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Conclusion

In "Trifles", Susan Glaspell masterfully intertwines the themes of victimhood and victimization, presenting a nuanced exploration of the complex dynamics between Mrs. Wright and Mr. Wright. Mrs. Wright, initially depicted as a silent and oppressed figure, emerges as both a victim of her husband's abusive control and a perpetrator of his demise. This duality challenges the audience to reconsider the conventional definitions of victim and victimizer, revealing how societal norms can distort personal identities and relationships. Mr. Wright, while appearing as the aggressor, is ultimately portrayed as a victim of societal expectations that dictate his behavior towards women, illustrating how systems of power can corrupt individuals. The play underscores the cyclical nature of abuse, where the oppressed can become oppressors, and vice versa. Glaspell's poignant symbols, such as the caged bird, serve as powerful metaphors for the constraints placed on both characters, high-

lighting the struggle for voice and agency in a patriarchal society. Through "Trifles", Glaspell invites us to reflect on the intricate layers of victimization, urging a deeper understanding of the human condition. The play remains a poignant commentary on gender dynamics and the often-invisible struggles faced by women, making it relevant in discussions of social justice and equality today. Ultimately, Glaspell's work serves as a reminder of the importance of empathy and awareness in addressing the complexities of victimhood and victimization.

them to see the evidence, which is the opposite of trifles.

The women play the role of the jury indirectly here because the male-dominated society does not allow them to voice their opinions freely without being judged. They create what Mael describes as “a web of sisterhood” (Mael, 61). The society looked at women as inferior citizens who did not have the right to vote. Thus, the women in the play are not seen as key factors in solving the murder of Mr. Wright. Veronica Makowsky asserts that the heroes of Glaspell’s plays are rebellious, and their rebellions “lead them to the public sphere of demonstrations, courts, and prison [...] Their actions demand that the patriarchal world consider their feelings and situations as something more than domestic “Trifles”. (Makowsky, 61) Glaspell portrays Mrs. Wright as a passive character who does not celebrate this new freedom even when she frees herself by killing her oppressor. Instead, she moves from the rocking chair to another chair in

the oratory of the kitchen because she acknowledges her inferior position in society. Linda Ben-Zvi asserts that “gender transcends class [...] when the farmers, jurors, and lawyers had a common connection: they were male and as such they were in control of the court and the direction of the testimony.” (Ben-Zvi, 155) However, Glaspell dismisses the male power in the play by having them scurry around outside the stage and limiting their role to mere sounds as they “Crisscross” the stage and the specifics of the offense, causing the investigations no place to display their incompetence¹. Instead, the women establish themselves in the center of the stage and occupy the men’s place in collecting evidence, concluding, as Glaspell probably wanted to show, that women were far more powerful than men were and are empowered by their feelings and the “Trifles” they so much care about.

1- Linda Ben-Zvi. «Murder, She Wrote: The Genesis of Susan Glaspell’s ‘Trifles.’» *Theatre Journal*, vol. 44, no. 2, 1992, pp. 141–162. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3208736.

they are her peers. Both Mr and Mrs Wright are absent characters, yet the entire play revolves around them.

The plot centers on a group of people similar to Mrs. Wright, who are tasked with judging her case, the women, and not only about her. However, the reader is also put in the position of a jury with these two women who withheld evidence. While we read the play, we see the crime through their eyes, and they believe that Mrs. Wright is innocent according to their idea of justice. Therefore, the reader becomes sympathetic to them and does not judge them for withholding evidence. The women characters enable the reader to understand the entire crime since they release the internal circumstances of Mr. And Mrs. Wright's house and give the impression that, in some way, Mr. Wright got what he deserved.

