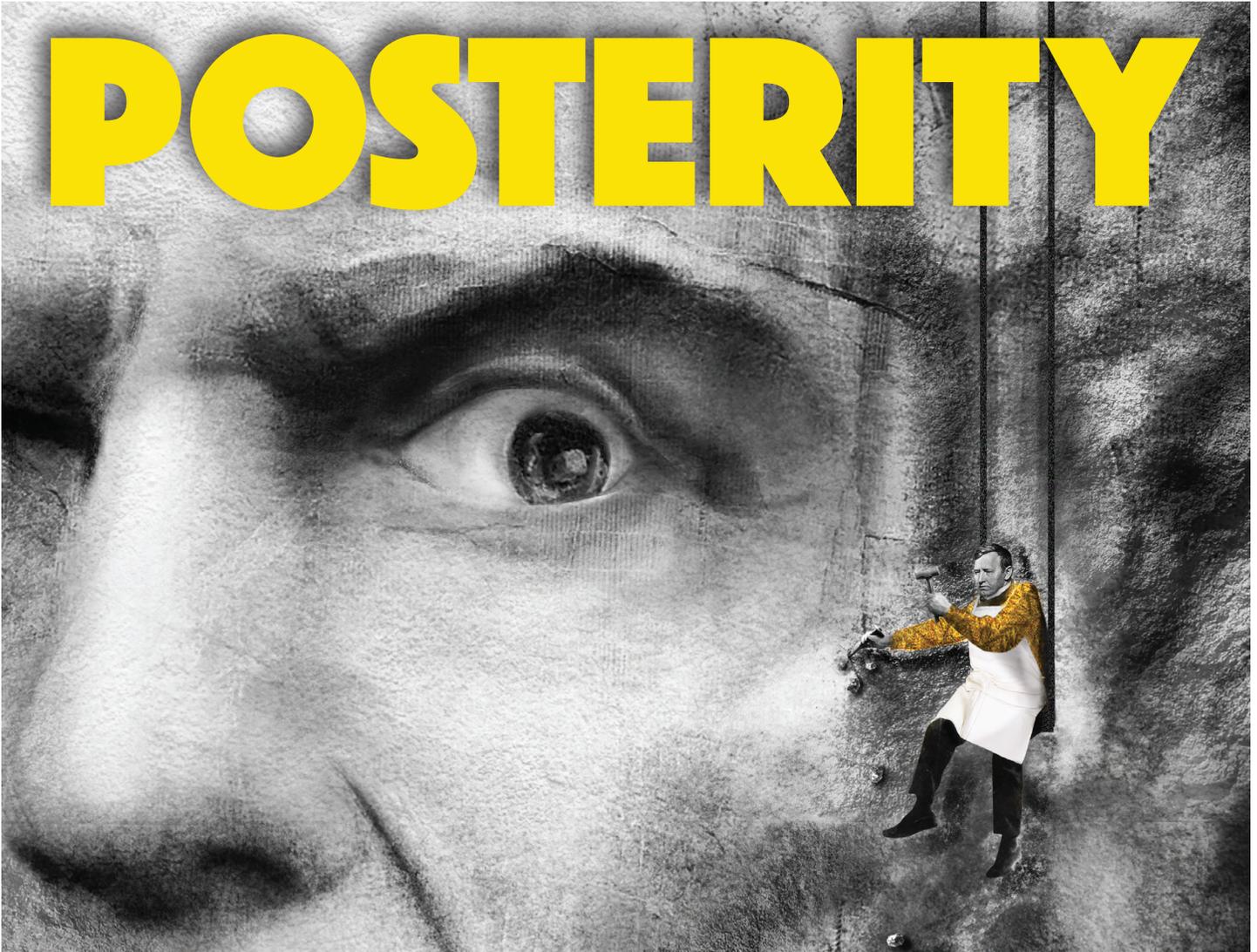


POSTERITY



Director of Education
HEATHER BAIRD

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Posterity written and directed by
DOUG WRIGHT

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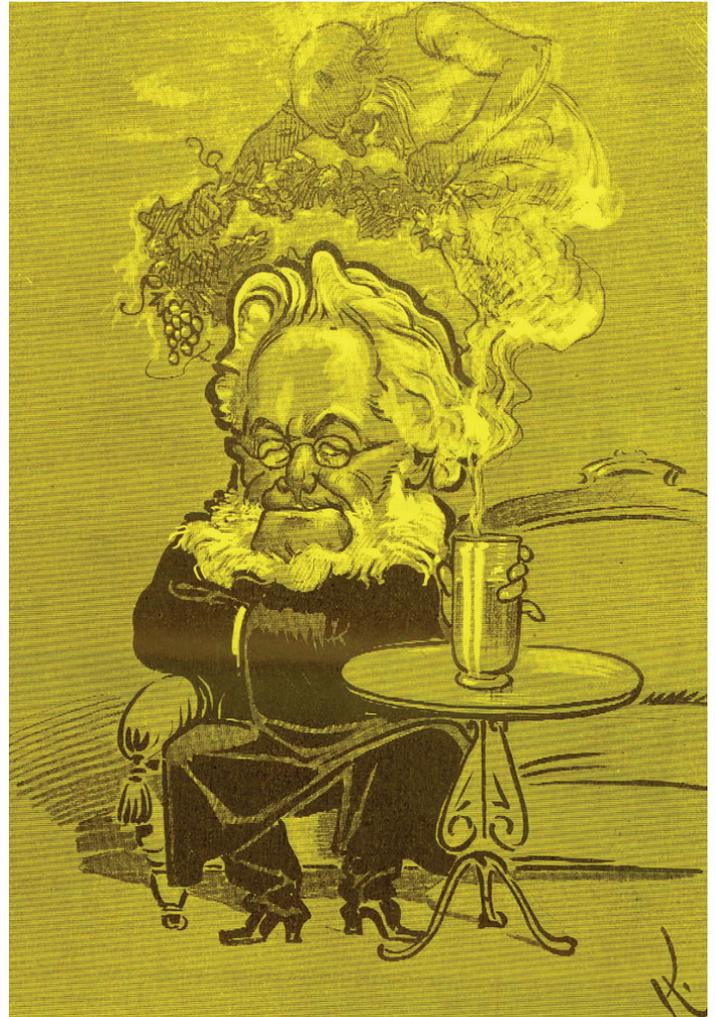
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Atlantic Theater Company, Atlantic Acting School



A portrayal of Ibsen from a publication in 1898

SECTION 1: THE PLAY

SYNOPSIS

Norway's most celebrated sculptor is commissioned to create the last official portrait of her most famous writer, but Henrik Ibsen proves to be an irascible, contentious sitter, as the two men wage war over his legacy and his likeness. Will a vulnerable artist and literary icon be able to define the nature of artistic success and the fear of being forgotten?

CHARACTERS

GUSTAV VIGELAND A sculptor, 30s-40s. Ferociously driven and passionate about his work, sometimes at the expense of gentler niceties. Beneath his bravado lurks a crippling insecurity.

GRETA BERGSTRØM A housemaid in her 70's. While she boasts a maternal streak, she has been alive for a great many years and doesn't suffer fools gladly.

ANFINN BECK An apprentice in his early 20's. His youth, virility and cockiness make him the immediate envy of men whose best years are already past.

SOPHUS LARPENT A patron of the arts, 50s-60s. He's good-natured but occasionally officious, with a highly strung temperament and slight nervous condition.

HENRIK IBSEN The great Norwegian playwright in his 70's. Irascible and contentious with a formidable intellect, surprising vain streak, and hidden reserves of compassion.

