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# **Actor in a Second Language**

Bogdan Mihai Florea

December 2020

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements  
for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts.**

**Submitted December 2020**

**Word Count: 80009**

# Abstract

The thesis is focused on actors who use English as a second language in performances on stage or on screen in England. The question that frames the enquiry is, “Who is a Second Language Actor?”, and it is posed three times, differently in each of the three chapters. Throughout the thesis, I will be applying philosophical terms from Gilles Deleuze and Felix, such as *plane of immanence*, *plane of composition*, *becoming*, *schizo-affect*, *grammaticality*. In the first chapter, I discuss the possible emergence of an SLA from within the totality of random events of act-ing (as opposed to acting) in a second language, termed the *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing. I will introduce the concept of *becoming*-SLA, a second language actor in the process of appearing, and always coming into being. Each act of uttering is seen as a minorisation of the second language, a creative pushing of the language’s limits, which generates a special form of English, named English-becoming-another-language. The second chapter introduces the concept of *grammaticality*: a complex machine (people, technologies, schools, traditions/customs) that names the SLA’s as either Migrant or Nomad and inscribes them onto a given *plane of composition* of second language acting, restricting their immanent, creative energies. The final chapter discusses the possible emergence of a new type of SLA : a schizo-actor who produces schizo-affects in an English-becoming-another-language, uncontrollable by *grammaticality*. The schizo-SLA operates in a state of *bottomlessness*, which is defined as a specific creative/existential condition. The thesis discusses all these in the context of the practice-based research conducted with Nu Nu Theatre, a company that focuses its work on the question of who a Second-Language Actor is and who he/she can become. The two performance processes that are analysed in relation to the research question are *Billie Killer* and *BANDIT*.

## Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without the inspiration and continued support provided by my wife and artistic partner Ileana Gherghina. I owe to her the existence of Nu Nu Theatre: under Nu Nu's umbrella, I have conducted the two practice-as-research projects.

Heartfelt thanks are very much due to my supervisors Professor Simon Jones and Dr. Katja Krebs, who have bestowed upon me a great gift: they allowed me the freedom to try out various theoretical and practical avenues until I was able to find the path most suitable to the research theme. I thank them for always being inspirational interlocutors. I also laud their patience and am grateful for the logistical support they have so often and so generously provided.

I would also like to thank Pam Tait and Rod Terry, who have supported the production of the two practice-as-research-projects.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my son, Luca, who has practically grown together with the research project and has made – with his very witty questions, interventions, interruptions – my travail so much more worthwhile.

# Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degrees Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed: ...Bogdan Mihai Florea.....

Date: ...21/12/2020.....

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# **Introduction – A Bottomless Hourglass**

## **Defining the Terms for this Study**

In my endeavour to understand and explain who an SLA is, I will utilize a number of terms and concepts, many of them borrowed from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. I list these terms and concepts in this section, along with short explanations of the way in which I employ them throughout the thesis.

## **Ontology**

The discussion about an ontology of an SLA appears in the context of my preoccupation with what makes this kind of actor different from other actors. How is such an actor born? How does he/she come into existence? What about his/her existence (if anything) is different, distinct from other actors? Ontology here means how an SLA is “born” and how s/he evolves throughout his/her existence, particularly in relation to the function of representation that is required of an actor. Is an SLA born when a person “walks across an empty space whilst someone else is watching” them, as Peter Brook once said? (Brook 1968: 7) The idea of an ontology of the SLA stems from my interest in pointing towards a most basic, fundamental performative event that engenders (or can engender) an SLA. The use of ontology is a reflection of my curiosity about what the event-based, indivisible and indispensable particle – Alain Badiou (date) calls it an “atomic object” ready to enter into a “new possibility of formalisation” (Jöttkandt 2010: 75) – from which an SLA emerges. My research project locates such an ontological event in the moment when a second language is being influenced (or put under strain) by non-native/external

elements, a minorization of the language from without, as I will explain below. I will argue that the source of the ontology of an SLA lies precisely at the meeting point between elements pertaining to two languages; first and second. My argument will be that the SLA has to be born not only on a first tier (Brook's man crossing the stage) but most necessarily on a second tier, from within the utterance that takes place at the intersection between two languages.

What the SLA's ontology illuminates is that an SLA is not made but born, he/she emerges or is immanent in the encounter between two languages. An SLA cannot be produced (only) by cultural or aesthetic programmes (Brook and other interculturalists like Barba or Mnouchkine migrants' theatre, multilingual theatre): a SLA is not constructed by people or cultural institutions (and their aesthetic programmes) from above. In other words, an SLA is not the product of a genealogy but of an ontology. I will argue that there is no God-like entity, person, or institution that can or should take charge of making or producing an SLA. In such case, the birth, the emergence of the SLA is no longer immanent, it does not appear spontaneously from the act/event of speaking/acting in a second language, but as a restrictive response (given by people other than the actor concerned) to the question: What do we do with this actor who speaks English as a second language? Should we call him/her a migrant-actor, or a foreign actor? What roles should we assign to him/her? In other words, a genealogy of an SLA means asking the question what an SLA is, instead of who an SLA is. Ontology, on the contrary, seeks to reveal the coming into being of an SLA as an effect of an anastomosis of languages, in all its immanent splendour.

## **Native/Non-Native**

In this research project, I utilize the terms of native and non-native with a sarcastic tone. By using them, I do not intend to signal a certain degree of competency in the usage of English language, although this dimension cannot be fully eliminated. Using Jacques Derrida's (date) ideas regarding hospitality, I understand native and non-native English speakers as those who see themselves as being in a position either to offer hospitality or (for various reasons) to ask for/seek hospitality in the English language. In this light, the non-native is not primarily a speaker who does not attain what is deemed to be native-level competency/fluency in the English language. The non-native is not necessarily the "alien," the foreigner in this equation: I see the non-native as the speaker who does not (or is not being allowed to) have the confidence, audacity, force to claim ownership of the English language. Similarly, the native is the one who either sees him/herself as owner of the second language and as such, as the one who has the right to grant hospitality to others who are second language speakers. Using this perspective, I argue that the non-native is not necessarily the one coming from outside the English language (from another language) but may also be a speaker coming from within the English language. Therefore, the dyad native/non-native – as I explain it in this research project - is not strictly separated along the lines of non-foreigner/foreigner: the term non-native may well be applied to a non-foreigner, to a speaker that was born in and with the English language as their first language. I envisage therefore a transferability of the term non-native to the speakers/actors who perform in a first language English. Similarly, there is a transferability of the term native to those who were not born in and with the English language as first language. The way in which I envisage the dyad native/non-native can be better explained in connection with Deleuze and Guattari's idea of minorizing the language, making it bark, pushing its limits, unsettling its formal, informal, accepted or assumed boundaries, customs, laws, making the language

''stammer, or mak[ing] it ''wail,'' stretch tensors through all of language [...] drawing from it cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities.'' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 115)

I argue that there are two ways of minorizing a language (in our particular case the English language): from within by a speaker born in/with the English language (the case of actors who speak English with regional accents or dialects) and from without, by a speaker not born in/with the English language. Both these instances of minorization are similarly valid and creative, I argue. The way in which some English people of Indian-descent speak the English language is different from the way in which some English people of Chinese-descent speak English, even though these people have all been born in England and have acquired English as their first language. These ''native'' speakers therefore exercise an inventive, creative type of pressure on the English language from within it. On the other hand, the non-native does a similar thing from without, with the help of elements pertaining to another language (a Polish driver who explains the cost of the bus ticket to a passenger, for example).

The dichotomy native/non-native – as shown – is habitually seen as rooted in the opposition between who has, who grants, who receives, who begs for, who needs access or rights to the English language. It is assumed that a so-called native speaker has automatic right over and in the language, whilst a non-native speaker less so. My research project seeks to unsettle this assumption, by introducing the common denominator of minorisation of the language. As such, I argue that only those speakers (be they born or not born in/with the language) who minorise the English language have a rightful claim to native-ness. The other speakers (the ones who do not creatively challenge the language, even if they have been born in or with it) are – in my view – non-native to the language. The latter are mute carriers and preservers of ossified usages of language, not challenging the substance of the language and its structures and form through minorization. Minorization is the true life of a language – without it, the language starts to ossify,

no longer being able to sustain itself through creative, innovative forms, structures, sounds. On stage and in film, the widely accepted meaning of the native/non-native opposition allows sharp distinctions/discriminations to be made between actors, based not on their possibilities of minorization but on capacities to utter “properly,” as expected or as known, according to pre-set standards. These might change with time, but every time they change, other shades of the inequality between the native and non-native come to the fore.

