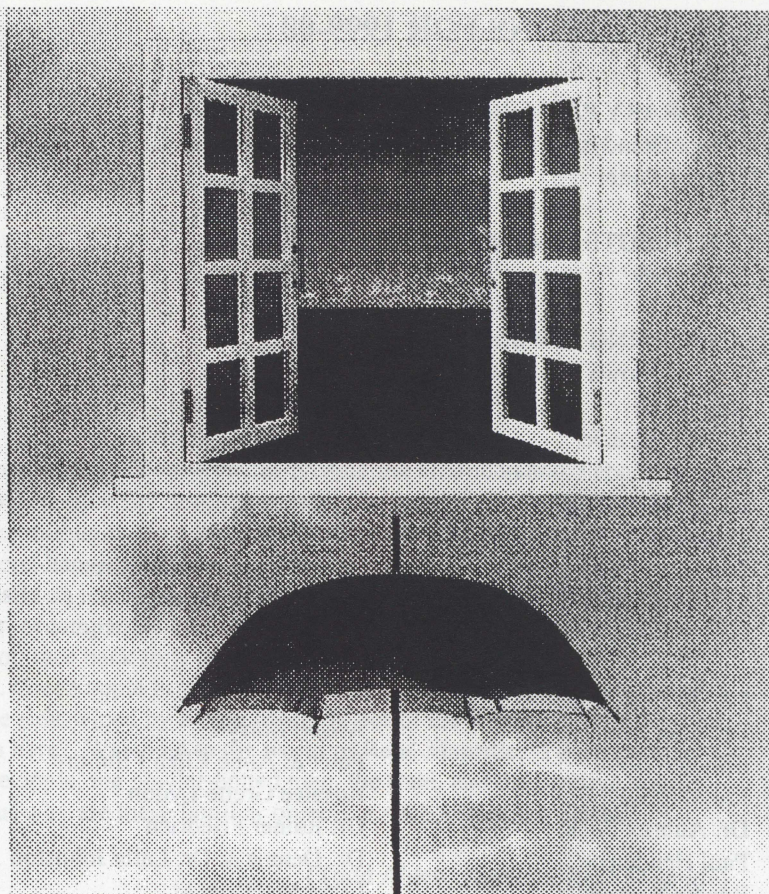


Dalhousie Theatre Department Productions
Presents

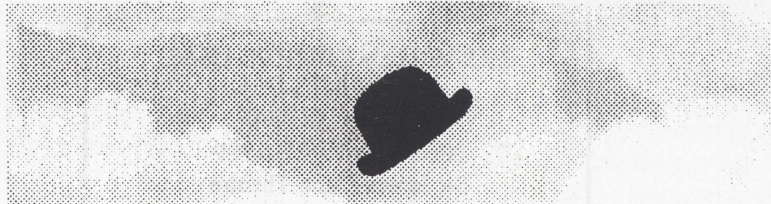


PROGRAM DESIGN BY CYNTHIA HENRY © 1999

7 Stories

A Play By **Morris Panych**

Directed By **Susan Stackhouse**



Oct. 13 -16, 8 pm

Sat. Matinee, Oct. 16, 2 pm, 1999

David MacK. Murray Theatre, Dalhousie Arts Centre

Tickets: Stu/Sen: \$5 Reg: \$10 Dalhousie Arts Centre Box Office Tel: 494-3820

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UPCOMING PRODUCTION

VINEGAR TOM

by Caryl Churchill

November 23-27, 1999

Sir James Dunn Theatre

Imagine this: You're out for a walk one afternoon and you notice the powder-blue sky dotted with puffy white clouds. Suddenly it feels like midnight, even though it's only 3:00 p.m., and when you look up, there, hanging above you -- oh jeez! -- is a 20-ton boulder with a castle on top of it! Hundreds of bowler-hatted men float through the air, accompanied by a band of flaming tubas. Let's get out of here! You race back to your house, screaming for help...and there's a 600 lb. Green apple in your living room! You streak down the hall and are sideswiped by a train charging out of the fireplace. What's going on here? Welcome to the world of René Magritte. You recognize the apple, the bowler-hatted men, the train, and the massive boulder. But why are these familiar objects in such unfamiliar places?

(Todd Alden, *Essential René Magritte*)

Director's Notes

What a pleasure it is working on this show! I haven't laughed so much in a long time. I chuckled many times when I first read the script, while researching, and we all laughed out loud during the first read-through. The enjoyment has continued as the actors, designers, assistant directors, dramaturge, crew, and others associated with the show have explored the text and found the depth and layers to Morris Panych's writing. We have used as inspiration for this piece the work of the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte and that of Sigmund Freud who was the founder of psychoanalysis and considered the true intellectual hero of surrealism. Freud says, "The interpretation of dreams is in fact the Royal Road to knowledge of the unconscious; it is the securest foundation of psychoanalysis." And so we also gathered a great deal of inspiration from the dream interpretation/symbol books. According to Freud's dream theory, a house symbolizes the body and a window the eyes. Did you know that to dream of a new building may mean that you are being challenged to find a new direction in life?