SETTING

Time: 1901

Location: The capitol city of Kristiana (now known as Oslo) in Norway. The sculpture studio of Gustav Vigeland and Henrik Ibsen's apartment.

THEMES

Immortality, Integrity, Legacy, Accountability, Vision



Ibsen, 1899

SECTION 2: CAST & CREATIVE



Posterity Writer and Director Doug Wright

DOUG WRIGHT (*Playwright & Director*)

Broadway: Books for the musicals *Hands On a Hardbody* (Drama Desk nomination), *The Little Mermaid* and *Grey Gardens* (Tony® and Drama Desk Nominations). The play *I Am My Own Wife* (Pulitzer, Tony Award®, Drama Desk, GLAAD Media Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, Lucille Lortel Award). Earlier in his career, Mr. Wright won an Obie Award for outstanding achievement in playwriting for *Quills*. He went on to write the screenplay adaptation, making his motion picture debut. The film was named Best Picture by the National Board of Review and nominated for three Academy Awards®. His screenplay was nominated for a Golden Globe Award®, and received the Paul Selvin Award from the Writer's Guild of America. For director Rob Marshall, Doug wrote the television special "Tony Bennett: An American Classic," which received seven Emmy Awards®. Directing credits include Strindberg's *Creditors* (Best Production, San Diego Critics Association) and acting work includes the films *Two Lovers* and *Little Manhattan*, as well as two episodes of "Law & Order: Criminal Intent." For career achievement, Mr. Wright is a member of the Dramatists Guild, the Writer's Guild of America, East, the Screen Actors Guild and the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers. Currently, he serves on the board of the New York Theater Workshop. He lives in New York with his partner, singer/songwriter David Clement.

SECTION 2: CAST & CREATIVE

**HAMISH LINKLATER (*Gustav Vigeland*)**

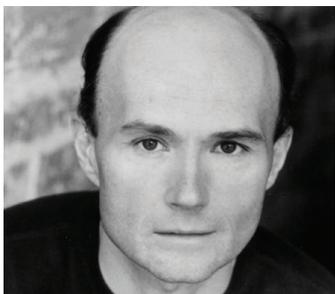
Theater: Broadway: *Seminar*. The Public Theater: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors* (Drama Desk nomination), *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Twelfth Night* (Drama Desk nomination), *Hamlet*, *The Square and Love's Fire*; Classic Stage: *The School for Lies* (Obie, Lortel, Outer Critics Circle nominations); Playwrights Horizons: *The Busy World Is Hushed* (Drama League nomination), *Recent Tragic Events*. His play *The Vandal*, was produced by The Flea and shown on PBS as part of the series "Theater Close-Up." Film and television credits include: *When I Live My Life Over Again*, *Ithaca* (both upcoming), *42*, *The Angriest Man in Brooklyn*, *Lola Versus*, *Battleship*, *The Future*, *Groove*, *Fantastic Four*.

**JOHN NOBLE (*Henrik Ibsen*)**

John Noble was Artistic Director of the Stage Company of South Australia for 10 years. He directed David Williamson's *Sons of Cain* on London's West End and acted in an award winning production of Rob George's *Errol Flynn's Great Big Adventure Book For Boys* at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. Other highlights of his stage career include producing over 70 new Australian plays, 240 performances of Ron Blair's one man play *The Christian Brothers*, and directing the enormously successful *Percy and Rose* by Rob George for the 1982 Adelaide Festival of Arts and subsequent National tour. In Australia, he had guest roles on many television series and was a semi-regular for five years on "All Saints."

**DALE SOULES (*Greta Bergstrom*)**

Broadway: *Hair* (debut), *Dude*, *The Magic Show* (co-starring magician Doug Henning and introducing Stephen Schwartz's songs "Lion Tamer" and "West End Avenue"), *Whose Life Is It Anyway*, *The Crucible* (with Laura Linney and Liam Neeson, Richard Eyre-Dir.), *Grey Gardens* (Michael Greif-Dir.) and most recently creating the role of "Janice" in *Hands On A Hardbody* (Neil Pepe-Dir.). Off-Broadway: Marsha Norman's *Getting Out*; For Atlantic: *The Water Engine* (Karen Kohlhas-Dir.), *The Joy of Going Somewhere Definite* (William H. Macy -Dir) and *Blithe Spirit* (David Pittu-Dir.); *New Jerusalem*, *Lotta*, *The Unknown* (NYSF/Public Theatre), *Maid*, *Gather At The River*, (Lincoln Center Theatre), *Pericles* (Red Bull Theatre).

**HENRY STRAM (*Sophus Larpent*)**

Broadway: *The Elephant Man*, *Inherit The Wind*, *The Crucible*, *Titanic*. First National Tour: *Spring Awakening*. Recent Off-Broadway: *Fly By Night* (Playwrights Horizons); *Antony and Cleopatra* (Public Theater/RSC); *The Cradle Will Rock* (Encores Off-Center); *Charles Ives Take Me Home* (Rattlestick); *Septimus and Clarissa* (Ripetime); *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (NYTW/The Acting Company); *See What I Wanna See* (Public Theater). Film: *Woody Allen Summer Project 2014*, *Angelica*, *Cradle Will Rock*, *The Grey Zone*. Television: "Smash," "White Collar," "Law & Order." Graduate of Juilliard and recipient of an OBIE for Sustained Excellence.

**MICKEY THEIS (*Anfinn Beck*)**

Professional credits include *The Fatal Eggs* (ATA) and *Hamlet* (Yale Rep), as well as workshops and readings with The Sundance Institute Theater Lab, Page 73 and New Dramatists. He is a recent graduate of The Yale School of Drama, where his credits include *Peter Pan*, *As You Like It*, *The Visit*, *Cloud Nine*, and *Vieux Carré*. He is a proud recipient of the Jerome L. Greene Endowment Fund Scholarship and the Oliver Thorndike Award in Acting. Also a songwriter, he recently recorded his first full-length album, *Range Songs*. www.mickeytheis.com

SECTION 3: YOUR STUDENTS AS AUDIENCE

“Plays should tell simple, honest stories.”

- David Mamet, American playwright
& noted actor, William H. Macy,
founders of Atlantic Theater Company

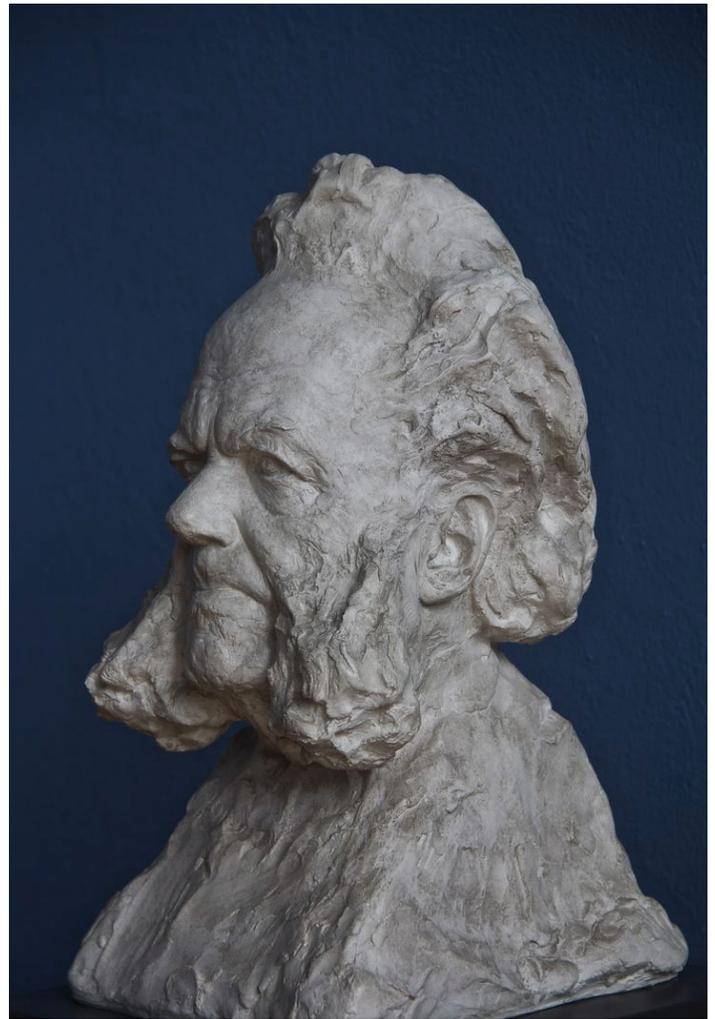
The following activities will assist your students in understanding the intentions of the playwright in telling a simple story.

