

Prime Stage Theatre



Bringing Literature to Life

The Elephant Man

A Play by Bernard Pomerance

Directed by Richard Keitel

February 24—March 4, 2012

New Hazlett Theater

Generously funded by



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Bringing Literature to Life

POST-SHOW CHAT SESSIONS

Stay after the school matinees to ask questions of both the actors and the characters! During the 20-minute post-show chat sessions, delve into the minds and reasoning of the characters and then ask questions of the actors about the rehearsal process, theatre performance, and their experiences working on that particular production. No registration required.

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Prime Stage Theatre's flagship education program strives to increase adolescent literacy through theatre in underserved and underperforming school districts in the Western Pennsylvania area. In this FREE program, schools receive tickets and books for each Prime Stage production, 10 in-school workshops, and professional development opportunities for teachers. If you would like your school to become involved, please download an application at our website, http://primestage.com/files/pdf/application_aas.pdf.

2011-12 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS — "CREATIVE INQUIRY FOR LITERACY LEARNING"

Bring WONDER into your classroom by introducing creative inquiry into your lessons. Learn how theatre artists use questions and critical thinking in their work, and discover how to use these techniques to inspire your students' love of learning. This season there are three opportunities to expand your creative teaching skills and invigorate your practice: "Introduction to Creative Inquiry," September 10, 2011 at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3. "Engaging Disengaged Adolescents," November 7, 2011 at the New Hazlett Theater. "Scientific Inquiry Is Not Just For Science," April 23, 2012 at the Carnegie Science Center. For more information and registration form, visit http://primestage.com/educators_students/workshops.html or contact Christina Farrell, Education Director at cfarrell@primestage.com.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS, FAMILIES AND ADULTS

Prime Stage Theatre offers opportunities for people of all ages to get involved with the theater. Check out our website to learn about mentorships, volunteering, book readings and many other exciting events. There is something for everyone at Prime Stage! <http://primestage.com/>

The Elephant Man

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre:
Bringing Literature to Life!



Antigone, PST2011



The Glass Menagerie, PST 2011

Dear Educator,

Welcome to the 2011-12 season at Prime Stage Theatre! We had a very successful season last year with acclaimed productions of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Antigone*. We are thrilled to welcome you this year to three productions that will inspire you to imagine and discover: *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Elephant Man* and *A Wrinkle in Time*.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities, and other curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with the literature. We hope it will inspire you to use theatrical skills and creative thinking in your classroom in order to spark personal connections with the themes and characters in the stories.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in this guide, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'm happy to help and welcome your suggestions!

~Christina Farrell
Education Director

cfarrell@primestage.com

Curriculum Connections Corner

Prime Stage Theatre is committed to directly correlating our programs to the PDE Academic Standards. *The Elephant Man* and this resource guide may be used to address the following curriculum content standards:

Arts and Humanities:
9.1-9.4

Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening: 1.1-1.8

History: 8.1-8.4



Bringing Literature to Life

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Did you know...

- **Prime Stage Theatre** has been in existence for over 13 years.
- **Prime Stage Theatre's** very first production was *A Woman Called Truth* about Sojourner Truth.
- **Prime Stage Theatre** first performed at the Station Square Playhouse (now Hard Rock Café).

Check out what's inside!

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Summary—*The Elephant Man*

The Elephant Man in 30 seconds...

1884—Dr. Treves is in London Hospital, touting his excellent credentials as the new lecturer in anatomy. In the next scene he happens to see Ross inviting people to pay to see “The Elephant Man,” a freak of nature. Treves views the man and pays Ross so he may study his anatomy for a day. Dr. Treves delivers a lecture on the man, named John Merrick, describing his deformities in a clinical fashion, explaining that his speech is difficult to understand and his face is incapable of expressing emotion. After the lecture, Merrick is returned to the freak show and Ross tries to promote him in Brussels. But the police stop the show for “public indecency.” Ross considers Merrick a liability and sends Merrick back to England alone after pocketing most of the money that Merrick had earned. The police escort Merrick away as he tries to explain that he had been “robbed.” As Merrick’s train arrives at the Liverpool Station, the police are protecting

him from an angry mob. They find Treves’ card in his coat pocket and contact the doctor. Treves arranges for temporary care for Merrick at the London Hospital. He interviews Nurse Sandwich to be Merrick’s caretaker but she, like many others nurses, is too horrified by his appearance to take the job. The Bishop, however, feels it is his Christian duty to help Merrick by providing religious instruction. Funds are raised to secure a permanent home for Merrick in the London Hospital. Treves invites an actress named Mrs. Kendal to visit Merrick, hoping that her acting training will allow her to hide her repulsion. But she finds Merrick to be an intellectual man capable of deep thought. She discusses *Romeo and Juliet* with him and shakes his hand as she leaves. Merrick sobs because it is the first time a woman has touched him. Merrick begins work on a paper model of St. Paul’s Cathedral. He receives gifts and visits from several members of the royal family, who each see traits of themselves within Merrick. During

one of Mrs. Kendal’s visits, Merrick explains that he has never seen a woman’s body. She matter-of-factly reveals herself, but Treves interrupts and sends her away with accusations of “indecent.” Hurt by the loss of his friend, Merrick questions Treves about whether it is “indecent” to see his female surgery patients without clothing. Later, Treves has troubling dreams in which he trades places with Merrick. Treves becomes more and more troubled, until he breaks down weeping, just as Merrick finishes his model of St. Paul’s. One afternoon Merrick takes his nap, sitting up to prevent the weight of his head from killing him, but he has a dream in which he sleeps lying down. He is found a short time later, lying on his bed.

...or less.

Due to a rare bone condition, John Merrick, known as The Elephant Man, makes a life journey from being a freak show attraction to medical wonder to society intellectual to spiritual inspiration.

Bernard Pomerance

Playwright Bernard Pomerance was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1940. He was inspired to write after seeing a production of Eugene O’Neill’s original production of *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*.

He studied at the University of Chicago, then moved to London in the early 1970’s where he became involved with several small, innovative theater companies. In 1972, he partnered with Director Roland Rees to create the Foco Novo theatre group.

The purpose of Foco Novo was to promote works by new playwrights, particularly those by black writers. Foco Novo premiered *The Elephant Man* in 1977, as well as Pomerance’s *Foco Novo*, *Quantrill in Lawrence*, *A Man’s Man* (adaptation of Brecht’s play) and *Melons*. Many of Pomerance’s plays take a politically-charged view of American history.

The Elephant Man was performed at London’s National Theatre and several times on and off Broadway. The play won the Tony Award for Best Play in 1979.

The famous movie directed by David Lynch was not an adaptation of the play, as many people assumed, and Pomerance successfully sued the movie studio for creative infringement.

Pomerance is a very private man, and therefore very little is known about his personal life or childhood.



Foco Novo original production of The Elephant Man.
David Schofield, Jennie Stoller. Photo: John Haynes

The Real Merrick

Pomerance's play is based on the true story of a man named Joseph Merrick. While many of the details in the play reflect real-life events, Pomerance took some artistic license in creating his play.



