

Letter to the Actors

Valère Novarina

I write with my ears. For pneumatic actors. In ancient Arabic manuscripts the periods are marked by respiratory suns . . . To breathe, to lung! To lung doesn't mean to displace air, to bellow, to become inflated; but quite to the contrary, to have a true respiratory economy, to use all the air that you take in, to consume it all before breathing in again, to become breathless, till the constriction of the period's final asphyxiation, the sentence's period like the gut clenched after the race.

Mouth, anus. Sphincters. Round muscles closing our holes. The opening and the closing of the word. Attack cleanly (teeth, lips, muscled mouth) and finish cleanly (cut off the air). Stop cleanly. Chew and eat the text. A blind spectator should be able to hear it crunched and swallowed, to ask himself what is being eaten over there, onstage. What are they eating? They're eating themselves? Chewing or swallowing. Mastication, sucking, swallowing. Pieces of the text must be bitten off, viciously attacked by the female eaters (lips, teeth); other pieces must be quickly gulped down, swallowed, gobbled up, breathed in, guzzled. Eat, gulp, eat, chew, dry lung, chew, masticate, cannibal! Oh, oh! . . . Much of the text must be cast out in one breath, using it up entirely, without breathing in. Expend everything. Don't keep anything in reserve, don't be scared to get winded. It seems that you find the rhythm, the different respirations, by casting yourself out, in free fall. Don't cut everything up, don't cut everything into intelligible slices, into intelligible slices, as normal French diction would have us do today, since the actor's work consists of cutting up the text like a salami, underlining certain words, loading them up with intentions. In short, such work entails recasting those academic lessons about the segmentation of words, about sentences cut up into subject-verb-compliment, where the game consists in finding the important word or in underlining part of the sentence to prove that you're a good, intelligent student. Whereas, whereas, whereas words actually form something more like a tube of air, a pipe with sphincters, a column with irregular openings, spasms, sluices, cut off flows, leaks, pressures.

What constitutes the heart of this matter? Is it the heart that pumps, that causes all this to circulate? The heart of all this resides in the abdominal depths, in the abdominal muscles. The abdominal muscles, pressing upon the bowels or the lungs, help us to defecate, and to accentuate speech. You must not be clever, but rather put your abdomen, teeth and jaws to work.

In *L'atelier volant*, Boucot = Bercot = Beaucoup = Bouche [Boucot = Bercot = Much = Mouth]. From that moment on, everything was contaminated by Bouche and became a sickness: Bouche, Bec, Bouc, Bucco (Italian hole) [Mouth, beak, goat, hole]. Boucot-buccal, the lips, the teeth. Words wickedly consonant, swallowed. Boucot, great swallower of the text, great eater of words, great ogre. Chewer, biter, wicked consonants. Virtuosity of the mouth, virtuosity of those two mouths: Boucot and Madame. Articulatory cruelty, linguistic carnage. Their oratorical art (harangues, orations, songs, counting rhymes, sermons, proverbs). Boucot the manipulator: rapidity of feet, legs, exactitude, sleight-of-hand, vocal prestidigitation. Boucot hard-deflated, hard windbag, soft bludgeon, erection-softening, to simultaneously be breathless and harden the articulation, to simultaneously become erect and become soft, Boucot never at rest, Boucot in Hell, Boucot-goat-Satan, always gripped by time's anguish, by capital, by the grains that slip by in the hourglass. Go ever faster, improvise, connect more quickly, struggle speedily against his pierced bag. Boucot the orator, the breathless rhetorician always rhetorizing more rapidly, seeking his third, fifth, ninth breath. Boucot the worn out orator, twaddling, speaking all alone: changes of rhythm, argumentative outbursts, suppressed arguments, collapses, outbursts—all this accomplished with the fear of losing, of getting thinner, of leaking, ceaselessly amplified. (Boucot, pierced, plugs up his leaks, Boucot leaks all over, and wants to plug up everything with his mouth). His great fear of the anus ("What's that?") obtains because that's where we come out. Boucot sans anus, Boucot bottomless hole, ceaselessly tightening his buccal sphincter, consonating hard, articulating, attacking with his muscled mouth; Boucot ceaselessly pierced, everywhere perforated, wanting to retain everything with his mouth alone, wickedly attacking the word. Boucot's terrible fear of death, so great that he's without joy. Except for the speech, evil and endlessly empty, which he discharges during his rare tranquil moments, that is to say when everybody sleeps (sommnambulist scene, finale of the language scene, songs). Boucot never sleeps, Boucot never dies. The cruel movements of his tongue, lips, teeth, the hard muscular work of the mouth-boucot, the movements of lips upon teeth, without moving the jaws, without agitating the body. There are moments when Boucot exists entirely in his mouth, a wicked articulation, biting, swallowing. Boucot suffers greatly. Labial dentition. Boucot never thought of death, never thought of his anus. Those are two things he greatly fears. That's perhaps the gist of the matter . . .

