

ORLANDO

a voyage to a Disney World in multiple acts

February 1998

Act 1

An enlarged copy of the Orlando watch is visible on the stage prior to the show. Hour and minute hands indicate the start of the show.

On the show begin the stage is empty at first. Only a cardboard wall, behind which the robot is hiding, is visible. The speaker enters the stage from the right (seen from the front, Helper and Show master are behind the left wall), looks around, searching for something and walks over to a fake robot (Gila-bot) at the far left corner of the stage. He grabs a rag out of his back pocket and begins to clean the robot. He cleans methodically but with small breaks during which he inspects the robot, very much enamoured with his work.

Speaker: **There you are!** *(Walk towards the robot.)* **I have been looking for you.**

Speaker walks over to the fake robot and begins lovingly to clean it.

Speaker: **There is something about cleaning that gives me pleasure.** *(continues to clean.)* **It is really not a trivial task. You know what I mean.** *(continues to clean.)*

A mobile robot enters the stage from behind the wall and begins to dance. It hums the theme from "Brazil" and has a fancy yellow top hat (like a jester's crown) with blinking LEDs. The robot gets everyone's attention. It is really pulling off a show. The speaker seems surprised and angry.

Speaker: **What is that? Oh no... I can't believe this!** *(Grabs his head.)* **What is this robot doing here? It's NOT supposed to be here!**

The speaker goes to the back of the stage and argues with the helper behind the cardboard wall, but is visible, in profile, for the viewers. The robot is quiet now.

Speaker: **What is going on here? Why can't you just tie that ..., that** *(sarcastic)* **thing up??**

Helper: **It just took off! All of a sudden it started to roll on its own.** *(Helpless)* **I couldn't stop it...**

Speaker: **That is NOT supposed to happen. Machines,** *(condescending)* **you know, don't have a mind of their own.**

Helper: **I don't know. Maybe I hit the wrong button.**

Speaker: *(Loud.)* **The wrong button! Don't touch the buttons! The only button you should touch is the panic button.** *(Frustrated)* **Ahh!**

Helper: *(Slowly)* **That's right, the panic button.**

Speaker: *(Frustrated).* **What am I supposed to do now? Look at this mess!** *(Give the robot a cue, right side sonars.). (Pause.)* **What *am* I going to do now?**

The speaker begins to disassemble the hat (but gets nowhere). The helper shows her head from behind the cardboard wall and says:

Helper: **Tell them about the trip to Orlando, remember?**

Speaker walks towards the helper. Robot begins to move back to panel walls.

Speaker: **Which trip?**

Helper: **You know, *the* trip.**

Speaker: **You mean the vacation?**

Helper: **Yes, tell them *all* about the trip to Orlando.**

Robot starts humming "Brazil" again.

Speaker: *(Thinking.)* **O.K. Why not? Yes, that is a good idea.** *(Put rag back in pocket.)*

(Excited.)

Not too long ago I decided to take a small vacation. You know, just to get away from it all. I wanted some entertainment so I went down to Orlando, Florida *(robot is quiet again and begins to exit the stage.)* **and took this mobile robot with me. What better a place to go than Disney World. Rides, Shows, friendly people, just a fun place.**

(Loud.) **ORLANDO!** *(with a happy snap.)*

Speaker: **Hey, where is the robot?** *(Pause if necessary.)* **Wait for me!**

Speaker runs after the robot and exits the stage.

Act 2

The fake robot (Gila-bot) is pushed into the audience. The robot and the speaker are now in Orlando. In the front right corner of the stage there is an arrow sign that says “Disney World”, pointing to the left. The speaker, wearing a straw hat, and the robot, with a white top hat with a red cross, enter the stage.

Speaker: **Orlando! We made it. Sunshine and fun!**

A fake telephone and a fake TV are placed, well visible, on the stage, behind the speaker and the robot. The speaker takes his sunglasses off.

Speaker: **After we arrived in Orlando a strange thing happened. Against our best intentions, we got lost and landed not in Disney World, but in a small town just south of Orlando.**

The Disney World sign is removed.

Speaker: **It was a small town but had its own little museum. It called itself the “Museum of Contemporary Machine Musing”. (Pause.) Curious, we decided to have a look at the exhibits. (Sensor cue to initiate reverse movement.)**

*The robot moves to the back of the stage and begins to maneuver around the telephone. The robot says: **Telephone: Tell a phony story.** It says this phrase in various intonations and speeds, as if convincing itself. After a full circle the robot stops, facing the audience. The robot is playing sound effects of some sort of machinery.*

Speaker: **After Bell commercialized telephone technology instantaneous verbal communication became a reality for the common person.**

With the advent of television technology a next step in manipulating the idea of presence was reached. Harnessing visual data and making it visible had a great impact on people. Viewers could see and hear of events beyond their immediate experience. The illusion of participating in activities outside of one’s life became a cultural obsession.

*The robot moves over to the T.V set and begins to circle around it. The robot says: **TV: Tell a lie, sell a vision.** It says this phrase as before in various intonations as if to convince itself. After finishing the circle, the robot moves to the center front of the stage where the speaker is standing.*

The telephone and the TV are removed and the telepresent teleoperation is set up (wall, chair and table).

Speaker: **The most interesting exhibit in the “Museum of Contemporary Machine Musing “ was the telepresent teleoperation. It looked something like this:**

Speaker points to the back and turns to the side so he can see the audience and the props at the same time.

The Show master appears with grand gestures and introduces himself. Volunteer applauds madly.