Joseph Carey Merrick was born on August 5, 1862 in the working-class neighborhood of Leicester (LICE-ster.) Although his mother, Mary Jane, was reported to have a physical disability of her own, Joseph was born without any sign of abnormality. The Merricks had two other children, a son who died of scarlet fever in 1866 and a daughter who was born with physical disabilities in 1867 and died in 1891.

Merrick began to display symptoms of his disorder around age two. He developed a lump on his lips, followed by a bony lump on his forehead. By age five, his skin turned thick and lumpy and began to loosen from his frame in some places. Over time his limbs enlarged tremendously, with the exception of his left arm which remained normal. At some point during childhood his left hip was injured in a fall, forcing him to walk with a stick from that point on.

Merrick's family, including Merrick himself, believed his condition to be the result of his mother being frightened and knocked down by an elephant during her pregnancy. During that time, it was a common belief that the emotional experiences

of the mother could affect their unborn children.

Despite his deformities, Merrick attended regular school and had a close relationship with his mother who was a devout Baptist and Sunday school teacher. Unfortunately, she died in 1873 and his father remarried the next year. Merrick left school at age 13 to find work, which was common for boys during that time. But the increasing severity of his deformities made it more and more difficult for him to work. His father and stepmother accused him of being a financial burden and after being severely beaten by his father, he left home in 1877.

After several failed attempts at finding work, Merrick admitted himself to the Leicester Union Workhouse at age 17. After about four years, he decided that he may be able to find work as an human novelty exhibition. He contacted a popular showman named Sam Torr, who decided to present him in a traveling show as "Half-a-Man and Half-an-Elephant." The show toured in and around London for a while and was finally taken over by Tom Norman. Norman opened a permanent exhibition on Whitechapel Road in which onlookers could pay to have an up-close look at The Elephant Man. Although Norman was concerned that Merrick's appearance might be too horrifying for even the freak show audiences, the show was moderately successful and Merrick was even able to save some money of his own.

Because the Whitechapel shop was across the street from the London Hospital, several medical professionals, including Dr. Frederick Treves, started to take an interest in Merrick's condition. Treves asked for Norman's permission to do a complete examination of Merrick. However, Merrick complained that he "felt like an animal in a cattle market" under the examination of the hospital staff.

Merrick traveled around Europe with the freak show under a new manager, but

was eventually abandoned in Brussels because he was deemed too horrifying. He returned penniless to London and the police sent him to Treves after discovering his card in Merrick's pocket.

Merrick remained at London Hospital with donated support from the community at large. He became friends with Treves, although there were many aspects of Merrick's life that he chose not to share with the doctor. Treves eventually learned that Merrick was not intellectually impaired, as he had first assumed.

Merrick told Treves that he wished to live in a home for the blind where he may be able to meet a woman who could not see his deformities. Eventually, Treves introduced Merrick to Mrs. Leila Maturin, a young widow, who stayed in contact with Merrick until the end of his life. A young actress named Madge Kendal also took note of Merrick's situation and although she never met him, she helped raised funds for his care. Several members of royalty and high society came to visit Merrick or sent him gifts. He took three trips to the countryside to visit the estate of Lady Louisa Knightly. One of the highlights of Merrick's life was attending the Theatre Royal in London.

After four years in London Hospital, Merrick's condition worsened. He was found dead on April 11, 1890 at the age of 27. The cause of death was determined to

be a broken neck caused by laying down in his bed. Throughout his life, Merrick had slept in a sitting position with his head resting on his knees.

London Hospital kept a plaster cast of Merrick's skeleton and many of his personal affects, including the model of a church he built during his residence at the hospital.



Putting it in Context



Queen Victoria

Victorian England—1837 to 1901:

The Victorian Era began when Queen Victoria was crowned in 1837 and it lasted until her death in 1901. The era is known for its strict social etiquette and advancements in industry, technology and medicine. As living standards improved, birth rates increased dramatically and people began to live longer. The population of England nearly tripled from 13.9 million people in 1831 to 32.5 million people by 1901. Poor and middle class people crowded into urban areas to look for work at new industrial facilities such as a coal mines, textile mills or steel production sites. Their labor added to wealth of the upper class and created a class of “nouveau riche” (newly rich) people who grew their wealth by starting their own enterprises. The large division between the upper and lower classes fueled the creation of social welfare programs and fair labor laws. Despite the daily struggles and technological advancements, the pervasive outlook in art and culture embraced romanticism and mysticism. Artists, writers, musicians—even scientists and historians—were interested in the mysteries of nature, the strengths of human emotion and the exotic unknown.

Imperialism and Colonialism:

“Colonialism” is defined as implanting settlements in a distant territory. The American colonies, for example, were created by English and other European settlers arriving at the new land and creating homes of their own.

While England certainly engaged in colonialism during the Victorian Era, it also sought to expand its empire through “Imperialism,” which differs from colonialism in that the goal is to assume power over an existing distant territory. Imperialism is associated with spreading ideological and social policies, governed from a central location.

Between 1814-1922, England’s increased its imperialistic efforts dramatically, resulting in approximately 400 million people being added to the English Empire. This takeover was justified among the English people because there was a pervasive feeling that many of the territories taken under English control were “uncivilized” and in need of moral and social improvement. As England took control of India and the eastern coast of Africa, for example, missionaries and doctors felt it was their civic duty to help the “poor, unenlightened natives” through religious instruction and medical assistance. But, of course, England stood to gain from the acquisition of raw materials such as cotton, rubber, copper, palm oil, diamonds, tea and tin as well.



The red indicates the territories that were part of the British Empire in the 1897.

Important Events

1843—The first Christmas cards are designed by artist John Callcott Horsley.

1845—The Irish Famine begins and becomes the worst humanitarian disaster in the history of the UK. Ireland loses over half its population due to starvation or emigration.

1848—Karl Marx publishes *The Communist Manifesto*.

1851—The Great Exhibition of 1851 the first World’s Fair and is held in the Crystal Palace in London. It showcases the world’s first voting machine and a precursor to today’s fax machine.

1859—Charles Darwin publishes his theory of evolution, *On the Origin of Species*.

1859—The famous London clock tower “Big Ben” is built.

1862—The London Underground (also called “The Tube”) becomes the first underground subway system in the world.

1865—*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by C. S. Lewis is published.

1870—The *Elementary Education Act* mandates that Basic State Education will be free for children under the age of ten.

1899—Sigmund Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Putting it in Context (cont.)



Victorian Etiquette and Fashion:

Upper class members of Victorian society were obsessed with social etiquette. There was a long list of do's and don'ts that covered even the tiniest details of everyday life. Proper introductions needed to be made before one person could speak to another, and then it was very important to use the appropriate title. Young women had to be constantly chaperoned and if they were caught alone with a gentleman, they could be ostracized by the family and social circle. A young woman's worst fear was being the subject of negative gossip! Women were expected to act gracefully at all times. They were not encouraged to participate in any activity that might be considered rigorous or cause them to sweat. The fashion for women included tight corsets which gave the illusion of having a very tiny waist. But the corsets caused women to faint and in some cases damaged internal organs.