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the characters, setting, and story of *Posteriority*.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that actors, working together, will simply and truthfully create the story of the play.



A photograph of Vigeland's bust of Ibsen

THEATER VOCABULARY

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To be able to discuss theater through a common, shared vocabulary.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that the most effective way to discuss theater and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.



Posterity Rehearsal (Photo: Ahron R. Foster)

Action The events that move along the story of the play and which influence the characters within the play.

Characters Individuals the audience learns about from their actions and reactions.

Ensemble A group of performers working together to create a complete production.

Dialogue The exchange of speech between two characters which reveals the feelings of the character as well as the story of the play.

Monologue A speech by one actor on stage which is intended to reveal the inner thoughts of the character the actor plays.

Character Arc The change produced in a character by the events and other characters in the play.

Musical Theater A twentieth century creation where writers and musicians collaborate to create a play which features song, dance and drama.

Mood The overall feeling the play evokes.

Costume The clothes, boots, etc., worn by the actors based on their character.

Prop Objects used by an actor to enhance their character. For example, wine glasses at a bar for drinks.

Set The constructed environment of a play within which the action takes place.

Sound Noises and music used in the play.

POSTERITY VOCABULARY

Pièce de Résistance The prize item in a collection, group, or series; the climax or most impressive part of an event, display, etc.

Temerity Excessive boldness; rashness; foolhardiness, recklessness.

Ad Infinitum To infinity; again and again in the same way; endlessly, forever.

Vicissitudes A change or alteration in condition or fortune; an instance of mutability in human affairs.

Mendacious Lying, untruthful; false.

Solipistic Relating to the theory of Solipsism; excessive regard for oneself and one's own interests, to the exclusion of others; preoccupation with oneself; extreme selfishness, self-centeredness, or self-absorption; (also) an instance of this. Also in neutral sense: isolation, solitude.

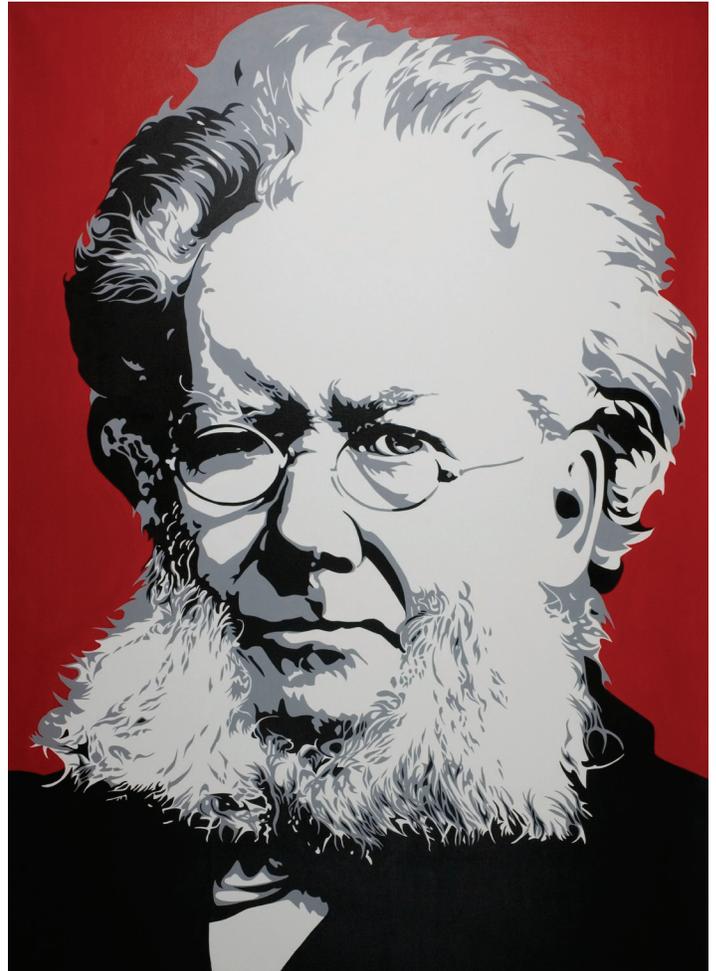
Dionysian 1) Of or pertaining to Dionysus or Bacchus, or the Dionysia or festivals held in honour of Dionysus.
2) Related to sensual, spontaneous, and emotional aspects of human nature.

Portentous Having the nature or quality of a sign, indication, or omen of a momentous or calamitous event which is about to happen.

Capricious Full of, subject to, or characterized by caprice; guided by whim or fancy rather than by judgment or settled purpose; whimsical, humoursome, spontaneous.

Truculent Characterized by or exhibiting ferocity or cruelty; fierce, cruel, savage, barbarous.

Brinkmanship The art of advancing to the very brink of war but not engaging in it.



Provincial Having or suggestive of the outlook, tastes, character, etc., associated with or attributed to inhabitants of a province or the provinces; esp. (depreciative) parochial or narrow-minded; lacking in education, culture, or sophistication.

Recompense To compensate, or make amends to (a person) for a loss or injury sustained.

RESEARCH & BACKGROUND: HENRIK IBSEN

WHO IS HENRIK IBSEN?

Henrik Ibsen is one of Norway's most famous 19th century playwrights. His plays, poetry, and other works are known and revered worldwide. He is often referred to as the father of realism and is also credited as one of the founders of Modernism. He is the second most performed dramatist, after Shakespeare, and his play *A Doll's House* is the most performed play of the 20th century. His life, however, was not one of only great success. One of the most remarkable things about Ibsen's story is that he rose from poverty to work for many years in theater before finding success as a writer. Although we may assume, due to Ibsen's fame, that he was always focused on becoming a playwright, his journey shows that not to be the case. Ibsen's life is one of stalled beginnings, scandal, and, ultimately, artistic greatness.



Ibsen, 1861 or 1862

EARLY LIFE

Henrick Ibsen was born on March 20, 1828, in Skien, Norway. At the age of fifteen he moved to Kristiania (now Oslo) for work, after his father lost much of the family's money. There he worked as an apprentice to a pharmacist. This is also where he met his first scandal, when on October 9, 1846, Else Jensdatter, a house servant, gave birth to his son, whom she named Hans Jacob Henricksen. Despite supporting him financially, Ibsen never made attempts to see his child. Legend has it that Hans Jacob paid Ibsen an unexpected visit some four decades later, but no details of that visit were documented.

By 1829 Ibsen was spending most of his time preparing for University, where he planned to study to become a physician. Although Ibsen did not finish school, he spent much of his time focusing on his artistic interests instead. As the years went on, these artistic interests that sprung from the practical function of entertaining his siblings, developed into the creation of mature paintings and poetry. Through his artistic awakenings and exploration, Ibsen, with other radical friends, developed a loathing for monarchs and oppressive governments, which, in turn, inspired him to continue writing. He began to take part in demonstrations and he wrote for/co-edited a radical publication. Despite run-ins with the law, Ibsen began to develop a reputation as a writer of promise.