Facing him are the Employees, suicidal, joyful. They have no fear whatsoever of dying, they desire only that. They know what the anus is, they know only that. And they learn to speak with, they begin to speak with . . . Under electroshock they are, they receive the discharges. It's something which comes from without, which makes them change rhythm, thought. Pulsive. It urges them on. Something that comes from elsewhere urges them on. Discharges, zigzagged words fulgurating from without, they're urged on by the electricity they receive. They develop nothing, possess neither tale nor discourse, have nothing to say; they recount nothing, but are always urged on by language. The change of rhythm, of delivery, precedes meaning (while for Boucot the change, the rupture, stems from rhetorical erosion, from an end felt to be just at hand). They are always bent forward, their words are ahead of their bodies or their bodies ahead of their words, as you wish. The employees don't have their own bodies, their own breath, their own speech (while Boucot's body is worn out, one which will disappear while speaking). For the employees, it speaks else-

from *Lettres aux acteurs*

Valère Novarina

Dans *L'Atelier volant*, Boucot = Bercot = Beaucoup = Bouche. Tout a été contaminé par Bouche dès ce moment et c'est devenu une maladie: Bouche, Bec, Bouc, Bucco (trou italien). Boucot-buccal, les lèvres, les dents. Paroles méchamment consonnées, dégluties. Boucot, grand avaleur de texte, grand mangeur de mots, grand ogre. Mâcher, mordre, les consonnes méchantes. Virtuosité de la bouche, virtuosité de ces deux bouches: Boucot et Madame. Cruauté articulatoire, carnage langagier. Leur art oratoire (harangues, oraisons, chansons, comptines, sermons, proverbes). Boucot manipulateur: rapidité des pieds, des jambes, exactitude, tour de passe-passe, prestidigitation vocale. Boucot dur-dégonflé, dure baudruche, molle matraque, bande-débande, s'essouffle et durcit l'articulation à la fois, bande-débande à la fois, Boucot jamais au repos, Boucot aux enfers, Boucot-bouc-Satan, pris toujours par l'angoisse du temps, des capitaux, du grain qui fuit, du sablier. Toujours aller plus vite, improviser, enchaîner plus vite, lutter de vitesse contre son sac percé. Boucot orateur, rhéteur essoufflé rhétoriquant toujours plus vite, cherchant son troisième, cinquième, neuvième souffle. Boucot orateur à bout, radote, parle tout seul: changements de rythme, sursauts d'arguments, arguments sautés, effondrements, sursauts, tout ceci avec, sans cesse s'amplifiant, une peur de perdre, de maigrir, d'avoir des fuites (Boucot percé bouche ses fuites, Boucot fuit de partout, veut tout boucher de sa bouche). Sa grande peur de l'anus ("Qu'est-ce que c'est?"), parce que c'est par là que ça s'en va. Boucot sans anus, Boucot trou sans fond, serrant sans cesse son sphincter buccal, consonnant dur, articulant, attaquant de sa bouche musclée; Boucot sans cesse percé, troué partout, voulant tout retenir de sa seule bouche durcie attaquant méchamment la parole. Folle peur de la mort chez Boucot, pour ça qu'il jouit pas. Sauf de la parole méchante à vide qu'il déverse, dans les quelques moments de tranquillité qu'il a, c'est-à-dire quand tout le monde dort (scène due somnambule, finale de la scène de la langue, chansons). Boucot dort jamais, Boucot meurt jamais. Cruauté de ses mouvements de langue, de lèvres, de dents, dur travail des muscles de la bouche-boucot, mouvements des lèvres sur les dents, sans que ça bouge la mâchoire, sans que ça agite le corps. Il y a des moments où tout Boucot n'est que dans la bouche, l'articulation méchante, la morsure, déglutition. Boucot souffre beaucoup. Dentition labiale. Boucot n'a jamais pensé à la mort, il n'a jamais pensé à son anus. C'est deux choses dont il a très peur. C'est p't'être bien là qu'est l'fond d'l'affaire . . .