Wealthy gentlemen were equally concerned with social rules and fashion. They needed to know when to tip their hat, when they were allowed to smoke or drink (rarely in front of a lady,) and which coat jacket was appropriate for every occasion. Top hats signified a very wealthy man, while a bowler hat was worn by the middle or lower classes.

Both ladies and gentlemen dedicated a tremendous amount of time and effort to maintaining their social connections. Parties, dances, attending the theater, making social calls to others' homes and being seen at the finest dressmakers were all an important part of daily living. Every person had a calling card which they'd leave behind at each event to be sure that the host knew of their attendance. Newspapers published social columns that reviewed the week's events and sited opinions about those who attended. Sometimes these reports cast scathing judgments on a person's clothing or behavior, causing devastating embarrassment.



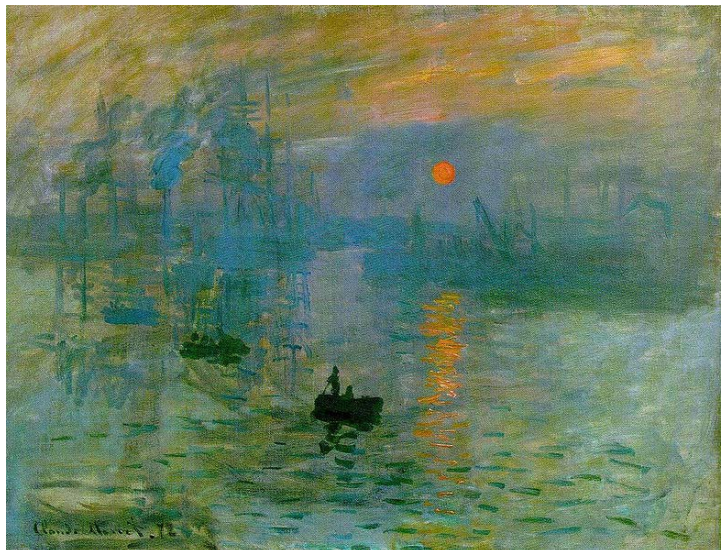
Victorian Art and Culture:

Theater was a popular past-time for Victorian people. The upper classes attended performances in fine theaters featuring the internationally famous actress Sarah Bernhardt. They also enjoyed comic operettas that poked fun at English society, such as *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *H.M.S. Pinafore* by the British duo Sir William S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. The lower classes attended variety shows or 'vaudevilles' at dance halls which featured popular songs, skits, dances, animal tricks and comedy acts. These were noisy, smoke-filled places where drunken audience members would shout, cheer and hiss the performers.

Music was central to the lives of the wealthy. Young children, especially girls, were trained to play an instrument and social visits often included parlor music. All the guests would gather around the parlor piano to listen to each other play and everyone would sing popular songs together.

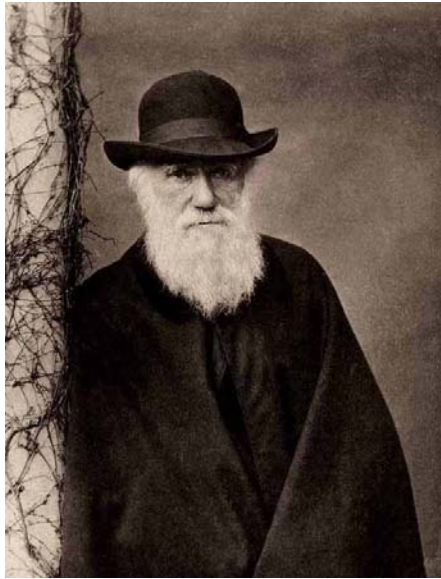
Charles Dickens' books, including *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*, were popular because they brought to light many of issues of social inequity that faced Victorian society. As the world started to make tremendous strides in technology, the science fiction of H. G. Wells captured the public's imagination. His novels such as *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds* and *The First Men in the Moon* predicted new technologies long before their time.

Victorian art covers Classicism, Romanticism, Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism. Classicism strove toward accurate, objective depiction of the world, while Romantic paintings focused on the expression of emotion over reason. Impressionism developed in the late 19th century and was characterized by the changing effects of light and color. Post-Impressionism was developed as a reaction to the limitations of Impressionism. Late Victorian art also included contributions made possible by a new technology - photography.



Claude Monet, "Impression Sunrise," 1872

Putting it in Context (cont.)



Charles Darwin

Victorian Religion:

When Queen Victoria took the throne, the protestant Anglican Church became a powerful force. The Church ran influential universities and high-ranking church members also held positions in the House of Lords. Children were expected to have a complete education of the Bible, which was the primary reading text in schools. It was widely accepted that if everyone embraced the teachings of the church, there would be an end to crime and immorality. Among members of the elite class, going to church was essential to maintaining respectability.

But there was strong dissent against the church as well. Many saw the Anglican Church as serving only the needs of the wealthy, while ignoring the genuine needs of the poor. Several new protestant sects developed out of this discontent, including Methodists, Congregationalists, The Society of Friends (Quakers) and Presbyterians.

In 1859 Charles Darwin published his theory of evolution, *On the Origin of Species*, causing a "Crisis of Faith" throughout the world. People began to question the foundations of religious belief and Victorian morals. There was a new emphasis on the individual's duty to society, in addition to one's duty to God. The combination of groundbreaking scientific discoveries and the general unease with the role of the church in society caused many people to rethink their interpretation of religious texts.

Victorian Medicine:

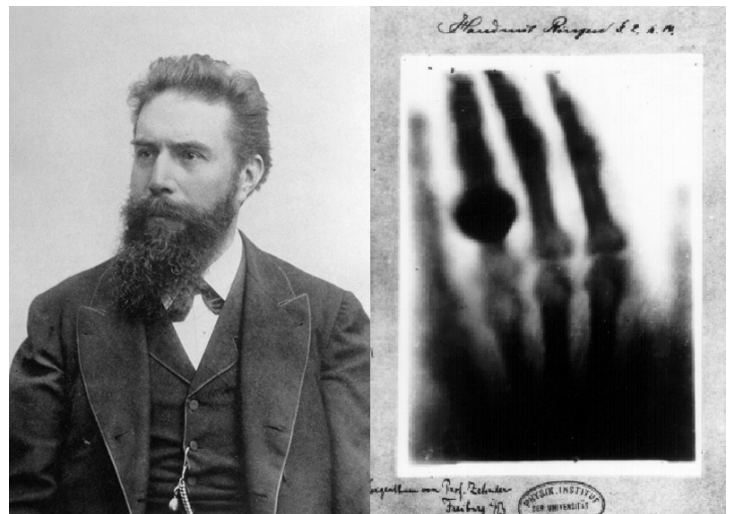
There were huge advancements in medicine during the Victorian Era. Thanks to research by scientist Louis Pasteur and improvements in microscopes, it was discovered that fungus and bacteria cause infection as opposed to 'bad air.' So for the first time, doctors began to boil and scrub their surgical instruments before and after each use to kill bacteria. This discovery also prompted doctors to simply clean wounds with antiseptics, rather than immediately amputating the injured limb as they had done up to that point to avoid gangrene.