## **Language**

Given my unconventional interpretation of the dyad native/non-native, it is required that I provide a nuanced explanation of how I will employ the term language throughout the thesis.

Having eliminated the habitual distinction between non-native and native, it is important to underline the fact that I see language as a medium to which everyone can claim access.

Language is a changing mass in which we can all get involved by adding to, or subtracting from it, according to our potential, interest, capacities. An essential trait of language is its transient/challengeable nature. As long as an intervention (minorization) is creative and illuminating, a language can easily expand or withdraw its limits, borders, rules. In this thesis, I am interested therefore mainly in the flexible nature of language. In the section dedicated to *grammaticality*, I will point to the regulatory and law-like dimensions of language and will be interested to uncover ways to challenge such ossifying tendencies.

## **Plane of Immanence of Second Language Acting**

This is a concept borrowed from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. By *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing, I understand the sum total of all random acts of speaking (or act-ing) in English as a second language, in all their randomness, heterogeneity, unpredictability, and variable manifestations. *The plane of immanence* is the soil from which an SLA can emerge, as a direct product of an utterance: that utterance is always an unpredictable suture of elements pertaining to two or more languages in the mouth/body of the second language utterer. On the *plane of immanence*, we can find possibilities, potentialities, or SLA's in-the-making – the atoms of SLA that I am looking for in my ontology of the SLA.

### **Schizo-Affect**

*Schizo-affect* (Guattari Date) is the bodily modification (augmentation and diminution) triggered by the very utterance in a second language (the physical expression of memorising the language through utterance). *Schizo-affects* come in the form of pairings, utterance-organ, utterance-body, utterance-face, utterance-diaphragm, etc., and establish themselves, grow, get “thicker” and finally give rise to a style of body-uttering in the second language English. Style here refers not to a particular way of speaking but to a particular way of (re)creating the second language from without, of minorizing it also with the body. *Schizo-affect* – I will argue – is the mark of any SLA and it includes the body of the actor, caught in the grip of the modifying, affective forces of the utterance in the second language.

### **Becoming-SLA**

*Becoming*-SLA is an on-going process which characterizes each and every SLA. It denotes the absence of a final destination of the ontological process. *Becoming*-SLA announces the schizo-SLA, which is an SLA fully aware and in charge of his/her own impossibility to produce unitary, regular identity through utterance and through the body. Instead, the SLA is capable of producing growths of affect, innervations, lines of flight, styles, etc.

### **Plane of Composition of Second Language Acting**

The *plane of composition* of second language act-ing refers to how the acts and events of second language utterance are being currently “composed,” structured, organized, perceived, understood, (re)presented on stage and on screen in England. Borrowing from the Deleuzian repertoire, I envisage the *plane of composition* as the totality of SLA presences/appearances/instantiations on the English stages and screens (together with all their (re)presentational baggage). As Maaïke Bleeker (2009) suggests, ‘the vector of movement of thought is taking shape through concepts (in the case of philosophy), compositions (in the case of art), or knowledge (in the case of science).’ (157) Deleuze also says that art, life and philosophy can indeed be joined as ‘the same shadow that extends itself across their different nature and accompanies them.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 218) The *plane of composition* denotes how, in what manner, an SLA is encapsulated in a certain identity on stage or on screen, how his/her minorization is framed within a role/character in a theatre or film production, by arrays of co-creators (casting agents, directors, producers, etc.). The *plane of composition* is the way in which the immanent-SLA is translated/transported on stage or on screen from his/her immanent condition – such a translation process implies certain transformations, alterations and exclusions).

## Grammaticality

*Grammaticality* is the sum of processes, technologies, traditions, techniques, and people that take part in the creation of the *plane of composition*, helping to cross the event of second language act-ing (and at the same time the *becoming-SLA* inscribed by it) from the *plane of immanence* to the *plane of composition*. *Grammaticality* is a restrictive, censoring machine, which seeks to translate the utterance of the second language actor for the stage or the screen. This machine is made of directors, casting agents, producers, other actors, funders, aesthetic traditions, common perceptions and expectations, etc. Translation of the SLA on the *plane of composition* occurs in two directions: the SLA is characterized – on stage or on screen - either as a migrant or as a nomad. *Grammaticality* is a machine that asks and responds itself to the question (supplanting the SLA's right to ask and answer) who is speaking/uttering in this or that role? *Grammaticality* is a machine for censoring utterance, for organising the mouth/body of the SLA on stage and on screen.

My definition of *grammaticality* – in the context of this research project - is focused more on the linguistic aspect. Initially, grammaticality is the ordering, regulating and disciplining dimension of a language. *Grammaticality* is therefore mainly a way of explaining (perhaps structuring and composing more than sense or sense-making), giving meaning to, and transposing into representation; characterising or identifying the conformity or non-conformity of certain utterances in relation to certain (aesthetic or linguistic) standards. How well or how conventionally a certain actor can speak the lines in English determines how his/her character is (re)presented on stage or on screen. However, the definition of *grammaticality* may be expanded to take into consideration the entire theatre apparatus/machine, with all its grammars of



production and economies/techniques of (re)presentational acting (which is the function mainly of Aristotelian, Western theatre). In that sense, *grammaticality* can be understood as a machine for the organization of (re)presentation. Actors, directors, producers, scenographers, etc. must every time weigh and select what is being shown on stage and how, in what measure, to what extent, towards what meaning-making outcome. From that point of view, the (re)presentational function of theatre cannot be sustained without *grammaticality*. In the Third Chapter, I talk about how the schizo-SLA avoids the forces of *grammaticality* – in a certain sense, this kind of actor is non-Aristotelian, non-representational. He/she is beyond the post-dramatic actor because his/her performance represents, presents, or performs the absence of *grammaticality*, the death inherent to (re)presentational theatre, a theatre eviscerated of its soul, which is most often the logocentric (re)presentation.

## **Theatre**

I will often use this term to designate that particular function of representing identity or character through acting on stage (and by extension on screen). Theatre, as Aristotle explained, should occupy itself with presenting ‘objects of imitation [that] are humans in action’ (Aristotle 2020: n.d.). By using the concept of theatre, therefore, I want to underline precisely the function of creating representations as loyal to “real” life as possible (real life can also be absurd life or postmodern life or deconstructed life, etc.), to give an explanation and a meaning for the presence of an actor/character on stage. By theatre therefore, I understand the function of representation through acting (in the Western theatre tradition), which is mainly logocentric (realized through word, text, utterance). Theatre also designates the pretension to be able to create and give some kind of meaning (on stage or on screen, but most importantly through

acting) to well defined, well rounded, recognizable, explicable, life-like identities. The realist/naturalist convention of theatre is perhaps most blatantly attached to such a claim – to be able to construct identities, life-like characters on stage, through acting/imitating humans in action. The inclination to think that identity can be recreated on stage is more generally present in conventions of Western/Aristotelian or post-Aristotelian theatre (absurd, intercultural, etc. - these all deal with identity-creation at some level, even if in a non-realistic, absurdist, post-dramatic key). That is why I will conclude (at the end of this thesis) that the schizo-SLA, who is my proposed model of SLA, is an expression of the death inherent to (re)presentational theatre (of whatever genre it may be): a genuinely non-identitarian, non-Aristotelian, non-(re)presentational type of actor. The schizo-SLA (my prototype of SLA) is non-(re)presentational at all levels (absurdist, post-dramatic, realist, etc.) – he/she thus signals and performs the end of theatre as a machinery of (re)presentation. To summarize, by theatre I designate all that encompasses the function of (re)presentation through acting and my main concern is with the realist/naturalist conventions of representation that are dominant on the British stage.

