In a Jury of Her Peers by Susan Glaspell uses evidence such as isolation, emotional abuse and psychological dependence to portray a 19th century wife's oppression in marriage.

Primary Sources:

"It had always been a lonesome-looking place. It was down in a hollow, and the poplar trees around it were lonesome-looking trees."

Here Mrs.Hale explains why she doesn’t like to visit her childhood friend because the Wright’s house had the desolate aspect, lacked a feeling of comfort and welcoming and It seemed like nobody could live there, just trees. In certain occasion, the reader can relate trees with vitality and joy, but here in this quote, one can deduce that these trees were tall and were exclusively cultivated to hide something like the isolation, the conditions of negligence and mistreatment towards a woman during that period of time.
Mr. Hale explains to the county attorney how he wants to convince Mr. Wright to get a telephone. "And as we got in sight of the house I says to Harry, 'I'm going to see if I can't get John to take telephone.'...unless I can get somebody to go in with me they won't come this branch road except for a price I can't pay. I had spoke to Wright it once before; but he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway."

Mr. Wright was not interested in having a telephone in his house because he wanted to keep his wife isolated and have no way for her to have information from outside of their home. By doing this, he cuts her access with her family, friends and social life. He wanted to keep her dependent on him.

"I wonder how it would seem, Mrs. Hale at last began, as if feeling her away over the strange ground 'never to have any children around?' Her eyes made a slow sweep of the kitchen, as if seeing what that kitchen had meant through all the years 'no, Wright wouldn't like the bird,' she said after that 'a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that too. 'Her voice tightened."

Here Mrs. Hale was sure and convinced that Mr. Wright killed the canary as he also killed his wife little by little taking away things that she used to do before got married like singing in the choir.
“The sheriff too looked all around, as if to re-convince himself. ‘Nothing here but kitchen things’, he said with the little laugh for the insignificance of kitchen things.”

In this quote the reader can distinguish how the men only take a few minutes in Wright’s kitchen, the place where Mrs. Wright spent most of her time. It is clear that psychological abuse always putting women's things "in this case the kitchen" as something unimportant and that no evidence could be found related to the crime there. It is also necessary to emphasize that they were convinced that women are incapable of understanding anything relevant to the story of the crime. It is here where the arrogance of the intelligence of men over women is observed, they feel superior and always humiliating them with their ironies.

Secondary Sources:

“Minnie is portrayed as isolated woman living in a lonesome stretch of road. The relationships of women are limited and weak, contrary to the men’s relationships.”

“Minnie Foster and Mrs. Hale are neighbours, Mrs.Hale has not crossed the threshold of Minnie Foster’s house, which is proof of the isolated lives they lead caused by domestic caregiving.”

“From the very beginning of the story to the end, we encounter in characterization and the narrative various references to voice, the lack of it, and the metaphor of women’s language, the codes of which are not taken seriously by men. Throughout the story we witness men talking and women staying in silent, but the silence of women tells us something unlike the continuous chattering of men.

These three quotes explain how women’s lives in the 19th century were oppressed by the patriarchal society, so that women had no voice in their own homes and it was even worse in society. As can be deferred from the first quote, Minnie Foster lived in a place in the middle of the field and her house was built in a hollow covered by trees that gave the appearance that no one lived there. From quotes one and two, it can be deduced that women had no relationship of friendship once they got married, they did not visit each other whereas men kept maintaining that relationship with friends before marriage. That is why Mrs.Hale could not cross that limit created in the thoughts of the society of that time. The third quote explain the absence of women's voices in public, in their homes,
and even more the minimization of their thoughts. The wright's habits were not unusual; the reader can see in the characterization of the men that they spoke loudly and seriously and considered the women's thoughts trivial and unimportant.


“There are also constant references to isolation. John Wright isolated his wife from other people who might have offered support. He cut off communication, the telephone (20-21), and the money that would have let his wife escape.”

“Evidence of isolation and accompanying abuse come from inanimate objects in the house: the dead canary, the unfinished quilt, the door violently torn off the cage, Minnie's shabby clothing. The women lament that the actions of the men seem ‘kind of sneaking, locking her up in town and coming out here to get her own house to turn against her!’ Instead of using against Minnie the evidence that they discover, the women conclude that it proves her to have been isolated and abused.”