Cholera was one of the most feared diseases of the Victorian Era. The disease slows blood circulation, causing the skin to turn blue and eventually resulted in death. Many people believed cholera to be the result of too much sun, too much oxygen in the air, comets or bad fruits and vegetables. But scientists realized that contaminated water was to blame, so people began to boil their water and the disease fell off sharply.

Common medical treatments included homemade herbal remedies and poultices made from household items such as bread, milk, herbs or horse manure. Doctors might recommend bleeding to cure high blood pressure or purging with laxatives to expel toxins from the body. Opium, morphine and ether were used to lessen pain during surgery or painful procedures such as child birth.

Despite the advancements in science, superstitions and social views played a large role in many people's understanding of health and medicine. It was a common belief that a person's own spiritual or moral failing could cause disease or physical deformity.

Victorian hospitals were largely viewed as the places people went to die because the spread of germs caused patients to encounter more illness in the hospital than they had arrived with. Therefore, the wealthy paid for doctors to care for them at home, while the hospitals took in the poor. These facilities were often overcrowded and it was difficult to find quality doctors to work there. Because the conditions at many of these hospitals were so horrific, several laws were passed in the late 1800's to ensure all patients receive quality medical care.



Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen took the first X-Ray in 1895.
It's name indicates that the process used an
'unknown' type of radiation.

Putting it in Context (cont.)

Life in the Workhouse:

Joseph Merrick entered the Leicester Union Workhouse when he was seventeen years old because his physical condition prevented him from maintaining a job. Workhouses were established to provide shelter and basic necessities to the unemployed, ill or elderly. People were free to enter or leave the workhouse whenever they wished, but the conditions within the houses were so harsh that only those who were truly desperate chose to live there.

From <http://www.workhouses.org.uk>: "Life inside the workhouse was intended to be as off-putting as possible. Men, women, children, the infirm, and the able-bodied were housed separately and given very basic and monotonous food such as watery porridge called gruel, or bread and cheese. All inmates had to wear the rough workhouse uniform and sleep in communal dormitories. Supervised baths were given once a week. The able-bodied were given hard work such as stone-breaking or picking apart old ropes called oakum. The elderly and infirm sat around in the day-rooms or sick-wards with little opportunity for visitors. Parents were only allowed limited contact with their children — perhaps for an hour or so a week on Sunday afternoon.

By the 1850s, the majority of those forced into the workhouse were not the work-shy, but the old, the infirm, the orphaned, unmarried mothers, and the physically or mentally ill. For the next century, the Union Workhouse was in many localities one of the largest and most significant buildings in the area, the largest ones accommodating more than a thousand inmates. Entering its harsh regime and spartan conditions was considered the ultimate degradation."



Women's Uniforms



Stone Yard at the Hackney Union Workhouse



The Whitechapel Murders:

A series of gruesome murders in London's poverty-stricken Whitechapel district captured the world's imagination in 1888. Between August 31st and November 9th, five women were found brutally murdered by gashes across the throat and abdomen. People began to call the murderer "Jack the Ripper" or "The Whitechapel Murderer." There have been many theories about the killer's true identity, but the case remains unsolved to this day. Although the crimes were committed on well-traveled streets, the thick soot in the air allowed the murderer to escape down the winding alleys without being seen. When the bodies were discovered, the police immediately washed the crime scene, destroying all evidence.

Because all the victims were prostitutes, the case called attention to the social problems in London's slums. The buildings were severely overcrowded, alcoholism was rampant and criminals were largely in control. In order to survive this poverty, thousands of women turned to prostitution rather than entering the workhouses.

(*London Hospital and the freak show featuring Joseph Merrick as "Half-man and Half-Elephant" are in the Whitechapel district.)

The Elephant Man in Popular Culture



Movies:

A film entitled *The Elephant Man* is a 1980 American drama film based on the true story of Joseph Merrick (called John Merrick in the film), a severely deformed man in 19th century London. The film was directed by David Lynch and stars John Hurt as Merrick, Anthony Hopkins as Dr. Treves and Anne Bancroft as Mrs. Kendal. The screenplay is not based on Bernard Pomerance's play, but was also adapted from original materials including the books *The Elephant Man and Other Reminiscences* (1923) by Sir Frederick Treves and *The Elephant Man: A Study in Human Dignity* by Ashley Montagu. The film was a critical and commercial success, receiving eight Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture.

Hurt's makeup was made from casts of Merrick's body, which had been preserved in the private museum of the Royal London Hospital. The make-up was so convincing that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences — which had earlier refused to give a special award to Tucker's work on *The Elephant Man* and received a barrage of complaints — was prompted to create a new category for Best Make-up for the Oscars.



Bernard Pomerance specified that the actor playing Merrick should not wear make-up or use special effects in his play. Rather, he wished the audience to see the "normal" man within the body. Pictures of Merrick are often projected behind the actors to create a contrast between the internal and external man. **Discuss the differences between theater and movies... how can theater use abstraction to communicate concepts and ideas?**

In addition to writing and directing the film, David Lynch provided the musical direction and sound design. During its depiction of the final moments of Merrick's life, the film uses "**Adagio for Strings**" by Samuel Barber.

Listen to this piece as you read the final scene of the play. What emotions does the music evoke? What other music would you suggest throughout the play?



Michael Jackson:

In 1987, pop star Michael Jackson offered the London Hospital Medical College \$500,000 to buy the bones of Joseph Merrick. When the hospital refused to sell the remains, Jackson doubled the amount of his offer but the hospital still declined. The offer was at the center of a media fury and was only one of many reports at the time about Michael Jackson's unusual behavior. Other headlines about Jackson suggested that he slept in an oxygen chamber to

prolong his life, he wore anti-gravity boots and he traveled everywhere with his chimpanzee, Bubbles. These reports earned him the nickname "Wacko Jacko." When Jackson realized that he would not be successful in his bid to purchase Merrick's remains, he publicly downplayed the incident and even contradicted himself about the details of the story, leading to conflicting rumors about whether or not Jackson actually attained the bones. But the London Hospital publicly confirmed that they did receive the offers from Jackson and are still in possession of the remains.

Many of the characters in Pomerance's play state that they feel they have something in common with Merrick. Do you think Michael Jackson has anything in common with The Elephant Man? Why do you think Michael Jackson might have been interested in Joseph Merrick's remains?

Glossary

What is... What?!?

The Elephant Man uses words and phrases from the Victorian Era that are infrequently utilized today, as well as some medical terms. We have listed some of the most unfamiliar words here.

Have students record unfamiliar words as they encounter them while reading the book. Students should then look up definitions in a dictionary. Vocabulary activities could include a word wall, word ball or new sentence generation.

