

Literature studies: men in susan glaspell's "trifles" essay

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The differences in women and men's perceptions of themselves and each other are discussed in Susan Glaspell's one-act play "Trifles" (1916) where the author focuses on the problem with references to the aspects of gender. The social opposition of women and men is represented in the play with the help of describing the differences in the female and male vision of the world processes and social development.

As a result, the play can be considered as the ironical discussion of the prejudiced viewpoints related to the roles of men and women within the society. In spite of the fact that men and women play equal roles as the protagonists of the play, it is necessary to analyze the viewpoint of men about the described situations because it is necessary to compare the socially adopted visions of the male roles with the biased visions of the gender roles.

Thus, it is important to state that the viewpoint of men in Glaspell's "Trifles" is correlated with the patriarchal principles of the society observed in the early part of the twentieth century because the male characters are inclined to discuss their actions as right and logical and women's actions and considerations as only 'trifles'.

Glaspell describes the male characters as full of dignity and as concentrated on the really important issues because they came to the house of Mr. Wright to perform their duty and professional tasks. That is why the men's actions are associated with logic and reasoning (Gainor 45). On the contrary, the female characters are perceived by men as focused on secondary tasks because they cannot be really useful for the society.

Thus, women's main task is to be housewives, and they should perform it well. From this perspective, the men's viewpoint about the things which are important for women is described in one phrase said by Mr. Hale who states that "women are used to worrying over trifles" (Glaspell 38). The important things and tasks can be done and performed only by men because they are the core of the patriarchal society oriented to success and progress.

The author draws the audiences' attention to the fact that there are two opposite visions in society about the distribution of gender roles and tasks. Providing the parallel narratives of female and male characters, Glaspell helps the audience concentrate on the men's ideas without references to the women's ones.

That is why it becomes more clear that men see women only in their relation to men because men play more important roles in society (Belasco 782; Glaspell 39-40).

As a result, it is possible to state that male characters in the play are inclined to develop their conclusions about the people's roles, referring to the discussion of strict gender roles. Even if men state that all people are equal, they also state that men are more important than women for society's progress because their actions are based on the reason.

In her play "Trifles," Susan Glaspell draws the public's attention to the fact that the rules to live in the society are developed by men, and they are inclined to criticize women because of their less important role.

These critical ideas and messages can be rough or light as it is represented in the discussion of 'trifles,' but these critical notes are observed in society. That is why it is necessary to discuss the problem of gender and different perceptions of women and men.

Belasco, Susan. *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature*. USA: Bedford-St. Martin's Press, 2008. Print.

Gainor, Ellen. *Susan Glaspell in Context: American Theater, Culture, and Politics, 1915-48*. USA: University of Michigan Press, 2003. Print.

Glaspell, Susan. *Plays by Susan Glaspell*. USA: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Print.