**Lethal Housewives**Body Paragraph 1

In both Dahl’s “Lamb to the Slaughter” and in Glaspell’s “A Jury of Her Peers”, the two stories are somewhat similar in plot, but the author’s style and description could not be more different with approaching characterization directly verses indirectly. Dahl uses the direct approach as he describes Mrs. Maloney. This means that the author defines the character almost as if he was a narrator talking directly to the reader; for example, “Her skin –for this was her sixth month with the child- had acquired a wonderful translucent quality, the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their placid new look seemed larger darker than ever before” (Dahl 1). In stark contrast, Mrs. Wright from “A Jury of Her Peers” is illustrated by in an indirect manner which means the author uses characters from within the story to describe her. This is evident in the passage seen through another character’s eyes: “She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively--when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls, singing in the choir” (Glaspell 10), as delivered by Mrs. Hale. Both characters are three dimensional as they undergo a change from their timid shell to a stronger, more defiant stand-up persona. Even though both of these murderous women are described differently, we relate and sympathize with their plight through the descriptive details that shape our understanding of their characterization.

**Lethal Housewives**

Body Paragraph 2

Another way in which these stories differ is in each woman’s vicious motives behind their attacks on their husbands. In the beginning of “Lamb to the Slaughter”, once her husband tells her that he is leaving her, Mary Maloney at first thinks he is joking. She then becomes exceedingly furious, making her instantly decide to kill him. In one of her essays, Sara Piecha writes that, “The directly shown suddenness of the events creates an experience of shock for the reader. He is confronted with the decision whether Mary Maloney is culprit or victim” (Piecha 6). Mrs. Maloney has nothing to lose by killing her husband since she is already losing him to another woman. Here, we must think how a pregnant woman in the early 50s might get along in a society without a husband. Thus, it is this concept and perhaps the hormones that may have lead her to snap and kill her husband, and while not right or justifiable, we as readers certainly relate and sympathize with her plight. A sympathetic character is believable and her motives help make her a dynamic character.

**Lethal Housewives**

Body Paragraph 3

On the other hand, Mrs. Wright’s motive is quite different. Glaspell describes Mr. Wright as an unpleasant person to say the least; for example, another character states that, “I don’t think a place would be any more cheerful for John Wright’s bein’ in it” (Glaspell 8). It seems that Mr. and Mrs. Wright had not been getting along for quite some time, and when he killed her pet bird it incited her enough to kill him. We must remember the setting of the harsh prairie and remoteness set in a bygone era which contributed to her snapping and killing her husband. Once her beloved companion and pet was murdered, she felt completely alone, even abandoned. Thus, her reason is not really different from Mrs. Maloney in “Lamb to the Slaughter” where she, too, became crazy at the prospect of being abandoned.