

Original Paper

Susan Glaspell's "Trifles": A Feminist/Post-Structuralist

Reading

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Abstract

This study offers a feminist/post-structuralist reading of Susan Glaspell's "Trifles". It addresses man/woman binary opposition, not by taking the existence of one to mean the absence of the other, but in terms of looking at each side of the binary opposition as having a multiplicity of identifications that require various opposition models. In particular, it pays attention to the post/structuralist view of opposition as a societal construct that does not exist in objective reality, and therefore, could be challenged, dismantled and rectified. The study seeks to analyze Glaspell's "Trifles" in the light of a quotation from Klages (2011) in which he uses the theatre seating arrangement as a metaphor for woman's position in the male/female gender binary. Also, In "Trifles", the patriarchal constructs underlying the judicial conventions have been confronted and the nature of criminality has been redefined when the women in the story repudiate the passivity foisted on them by engaging in a series of domestic feminine details that finally lead to the unraveling of the mystery of the crime. The study sheds light on the feminist rejection of patriarchy, and it concludes with the postulation that the time has come to incorporate the feminine perspective and female settings in the legal investigative tradition.

Keywords

Feminism, Post-structuralism, Binary Opposition, Trifles

Introduction

Davies (2011) claims that, historically, feminist post-structuralism postdates two stages of feminist movement. The first, according to him, was liberal feminism, which sought to endorse woman's rights to gain access to public domain, and the second was radical feminism, which celebrated womanhood and castigated the negative female image in masculine discourse. In the same vein, Annapurany (2016) describes three phases of feminism; the first was characterized by the struggle for equality and property rights for women (political), the second was concerned with initiating a feminist cultural identity (cultural), and the third involved interdisciplinary associations that included post-structuralism and its

related issues of language, and culture (academic). Picking this point up, it is feasible to mention Williams' (1990) deprecation of post-structuralism's orientation towards academics on the ground of its incompatibility with reality. To him, arguing interpretations and persuading others is more effective than engaging in cold academic discourse.

Having hastily established the three waves of feminism, the present study will dwell mainly on feminist post-structuralism in its effort to challenge the male/female binary opposition on the basis of Barrett's (2005) conjecture that feminist post-structuralism not only disrupts, but also opens up the possibility of changing, countless preconceived social assumptions.

It is generally held that post-structuralism views language as a set of beliefs and understandings that shape our self-identity. Davis (2000a), cited in Barrett (2005), states that: "*we speak ourselves into existence within the terms of available discourses*" (83). This idea of discourse as a home for our existence harmonizes with Hook's (2006) claim that males and females are distinguished with respect to "*the pre-existing domain of language and law, the social and cultural structure into which the child is born*" (61), which Hook refers to as the 'symbolic order'. Abd-Aun and Haleem, (2020) agrees with Hook that the 'symbolic order' comprises the worlds of language, culture and law, and adds that in the western 'symbolic order', woman is constructed as the "other" of man. This "otherness" is associated with the male-dominated social structures in Western culture, where woman is subjugated and assigned a marginal role and an inferior position (Abd-Aun & Haleem, 2020; and Knights & Kerfort, 2004).

Female "otherness" as a social gender reality is closely investigated by Klages (2011) who postulates that male/female binary opposition does not make sense in the same way light/ dark, and good/evil do. He argues that while dark is defined as the absence of light, and good as the absence of evil, it is never the case that the absence of female features makes a male or vice versa. To him, male/female as binary opposites do not stay on their proper side of the slash like light/dark and good/evil due to the multiplicity of male/female identifications in language and cultural practices, which indicates that they are not mutually exclusive. This last point is consolidated by Butler's (1986) statement that: "*binary gender system has no ontological necessity. One could respond that there are merely various ways of being a 'man' or a 'woman'*" (48)

Butler argues that polarizing gender is self-contradictory and baffling because new constructions of gender with different male/female opposition models are always emerging. Of special importance to our present concern is the point he makes about the western culture bestowing on man a higher cultural value, and placing him at the center as contrasted with the controlled, suppressed and excluded woman who is placed at the margin, a situation which feminists see as unnatural and socially-instituted and thus call for its deconstruction.