RESEARCH & BACKGROUND: HENRIK IBSEN

EARLY CAREER AND SETBACKS

In October of 1851, the famous Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, came to Kristiania in search of financing for a theater he'd founded in Bergen. There he met Ibsen and hired him to join his company as a "dramatic author." As such, Ibsen was tasked with writing one new play a year. However, most of his time was taken up with other work for the fledgling theater, which was criticized for producing mediocre work. In 1852, the theater sent Ibsen on a study tour of major theaters in Europe. This was a turning point for Ibsen, both personally and professionally. On the trip he was able to see genuine professional theater. During his travels he also discovered the book *Das Maderne Drama* by Hermann Hettner, which aided his understanding of modern drama, especially dramatic structure and form, complex characterization in the Shakespearean mode, and the nature of tragedy. Although these influences did not cause him to suddenly emerge from the mediocrity surrounding him, they would be seen in his future, more successful work.

While working in Bergen, Ibsen met Suzannah Daae Thoresen, whom he would later marry. After six years with the theater company, Ibsen returned to Kristiania to become artistic director of the Kristiania Theater. Ibsen and Suzannah were married on June 18, 1858. She remained his lifelong companion and his staunchest supporter. However, although his work with the Kristiania Theater started off well (the high point being an early version of *Hedda Gabler*), by 1860 both the theater's board and the press were calling for his replacement.

In 1859 Ibsen and his wife welcomed a son, Sigurd, to their family. However, his professional troubles continued when in 1862 the Kristiania Theater went bankrupt. This led to a time of struggle that lasted until the last forty years of his life, which are considered his most remarkable. During this time he received many medals and other honors from institutions and crowned heads of state.

IBSEN'S GOLDEN AGE

In 1864 Ibsen and his family moved to Italy. This move was seen as self-imposed exile, as his plays were garnering unfavorable notoriety due to scandalous subject matter. While in Italy Ibsen wrote several of his most famous works, including *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*. With the success of these plays, Ibsen became more confident and began writing more openly about his beliefs. In 1868 he moved to Dresden, Germany where he spent several years working on *Emperor and Galilean*, which dramatized the life and times of Roman emperor Julian the Apostate. From there he moved again to Munich where he wrote his first contemporary realist play *The Pillars of Society*, followed by arguably his most known play, *A Doll's House*. These plays, as well as *Ghosts*, which he wrote after *A Doll's House* were commentary on morality. He continued this approach to writing with *An Enemy of the People*, which was seen as his most outspoken play. The final play written during this time period (which is often referred to as his golden age), *The Wild Duck* is considered by many to be his finest work.



A portrait of Ibsen, 1863

RESEARCH & BACKGROUND: HENRIK IBSEN

LATER LIFE & CAREER

After years of success, Ibsen moved back to Kristiania to live out the final part of his life. The dramas Ibsen wrote during this time are more introspective and include less of the social commentary that his earlier plays are known for. A few examples of his most well known works from this time period are *Hedda Gabler* and *The Master Builder*.

Beginning in 1889 Ibsen developed several relationships with younger women. The most notorious of these was with the publicity-seeking Emilie Bardach, a young Austrian woman he corresponded with for some time. Another, who would prove incredibly important professionally, was Hidir Andersen, a well-known concert pianist and one of Norway's first female professional musicians.

In 1898 Ibsen's collected works were published both in Denmark and in Germany. By this time his work was revered worldwide. Ibsen was best known for his influence on realism and modernism. He is also known for his social commentary about morality and right and wrong.

Ibsen died in his home in Kristiania on May 23, 1906, after suffering for several years from strokes. It is reported that on the day before his death, his nurse informed a visitor that his health was improving. Upon hearing this, Ibsen uttered "tvertimod!" meaning "on the contrary." These words are rumored to be his last.

Many years after his death, Ibsen is still viewed as a groundbreaking playwright. His works are still heavily read and performed around the world.



A portrayal of Ibsen from the 1890's

THE HISTORY OF HISTORICAL DRAMA

History Plays A history play is dramatic literature that is centered on a historical event or figure. The legitimacy of the genre is often criticized by historians, as there are many ways in which history can be utilized in playwriting. The popularity of this type of dramatic text is linked mostly to England and the Elizabethan age, notable for Shakespeare's history plays.

History and Tragedy Aristotle, a Greek Philosopher whose definition of drama is widely accepted as dictum (a formal pronouncement from an authoritative source), stated that tragedy tends to portray the fall of a hero. The heroes of the Elizabethan age were princes and kings, and thus the artists of the Elizabethan era, with a strong interest in the past, recorded the histories of their heroes in their texts. In this way, history plays and tragedy are often linked.

Creative License Historical drama isn't always completely factual. Many elements of historical drama are invented, as long as the text remains true enough to the facts that the audience knows to be historically accurate. Historical drama isn't supposed to alter history, but is allowed to employ elements of historical fact to create a story. These foundations can be used in many ways. Many writers use historical elements to recreate the magnificence of the past or to present a historical figure alongside events that might offer possibilities of truth, rather than complete fact.

The writer might use historical events as a setting for fictional characters to live within. An author may present historical settings and facts to add interest to the plot of a fictional story, or paint a picture of the social norms of a time in history as a setting for this new plot. Whatever tactics the writer uses, the foundation of the plot employs historical context to aid in or to drive the storytelling.

The Chronicle Play Aside from the idea of using historical context in storytelling, there is a type of historical drama that heightens the reality of what is otherwise a completely true story. In this type of text, also thought to originate in its modern format in the Elizabethan age, the Chronicle Play is loose and episodic in structure. These plays chronicle every important episode in the history of the play's "hero" or central character. These plays tend to ignore Aristotle's dramatic requirement that a play have a beginning, middle, and an end. They tend to ignore most conventions to present a dramatized version of one person's life, chronologically. This method was put to great use in Shakespeare's history plays, such as *Henry V*, but in modern playwriting, historical plays tend to take on a more narrative structure.

Romanticism Because the creators of historical drama are generally drawn to momentous events, there is often a great sense of romanticism to their plays. This doesn't mean romantic in the sense of romantic love, but implies an interest in scenes of great emotion; romance, battles, murders, and conspiracies. These scenes are overflowing with motivated characters, intensified action, dream sequences, prophecies, and the supernatural. In such a grasp for spectacle (another element of Aristotle's definition of drama), occasionally these romantic and picturesque plays lacked in substance of plot. In these examples, the historical drama becomes less a historical record and more a vehicle for philosophical ideas and emotion. The greatest examples of these come from the Renaissance and the French Revolution.

IMPORTANCE OF THE HISTORY PLAY

Wherever it is found, the history play is an important dramatic tool. It awakens its audience to relive experiences of the past in a more vivid way than a textbook. Throughout the ages, the subjects of these texts have changed and the techniques the playwrights have used have also. Whatever way they are used, historical drama serves an important role in the theater that has transcended Shakespeare and has become prominent in the writing of many prominent playwrights, including Friedrich Schiller, Lord Tennyson, and of course, Henrik Ibsen.

RELATING THEMES TO OUR OWN LIVES

CONTEMPORARY THOUGHTS ON SELF-EXPRESSION

From *The Mindful Word* by Alexandria Bean

From finger-painting to intricate landscape portraits, Lady Gaga to Chopin, art provokes spiritual wellness. Even before hospitals hired musicians to perform for traumatized veterans during the First and Second World Wars, people have been using art—extensions of the human soul—to cultivate positive changes within themselves and relations with the outside world. While some of us are recovering from an eating disorder and some of us are wounded from a lost love, these difficult experiences develop our unique preferences and deeply connect us to people, images, and sounds, exuding a common struggle or hope. Therefore, we do not need any particular musical or artistic ability to benefit.

