image of the Woman in Black in the distance

Imagery



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- Hill uses sensory language throughout the novella to convey the tension and fear of the protagonist:
  - For example, in Chapter 2, "seething through cracks and crannies like sour breath" creates an unpleasant image of London overtaken by an invasive fog
  - This could foreshadow the sinister and distressing events that Kipps will experience later on in the narrative
- Personification of the whistle is used to describe the sinister sound and creates tension:
  - For example, in Chapter 3, the sound of the "train whistle" is described as a "shriek", which signals the danger and horror that the protagonist is going to experience at Crythin Gifford
  - The protagonist is unable to understand where the sound is coming from, which further isolates and terrifies him
- Pathetic fallacy is used throughout the novella:
  - The clouds are described as being "cold" and "damp" and the "wind" came "howling"

Your notes

- These create a sinister atmosphere that isolates the protagonist and acts in opposition to him

- Hill uses descriptive language connected to evil and fear at crucial points in the narrative:
  - Words such as “shriek”, “howling”, “shadow”, “paralysed” and “malevolence” all contribute to the haunting and sinister atmosphere
  - The narrative perspective enables descriptive language to be used to explain the sense of fear and panic felt by the protagonist



Your notes

Sources

Hill, S. (2011). *The Woman in Black*. Vintage Books.

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Your notes

The Woman in Black: Key Theme Quotations

You will not be able to take a copy of The Woman in Black into the exam so it is useful to learn some quotes to reference in your essay. These quotes should be short and the best way to remember them is to group them by theme or character as that is what your question will focus on.

Here are some key quotations that are organised by the following themes:

- Isolation and trauma
- The past
- Fear

Isolation and trauma



From the start of the novel, characters are clearly traumatised by their experiences and isolated as a result. The frame narrative offers an insight into how deeply Arthur Kipps has been affected by his past and allows readers to relive it with him.

"I was the one who had been haunted and who had suffered … the only one left alive … still affected by it deeply" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 1: "Christmas Eve"

Meaning and context

- The protagonist reflects on his encounter with the Woman in Black and how badly it has affected him

Analysis

- The repetition of the phrase the "only one left alive" emphasises Kipps' isolation as, due to the length of time that has passed, the other victims would no longer be living:
  - Not only is Kipps isolated from the rest of his family, but he is isolated from the rest of society

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- The words "haunted", "suffered" and "affected" evoke strong emotions and re-emphasise the lingering impact of his supernatural experience


Your notes

"I gather she had no friends – or immediate family – that she was something of a recluse?" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 3: "The Journey North"

Meaning and context

- Arthur Kipps shares a train carriage with Samuel Daily while travelling to Crythin Gifford
- Daily tells Kipps that he knew about Mrs Drablow and Kipps proceeds to ask questions about her

Analysis

- Hill is setting the scene and using foreshadowing to give readers an insight into how isolated Mrs Drablow's manor was:
  - It also adds mystery and tension to both the character and where she resided as the word "recluse" suggests that Mrs Drablow deliberately isolated herself
  - The mention of "no friends" and "immediate family" further conveys her isolation and loneliness:
    - Daily claims her funeral will not be well attended
- Kipps tries to use logic to understand why she was alone and Daily does not elaborate even though he knows why:
  - It later becomes apparent that Daily is part of the conspiracy of silence

"... when the tide came in, it would quickly be quite submerged and untraceable" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 5: "Across the Causeway"

Meaning and context

- Kipps has crossed the Nine Lives Causeway for the first time and realises that, at certain points during the day, the only exit disappears
- This means that he cannot leave Eel Marsh House until the tide turns

Analysis

- By covering the road, Kipps is physically isolated from the rest of the town and left alone at Eel Marsh House:
  - This creates tension and suspense as he is completely cut off from society
  - The adjectives "submerged" and "untraceable" suggest concealment and highlight how the exit is not visible
- Kipps is therefore trapped and vulnerable as he is unaware of the dangers at Eel Marsh House:
  - The reader is isolated with the character; therefore our sense of fear is heightened

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"... this daughter of genteel parentage, who had been so coldly rejected and whose feelings were so totally left out of the count." – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 11: "A Packet of Letters"


Your notes

Meaning and context

- After reading Jennet Humfrye's letters, Kipps feels sympathy for her and her difficult life
- Kipps reflects on how she was isolated from society for having a child out of wedlock

