

'You shall hear the nightingale sing on as if in pain':
The Dilemma of Domestic Violence in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*

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Abstract

Domestic violence, or as sometimes known as family abuse, is usually related to a domestic or local setting as in cohabitation or in marriage. It can take the forms of being physical, verbal, economic or emotional. Globally, most of the domestic violence is overwhelmingly directed to females as they tend to experience and receive severe forms of violence, most likely because they do not involve their intimate, or sometimes even non-intimate partners, in the process of mental and physical self-defense.

Sometimes countries justify domestic violence directed to females, they may be legally permitted when the reasons behind it are related to issues of women's infidelity. Usually, the permission to violent acts is related to the level of gender equality postulated in these countries.

Familial or domestic violence may progress when it is directed against any partner in society. In its evolution, domestic violence may develop different violent dynamics out of human choices. In Glaspell's play, domestic violence has led the hard-natured Mr. Wright to his death, a nature that is articulated to his wife as a fatal execution of her own freedom and humanity. The kitchen, a place which men consider trivial, holds the clues leading the female characters in the play to discover the identity of the murderer. This discovery causes, in the audience as well as in the female characters, a dilemma of judging the domestic violence executed by the murderer under the pressures of emasculated patriarchal culture overwhelming that closed society.

Keywords: asymmetrical violence, dilemma, domestic violence, gender, patriarchal culture

"استسمع العنديلبي يغني , وكانه يغني بالميم" معضلة العنف الاسري في مسرحية سوزان كلاسييل الترهات

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المستخلص:

ان العنف الاسري او مايعرف احيانا بالاساءة الاسرية غالبا مايكون متعلقا بالحيز المحلي او المنزلي كما هو الحال في مشاركة السكن او مؤسسة الزواج. وقد ياخذ العنف صورة العنف الجسدي, اللفظي, الاقتصادي او العاطفي. عالميا, فان الكثير من العنف الاسري يكون موجها نحو المرأة وذلك لميلها الى امكانية استقبال الهنف من شريكها المقرب او غير المقرب دون العمل على اشراكه في حالة الدفاع عن النفس في استجاباتها لهذا العنف.

ان الكثير من البلدان قد تبرر العنف ضد المرأة وقد يقف القانون احيانا الى جانب هذا العنف خاصة ان كان متعلقا بقضية الخيانة. وعادة مايرتبط السماح بالعنف بمستوى ثقافة المساواة بين الرجل والمرأة في تلك البلدان. من الممكن جدا ان يوجه العنف ضد اي شريك في المجتمع. وفي طور تنامي العنف قد تتولد اليات مختلف للعنف كانعكاس لافكار واعمال وخيارات الانسان. لقد وجه العنف الاسري في مسرحية كلاسييل ضد السيد رايت الزوج المعنف التي دفعت زوجته الى الى الحصول على حريتها وانسانيتها باسلوب مميت وقد كان لمطبخها , الحيز الذي احتقره بقية الرجال في المسرحية, الدور في اخفاء الدلائل التي تدين السيدة رايتز الا ان هذه الادانة قد حيرت الجمهور كما حيرت النساء في المسرحية حول كيفية النظر الى هذه الادانة تحت وطاة الضغوطات التي يمارسها ذلك المجتمع المحكوم بالثقافة الرجولية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العنف المتباين, لمعضلات, العنف الاسري, جنس , الثقافة الابوية.

