

# The woman in black analysis essay



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The Woman In Black, although quite scary, was on the whole very entertaining. I think that the second half of the play was more surprising than the first, as the first didn't really include many shocking scenes, or sudden actions.

It didn't show much of the actual woman either, but this could have been an advantage as if the woman was shown often, it would be less realistic. Also, I think that the audience may have accustomed to her being there, and therefore, wouldn't be frightened of her. The actual 'scary element' would have to be the shock of the sudden actions of the sound, lighting and actors. I think that this was the best part of the play as much of it was just talking between the two main characters in the play, which eventually made me feel calmer and not so afraid, which isn't too good as the play was meant to be a horror story. I found that when I was sitting in the theatre, waiting for the play to begin, I was anticipating quite a scary experience.

I was excited to be there, and started to think about the story line, or what may happen in the play. I think that the atmosphere of the theatre does help the play as you are in the dark, and you can see the stage coming quite close to you (especially if you are in the front row). The fact that the play is live is also better than watching it on the television, or sitting in the cinema. The people are generally more involved in the play if they are sitting in front of it.

Being in a theatre is a tradition also, and in most plays in theatres, the atmosphere is usually filled with anticipation. The Woman In Black is in the style of paranormal horror. It was set in rural England back in the 1930's or

40's. The actual costumes and scenery do help to set the period and style of play as you would obviously not put on modern day clothes if you are trying to show the audience that the play is set 100 years ago. Without the clothes, it would be hard to tell what year the play was set as the English language is basically the same as the early 1900s, and well before that! The scenery again helps clarify the period and style of the play as you can tell where the character is. They might be talking about somewhere completely different to where they are, but the set can make it clear where they are situated.

You can also see what style of play it is by noticing the style of the scenery and costumes. If they are modern clothes and modern scenery, then it is likely that the play is set in modern times. The set was very well used by the actors. They kept the same main props on the stage, but changed the smaller, less obvious props, throughout.

They managed to use one prop for many different things, like the whole of the child's bedroom was covered in sheets and used as a graveyard beforehand! I think the set helped, partially, to communicate with the audience as right from the start, from the set, you could see it would be quite interesting-by being ghostly. It was quite stereotypically lay out for a ghost story, with the coloured material draped across the front of the stage, and the scenery set out to look like an old 19th century haunted house. I think the set was very successful in general, especially as there were only a few props involved, which rotated. I don't think there was much that was unsuccessful with the set. Other than at the very beginning of the play, I noticed that there was a bucket in the stage.

At first, I presumed it would be part of the play, like everything else on stage, but it was abruptly thrown off for no apparent reason, which I found rather strange. I especially liked the part that was carefully hidden behind a very thin, slightly transparent curtain, though. I liked this as you could easily see what was going on when the actors went behind it, and wanted you to see it, but it could hide the background set when it needed to be. The sound and lighting together really added to the play, without them I don't think it would be nearly as effective as it was, or in any play. They created mood and atmosphere really well, throughout the whole play.

When the mood changed from happy to scary, for example, the lighting colour would also change, making it clearer to the audience. It was used to highlight certain parts of the stage as well, or concentrate on one character as they were talking. Sound was also really well used. It could generally help by there being the natural background sounds that you would hear in a particular scene, or being used for sudden movements or actions to scare the audience. When the solicitor was riding in the horse and trap, the sound of the horses' hooves trotting on the road was used to make it more believable, especially as they were actually bouncing on a large rectangular wicker basket! Sound was used as a surprise when the solicitor was seeing the horse and trap running over the children. The audience couldn't see what he was, and all he was saying was " no.

No! " for instance. However, you could hear the sound of horses' hooves trotting, and then a horrible piercing scream, making people jump out of their seats! At one point, in the haunted house, the solicitor had just jumped out of bed and had walked backwards so he could see everything. At that

moment, there was a beam of light directly on him. A loud scream and banging sound then followed the beam of light changing from him, to a figure standing right behind him-The Woman in Black! You could still see him as the light had also increased in size though.

I thought this was an excellent example of the use of light and sound to create mood and atmosphere. It was a very sudden movement and managed to make the whole of the audience jump, because it was so scary. It also had changed the mood from when he was asleep and calm, to him suddenly awake and frightened. The actors used the sound and lighting too, by pretending that they were rehearsing the story and finishing each scene by asking " Mr Barnes" to put the lights back to normal which then showed the audience that they were finished acting as actors in the story. Other effects used were the imagination of the actors.

This was very effective; as they probably couldn't have had all the props they needed, and so would have to use their imagination instead. An example of this would be when the solicitor was given a dog " Spider". If they had used a real dog, there would be no guarantee that it would do what the actors wanted it to do, and could have diverted the audiences' attention away from where it should have been. I think the actors used their imagination really well, and it did enhance the enjoyment of the play, as it also let the audience use their imagination. The actors in general, left quite a good impression on me.

I was very impressed with their skills, as they seemed to fit into the characters really well, and made the play very believable. The vocal and

movement skills used were of a very high standard. The actors used their voices to pretend they were in busy and quiet places, for example by having to shout to hear each other. They also managed to act as if they were really scared through their voices shaking, as if they were scared.

The movements of the actors were also very skilled. For instance, when they were calm, you could tell as they would have flowing movements and would be tranquil, but when they were scared, they would run about the place in a flurry, and would have very sudden movements. They also used their movements to show where things were too. I think the actors conveyed the character's feelings, thoughts and emotions really well, too. They would think out loud when they were alone which was a way of telling the audience what was going on. They also paused sometimes, as if they were thinking, like when the solicitor was wandering round the house and noticed that there was a child's bedroom complete with everything you could expect.

He would pick up objects, and make a comment about it. Sometimes he would ask himself " Oh. What's this then? " for instance.