### **Where do I start?**

The present research concerns itself with Second-Language Actors active in England, UK. By Second-Language Actor (SLA) I understand an actor who uses English as a second (non-native) language in a stage or screen performance, in England. In this thesis, I will be referring to and analyzing the professional experiences, trajectories and/or creative work of Second-Language Actors who have arrived in England as adults. The research excludes bilingual/multilingual actors born in the United Kingdom (particularly Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) and who might speak another native language alongside English. The research project has been inspired

by my own experience of being a Second-Language Actor, living and working in Bristol, England. Arguably, the most difficult task that the research project presented was that of finding potential common traits between – for instance - my own experience as an Actor in a Second Language in Bristol and that of Juliette Binoche, who has performed in theatre productions at The Barbican or The Almeida Theatre, in London. The difficulty arose when I wondered what might unite Binoche's and my own second-language acting experiences. What connection can be made between Binoche and the non-native acting students taught at the Bristol Old Vic acting school, for instance: students who – at the end of their acting course – perform in various theatrical productions, using second-language English? What similarities can be found between Second-Language Actor Pinar Ogun - a Turkish graduate of LAMDA, now working between Cardiff and London – and myself? Does Xavier de Sousa – a London-based Portuguese producer turned actor/performer – have anything in common as an Actor in a Second Language with me, taking into consideration the fact that I have (unlike de Sousa) graduated an Acting Conservatoire? The Bulgarian actress (often performing in amateur or semi-amateur musicals or music videos) who moved to Bristol in 2016 in order to find a better future for her six-year old daughter: what could she have in common – as an Actor in a Second Language - with the famous Danish actor Sofie Gråbøl? Best known to British audiences from the 2007 Danish television series *The Killing*, Gråbøl performed the role of Queen Margaret of Denmark in the play *James III: The True Mirror* (2014) at the National Theatre London. Can Romanian actor Ana Maria Marinca – a professional actress that works between UK, France, Germany, and Romania – be considered to share something essential with an artist such as Yorgos Karamalegos: actor, dancer, director, acting coach and producer working between Greece and the UK, performing both in English and in Greek, with a strong focus on physicality and dance/movement? Where do all these disparate experiences meet, if they ever do meet? Is there an underlying commonality to

them? How can they be unified? The difficulty with mapping all these different nuances of SLA has compelled me to put the question of “Who is an SLA?” at the centre of this research project. Another difficulty is represented by the fact that the presence/activity of such type of actor appears to be particularly volatile (sometimes even accidental) on the English scene and screen. There is an increased heterogeneity that characterizes the phenomenon of second-language acting in England. No SLA is known to have established a more enduring and prominent career in English theatre or film. That may stand in contrast with other parts of the world, where examples can be found of actors who have established themselves more fully and prominently in the theatre or film domain. I could quote the examples of SLA’s from France (20<sup>th</sup> century Romanian-born actor Elvire Popesco, who has risen to fame as a Second-Language Actor in French theatre and film), or from Hollywood: Greta Garbo or Marlene Dietrich (in the initial wave of émigré actors of early Hollywood) or more contemporary names such as Antonio Banderas, Penelope Cruz, Arnold Schwarzenegger or Jackie Chan. Joseph Horowitz’s *Artists in Exile: How Refugees from Twentieth-Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts* (2009) contains valuable insights regarding the emigration of European artists into the United States, including references to early Hollywood stars such as Greta Garbo or Marlene Dietrich, alongside other second-language writers, filmmakers, directors. Focused on underlining the unique contribution that all those émigré artists have contributed to the American culture, the study does not however delve deeper into the question that concerns me: who an SLA is and what are the more intimate creative processes that define such an actor. Therefore, I will consider Horowitz’s study as a valuable source for identifying possible particularities that SLA’s across the world may share as artists. By quoting Horowitz, I may also be able to provide a somewhat more informed response – in a comparative analysis exercise - to the particular

curiosity of why SLA's could become prominent artistic figures in the USA (many decades ago) but have not been able to do so (yet) in contemporary England.

As noted, in England, non-native actors work mainly on a temporary or even accidental basis, in theatre or film projects that appear particularly disparate on a birds-eye map, without clear continuity from one project to another, from one role to another. Some SLA's are not firmly established in England, but often work between their country/native language and England/English language. Many of these SLA's will appear in episodic, small-size roles (this is most evident in film), with an already-marginal creative presence interrupted by long absences. Other SLA's – although given bigger parts in English-language productions – remain painfully (and definitively, it would appear) attached to roles of foreigners and immigrants. It can also be observed that there are Actors in a Second Language of many nationalities, with different levels of training, with different aspirations, living and working – occasionally or less so - in various contexts across England. Theatre companies (big or small) that might employ SLA's are in extremely small numbers: what is certain is that they have not yet produced a well-established formula of SLA, one to be acknowledged by the wider public and by the critics, or to achieve a similar success to a prominent native actor such as Judi Dench, for instance. Nor did such companies allowed for a sense of community of SLA's in England to emerge. Hence, the ambition of the present research project: that of providing a further clarification into who an SLA is (and can be) and precisely what individualizes him/her as a creator. By answering that question, I hope to be able to bring together all those diverse, disparate experiences of working as a Second-Language Actor in England, covering all the different relations entertained by the actor (in performance) with the second-language English, and with various levels of ability and training.

This particular ambition is posited in a context where there has been no research targeted specifically at Actors in a Second Language in England: as such, there exists no official overview of how many such actors are active in England, or what their influence/contribution might be on the wider English performance scene. Most importantly, there is no study that delves into the creative specificities (if any) of such an actor: what particular kind of expressivity distinguishes an SLA from his/her native counterparts. The present project is therefore the first of its kind: as far as I have been able to ascertain, an analysis dedicated exclusively to articulating the concept of Actor in a Second Language active in England or further afield has not yet been produced. With that in mind, I should reiterate that the main challenge of the research project has been to find a convenient starting point. Where do I start?

A distinct possibility would have been to draw from the work and theorizing of rather famous, non-England-based advocates of intercultural exchange in theatre/film. One such advocate would be Peter Brook, who has often relied on the participation of SLAs in the projects conducted at his *CIRT (International Centre for Theatre Research)*, established in 1970, in Paris. Looking at what director Peter Brook thought of, how he worked with or involved SLA's in his theatrical or film projects, I believed that I might have been able to identify a route towards answering the all-important question of who an SLA is. The difficulty with looking for Brook's vision of the SLA consists in the fact that the acclaimed director – although relying on SLA's in many of his projects - did not propose a conceptualization, as it were, of this type of actor. Brook did not study the case of the SLA. Despite collaborating with a number of high-profile SLA's (like the Japanese actor Yoshi Oida or the Polish actor Ryszard Cieślak), Brook remained mainly the architect of a vision for intercultural theatre and not of one for the SLA. The SLA served therefore his wider intercultural platform, which did not have the actor as its main preoccupation,

but the wholeness of the intercultural spectacle instead. Taking the work of Shakespeare as a model, Brook sought to create a type of theatre in which prevails an:

absence of style, private and intimate balance epic and public: different elements co-exist discontinuously and painfully, just as we know intuitively, they do in real life. Yet here they are in a concentrated form, neither neutralised nor compromised by each other's presence. (Williams, 1988: 145)

In this context, the SLA fulfils the role of instrumentalising and representing such a multi-faceted type of theatre, being a small wheel of a wider spectacle of different accents, different cultural references gathered on the same theatrical score. The question posed by my research project envisages an SLA detached from other – overarching, integrative – agendas (like Interculturalism or Multilingualism in Theatre) and autonomous in exercising his/her profession, on the same level with any other native actor. In other words, I am not interested in an SLA that comes into existence only as part of a greater vision or trend in theatre: not as the result of a transcendental will (the director, usually) deciding that an SLA belongs to or is created by the regime of Intercultural paradigm in theatre, for instance. I am interested in who an SLA really is: what makes him/her a distinct type of actor, what unique expressive qualities can be associated with such an actor. I am interested to discover how a second language actor can gain the freedom to play any role (in any production, on any stage and not necessarily under the banner of Interculturalism or Multilingualism) just as any actor for whom English is a first language does. Utilising actors from various countries, continents and cultures, Brook articulated his well-known vision for a world theatre, in which each accent, each different cultural trait was seen to constitute a piece of a universal puzzle:

Theatre has the potential - unknown in other art forms - of replacing a single viewpoint by multitude of different visions. Theatre can present a world in several dimensions at once, whereas the cinema, although it tirelessly seeks to be stereoscopic is still confined to a single plane. Theatre recovers its strength and intensity as soon as it devotes itself to creating that wonder - a world in relief. (Brook, 1987: 15).

In this kind of multi-perspectival and multi-style theatre, an SLA often became an important instrument. Brook's actors were expected to express a kind of universality in their acting. Yoshi Oida, the Japanese-born actor who played Drona in Brook's widely-commented production of the *Mahabharata* (1985) declares: "He [Brook] won't use actors who stick to their past - you have to look for possibilities of change. With fear, with fame, with pride people don't open to the public." (O'Connor, 1989: 93) The SLA's agency (his/her power to define who he/she is or can be as an artist) was therefore subjected to the wider frame of universality implied in Brook's vision of a global theatre. Although it might be argued that an(y) actor (native or non-native) is primarily the product of the performance he/she is involved in, this research project ponders how and if an SLA can indeed become the architect of his/her own coming into being (and locates such coming into being at the meeting point between native and second language).