It is now time to turn our attention to the metaphor of the theatre seating arrangement. It runs as follows:

"Using the theater metaphor, women sit in the back row, closer to the door and further from the organizing center of the stage; from that back row, they have more freedom to behave as they choose,

rather than as the center dictates. They are also closer to the Imaginary, to images and fantasies, and further from the idea of absolute fixed and stable meaning than men are" (Klages 100)

For ease of reference, Klage's metaphor, within which the present study is framed, will be dissected into three indexes representing three related manifestations of woman's position in a society that promotes male supremacy. The first index of woman's disempowerment is that "*women sit in the back row, closer to the door and further from the organizing center of the stage*" (100). The second is that they "*have more freedom to behave as they choose, rather than as the center dictates*" (100), and the third is that "*they are also closer to the Imaginary, to images and fantasies, and further from the idea of absolute fixed and stable meaning than men are*" (100). Along these three indexes, Glaspell's "Trifles" will be explored, and themes interwoven with male/female binary opposition will be identified and discussed, and the study will, hopefully, unfold a critique of female attempts to voice out their rejection of patriarchy and instituted gender roles.

To begin with, Mael (1989) summarizes "Trifles" as:

"a gloomy farmhouse kitchen belonging to John Wright, recently strangled, and his wife Minnie, now being held in prison for the crime. Three men enter the set: one, the neighboring farmer who discovered the body; another the district attorney; and a third, the sheriff. Two women accompany them: Mrs. Hale, the farmer's wife and childhood friend of Minnie and Mrs. Peters, the sheriff's wife. While the men search the bedroom and barn for clues to a possible motive for the murder, the women move about the kitchen, reconstructing Minnie's dismal life. Through their attentiveness to the "trifles" in her life, the kitchen things considered insignificant by the men, the two women piece together, like patches in a quilt, the events which may have led to the murder. And because they empathize with the missing woman, having lived similar though different lives, they make a moral decision to hide potentially incriminating evidence" (281).

As the story opens, three men; the Sheriff, the County Attorney and a farmer, Mr. Hale, accompanied by two women; Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale, enter the kitchen of the Wright farmhouse. They are there to collect evidence to convict Mrs. Wright, the prime suspect of the murder of her husband. In the following few pages, the proceedings of the story will be approached and interpreted within the frame of Klage's theatre seating arrangement metaphor.

Women Sit In The Back Row, Closer To The Door And Further From The Organizing Center Of The Stage

The idea of woman in the back row portrayed in Klage's metaphor is strikingly embodied in the first scene of Glaspell's "Trifles". The women literally occupy the periphery of the scene as they stick to the outer door reluctant to accept the men's invitation to join them by the fire.

"COUNTY ATTORNEY and HALE. The SHERIFF and HALE are men in middle life, the COUNTY ATTORNEY is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove" (Glaspell 5)

Upon their arrival in the now-abandoned house of Mrs. Wright, the men immediately go to the stove to

warm up. The women, unwilling to tolerate even the smallest potential danger, bundle up and keep close to the door:

"The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door" (Glaspell 5)

This scene provides a living and breathing embodiment of the metaphorical index *"women sit in the back row, closer to the door and further from the organizing center of the stage"* (Klages, 100). Their concern about personal security deprives them of the pleasure of warming up around the stove like their male counterparts, who have fearlessly infringed on the scary uninhabited farmhouse. It is worth pointing out here that the men do not restrain the women from sharing the warmth of the stove. Contrarily, they encourage them to have an equal opportunity of enjoying the warmth of the stove in the chilly day:

"COUNTY ATTORNEY: (rubbing his hands) This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies" (Glaspell 5)

The women are reluctant to accept the invitation. Mrs. Peter moves a step forward and stops to give the obviously false claim that she does not feel cold.

"MRS PETERS: (after taking a step forward) I'm not—cold" (Glaspell 5)

Instigated by their female psychological makeup, the women tend to stay away from the slightest possible threat to personal security. Also, their bundling up possibly serve the purpose of contesting their image in masculine discourse. They seem to have developed a sense of solidarity since the feeling of sisterhood, as Suwastini, and Wahyudiputra (2021) suggest, develops when women feel they share the same fate.