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where, it comes from elsewhere, from without. For Boucot, nothing ever comes except from within. Boucot speaks. It speaks in his employees. It comes out of their mouths, but it isn't their mouths which speak, because they have no mouths. It is always Boucot whose speech is empowered. They have their mouths *somewhere*, while Boucot has, as *somewhere*, only his mouth. The employees have no mouths. Endless holes they too, but in the other sense; inverted; anus without mouth, mouth without anus. None of the "characters" of *L'Atelier volant* [The Flying Studio] possess these two organs, simultaneously necessary. Oh, oh! Employee abdomen, erect nails, they speak from the abdomen, from the inner muscles. Boucot's buccal muscles, the employees' inner muscles. The employees ventriloquize, in front of Boucot the articulator. Their words arise from below, thrust forth by their inner muscles. What speaks within them? Reminiscences, bits of false infancy, fits, revolt, finagling, zigzag of hearts, impetus of false memories (a thousand lives), puffs of false reasoning, and especially, especially, especially swoons, syncopes, free falls, blanks everywhere, blanks in speech. Cyclothymia, suicide, electroshock. They always faint, they always die. Boucot is always awake, and never dies. Suicidal employees. Intense happiness, falling in the void. Joy (free fall) of the employees before a restless Boucot held in the grips of a power to be forever conserved (a useless expenditure to fill in the holes).

The theatre is a rich dung heap.

Madame Boucot. A lapsus of the employer. Flight of Boucot, Boucot in flight, mad Boucot. A burst of steam, a siren. Her vapors, her siren's song. Aerophagia, music. Anarchist, foresightful, somnambulist, seer, ghost, passerby, sleeper, clairvoyant, drunk, strolling. The sincere tears that she sheds, all the while inciting crime. Madame Boucot the whistler, cradle-rocker, hisser, infanticide mother, under hypnosis, hypnotized and hypnotizing, possessed, bent over, in tears bleeding the child. She keeps the books, sings counting rhymes, tells tales in a foreign tongue. Madame Bouche [Madame Mouth]. A huge voice that comes and goes, oscillating widely between far and near, in hypnotic motion; a voice difficult to situate in space, whose source can never be known, whose body can never be found. Boucot manipulates, Madame Boucot crosses the stage. Ageless. Witch. Everywhere. Invisible. Vocal, buccal, armed. The coldness of her teeth, of her dentures, her sweetness. Buccal, like Boucot, but with much more articulatory madness, with a singular manner of finishing her sentences harshly, with missing vowels. She vocalizes her consonants, she articulates her vowels. Note that in writing this piece, at the point where the employees speak very little, the passages ascribed to Madame Boucot permit the emptying out of an overfull language, permit us to breath, to hear something else that wanted to speak. Madame Boucot's partition. She was never thought of as a "character," but rather as something that masks, breaks, pierces, as a blank, a syncope, an expiration, overfull. Vacillating, under hypnosis, an accomplice, she distractedly passes the props to Boucot the manipulator. Flight. Lapsus. Madame Mouth. We don't know what it is. The only nearly complete body over there, inside? No? A part of Boucot's body? Or what? It's the vagina, huh? That would do it, we would have our three holes, we would have seen it all! "I really don't know, Madame, since it's a hole that I don't have." What!?

Now that we've listed (mouth, anus, vagina) the three openings, mouthpieces, what was that done with, huh? Because the distribution of voices, the choice of "characters" in this dramatic writing, is also (and especially) presented as a choice of mouthpieces placed over a canal of breathed air which ceaselessly escapes.