Explore personal feelings

Spiritual healing requires harmonizing the many aspects of being human—gifted with the ability to experience and create. Art generates personal exploration through self-expression or delving into one's spiritual agony with listening or seeing. Channeling art solidifies how outside sources impact our life. Self-expression reveals the sources of personal struggle, examining who or what situations spark spiritual discomfort. By discovering the hindrances of wellness, we have the potential to avoid or manage such triggers in the future.

Meanwhile, creating a new masterpiece transforms inner rage, pain, or emotional baggage into something tangible. Hopes and fears can be transcribed for the first time, feelings that shouldn't be ignored or suffocated. Rather, these basic human feelings can be managed and celebrated through creativity. In this sense, self-expression serves as a simple reminder of the healing process.

Even if we do not have the technical ability to write a ballad or paint a self-portrait, most of us can use our senses to connect the emotion or content of a piece to our own struggle. We all know a song that reminds us of our childhood best friend; we all know an image that provokes happiness or guilt. After all, we're all connected through art despite our varied skill levels.

Make positive changes

Art's facilitation of self-esteem and stress-reduction potentially allows everyone to work through any source of spiritual trauma. Something as simple as learning the words to a meaningful song or hanging your drawing on the refrigerator generates self-esteem. Starting and completing any task, and experiencing the finished product, produces an irreplaceable sense of productivity and worth. Likewise, after studying or creating a piece, we can enjoy the product and share it with loved ones. As stated in *Into the Wild*, "Happiness is only real when shared." For this reason, it's important to share our gifts with others because we all have the ability to be touched and spiritually uplifted through the universal languages of art.

Sense of control

The life-affirming pleasure of experiencing art constructs a sense of control, especially in a time of disillusionment or disease. Although art connects people, it can also administer a sense of independent thought and actions. Away from appointments, away from family stress, away from society's expectations, connecting with art puts the individual in control. No one can enforce what can be listened to, what colours are permitted, what should cultivate inspiration—the quest to spiritual wellness is an individual journey in this sense. Art provides control in a chaotic world.

However, the new orientations of time and location in visual and performing arts offer another source of independence. New depictions of the past, future, and even location, enable us to temporarily escape our social bubble. Entering alternate realms allows us to realize a world beyond our personal struggles, disease or agony. Art creates a safe space for anyone to temporarily escape from his or her own head into a meditative state where inner peace is possible. Art forms generate spiritual wellness with their ability to create alternate mindsets controlled by the viewer, listener or composer.

We all interact with art on a daily basis. However, few stop and think how these forms of expression not only look pretty or have a danceable beat, they also provide spiritual wellness. By meditating to a soulful guitar solo or creating a sculpture of your adoptive mother, art cultivates both independence and connection to others. Although individual mental states can be tamed through art, people all share a common bond through experiences and emotion. Creating a masterpiece for your personal spirituality has the potential to create inspiration among those with whom it is shared.

RELATING THEMES TO OUR OWN LIVES

CONTEMPORARY THOUGHTS ON ART & ARTISTS BY DEEYAH KHAN

Historically, artists have pushed the boundaries of society.

The role of art and artists in society varies, pivoted upon the choices and perspectives of any individual artist. Art can be merely a form of entertainment, or can demonstrate the proficiency of technique – but art can also be a form of resistance, protest, disobedience, freedom and subversion. Each motivation is as valid and necessary as the next: the voices and work of the whole creative sector are foundational to a healthy, open society.

Across all art-forms numerous artists have faced suppression in the name of ‘morality’, ‘decency’ or ‘community sensitivities.’ They have been jailed, tortured, harassed, threatened, marginalized, and even killed for the ‘crime’ of self-expression.

Artists also confront other, more invisible, forms of suppression, such as self censorship on the basis of gender and sexuality, or the fear of losing financial or institutional support, causing offense, or ‘provoking’ violent public and media reactions, harassment and threats in which censorship may be disguised under ‘noble’ concepts such as ‘cultural sensitivity.’ The result of these pressures is that expressions of creativity may be aborted before being formed, or develop in stunted form.

However difficult or subversive the work of an artist may be, there is a need for institutions to stand for freedom of expression, and support the free exchange of ideas and opinions fearlessly and to embrace the positive value of controversy and disagreement. Comprehending the diversity of opinions is the only means to understand ourselves and our society. Support from the highest levels of society is absolutely central to developing a society that is able to defend artistic freedom whenever challenged.

The fear of violent reactions is silencing voices that really need to be heard. This is exacerbated by another form of suppression known as corporate censorship which is also becoming stronger in the West, and which needs to be challenged more readily.

WHO IS DEEYAH KHAN?

Deeyah Khan is a Norwegian film director, music producer, composer, and activist of Punjabi/Pashtun descent. She is an outspoken supporter of women’s rights, freedom of expression, and peace.



One of Gustav Vigeland's Sculptures from Frogner Park

WEBBING & DISCUSSION TRIGGERS

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To develop critical thinking skills through examining the themes in *Posterity*.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that the story of the play relates to their own lives.

MATERIALS

Chalkboard, chalk, paper, pens, the webbing ideas and discussion triggers.

WEBBING IDEAS

Regret	"Feet of Clay"
Redemption	Adversary vs. Compatriot
Father/Son Relationship	

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In *Posterity*, Greta and Anfinn share the following scene in Act II:

Anfinn

Oh, I'll remember you. But so will the world.

Greta

You mustn't tease an old woman.

Anfinn

I mean it. Herr Ibsen be damned. The Master's already carved us. He'll build that fountain of his. And on it you'll find the two of us in granite, naked as the day we were born.

GRETA blushes.

Anfinn

(grinning)
You and me, Mrs. Bergstrøm? We'll be immortal.

Does the concept of immortality resonate with you as an audience? As you think about what your own legacy, consider the concept of an individual's legacy as a pathway to metaphorical immortality.

Step One

Write the Webbing Ideas on the chalkboard.

Step Two

Have each student add their impressions of the meaning of one of these concepts on the board, and how it relates to their own experiences.

Step Three

Use the students' responses to focus on how unique each student's perception is of these concepts. Why is this true?

Step Four

Ask the students to discuss how their sense of personal legacy plays a role in their own lives.

Step Five

Share the discussion trigger and questions with the class.

What are the facades we create for others in our society, and what do we do when circumstances reveal the horrible truth behind those facades?

What is reality, and can artists ever truly capture it?

SECTION 4: YOUR STUDENTS AS ACTORS

*“Actors should remain truthful to the story
and their character.”*

**- David Mamet, American playwright
& noted actor, William H. Macy,
founders of Atlantic Theater Company**

The following activities are designed to assist your students in understanding the actor’s “job.” Like every job, even acting has its “tools.”

The Practical Aesthetics acting technique was developed by David Mamet, William H. Macy and the founding members of the Atlantic Theater Company. This technique offers the actor a set of analytical tools to understand the playwright’s intentions and what the characters want. This process of script analysis additionally helps define the actor’s job on stage.



Posterity Rehearsal (Photo: Ahron R. Foster)

WARM UP GAME: READING A SCENE

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To demonstrate to students how artists manifest their skills and talent for their audience.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand the complex nature of the *Posterity* characters' sense of self-worth.

MATERIALS

A space for improvisational acting.

Step One

Ask for two volunteers from the class.