It is evident in the costume design that the surrealist notion has been extended by using a monochromatic theme and that we

have had fun with the symbolism of colour. Colours have different vibrations, properties and represent different levels of awareness. Do you dream in black and white or in technicolour?

I hope you enjoy this production as much as we have enjoyed getting it ready for you.

Susan Stackhouse

Incidental Music

The music in this production is all a cappella. The artists you will hear are the Canadian groups, The Euphorics (Bohemian Rhapsody) and, for all party window sounds, Streetnix who advertise that "Every sound on this album has been created with the human voice." As well you will recognise Gregorian Chants, as well as Bobby McFerrin and James Taylor....

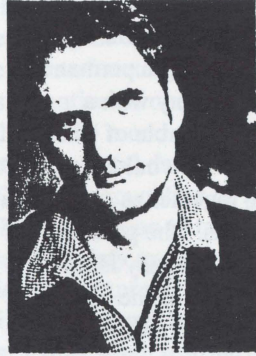
7 is a prime number and also the first complete number, which means that it can be obtained by adding 3+4, 2+5, and 1+6.

Morris Panych

When Morris Panych was seven years old, he had his very first theatrical experience. It was at his Ukrainian-Polish grandmother's Catholic funeral. As Morris explains, "it was an incredible service that lasted two days, with an open coffin, open pit burial, a choir . . . I was totally captivated." It seems as if this accomplished playwright, actor, and director has been captivated with the world of theatre ever since; and while a funeral may not seem like the ultimate introduction to theatre, this fascination with the mystery of the whole human experience lies at the centre of Panych's work.

Born in Calgary on June 30, 1952, Panych spent most of his childhood in Edmonton. In 1973, he ended up in Vancouver to do his BFA. in creative writing at UBC, and then went to England to study at London's East 15 Acting School. Upon his return, Panych quickly became a central figure in Vancouver's theatre community, working in theatres all over the West Coast as he developed his various theatrical talents. The year 1989 marked the birth of his highly popular production of *7 Stories* (which he both wrote and directed), and solidified his place in Canadian theatre. *7 Stories* was the winner of

six Jessie Awards (Vancouver theatre awards), including "Outstanding Original Play" and "Outstanding Production of a Play."



Not only is Panych an accomplished playwright and director, but he also has a number of acting credits to his name. Along with a number of theatrical roles, he appeared in such movies as *Look Who's Talking Too* (1990) and *Mystery Date* (1991), and in a number of television shows including *MacGyver* (1985), *21 Jump Street* (1987), *Mom P.I.* (1990), and *X-Files* (1993). He directed over twenty-five productions in Vancouver and Toronto, and wrote numerous plays for which he has won a number of awards (including the Governor General's Award for *The Ends of the Earth* in 1994).

In music, there are seven notes in a scale before it returns to the first note to produce an octave.

For Panych the entire theatrical experience is a compilation of a number of equally important things, which is obvious when one looks at the various things he has done throughout his career. He believes that all the parts are necessary to make up the whole, and even dreams of creating a permanent repertory company with a production ensemble of "theatre specialists" who would put everything together as a team. In his own words: "the practical realization of the play is as important to me as the written material - as informative, and as necessary. To invent plays on paper is only the starting point of a whole integrated process."

René Magritte

One of the most important artists of surrealism was Rene-François-Ghislain Magritte. Born on November 21, 1898, in Lessines, Belgium, Magritte discovered painting as a young child and continued to develop his artistic talents in conjunction with his adult education. Magritte's education introduced him to the words of poet Edgar Allan Poe; like him, Magritte was fascinated with death throughout his life. Magritte's fascination with death began with the experience of his mother's

suicide. This tragic event is rumoured to have influenced and even inspired some of his later work. After her death his family moved around quite a bit, before settling again in Brussels. It was here that Magritte was introduced to the work of Italian painter Giorgio De Chirico. The techniques that Chirico employed became the model for many surrealists, and his work enchanted the young Magritte.



In 1922, Magritte married and began to use his art for commercial purposes, and this point marks a definite transition in his artistic style. He experimented with cubism and futurism before creating his first surrealist painting, *The Lost Jockey* (1926). The combination of contrasting elements within the picture represents some of the basic principles and stylistic qualities that dominated Magritte's work. There

Human growth is frequently thought to develop in 7 increments, as in Shakespeare's speech on the "seven ages of man" from As You Like It.

are no obvious clues to explain the artist's intention or interpretation of reality. Magritte was meticulous in constructing an image and he offered no solution to his pictorial questions. His images depicted actual objects displaced from reality, and words or obscure titles often accompanied these pictures.