That is the main reason why Brook's vision for the SLA is not particularly useful (as a starting point) to this research, as it involves an imposition of who an SLA is (or should be) from "on-high" and does not articulate an artistic identity for the SLA that comes from the actor him/herself at that meeting point between native and second language. Brook's actors often had the task to search for and perform in a language beyond language (like in the 1971 performance of *Orghast*), a kind of primordial language that Yoshi Oida talks about:

A philosopher of language once said that in the beginning, everybody on earth spoke the same language. Afterwards, as each culture developed, the languages separated. Somehow, I feel that this is true, because the basic sound-sense of a language can often be grasped (Oida, 1997: 100)

The idea behind the present research project was – quite the contrary – to look not at how the SLA surpasses or sidesteps the second language in order to reach some kind of meta or pre-linguistic realm of expression, but at how he/she continuously attacks and erodes the second language, making it her/his own, reinventing it. The aim of the project is to understand the



damage that an SLA can inflict upon the second language and how that might produce a unique expressive identity for the non-native actor. Therefore, Brook's vision for the SLA is largely incompatible with that of the present research. I will comment on that incompatibility throughout the thesis, through various comparisons, mainly in the footnotes.

One other prominent intercultural theatre-maker that I might have considered as possible starting point for the research into who an SLA is, was Eugenio Barba. What appeared particularly attractive in Barba's vision of theatre was that the latter was built around the artist's émigré status (and the SLA is necessarily one type or another of émigré). The reality of being himself a poor immigrant to the North of Europe, influenced Barba's overall thinking on theatre and helped him define the concepts of *First*, *Second* and *Third Theatre*:

When I began as a director, I was an amateur, together with a few teenagers who had been turned down by the theatre school. I belonged to the theatre lumpenproletariat, which is to be found across all borders. I called it Third Theatre, bearing in mind the discrimination which is inflicted by the theatre's first world' (Watson, 2002: 247-8)

The *First Theatre* is, according to Barba's vision, the established theatre, in which he sees vested the mainstream cultural authority. The *Second Theatre* is represented by the avant-garde, where ideologies connected to state, politics, etc., are being contested. The *Third Theatre* – the one which Barba himself belongs to - designates that insular territory of artists/makers who have lost country, language, sense of belonging to a native culture and have sailed away in what Barba poetically calls a "paper canoe" (Barba, 1995). Barba's own version of the *Third Theatre* - the *Odin Teatret* in Holstebro, Denmark - is compared to a "floating island" (Barba 1986: 19). His vision rhymes – in its stress on the émigré, floating, lost-at-sea condition of the artist – with my own vision of creating second-language theatre as if on a *desert island*, an aspect which I will discuss in further detail later in this introductory section. Apart from this particular focus on sailing away from one's language/culture, I will not be able to use Barba's ideas about the

coming into being of an actor: his preoccupations with an anthropology of acting, and the identification of a pre-expressive, universal psycho-physical alphabet for the performer (which overcomes the communication function of language).

Another example of an intercultural theatre-maker and another potential starting point for the research into who an SLA is, could have been Robert Wilson. The particular draw of Wilson's vision for theatre – on which I will comment at certain points throughout the thesis – is represented by the view that certain vernacular languages and modalities of uttering should be recognized as languages proper and incorporated into performance on par with the accepted, "normal" ways of uttering. Wilson gives the example of the autistic boy and of the deaf person, who speak/utter in their own languages: "when a deaf person speaks, "Eah Eeyan Eeah", you see in the face his nightmare of not being able to speak the hearer's own language." (Wilson, 1978: 25) Wilson understands these non-conventional ways of uttering as languages in their own right and appeals to us (theatre-makers and audiences alike) to recognize and to learn them as autonomous languages similar to French or German: "I have never seen anyone try to relate to a non-hearing person with their own sounds and their own language." (Wilson 1978: 26) This way of thinking about language and disability in uttering (the impossibility to utter to the expected, normal, native standard) is rather relevant to the present study, as I argue that an SLA can also be seen (in his/her coming into being) as one who speaks a distinct, non-normal, non-standard English on stage or on screen. In a similar fashion, Wilson makes interesting remarks about an autistic boy and his particular way of uttering (and in a certain way, re-creating) the English language:

I became more fascinated with him and what he was doing with language. He would take ordinary, everyday words and destroy them. They became like molecules that were always changing [...] He was constantly redefining the codes. (Wilson 1978: 22)

What Wilson advocates for is that the ‘‘normal,’’ to-standard utterers should learn how to speak the deaf or the autistic’s language and not vice versa. This constitutes a useful path to follow with my own research and allows me to argue that – in the unequal fight for roles between the so-called ‘‘native’’ and ‘‘non-native’’ actors – the SLA’s utterance should be listened to as revelatory of a new, alternative language, through a new expressive direction being imposed (by the SLA) upon the second language English. I will argue that, in a certain sense, the SLA too is an utterer who can never speak/act to the expected standard.

When put into practice however, Wilson’s vision for an SLA over-simplifies the possibility that an actor identifies him/herself (creates him/herself) through utterance on stage: ‘‘Like Duchamp, and with him, they [Wilson, Phil Glass, Richard Foreman, etc.] opened a new area where theatre could do without language, and concepts without referent.’’ (Lotringer 1978: xii) Therefore, Wilson’s SLA’s utterances – in performance - are devoid of their immediate functions of communication, signification or identification:

The actors’ bodies, objects, and scraps of language, sound and music are no longer offered as signs that should represent something, mean anything, but rather as objects which refer only to themselves and which delight in their very objectness. (Fisher-Lichte, 1997: 139)

Using the example of Wilson as a starting point for the research would thus appear productive only in as much as the director advises us to look at languages other than the normative/normal ones, rejecting the accepted standards of language use on stage. Apart from this particular idea, it would be less productive (from the point of view of the question who is an SLA) to analyze Wilson’s use of SLA’s in his theatrical works, since the latter are most often reduced to a-signifying objects in an architectural, visual theatre spectacle. That sits contrary to the concern of the present research, which is with actors who indeed affirm and identify themselves as autonomous artists through their way of uttering and use language as an important (vital) means

of expression on stage or on screen (they want to play *Hamlet*, they want to play non-Wilson-like characters).

Another potential starting point for the research might have been the post-dramatic theatre paradigm, which was pioneered – in the theoretical domain – by Hans-Thies Lehmann in *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006). A post-dramatic reading of the SLA also proves insufficiently productive in the context of my research, as the post-dramatic theatre clearly separates the dramatic text (and the utterance of the actor together with it) from the notion of theatre: “theatre is here recognized as something that has its own different roots, preconditions and premises, which are even hostile to dramatic literature.” (Lehmann 2006: 48) The post-dramatic regime proposes (and Brook, Barba or Wilson appear to embark on a similar direction) a leveling of the text/utterance and other expressive modalities on stage (costume, movement, scenography, etc.). In this equation, the value of the actor’s utterance is significantly decreased, as the dramatic character no longer exists, in a situation that Lehmann calls “the ‘dethroning’ of linguistic signs and de-psychologisation that goes with it.” (Lehmann 2006: 95) With its radical reinterpretation of the classical role of text in theatrical representation (that of reconstructing reality on stage through dialogue and utterance), the post-dramatic proposes a use of language/utterance in a ‘consistent tendency towards musicalisation’ (Lehmann 2006: 91). Thus, the utterance (be it non-native) is inscribed (and its ontological force partly annulled) in the more general soup of non-hierarchized scenic signs, within a general tableau of the dissolution of the character and of the narrative. In a post-dramatic reading, an SLA is again one of the many realizers of theatrical signs on stage but never clearly identifiable through his/her utterance. However, the SLA that the research project seeks to define (who is he/she) must be understood beyond the post-dramatic paradigm: through the characters played in TV series,

films, and in the classical plays mounted on the stages of England, which are not – most of them – post-dramatic.

One evident and significant difficulty with all these potential starting points for the research project is that none of them is located in England. Brook and Barba have built their research centres in other parts of Europe, with Brook deliberately turning away from his country:

“England destroys artists [...] [the] edge is rapidly knocked off an artist. [...] No one presses the artist to do anything - all they do is to create a climate in which he will only too readily castrate himself.” (Brook, 1961: 17). On the other hand, the post-dramatic manifestations are only marginally present in English theatre and film. What I retain and marginally carry forward (into the argument) from these three possible beginnings, is the outright antagonism towards Brook’s vision of a primordial, universal language that can surpass individual languages; the interest in Barba’s émigré-inspired *Third Theatre* ideas, and Wilson’s advocacy for alternative, vernacular manners of uttering and the fact that they should represent languages proper. As such, I was not able to find an entirely productive or profitable point from which to begin to answer the tormenting question of “Who is an SLA?”