This emerging sense of solidarity between the two women as represented in their coming closer to each other helps reduce the social distance that separates them, and facilitates their confrontation of the men's incessant denigration and ridicule as one strong front. For instance, as a reaction to Mr. Peters' sarcastic remark that women worry over trifles, the two women spontaneously move a little closer to each other:

"Well, women are used to worrying over trifles." (The two women move a little closer together.) (Glaspell 10)

They also draw nearer to each other when they decide to protect their female neighbor and hide the evidence that would convict her from the perspective of the men.

"Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose) Why—(MRS PETERS bends nearer, then turns her face away) There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS PETERS: Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS HALE: (lifting the silk) Oh, Mrs Peters—it's—

(MRS PETERS bends closer).

MRS PETERS: It's the bird.

MRS HALE: (jumping up) But, Mrs Peters—look at it! It's neck! Look at its neck!

It's all—other side to". (Glaspell 20)

This groupthink, whether they disclose it or not, and whether the men accept its significance or not, remains an expression of their coordinated rejection of the passivity foisted on them by the men (Abd-Aun & Haleem, 2020). The reinforcement they get from each other's support enables them to stand up for their neighbor's case and defend her against the verbal assaults of the men. For instance, the County Attorney, as can be seen in the following quotation, chastises Mrs. Wright for bad housekeeping:

"He goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller-towel, turns it for a cleaner place) Dirty towels! (kicks his foot against the pans under the sink) Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?" (Glaspell 10)

County Attorney's criticism of Mrs. Wright on account of her incapability to keep her kitchen clean and tidy irritates Mrs. Hale and puts her on the defensive. Probably Mrs. Hale sees in it an unjustified aggressiveness, as if it is not enough for men to judge women negatively in the social domains that they insist on meddling in female domestic chores. She readily gives three explanations for what has been perceived by the men as bad home keeping; the first justification is that women are always busy doing farm work *"There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm"* (Glaspell 10), the second is that men contribute to household uncleanness as their hands are not always clean *"men's hands are not always clean as they might be"* (Glaspell 11), and the third is that the towel gets dirty *'awful quick'* (Glaspell 11).

The sense of unanimity and empathy from the part of Mrs. Hale towards her neighbor gets the men's recognition and respect as shown in the County Attorney's description of Mrs. Hale as devoted to her sex *"Ah, loyal to your sex, I see"* (Glaspell 11). This point strongly suggests that through female collaboration, the possibility of the formation of a cohesive, genuine female identity is always there .

The women in "Trifles" seem to be rejecting the marginal situation that has given rise to disadvantages for them. Rather than accepting this de facto marginalization, they apparently have created a new center within the margin they have been relegated to, represented in the emergence of a clearly visible female identity characterized by resilience, sisterhood and cooperation. Alkalay-Gut (1984) lends more credibility to this last point in his claim that only through solidarity can women, isolated and marginalized as they are, obtain sympathy and collaboration and extend these values to others.

The institutionalized discrimination against woman is discernible in the hierarchical nature of the center/periphery binary opposition in "Trifles". The gendered dynamics of the division of labor assign to the men the predominantly male official duty of gathering forensic evidence, and to the women, who are considered mere visitors, the minor task of gathering personal belongings Mrs. Wright has requested be brought to her in jail. Even this minor domestic task is subject to the approval of the County Attorney who has agreed that Mrs. Wright's personal items are to be trusted to the women's care as they are totally irrelevant to the investigation in progress. This way of structuring gender roles is in line with the claim of Abd-Aun & Haleem (2020) that the world is structured hierarchically, with women occupying the inner small space of domesticity and men occupying the rest of spaces including

supremacy over the women's space.

Judged from the men's perspective, the women's undertaking is insignificant and inconsequential, however, by virtue of being farmhouse wives, they could view these trivial details of Minnie Forster's (Mrs. Wright's maiden name) household with full acceptance of their significance. Not only that, but they use these details to develop a standpoint that strongly propagates the assimilation of woman in male-privileged spheres. Hedges (1986) sees the divergence in the models of perception of the two sexes as best represented in the contrast between the way the women accept Mrs. Wright's worrying about her jars of preserves, and the Sheriff's poking fun at Mrs. Wright:

SHERIFF "Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves".

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about. (Glaspell 10).