PDE Academic Standards 1.7-1.8

AFFLICTED: distressed with bodily pain
ANESTHETIZE: to numb using an anesthetic
APERTURE: an opening, hole, slit or crack
APOTHEOSIS: the elevation of a person to the rank of a god
ARBITRARY: contingent solely upon one's discretion, subject to individual will
ASPHYXIATION: to die or lose consciousness due to impaired breathing, choking, smothering
ASYLUM: an institution that cares for the mentally ill, orphans or those requiring special care
BANAL: without originality, trite
BENEFICE: a religious position that guarantees a fixed income or property
BENEVOLENT: expressing good will or kindness
BENIGHTED: intellectually or morally ignorant
BLOKE: British term for guy, fellow, man
BOON: blessing, benefit
CHASTISEMENT: severe criticism or reprimand
CIRCUMFERENCE: length of an outer boundary
CLIMES: climate
COBBLESTONE: naturally round stones, formerly used for paving
CONSOLATION: comfort or solace
CONSONANT: in agreement, consistent with
CRETINS: stupid or mentally defective person

CRUCIFORM: resembling a Christian cross
DEBARRED: shut out, excluded
DACHSHUND: German dog with short legs and a long body
DAFT: stupid, senseless, foolish
DEMI-URGE: the deity responsible for the creation of the physical world, in some beliefs
DERELICT: neglected or abandoned
DEVIANT: departing from the norm; one who behaves outside the social norm
DEVOUT: devoted; pious; sincere
DEWLAP: a fold of skin under the chin of an animal such as a cow, turkey or lizard
DISSIPATION: dispersion
DOSSHOUSE: flophouse, cheap lodging
DROPSICAL: of, like or affected with *dropsy*
DROPSY: an infectious disease of fishes, characterized by swollen body and protruding scales
ELEPHANTIASIS: a chronic disease resulting in obstruction of the lymph nodes, causing bodily enlargement
ETHER: volatile, flammable liquid, used formerly as an inhaled anesthetic
EXEMPLARY: worthy of imitation; serving as a model, pattern or example
EXTRUSIONS: acts of thrusting out, expelling
FERVIDLY: enthusiastically
FORTITUDE: mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty
FRETTED: move with agitation
FUNGOUS: of the nature of or resembling fungi
GAPING: a wide opening; an astonished gaze
GRIMACE: a contorted facial expression of disapproval or pain
IMBECILE: dunce, blockhead, dolt; also formerly used as an official psychological classification of mental retardation
INCAPACITATING: depriving of ability or strength
INDECENCY: immodesty, obscenity or indelicacy
INDISCRETION: an act of indecency
LACERATING: tearing roughly or mangle; torturing mentally or emotionally
LEPERS: people with leprosy—a disease that affects the nervous system and skin; also a term

for social outcasts
LOATHING: strong dislike or disgust
MACKEREL: an edible fish
MALIGNANT: dangerous or harmful; deadly
MORIBUND: in a dying state, near death
MUTATIONS: a change or alteration, as in nature
NAVY: an unskilled manual laborer
NOSH: snack, eat between meals
OCCLUDED: closed or shut; in chemistry to incorporate as by absorption
OSSEOUS: composed of, containing or resembling bones, bony
PAPIER MACHE: a substance made of pulpy paper and glue used for molding
PAPILLOMATOUS: a benign tumor of the skin, as a wart
PATHOLOGICAL: caused by or involving disease; evidencing a mentally disturbed condition
PARABLE: story that teaches a moral lesson
PERAMBULATING: walk about or stroll
POLLARDED: cut back a tree nearly to the trunk
RABIDLY: zealously, furiously, violently
SCOURGES: a whip or lash for punishment; a person or thing that administers punishment; a cause of affliction
SCROFULA: a tuberculosis infection of the lymph nodes
SQUALOR: filth and misery
STAGGERING: overwhelming; moving unsteadily
STENCH: terrible smell
TETE-A-TETE: a private conversation usually between two people
TOUTE SUITE: at once, immediately
TUBEROUS: having rounded, wart-like prominences
UNAFFLICTED: not physically affected or distressed
UNCORSETED: as a woman not wearing a corset - a tight fitting undergarment
UNREMITTING: incessant, persistent
UNTENABLE: incapable of being defended, as an argument; not fit to be occupied, as a house
VOKED: joined, connected

A GUIDE TO THE VICTORIAN BRITISH MONETARY SYSTEM



POUNDS: basic monetary unit; formerly based on one pound sterling silver
SHILLING: a pound was worth approximately 20 shillings



BOB: Slang term for a Shilling
PENCE: plural for pennies, a shilling was worth 12 pence
TUPPENCE: two pence, slang



GUINEA: a gold piece worth 21 shillings; primarily used by aristocracy
GUINEA FEE: a salary, obtained mainly by professional such as doctors

BRITISH CULTURAL REFERENCES TO KNOW

CEYLON: country off South-East Indian coast now known as Sri Lanka, formerly under British rule
"THE CONTINENT": the European mainland, as opposed the British Isles
DORSET: wealthy neighborhood in London, associated with easy living
FRS: Fellow of the Royal Society
GORDON AT KHARTOUM: British Major-General Charles George Gordon was appointed Governor-General of Sudan, but was viciously murdered in the city of Khartoum by rebels as he protected the city.
NIGER: once a British colony in Africa
PICCADILLY EXQUISITE: fashionable elite
THE RACK: a torture device used to stretch people beyond their limits

Pre-Reading and Pre-Show Activities

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to approach literature with curiosity and personal relevance. **The activities below are intended to spark enthusiasm, interest and inquiry into the story before they have read the text or attended the performance.**

Making Predictions: Prior to reading the play, ask students to examine the pictures and writings below and on page 13 . Ask, "What clues do you find?" "What can you infer?" "What connects and what is contradictory?" "What do you think this story might be about?"

Purpose: As students make predictions and create their own stories, they will tap into important themes in *The Elephant Man* such as the various ways Merrick was viewed in his society. By coming up with their own clues and inferences, students will continue to be tapped into important details as they read the play.

LONDON HOSPITAL

**Lecture on Human Anatomy by Doctor Frederick Treves
May 24, 1884**

The most striking feature about him was his enormous head. Its circumference was about that of a man's waist. From the brow there projected a huge bony mass like a loaf, while from the back of his head hung a bag of spongy fungous-looking skin, the surface of which was comparable to brown cauliflower. The osseous growth on the forehead, at this stage about the size of a tangerine, almost occluded one eye. The deformities rendered the face utterly incapable of the expression of any emotion whatsoever. The right arm was of enormous size and shapeless. The right hand was large and clumsy – a fin or paddle rather than a hand. As a limb it was useless. The other arm was remarkable by contrast. It was not only normal, but was moreover a delicately shaped limb covered with a fine skin and provided with a beautiful hand which any woman might have envied.

Tuppence only, step in and see!



Tuppence only, step in and see!

His physical agony is exceeded only by his mental anguish,
a despised creature without consolation.
To live with his physical hideousness, incapacitating deformities
and unremitting pain is trial enough,
but to be exposed to the cruelly lacerating expressions
of horror and disgust by all who behold him
– is even more difficult to bear.