Magritte was not interested in the typical surrealist techniques. He was an active part of the surrealist movement, but it was always on his own terms. By "remaining aloof from the Surrealist preoccupation with the stream of consciousness, Magritte went further than his fellow artists towards realizing the ideal of a universal pictorial language" (Calvocoressi). Magritte did not strictly follow the doctrines of movement. His primary focus did not include painting dream-like images or pictures to express the unconscious mind. As many of his surrealist counterparts, he supported some of the surrealist

ideas and theories, yet he also maintained his independent style and painted accordingly.

Magritte gained international attention for his painting during the early 1940's and mid 50's. After World War II, he became increasingly interested in describing the effects of metamorphosis (the transformation of one object into another). The mood of Magritte's painting changed drastically during the German occupation of Belgium, and his style began to take on a sense of anxiety and urgency. This anxiety was expressed with the motif of enclosure. Many of his images were often restricted by borders, and objects were contained within cages. Magritte sometimes used an image of the sky and trapped it within a frame or object. In a sense, he was trapping freedom and controlling a point of escape. Despite these restrictive elements, he also gave freedom to people and objects by releasing them from the confines of the body and negating the effects of gravity on reality.

Throughout his career, Magritte explored various styles and techniques in the pursuit of creative combinations and mysterious inventions. The combination of unrelated objects was an active ingredient in Magritte's painting. To him the mystery of objects was central to his methodology. He transformed the mundane objects around him into a visual language

Since in Babylonian civilization they thought that there were 7 planets in our solar system, 7 became the number of the cosmic structure.

system. This system forced the observer to learn a new alphabet of recognition. There is "nothing in his work [that] functions as one would expect. The stability of familiar objects and situations is deceptive. Reality is only assumed reality. The picture is a trap: it is a product of reflection and an invitation to further reflect" (Schneede). Magritte continued to create his visual illusions and confuse the perception of the viewer until his death in 1967. He is still considered to be one of the most important figures in surrealist movement, and his painting has continued to surprise and capture the attention of the mind.

Surrealism

In 1919, the French author André Breton collaborated with a colleague by the name of Phillipe Soupault on an experiment in automatic writing. It was this project that would eventually come to be considered the birth of the surrealist movement.

In truth, however, surrealism's origins date back at least another nineteen years, at which time Sigmund Freud published his now famous text *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In this and other works, Freud introduced the general public to two ideas: first, that a significant portion of the human mind

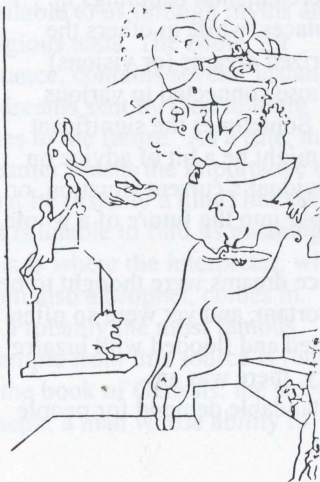
functions beyond the person's conscious awareness; and second, that the subconscious mind can find external expression when the conscious mind is suppressed, most notably through dream symbolism.

It was the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 that provided the environment out of which surrealism's second root would form, this root being Dada, a sort of disillusioned anti-art intended by the painters and poets of the movement to shock Europe's complacent populace out of their traditional views and their blind acceptance of their condition in a world at war. This movement relied heavily on such concepts as absurdity, chance as a means of creating art, and the use of odd combinations of everyday objects. Most of these ideas survive as elements of surrealism when the end of the war creates the need for a more optimistic, yet still irreverent, artistic, literary, and philosophical movement.



Despite these rumblings, the surrealist movement did not officially get underway until 1924 when Breton (who would soon come to be known as the “Pope of Surrealism”) opened the Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes, started the publication of his periodical *La Révolution Surréaliste*, and published his first manifesto. In this manifesto, he defines Surrealism as:

Pure psychic automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing, or by other means, the real process of thought. Thought’s dictation in the absence of all control exercised by reason... [The philosophy of] Surrealism rests in the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association neglected heretofore; in the omnipotence of dreams and in the disinterested play of thought.



The primary objective of the Surrealist movement centered on the substitution of the reality of day-to-day perception with the reality of the subconscious mind, in order to understand an absolute, super-reality, which was what truly existed. In doing so, the Surrealists relied heavily on automatism: techniques that involve the conscious suppression of the conscious mind. Such techniques fell into three general categories. The first was mechanical automatism, in which randomness was exploited for the physical creation of the work. This could entail anything from drawing words from a hat in the creation of a poem, to passing a piece of paper over a candle flame in making a *fumage*, to the controversial Found Object sculptures.