Analysis

- The novel is set during the early 20th century and illustrates society's beliefs and code of conduct during that time:
  - Humfrye was treated poorly for having a child out of wedlock
- The use of emotive language, "coldly rejected", suggests abandonment and a lack of empathy:
  - Her family disowned her and she became an **outcast**
- Her "feelings were ... left out" suggests that Humfrye's wellbeing and happiness were disregarded
- The "daughter of genteel parentage" suggests she came from a respectable family:
  - The reputation of the family may have been more important than Humfrye's love for her child
- Despite giving her child up for adoption, Humfrye's reputation was tarnished:
  - This backstory gives readers an insight into the origins of the Woman in Black and may offer some justification for her desire for revenge
  - It evokes sympathy for her and portrays her as someone who has been treated unfairly

The past



Arthur Kipps is recalling a harrowing incident that happened to him many years prior and the impact that it had on his life. As he tells the story, it is evident that the residents of Crythin

Gifford have also been affected by past incidents and continue to live with the consequences of them.

"... that I should lie awake in a chill of sweat, going over that time, those events, those places." – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 1: "Christmas Eve"



Your notes

Meaning and context

- The protagonist is introduced in the first chapter and he appears to be struggling internally with past incidents that have had a deeply negative impact on him

Analysis

- The language in this quote creates a powerful image of Kipps haunted by his past:
  - "Lie awake" highlights how he is consumed with these thoughts at night as he relives the incident
- These intense emotions set up the frame story as Arthur decides to return to his past in order to exorcise his demons:
- The phrase "that time, those events, those places" suggests he is overwhelmed by the details of his past trauma:
  - The repetition of "those" underscores the recurring nature of his memories

"They must have been here for half a century, yet they might have been played with this afternoon and tidied away tonight" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 9: "In the Nursery"

Meaning and context

- At Eel Marsh House, Kipps discovers that a previously locked room is now unlocked
- He enters to find that it is a perfectly preserved nursery

Analysis

- The image of the nursery appearing well preserved highlights the more sinister undertones of the house:
  - It could be suggested that the Woman in Black maintains the room in order to preserve the memory of her child
- It also illustrates how Eel Marsh House has not moved on from the fatal accident and that the house is haunted by the memory of it:
  - This is also reinforced by the recurring sound of the child dying
- The Woman in Black cannot move on; therefore the house also remains entrenched in the past

"Crythin Gifford has lived with that for fifty years. It's changed people." – Samuel Daily, Chapter 11: "A Packet of Letters"

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Meaning and context

- Arthur Kipps has left Eel Marsh House for the last time and discusses the house and its past with Samuel Daily
- Daily is hesitant to talk about it as he is afraid of the consequences

Analysis

- The residents of Crythin Gifford are having to endure the supernatural occurrences due to the child's death at Eel Marsh House:
  - They have lived with the knowledge that they may encounter the Woman in Black and have "changed" as a result
- It can be concluded that the residents of Crythin Gifford are also unable to move forward as the sight of the Woman in Black is a constant reminder of the past
- "Lived with that for fifty years" underscores the duration and weight of this burden

Fear



As this novella is inspired by the Gothic genre, fear is a central theme that is present throughout the whole text. It affects multiple characters and influences their actions, behaviour and speech.

"... for it took us to the very edge of the horizon where life and death meet together." – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 7: "Mr Jerome is Afraid"

Meaning and context

- Kipps discusses Eel Marsh House with Mr Jerome, who is hesitant to help
- He is aware they have both experienced something that caused intense fear as he had seen the Woman in Black again at Eel Marsh House

Analysis

- Hill uses the image of the "horizon" to symbolise life in order to describe the negative impact the Woman in Black had on both men:

Your notes


Your notes

- Their experience was something that was not linked to life nor death but instead transported them to a purgatory state emphasising their extreme discomfort and fear

- It also creates an image of otherworldliness wherein they would be powerless to fight or resist:
  - This conveys their sense of isolation and fear

"... my fear reached a new height, until for a minute I thought I would die of it, *was* dying ..." – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 11: "A Packet of Letters"

Meaning and context

- At Eel Marsh House during the night, Kipps witnesses something supernatural
- Spider, the dog, runs through a corridor to a room that was previously locked but is now unlocked

Analysis

- Kipps experiences an intense fear as he sees the open door:
  - As he is the only person in the house, the tension and fear is palpable as he was previously unable to open the room
  - This leaves the reader to question who opened the door and what is in the room
- The phrase "*was* dying" suggests Kipps has never experienced anything like this before and illustrates the overwhelming nature of his fear:
  - It also suggests that what he is experiencing is sinister and may claim his life
- Kipps was previously a logical man who believed in fact rather than superstition and so his fear highlights his lack of understanding and inability to come to a reasonable conclusion:
  - The word "dying" could also symbolise how Kipps is changing and will never be the same person again