### **The Auto-Ethnographic Route**

I resorted to auto-ethnography as a most helpful methodology in mapping the disparate experiences of second-language acting/actors in England and in responding to the question of who is an SLA? By putting my own experience as a Second-Language Actor in England in connection with different other professional experiences of fellow SLA’s, I will be able to “foray deeper” into the internal creative journeys of such actors and grasp some of the unseen

details (and inherent qualitative dimensions) of the process of coming into being as an SLA. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty noted in *The Phenomenology of Perception*:

All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view or from some experience of the world, without which the symbols of science would be meaningless. (Merleau-Ponty 2002: ix)

Therefore, I deem profitable that I posit my own experience of becoming an SLA in England as the ground zero for the present research project. Without this starting-from-the-inside of my own experience and reaching forth to other experiences of SLA's it would be significantly harder to articulate a concept of SLA. The auto-ethnographic reference that runs like a connecting thread through the entire thesis, posits me in the position of "I-witness" (Geertz 1988: 79): equally analyst and co-participant in a process of mapping the phenomenon of acting in a second-language in England.

By positioning my own experience (Romanian professional actor emigrating to England to first undertake an unskilled job, to then become an actor with an agent, to then become an independent theatre-maker and a researcher) as the starting point of the entire project, I seek to fulfill Norman Denzin's instruction that: "The tale being told [by the auto-ethnographic discourse] should reflect back on, be entangled in, and critique this current historical moment and its discontents" (Denzin 1997: 25). Therefore, the experience of an SLA currently living and working in England represents the most profitable manner in which to pose the problem of the SLA in the English context. I have also considered my experience to be somewhat unusual (triggered as it was by a profound inclination towards withdrawal and a genuine wish to make myself disappear as a Romanian professional actor, as I will detail later in the Introduction) and therefore prone to incite – in its interconnectedness with other SLA experiences – a novel, unusual critical journey to 'somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to' (Geertz 1988: 13-14). Therefore, the auto-ethnographic approach becomes - beyond an immediate necessity produced

by the lack of other previously-tested routes – ‘essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake’ (Geertz 1988: 13-14). This alternative route satisfactorily deals, I argue, with the great question of where to start from with the analysis in the array of diverse, heterogeneous and often inconsistent, unfinished experiences of SLA’s being active in England.

Doubtless, all SLA’s that this research project discusses have become SLA’s because of an innate wish to become a foreigner, by surpassing their native-ness, as Julia Kristeva emphasized: ‘‘a person of the twentieth century can exist honestly only as a foreigner.’’ (Kristeva 1986: 286) Such curiosity to break boundaries of native language and culture must nevertheless characterize all Second-Language Actors. Jacques Derrida underlines – in his dialogue with Anne Dufourmantelle, entitled *Of Hospitality – Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond* ‘‘the necessity of exile in order for ‘‘oneself as another’’ [...] to come into being.’’ (Derrida 2000: 130) There must also exist – in many, if not all SLA’s - an underlying need to re-invent oneself as an artist after breaking the known boundaries of native culture and language, and an urge to re-evaluate one’s field of professional knowledge and expression, in a manner that Salman Rushdie has determined thus: ‘‘to see things clearly, you have to cross a frontier [...] Migrants must, of necessity, make a new imaginative relationship with the world.’’ (Rushdie 1991: 124-5) It is no doubt that many of such frontier-crossings (linguistic, cultural and not only) by SLA’s in-the-making must have occurred under an impulse to look for better chances to learn as artists and exposure to new, unexplored environments. For instance, this is what English actress Kristin Scott Thomas (who works extensively in French) thinks: ‘‘Exoticism can give you an edge [...] in France, the range of characters I’m asked to play is much wider than in England’’ (Esler 2007: online resource).

However, as noted above, my transformation from a professional actor in Romania into an SLA in England has occurred in rather unusual circumstances. Growing up in a country where the utopian dream of Communism was in active disintegration, I had incorporated (like many other Romanians) with a heightened sensibility, the post-apocalyptic atmosphere installed after almost half a century of living outside the normal flow of history. As Romanian historian Lucian Boia observed in *The Scientific Mythology of Communism*, the Communist ideal had always been 'to conquer freedom [by] exit[ing] history' (Boia 2000: 6) and to establish "the perfect Communist society" (Boia 2000: 24). The aftermath of almost fifty years of such aberrant experimentation concluded in a lingering sense of meaninglessness: a sentiment that conquered a country very unsure about how to re-join the fast lane of history. Not having the resolve to see how this (elusive) closing-the-time-gap process would unfold, approximately 3,4 million Romanians - according to a UN report (UN 2016: online resource) - left the country between 2007 and 2015. I was also part of this deluge of people. For myself however, meaninglessness was not synonymous (as for many of the 3,4 million) with unsatisfactory economic standards: instead, the very peculiar sentiment of meaninglessness invited a dreaming about some sort of new, possibly unexpected and intoxicating artistic liberty. The thought of leaving the country hid the promise of a newly found sense of creative independence, the possibility to float in a "bottomless Cosmos" of novel opportunities instigated by the risky rupture with the native language and culture. I should note that, not being based on a dream for better economic conditions, my emigration to England was triggered by an instinct to separate from home and a dream of an artistic existence in isolation and loneliness (perhaps also as a prolongation/side-effect of the state of meaninglessness that Romanian society was engulfed in, in my youngest years):



Dreaming of islands is dreaming of pulling away, of being already separate, far from any continent, of being lost and alone – or it is dreaming of starting from scratch, recreating, beginning anew. (Deleuze 2004: 10)

This instinct to break up – to become what Allen Kaprow's has called the un-artist: "the offspring of high artists who has left home" (Kaprow 2003: 230) - and exist in separation on my own artistic *desert island* was enhanced by the concrete realities in the Romanian theatre and film environment. In 2000, I was admitted into the Acting Conservatoire in Bucharest, in what had been a very tough competition, particularly for an 18 years-old coming from a small provincial town, with no connections in the world of theatre. The Conservatoire in Bucharest had the reputation of being extremely competitive and elitist: for instance, there were certain periods when the Conservatoire (at one time, one of the only three acting schools in the entire country) was accepting just four students (boys and girls) per academic year out of hundreds of aspiring candidates. The teachers at the Conservatoire were the country's most prominent actors, directors, scenographers and filmmakers and the students would therefore benefit from the best professional training. After the year 2000, a number of things started to change: the number of students increased significantly in the years after my admission. The Romanian Ministry for Education became a signatory of the *Bologna Accord* in 1999: *The Bologna Higher Education Reform* (1999), representing a step towards the creation of a unitary Higher Education system in Europe through the imposition of a common basic framework. The implementation of the *Bologna Accord* had negative implications for the vocational theatre and film school in Bucharest. In the period after I was admitted, the number of students accepted each year went up to fifty (and later to eighty) per year. In a situation where the number of students rose exponentially, the learning facilities remained the same and the time dedicated to each student's individual professional training severely decreased. Privately-owned mini-conservatoires flourished throughout the country, whilst the number of theatre buildings and theatre companies

remained the same. The number of actors 'produced' per year rose therefore considerably.

Marina Constantinescu, theatre critic and curator of the *National Theatre Festival* of Romania, remarked in an interview that:

We have now an inflation of actors. [...] Leaving aside the catastrophe of the Bologna system which, in my view, has destroyed the theatre school, [...] the majority of teachers have nothing to do with the stage. They have done nothing or close to nothing on the stage. [Also,] in the vocational system you can't work with cohorts. (Constantinescu, 2015: online resource)

In a sense, the sentiment of meaninglessness which was permeating the entire country was being replicated – with specific effects and nuances – in the acting profession. My inability to adapt to this new reality has made me want to completely renounce my life as an actor. The auto-ethnographic reflection that underlines the thesis hinges therefore on this peculiarity: an instinct to vanish, to extinguish myself as a professional actor in Romania, a suicidal urge nuanced by a discreet hope of being able to re-emerge as a kind of post-apocalyptic un-actor, on a totally different plane, in a different culture and language. Gilles Deleuze talks about this urge to seek refuge and re-birth on a *desert island*:

this presupposes that the formation of the world happens in two stages, in two periods of time, birth and re-birth and that the second is just as necessary and essential as the first, and thus the first is necessarily compromised, born for renewal and already renounced in a catastrophe. (Deleuze 2004: 13)

