

**Adapting representations of death from page to screen in Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black*
(1983)**

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Abstract

Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* (1983; 1998) has been praised as a novella demonstrating a "gradual development of exquisite suspense" and distinguishing, in its subtlety, "the true ghost story" (Bann cited in Scullion, 2003: 296).¹ This article examines James Watkins' 2012 film adaptation with particular focus on representations of the complex relationship between death and screen, which will be addressed through a close reading of the novella alongside its filmic adaptation. Both Hill's (1983) novella and Watkins' (2012) adaptation are littered with representations of trauma, death, and the experience of dying, predominantly by women and children, who functioned on the outskirts of Victorian society and whose existence remained largely confined to the margins.² As such, this article serves to establish how the film adaptation upholds the Gothic through the representations of trauma, death, and dying in relation to Hill's (1983) novella with particular focus on the supernatural spectral haunting of Jennet Humfrye and the death that surrounds her at every turn. In terms of Watkins' (2012) film adaptation, my discussion will focus on those previously oversimplified representations of gender to demonstrate Watkins' critical commentary on the marginality of female trauma.

¹ *The Woman in Black* was first published in 1983, however, directly quoted material is sourced from the 1998 edition.