The Hollow of the Three Hills

*Plot summary*

The story is about a young woman meeting up with an ‘old hag’ in a place filled with mystery and fear. As the story progresses, the audience learns that the woman has run away from her parents, abandoned her husband, and (possibly) led to the death of her child. The audience learns about the woman’s past through a spell cast be the old hag. We are allowed to hear where the people from her past are now and deduce the situation from what the people say. The story finishes with the young woman’s death as the spell has cost the woman her life.

*Themes*

Death –

* This is a major theme in the story.
* The woman’s child dies in the story.
* The woman herself dies twice in the story.
* The young woman meets the hag in ‘purgatory’ and at the end of the story when she dies in the hag’s arms.

Myth/Mystery –

* The old ‘hag’ is a witch-like character.
* She casts a spell on the younger woman.
* Images of hell
* Nature portrayed as decaying.

Youth/Aging –

* Use of contrast between the ‘hag’ and the young woman.
* Negativity associated with age.

Religion –

* The use of demonic/satanic rituals repeatedly associated with the opposite of Christianity.

*Tone*

The tone of the piece can be described as dark, evil and hopeless. The world that the story takes place in is dark world filled with evil spirits. The woman’s early suggestion of ‘I will do your bidding though I die’; implies the hopelessness of her quest.

*Characters*

**The young woman:**

We learn that she is riddled with guilt because of her past actions. This shows that the woman – despite having abandoned those close to her – has a conscience and feels regret.

We also learn that the woman has nothing left since she abandoned those close to her. She resolves to condemn herself just to find out about them.

**The old crone:**

We learn that she is a bitter and evil witch-like creature. Though she lacks her own magic abilities she is capable of summoning magic powers from elsewhere.

We also learn that she is sadistic. She enjoys and takes relish in inflicting the psychological anguish on the younger woman.