Introduction

In abusive relationships, there might result a state of learned helplessness for the victim. Yet, symmetrically, there might be created a cycle of humiliation due to which tensions rise and a reversed action of violence is committed. Such reversed action against abuse is usually followed by a peaceful time of reconciliation and clam on the part of the abused partner. This is most apt to happen for the partner under control, who has been subjected, by the abuser, to situations of isolation, control and traumatic bonds, which tie the abused to obstacles of financial issues and cultural acceptance. The resulting feeling of depravity, most probably, leads to psychological disorders accompanied by and unregulated style of life. Many activists saw that the most reliable scale to measure the rates of domestic violence is the motivations of the abused. On this scale, many of the defenders of women's rights saw that it is the women who have a stronger motivation in the cases of family or domestic abuse. Therefore, they are more justified for the violence they reverse against their partners. Yet, many studies uniformly postulate that the rates of domestic violence are dramatically asymmetrical, that is females are more likely prone to be the victims of domestic violence than men (Kimmel, 2002, p. 1333).

Born to the hay farmer, Elmer Glaspell, and the public school teacher, Alice Keating, Susan Glaspell (1876-1948) was raised in Iowa on a rural homestead just below the Mississippi River. The environment in which Glaspell was raised could frame her mental and literary outcome. Though situated in a conservative part of the country, reflecting its 'unforgiving morality, Iowa had been radically flavored'. Floyd Dell, an influential figure in the literary world, describes it as being "largely German and Jewish, liberal and socialist superstructure...

[blossoming with] some native mysticism” (Andrews, 1972, p. 165). Such a mixture dyed the works of the pioneer writers who stemmed from the soil of Iowa like Floyd Dell, George Cram Cook and most prominently, Susan Glaspell, who never lost her attachment to the spiritual and virtuous integrity of her homeland, yet blossoming with the notions of individual’s independent intellectual, moral and physical self-sufficiency. She was best remembered by her parents and relatives as a caring and kind-hearted child towards stray animals, denoting thus her defying character. Glaspell’s worldview could be framed by of her grandmother’s tales on the autobiography of Black Hawk, the Indian leader of Sauk American Indians, first published in 1833. Hawk led the war in Illinois and Wisconsin against European-American settlers in the 1832 Black Hawk War. This Indian leader believed that the Americans should be worthy inheritors of the land they grasped. This banner has surveyed all of Glaspell’s writings as she fought to draw a better line in the life of Americans in the New Land (Ben-zvi, 2005, p. 6).

When the Glaspells’ farm was sold the family moved to the city giving her an opportunity to develop values of work and independence having very important effects on her later social views. By the age of eighteen, she could manage her advance study in Davenport’s School, along with earning a regular salary as a journalist for a local newspaper, where she later at the age of twenty worked as a reporter covering the state’s legislator and murder cases which is a rare position for a woman at her time.

Glaspell’s plays were published first in the print form because they were much appreciated by the prestigious newspapers and magazines, celebrating Susan Glaspell as one of the pioneer English writers who is worth ranking a step after Henrik Ibsen. Her productivity is well-considered fertile and having its significant prints in the world of feminist and individualistic literary writings. Moving to New York after her marriage to the classic professor, novelist and poet, George Cram Cook, in 1913, Glaspell became a part of the feminist groups calling for women’s rights.

Glaspell is most remembered for the twelve plays she had submitted to the company in seven years, plays that showed a newly formulated design for feminist plays. Her play, *Trifles*, first published in August 1916, is based on a story of a murder trial she covered in 1900, when she was a young reporter in Davenport Morning Republic for *Des Moines*, prior to her resignation (Cherly, 2002, p. 12). *Trifles* was written for the Provincetown Theater in a time that corresponded to the time of crucial issues of women’s rights, as it appeared at the height of the American Women’s Suffrage Movement (Dubois, 1999, p.23). It stood as an early example of standing against patriarchal oppression. The play is now considered as a feminist masterpiece for postulating its daring views on the perspective through which justice and morality are reconsidered. The debating perspective has made of women issues a dilemma in the eyes of its audience (Al-Khalili, 2013, p.132).

After her husband’s death and her second marriage, which caused a traumatic experience of disappointment, Glaspell fell into alcohol addiction leading to a hard project of low productivity. Regaining her control over drinking, she returned to Cape Cod, reserving the influence of her work in the Midwest which manifested itself in her last novels focusing on family life and religion questioning.