Secondly, there was psychological automatism, in which ideas might be presented in a carefully planned, “realistic” manner, but the subject matter would be derived from dreams, or dream-like subconscious imagery. This style was intended not only to portray the pictures or narratives of dreams, but also the intuitive understanding that dreams express.

Finally, there was surreational automatism – Breton’s favourite – in which one idea would be derived thoughtlessly from the one that preceded it through natural associations; creating paintings and poetry as one form or word flowed

into the next.

The surrealist movement was remarkably broad in scope; media were limited only by the imaginations of the artists. Among the various styles and creations were: the darkly erotic films of the Spanish film-maker Buñuel, the absurdly shocking plays of Artaud (later to become Theatre of Cruelty), the hallucinatory realism of Dalí's paintings as well as the poems, novels and political musings of Breton.

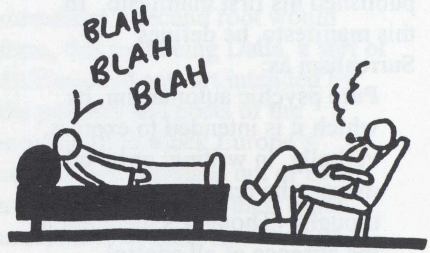
It was, however, the political interests of many of the movement's members that would lead to the most headaches. During the 1920's and 1930's, differences of opinion regarding an increasingly revolutionary European political climate caused considerable strain among the Surrealists. By the 1940's, this conflict, along with the change in society brought about by renewed war, as well as a touch of artistic ennui, would lead to the dissolution of Surrealism as an organized movement.

Of Dreams and Their Importance

The Traditional Approach

In the beginning, our oldest myths and stories tell us, there were humans. And where there were

humans, there were dreams. In fact, it is quite plausible to think that many of those legends were early attempts to interpret dreams, since for as long as we can remember, we have tried to understand our dreams and find deeper meaning in them.



In most cultures, the traditional approach to dreams has been to attribute them to the supernatural or to a deity making contact for some reason. Some discrimination was used, of course; for example, dreams inspired by alcohol were considered mental babblings in some places, while in others the most prized dreams (or visions) were those connected to various drugs. Sometimes the significant dream might be a bit of advice on an individual's current situation, or a glimpse into the future of a whole tribe.

Since dreams were thought to be so important, and yet were so often disjointed and flooded with bizarre imagery, there was an understandable demand for people

Dalhousie Theatre Department Productions
presents

7 STORIES

a play by Morris Panych

Director.....Susan Stackhouse
Scenography by.....Peter Perina
Costume Designer.....D'Arcy Poultney
Lighting Designer.....Bruce MacLennan
Assistant Directors.....Mike McKeown, Aren Morris
Dramaturge.....Sarah Chaisson

CAST

Rodney, Michael.....Christopher Barry
Nurse Wilson, Four (Y).....Julie Clifford
Charlotte, One (X).....Susie Counsel
Man.....Zach Fraser
Joan.....Nadia Gandhi
Leonard.....Kevin Kincaid
Charlotte, One (Y).....Krista Laveck
Marshall, Al.....George MacKenzie
Rachel, Three (X).....Mary Mooney
Jennifer, Two (X).....Sherisse O'Leary
Nurse Wilson, Four (X).....Una Pape
Jennifer, Two (Y).....Leslie Seiler
Rachel, Three (X).....Jennifer Smith
Percy.....Beth VanGorder
Lillian.....Jeanne Webber
Police Megaphone.....Shane Monk

Cast X performance.....Oct. 11, 14, 16 (8pm) Oct. 13 (1pm)

Cast Y performance.....Oct. 12, 13, 15 (8pm) Oct. 16 (2pm)

Stage Manager.....Seana McCrodon

Assistant Stage Managers.....Melodie Daniels, Hayley Levitt

*This show will run one hour and thirty minutes. There will be no
intermission*

For This Production:

Construction Crew Chief	Illya Neilson
Construction Crew	Siren Kristoffersen, Jacob Dambergs Duane Dodge, Jonathan Lamey, Jennifer MacGregor
Lighting Crew Chief	Julie Spekkens
Lighting Crew	Sarah Allen, Kelly Baylis, Amanda Butler
Sound	Krista Blackwood
Props Crew Chief	Amanda Cheverie
Props Crew	Robin Cheesman, Tarek Abouamin, Beth Denny
Costume Dressers	Laura Anderson, Christine McCaffery, Niesge Vanec, Alyson Stapps, Rose Featherstone
Wardrobe Coordinators	Chloë Anderson, Amanda Bezanson, Leisa Bowmaster, Rebecca Burke, Dianne Cale, Barbara Cassidy, Kerri Ann Croft, Mary Crowe, Richard Daniel, Molly Doyle, Sara Driscoll, Bradley Gould, Joanne Greenstein, Nicole Johnson, Erica Kregling, Stephanie Lemelin, Charlotte MacCuish, Angela Mcinnis Sharelyn Meisner, Julie Nepjuk, Wendy Nowlan, Julie Smith, Katharine Young
House Manager	Deborah Preeper
Photographer	Kenneth Kam
Poster Design	Cynthia Henry
SPECIAL THANKS	Scotiabank, Scotia Tuxedo Inc., Jim Michieli (Make-up), Mail Boxes Etc. (Dartmouth Mall)

intelligible (children's dreams often fit this category);

- dreams that make sense and yet are bewildering (dreams which don't fit into our 'mental life');
- dreams which are disconnected, confused, and meaningless.

