

# Morality in the play trifles argumentative essay

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



Trifles, by Glaspell Susan, is a play that tries to draw the line between morally correct and incorrect actions. This it attempts through the choice of moral development schemas, which either seek to uphold morally correct principles which are applicable universally or those which are differentiated and reflective in nature, dynamic with changing sets of circumstances (Gilligan 39). In relation to morality as a theme in 'Trifle', the differentiating factor according to many is the choice between the psychological logic of people's relationships and the universally accepted and politically correct formal logic of fairness.

In this play, a murder most foul occurs. A woman referred to as Minnie Wright, is the main suspect in her husband's murder in their isolated farmhouse. As is common practice in investigations and crime solving, enforcers of law and order, which in this case happened to be the sheriff and the county attorney rush to the scene to collect evidence that would probably lead to the apprehension of the guilty party (Glaspell 45). They are however accompanied to the murder scene by their wives and a neighbor, who are here on a different mission, to gather the belongings of the suspect who is already a visitor of the state. During the course of their intended actions, the women referred to as Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters stumble across vital evidence that would have solved this case. While gathering the suspect's belongings, they come across Minnie's dead bird that had been violently strangled before being lovingly laid in a piece of expensive material in the suspect's sewing box. This would later prove to be the missing piece in this murder puzzle (Glaspell 57).

The discovery of this incriminating evidence dawns on them as is attributed

in the play's stage directions, their eyes met coupled with a look of increasing horror comprehension. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters decide to hold on to their discovery and do not disclose any information with regard to the evidence they had collected (Glaspell 65). The men, who are thought to be symbols of authority and agents of the state, fail in their core responsibility to secure evidence in the crime scene. They routinely comb through every inch of the murder scene much to no avail. Even the statements recorded from the key witnesses did not help in solving the crime. All this time, the women were concealing evidence vital unlocking the deadlock. Whereas the order of events in the play portray accidental discovery of the crucial evidence, careful scrutiny of the women's actions would reveal otherwise (Glaspell 71). The sequence of events reveals that the discovery was indeed systematic and well thought out. It is however the choice to hide the evidence that baffles many.

In my lay view, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters did not make the right choice in hiding Minnie Wright's dead bird from their law enforcing husbands. First off, given that the women are wives to law enforcers, logic would follow that these women be the first to uphold the very law that their spouses swear by. They defy logic by keeping the evidence at bay, far from their husband's reach. From a moral perspective, this action is tantamount to the obstruction of justice. Instead of letting the law takes its probable course, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters obstruct justice by taking away an important piece of the puzzle (Gilligan 68). In doing so, the women take the law into their own hands, and though we have no idea what happened to the suspect in the very end, the

actions of the two women no doubt had an impact on the outcome, whatever it was.

The women knew Minnie Wright through their interactions with her. This is depicted in the play when we are informed that they reflected, shared and pondered the details of Wright's life, an action that enabled them to comprehend what the law enforcers and investigators could not, the motive of the crime (Gilligan 76). According to the women, the suspect had over the years become seemingly withdrawn and had been given up singing. The deceased would not have tolerated the singing bird, just like he did not tolerate Minnie's singing. The women were of the opinion that Minnie's deceased husband had killed the bird. In their minds, the women, who I must admit outdid themselves, were of the idea that Minnie had been oppressed by her husband over the years, before she finally stood for herself, an action that turned tragic.

Whereas the women's investigative abilities are to be looked up to, it is important to note that Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters were not trained investigators and could have easily made the wrong conclusion. The right thing to do would have been to hand over the evidence to the investigators who would then put the pieces together in a bid to solve the case. If the men had the evidence that the women closely guarded, they would have no doubts whatsoever, with regards to how to use it (Gilligan 98). This is because their strict, lawful path would not leave room for ambiguity. The women, on the other hand, put themselves in Minnie's shoes to try and figure out what ensued. This leads them to believe that Minnie Wright had suffered days on end from the brutality of the man she called her husband

and that she had reached her breaking point. Though this could be true, it is only speculative and largely ambiguous and certainly does not warrant a murder or the concealing of vital evidence (Glaspell 79).

This difference in choice between the different genders asserts that even with the significant changes in women's lives over the years, women's concerns and interests largely remain distinct from the men's. From a moral perspective, I still think it was wrong for the women to hide the evidence from the law enforcers. In a battle that puts the psychological logic of relationships and the formal logic of fairness on opposing sides, the latter should take precedence as it barely leaves room for ambiguity, a quality that cannot be attributed to the former (Gilligan, 73).

## **Works Cited**

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