

**Charles Lamb**, from: *The Essays of Elia*, (1822)

... it is something to have seen *The School for Scandal* in its glory.... It is impossible that it should now be acted. Its hero, when [Jack] Palmer played it at least, was Joseph Surface. When I remember the gay boldness, the graceful-solemn plausibility, the measured step, the insinuating voice – to express it in a word, the downright *acted* villainy of the part, so different from the pressure of conscious actual wickedness, – the hypocritical assumption of hypocrisy, which made Jack so deservedly a favourite in that character, I must needs conclude the present generation of play-goers more virtuous than myself or more dense ...

A player with Jack's talents, if we had one now, would not dare to do the part in Jack's manner. He would instinctively avoid every turn which might tend to unrealize and so to make the character fascinating. He must take his cue from his spectators, who would expect a good man and a bad man as rigidly opposed to each other ...

Jack had two voices, -- both plausible, hypocritical, and insinuating; but his secondary or supplemental voice still more decisively histrionic than his common one. It was reserved for the spectator; and the dramatis personae were supposed to know nothing at all about it. The ... sentiments in Joseph Surface, were thus marked out in a sort of italics to the audience.

**Bertold Brecht**, from: *A New Organum for the Theatre* (1949)

The actor has to discard whatever means he has learned of getting the audience to identify itself with the character which he plays. Aiming not to put his audience into a trance, he must not go into a trance himself. His muscles must remain loose, for a turn of the head, e.g. with tautened neck muscles, will 'magically' lead the spectators' eyes and even their heads to turn with it, and this can only distract from any speculation or reaction which the gesture can bring about.

This principle – that the actor appears on the stage in a double role, as Laughton and as Galileo; that the showman Laughton does not disappear in the Galileo whom he is showing; from which this way of acting gets its name of 'epic' – comes to mean simply that the tangible matter-of-fact process is no longer hidden behind a veil; that Laughton is actually there, standing on the stage and showing us what he imagines Galileo to have been.

from: *THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL* (1777) **R B Sheridan**

*ACT IV SCENE II: the Apartments of Joseph Surface*

*Enter Joseph and a Servant.*

Joseph. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Servant. No, Sir.

Joseph. I wonder she did not write if she could not come – [**Aside**] I hope Sir Peter does not suspect me -- but Charles's dissipation and extravagance are great points in my favour (*Knocking at the door*) – See if it is her.

Servant. 'Tis Lady Teazle, Sir; but she always orders her chair to the milliner's in the next street.

Joseph. Then draw that screen – my opposite neighbour is a maiden lady of so curious a temper – you need not wait. (*Exit Servant.*) – (**Aside**) My Lady Teazle, I'm afraid begins to suspect my attachment to Maria; but she must not be acquainted with that secret till I have her more in my power.

*Enter Lady Teazle.*

Lady Teazle. What, sentiment in soliloquy! – Have you been very impatient now? Nay, you look so grave, – I assure you I came as soon as I could.

Joseph. Oh, Madam, punctuality is a species of constancy – a very unfashionable custom among ladies.

Lady Teazle. Nay, now you wrong me; I'm sure you'd pity me if you knew my situation --- (*both sit*) --- Sir Peter really grows so peevish, and so ill natured, there's no enduring him; and then, to suspect me with Charles.---

Joseph. (**Aside**) I'm glad my scandalous friends keep up that report.

Lady Teazle. For my part, I wish Sir Peter to let Maria marry him – Wou'dn't you Mr. Surface?

Joseph. (**Aside**) Indeed I would not – (**to her**) Oh, to be sure; and then my dear Lady Teazle would be convinced how groundless her suspicions were, of my having any thoughts of the silly girl.

Lady Teazle. Then, there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has propagated malicious stories about me – and what's very provoking, all too without the least foundation.

Joseph. Ah! there's the mischief; -- for when a scandalous story is believed against me, there's no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

from: **Congreve's Epistle Dedicatory** to *The Double Dealer* (1693)

I grant that for a man to talk to himself appears absurd and unnatural, and indeed it is so in most cases; but the circumstances which may attend the occasion make great alteration. It oftentimes happens to a man to have designs which require him to himself, and in their nature cannot admit of a confidant. Such for certain is all villainy, and other less mischievous intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a second person. In such a case, therefore, **the audience must observe whether the person upon the stage takes any notice of them at all or not. For if he supposes any one to be by when he talks to himself, it is monstrous and ridiculous to the last degree.** Nay, not only in this case, but in any part of a play, if there is expressed any knowledge of an audience, it is insufferable. But otherwise, when a man in soliloquy reasons with himself, and PRO'S and CON'S, and weighs all his designs, we ought not to imagine that this man either talks to us or to himself; he is only thinking, and thinking such matter as were inexcusable folly in him to speak. But because we are concealed spectators of the plot in agitation, and the poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole mystery of his contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this person's thoughts; and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of speech, no other better way being yet invented for the communication of thought.

from **Congreve's *The Double Dealer*** (first performed 1692)

MASKWELL: (solo) Why let me see, I have the same force, the same words and accents, when I speak what I do think, and when I speak what I do not think — the very same — and dear dissimulation is the only art not to be known from nature.

from **Wycherley's *The Country Wife*** (1675)

ALITHEA. Did he not carry you yesterday to a play?

