

Sample essay on the use of props in hedda gabler and the importance of being earn...

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Props are important in plays because they help in revealing important information about the characters, the themes, and the plot of the play. Props include all the physical objects used in showing the flow of the play and directing the readers or viewers about what the play covers. Props open the eyes of the viewers into the significance of certain occurrences hence they spice up the play. The use of props in the two plays, Hedda Gabler and The Importance of Being Earnest, categorically places the plays in high ranks about the message, characterization, and plot for the plays. Some of the props have great semblance while others have varying differences. The paper explores the use of props in the two plays to highlight the significance of the props like food, the houses and the lifestyles of the characters to the plays' development.

Both plays use food as part of the props to highlight different concepts. In Hedda Gabler, food is used to show unity of the people as well as their disagreements and conflicts (Vellela 12). The foods used in the play are however, mostly drugs. At the beginning of the play, Hedda lights and smokes a cigarette in a casual way. This is a show of the ugly side of the presentable and well-mannered woman, which puts the play on course for Hedda's controversial life. At the same time, arguments about food and drugs cause many conflicts in the whole play (Craig 21). In the Importance of Being Earnest, food is mainly framed as the item over which conflict starts in the society. The first act contains the cucumber sandwiches, which cause the first conflict about food. Algernon unconsciously savors all the sandwiches causing a conflict in the house. Gwendolen and Cecily conflict about sugar and cakes in a furious exchange about who is engaged to Earnest.

In both plays, Props are used to show the character traits of people are perception about the characters. The two pistols influence the perception of the readers about Hedda. She is a brutal woman. Firing two pistols at people did not sound like the best thing to do. Moreover, the luxurious houses and foods eaten by Earnest in *The Importance of Being Earnest* highlight him as a rich and admirable man (Wilde and Parker 106). Food such as bread and butter and the conflicts over them show the desperate nature of the women, Gwendolen and Cecily, to marry Earnest. They use food as a bait to start a quarrel and show each other that they deserved to Marry Earnest. They both feel they are rightfully engaged to Earnest and none of them is ready to let go.

The props are also used to portray the lives that the characters in each of the plays live. In *Hedda Gabler*, Hedda and Eilert are portrayed as lavish brown-haired men and women because of their dresses and rich lifestyles that reflect brunette lives as well as lavish ones (Vellela 14). Mrs. Elvsted's home is a rich home as she comes from the governess position. In this case, the props show that Mrs. Elvsted is rich. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the cigarette prop is used to show Jack's deceitful lifestyle (Chafe 96). The cigarette prop is also in a lavish house displaying the wealthy nature of the characters. Jack assumes the name Earnest to get to Cecily. Algernon interviews him over the cigarette case only to reveal his true character in Jack. The lavish home shows that Jack lived a rich life and only pretended to be Earnest in order to get to Cecily.

The props in the two plays differ and portray different messages in a number of ways. In *Hedda Gabler*, the props show that the characters live a lot in

illusion and no one understands the other people pretty clearly. Everyone thinks Hedda is a modest woman. However, the props show a contradiction. She smokes a cigarette carelessly making the audience suspicious of her modest nature, which is expected of a woman. It shows that she is not a modest woman, although throughout the play she frames herself as one. When she fires pistols at a garden, her double life is exposed and this changes the audience's perception of Hedda. Whereas the audience believes that she is a modest and cool woman, the pistols contradict that and reveal that she is a brutal lady through the threats she advances. Lovborg's rebellion against the society is presented in a manuscript, a prop that shows direct double lives of the characters. In the Importance of Being Earnest, the props show a natural life that is admired by the majority of actors. Jack is naturally a lavish man who lies conceals his real identity to Cecily (Wilde 66). He makes up a secret to take up the name Earnest in order to deceive the people. It does not show wrong perception, but the audience can actually see that he pretended both in rich and poor measures. Bread and butter in the play show that the women, Gwendolen and Cecily, lived lavishly although by contrast, they are competing for engagement to Earnest.

In Hedda Gabler, the props symbolically deliver the message about the characters. The two pistols symbolically showed Hedda's double life (Craig 9). In one life, she was the presentable and admirable woman while in another life she was tough and untamable. The glass door also symbolizes Hedda's inner feelings. She feels that it is necessary to escape from the Villa. She feels that her goals will be easier to achieve if she escapes from the Villa. Similarly, the piano on the stage symbolizes luxury and richness (Carter

111). The piano is always associated with the rich hence its presence in Mr. Tesman's house shows wealth and luxury. In the Importance of Being Earnest, the props are used to show natural secrets kept by the actors and the natural lives. The hidden secret in the name ' Earnest' is a show of the reality that Jack truly needs to get to Cecily. The cigarette box is a prop used to show the complicated and harmful nature of Jack's life (Wilde 65). The stage is natural with trees and a natural environment to signify that the play mainly focused on the nature and natural secrets. The bookcase and the large volumes of books show that the characters had secrets kept in the books as all the secrets are revealed at the end of the play. One revelation of a secret leads to yet another revelation in the comic conclusion.

Props are essential in a play as they show the thoughts and ideas above the traits of the characters. A number of props are used to reflect the same motif or character trait in the two plays. The cigarette smoking in Hedda Gabler and the cigarette case in the importance of being Earnest both show the double lives of the characters. Food is a prop that is used in both the plays mainly as a source of conflict. Similarly, some props are used to mean different or conflicting things in the plays. The glass door means the secrecy and inner feelings of Hedda in Hedda Gabler while the same shows the lavish life in the importance of being Earnest. Concisely, the props help in building the plots as well as the character development.

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