While the men think objectively and assume that a prisoner waiting to be tried for murder should have more serious things to worry about, the women could see through Mrs. Wright's worry about her preserves, with all her work in the hot summer at risk, and they could imagine her sense of loss when that summer's work is destroyed by the winter cold. To ensure full sympathy with Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Peter reminisces how irritated she herself felt on two occasions; once when a boy killed her kitten and once when she was childless for a long time. In a similar context, Clausson (2001) postulates that the women outperform the men in unearthing the motive of the crime by their ability to see things through the eyes of the accused, which is a non-negligible skill in the process of mystery solving. Clausson agrees with Schragar (2019) who claims that the American constitution guarantees the right of the defendant to receive a jury trial in which *"guilt or innocence is decided by a small group of people who share similar traits and experiences to the accused is an important tenet of democracy" (1).*

Women Have More Freedom To Behave As They Choose, Rather Than As The Center Dictates

As has been established in the section above, the men assume the official role of conducting the murder investigation and embark diligently on the quest for judicial knowledge through the use of scientific methods of evidence collection. Conversely, the women are denied the opportunity to exhibit their abilities in the investigative process, and even in their subservient roles they are not taken seriously, and consequently they occupy the back row in the metaphor where they are *"further away from the controlling influence of the center"* (Klages 100).

In this section, we will explore the implication of the back row position which, following the metaphor, allows the women *"more play, more 'freedom' to move and to behave as they wish"* (Klages 100), while waiting for the men to accomplish their institutional duty. The social representation of man as the 'essential' and woman as the 'inessential' as Abd-Aun & Haleem (2020) argue, pushes the woman further away from the center of the symbolic order which comprises the worlds of language, culture and law, and in which woman is culturally constructed as the "other".

As the women's role is that of spectators not actors, they undergo less constraint and enjoy more

freedom to pursue personal interests. They start, as a time-passing activity, to examine the surroundings. They give reign to their female instincts, tidying up things of Mrs. Wright, and unconsciously speaking their minds freely, exploring the possible reasons behind her messy household like the half-cleaned table, the unwashed dishes, the disarray of preserves, the loaf of bread outside the bread set, as well the broken birdcage and the strangled canary. To them, Mrs. Wright must have hurriedly left, or unexpectedly been taken away, and all these interrupted half-done chores strongly point to an emotionally disturbed soul.

Among the things that have caught their attention is a poorly sewn unfinished quilt, and they impulsively start discussing whether she was going to quilt it or knot it. The men who happen to be coming downstairs after they have finished their first round of investigation in the dead man's room upstairs, hear them discussing which style Mrs. Wright decided to finish the patches: quilt them or knot them. Not knowing that the women are making valuable deductions that would finally lead to the construction of the evidence, the men mock the silliness of female interests. Mrs. Hale does not comprehend why the men should be critical of them in spite of their subservience and willingness to act submissively in their company.

"I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence" (Glaspell 16)

By confessing that they have been roaming the place in total comfort doing 'little things', Mrs. Hale is consciously reiterating her wish not to be burdened by serious commitment, but that also means acknowledging the men's superiority over them. Definitely, the men are totally oblivious of any substantial or serious female role, and they do not even see them worthy of being taken seriously. For example, after spending a little time in the kitchen warming up and listening to Mr. Hale's testimony, the sheriff suggests that the men go upstairs and then to the barn. To him the kitchen is supposedly a domain of trifles *"Nothing here but kitchen things"* (Glaspell 10). This derogatory remark carries two negative meanings. On the one hand, the kitchen is viewed as a woman's space totally devoid of any judicial value, and on the other, the Sheriff's words are strongly suggestive of a strong cultural association between the role of a woman and that of a housekeeper Özlem (2019). To further elucidate the men's aggressiveness against the women, they judgmentally observe the mess in the kitchen to focus on Mrs. Wright's flaws, probably as a projection of their own failure in the investigation onto the women or maybe they just want to exercise dominance and power over the them.