He said that the latter variety were the most common, and usually the ones which were likely to contain some significance. He believed that the reason we usually fail to remember our dreams is that they are a relaxing of the censorship that our minds place on themselves, which allows us to remember things we had repressed; however, when we wake up, the censorship is restored and we lose the things we had recovered, retaining only a few scraps to build on. Freud's psychoanalytic techniques were partially rooted in his theory of dreams, and he often helped his patients to recall theirs in order to help treat their problems.

Since Freud's day, many of his theories have been validated, many have been incorporated into the ever-changing body of modern psychology, and many have been discarded (although traces of them still appear in our everyday speech and colloquialisms). The people who study dreams today continue to make progress and changes to the existing thoughts about our dreams. Some are looking into lucid dreaming, others into astral

projection, still others into shared dreams. Whatever their conclusions (for there are as many conclusions as researchers), it is clear that what we dream is, in a very real sense, a key to what we really are . . . if we only knew for sure where to find the doors.

Sigmund Freud



Born in what is now the Czech Republic but grew up in Vienna. Always his mother's favourite, Sigmund's sister's piano was once sold when her lessons interfered with his studies. Sigmund's relationship to his father was much more cold and distant; he even came late to his father's funeral. One of many Jews who fled Germany in the 1930's, Freud smoked heavily throughout his entire life. Various surgeries for oral cancer left him with a speech impediment. Throat cancer eventually claimed his life in 1939.

Main Ideas

Levels of Consciousness

Conscious: consists of whatever we are thinking at any given moment.

Preconscious: just below the conscious level; includes readily available memories.

Unconscious: houses the thoughts, desires and impulses of which we are not aware; also includes suppressed memories.

Structures of Personality

Id: Source of our most basic urges for satisfaction (bodily, sexually, and emotionally). It wants immediate and total gratification of its needs without considering any consequences.

Ego: Considers the external consequences of our actions and directs our behaviour so as to maximize pleasure and minimize pain.

Superego: The "referee" between the Id and the Ego. It also incorporates the moral values we have learned from our parents.

The constant struggles between Id, Ego, and Superego on the different levels of consciousness are what makes us who we are.

Phases of Psychosexual Development

Oral (0-2 years): Pleasure is sought through the mouth (sucking, biting,

etc).

Anal (2-3 years): Development hinges on the intensity of toilet training.

Phallic (3-7 years): Genitals become the main source of attention.

Latency (7-11 years): Sexual urges are at a minimum.

Genital (11-adulthood): One learns to blend lust with affection.

Psychoanalysis

The word psychoanalysis refers to Freud's method of treatment and his theory of the mind.

Psychoanalysis emphasizes the role of the unconscious mind, early childhood experiences, and sexual and aggressive drives as they relate to personality development. One of the main strategies of psychoanalysis is free association which allows the patients to speak freely about themselves. In this way, Freud could uncover unconscious memories that may have been causing problems.

Freud soon recognized that patients did not feel immediately comfortable with this kind of therapy. They often showed resistance by refusing to talk about certain issues, by "forgetting" to show up for sessions, or by transferring their feelings of love, anger, and so forth, onto the therapist or some other person in their life.

Carl Gustav Jung



Born and raised in the small Swiss village of Kessewil. A loner as a child, Carl's parents sent him to boarding school in Basel, Switzerland. Carl developed a keen hatred for school; he would often fake sickness or fainting spells to get out of classes. Jung first met Freud in Vienna in 1907. The story goes that upon their first meeting, the two discussed their ideas on psychoanalysis for 13 hours straight! Seen as Freud's heir apparent, Jung would eventually deviate to follow his own theories in what has been described as a "bitter divorce."

Main Ideas

Collective Unconscious

Unconsciously, human beings possess the collective experiences of all human beings before them. Active in our dreams and fantasies,

the collective unconscious is woven into our biology.

Archetypes

Symbolic representations of key human experiences. These symbols, stemming from the collective unconscious, can be seen in the fables across many different cultures (symbols like Sun, Moon, Mother, Father, Child, Death).

Introverts/Extroverts

Jung's categories of human behaviour. Introverts are described as being shy, hesitant, and prefer to watch the world than actively participate. Extroverts are confident, outgoing and seek as much stimulation in as many ways as possible. Modern psychology still uses these terms today.