MRS PINCHWIFE. Ay, but we sat amongst ugly people; he would not let me come near the gentry, who sat under us, so that I could not see 'em. He told me none but naughty women sat there, whom they toused and moused. But I would have ventured for all that.

ALITHEA. But how did you like the play?

MRS PINCHWIFE. Indeed, I was a-weary of the play, but I liked hugely the actors; they are the goodliest, properest men, sister!

ALITHEA. Oh, but you must not like the actors, sister.

MRS PINCHWIFE. Ay, how should I help it, sister?

**Epilogue to *Tyrannic Love*** By John **Dryden** (premiered 1669, published 1670)

Spoken by the actress Nell Gwyn, who played Valeria, daughter of the Emperor but then a Christian martyr:

[*To the Bearer.*] Hold, are you mad? you damn'd confounded Dog,  
I am to rise, and speak the Epilogue.

[*To the Audience.*] I come, kind Gentlemen, strange news to tell ye  
I am the Ghost of poor departed Nelly.

Sweet Ladies, be not frighted, I'll be civil,  
I'm what I was, a little harmless Devil.

For after death, we Sprights, have just such Natures,  
We had for all the World, when humane Creatures;

And therefore I that was an Actress here,  
Play all my Tricks in Hell, a Goblin there.

Gallants, look to't, you say there are no Sprights;  
But I'll come dance about your Beds at nights.

And faith you'll be in a sweet kind of taking,  
When I surprise you between sleep and waking.

To tell you true, I walk because I dye  
Out of my Calling in a Tragedy.

O Poet, damn'd dull Poet, who could prove  
So senseless! to make Nelly dye for Love,

Nay, what's yet worse, to kill me in the prime  
Of Easter-Term, in Tart and Cheese-cake time!

I'll fit the Fopp; for I'll not one word say  
T'excuse his godly out of fashion Play.

A Play which if you dare but twice sit out,  
You'll all be slander'd, and be thought devout.

But, farwel Gentlemen, make haste to me,  
I'm sure e're long to have your company.

As for my Epitaph when I am gone,  
I'll trust no Poet, but will write my own.

Here Nelly lies, who, though she liv'd a Slater'n,  
Yet dy'd a Princess acting in S. Cathar'n.

from: the final sequence of *The Beggar's Opera*, John Gay (1728)

MACHEATH. O leave me to Thought! I fear! I doubt! I tremble! I droop! -- See, my Courage is out. [*Turns up the empty Bottle.*]

POLLY. --Adieu.

LUCY. --Farewell.

MACHEATH. But hark! I hear the Toll of the Bell.

CHORUS. Tol de rol lol, &c.

JAILOR. Four Women more, Captain, with a Child apiece! See, here they come. [*Enter Women and Children.*]

MACHEATH. What--four Wives more!--This is too much--Here--tell the Sheriff's Officers I am ready. [*Exit Macheath guarded.*]

[*To them, Enter Player and Beggar.*]

PLAYER. But, honest Friend, I hope you don't intend that Macheath shall be really executed.

BEGGAR. Most certainly, Sir.--To make the Piece perfect, I was for doing strict poetical Justice. -- Macheath is to be hang'd; and for the other Personages of the Drama, the Audience must have suppos'd they were all either hang'd or transported.

PLAYER. Why then, Friend, this is a downright deep Tragedy. The Catastrophe is manifestly wrong, for an Opera must end happily.

BEGGAR. Your Objection, Sir, is very just, and is easily remov'd. For you must allow, that in this kind of Drama, 'tis no matter how absurdly things are brought about -- So -- you Rabble there -- run and cry, A Reprieve! -- let the Prisoner be brought back to his Wives in Triumph.

PLAYER. All this we must do, to comply with the Taste of the Town.

BEGGAR. Through the whole Piece you may observe such a Similitude of Manners in high and low Life, that it is difficult to determine whether (in the fashionable Vices) the fine Gentlemen imitate the Gentlemen of the Road, or the Gentlemen of the Road the fine Gentlemen. -- Had the Play remained, as I at first intended, it would have carried a most excellent Moral. 'Twould have

shewn that the lower Sort of People have their Vices in a degree as well as the Rich: And that they are punish'd for them.