Step Two

Tell both students that they are experts of a given field. For use with *Posterity*, perhaps a sculptor or an artist. Both students will be "experts" of the same field.

Step Three

For one minute at a time, each student will improvise a speech about their expertise and why they are the best in their field. This should go back and forth, depending on time, at least two times for each student to resemble a debate.

Step Four

Thank the volunteers. Then ask the class what worked about each argument that was given. Who was the most convincing? Why?

A portrayal of Ibsen 1898



READING A SCENE FOR UNDERSTANDING

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To introduce the Practical Aesthetics “tools” for breaking down a scene. To understand the character and the story of the scene by relating the character’s actions to the student’s own life.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that an important part of creating a simple, honest character involves knowing what that character “wants.”

MATERIALS

Pens, pencils, copies of the following scene from *Posterity*, and copies of the Literal, Want, Action, As-If worksheet and/or Mini-Lesson.

PRACTICAL AESTHETICS EXERCISE

Step One

Divide the students in pairs. Ask the students to select which character they want to portray.

Step Two

Allow the students time to read the scene silently to themselves.

Step Three

Ask the students to read the Introduction to the Practical Aesthetic Acting Technique sheet. Have the students answer the four questions on the Scene Analysis Worksheet.

NOTE: The four questions and the students’ answers to them form the basis for the Practical Aesthetics scene analysis; and enables the actor to create a simple, honest character—they’re simply being honest to their own experiences!

Step Four

After the students have completed the question worksheet, ask each pair of actors to read the scene in the front of the class room for an “Audience.” The students should incorporate the ideas from the worksheet as they read the scene.



Gustav Vigeland, 1884 or 1885

READING A SCENE FOR UNDERSTANDING

A SCENE FROM *POSTERITY*

Gustav

Is that all I'm good for, Larpent? Fatuous public art? To perpetuate the fame of others, without ever achieving my own? For this, I should postpone my *pièce de résistance*?

Larpent

Mr. Klouman-Høiner has enormous influence with the Ministry. His endorsement, well, there's no one more persuasive, more politic or more well-liked on the public arts committee. He could make this fountain of yours a reality. But if you humiliate him again by declining yet another of his requests---

Gustav

Humiliate him?

Larpent

Yes! How else is he to feel, his every entreaty rebuked? As it happens, I have a standing offer.

Gustav

Already?

Larpent

Yes, an urgent one.

Gustav

"Urgent?" A bust, mind you, crafted first in clay, then cast in bronze. How urgent could that be?

Larpent

Urgent enough for me to violate my promise and storm your studio ---

Gustav

Who am I to sculpt? A judge, to fill some alcove in the courthouse? Some fat politician for a niche in parliament?

Larpent

It's quite a prestigious opportunity.

Gustav

For whom, the subject?

Larpent

Gustav, please!

Gustav

Who is it, then?

Larpent

Our most esteemed writer.

Gustav

You can't mean ---

Larpent

Precisely.

Gustav

You're joking.

Larpent

Decidedly not.

Gustav

I won't do it. I absolutely refuse.

Larpent

Fine; when the Ministry rejects your fountain, you'll have no one to blame but yourself. As of this moment, I wash my hands of the whole affair.

LARPENT heads for the door, but GUSTAV implores:

Gustav

Wait.

PRACTICAL AESTHETICS INTRODUCTION

ANALYSIS

SCRIPT ANALYSIS is the process of breaking down a beat within a scene. We ask four questions in order to do this.

1. What is the character LITERALLY doing?
2. What does the character WANT?
3. What is the essential ACTION?
4. What is that action like to me? It is AS-IF...

Literal

In this step, the actor determines what the character he or she is playing is literally doing according to the text.

PURPOSE: An actor has to travel far—think of this preparation as the road map.

Want

In this step, the actor identifies the goal of the character in the scene, specifically what the character wants from the other character/s in the scene. The given circumstances of the story inform the WANT.

PURPOSE: To focus the actor on the characters' interaction.

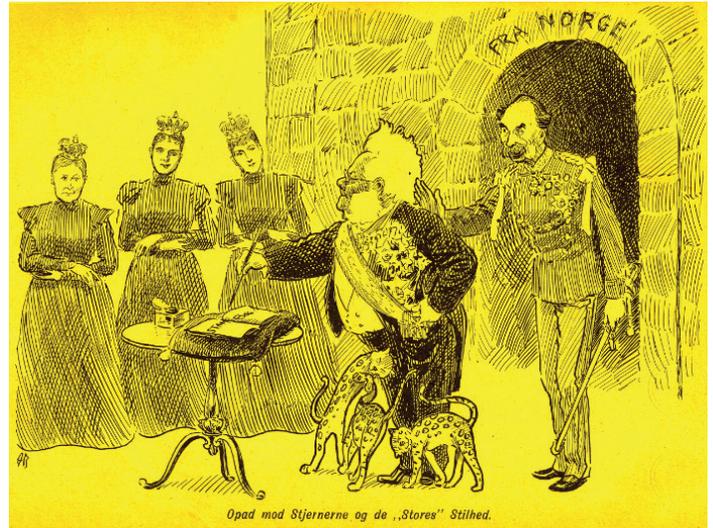
Action

Playing an ACTION is the physical pursuit of a goal. Defining the ACTION of the scene allows the actor to determine what result or CAP he or she is looking for from the other actor/s in the scene.

EXAMPLES:

- Put someone in their place.
- Beg someone for forgiveness.
- Get a favor.
- Get someone to let me off the hook.
- Force someone to face the facts.
- Inspire someone to greatness.
- Get someone to see the light.

PURPOSE: Using an action gives the actor a task and a specific point of view. The Atlantic Theater Company teaches that the Action creates character.



A portrayal of Ibsen from 1898

As-If

In this step, the actor personalizes the action by finding a real-life situation in which they would behave according to the action they have chosen for the scene.

EXAMPLE: Get a favor.

It's AS-IF I forgot to do my science homework and I'm asking my teacher for an extra day to hand it in.

PURPOSE: To gain personal insight and urgency to the scene or beat.

Tactics & Tools

Different ways an actor goes about getting his action.

EXAMPLE: Plead, flirt, demand, inspire, challenge, level, threaten.

Living In The Moment

Reacting impulsively to what the other actor in the scene is doing, from the point of view of the chosen action.

SCENE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

IF YOU'RE PLAYING GUSTAV

Here are your “tools” for understanding your character:

What is my character literally doing?

Gustav is talking to Larpent about his next project.

What does my character want?

Gustav wants Larpent to endorse his fountain sculpture idea.

What is the action I'm going to play?

To get someone to recognize my worth.

The As-if

Is there someone in your life, a friend or family member, who you want to recognize your worth?

IF YOU'RE PLAYING LARPENT

Here are your “tools” for understanding your character:

What is my character literally doing?

Larpent is talking to Gustav about a new project.

What does my character want?

Larpent wants Gustav to accept his proposal.

What is the action I'm going to play?

To get someone to seize a great opportunity.

The As-if

Is there someone in your life, a friend or family member, who you want to seize a great opportunity?

MINI-LESSON VOCABULARY

KEY VOCABULARY

Literal

The process of accessing the basic story-line of the characters in a particular scene or beat.

Want

The process of identifying the goal of the character in a scene or beat.

Action

The actor's physical pursuit of a specific goal.

As-If

A way to determine what this action means to me.