Show master: **Welcome, welcome, welcome.**

This is the infamous telepresent teleoperation performance. I am your host for today and do I have some surprises for you! You are about to witness an experiment in telepresence unlike any other. Using highly alternative technologies one of you will bring the principle element of life, water, yes water, to a thirsty man’s lips. This Tele manipulation will demonstrate the power of a remotely performed operation.

Confused??

Just wait .. and see. (Looks around.)

To get started, all I need is a volunteer.

The speaker volunteers. The robot gets a sensor cue and begins to move towards the table behind the actors.

Show master: **Hello volunteer. How are you?**

Volunteer: **Fine.**

Show master: **Now, are you excited about this experiment?**

The volunteer keeps shaking, vigorously, and the show master tries to free his hand. They move to the front of the stage so the robot can align itself.

Volunteer: **Oh yes, very.**

Show master: **Have you ever participated in a telepresent teleoperation before?**

Volunteer: **Kind of.**

Show master: **Then lets get on with the show !**

The Show master begins to explain the setup. The robot starts to pace in front of the table..

Show master: **The goal of this telepresent teleoperation is to remotely, I repeat, remotely, make the source of all life available to a person in need. The tools you have available are this tele-broom (*The Helper brings in the props: broom, binoculars and tin cans*) and this tele-communicator (*cans*) by which you can remain in contact with me at all time during the performance (*volunteer: Wow, wireless*). Also, you have at your command this stereo-scope (*cheap plastic binoculars*). With this tele visual aid you can indirectly see the scene you are remotely manipulating. Are you ready?**

Volunteer: *(Enthusiastically)* **Yes!**

Show master: **Then step into the box and ready yourself.**

The Show master takes a seat on a high stool behind the table while the volunteer sits behind the wall and fiddles with the broom, binoculars and the tin can. The robot is pacing in front of the scene. Robot complains and mumbles.

Show master: **Testing 1, 2, 3, testing, over.**

Volunteer: **Testing 1, 2, 3, confirmed, over.**

Show master: **Roger, volunteer, you may begin, over.**

Volunteer: **Begin? But how? I do not know what to do. I am here and you are there, yet we are in contact. This is amazing.**

Show master: *(To the audience, as if the speaker could not hear it.)* **All novices are impressed at first.**
(Louder.) **I am here to help you. But please adhere to protocol and confirm with “roger” and end with “over”, over.**

Volunteer: **Roger, I am sorry, over.**

Show master: **That is OK. How do you feel, over?**

Volunteer: **I feel great, over.**

Show master: **Now try to use the tele broom and maneuver the glass towards me, over.**

The volunteer uses the broom and binoculars to move the glass across the table. The verbal exchange with the show master seems to happen via the tin can. The robot paces a little slower and sings “Its a small world after all”. The volunteer moans under the stressful excitement.

Show master: **More to the left, further , slow... over.**

Volunteer: **Wow, I am actually teleoperating, over.**

Show master: **Isn’t it amazing, Do you feel the power, over?**

Volunteer: **I feel the power. I have control, I am in charge, I am there, with you, yet here, in the box. Amazing, over!**

Show master: **I knew you would like it.** *(To the audience: Isn’t this fascinating?).*

Eventually the glass of water is close enough to the show master and within his reach.

Show master: **Just a little more. You are almost there, over.**

Volunteer: **I can not believe it, but it must be true, over.**

Show master: **I now have the source of life within my reach. With your consent I will take control and manipulate the vessel myself, over.**

Volunteer: *(Upset)* **Oh no. You mean I must give up my Telepresence? But you can’t do that! I just got started! You can not do that!**

Show master: **I am afraid so.**

Show master drinks the glass of water.

Show master: **Game over. Over and out.**

The show master slowly walks over to the volunteer. The speaker is all tied up in the dysfunctional tin can communicator.

Volunteer: **Oh no, I was having so much fun, over.** *(Pauses)* **Hello, over. Can you hear me, over. Over and roger, roger me over. Over there , where is Roger, over. OVER.** *(Annoyed)* **No, over! Over?** *(Shakes the tin can.)*

Show master walks over to the volunteer, who is scared as the show master appears behind him. The robot has slowed down its pacing movement and has just about stopped.

Volunteer: **So ... when may I teleoperate again, over?**

Show master: **We always teleoperate, my friend. Drop the “over”, now.**

The Show master disappears, walls and chairs are removed . Perplexed, the speaker stands rooted to the very spot the show master left him. He mumbles “over, over?” and exits the scene. The robot exits the scene through the curtain.

Act 3

The speaker and the robot appear on stage again. The speaker begins to clean the robot (wearing a short yellow hat) with the small broom again. Then he addresses the audience.

Speaker: **That, ladies and gentlemen, was our trip to Orlando. It really wasn't quite what I had expected. If you had more time, I would tell you more about it. Oh well, maybe some other day.**

Speaker turns around and is about to leave (gives robot a sensor cue again).

Robot: **Respect your power drill.**

Speaker: *(Smiles. Looks at the robot and then at the audience .)*
 The ultimate in telepresence is (pause) telepathy.

Speaker exits the stage. Robot waits, then begins to rotate:

Robot: **There is a chance of afternoon thunderstorms today, but for the evening, (pause, then begin turn around) expect mild weather.**

Robot exits the scene.

END

EnCoRe

All three actors enter stage through middle isle, then make room for the robot, who moves past them. Sales pitch for Orlando watch begins:

Speaker: **Of course, Orlando is not over. And neither is the telepresent performance. But you can be a part of it, too. For a limited time we are offering this Orlando-watch as a special offer. Here, look! So step right up and get your Orlando watch! This special offer will continue through out the evening so take advantage.**

Bow and exit stage. Robot turns around and exits.