"They don't speak of it, you found that out. Those who have suffered worst say least – Jerome, Keckwick." – Samuel Daily, Chapter 11: "A Packet of Letters"

Meaning and context

- Daily and Kipps discuss Eel Marsh House and the origins of the Woman in Black
- Daily mentions some of the Woman in Black's victims

Analysis

- It is evident that the residents of Crythin Gifford do not speak out of fear or trauma:
  - Therefore, every member of the town is part of the conspiracy of silence

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- Daily's comments explain why Mr Jerome was hesitant to help Kipps and appeared to be "paralysed" with fear at the mention of the Woman in Black in the church:
  - The phrase "suffered worst" suggests they have experienced something painful and terrifying:
    - It implies the pain is so terrible that words fail to capture it

"I was paralysed, rooted to the spot on which I stood, and all the world went dark around me ..." – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 12: "The Woman in Black"

Meaning and context

- Years after his encounter with the Woman in Black at Eel Marsh House, Kipps sees her again in London

Analysis

- Emotive language is used to highlight Kipps' shock, fear and helplessness:
  - Her appearance affected him physically as he was "paralysed" and "rooted to the spot"
- The "world" going "dark" around him also highlights how his extreme fear has isolated him:
  - Her presence and her stare has made him feel exposed and vulnerable
- His reaction is a direct contrast to the first time he saw the Woman in Black as he now understands what her presence means:
  - Hill has created the Woman in Black to be the epitome of fear and she elicits extreme reactions out of those she targets

Sources

Hill, S. (2011). *The Woman in Black*. Vintage Books

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Your notes

The Woman in Black: Key Character Quotation and Analysis

The Woman in Black essay question on the Eduqas Component 2 English Literature paper may ask you to explore one of the following:

- A theme
- A character
- The relationship between characters

Examiners want you to be able to demonstrate your knowledge of the events and characters in the novella. You must select meaningfully from the text in order to support your response so it is a good idea to learn quotations according to theme or character. Let's look at some Woman in Black quotations, which are organised by the following characters:

- Arthur Kipps
- Samuel Daily
- Mr Jerome
- The Woman in Black/Jennet Humfrye



Examiner Tips and Tricks

It is important that your quotes are short and embedded in your response. The examiner wants you to closely examine the language and techniques used by zooming in on the words and phrases that the writer has used.

For this reason, we have included a "key word or phrase" from every one of our longer quotations to help you focus on the most important parts of each quotation.

Arthur Kipps quotes

"I had walked about in a frenzy of agitation, ... I must make an effort to calm myself..." – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 1: "Christmas Eve"

Key word or phrase: "frenzy of agitation"

What the quotation means

- The protagonist, Arthur Kipps, is attempting to calm himself down after remembering a traumatising incident that happened to him in the past

Analysis

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- At the beginning of the novel, it is evident that the protagonist has attempted to suppress a horrifying memory
- This line highlights Arthur's emotional turmoil as he is in a "frenzy of agitation", suggesting that he is experiencing strong emotions:
  - The use of the word "frenzy" suggests that he is highly distressed
- This line also shows the character's self-awareness as he realises that he must try to "calm" himself down, highlighting his mental strength
- The juxtaposition of the words "frenzy" and "calm" suggests the inner turmoil that Arthur is experiencing as the memory of his past attempts to overwhelm him

"... I was scarcely taking Mr Bentley seriously." – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 2: "A London Particular"

Key words or phrase: "scarcely" and **"seriously"**

What the quotation means

- Arthur reflects on the task he has been given by Mr Bentley

Analysis

- By not taking Mr Bentley "seriously", it is evident that Arthur is only interested in facts and believes only in the rational:
  - Ironically, it could be argued that Arthur himself is a stereotypical character from a Gothic horror novel
- Arthur's scepticism serves as a warning and foreshadows the events that will take place later on in the novel

"I did not like her look and I liked the...the power that seemed to emanate from her towards me even less" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 8: "Spider"

Key word or phrase: "did not like" and **"power"**

What the quotation means

- Arthur describes how he felt when he saw the Woman in Black to Mr Daily

Analysis

- It is clear that Arthur is now uncomfortable and afraid of the ghost:
  - The phrase "did not like" suggests that he feels a sense of discomfort towards her and how, on some level, he knows she is a supernatural being
  - The use of ellipses could also highlight his reluctance to admit that the Woman in Black is powerful and intimidating
- The use of the word "power" emphasises how the Woman in Black exudes a sense of authority and malevolence, which intimidates him
- Despite his sense of shock and fear, Arthur is still determined to return to Eel Marsh House and attempts to be rational:

- It could be suggested that he does not want to truly admit how horrifying his supernatural experiences have been


Your notes

"I was paralysed … and all the world went dark around me" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 12: "The Woman in Black"

Key word or phrase: "paralysed" and **"dark"**

What the quotation means

- Arthur Kipps describes his reaction to seeing the Woman in Black over a year after the incident at Eel Marsh House

Analysis

- Arthur Kipps is with his wife and infant child at a fair:
  - His wife, Stella, and his child are both riding a "pony and a trap"
- While they are on their ride, Arthur Kipps notices the Woman in Black and is "paralysed" with intense fear:
  - This is a stark contrast to his scepticism at the start of the novel with regards to the supernatural
- The description of the world going "dark around" him emphasises how isolated and alone Kipps is in the presence of the Woman in Black
- It is clear now that Arthur Kipps not only believes in the Woman in Black, but fears her and the curse that follows her:
  - It is this final sighting of the ghost that results in both his child and wife dying from injuries sustained on the pony and trap

Samuel Daily quotes

"He seemed keen to reassure me and to make up for his teasing exaggeration" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 3: "The Journey North"

Key word or phrase: "reassure"

What the quotation means

- Arthur Kipps has met Samuel Daily on his journey north

Analysis

- Arthur describes his meeting with Samuel Daily and how Daily appears to be describing the village of Crythin as bleak and sombre
- However, he then explains that Mr Daily is "keen to reassure" him, suggesting that he is a kind and considerate character
- His kindness is then extended when he offers to drive Arthur to Gifford Arms:

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- Therefore our first introduction to Samuel Daily is positive and establishes him as a significant character in the novel


Your notes

"But he could surely not be disliked" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 8: "Spider"

Key word or phrase: "disliked"

What the quotation means

- Arthur Kipps is describing Samuel Daily's personality and fortune

Analysis

- Arthur has warmed to Samuel Daily, who has invited him for dinner:
  - It is evident that Arthur does not envy Mr Daily, but admires him
- Mr Daily is a self-made man as Arthur comments on his wealth and the acres of land that he owns and how, despite this, his personality makes him likeable rather than envied

"'I had you on my mind,' he said at last. 'I wasn't happy. It began to unsettle me.'" – Samuel Daily, Chapter 11: "A Packet of Letters"

Key word or phrase: "wasn't happy" and **"unsettle me"**

What the quotation means

- Samuel Daily explains why he travelled to Eel Marsh House to find Arthur Kipps

Analysis

- Mr Daily travels to Eel Marsh House very early in the morning as his thoughts began to "unsettle" him:
  - It is clear that Samuel Daily believes that Eel Marsh House is not safe and that, despite Arthur's bravery and determination, he could be in trouble
  - By rescuing Arthur Kipps, it is evident that Samuel Daily has a caring and considerate nature
- This also emphasises Mr Daily's generosity and bravery as he is willing to risk his own well being and comfort in order to save Arthur Kipps

"Stella gave birth to our child … and Mr Samuel Daily was his godfather" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 12: "The Woman in Black"

Key word or phrase: "godfather"

What the quotation means

- Arthur Kipps' wife gives birth to their son and his godfather is Samuel Daily

Analysis

- By making Samuel Daily the godfather to his son, Arthur Kipps is showing his appreciation and love for Mr Daily:
  - It could also emphasise his gratitude towards Samuel Daily for protecting him during his time at Eel Marsh House
- A "godfather" could also imply that Arthur Kipps wishes for the same protection for his son that only Samuel Daily can provide:
  - It emphasises how much Arthur Kipps came to rely on Samuel Daily and how important his role was in ensuring Arthur's safety


Your notes

Mr Jerome quotes

"... a somewhat shuttered expression that revealed nothing whatsoever of his own personality" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 4: "The Funeral of Mrs Drablow"

Key word or phrase: "shuttered expression" and **"revealed nothing"**

What the quotation means

- Arthur Kipps notes how reserved and introverted Mr Jerome is

Analysis

- The character of Mr Jerome is not overly talkative and often does not respond verbally to questions and chooses to be vague in his answers
- Mr Jerome's reservedness could reflect his fears surrounding Eel Marsh House and its inhabitant, Mrs Drablow, which Arthur finds curious and somewhat irritating
- The use of the word "shuttered" could suggest that Mr Jerome's reservedness is deliberate and an attempt to limit questions and conversation
- His reservation and businesslike manner is in stark contrast to the intense emotions he feels when the Woman in Black is mentioned