[*To them, Macheath with Rabble, &c.*]

MACHEATH. So, it seems, I am not left to my Choice, but must have a Wife at last. -- Look ye, my Dears, we will have no Controversy now. Let us give this Day to Mirth, and I am sure she who thinks herself my Wife will testify her Joy by a Dance.

ALL. Come, a Dance -- a Dance.

MACHEATH. Ladies, I hope you will give me leave to present a Partner to each of you. And (if I may without Offence) for this time, I take Polly for mine.--And for Life, you Slut, -- for we were really marry'd. -- As for the rest. -- But at present keep your own Secret. [*To Polly.*]

[A DANCE.] AIR LXVIII. Lumps of Pudding, &c.

MACHEATH. Thus I stand like the Turk, with his Doxies around;  
From all Sides their Glances his Passion confound;  
For Black, Brown, and Fair, his Inconstancy burns,  
And the different Beauties subdue him by turns:  
Each calls forth her Charms to provoke his Desires:  
Though willing to all, with but one he retires.  
But think of this Maxim, and put off your Sorrow,  
The Wretch of To-day, may be happy To-morrow.

CHORUS. But think of this Maxim, &c.

**KITTY CLIVE** (1711-1785)

A leading actress of the mid-eighteen-century, she was born Catherine Raftor, daughter of an impecunious Irishman who had settled in London after a stretch as an officer in the French army. She was working as a servant when she was discovered, singing while she cleaned household steps, and by 1728 she was a member of the theatre company managed by Colley Cibber at Drury Lane. In the early 1730s she was married briefly to a barrister by the name of George Clive, and she retained his name when they separated by mutual consent.

Among her friends was the composer Handel, and she sang and acted the role of Dalila which he wrote for her in his *Samson* (1743). She herself was literate and creative: as well as writing several farces, in 1744 she wrote *The Case of Mrs Clive*, a pamphlet in which she argued for the theatre managers to pay actors and actresses better, and argued against the public tendency to regard theatre performers as beggars, prostitutes and ne'er-do-wells.

She wrote *The Rehearsal* for her 'benefit' in 1750, and added a preface when it came to be published in 1753. The actor-manager David Garrick held her in high esteem, and she was one of the founding members of the theatre company that he established at Drury Lane.

Kitty Clive retired from the stage in 1769, to live in a villa at Twickenham that had been given to her by her friend Horace Walpole. Contemporary biographers report she spent much of her earnings on supporting her father and his family.

from *The Rehearsal* (1750), by Kitty Clive

[The central figure in this piece is Mrs Hazard, a would-be playwright viewed satirically by her household and acquaintance, and played by Mrs Clive.]

Witling. Pray how many Characters have you in this thing?

Mrs. Hazard . Why I have but three; for as I was observing, there's so few of them that can sing: nay I have but two indeed that are rational, for I have made one of them mad.

Witling. And who is to act that, pray?

Mrs. Hazard . Why Mrs. Clive to be sure; tho I wish she don't spoil it; for she's so conceited, and insolent, that she won't let me teach it her. You must know when I told her I had a Part for her in a Performance of mine, in the prettiest manner I was able, (for one must be civil to these sort of People when one wants them) says she, Indeed, Madam, I must see the whole Piece, for I shall take no Part in a new thing, without chusing that which I think I can act best. I have been a great Sufferer already, by the Manager's not doing Justice to my Genius; but I hope I shall next Year convince the Town, what fine Judgment they have: for I intend to play a capital Tragedy Part for my own Benefit.

Witling. And what did you say to her, pray?

Mrs. Hazard . Say to her! why do you think I wou'd venture to expostulate with her?---No, I desir'd Mr. Garrick wou'd take her in hand; so he order'd her the Part of the Mad-woman directly.

Witling. Well, I think the Town will be vastly oblig'd to you, for giving them such an Entertainment, as I am told it is from every body that has heard it ...

from *A PEEP BEHIND THE CURTAIN* (1767) by David Garrick

[This play of Garrick's is itself largely set in the theatre, supposedly empty because it's supposedly morning. Various theatre personnel appear, all complaining,, from the cleaning ladies to the stage carpenter, who is discommoded because his stage waterfall has been set on fire. To watch the first rehearsal of the first act of a new burletta come Mrs Fuz with her husband, her daughter, and their friend Sir Macaroni, soon to be followed by a young man bent on abducting the Fez daughter by pretending to be an actor. Sir Toby and Lady Fuz themselves have an interest in theatrical activities. The role of Lady Fuz was written for Kitty Clive.]

Lady FUZ. Pray don't you adore Shakespear, Sir Mac ?