In other words, being caught amidst what I perceived as the catastrophe of Romanian society and of its theatrical culture, I felt compelled to seek to un-actor myself, to untie myself from my profession, vaguely hoping for a re-birth on the *desert island* of another land, culture and language. Framing such an inclination for withdrawal and isolation (which I will translate into the model of a schizo-SLA that I discuss at length in the Third Chapter) cannot be attributed only to 'external,' objective factors such as those aforementioned: this urge to be re-born as an artist must also be understood in relation to the essential profile of myself as an artist. Many actors,

many artists I argue, must possess (in various degrees) and profess an instinct to die in order to be reborn; to become an inhabitant of a *desert island* and to incorporate the “geographical dynamism of the island (island as rupture from the continent, and island as an eruption from the deep)” into the “mythical dynamism of mankind on the deserted island (a derived rupture and an original re-beginning)” (Deleuze 2004: 98) What artist does not at least dream to become the master of such dynamisms and to create for him/herself – like Crusoe – a new world from scratch? The research project starts therefore from this auto-ethnographically-informed premise: an SLA is the peculiar actor-inhabitant of a *desert island*. Philosopher Tatsuya Higaki - in his article “Japan as Thousands Plateaus” – aptly paints the portrait of such a withdrawn creature: “Deleuze plainly relates the fact that desert islands are isolated islands cut off from the continent, and that the people who live there are solitary schizophrenics devoid of an Other.” (Higaki 2018: 248)

By the time of my graduation in 2004, I had already been invited to collaborate with two important theatres in Bucharest: The Comedy Theatre (Teatrul de Comedie) and the Nottara Theatre. Romania’s legislation and organization of theatrical institutions was (and still is) based on a Communist model. Theatres in Romania have permanent troupes of actors, directors, scenographers, etc. Most actors in a permanent troupe are employed for life, even if some of them might not be offered parts to play for years on end. Ion Caramitru, Artistic Director of the Bucharest National Theatre and former Culture Minister, in an interview from 2014, observed that:

The biggest problem of the theatre system in Romania is legislation. It does not please anyone. [...] The law must be changed completely. A law must be made to allow the young actors to enter theatres... and to stop open-ended contracts. (Caramitru, 2015: online resource)

As a young professional actor, I did not want to become the lifetime member of a theatre troupe, although such an opportunity had indeed appeared. I was particularly interested in practising as an independent actor and theatre-maker, able to produce theatre according to my own vision. In 2007 (soon before my departure from Romania), the wish to be an independent theatre-maker seemed a particularly risky – if not altogether naïve – strategy. First of all, the independent movement at that time was extremely marginal in Romania, as becomes evident from the conclusions of a 2016 meeting of Corina Suteu (Culture Minister at the time) with representatives of the independent theatre-makers in Romania. Suteu observes that: "Beginning with 2009-2010, more independent theatre troupes have begun to emerge. At the moment we are outlaws. We manage as best we can. We would like a unitary form of organization." (Marinescu, 2016: online resource). If in 2009-2010 the independent scene was only just appearing, in 2007 it was almost inexistent. New opportunities for travel and work outside the country emerged when Romania joined the EU in 2008: therefore, the dream of pulling away and being independent seemed much easier to be fulfilled outside of my native culture and language. The wish to embark on a Crusoe-like experimentation with myself as an artist appeared to be more than ever within reach: I would be able to dispose of my native language and throw myself into a bottomless sea of possibilities, to die as a Romanian actor and hopefully be re-born into a new kind of actor thereafter. The possibility to let myself as an artist hang only by a thread, to be the architect of my own shipwreck – appeared as the highest form of affirming independence. Withdrawing from my native theatrical culture carried the luminous promise of becoming a self-created, absolutely independent inhabitant of a *desert island* of theatre in a foreign, newly discovered (and for myself, totally unknown and therefore deserted) country, culture and language:

An island doesn't stop being deserted simply because it is inhabited. While it is true that the movement of humans toward and on the island takes up the movement of the island

prior to humankind, some people can occupy the island – it is still deserted, all the more so, provided they are sufficiently, that is absolutely separate, and provided they are sufficient, absolute creators. Certainly, this is never the case in fact, though people who are shipwrecked approach such a condition. (Deleuze, 2004: 10)

Embedded in an auto-ethnographic reading, the research project sets as its corner stone this "mad energy of rupture" that necessarily defines any sort of departure from one's language and culture: "Everybody who accomplishes anything must leave home" (Kincaid 1995: online resource) emphatically declares writer Jamaica Kincaid. I argue that all SLA's must rely (to some degree) – in their more or less usual departures from the native language and re-emergence on the English scene - on such élan of rupture and appetite for wandering on a *desert island*. I return here to Eugenio Barba's floating island and paper canoe metaphors and to his poignant note: "What was my first day in theatre? Perhaps it was the day I lost my mother tongue and made myself into a foreigner, in a country which was not the country of my birth." (Barba 1986: 19) It is the aim of the present research to look for this energy of rupture in all the SLA experiences being discussed, seeking to understand how that energy subsequently plays out in the re-birth of the actor on the English stage or screen and in the second language. The third way for the coming into being of an SLA – detailed in the *Third Chapter* – speculates to the maximum this violent departure from one's native language and advocates for its re-embodiment into a radical form of Second-Language Actor. Anchored in the auto-ethnographic reading, the idea of a third type of SLA imagines the "instinct" for absolute separation/subtraction brought to its perfection in the emergence and establishment of the schizo-SLA in England:

To that question so dear to the old explorers – "which creatures live on deserted island?" – one could only answer: human beings live there already, but uncommon humans, they are absolutely separate, absolute creators, in short, an Idea of humanity, a prototype, a man who would almost be a god, a woman who would be a goddess, a great Amnesiac, a pure Artist, a consciousness of Earth and Ocean, an enormous hurricane, a beautiful witch, a statue from the Easter Islands. (Deleuze, 2004: 11)

At the centre of my analysis of the phenomenon of second-language acting sits therefore the "derived rupture and an original re-beginning" (Deleuze, 2004: 98), which must characterize – to paroxysm (I will argue) – the emergence of an SLA on the English stages and screens. My personal history as an SLA and its subsequent auto-ethnographic interpretation in the present thesis impacts the entire research project, particularly the way in which I envisage the SLA as originating/coming into being from within an immanent field (the *plane of immanence* of second language acting), rather than being constructed artificially by the transcendental, God-like, "casting" powers of screen and stage (through directors like Brook).

I will call these powers *grammaticality*. The *Second Chapter* introduces and analyses the concept of *grammaticality*, which is envisaged as a complex machinery that restricts the freedom of an SLA to become him/herself and affirm him/herself independently as re-born on a *desert island*. Subsequently, the *Third Chapter* proposes a new way of defining and articulating the concept of SLA (as a schizo-SLA), in a move to release the concept from the censoring powers of *grammaticality*. The émigré actor is seen to emerge in full independence, in contradiction with the norms of *grammaticality* - an approach which continues to draw on the image of a subtractive, suspicious, solitary, amnesiac dweller of the *desert island*: "the migrant suspects reality: having experienced several ways of being, he understands their illusory nature." (Rushdie 1991: 124-5)

As mentioned above, the auto-ethnographic approach is imposed (to a large extent) by the lack of literature dedicated specifically to the topic of the SLA (and more precisely to who an SLA is as an artist). There is an evident lack of detailed analysis of the internal processes that lead to the appearance of an SLA: as such, instrumentalising my own experience as SLA, I tackle the question of what is needed for an SLA to come into being and how that coming into being

unfolds. I am also interested to understand what are the particular barriers that this special kind of actor encounters during the creative process.

Putting auto-ethnography at the foundation of the research journey does not signify an attempt to reduce the notion of second-language acting to my personal experience: on the contrary, I use that personal experience (which is again one of intense isolation, un-artist-ing and withdrawal) as the much-needed fixed point from which to dialogically and qualitatively engage (from the remote observation tower represented by the *desert island*) with other SLA experiences: ‘‘it is not a question of going native. It is a question of living a multiplex life; sailing at once in multiple seas’’ (Geertz 1988: 77) How else could I better cover the vast array of second-language acting experiences and trajectories if not from that isolated and remote withdrawal point that I have acquired for myself on the *desert island*? Therefore, the auto-ethnographic reading tends to lose its subjective, personal/biographical surface, through a sustained ‘‘attempt to reflexively map multiple discourses that occur’’ (Denzin 1997: xvii) for different, diverse SLA’s on the English stages and screens.

