

# Good example of essay on trifles

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



There are various approaches of women and feminism in the literature of the early 20th century. For depicting the feminine psych, authors use various literary devices for allowing readers to enter the mind of their characters. Susan Glaspell's "Trifle" uses symbolism and irony for resenting her character, Mrs. Wright and for illustrating her hardships that drove her to murdering her husband. Moreover, after studying Glaspell's "Trifle", the manner in which she develops the narration indicates that she considers Mrs. Wright's action as justified. Mrs. Wright, a character of the early 20th century, resembles Kate Chopin's Mrs. Mallart, as they both are engaged housewives, desperate to escape.

"Trifle" playwright is based on specific symbols that express the solitude, desperation and in general the women's condition in the early 20th century. Glaspell uses symbolism for exploring the mind of the women of that time and also for presenting how they were treated in the domestic and public space. The word "trifle" is, in fact, symbolically denoting how society perceived women and their existence. They were considered as unimportant, as also their activities, such as cooking, watching over the house, cleaning, etc., were considered insignificant. As the murder is investigated, the Sheriff notes: "Nothing here but kitchen things" (Glaspell, "Trifle"), which suggests the minimization of the feminine existence in the eyes of the men. Later, Mr. Hale indicates that "women are used to worrying over trifles" (Glaspell, "Trifle"), mocking like this the small existence and the little concerns, as he perceived women's activities and their businesses. Another important symbolic clue that depicts the women's condition in the 20th century is the bird's cage. The canary entrapped in the cage that was murdered by her

husband because of its happy songs symbolizes Mrs. Wright's inner death within the marriage. As Mrs. Hale records, Mrs. Wright "used to sing really pretty herself" (Glaspell, "Trifle"), but that before the marriage. As Minnie Foster before getting married to Mr. Wright, the woman was happy and cheerful and used to wear colorful clothes, but the marriage made her a sad and gloomy woman. Even Mrs. Hale observes that the Wright's residence "never seemed a very cheerful place" (Glaspell, "Trifle"). Therefore, the cage indicates that a free and cheerful bird, like Mrs. Wright used to be before her marriage, was transformed into a dreary and tenebrous person. Her individual personality was minimized in her daily existence because she was chained in her marriage, not free to act as she would have wanted, but oppressed, just like a bird in a cage. Yet another symbol in "Trifle" is the rope hanging around Mr. Wright's neck, which represents the woman's fight-back over the male oppression. By using a method used by men to show their power over women, strangulation, the woman expresses her liberation from her husband's domination, showing that she can be equal to men. Besides the generous symbolism, "Trifle" also expresses irony, in depicting the fact that although women are considered inferior to men, they are in fact more observant and better detectives than they are. While men consider "trifle" kitchen materials, the women are able to read beyond their apparently trivial presence, viewing murder details that they hide away (as the dead canary in its cage, hidden by Mrs. Hale).

The presence of the two women, Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale, shape the feminist attitude in Glaspell's play. Mrs. Peters, the Sheriff's wife changes her attitude throughout the play, from the formal wife of the Sheriff,

somewhat oppressed herself, to empathize with Mr. Wright, associating with her pain and hardship. She and Mrs. Hale share the same compassion for the victim's wife and they are bound through their inner conflict and untold understanding of hiding the evidences that incriminate Mrs. Wright. Both women are intuitive and better detectives than the men, as they are able to tell from small things how and why the murder occurred: "she was going to – knot it" (Glaspell, "Trifle"), is the indication that Mrs. Peters gives that translates Mrs. Wright's intention of murdering her husband. Unlike Mrs. Peters, however, Mrs. Hale seems more in control of herself, more independent, as she pities Mrs. Wright, but does not relate to her. She blames herself for not visiting more often Minnie, considering that this might have changed something.

Looking at Mrs. Wright character, who never appears on the scene of the play, but it is only described by the other characters, she is very similar with Kate Chopin's Mrs. Mallard from "The Story of an Hour". Both women suffer in the marriage, both are gloomy and depressed. However, Mrs. Mallard seems not to be oppressed, while Minnie is. The marriage took away their cheerfulness. Minnie regains her independence and gains equality with men through her murder, while Mrs. Mallard frenetically contemplates the joy of being freed from an unpleasant marriage when she finds that her husband died. The stillness of the marriage and the acknowledgement that her husband is still alive kills Mrs. Mallard, which indicates the pressure and anxiety she felt for being married to a man that she did not love. On the other hand, Mrs. Wright chose not to be the victim, killing her oppressor by using his technique, the strangulation.

## **Works Cited**

Glaspell, Susan. Trifles. Accessed 6 December 2014, available at <http://www.one-act-plays.com/dramas/trifles.html>. N. d. Web.

Chopin, Kate. The Story of An Hour. Accessed 6 December 2014, available at <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/hour/>. 1894. Web.