Though well known for her priority as a Pulitzer–Prize winner, Glaspell’s feminist idealism was overcome by her death, when her novels went out of print because of the post-war circumstances. Adding to this, Glaspell tended to avoid public interviews, a matter that shared

in downplaying her literary achievements. But in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Glaspell's works started to be more valued by scholars and critics because of the arousing interest in the experimental aspect of her literary outcome. Therefore, her works were revived by republishing. After nearly a century of negligence, Susan Glaspell survived to be considered as a "prime example of an overlooked female writer deserving canonization" (Nemo, 2019, p. iii).

The Dilemma of Domestic Violence in *Trifles*

Susan Glaspell's ideal feminism has become more widely known for her one act play *Trifles*, later as a short story "A Jury of her Peers". The title of *Trifles* is simple and seems quite contradictory to the subject and situations of the play. The trifles are things that are very important for women and silly for men. Susan Glaspell denotes through the words of male characters the difference in gender perspectives, a matter that makes men in the play, unlike women, dismiss the idea of investigating Mrs. Wright's kitchen because of being a womanly thing that is not worth searching.

The play contains nine characters, four of whom are off-stage characters. The off-stage characters are the murderer and murdered Mrs. and Mr. Wright, Frank the Sheriff's assistant and Harry, Mr. Hale's friend. Glaspell introduces something strange in the play, that the man and woman on which the whole play revolves are not postulated to have even one speech during the whole play, yet, Glaspell's playwriting is hailed for her ability to represent truthfully the viewpoints of all her characters even those who are not seen physically on stage (Krasner, 2005, p. 37). Some critics consider that the absence of real physical manifestations of the characters under scrutiny makes the play "neither sufficient nor sufficiently direct.... [O]ne aches for a word to release the dumbness, complete the crisis, and drive the tragic situation home" (Hinz-Bode, 2006, p. 69). Yet, this speechless atmosphere serves as the play's unique strength as far as silence imposed on female characters articulates the patriarchal attitude of that society. The instant glances between Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters express their thoughts and fears thoroughly is intended to evacuate the need for words. Also, this might have been intended to add the flavor of generalization, depicting that this is a problem that may happen to any couple when violence and abuse govern their relationship. The play takes place in the farmhouse of John Wright with his woman who is reported to have suffered a lot with her husband and the reporter is the neighbor, Mrs. Hale. The complex point of the play is to know the identity of the murderer.

Although the male characters try to belittle the women's value in helping to reveal the murderer's identity, it was the female characters who could figure out the clues and evidence that men could never find. Their perspective to the kitchen and its tiny details and their belief that it is the only domestic sphere that would be tightly attached to a woman's interest in that Midwestern universe helps them identify the truth. The play's setting is originated from an actual setting of a murder case that Glaspell had covered when she was a reporter for a local journal. Glaspell postulates this association between the crime and the domestic stage of the kitchen:

After a time, the stage became a kitchen, __ a kitchen there all by itself... I saw just where the stove was, the table and the steps going upstairs. The door at the back opened, and the people all bundled up came in ___ two or three men ... I wasn't sure which, but sure enough about the two women,

who hung back, reluctant to enter the kitchen (Hernando-Real, 2011, p.7).

The women's reluctance to enter the kitchen is related to the women's full perception that any woman's kitchen is part of her personal property and individualism. It is most believed that women's lives are shaped and empowered under the influence of the domestic space which can be undeniably represented by the kitchen in Glaspell's play. It is related, on one side, to the social determination of gender- role and homemaking (Karagoz, 2019, p. 398), therefore the kitchen's domesticity could associate itself to a larger or smaller extent to patriarchal oppression featuring a partner's relation to his woman. On the other side, the kitchen is attached to a woman's potential need for liberty as far as she is, as well as other women are, all trapped in this spatial domesticity of the Midwestern stage (Chaisilwattana, Y., Nakhachai, S., Panha, M., HolaSut, M. and Kramer, J., 2015, p.1).