Tuppence only, step in and see!

London Daily Times
February 17, 1885

Help Wanted: Experienced nurse sought to care for resident with severe bone disorder at London Hospital. Nurse must be able to provide meals, take care of the room and be ordinarily kind to him without panicking, as his appearance his quite beyond ugly. Photographs of the patient may be reviewed before accepting the nurse position. Please respond to Dr. Treves care of London Hospital.

Dear Dr. Treves,

I am responding to your ad in the London Daily Times requesting a nurse for the severely deformed patient. I have had experience in missionary hospitals in the Niger and lepers in the East. I have seen dreadful scourges quite unknown to our more civilized climes and am confident that I will be successful caring for the patient despite his affliction. I will come by the hospital to view the photographs, although I am certain they will not sway my intention to fill this position.

Sincerely,
Miss Sandrich

London Daily Times
March 3, 1885

Help Wanted: Experienced nurse sought to care for resident with severe bone disorder at London Hospital. Nurse must be able to provide meals, take care of the room and be ordinarily kind to him without panicking, as his appearance his quite beyond ugly. Photographs of the patient may be reviewed before accepting the nurse position. Please respond to Dr. Treves care of London Hospital.

Pre-Reading and Pre-Show Activities

Making Predictions: (Continued from Page 12)



Dear Mr. Merrick,

I write to wish you a Merry Christmas. I noticed you had quite a lovely collection of gifts when I visited earlier this week - a ring from the Duchess, silver-backed brushes and comb from the Countess, a silver-topped walking stick from Lord John, an autographed picture of Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra and I heard that you received a lovely pheasant and woodcock from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. In light of all these beautiful presents, I hope you will accept my humble gift of an ivory-handled razor and toothbrush. I would also like to invite you to attend the theater with me next month. I think it will inspire your artistry.

Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Kendal

I built it with one hand, they all say. I did not begin to build at first. Not till I saw what St. Phillip's really was. It is not stone and steel and glass; it is an imitation of grace flying up and up from the mud. So I make my imitation of an imitation. But even in that is heaven to me.



Physical Empathy: Play a game in which students must complete a timed task with only one hand—tying a shoe, building a card house or getting dressed. (Try putting baggy clothes on over regular clothes.) How does it feel to have that limitation? Ask students to write a diary entry or instruction guide from the perspective of a one-handed person. What would that person like others to know?

Purpose: By physically exploring the physical limitations that Merrick experiences, students will develop a greater understanding of his condition and perhaps greater empathy for his character.

Descriptive Writing: Look at the pictures of Merrick on page 5. Ask students to write a medical description of Merrick's condition using similes, metaphor and descriptive language. When finished, look for subjective and objective language in the writing—what words indicate a feeling or emotion about Merrick? Then compare the students' writings with the monologue that Dr. Treves delivers in Scene III of Pomerance's play. How does Treves use metaphor and simile to describe Merrick's condition? What language indicates opinion and fact. Discuss how the students reactions compare to other characters in the play—are they subjective or do they have strong opinions about Merrick's appearance?

Purpose: Ask students compare their own creative choices about using language to Pomerance's choices, they will become more aware of the stylistic choices made by the playwright. They will also become aware of their own biases and judgments based on the appearance of The Elephant Man.

Reading Activities

Prime Stage’s mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to make personal connections to literature through meaningful, interactive exploration of the text and themes. **The activities below are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich the text as they read the novel.**

Excessive Blessings: At the end of Scene I, Treves states that he has “excessive blessings.” Make a list of his ‘blessings’ that are described in the scene and add to the list throughout the reading of the play. Make another list for Merrick... what are his ‘blessings?’ Add and compare the lists throughout the reading of the play and discuss how the characters may change their ideas about the meaning of ‘blessings’ as they continue to evolve.

Extension: Students may also create a list of their own blessings—before and after reading the play. How have their ideas about ‘blessings’ changed as they read the story?

Purpose: Treves has a significant change of heart over the course of the play. By tracking his evolution throughout the reading, students will be more aware of significant turning points. They will also have the opportunity to assess their own notions of blessings and evaluate their peers’ points of view.

Art Is As Nothing To Nature: Scene II is entitled “Art Is As Nothing To Nature” and Ross, Merrick’s manager invites the public to view him by saying, “See Mother Nature uncorseted and in malignant rage!” Look at these pictures and discuss whether or not humans have the ability to match nature’s “artistry.”

Extension: Students may write an caption for each of these photos as if describing a work of art in a museum. What tools or techniques did the artist, Mother Nature, use to create the art? What was her message in creating these masterpieces?



Purpose: During the Victorian Era, there was an awe and appreciation of the power and beauty of nature. This activity will help students assess their own views of nature and gain a greater understanding of the role Nature played in the aesthetic and world view of the era.

Tone of Voice in Reading: In Scene III, Treves lectures on Merrick’s condition. Ask students to read this monologue aloud using contrasting attitudes and tones of voice. Read without emotion, with a tone of disgust, with pity, in a mocking voice, in amazement, with reverence or with complete indifference. How does each interpretation affect the listeners’ view of Merrick? How do they shape the listeners’ perception of the speaker, Treves? Which interpretation would you expect from the real actor in the play?

Purpose: An key theme in the story is Treves’ attitude toward Merrick and how it changed throughout the story. This experience will help students identify how the actors’ vocal and physical choices make a great impact on the portrayal of those attitudes. Hawthorne’s symbolism with their own.

Let’s Talk About

BULLYING

This activity can also help students recognize that much of what you say is in *how you say it*. As students read each interpretation of the text, identify which versions sound like bullying and which do not. How can the same words be interpreted in multiple ways simply by changing the inflection or tone of voice? Talk about how tone of voice plays a role in school bullying.

Reading Activities (cont.)

Letters to the Editor: In Scenes IV and V, contradictory opinions are expressed regarding the freak shows and the treatment of the performers. Pretend that your class lives or works in a Victorian neighborhood in which a controversial new freak show has just opened. Write letters to the editor in support or against the freak show from the perspectives of multiple people in the community. Use clues from these scenes to inform your opinion. How would the following people view the freak show: the show managers (Ross,) the performers (Merrick, Pins,) the policemen, the middle class homeowners, religious missionaries or social workers and customers.

Purpose: Students will engage in persuasive writing from the point of view of characters in the play using text support and inferences. This experience helps them understand the controversy surrounding the freak shows and develop their own opinions.

Boom Boom Poetry: Merrick describes the conditions and his treatment at the workhouse in Scene VIII by saying, “They beat you there like a drum. Boom boom: scrape the floor white. Shine the pan, boom boom. It never ends. The floor is always dirty. The pan is always tarnished. There is nothing you can do about it. You are always attacked anyway. Boom boom. Boom boom.”

Invite students to create another metaphor for Merrick’s treatment (“Merrick is treated like a ...” or “Merrick feels like ...”) Then choose a sound to create a poem in the style of Merrick’s words using onomatopoeia. Use the text to find examples of actions or images that support the metaphor. Read poems aloud to emphasize the onomatopoeia.