The interplay of Victim and Victimizer

The gender differences are essential to the play and the author herself. The play is set in the

rural side during the 1910s with a focus on farming arduous life; the work is divided here between men and women. Women are responsible for household chores, such as preparing food, cleaning, and preparing the family's daily needs. As for men, they are accountable for earning a living and for protecting their families. Phyllis Mael elaborates on this psychological difference between men and women and describes women's judgment as being "tied to feelings of empathy and compassion" (Mael, 63) while men's judgment is "impersonal" and "independent of its emotional origins." (Mael, 61) Women look at things more accurately, while men look at things superficially. Men are cold and rational, while women live life by feeling. Thus, the play shows men's incompetence in understanding external events accurately. The women could see proof that the men would never even notice, evidence that they assume to be "trifles" only women care about. The women's awareness and understanding enable

ognize evidence. In a sense, the entire male gender is being scrutinized because their behavior mirrors that of Mr. Wright's treatment of his wife.

Mr. Wright as Victimizer

Mr. Wright is portrayed as a victimizer, embodying the oppressive forces that contribute to the emotional and psychological suffering of his wife, Minnie Wright. Through the lens of feminist criticism, Mr. Wright's character serves as a representation of patriarchal authority and the systemic abuse that women faced in the early 20th century. Characteristics of Mr. Wright as a Victimizer. Mr. Wright's treatment of Minnie is characterized by emotional neglect and isolation. He is described as a hard man who stifles Minnie's spirit, leading to her transformation from a lively young woman into a reclusive and despondent figure. This emotional abuse is evident in the way Minnie is left alone in their home, deprived of companionship and joy, which ultimately contributes to her mental decline. (Nussbaum, 128)

In the town, Mr. Wright is known to be a respectable man who does not consume alcohol, fulfills his financial obligations, and does not physically abuse his spouse. However, Mrs. Hale describes him as a "raw wind that gets to the bone" (Glaspell, 42), and he turns everything cold with his presence; even the house he lives in with Mrs. Wright is too dark and cold and not cheerful when Mr. Wright is in it. The women are moved by female solidarity and feel it is their job to help Mrs. Wright.

Mrs. Wright is absent in the story, but what symbolizes her presence is her kitchen and jars. When Minnie is with him, she feels cold because he is cold. However, he does not hurt his wife physically; he hurts her emotionally and mentally. He imprisons her in a thing that is called marriage. We have to keep in mind that women at that time did not get their rights; they did not have the right to vote or to be represented in juries. Therefore, the female characters here indirectly play the jury's role in defending Mrs Wright because

"A sheriff's wife is married to the law" (Glaspell, 45) because she is married to a man of the law, and therefore, she must live by the law. Moreover, by hiding the clues, she breaks free and rejects the idea of being an appendage of her husband and his career. She understands that being married to the sheriff does not grant her any more independence than Mrs. Wright is in her relationship with John Wright. Marshall, "The Feminist Perspective in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*," discusses how "*Trifles*" analyzes the societal norms that marginalize women. She emphasizes the significance of the female characters' solidarity and their ability to uncover truths that the men overlook. Her analysis highlights the play's commentary on the trivialization of women's experiences and the importance of female perspectives in understanding the narrative. (Marshall, 55)

The women in the play do not seem to judge Mrs. Wright for murdering her husband even though they find the clues that

convict her. They play the role of peers who do not judge her, and they even try to see it as self-defense or an excuse for what she had gone through while being married to Mr. Wright. Mr. Wright is an unkind and unsympathetic partner who has caused his wife's mental health to deteriorate. He has restricted her autonomy, leaving her with no more freedom than Mrs. Wright had in her marriage. She was fond of singing, but he cruelly took away her only source of joy by killing her canary. This act was the final straw for her already fragile mental state, which had been on the brink of a nervous breakdown. Essentially, the sheriff is responsible for his wife's decline.

The play challenges us to reconsider who the actual victim is. While Mrs. Wright is the one who has been killed, the trial becomes more of a judgment of John Wright and men as a whole. This is due to the patronizing language used by the male characters towards women and their assumption that women are too ignorant to rec-

had been murdered in the same manner as the bird. They hide the discovery from the men, understanding Mrs. Wright’s emotional abuse and the reasons why she killed him, causing them to have sympathy and understanding for her situation in the way that only women could.

Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peter’s actions are feminist; they are not just the play’s female characters, but they present all women in society who were like shadows and under-represented. Mrs. Hale talks about what Mrs. Wright was like in the past; she says she used to be lively 30 years ago. When she was not married, she was Minnie Foster. Now, she is not the same person she used to be.”.....”Even the names of Minnie and her husband, Mr. Wright (Right), are symbolic, Minnie being mini or minimized, Mr. Wright as if the society has given him the right to do anything he wants and it does not matter what he does, he will be correct. The name here means an authority.

Mrs. Wright as Victim

The play is significant in representing women’s issues and societal status. Women are frequently criticized for focusing on insignificant matters and not staying on track. However, the things they worry over, the trifles are what helped them find the motive of the murder, though they are never given the credit for their initial realization. Trifles are things of little value or importance, and Glaspell uses many everyday things to symbolize Mrs. Wright’s life in the play. The women collect trifles in Mrs. Wright’s kitchen, leading to the discovery of her unhappy life. However, the men never learn about these trifles because the women swear they will never tell.

Hiding the evidence and the motive for murder from the men establishes the women’s position as a jury and a defender for Mrs. Wright. They hide the clues because the men in this situation are insulting them consistently. Mrs. Peters is even objectified as an extension of her husband when the county attorney states,

them as enslaved people.

Susan Glaspell's "Trifles" is a seminal work in American drama that intricately weaves feminist themes into its narrative, highlighting the oppression of women and the dynamics of gender roles in early 20th-century society. Written in 1916, during the first wave of feminism, the play analyzes the patriarchal structures that marginalize women's experiences and voices. The character of Mrs. Wright (formerly Minnie Foster) epitomizes the struggles faced by women in a male-dominated society. Her isolation and the emotional abuse she endures from her husband, Mr. Wright, illustrate the broader theme of women's victimization. The play reveals how her oppressive domestic life leads her to a breaking point, culminating in the murder of her husband, which is portrayed as an act of desperation rather than malice. (Marshall, 45)

Trifles is an example of feminist drama, presenting the views of women's competence in society. The message of Glaspell's

play is found in the small, seemingly unnecessary details as the play begins and ends in the same place and with the same characters. The local Sheriff, his wife Mrs. Peters, the county attorney, and Mr. and Mrs. Hale gather at the now-empty house of Mr. and Mrs. John Wright, where Mr. Wright was found strangled to death the day before by Mr. Hale, and with Mrs. Wright sitting in her kitchen utterly aware of his death. Mrs. Wright has been jailed for her suspected involvement with this crime and sent Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale to fetch her things from her house. (Nussbaum, 123)

Throughout the play, Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale notice things that the men dismissed, and they were accused of worrying about "trifles" amid the crime scene. However, as they share and ponder the mundane details of Mrs. Wright's life, they comprehend what their husbands could not: the motive for the murder. They had found Mrs. Wright's bird strangled, presumably by her music-hating husband. In addition, Mr. Wright

gins and ends in the same place and with the same characters. The local Sheriff, his wife Mrs. Peters, the county attorney, and Mr. and Mrs. Hale gather at the now-empty house of Mr. and Mrs. John Wright where Mr. Wright was found strangled to death the day before by Mr. Hale, and with Mrs. Wright sitting in her kitchen completely aware of his death. Mrs. Wright has been jailed for her suspected involvement with this crime and sent Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale to fetch her things from her house. Throughout the play, Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale notice things that were dismissed by the men, and they were accused of worrying about “trifles” in the midst of crime scene. However, as they share and ponder the mundane details of Mrs. Wright’s life, they comprehend what their husbands could not: the motive for the murder. They had found Mrs. Wright’s bird strangled, presumably by her music – hating husband.

The play sheds light on how women are ridiculed by society

and men. Trifles refer to something sweet; men’s attitude towards women is based on how they see women. They see women as objects with which to delight themselves. Women are considered empty-minded; their only concern is trifles or trivial things. The idea is that men see women as unable to think well and only interested in unimportant things. This is reflected in the sheriff’s attitude when investigating the house, looking for evidence. He sees the women’s action of collecting things for Mrs. Wright as something insignificant.