This *Atelier volant* flies low, I must say . . . Because it wasn't only a perspicacious summary of the world factory, but also a descent into the inner factory . . . All this really isn't seen from the outside, not only for the reason that he who held the pencil never set foot in a single factory, and not only because no visit can truly permit us to discover oppression, but especially because he simply wanted to enter a bit into his own body. Be brave! Good. Also, though *L'Atelier volant* dismantles the social mechanism a little, it especially reveals its ills. The actor's ills. Let's go, let's go, let's bare our asses before those stupid healthy ones! "I'll show it to them as I die." It's frightening, it's suicide to act like that; I'm dying of laughter! My pleasure (you artists must always try to say what pleases you, huh!?) is not found at all in the actor attempting to send those old imposed lines back to me, but is rather a matter of seeing the long corked up alcohol have, more and more often, spectacular effects on him; to see the old text completely burnt up, completely destroyed by the dance of the actor bearing his entire body before him.

The theatre is a rich dung heap. All those directors who stage a play, those devilish pitchforkers cover the profoundest levels with the most superficial ones, the bric-à-brac of a theatricule of the accumulated crust of old representations of postures of old men—enough!—glosses upon glosses—quickly!—long live the end of this theatre which doesn't cease examining its bellybutton and stuffing our sound-holes, ears and ear flaps full of glosses upon glosses, instead of generously offering up the ears' pavillions to the immense mass of everything that is said and accentuated today, that stretches the meanings of the old imposed language in every direction, in the stunning uproar of new languages that jostle the old one, which wavers as much as can be!

It's the actor who will cause everything to change. Because this impulse always comes to he who is most restrained. And what he propels, what propels him, is the tongue we shall finally see reemerge from the orifice. The actor's center is his orifice, and he knows it. He still cannot say this because in the theatre today speech is granted only to directors and journalists, and because the public is politely asked to hang up its body in the cloakroom, and the well-disciplined actor is gently asked not to throw the play, not to disturb the chic unfolding of the meal, the pretty exchange of conniving signs between the director and the newspapers (they exchange reciprocal cultural signals).

The director wants the actor to scratch himself just as he does, to imitate his body. This creates "group acting" and the "style of the troupe"; this is to say that everybody attempts to imitate the one body which does not show itself at all. What infatuates the journalists is to see everywhere the composite-sketch of the director who dares not appear onstage. As for me, I want to see each and every body show me the particular illness which will bear it away.

Any theatre, every theatre, always acts quite strongly upon the brain, whether to unsettle or to perpetuate the dominant system. I want my perceptions to be changed. Must urge on the end of the syst'. Must urge on! It's most urgent that we put an end to this, that we commence the demise of the still extant reproductive system.

What does this mean? It means, Madame, that those who dominate always find it advantageous to make matter disappear, to suppress the body, the support, the place from which it speaks, to make us believe that words fall into our heads from the heavens, that it is thoughts which are expressed, and not bodies. In order for us to absorb everything inside, without saying anything, without the tongue, without the teeth. They work night and day with immense teams and enormous financial means: a cleansing of the body in sound recording, a toilet of the voice, filtering, tapes edited and carefully purified of all laughs, farts, hiccoughs, salivations, respirations, of all the slag that marks the animal, material nature of the words that come from the human body; a practically total ellipsis between the feet and the TV, makeup applied to the skin of heads-of-state, the translation (i.e., the mauling) of the spoken word into the written one, the order given the actor to hide his native accent and acquire the standard one. The dominators spend a great part of their time assuring that man is properly reproduced, in order to deaden the body's racket, where it arises, what will overthrow it.

The public is enthused by Economy. That is to say, by the manner in which the actor expends himself during the spectacle. The actor doubles, triples, quadruples the normal heartbeat, the normal blood circulation. He dies young. Music! Music! . . .

