

English 312
Spring 2017

Paper One

4-5 pages

Texts: William Wells Brown, *The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom*, Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*, Anton Chekhov, *The Sea-gull*

All three of these plays comment on the relationships between the play/the text of the play and creative and artistic acts. For example, there are artist figures in the plays; characters are playwrights, writers, and actresses. In other instances, such as in *The Escape*, songs are introduced into the text itself and the reader is shown the entirety of more than one song. This paper asks you to consider the relationship between creative/artistic acts and the plays as texts. Write an essay that explores the role of one or more creative acts in relation to the characters in the play or the text itself.

This prompt is open-ended, so you can explore your own ideas about the texts. You can write about one play or compare/contrast two or more plays. Additionally, if you focus on one play, you can write about several characters/scenes or focus on one element of the play. Here are some questions to think about as you consider this prompt:

- Is there an artist figure in the play? If so, what is the role of the artist?
- Is the artist valued in the play? If so, what kind of art is valued?
- What is the author saying about art and the artist? Does the author propose an overall theory of art? Is there a coherent message about art and/or the artist figure in the play?
- Do characters have differing or contradictory relationships with art?
- How else is creativity defined beyond our traditional ideas of the artist?
- What is the relationship between art in the text and the characters or other aspects of the play? For example, what relationships do the characters have to the book that Lovborg is writing?
- In *The Escape*, what is the relationship between the songs printed in the text and the text itself? Why are there songs printed in the text?

This essay is argument based and should have a thesis. You should not only point out interesting aspects of the text(s) but also form an argument around these aspects. The main goal is to show how your reading of the text elucidates or explains the text in a way that would add to someone's understanding of the play. What does your reading offer your reader? How would it further their understanding of the text? This is a short paper, so remember to focus your argument as much as possible in order to give appropriate attention to each of your points.

It is not necessary to have outside sources, but if you do, please include them in your Works Cited and cite them properly in the text.

Rubric:

Argument	Has a strong argument with a clearly articulated thesis		10
	The argument effectively answers the ‘so what?’ question—that is, the writer explains the broader significance of his/her observations		10
Structure/Organization	Thesis is used to provide structure to the essay		10
	The writer shows complexity depth of thought when constructing his/her argument		10
	Focus is adequately developed over the course of the essay		10
	Ideas are presented in a logical order		10
Transitions/Paragraphs	There are clear transitions between main ideas in the text		10
	Paragraphs cohere around central ideas		10
	Sentence-level transitions move the essay forward		10
Technical Skills	Has few grammatical errors		5
	Uses MLA format correctly		5
Total			100