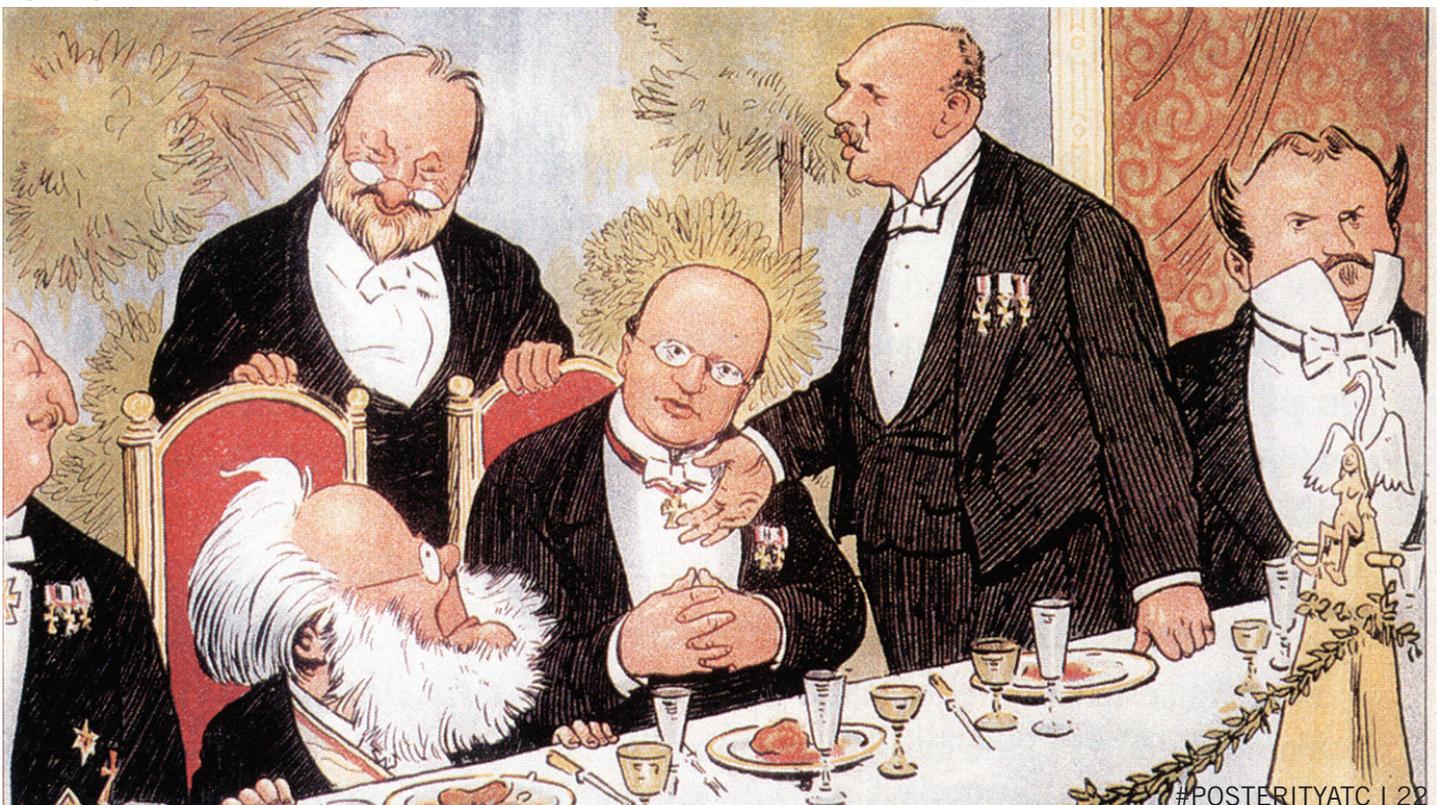
HANDY TOOL KIT FOR THE ACTOR

Acting Tactics & Tools

To Use In The As-If Step

- Laughing to get what you want
- Teasing to get what you want
- Testing to get what you want
- Threatening to get what you want
- Pleading to get what you want
- Flirting to get what you want
- Bartering to get what you want
- Bribing to get what you want
- Begging to get what you want
- Crying to get what you want
- Demanding to get what you want
- Leveling to get what you want
- Inspiring to get what you want
- Challenging to get what you want

A portrayal of Ibsen from 1898



SECTION 5: YOUR STUDENTS AS ARTISTS

“Create your own work.”

**- David Mamet, American playwright
& noted actor, William H. Macy,
founders of Atlantic Theater Company**

The following activities will assist your students in understanding themselves as artists creating original work that connects with their own experiences and world.



One of Gustav Vigeland's Sculptures in Frogner Park

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY: WHY THIS WORD?

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

The following activities will assist your students in understanding themselves as artists creating original work that connects with their own experiences and world.

STUDENT GOAL

To develop Critical Thinking skills through examining the themes in *Posterity*, and how to relate these themes to the students' own experiences.

MATERIALS

Pens, pencils, writing paper. An open space for performing.

MOTIVATION

To understand how a few specific words can open the imagination to a whole new world.

DISCUSS WITH YOUR STUDENTS

Why do you think Playwright Doug Wright selected the word "Posterity" as the "window" into understanding his play?

Step One

Ask each student to create a free write around the trigger, My "Posterity."

Step Two

Ask a student volunteer to define the style of writing called a free write.

Step Three

Allow each student five minutes to work on their free write.

Step Four

Ask students to read their piece silently to themselves, then circle the one sentence they believe carries the strongest significance to them.

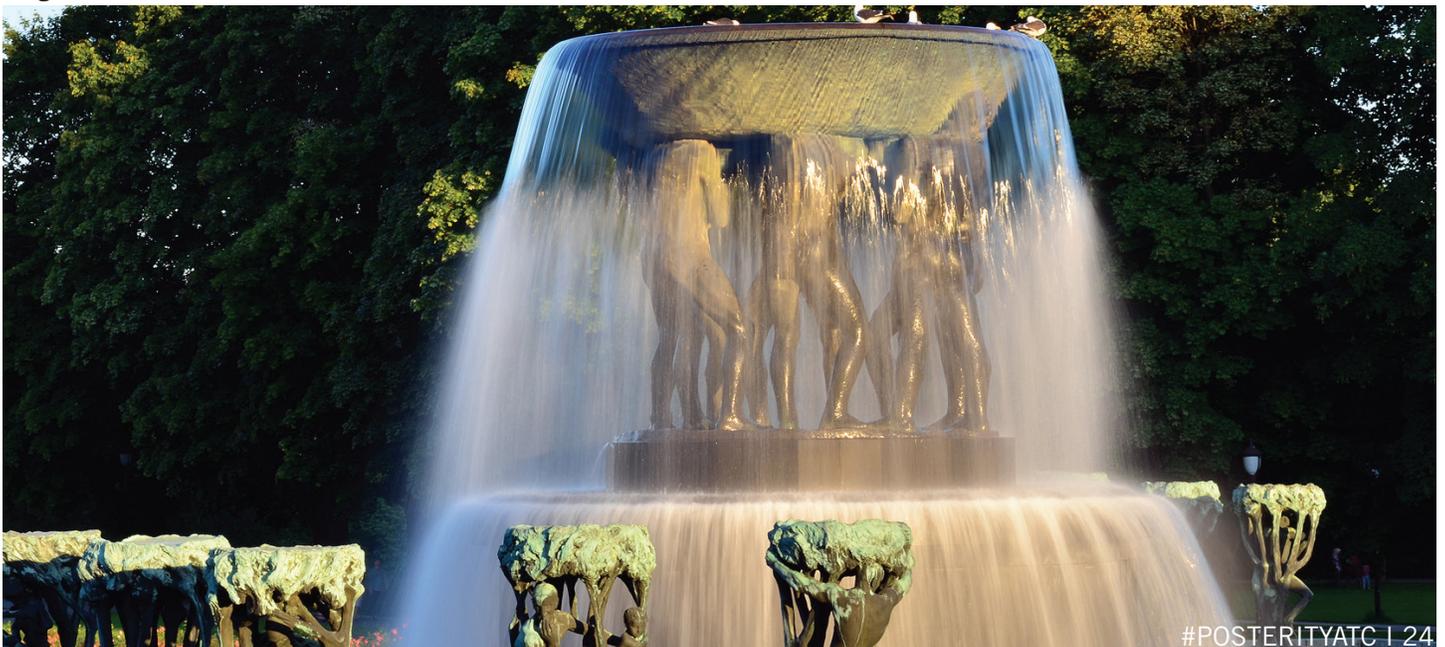
Step Five

Using the circled sentence as a new writing trigger, ask the students to write another free write for 3 minutes.