1. Alonzo L. Hambly. Outline of U.S. History. New York: Nova Publishers, 2007

Glaspell is not only criticizing society itself. Persecution was dominant, and women were considered second-grade citizens and lower than men. Although the play is set in an American culture, its themes are universal. Glaspell contrasts male and female perspectives through their dialogues. The men see women as objects belonging to them, and they treat

farmhouse. At that time, Susan Glaspell worked as a reporter for the Des Moines News. Mrs. Margaret Hossack, a farmer's wife, was suspected of murdering her husband, Mr. John Hossack, with an axe while he was sleeping. In the beginning, it was thought that a thief had killed Mr. Hossack, but a later investigation appeared to prove that Mrs. Hossack was abused in her marriage. As a result of that, she was accused of the crime and sentenced to prison. Six months later, the author wrote 26 articles covering the case of the husband's murder. Glaspell found herself sympathetic to the accused woman a lot despite the ugliness of the crime.

Susan Glaspell wanted to bring life to American realism. In 1913, she married George Gram Cook. Cook pulled her into the world of socialism and interested her in women's suffrage. Glaspell, Cook, and some friends established the Provincetown Players in England and then moved to America. People were destroyed by a mechanized world and com-

pressed by social and psychological forces. The American writer Eugene O'Neill regarded Susan Glaspell as being in charge of the main discoveries in American drama. Their works explore issues that were essential to women.

Historical Context of Women Rules in 20th Century

Susan Glaspell's Trifles is more than a Midwestern murder drama. Set in the mid 1910's, the play presents the injustices women at that time faced in both society and home. The play was published in 1916, four years before the ratification of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote in 1920¹. Women were not seen as people, or even allowed to contribute to society at the time of writing the play, and this view of women being cast aside is shown with severity in this play. Trifles is an example of feminist drama, and it presents the views of women's competence in society. The message of Glaspell's play is found in the small seemingly unnecessary details as the play be-

the emotional and psychological abuse inflicted by her husband, Mr. Wright, who functions as the archetypal victimizer. The play analyzes societal dismissiveness towards women's experiences, encapsulated in trivializing their concerns. Key themes include oppression, isolation, gender roles, and solidarity, revealing how Mrs. Wright's actions become a desperate response to her systemic victimization. Through the lens of feminist critique, Glaspell's work highlights individual trauma and challenges the broader societal structures that perpetuate such injustices.

This research aims to shed light on how we go deeper into the play to see it as a multi-leveled prison, a literal prison that symbolizes the bird's cage; it is a small prison, and the wife is the prisoner. The husband is also a prisoner in a bigger prison, which is society. We can see that the husband is the victim and the victimizer; even the wife here is the victim and the victimizer of the bird. The modern age tries to dehumanize people,

and they all turn into machines or robots with no feelings to express. Mrs. Wright has no voice to express her feelings and wants a voice. The bird symbolizes her voice. Now she is silent like a piece of furniture in the house.

Key Words: Multi – level prison, domestic violence, women's oppression, dehumanization, silence, freedom, isolation.

Introduction

Trifles by Susan Glaspell is a play that delves deeper than a simple murder mystery in the Midwest. It portrays the discrimination and mistreatment of women in both society and the home during the early 1900s. Published in 1916, before the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, the play highlights how women were not considered equal members of society and were denied opportunities to contribute. This play starkly portrays the harsh reality of how women were marginalized during that time.

The one-act play, "Trifles," is based on a true story in the

The Victim and the Victimizer in Susan Glaspell's Trifles American Drama

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Outlines

- 1- Abstract
- 2- Introduction
- 3- Historical Context Of Women
Rules In 20th Century
- 4- Mrs. Wright as Victim
- 5- Mr. Wright as Victimizer
- 6- The interplay of Victim and
Victimizer
- 7- Conclusion
- 8- References

Abstract

Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* profoundly explores gender dynamics and the systemic oppression of women in early 20th-century America. From a feminist perspective, Mrs. Wright emerges as a poignant victim, embodying the struggles and silenced voices of women constrained by patriarchal norms. Her isolation, symbolized by her desolate home and the dead canary, reflects