Sir MACARONI. Shakespear! (*yawning.*)

Lady FUZ. Sir Toby and I are absolute worshippers of him ---we very often act some of his best tragedy scenes to divert ourselves.

Sir MACARONI. And it must be very diverting, I dare swear.

Sir TOBY. What more family secrets! for shame, Lady Fuz ---

Lady FUZ. You need not be ashamed of your talents, my dear---I will venture to say you are the best Romeo that ever appeared.

Sir TOBY. Pooh, pooh!

Sir MACARONI. I have not the least doubt of Sir Toby's genius --- But don't your Ladyship think he rather carries too much flesh for the Lover---Does your Ladyship incline to tragedy too?

Lady FUZ. I have my feelings, Sir -- and if Sir Toby will favour you with two or three speeches, I will stand up for Juliet.

Sir TOBY. I vow, Lady Fuz, you distress me beyond measure --- I never have any voice till the evening

Miss FUZ. Never mind being a little husky, Papa---do tear your wig, throw yourself upon the ground, and poison yourself.

Sir MACARONI. This is a glorious scene, faith. (*aside.*) Sir Toby looks as if he were susceptible of the tender passions.

Lady FUZ. Too much so, indeed; he is too amiable not to be a little faithless---he has been a great Libertine --have not you, Sir Toby? have you not wrong'd me?-- Come, give me a pinch of your snuff -- [*Takes snuff out of his box.*]

Sir TOBY. Forget and forgive, my dear,-- if my constitution err'd, my affections never did -- I have told you so a thousand times.

Sir MACARONI. A wonderful couple, upon my soul!-- (*aside.*)

Enter AUTHOR .

AUTHOR. Ladies, you can't possibly have any thunder and lightning this morning; one of the planks of the Thunder-Trunk started the other night, and had not Jupiter stepp'd aside to drink a pot of porter, he had been knock'd o'the head with his own thunder-bolt.

Lady FUZ. Well, let us go into the Green Room then, and see the actors and actresses -- Is Clive there? -- I should be glad of all things to see that woman off the stage.

AUTHOR. She never attends here, but when she is wanted.

Lady FUZ. Bless me! If I was an actress, I should never be a moment out of the Play-house.

Sir MACARONI. And if I had my will, I would never be a moment, in it.

Lady FUZ. I wish I could have seen Clive! I think her a droll creature---nobody has half so good an opinion of her as I have.

from: *The Century*, ALAIN BADIOU (2005)

[This the opening paragraph to Badiou's chapter four, which has the title "The passion for the real and the montage of semblance."]

What is this distancing that Brecht turned into a maxim for the actor's performance? **It is the display – within the play – of the gap between the play and the real.** More profoundly, it is a technique that dismantles the intimate and necessary links joining the real to semblance, links resulting from the fact that semblance is the true situating principle of the real, that which localizes and renders visible the brutal effects of the real's contingency.

From the final sequence of *The Critic*, R B Sheridan, (1779)

PUFF ... and so to my catastrophe — my sea-fight, I mean.

SNEER What, you bring that in at last?

PUFF Yes — yes — you know my play is *called* the *Spanish Armada*, otherwise, egad, I have no occasion for the battle at all. — Now then for my magnificence! — my battle! — my noise! — and my procession! — [*calls out*] You are all ready?

PROMPTER (*within*) Yes, Sir.

PUFF Is the Thames dressed?

*Enter THAMES with two attendants*

THAMES Here I am, Sir.

PUFF Very well indeed — See, gentlemen, there's a river for you! This is blending a little of the masque with my tragedy — a new fancy you know — and very useful in my case; for as there *must be* a

*procession*, I suppose Thames and all his tributary rivers to compliment Britannia with a fete in honour of the victory.

SNEER But pray, who are these gentlemen in green with him?

PUFF Those? — those are his banks.

SNEER His banks?

PUFF Yes, one crowned with alders and the other with a villa! — you take the allusions? — but hey! what the plague! you have got both your banks on one side — Here Sir, come round — Ever while you live, Thames, go between your banks. (*bell rings*) There, so! now for't! — Stand aside my dear friends'. — away Thames!

*Exit THAMES between his banks*

***Flourish of drums — trumpets — cannon, &c.&c. Scene changes to the sea — the fleets engage — the music plays 'Britons strike home'. — Spanish fleet destroyed by fire-ships, &c. — English fleet advances — music plays 'Rule Britannia'. — The procession of all the English rivers and their tributaries with their emblems, &c. begins with Handel's Water Music — ends with a chorus, to the march in Judas Maccabaeus. — During this scene, PUFF directs and applauds everything -- then***

PUFF Well, pretty well-but not quite perfect -- so ladies and gentlemen, if you please, we'll rehearse this piece again tomorrow .

*Curtain drops*