Astral Projection

The phrase "astral projection" was first used in 1875 by Madam Blavatsky who founded the Theosophical Society in New York. This society was based on the study of science as well as the study of eastern religions. According to the theosophists, man is not just a product of his body but a very complex creature consisting of many bodies more fine and more complex than the one prior. Like a swaddled man, as fabric is

removed, one gets closer and closer to the true being.

The theosophists believed in Seven Great Plains and seven corresponding bodies, or what they described as "vehicles" which enable us to reach the destination. The first of these seven is the physical body, considered to be the "vehicle of consciousness." The theosophists also believed that in the second plain (called the astral world) exact replicas of this vehicle exist that are their subtler and supersensitive representations.



The astral world consists of astral matter: the replicas of objects found on Earth as well as things which don't exist in everyday reality. As this place is fueled by the human imagination, it contains phenomena that are only comparable to what one finds in one's dreams. It is interesting to note the dead have been known to

appear to a person experiencing an astral projection.

Astral projection could best be described as leaving one's human or physical body and entering the world of illusion. It most often occurs in a near-sleep state: in fact, 85% of projections occur in bed. People have often described the sensation as an out-of-body experience. It is reported that small children in an abusive situation leave their physical bodies and watch the happenings safely from a distance. Astral projection is, therefore, thought to be a safe place for one's deeper being.

While skeptics believe that the cases reported should be described as "lucid dreams," that is, an imagination of the mind that occurs in a near-sleep state, believers suggest this is not so as most of them have experienced both and can differentiate between the two. It is possible that, by the help of quantum physics, astral projection will eventually be proven to be scientifically valid.

All astral projections are described as vivid and expressive. People are supposed to enjoy visiting the astral world, and projections are relatively easy to control. Astral projections are most easily experienced if we are in comfortable clothing and in a comfortable or meditative state. Positive thinking is also a crucial

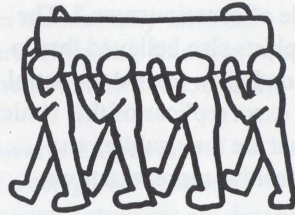
component to enjoying the astral world.

Life, Death, and Suicide

Death is the inevitable part of human existence. This ambiguous end lacks definition or explanation. It is the subject of many authors and artists, including Canadian playwright Morris Panych. His fascination with death can be uncovered in the dialogue of his characters. The presence of death has been a recurring theme in his plays, including *Last Call: A Post-Nuclear Cabaret*, *Vigil*, and *7 Stories*. In each play, Panych presents a dark comedy and his own vision of humanity.

Panych creates a morbidly funny portrayal of death and suicide in *7 Stories*. A man stands poised on the edge of a ledge, but his suicide is continually interrupted by the characters who live in the building. Every interruption confirms death as a casual fact of life: a common occurrence that appears as nothing more than routine. Panych carefully illustrates the cultural associations with death by representing several aspects of society. He includes a voice for religion, faith, the medical community, the elderly, and the insane. The characters display a genuine lack of concern for the man

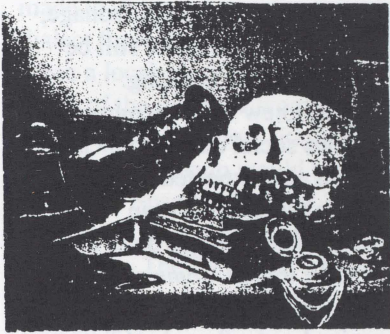
standing on the decisive edge of reality. Their indifference allows both life and death to be casually discussed in this surreal atmosphere.



The human act that defies explanation is suicide. This act is a willingness to end life, and Irina Paperno suggests that even the great philosopher, Socrates, committed suicide. Socrates, a student of Plato, was condemned to death by the Athenian state. He chose to drink the poison before the appointed hour, and this leads researchers to believe that he committed suicide because of his faith in immortality. Paperno also proposes that another voluntary death can be attributed to the death of Christ. His death may be considered a suicide because it was a willing act that also made him a martyr.

There are few cases in which suicide is considered to be socially acceptable. A martyr is revered for

their faith and such an act is considered to be heroic or pious. Suicide is considered to be a weakness by many. It is often assumed that only a victim of poverty, disease or failure committed suicide. It is possible that such an act is a means of escape for those who are simply tired of living.



Suicide is a solution to an unresolvable problem. It is an act of free will that is in direct defiance with destiny and fate. The decomposition of the family and society are often blamed, but there are no definitive answers. Panych offers the answers to many questions on death and suicide. He creates a society of individuals living in an age of atheism and indifference. He depicts this dark vision of society with an equal amount of sensitivity and humour.