The spectator comes to see the actor's execution. This useless expenditure thrills the spectator, expedites the blood circulation, penetrates the old circuits anew. A spectacle is not a book, a painting or a discourse, but rather a duration, a harsh trial of the senses. This is to say that the racket endures, that it is tiring, that it's hard on our bodies. The spectator must exit exhausted, shaking with an inextinguishable, stunning, and uncontrollable laughter.

The actor is not at the center; he is the only place where it happens, and that's all. It happens within him, and that's all. Provided that we cease taking his body for an intelligent telegraph, transmitting chic signals from the daily droning glosses, from a cultivated brain to a policed brain. Provided that he works his body at its center. Who is found *somewhere*. In the comical. In the abdominal muscles. In the emphasizeers-rhythmists. Where the emerging language is expelled, at the place of ejection, at the place of the word's expulsion, there where the entire body is shaken.

The theatre is not a cultural antennae for the oral broadcast of literature, but rather the place where speech, expiring from the body, is to be materially recast. The actor is death speaking, is the deceased speaking to me! It hurts my eyes, it hurts me! He sickens my perception. Help, Doctor, all the tongues are dying! Oh, my bbbbody, Doctor, there's another tongue tththat's coming out!

9 December. Continuation of the rehearsals. Continuation and hunger. Because I'm so greedy, because I want him, the actor, to tell me how it really is down there. I devour him with my eyes, but I don't feast upon his words. Is it because he's eating me up onstage? Because he's devouring my words? My memory is stirred up by seeing his body struggle with the old script, irrigate the ancient textus, inundate the corpse with its masculine and feminine sperm, incarnate it, as we say . . .

I didn't write this with my hand or with my head or with my prick, but with all the holes of my body. Not writing by feather, but writing by hole. Nothing brandished, everything opened. With the three aforementioned sphincters. It's an air-hole, indraft text, feminine, empty, oral, open, hollow, summoning the actor's assistance. Inhaled jet, initial shortage of air.

To make theatrical speech is to prepare a course where one will dance, place obstacles and hurdles on the track, knowing quite well that only the dancers, the leapers, the actors are beautiful . . . Hey actors, actresses: your bodies are troated, summoned, desired! Nothing but the desire for the actor's body incites one to write for the theatre. Do we really understand this? What I awaited, what incited me? Let the actor come forth to plug up my deficient text, and dance within me.

One who wrote speaks to one who acts. But it's not so much the difference between verbs (to write, to act) that creates the difference between us, it's rather a matter of tenses. Those bodies are at work, while mine no longer is. It's a paralytic who speaks to those who dance, it's a degulleted one who speaks to fine singers. It's an ex-dancer who would never have danced—and not the author or the signatory of the event—who speaks. Because whoever says author says author of the thing, heir to the corpse, administrator of excrement; and because this staged spectacle, this adventure, doesn't provide me with even the slim satisfaction of seeing my money circulate, finally flow, but rather proffers the pain of no longer having the feat of a twenty year old to dance that dance, and the joy of seeing the actors waltz way up high.

What can I, in my spectator's impotent wheelchair rehearsal, what can I really tell those who dance, who jump? . . . Can just tell them to. Want to just tell them that. The actor (any actor at all) is today at least ten years ahead of everything. Of everything written. Through the very knowledge retained in his body. But he cannot yet adequately speak of this knowledge. Because we hinder him. And also because a person immobilized can all the same say something about the body to those who still profit from all their limbs, because something is still known about it, in his shackled body, by dint of motionless dance and closemouthed song.

L'Atelier volant wasn't a matter of representation, but of expenditure. We need actors of intensity, not actors of purpose. Put his body to work. First of all materialistically, sniffing, chewing, breathing in the text. It's by starting from letters, by stumbling over consonants, by breathing in vowels, by chewing, by vigorously working it over, that we discover how it breathes and how it is rhymed. It even seems that by violently expending yourself in the text, by losing your breath within it, you will discover its rhythm and its respiration. A profound reading, ever deeper, ever closer to the core. Kill, extenuate your first body to find the other one—another body, another respiration, another economy—which must act.