The above discussion sets up the major disparity between men and women. Firstly, the reason behind Mrs. Wright's household mess constitutes a strong motive for the crime, but the men would not care about it due to their tendency to overlook feminine items and consider them unworthy of judicial scrutiny. Secondly, the women, after realizing that all the unfinished and poorly achieved chores bespeak repression, develop a strong sense of sympathy and sisterhood towards Mrs. Wright, and practically decide to stand strongly in the face of the men and their alleged notion of justice. A notion, that seeks to apply the letter of the law without its spirit, which would definitely fail to give Mrs.

Wright a fair trial. Away from the controlling center, the women enjoy the freedom "*to behave as they choose, rather than as the center dictates*" (Klages 100). Through this freedom, they are able to imagine a parallel system of justice characterized by the tendency to see things through Mrs. Wright's (the accused) eyes rather than through the legal lens, as well as the propensity to engage in the fact-finding process collaboratively. This seems to agree with Stein (1981) who states that: "*the women, by bonding and co-operating, are "diametrically opposed to the solo virtuosity usually displayed by male detectives"* (254).

Stein points to the universally held notion of a male finder of facts who undertakes on his own the investigation of a mysterious crime and finally succeeds in deciphering the mystery.

They are also Closer to the Imaginary, to Images and Fantasies, and Further from the Idea of the Absolute Fixed and Stable

Language usage is considerably influenced by the underlying perceptions of the dominant group, therefore, the members of the dominated group are disadvantaged and partially muted (Manuel, 2000). In "Trifles", the women, being the disadvantaged and muted group, cannot articulate their experiences because the language is supposedly embedded in male-privileged cultural expectations and norms, which, as the metaphor articulates, form the "*absolute fixed and stable meaning*" (Klages 100). To give just one example, the men and the women seem to disagree on the mental representation of the word 'evidence'. As has been established regarding the men's and women's attitudes towards Mrs. Wright's case, one could say that the men take 'evidence' to be a solid ground for convicting the suspect, whereas the women take 'evidence' as a ground to prove the crime but not to decide on matters of innocence or guilt.

This section will shed light on how, while being pushed away from the fixed and absolute, the women are brought closer to "*the Imaginary, to images and fantasies*" (Klages 100).

As has been noted, the women in "Trifles" have been ostracized from an important social and cultural domain and their voice as active participants is muted. This idea of silencing is further nurtured when, on the onset of the investigation, Mr. Hale recalls that he has called on Mr. Wright to try for the second time to convince him to join the party -telephone after he had failed before to obtain his consent. From Mr. Hales words one can take a clue that Mr. Wight's rejection of the telephone network has contributed to Mrs. Wright's silencing and isolation from the rest of the society. Mrs. Hales confirms this point when she reminisces that before she was married to Mr. Wright, Minnie foster was a beautiful woman with a lovely voice who used to be an active member of the choir, but has been imprisoned at home ever since her marriage, apparently because her husband would not have her sing or communicate by telephone. Along the same line, Özlem (2019) proposes that marriage has altered Mrs. Wright's name, her appearance, her psychology and makes her stop singing, which means that it has silenced her. This silencing of Mrs. Wright by withdrawal from society, according to Özlem (2019), has to be made up for, and that is why she has bought the canary. However, her husband who has

deliberately enforced silence in the house, does not like the canary, and without negotiating the matter with his wife he wrings its neck with a rope (Guswanto & Husna, 2019). This point is further generalized by Wright (2002), who claims that Glaspell's *Trifles* emphasizes the incarceration of women, and their denial of a voice within marriage and before the law.

Nevertheless, it is not only Mr. Wright who has imposed isolation on Mrs. Wright, rather, her neighbors have also contributed to her loneliness. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters express their regret for having failed to reach out to their neighbor "*We Live Close Together and We Live Far Apart*" (Glaspell 23). Add to that, the investigative panel has deliberately denied her the chance to physically appear in a scene set at her home, and denied her a voice when her fate is being discussed. Azeez (2021) proposes that the author has absented the main character "*to intensify the idea of marginalization and to show how patriarchy deprived women of their substance*" (48).