Commedia Dell'arte

Commedia dell'arte was, in essence, a semi-improvisational form of theatre that flourished in what is now known as Italy from the mid-sixteenth to late eighteenth centuries. It was, at the time, the region's principal professional theatre, hence the name "*dell'arte*," which, roughly translated, means "of the profession," distinguishing it from *commedia erudita*, which was the domain of well to do amateurs. In addition to being professionally performed, *commedia dell'arte* separated itself from other dramatic forms of the Italian Renaissance by virtue of its unscripted plays. The lack of prewritten text did not, however, mean that the actors would march out on stage entirely unprepared; the troupe would have a predetermined synopsis (*scenario*) around which the action would be improvised – often posted backstage for quick reference. Each performer would also be armed with a character that he/she knew intimately, as well as that character's stock gags (*burla* and *lazzo*) and business. Finally, each actor would have had at his or her disposal a litany of memorized speeches in verse, each one available to be inserted as the action demanded.

The standard *dell'arte* troupe

consisted of between ten and fifteen actors, both male and female, all extensively trained in acrobatics, vocal mimicry and improvisation. Each actor would specialize in the portrayal of one character and, except for possibly replacing a young character with an older one as he aged, would play that one role his entire career. Among the company there would be at least one pair of young lovers, the male *inamorato* and the female *inamorata*. Standing in the lover's way would be the *inamorata's* overprotective father or husband, the lustful Pantalone. There would also be Capitano, the braggart soldier who was often a rival to Isabella's affection, and sometimes Pulcinella, the nasty, obese peasant. Rounding out the cast would be a number of female servants, often a widow to complicate intrigues, and always a number of *zanni*. Except for Colombina, who was female, the *zanni*, or clowns, were all low-status males.

All of these characters would have been quite familiar to their audiences. Since there was little variation in characterization from troupe to troupe, the actors could focus on the improvisation of action with little time spent on character development; they could count on audience members already recognizing the characters and knowing what to expect from them.

Usually, it was the costumes that allowed for immediate recognition. Except for the *inamorato*, males would identify themselves with character-specific costumes and half masks. The *zanni* Arlecchino, for example, would be immediately recognizable because of his black mask and patchwork costume. While the *inamorato* and the female characters wore neither masks nor costumes unique to that personage, certain information could still be derived from their clothing. Audiences knew what members of the various social classes typically wore, and also expected certain colours to represent certain emotional states. Regardless of where they toured, *commedia dell'arte* conventions were recognized and adhered to.



Commedia dell'arte gained much of its distinctive theatrical flavour from constant touring. Staging, for example, was

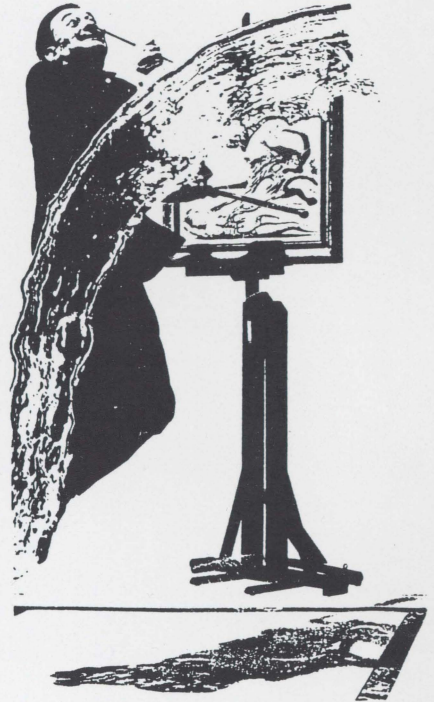
Buddha had 7 steps to salvation that took him 7 years of meditation, and the Buddhist paradise has 7 terraces

minimalistic – rarely anything more than one market or street scene – and the stages were frequently temporary outdoor structures. A question arises at this point: with the vast number of Italian dialects, how would a touring company make itself understood?

Apparently, there was no attempt made to change the performance's dialect from region to region. Even when a local company performed, much of the dialogue would not have been understood. Regardless of region, *Capitano* would have spoken in Spanish, *Dottore* in Bolognese, and *Arlecchino* in utter gibberish. The focus was placed on physical business rather than on spoken text.

Though by the beginning of the eighteenth century *commedia dell'arte* had started to decline, it did not die entirely. In Italy, Goldoni mounted scripted dramas in an attempt to recapture what was no longer possible through improvisation, while Gozzi attempted to revive the *dell'arte* tradition. Abroad, touring *dell'arte* troupes left their marks on local cultures. In England, *Pulcinella* became the puppet *Punch*, *Arlecchino* became *Harlequin*, and much of the acting style filtered into pantomime. In Germany, *Hanswurst*, true to the style of *dell'arte zanni*, was popular for

decades. In France, where Goldoni eventually relocated, elements of *commedia dell'arte* were gradually absorbed into mainstream theatrical tradition.



...and that that moment of crisis ...