“Abused women normally suffer both emotional and physical abuse. There is strong evidence of emotional abuse in the story: the purposeful isolation of Minnie, her old but
carefully mended clothing, her broken stove. Physical abuse may be inferred from the killing of her canary, her alter ego, whose death warned of her husband's impending deadly attack, and from the torn cage door and the bursting preserve jars that indicate sudden explosive, destructive violence.”

“Martha Hale describes him as ‘a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him.... Like a raw wind that gets to the bone.’ But although Wright was an abusive husband who kept his wife in isolation, depriving her of the joys of life and even of its necessities, that did not detract from the public view of him as ‘a good man.’”

Theses quotes explain how Minnie Foster was mistreated by her husband, and was forbidden to maintain communication with her family, friends, and society. In this way, he keeps her isolated from the outside world from what happens day after day, and also it can be deduced from these quotes that Mrs. Wright was emotionally and physically abused. That is why she could not prevent the death of her canary by the hands of her husband because he could have beaten her to death. It should be noted that society had a bad concept of a ‘good man’ because they said that Mr. Wright was not vicious and that he was very hardworking and kept his wife in restricted conditions without contact with other members of society. He also did not give her money for the purchase of new clothes and kitchen devices like as stove. The reader could conclude that these quotes show how Mr. Wright was a cold, violent, and economically controlling man against his wife. This
is the way Glaspell portrays the role of the men during that period of time and the women subjected to oppression under a society commanded by men through the characters.


“The women reason that the strangled bird had been treasured by the desperately lonely farm wife for its companionship and killed at the hands of her husband, and must have been the proverbial last straw prompting the wife to kill her abusive husband.”

“Female bonding is a central theme in Jury of Her Peers, long celebrated by feminist writers. Conversing, Minnie’s neighbor and the sheriff’s wife realize how difficult her work must have been at the bad stove, how shabby and humiliated she must have felt in her worn-out clothes, and how she must have longed for music. They appreciate how desperately she must have missed other women’s company and their social activity, friendship, warmth, conversation, and compassion.”
“Pausing from their daily chores to scrutinize Minnie’s life, they come to apprehend their own, reluctantly admitting: “We all go through the same things—it’s all just a different kind of the same thing!”

From these quotes the readers can deduce Mrs. Wright had a lonely life, she did not have any children and for this reason that she took as much love to the canary as to be her own child. In spite of this, Mr. Wright did not care and killed the canary who was the companion of his wife, consoled her days of loneliness. He also took away the Minnie’s participation as a singer in the choirs, interaction with other people that is the most important for the development of human been. Finally, this situation of Mrs. Wright was not different to the other women’s of the society; it did not matter what social class they belonged because after all they had something in common that was the oppression of women under the patriarchal system of that time.


“The differences between the men and the women become apparent almost immediately. They divide into two separate groups as they enter the Wright Farmhouse, but the distance is quickly shown to be more than simply physical; the psychological and emotional reactions of the men and the women differ as well. Throughout the story, the
men and the women display different interests, concerns, and priorities. And it is the men who carry the weight of authority, who are charged with the investigation of the murder. The men will decide what is relevant under the law, just as other men, acting as judge and jurors, will be responsible in the courtroom for deciding the fate of Minnie Wright. In the minds of the men of the story, just as in the society as whole, the women are marginalized, with their abilities perceived to be limited to those necessary for their domestic duties of cooking and housekeeping.”

This quote explains how Glaspell show us the gender differences are obviously very important to the story, and it is more than physical and also they have different agendas. The men thought themselves superior intellectually more than women because they were the ones who managed society at that time. The women could not serve as part of the court because all the thoughts of women were minimized, the men believed that they only served for the kitchen and housework. Then it was the men who investigated, those who handled the court, and decided how they would be sentenced the guilty in this case Minnie Foster.

“Minnie’s existence and her behavior are determined by her man who makes the rules she lives by. In this respect all the three women are the same. Their behavior varies only because different men motivate different behavior.”

In this quote, the readers found another proof of how the three women had something in common, they shared that same treatment of men. Possibly Mrs. Hale would have a more understanding husband but at the end he followed the same patterns of the society of that time. Mrs. Peter, also went through the same, a shy woman, almost did not speak barely murmured. In her situation, Mr. Peter was more careful because he was the local sheriff; It would not have been good for him to be involved in situations of violence but it does not guarantee that there was no violence towards his wife in his home. Finally it was the man who managed the society of nineteenth century, where the woman had no right.