Anyway, the silencing imposed on the women, be it from the life partner, the neighbors or the gender-biased institutions, has only partially succeeded in secluding them, and they have resisted it in many ways. One way of resisting woman silencing is that Mrs. Wright has bought the songbird to spread happiness and cheer in the quiet farmhouse, and to be a substitution for her deliberately distorted appearance and muted voice. Also, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters could communicate silently and the mutual understanding between them sometimes surpasses language. Look at when they consider hiding the dead bird from the view of the men. They just exchange eye contact to express their unspoken agreement:

Mrs. Hale rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at Mrs. Peters, whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting Mrs. Hale's. For a moment Mrs. Hale holds her eyes, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly Mrs. Peters throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is wearing (Glaspell 25)

The tacit agreement they make is not expressed verbally. Their incipient knowledge is revealed in the stage directions:

"...whose eyes make a slow turn finally meeting Mrs. Hale's" (Glaspell 25).

Without verbal communication, the women achieve a number of positive outcomes. Firstly, they correlate the ruthless way in which the songbird is strangled, yet lovingly set inside a decorative box, and the very similar way in which Mr. Wright is strangled. Secondly, by seeing things through Mrs. Wright's eyes they understand how provoked she might have felt by the violent killing of her pet bird, and that she may have possibly avenged the death of her bird in the same manner. Thirdly, they conceal the evidence because they know that disclosing it would mean acquiescing in the rule of law, which means Mrs. Wright will be convicted without giving any consideration to how Mr. Wright killed her a thousand times over by destroying her hopes and pleasures. Fourthly, this irreconcilable dichotomy of being committed to protect Mrs. Wright, but not willing to obstruct justice and tamper with evidence has led them to make a compromise between telling and not telling. They resort to the image of Mrs. Wright's "knotting" of the quilt to suggest the knot with which the husband has been strangled:

"—Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what it is you call it, ladies! MRS. HALE (her hand against her pocket). We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson" (Glaspell 25)

Alluding to the knot on the noose, Mrs. Hale hints that Mrs. Wright is the killer but the County Attorney and the Sheriff fail to understand what a trifle like a quilt stitch may signify in a murder crime.

The discovery of the evidence provides the women with a feeling of self-satisfaction as their sidelined free indulgence in female chat within a purely female domain has caused them to succeed where the men fail. Thus, beyond the scope of the male-dominated system, the women could achieve satisfaction and probably ecstasy, a situation described by feminist post-structuralists as "jouissance" a French word for orgasm- or pleasure beyond language (Klages 97).

The triumph of the women in the middle of a world dominated by men repudiates and discredits the culturally and socially constructed frame of justice that places man at the center and woman at the margin. The men have followed a scientific methodological approach in their investigation including hearing witnesses, looking for crucial information and physical evidence, but they finally find neither evidence nor motive for the crime. Conversely, the women are able to reconstruct Mrs. Wright's crime from insignificant feminine details. This point coincides with the post-structuralist claim that the superiority of man is socially constructed and not natural, and with Carpentier's (2006) claim that compassionate understanding may be fundamental to the achievement of justice. The women in "Trifles" have proven that the time has come to incorporate female contexts and female settings in the legal investigative tradition, and to review the nature of criminality and the ways of its prevention. The voice of women in defining justice has to be heard, and as Shamena et al. (2019) claims, the female perspective enriches the jury experience by incorporating female domestic expertise and by increasing community representativeness in justice institutions. Taking this last point into account one could safely say that a feminist post-structuralist reading of "Trifles" seems satisfactory in defending women's rights.

Conclusion

This study offers a feminist/post-structuralist reading of Susan Glaspell's "Trifles". It addresses man/woman binary opposition, not by taking the existence of one to mean the absence of the other, but in terms of looking at each side of the binary opposition as having a multiplicity of identifications that require various opposition models. In particular, it pays attention to the post-structuralist view of opposition as a societal construct that does not exist in objective reality, and therefore, could be challenged, dismantled and rectified. The study seeks to analyze Glaspell's "Trifles" in the light of a quotation from Klages (2011) in which he uses the theatre seating arrangement as a metaphor for woman's position in the male/female gender binary. Also, in "Trifles", the patriarchal constructs underlying the judicial conventions have been confronted and the nature of criminality has been

redefined when the women in the story repudiate the passivity foisted on them by engaging in a series of domestic feminine details that finally lead to the unraveling of the mystery of the crime. The study sheds light on the feminist rejection of patriarchy, and it concludes with the postulation that the time has come to incorporate the feminine perspective and female settings in the legal investigative tradition.

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