...usually it was the ...

...While the ...

...through by the beginning of ...

...All of these characters ...

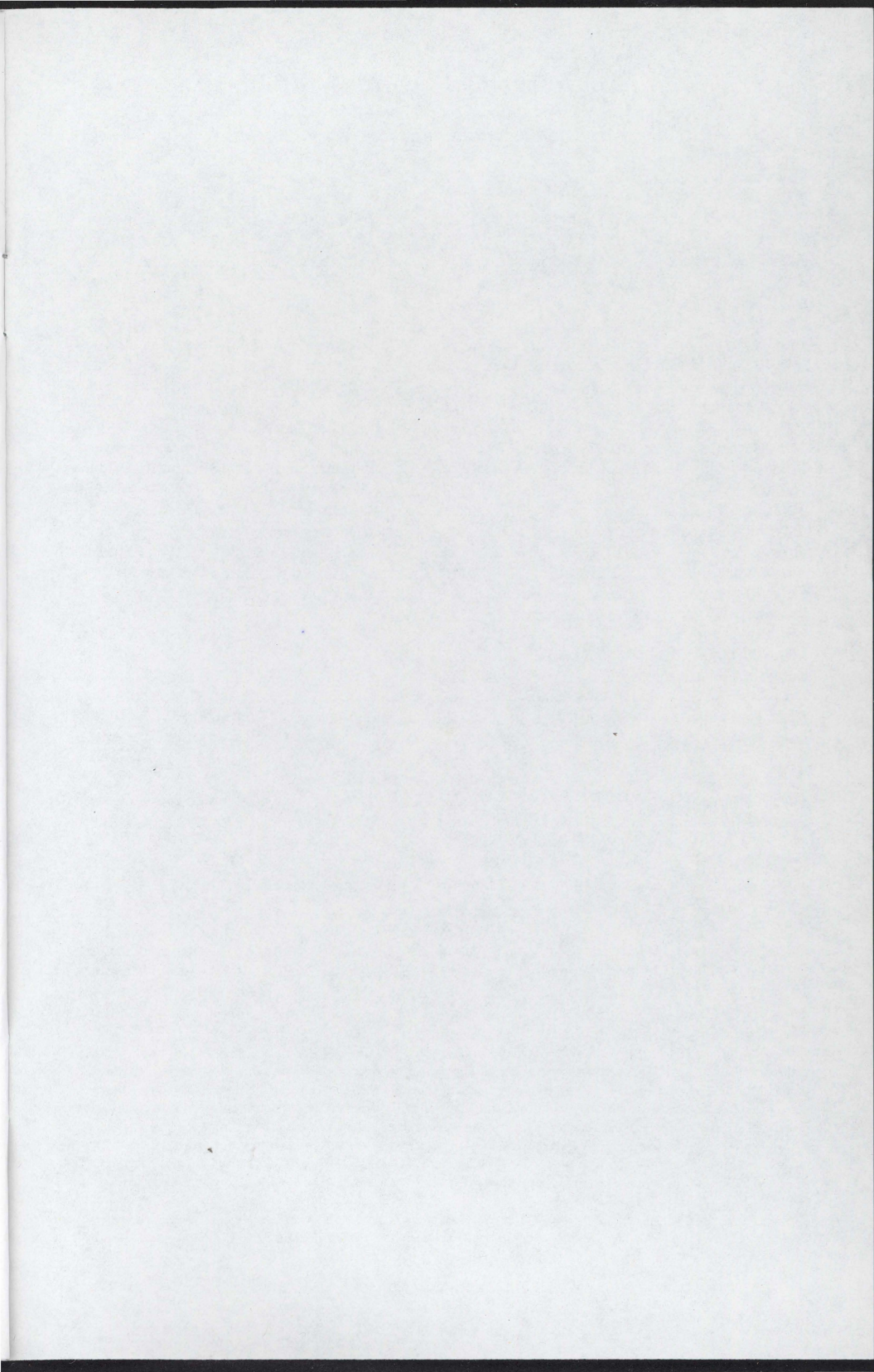
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Dalhousie University's Department of Theatre offers the largest and most comprehensive range of theatre programmes in the Maritime region. B.A. programmes are available that lead to degrees specializing in acting, technical scenography and theatre studies; diploma and advanced diploma programmes are offered in costume studies. Graduates of the department are successfully pursuing careers in all aspects of the professional theatre, including acting, scenography, costume design and creation, stage management, directing, playwriting, etc. and in related fields such as teaching, criticism and dramaturgy. The programme has established itself nationally and our graduates work in all the major theatre centres in Canada, as well as in the U.S. and Britain.

We wish you a rich and rewarding theatre experience, and welcome your comments and suggestions. For further information about the department and its programmes, please contact: **Peter Perina**, Acting Chair, Department of Theatre, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS B3H 3J5.