The isolated point from within which I conduct the dialogue with other SLA experiences allows me to contemplate a hermeneutic, rhizomatic map of acting in a second language experiences in England:

The rhizome is irreducible neither to the One nor to the multiple. [...] It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overfills. It constitutes linear multiplicities with  $n$  dimensions [...] from which the One is always subtracted ( $n-1$ ). (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 23)

This particular type of mapping – constructing a rhizome-like set of readings/connections between experiences - allows me as a researcher to contemplate (from the comfort zone of my *desert island* isolation) the true diversity, inconsistency, unpredictability and rootlessness of the phenomenon of acting in a second language. A concept of Actor in a Second Language emerges

therefore from multiple planes and directions, which overflow from one intense, vibrating point, - my own experience of coming into being as an SLA:

A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, between interbeing, intermezzo. [...] Where are you going? Where are you coming from? What are you heading for? These are totally useless questions. (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 27)

Starting from a maddening personal curiosity (who am I and who can I (un-)become as an actor in another language), the research project is inclined towards articulating an ontology of the SLA: a concept of SLA that grows forth from within the rhizomatic connections between my own experience and that of other SLA's. Therefore, the research project envisages the phenomenon of second-language acting (in England) as having no determinable core, but emerging as the sum of relations between diverse experiences, sum which "has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows." (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 23)

### **The Ontological Turn**

An SLA - I will argue - is born from the act of speaking in the second language: this is the fundamental feature that Binoche, me, Garbo, Karamalegos, the Bulgarian actor, Marlene Dietrich, Penelope Cruz and all other SLA's in England or elsewhere in the world, in the past or today share. That is how I can link my experience with that of Binoche and Binoche's with that of the Bristol-based Bulgarian actress and further with that of Sofie Gråbøl at the *National Theatre*.

Having established that, the research project will take into account the "external" factors which might influence how an SLA's function, role and importance are constructed on the English stage and screen. These conditions can be encompassed under the wider banner that Erika



Fischer-Lichte calls "the politics of interweaving performance cultures" (Erika Fischer-Lichte 2014) in performance. Patrice Pavis, Bhiku Parekh, Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Dasgupta, Tariq Modood, Rustom Bharucha, Elinor Fuchs, Ali Rattansi, Will Kymlicka, Nadine Holdsworth, or Lara Nielsen and Patricia Ibara are theorists that I will invoke in order to illustrate some of the specific cultural/artistic conditions/contexts in which interweaving occurs, inviting and - in some degree – determining the presence (not the ontology) of SLA's on English stage and screen. However, the aim is not to provide a cultural studies-anchored response to the question of who an SLA is. The aim of the research is that of producing an ontology of the SLA, by identifying what kind of distinctive actor he/she can be(come), and what are his/her unique creative qualities in contrast to other (native) actors. That is why the cultural studies element will come secondary in the critical discourse, with the main argument moving into the realm of performance philosophy.

As such, I will turn to the thinking of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Gaston Bachelard, Alain Badiou, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Vilem Flusser, and Laura Cull, with the aim to sketch an ontology (in three stages) of the SLA and therefore to respond to the all-important question of "Who is an SLA?" (and Who am I as an SLA?).

### **Organisation of the Argument – A Bottomless Hourglass**

The geometry of the bottomless hourglass in Figure 1 enables a better illustration of the way in which the argument will circulate throughout the body of the thesis.

The First Chapter introduces the concept of immanent theatres of second language acting (or the *plane of immanence* of second language acting). Detectable within an irregular agglomeration (which surpasses the boundaries of the stage and screen) of disparate, the simplest, most banal

acts/utterances in the second language - each of them in their own unique way – reveal immanent theatres of second-language acting. The ontology of an SLA necessarily starts with and in the act/event of speaking in the second language English and is afterwards animated by schizo-*affect*. I will employ the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of *affect* to describe that particular type of energy (expressed, as will be shown, through an incongruent, disorganized diminution or augmentation), which ‘possesses’ the actor/speaker’s body (not solely the physical body) during the act of utterance in the second language. Schizo-*affect* is a particular kind of energy characterizing the immanent theatres in a second language and sustaining the ontology/emergence of an(y) SLA. Moved by schizo-*affect*, an immanent-SLA takes shape directly and overflows from within the utterance in the second language. Therefore, I argue that an(y) SLA is capable of self-creation and self-determination through a process of self-propelling and over-spillage from within the act/event itself of speaking in a second language (marker always of an immanent theatre). I will call this complex process of self-birth – borrowing a Deleuze and Guattari concept – *becoming-SLA*. Finally, the first chapter outlines how an SLA is emergent from the *plane of immanence* of the act of uttering and travelling towards the *plane of composition* of the stage or the screen on which that act is framed, can be seen as always caught in a process of *becoming-SLA*. Subsequently, this transient state defines who an SLA is. The key element in the ontology of an SLA is therefore *becoming-SLA*: an open-ended process of de-territorialising the second language English and re-territorialising it through schizo-*affect*, under the power of the actor’s native language. *Becoming-SLA* is an elusive process unleashed in the act/event of crocheting native language codes onto the second language English. *Becoming-SLA* becomes apparent and detectable through two of its ‘symptoms’:

- the emergence of a new linguistic domain, which I will call English-becoming-another-language (a de-territorialization of the second language English by the codes of the native language of the actor during utterance) and
- a re-articulation and re-invention (through *affect*) of the organs and body of the actor so that it can withstand the task of inhabiting this newly created linguistic domain.

The First Chapter is informed by the practice-based project called *Billie Killer*.

As the ontological journey continues, an SLA moves towards the *plane of composition* (the lower half of the bottomless hourglass), which designates the act/event of speaking in a second language on stage and/or on screen. However, before reaching the *plane of composition*, an SLA in-the-making must pass through the middle part or the neck of the hourglass. The middle part of the hourglass is represented by *grammaticality* – a complex machinery which seeks to capture the fluid process of *becoming* that characterizes an SLA in his/her ontology and set it into fixed, unmovable forms.

Second Chapter introduces the concept of *grammaticality* (inspired by Deleuze and Guattari and reinforced by Derrida's concept of *hospitality*), which designates the complex machine for censoring the "utterance" of the SLA, with the purpose of producing a stable identity of the SLA (an empty replacement of *becoming*) on the existent *plane of composition* of second language acting (current English stages and screens). In that way, *grammaticality* interrupts an SLA's ontology and transforms it into a genealogy, by asking the following questions about the actor who utters in the second language: Where are you from? What is your accent?

*Grammaticality* is pitted against *becoming* and works through people (directors, policymakers, casting directors, producers, curators, audiences, etc.) and techniques (castings, profiling of actors, curating, programming of performances, etc.). I argue that after having passed through the coercive, censoring, molding mechanisms of *grammaticality*, an SLA (on the stages and screens

of England) is ‘‘cast out,’’ created, made or written in two guises only: *Migrant*-SLA (an actor who plays/utters only foreigners’ roles and is forever attached to what is deemed to be his/her ‘‘native accent.’’ In the English language) or a *Nomad*-SLA (an actor who is permitted only temporary, occasional and conditional access to roles other than those of ‘‘foreigners’’). Under the strain of *grammaticality*, an SLA reaches the *plane of composition* not as born by and through her/himself from within the *plane of immanence* but as born, made or curated by an external machine.

The Third Chapter ponders the possibilities to exit or overcome the cul-de-sac that *grammaticality* puts in front of an(y) SLA and his/her ontology from within immanence.

Anchored in the concepts of *desert island* (Gilles Deleuze) and *bottomlessness* (Vilém Flusser), I propose a third way in which to continue the ontology of the SLA, in a post-apocalyptic (on a *desert island* which allows re-birth after the disaster and the rupture, on a different plane), post-*grammaticality* scenario. Engaged on this third route, the SLA can resume the process of *becoming* (on a new, alternative, self-invented *plane of composition*) and regain the power to control his/her own ontology, leaving behind the forces of *grammaticality*. Drawing again from Deleuze and Guattari, the third way indicates the emergence of a schizo-SLA: a ‘‘schizophrenic [actor] out for a walk’’ (Deleuze, Guattari 1983: 2) in-between two languages (native and second and native with second). This type of SLA (an alternative to *Migrant* and *Nomad*) involves a re-evaluation/re-interpretation of an SLA’s body (the second condition of *becoming*, listed in *First Chapter*), in the equation of a dis-organ-ised, de-territorialised, dis-function-al, schizoid Body-without-Organs of the actor. If the immanent SLA of the *First Chapter* was predicated upon the playfulness, randomness and free improvisation found in the act/event of speaking the second language (on the street, in the park, on the shop floor), the schizo-SLA adds to the violence of the dis-organ-isation of the body of the actor who has to withstand and express him/herself – this

time on stage or on screen - in an English-becoming-another-language. The theoretical argument in the third chapter is complemented and reinforced by the practice-as research-project *BANDIT*.