The text becomes the actor's nourishment, his body. Seek the musculature of this old printed corpse, its possible movements, that through which it wants to move; see it revive little by little when you breathe into it, recast the act of making the text, rewrite it with your body, see what was used to write it, which muscles, different respirations, changes of flow; realize that it is not a text but a body that moves, breathes, has erections, sweats, exits, gets worn out. Encore! That's the true reading, of the body, of the actor. Nobody knows more about the text than he, and he takes orders from nobody, since the body doesn't take orders. He is the only one who truly knows that this is for the teeth, that is for the feet, and this for the abdomen; to know that one breathes differently by means of different inner contractions and different internal postures of the body, which made this text that we see before us on the sheet of paper. More than the steps that remain, the smooth mark on the floor. We must discover who made this dead text and what prompted him. What part of the expelled body wrote it. Beware of the dead letter of the text on paper: don't submit to it!

Don't take it for hard currency and for a meaning to be transmitted! But see how it was born, where it came from, how it died, how it grew.

Remake speech by dying in the body. Descend to the postures. Find the musculatory and respiratory postures in which it was written. Because characters are postures of organs, and scenes are sessions of rhythm. Boucan. And because the text is nothing but footprints on the ground left by a dancer who has disappeared. But because, but because . . . but because it wasn't the dance of a particular body; because it is not the author, the body of the author, that must be rediscovered (since ultimately it isn't he who made this, just as it isn't really the actor who acts), but because, on behalf of both, it is rather a matter of manifesting, of soliciting, the existence of something that wants to dance, yet something which is not the human body we are led to believe we possess.

One day it will be necessary for an actor to donate his body to science, for it to be cut open, so that we may finally know what occurs inside it when it acts. We must know how it is made, that other body. Because the actor acts with a body other than his own. With a body that functions in the opposite direction. A new body comes into play through the expenditure of acting. A new body? Or another economy of the old one? We still don't know. It must be cut open. While acting.

A new body comes into play through the expenditure of acting. A new body? Or another economy of the old one? We still don't know. It must be cut open. While acting.

The acting body is not a body that exaggerates (its gestures, its pantomime); the actor is neither a comedian nor an hysteric. Acting is not just one more agitation of the muscles under the skin, a surface gesticulation, a triple activity of the body's visible and expressive parts (amplify the grimaces, roll the eyes, speak louder and more rhythmically). To act is not to emit more signals; to act is to have under the envelope of the skin the pancreas, the spleen, the vagina, the liver, the kidneys and the bowels, all the circuits, all the tubes, the beating flesh under the skin, the entire anatomical body, the entire nameless body, the entire hidden body, the entire bleeding, invisible, irrigated, and clamoring body, resuscitated, speaking, in motion underneath.

Yet they want to make the actor believe that his body consists of fifteen thousand square centimeters of skin kindly offered up as the support of the spectacle's signals, six hundred and four possible expressive positions in the art of staging, a telegraph to ripple forth the order of gestures and intonations necessary for the intelligibility of the discourse, an element, a bit of everything, a piece of the whole, an instrument of the orchestra concertante. Whereas the actor is neither an instrument nor an interpreter, but rather the only place where it happens, and that's all.

The actor is not an interpreter because the body is not an instrument. Because it is not the instrument of the head. Because it is not its support. Those who tell the actor to interpret with the instrument of his body, those who treat him as an obedient brain, clever at translating others' thoughts into corporeal signals, those who think that something can be translated from one body to another and that a head can command a body, are guilty of misunderstanding the body, of repressing the body, are quite simply guilty of repression.

If the actor didn't apply makeup, we would see the scars and streaks on his body, the blemishes covering his epiderm. Everybody sees it, but nobody dares admit that when the actor acts, his skin is absolutely transparent and we see everything inside him. The actor's body is his inner-body (not his chic stylized performing puppet marionette silhouette), his profound body, nameless underneath, his rhythm machine, where the liquids (chyme, lymph, urine, tears, air, blood) all circulate in torrents, where everything that rushes down the inclines, through the canals, the tubes, the sphinctered passages, to quickly ascend again, overflow, force open the mouth; where all that circulates in the closed body, all that panics, that wants to leave, thrust forth and surge back, which by dint of rushing through opposing circuits, by dint of currents, by dint of being returned and expelled, by dint of traversing the entire body, from a plugged-up portal to the other mouth, by dint of, ends up becoming rhythmic, rhythming itself, multiplying its force through rhythm—this rhythm comes from pressure, from repression—and exits, ends up exiting, ex-created, ejected, jaculated, material.