Purpose: Metaphor and simile are used often throughout the play. Help students think abstractly by developing their own imagery.

Let’s Talk About **BULLYING** Read Scene VIII and identify moments in which bullying occurs.

Is it bullying when...

- ... Porter and Snork stare at Merrick?
- ... Gomm fires Porter?
- ... Treves makes Merrick repeat after him?

Who is being the most cruel in this scene?
With whom does Merrick sympathize & why?



Full of Dreams: Merrick states in Scene X that his head is so big because it is full of dreams, then asks what happens when dreams can not get out. Illustrate this image by drawing an outline of Merrick’s head. Inside, write or draw all the dreams and wishes he imagines. Outside, draw all the barriers that prevent him from fulfilling his dreams. How might Merrick’s wishes be the same or different than any other young man?

Purpose: Students will develop empathy for Merrick by placing themselves in his shoes. They will also identify outside forces that are working against him. Illustrating these ideas gives struggling writers another option for self-expression.

Socialite Improvisation: Improvise a scenario in which students pretend to be wealthy Victorian socialites at a tea party. Half are bragging about their acquaintance with Merrick and the other half is asking about him. (See Scene XI) What would Merrick’s acquaintances choose to tell others about Merrick? How would they justify their acquaintance with a former freak show performer? How would they describe his appearance to others? What questions would people ask who have only heard about his reputation? What happens if one person suggests they invite Merrick to the next party? Challenge students to reveal many nuances of this scenario. What are the motivations behind the characters’ actions and words? (Self-glorification, genuine affection, Christian duty, social welfare, disgust, morbid curiosity, scientific inquiry?)

Purpose: Help students recognize the many reasons for the characters’ “good-doing” and understand that outward reasons may not necessarily reflect their inward feelings.

Let’s Talk About **BULLYING** What motivated the characters in Scene XII to find their own similarities to Merrick? What can motivate us to find similarities with others in our own lives? Is it human nature to see ourselves in others?

Like Me: Write a simple sentence in the style of the lines in Scene XII in which students state their own similarity to Merrick. Perhaps students could also choose another student, a popular figure in the news or person that represents an idea that the student disagrees with.

Purpose: Help students understand the characters’ attitudes towards Merrick and develop their own ideas and opinions about Merrick and others.

Reading Activities (cont.)

Forbidden: In Scene XIV, Treves angrily asks Mrs. Kendal, “Don’t you know what is forbidden?” Ask students to make a list of things that are forbidden in various settings... home, school, at work, in America, in other societies. Why are some things forbidden in some places but not others? Why have they been declared ‘forbidden?’

Purpose: This experience encourages students to address their assumptions about controversial issues and opens the door to discuss multiple perspectives surrounding those issues.

Cross Cut: Cross-cuts are familiar devices used in film to draw connections between two scenes. Ask students cut back and forth between two separate scenes, editing them to emphasize the links, comparison, analogies, similarities and ironic contradictions which exist between the two. Have students create a cross cut of Treves description of Merrick in Scene III and Merrick’s description of Treves in the dream in Scene XVIII. How can students use staging, gestures, inflection, etc. to maximize the contrast between the scenes? How does this cross-cutting give new insights or understanding?

Purpose: Students are able to experiment with form and content. They will explore the potential for discovery of new meaning as they make editorial choices.

Quality of Life: We often refer to the phrase “quality of life” when we talk about those with severe medical conditions. Ask your students to consider what they require to maintain a high quality of life. Ask: Which of the following would you deem most important to having a high quality of life: Love, Health, Money, Education, Family. What would your life be like without it? Would you feel any different without it? Would people treat you differently if you didn’t have it? How would you have to adapt if you lost it?

Purpose: This experience helps students empathize with Merrick’s condition. This issue can also connect to current events as related to medical ethics and the priorities of lawmakers.

Prescription for the World: After Treves states his growing frustration with the world in Scene XIX. He describes how his patients destroy themselves through overwork, overeating, drinking, corruption, fashion, and ignorance. He says, “I counsel against it where I can. I am ignored of course... I am an extremely successful Englishman in a successful and respected England which informs me daily by the way it lives that it wants to die. I am in despair in fact.” Ask students to identify one way in which they see our current society moving in a self-destructive way. Then write a prescription from the perspective of a doctor which describes the behavior that is the “illness,” its symptoms and the recommendation for curing the problem.

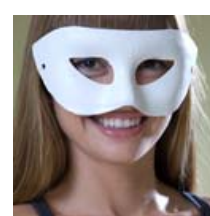
Purpose: Students will connect and compare the vices of the Victorian world with those of modern society and strengthen their ability to write figuratively.

One Small Thing/Funeral: In the final scene of the play, Gomm is writing the obituary for Merrick. Just as he finishes, Treves adds, “I did think of one small thing,” but Gomm says, “It’s too late, I’m afraid. It is done.” But what did Treves wish to add? What was his final unspoken thought about Merrick? Ask students to write their ideas in the voice of Treves. Then dramatize a funeral by laying a shirt/jacket out on a table to represent Merrick. Play reverent music and ask each student to approach Merrick’s “body,” read Treves’ final words and lay their paper upon the shirt. As students “perform” the funeral, what emotions are revealed—relief, pity, gratitude, confusion?

Purpose: This experience allows students to share a collective interpretation of Treves’ emotions and relationship with Merrick.

Mask-Making: Create a variety of masks to use in class as students read the play aloud. Make masks that are neutral with no expression, distorted and grotesque and display specific emotions—angry, sad, happy, etc. Read scenes with different masks to see how they affect the audiences interpretations. Discuss how Merrick’s inability to express emotion on his face may have affected his relationships with others. What is a person with a grotesque face says something beautiful—or vice versa?

Purpose: Masks create distance and alienation, causing the observer to look differently and the actor to consider her choices wisely.



HEALTH



MONEY

EDUCATION



FAMILY



Post-Reading and Post-Performance Activities

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to reflect on their learning. **The activities below are intended to provide opportunity to synthesize the learning and make personal meaning after they have read the text or attended the performance.**



Set Symbolism: Discuss the imagery used in the set design. Why do you think the production team used these images and what impact did it have on your interpretation or experience as an audience member?

Compare the set with the pictures to the left. What do these images have in common and how are they different? What emotions or responses do they evoke?

Purpose: Strengthen students' understanding of imagery and symbolism as it relates to the text and the dramatic art form.

Physical Shapes: The actors in this production are required to think about how their physical movements affect the audience's understanding of their character. Consider, for instance, the actor's choice of posture. Which character's posture could be represented by a straight line? A wavy line? A knotted line? Now think about adverbs to describe their movement. Who moved fluidly? Jaggedly? Stiffly? Bouncily? Try recreating their postures and movements in your own body. What are the challenges of creating these characters? Why do you think the actors made those specific movement choices?

Purpose: Students will gain greater insight into the actor's interpretations of character by identifying specific movement choices.