The setting of the Wright's house involves crucial clues about the murdered and the murderer as long as they are both offstage characters. The details of the messy kitchen having "unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the breadbox, a dish towel on the table"(Glaspell, 1917, p. 36) are all exploring the psychology of a woman who is repressed. This repression and its manifestations in violent domestic situations can never be recognized by men. The perfect housekeeping required from a female in a patriarchal-controlled life is violated by Minnie Wright, as the female characters contemplate it, to show her rebellious refusal to that patriarchy. Furthermore, the women see that the crime happened spontaneously without any insistent prior arrangement.

The female characters are able to realize that Minnie's kitchen is more than a physical space constituting a background to the murder case, as the male characters consider. These women realize the significance of the kitchen's trifles in her life and theirs, making of these trifles a bond that tides them to Minnie, driving them to reformulate the meaning of law and justice by the hand of sympathy. The dilemma, which domestic violence creates, starts when the audience, similar to the females in the play, begin to sympathize with the murderer and try to make justifications for the motivations that drove Mrs. Wright to such violent act. The activists of "men's rights" suggest that there is some type of gender-symmetry in the issues of domestic violence or abuse, that is males and females can equally be the victims of domestic violence (Kimmel, 2002, pp.1333-1334). On this basis, the women in the play find that Mr. Wright can never be justified for the psychological, moral and emotional abuse he executed against his wife.

The women start to trace back Minnie Wright's life as they knew it, trying to depict Minnie's motives for the murder of her tyrannical husband. They show some kind of loyalty to their gender and women's suffering because those women share similar experiences in this patriarchal society: "[w]e live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things-it's all just a different kind of the same thing" (Trifles, 2003, p. 44). Mrs. Peters, the Sheriff's wife, hides the evidence from her husband to evangelize a woman against society and its pressures. The end of the play is an open ending to some characters as Mr. Henderson, the country attorney, because he finds nothing to solve the case with, but for the woman it is a close ending as they solve the puzzle, yet, in privacy.

Mrs. Minnie Wright is the only suspect in the case of murder. She reports herself asleep when her husband, John Wright, was gruesomely strangled to death. The names of the characters and the way of murder have been deliberately suggested to depict a pun for a lady's depravity of human rights. Similarly, it depicts her own right to free herself by having a final

chance of survival and proper way of living (Ben-Zvi, 2005, p. 153). Mrs. Wright is proved by the women in the play, to be the executor of the crime, but this is kept a secret among them. Mrs. Wright voiced her freedom very harshly against her husband when she chose the way of killing him by strangling him with a rope, rather than using the gun which is available in the house. This may suggest Minnie's yearning to make her husband go through the same experience of despotic suffocation attempting to survive, a feeling identified to hers in the previous long years of silence and isolation.

A further supporting perspective siding with Minnie's reasons is the females' viewpoint when scrutinizing into Minnie's life before and after marriage. They try to analyze the psychological negative change Minnie has gone through symbolized by changing her name from Minnie Foster to Minnie Wright, having her been dried from her livelihood. The domestic patriarchy and oppression that are sounded by the patriarchal culture to be "right" transformed her from a dedicated woman for singing in the church's choir to a silenced wife deprived of joining the flock of other women in the choir or in the Women's Aid, or even connected to other neighboring women by the telephone line, a luxury that all housewives can enjoy at Minnie's time.