This is the speech, the *speak*, which the actor either casts forth or retains, and which, whipping the public's face, manages to truly affect and transform their bodies. This is the principal liquid excluded from the body, and the mouth is the site of its omission. This is what is most physical in the theatre, this is what is most material in the body. This *speak* is the matter of the matter, and we cannot grasp anything more material than this invisible and unstockable liquid. It is the actor who manufactures it, through his breathed rhythm, as it passes through his entire body, so that it passes backwards through all the circuits, in order to leave, in the end, through the hole in the head.

But it is clear for every actor that this *speak* does not come from there, and that if it does leave through the mouth, this doesn't happen easily or naturally, but only after having traversed the entire labyrinth and after having tried all possible holes in vain.

The actor does not execute but is executed, doesn't interpret but penetrates himself, doesn't reason but makes his entire body resonate. Doesn't build his character, but decomposes the civil body usually kept in order; commits suicide. It's not the composition of a character, but the decomposition of the person, the decomposition of the man who appears on the boards. The theatre is only interesting when we see the normal body of *who* (tense, on the lookout, on guard) come undone, and the other body come out, a wretched player wishing to play at *what*. It's the actor's true flesh which must appear. Seeing the actors' and actresses' bodies is what is beautiful: to show the true and mortal, sexed and tongued flesh to the castrated public that thinks in the eternal and castrated French language.

The actor who truly acts, who acts forcefully, who acts from the core—and in the theatre only this is worthwhile—bears, upon his face, his cast off face (as in the three moments: to ejaculate, to defecate, to die), his white, undone, empty death mask—the empty part of the body, and no longer the expressive recto of the head set on a figurehead body—he shows his face white, disfigured, bearing his own death. The actor who acts knows very well that this truly modifies his body, that it kills him each and every time. And the history of the theatre—if we really wanted to write it, finally, from the actor's point of view—would not be the history of an art, of a spectacle, but rather the history of a long, deaf, obstinate, ever beginning, never ending protest against the human body.

It's the invisible body, the unnamed body, the interior body, the body with organs that acts. It's the feminine body. All the great actors are women. Through the keen awareness they have of their inner bodies. Because they know that their sex is inside. Actors are tightly invaginated bodies, they vaginate forcefully, they play the uterus; with their vagina, not with their thing. They act with all their holes, with the entire interior of their perforated bodies, and not with their straining tips. They don't speak from the tips of the lips; all the *speaks* emerges from their bodies' holes. All actors know this, as they know that we try to hinder them from doing so, from being women and from vaginating. We want them to indicate, to show one thing after another in good order, and not to show themselves. We want to reduce them to being mere telegraphs that emit, execute and transmit signals with their bodies from one head to another, meaningful phalli, male members straining to designate, arrows well directed to pinpoint meaning, indicators and executants. With meaning, with good sense, so that everything remains in its normal order. We return to this as it occurs in the last scene of *L'Atelier volant* (someone perched on the mast with the Boucots down below, pointing him out). The Boucots demand that this actor at the mast's summit, all open holes and vaginating, indicate and account for the meaning of what he designates, the meaning of his gestures, of where his phallus is going. Whereas, as a matter of fact, he up high no longer has it, has lost it, *speaks a riddled speech*. The Boucots always ask him for tales, for the meaning of and the reason for all the sounds he utters; by demanding a meaning they create one, and they indicate to him the direction of descent. Asking him to draw his arrow and designate something causes him to descend.

What, what, what? Really, why does a person become an actor? Because we can't get used to living in the body imposed on us, in the sex imposed on us. Each actor's body is a threat to be taken seriously, a threat to the dictated order of the body, to its sexed state. And if, one day, you find yourselves once again in the theatre, it's because there is something that you too can't bear. There exists in each actor something like a new body, desiring to speak. Another economy of the body which comes forth, which thrusts aside the old prescriptions.

Translated by Allen S. Weiss