Map of Transformations: Identify moments in the book and the play when you felt the characters were transforming in some way. What clues in the book and the play helped you identify those changes? Consider: textual evidence, body language, tone of voice, music, lighting, dramatic pauses, other's responses, etc. Draw a "road map" showing where one character began, the path to transformation and where he/she ended. Add road signs or landmarks that indicate each significant phase along the way.

Purpose: Help students recognize how a live theatre production can offer more clues about the characters' personal journeys through the use of visual and auditory clues, and connect these clues to the text.

Powerful Moment Collage: Identify the moment from the play that was the most powerful and memorable for you. Try to relive that moment in your imagination and recall as much about it as possible? What did you see? Hear? Feel? What effective choices did the actors make in that moment? What words made an impact on you? Then identify ways in which that moment connects to your own life. Have you felt the same way the characters felt? Have you been in a similar situation? Create a collage that represents your memory of that moment and your connection to it. Consider using real and abstract images, poetry, quotes, words, textures. Perhaps you could even add a smell or taste. Write a brief explanation describing your artistic choices as if you were displaying your collage in an art museum.

Purpose: Students will connect the play to their personal lives and develop their own abstract representations to symbolize their response.

Descriptive Letters: Based on all the information that can be learned from the play and the book, write a paragraph that answers the question, "Who was John Merrick?" Compare student responses to this question. Some people may answer in terms of historical facts, while others will offer a subjective description of his personality. Compare the evidence used in each type of description. Then consider the various ways that we learn about popular or historical icons. Have we learned facts or opinions? How does our current political or social climate affect the way that we interpret the events surrounding their lives? How does the passage of time affect the way we view their actions or role in society?

Purpose: Recognize the difference between fact and opinion in our understanding of character and make connections to the way we view historical or popular figures.



Attending the Performance

House rules (...and we don't mean your mama's house!)

It goes without saying that when most children today hear the word “theatre” they think “Oh, MOVIE theatre.” And with that thought comes all of those things that we do at movie theatres: eat popcorn, drink noisily from soda cups, put feet on the seat, text message—and the list goes on from there. But live theatre is just that: it's LIVE with LIVE HUMANS who react and respond to the audience, something that we at Prime Stage think is the beauty of the theatre experience. Because of this, live theatre requires a higher level of respect between the audience and performer in order for the experience to be a positive one.

Please review the following “house rules” with your students prior to attending our production:

—Please stay together with your group and wait for the ushers to help you all find your seats.

—Please turn all cell phones and pagers **completely off** before the performance. If you are texting during the performance, you will be asked to leave.

—No photography or video taping.

—Please stay in your seat until the intermission or the end of the show.

—No eating, drinking, or chewing gum during the performance or inside the theatre house.

—While we encourage active listening and appropriate responses to the play such as laughing or clapping, please do not talk to your neighbors during the performance.

—Be polite and attentive. Show your appreciation by clapping—the actors love to see how much you enjoyed the show!

PDE Academic Standards 1.6, 9.1

Thinking Like a Critic

Critics play a very important role in theatre. They are often the first to see the show and can write a wonderful—or a horrendous—review for all the world to see. Prepare your students to attend the show by “thinking like a critic.”

Read the following questions before the show.

Think about the questions as you're watching the show and write your answers in a notebook or journal during intermission or on the bus ride home.

Write a critique of the show based on your responses.

PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4, 1.4-1.5



“I would rather be attacked than unnoticed. For the worst thing you can do to an author is to be silent as to his works. An attack upon a town is a bad thing; but starving it is still even worse.” ~ author Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

Actor choices—How did they move and speak? Did they seem like people we know? How did they relate to other characters?

Designer choices—What design element captured your attention the most—the set, costumes, lights, or sound—and why? How did the design elements work together to support the entire production? What choices did the designers make in materials, colors, intensity, detail, etc.? Were the design elements more descriptive or suggestive? What symbols were in the design elements?

Director choices—What was the style, pace, and rhythm of the play? What stage pictures helped to tell the story? How did the director unify all the elements of the production?

Interpretation—Did the director make a statement about life now? How did the characters, design, and play make you feel? What did the play mean to you? What might it mean to others?

Evaluation—Why do you suppose the playwright wrote the play? Why was the play produced now? When were moments where the storytelling was very clear? When were moments you were confused about the story? Who would enjoy the play and why?

Remember—it's all about choices! Whether you loved the play or not, identify the specific choices that made you feel that way!



Bringing Literature to Life

new hazlett theater
center for the performing arts

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BOOKED YOUR TICKETS YET???

Prime Stage Theatre’s student matinees for *The Elephant Man* will be held February 28, 29 and March 1, 2012. All performances begin at 10 AM at the New Hazlett Theater and are followed by a brief post-show chat session.

Tickets are \$10 per student.

Book tickets by emailing studentmat@primestage.com or calling 412.841.7353.

Discussion Questions

1. What would you say is the main theme of *The Elephant Man*? Do you feel it was intended to teach a moral lesson?
2. Which character do you think made the greatest personal transformation and why?
3. Do you think the playwright makes a judgment about British Victorian culture? What evidence can you find?
4. Why do you think Mrs. Kendal becomes friends with Merrick? What makes their friendship more sincere than Merrick’s other relationships? How is their friendship the same or different than the relationships you have with your own friends?
5. What causes Dr. Treves to change his attitude and behavior toward Merrick? What did Treves want in the beginning of the story and what did he want at the end?
6. Discuss the role of religion in *The Elephant Man*. Do you feel it is portrayed positively, negatively or neutrally in the play?
7. Discuss the role of science in *The Elephant Man*. Do you feel it is portrayed positively, negatively or neutrally in the play?
8. Discuss the titles of each scene in the play. How do the titles illuminate or emphasize important themes in each scene?
9. Do you think Merrick wanted to die when he did? Why or why not?

PDE Academic Standards 1.1, 1.3, 1.6

Resources for your Classroom

BOOKS

Howell, Michael and Peter Ford. *The True Story of the Elephant Man: A Definitive Account of the Tragic and Extraordinary Life of Joseph Carey Merrick*. Skyhorse Publishing. 2010.

Mitchell, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. Greenwood. 2008.

Montagu, Ashley. *The Elephant Man: A Study in Human Dignity*. Acadian House Publishing. 2001.

Pool, Daniel. *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew: From Fox-Hunting to Whist—The Facts of Daily Life in 19th Century England*. Touchstone. 1994.

Treves, Frederick. *The Elephant Man and Other Reminiscences*. General Books LLC. 2001.

Tromp, Marlene. *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*. Ohio State University Press. 2008

DVDs

The Elephant Man. dir. David Lynch, Starring Anthony Hopkins and John Hurt. 1980. (Reminder: this screenplay is not the same as Pomerance’s play.)

The 1900 House. PBS Documentary in which a modern family lives in the style of the Victorian era. 2000. Life in Victorian England.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Life in Victorian England—everything you want to know! <http://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/life-in-victorian-england.asp>

About Darwin, a site dedicated to the life and science of Charles Darwin. <http://www.aboutdarwin.com/index.html>

The Workhouse—extensive information about specific workhouses in the UK. <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/>