"... beside me was a man in a state of near-collapse" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 4: "The Funeral of Mrs Drablow"

Key word or phrase: "near-collapse"

What the quotation means

- Arthur sees the Woman in Black for the first time and notices Mr Jerome's behaviour

Analysis

- Arthur is not afraid of seeing the Woman in Black while, evidently, Mr Jerome's reaction is more extreme as he is "near-collapse":
  - His reaction indicates that he not only knows about the Woman in Black, but that he recognises the evil that follows her
- The use of the phrase "near-collapse" suggests that Mr Jerome's fear is so intense that it has physically affected him:

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- This intense emotion contrasts his earlier reserved and professional attitude



Your notes

"Mr Jerome's expression was one of panic" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 7: "Mr Jerome is afraid"

Key word or phrase: "panic"

What the quotation means

- Mr Jerome is stressed when having a conversation about Alice Drablow with Arthur Kipps

Analysis

- Arthur Kipps states that the work he is required to do is too much and asks for help, which results in Mr Jerome panicking:
  - His immediate and visible panic causes the reader to question why his reactions are so extreme in comparison to other people in the village
- The title of the Chapter is "Mr Jerome is afraid", which further emphasises the fear and panic Mr Jerome experiences at the mention of Eel Marsh House or the Woman in Black

"I pray that you do not" – Mr Jerome, Chapter 7: "Mr Jerome is afraid"

Key word or phrase: "pray"

What the quotation means

- Mr Jerome hopes that Arthur Kipps does not encounter the Woman in Black again at Eel Marsh House

Analysis

- Mr Jerome's words reflect his fear over the Woman in Black
- The use of the word "pray" has religious connotations and underscores Mr Jerome's desperate hope that Arthur Kipps does not meet any other supernatural being
- It creates a sense of tension and foreboding as Arthur Kipps leaves to return to Eel Marsh House

The Woman in Black/Jennet Humfrye quotes

"... a desperate, yearning malevolence" – Arthur Kipps, Chapter 5: "Across the Causeway"

Key word or phrase: "malevolence"

What this quotation means

- Arthur Kipps describes the Woman in Black as he sees her on the grounds of Eel Marsh House

Analysis

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- Arthur Kipps is able to see the Woman in Black's face closely and he notices a "malevolence" about her facial expression, suggesting that she is filled with an intense hatred
- The use of the word "desperate" and "yearning" suggests that she is longing for something that may have been taken away from her


Your notes

"I shall kill us both before I let him go" – Jennet Humfrye, Chapter 9: "In the Nursery"

Key word or phrase: "kill us"

What this quotation means

- Jennet Humfrye vehemently refuses to be parted with her son

Analysis

- In a series of letters, Arthur Kipps realises that Jennet Humfrye was being pressured to give up her son, who was born out of wedlock
- Jennet declares that she will "kill" both herself and her son before she gives him up:
  - This could highlight how emotionally unstable she was but also how intense her love was for her child
- This also reflects the pressures that women who had children out of wedlock were faced with and how they were unsupported

"But he is mine, mine, he can *never* be yours" – Jennet Humfrye, Chapter 9: "In the Nursery"

Key word or phrase: "mine"

What this quotation means

- Jennet Humfrye is writing to her sister, Alice Drablow, who has adopted her son

Analysis

- This quote highlights Jennet's intense love and longing for her son while also emphasising her heartache over having to put him up for adoption
- The repetition of the word "mine" highlights her possessive nature and how she can never truly let her son go
- The emphasis on the word "never" further underscores this but also has threatening and menacing undertones:
  - This helps to draw parallels between Jennet Humfrye and the Woman in Black as we see glimpses of the rage and desperation that turn her into the evil spirit

"Mad with grief and mad with anger and a desire for revenge" – Samuel Daily, Chapter 11: "A Packet of Letters"

Key word or phrase: "mad", "revenge"

What this quotation means

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- Samuel Daily describes Jennet Humfrye's grief over the loss of her son


Your notes

Analysis

- Jennet Humfrye blames her sister for the death of her son and is driven mad by her intense feelings of "anger" and "grief":
  - Her anger highlights the intensity of her love for her child but it is so powerful that it does not allow her to rest after her death
  - It is evident that the death of her son turns her into the Woman in Black
- Jennet's "desire for revenge" causes her to haunt Eel Marsh House and its surroundings to satisfy her craving for revenge by taking the souls of children

Sources

Hill, S. (2011). *The Woman in Black*. Vintage Books.

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