A further clue that the women use to find justifications to twist the law of justice and to save Minnie, is the dead canary. Proceeding into the kitchen with more care than their husbands, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters find an empty bird's cage with a broken door, later, they discover a corpse of a dead bird, which was a decapitated canary. Mrs. Peters notices that somebody had wrung its neck, but still they are not sure whether Mrs. Wright or her husband had done this to the bird. But for Mrs. Hale, she was sure that it must be Mr. Wright who killed the bird. The assertive tone by which Mrs. Hale accuses John Wright of killing the bird identifies the amount of suffering that Mrs. Wright had gone through. Hale relates this murder of the bird to the past days when Minnie used to sing in the choir, justifying that John Wright would not endure some singing in the house while he prevented her from singing: "No, Wright wouldn't like bird_ a thing that sang_ she used to sing. He killed that too" (Trifles, 2003, p. 44). This discussion between Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale shows how much Mrs. Hale has a sense of sympathy to Mrs. Wright and how much she understands Mrs Wright's character and needs. She realizes that Mrs. Wright had just lost her memories with the killing of her bird. They both, Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale find the answer to their question about the dilemma that their neighbor was suffering from. They realize that she killed her husband the same way he killed her canary:

She was kind of like a bird herself-real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid - and
fluttery. How-did -change.... It was an awful thing was done in this house that night,
Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked
the life out of him (Trifles, 2003, pp. 42-43, 44).

In the literature of female writers, an association between silenced women and the myth of Philomena, the "princess of Athens" is always invoked. Such association is more likely represented or symbolized by a singing bird within the scene to symbolize women's hushed suffering. This mythological allusion to Philomena has always been debatably twisted by male writers under the influence of their belief in patriarchy. Male writers tend to silence the nightingale forever justifying that the female nightingale is mute in nature.

In the myth, Philomena has been raped and mutilated by her sister's husband, the King Tereus of Thrace, and was transformed into a nightingale singing its sad song to the sister revealing the secret of Philomena's tragedy. The nightingale Philomena could incite her sister to take revenge against the despotic male in their lives and she succeeds in this. The nightingales' songs, though always attributed to be sad, as it is associated to Philomena, yet, it is related to the articulation of the silenced truth. Minnie, before marriage was most noted by the town people for her beautiful singing in the choir, but soon after marriage she was silenced completely and psychologically tormented:

I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that_ oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in" (Trifles, 2003, p. 40).

Similar to Philomena's song that brought the truth to her sister, Minnie, whether consciously or unconsciously brought the evidence of her abuser and tormentor through the singer of her soul, the dead canary, to the women who are emotionally bond to her in some type of sisterhood. Therefore the moment Mrs. Wright was expected by her husband to be enforced to silence by silencing the bird, he tried to get what he expected from her. But, contradictory enough, it was the same moment that she voiced out her need for expression by hiding the dead canary to be the message of the failure of her own expectations of a married life.

Contemplating the killing of the bird, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters reconsider John Wright's intrusion to the very personal trifle that stans for his wife's freedom. This intrusion shows itself a background on which these women base their sisterhood with Minnie. Mrs. Hale recollects memories of childhood where her personal property was confiscated as her pet kitten was hurt in front of her eyes, identifying herself to Minnie:

When I was a girl--my kitten--there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—
and before I could get there--(Covers her face an instant.) If they hadn't held me back,
I weakly— hurt him (Trifles, 2003, p. 43).

The writer tend to put a full analysis of the atmosphere within which the murder happened through the setting of the play. The place is a new abandoned farm in the Midwest, showing a gloomy kitchen, unwashed pans, unbroken bread, an empty rocking chair and a stove that does not work. All the details in the setting articulate a bleak, empty and enclosed geographical background of the Middle West. Also, the scene of the uncompleted work is used by Glaspell for the purpose of postulating "signs of an incompetent housekeeper to the officers of the court, to the women and to the audience. These props help to establish the presence of a disturbed consciousness" (Noe, 1995, p.39). Another purpose, as will be discovered later, is that the incomplete tasks in Minnie's Kitchen show the time in which she strangled her husband, post to the time in which Mr. Wright strangled her bird, a matter that provokes her to act. Strangling the bird provoked a necessity for her to take some act.