Step Six

Ask students who feel comfortable to read their pieces aloud to the class for feedback.

Frogner Park Fountain



CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITY

Recurring themes in *Posterity* are vision, immortality, and legacy. The vision each artist has of themselves and the view that society, the audience, or the public has of the artist and their work is of immense importance in this production. In the context of the play, posterity not only alludes to the literal descendants of the characters, as it is defined, but evokes the idea that the artist's work is also a collection of artifacts that remain for the sake of the artists' posterity (legacy).

Do you ever consider your legacy? You are a student, but in what other ways are you viewed by the people around you? A son, a daughter, an athlete, an artist? How will these impressions that you leave behind impact your legacy? What statement about your life, if you could choose, would you like to record for the sake of posterity?

Below is a list of synonyms for the word legacy. How many of these words will apply to your legacy?

- Accolade
- Appreciation
- Compliment
- Eulogy
- Gift
- Gratitude
- Honor
- Memorial
- Recognition
- Acknowledgment
- Star
- Applause
- Citation
- Commendation
- Esteem
- Offering
- Recommendation



Posterity Rehearsal (Photo: Ahron R. Foster)

COMMON CORE & DOE THEATER BLUEPRINT

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

Theater conveys the significance individuals place on the pursuit of their passion.

Theater conveys the meaning behind an individual's life work as a route to metaphorical immortality.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Does the direction and staging reinforce the sense that individuals need their own manner of self-expression in order to feel validated?

Do you accept the concept put forward in *Posterity* that an individual's contributions to the world shape their legacy?

Why do people place such significance on leaving a piece of themselves behind after death?

STRAND BENCHMARKS

Theater Making: Acting

BENCHMARK: Students increase their ability as imaginative actors while continuing to participate as collaborative ensemble members. Students demonstrate the ability to reflect on and think critically about their own work.

Theater Making: Playwriting/Play Making

BENCHMARK: Students refine their ability as playwrights to express point of view and personal vision.

Developing Theater Literacy

BENCHMARK: Students develop skills as critics by analyzing the critical writings of others.

Making Connections Through Theater

BENCHMARK: Students demonstrate a capacity for deep personal connection to theater and a realization of the meaning and messages of theater.

Working with Community and Cultural Resources

BENCHMARK: Students invigorate and broaden their understanding of theater through collaborative partnerships with theater professionals.



SECTION 6: THE ATLANTIC LEGACY

ATLANTIC THEATER COMPANY & ATLANTIC ACTING SCHOOL

76 Ninth Avenue, Suite 537, New York, NY, 10011
Phone: 212-691-5919

atlantictheater.org
atlanticactingschool.org

LINDA GROSS THEATER

336 West 20th Street, New York, NY, 10011

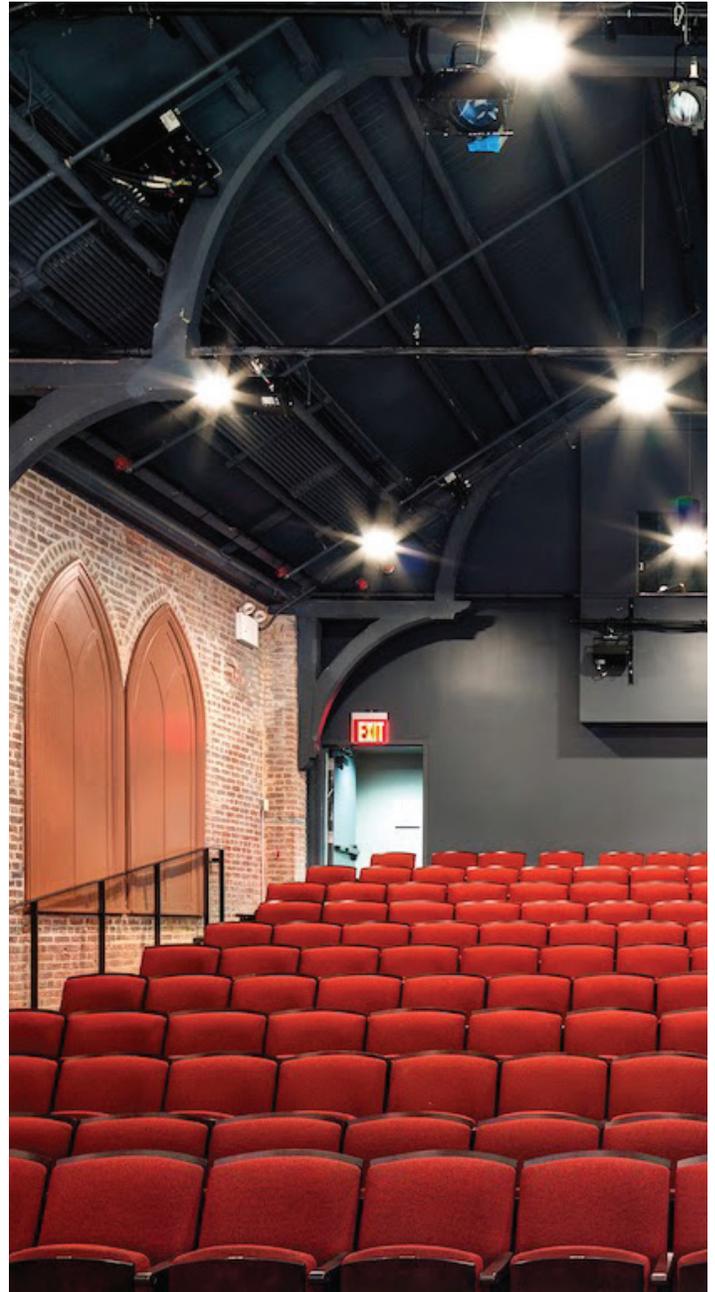
ATLANTIC STAGE 2

330 West 16th Street, New York, NY, 10011

Inspired by the Group Theater, Stanislavsky, and a passion for ensemble acting, David Mamet and William H. Macy formed the Atlantic Theater Company with a select group of New York University Undergraduate drama students. Since its inception in 1985, Atlantic has produced more than 100 plays and garnered numerous awards, including: 12 Tony Awards, 11 Lucille Lortel Awards, 15 OBIE Awards, five Outer Critics Circle Awards, seven Drama Desk Awards, and three Drama League Awards. Noted productions include: *Spring Awakening*, *Port Authority*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Boy's Life*, and *American Buffalo*.

The Atlantic Theater Company's mission is to produce plays simply and truthfully, utilizing an artistic ensemble. Atlantic believes that the story of the play and the intent of its playwright are at the core of a successful theatrical production.

The Atlantic Acting School fosters new generations of actors by passing on the tools learned from Mamet and Macy and by preparing students for all aspects of a career in film, television and theater. The Atlantic offers studies through New York University, a full time conservatory program, part-time programs and summer workshops. Atlantic for Kids offers acting classes in an after school setting as well as summer programs for children ages 4 to 18.



Interior of the Linda Gross Theater

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