The audience knows that John is a typical farmer. He is an off-stage character who spent his life working on the family farm as a farmer, a matter that the Middle West accords to man as the best because it delivers the idea that “hard work is a virtue” (Hart, 1972, p. 272). Mr. Wright is seen to be sticking to this idea. His reputation among people is a very good one, but he is not a very good man. Mrs. Peter declares that she is,

Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man Yes_ good;
he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he
was a hard man, Mrs. Peter. Just to pass the time of the day with him_ [Shivers]

(Trifles, 2003, p.42).

A reference to Mr. and Mrs. Wright's marriage can be informed from the descriptions of their relationship denoted by the writer, showing that Mrs. Wright suffered a lot in her marriage. She was changed negatively after her marriage to the extent that she could not develop good and familiar social relations:

Mr. and Mrs. Wright obviously had some strains on their marriage, caused by Mrs.

Wright's longing for silence. Because they did not communicate with each other, they ended up in a sorrowful state- with Mr. Wright dead and Mrs. Wright blamed for this murder (Miller, 2009, para.5).

Mrs. Hale notices how much Mrs. Wright was changed in everything even in her relations and clothes. She isolated herself from the Church and the Ladies Aid, a place where women gather for comfort and exchange advice. In spite of all these types of suffering, Mrs. Wright wanted to keep the appearance of a good wife, even if she was a major suspect for her husband's murder. She was taken to jail as a murderer but the strange thing is her request for Mrs. Peters to bring her an apron and shawl, a matter that Mrs. Peters considers as funny thinking that Mrs. Wright asks for these details to feel natural and at home even when she is in jail.

When the men enter the house the first time, they notice Mrs. Wright's uncompleted work. They are seeking for an evidence to accuse Mrs. Wright of the murder, but they fail to find. The search included two groups, the males and the females. The two groups of investigators had different aims. Whereas the first group tended to reconstruct evidence, the latter come to gather some personal items for items for Mrs. Wright in the onstage kitchen. Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale keep asking if Mrs. Wright killed her husband or not. Another fact that makes Mrs. Wright's life unbearable with her husband is her loneliness. She is isolated in the large and empty Middle West. It is obvious that Minnie, without children, is confined to her house alone and the spatial division further limits her social life and changes her personality. Furthermore, the house that Mrs. Wright lives in is overwhelmed by the atmosphere of dullness and emptiness, with no children and with a bad relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Wright, let alone the fact that Mrs. Wright's suffering of her husband's psychological abuse as his hard personality hurts Minnie alone (Smith, 1982, 176). This condition urges her to a compulsive life vacant of any other activities than those of the house stuff. She is obliged to alienate herself into the domestic world of John Wright.

Such contemplation over the circumstances and pressures under which Minnie was living, both Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale show signs of sympathy towards Mrs. Wright. They put themselves in her position, especially that they are living in the same society under similar traditional pressures. This leads them to think over the “importance of women bonding” (Ozieblo, 2008, p. 66). Mrs. Hale is very close to Mrs. Wright, but Mrs. Peter is quite far from being close to Mrs. Wright. What makes her seem loyal to Mr. Wright is that she is also prejudiced against the male-controlled society predominating their lives. Also, she has gone through a similar situation through which Mrs. Wright has experienced. She had also lost her pet, which was killed by a little boy, a situation that also stood for her looted right.

It is obvious then, that women, in this case, could form a family bonding based on geographical background and a similar sense of the effect of place. They can sympathize with each other and create such a bonding. Therefore, due to the shared sense of frustration and dissatisfaction rising from the patriarchal gender relations in the Middle West, the two women could recognize the clues and further decide to hide the truth in order to challenge the male centered judicial system surrounding them. Women, becoming detectives, successfully find the truth and hide the evidence from men. That shows a construction of the “community of women” (Krasner, 2005, p. 37), exactly as Glaspell wanted to articulate it in her play.

Glaspell focuses on the idea of women’s bonding and community because she belongs to the Women’s Movement, which plays an important role in the society and culture of the United States from the late nineteenth century and the advent of the twentieth century. In this movement, there was established a groundwork for women’s emancipation, “for a feminist movement by articulating a set of demands for women’s rights and by acquiring the skills and self-confidence necessary to offer political leadership to other women” (DuBois 1999, p. 19). Glaspell uses the colors of the movement in this play to symbolize her views. When the canary was killed, Mrs. Wright folded its dead corpse in a red silk, not only to signify her contemplation of revenge, but significantly enough, in reference to one of the colors in the Feminist Movements’ flag, to postulate its banners for revolution against patriarchy. Another reference is accorded to the white color of Mrs. Wright’s dress before her marriage. Mrs. Hale recalls Minnie’s pure character with her simplicity and freedom:

I wish you’d seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. Oh I wish I’d come over there once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who’s going to punish that?” (Trifles, 2003, p. 44).

Though hiding the evidence is against law, yet the women’s view is justified by their sympathy and female bonding, as well as by the men’s prejudiced preconceptions against women. Men’s inability to find evidence, postulated by the country attorney manners, is enhanced by the men’s own fault. They never try to inspect the kitchen as they look at it as another part of women’s trifles. When the inspectors enter and see Mrs. Wright’s incomplete work and unarranged kitchen, they dismiss the significance of the domestic environment. It stands for them a tool for male criticism that is later defended by Mrs. Hale that “Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren’t always as clean as they might be” (Trifles, 2003, p. 38).

The women’s characters are placed deliberately at the center of Glaspell’s play and the men are presented as the force which controls women negatively. Glaspell emphasizes the

relation between the women who live according to the spatial environment, as Doreen Massey argues “that geography matters to gender and vice versa, and examining spatial division is a good approach to explore gender development and gender relation in a place” (Massey, 1994, p. 179). This view is much applied to members of enclosed communities as the countryside or rural places. Glaspell states the fact that women in rural places who are living under similar hard traditions is an issue that creates loyalty and collectiveness. The farmers’ wives have their hands full sharing the housework with each other, which presents joint character for all women. Many critics see that when the value of housework, which is in its essence a stereotypical symbol of gender loyalty, is underestimated in molding the feminist culture; it would be certainly far from being accurate because it helps men understand the women’s favor of each other (Rabuzzi, 1982, p. 143). When Mrs. Hale tries to defend Mrs. Wright before the country Attorney, he justifies her defense for causes of sex and gender, exclaiming, “Ah, loyal to your sex” (*Trifles*, 2003, p. 38).

The differences between gender and sex are both discussed in *Trifles* as Glaspell evidentially postulates the idea of the way of living between men and women. For Glaspell, each group has a different way in talking and dealing with the members of its own gender community. Also, each group has its own prejudice for itself and against the other. Glaspell shows that men speak a different language from women and they refuse to understand them, but they also despise their words and activities.

Conclusions

Trifles serves to be one of the most frequently anthologized American Drama. The play delivers a strong sense of place where inner conflicts are working out and revealed. Gender complex relations are demonstrated by the environment. There have always been different modes of judgment where killing is sometimes justified. The women dramatically examine the serious injuries caused to Mrs. Wright that are in themselves only the result of what Mr. John Wright has done. They sympathize with Minnie not only on the basis of humanity, but also on the basis that stems from their belief that domestic violence has been almost always asymmetrical posed on the female side only.

The killing of the bird is never forgiven because it symbolizes the freedom confiscated from a woman only because she is put compulsively under the pressures of her patriarchal society. While, killing Mr. Wright has been justified by the feminine community on the basis that it resolves the predicament of all women under similar or identical social pressures. They tend to solve the dilemma of domestic violence by establishing new forms of justice relying on caring and connectedness rather than on the abstract principle of men’s law.

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