Laura Cull has pointed out in *Theatres of Immanence - Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance* that:

Immanence has ‘two powers’ or tendencies; a chaotic tendency towards the greatest degrees of movement and change, and an organizing tendency towards the production of relatively stable forms and identities. (Cull 2012: 225)

The bottomless hourglass – a geometric figure stripped of its upper and lower edges – denotes a similar tendency towards chaos at both ends, as the upper and the lower part are both “staring” into the abyss of immanence. The random acts of speaking in the second language open the upper edge of the hourglass towards the bottomlessness of ever-more playfulness in the second language English. On the other hand, in the lower part of the hourglass, bottomlessness is achieved through an ever more violent, ever more schizz-ed fight to escape the powers of *grammaticality*. The characteristic of bottomlessness with which the hourglass argument is endowed is not accidental. It is inspired by the work and thinking of Vilém Flusser. Philosopher, writer and journalist, Flusser was born in Prague, in 1920, in a family of Jewish intellectuals. Forced into exile by the rise of the Nazis, Flusser fled to London in 1939, and subsequently to Sao Paolo (1940), where he lived and worked for three decades. After the situation in Brazil started to deteriorate – in the wake of the military coup of 1964 – Flusser returned to Europe – living first in Italy and thereafter in France – from where he continued to lead a nomadic life of lectures and conferences until the tragic end of his life in 1991. Flusser’s thinking was greatly impacted by the loss of his native home in tragic conditions, as he later on confessed:

All of the people to whom I was mysteriously bound in Prague were murdered. All of them. The Jews in gas chambers, the Czechs in the Resistance, the German's on the Russian front. (Flusser, 2002: xx)

With his personal universe destroyed, Flusser experienced a “feeling of vertigo and of a complete loss of orientation” that would later become “the starting point of all his future thoughts and feelings [...] his essence.” (Stohl, 2002: xix). This feeling of being pushed out of life – which Flusser called *bottomlessness* or *bodenlos* - was to become a concept central to his work and thinking. Flusser realized that:

through emigration one is responsible for separating oneself from one's home, to throw oneself into the yawning abyss of meaninglessness... from this point on one is consuming one's own energy, not the energy that comes from the nurturing earth... A life in bottomlessness had begun. (Flusser, 2002: xx)

The concept will be employed throughout the thesis, with particular emphasis in the first and third chapters. In the *Third Chapter*, I will discuss the concept of *bottomlessness* at length and propose it as the conceptual and existential solvent necessary for the emergence of a new kind of SLA, the schizo-SLA. The upper half of the hourglass contains the promise of bottomless possibilities of improvisation in second language English, which a non-native act<sup>1</sup>-or triggers in her contact with the second language English. In the lower half of the hourglass, *bottomlessness* augurs for an ever-renewed fight of the actor to be liberated from the forces of *grammaticality*, which appear and re-appear, always seeking to encapsulate, to shape/curate, to reduce the ever-moving, ever-evolving process of *becoming*-SLA. The neck of the hourglass suggests the organising, constricting tendency of *grammaticality*. Finally, the hourglass does not suggest a final settlement into geometrical representation of the argument about the ontology of an SLA: the figure should be seen as a single cell, part of a long series, part of a growing column made of similar hourglasses, where *bottomlessness* and chaos always must be fought for and re-discovered, as various (new) kinds of *grammaticalities* always tend to re-appear, and ever-new organisational tendencies strangulate *bottomlessness* into neck-like zones.

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<sup>1</sup>The act-or denotes the person (not necessarily a professional actor) involved in an act of speaking the second language.

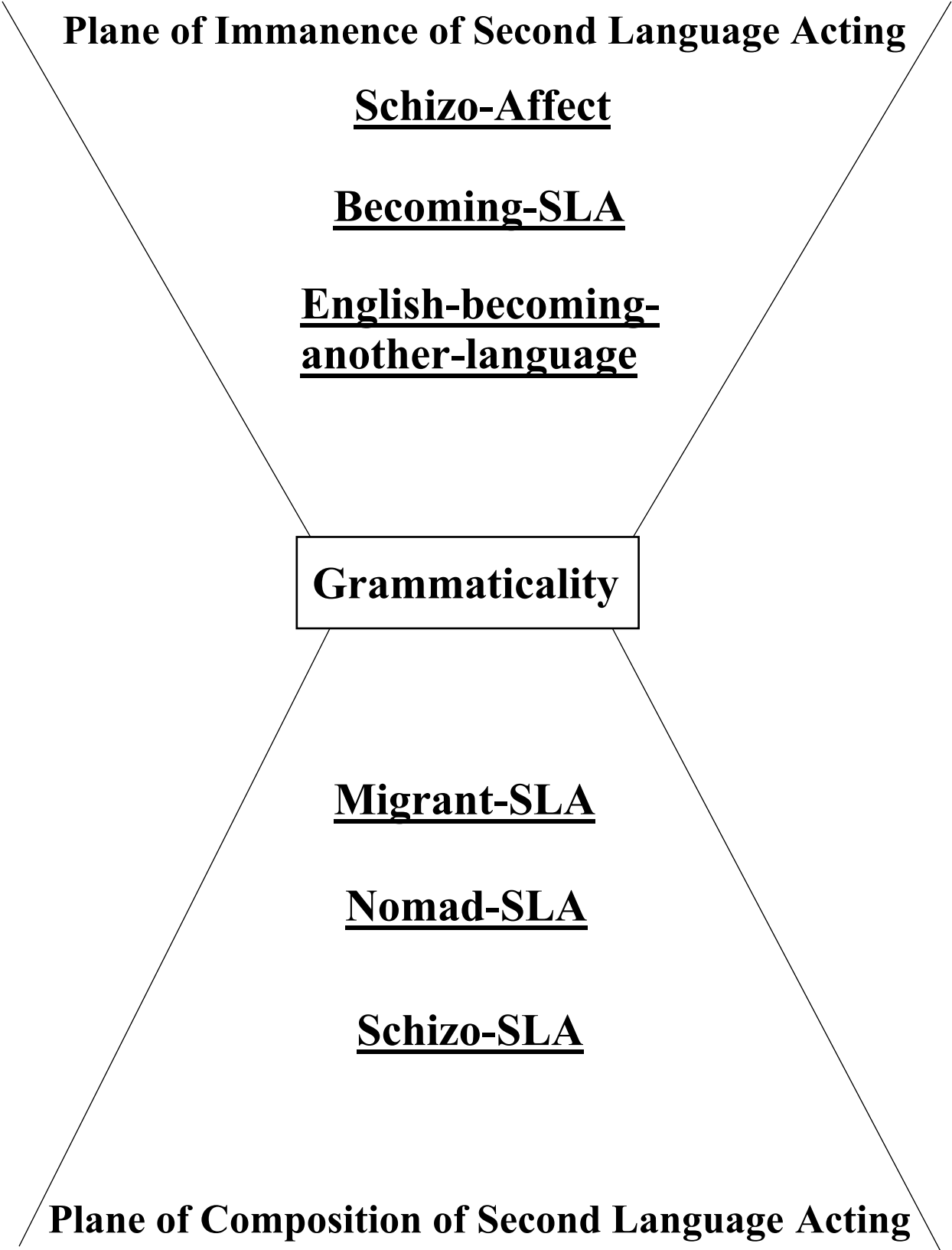


Figure 1: Bottomless Hourglass

## Practice-based research - Nu Nu Theatre

The practice-based research component has been conducted under the umbrella of *Nu Nu Theatre*, a company created to test ideas that concern the ontology of an SLA. *Nu Nu Theatre Company* was established at the beginning of the present research activity, in late 2012, in Bristol, UK. The company was founded by two Romanian professional theatre-makers and emerging SLAs: me, the author of this research project and Ileana Gherghina, who has directed the two practice-based research pieces. The fundamental aim of the two-person company was to carry forward and experiment with our instincts for separation and withdrawal as artists and to understand how we could both be re-born as SLAs in England and create unhindered as actors on a *desert island*. *Nu Nu Theatre's* life has now entered in its seventh year. Throughout this entire period, both actors at *Nu Nu Theatre* have experimented with articulating personal identities and understanding their own ontologies as SLA's in England, after the "apocalypse" represented by their emigration and rupture with native language and culture. *Nu Nu Theatre* fills a void in the English theatre market, by being the only theatre company dedicated exclusively to the study of SLA's ontology.<sup>2</sup> It is very important to note, that before anything else, Nu Nu is a theatre company that tests philosophical ideas about the coming into being of an SLA and tests them through performance. Therefore, as peculiar as it might appear, Nu Nu's interests are not primarily of an aesthetical or theatrical order – instead, the company operates more on a philosophy of performance level, by means of theatrical experiment. In other words, the company enables primarily a putting into practice (through theatrical means) of philosophical ideas about the ontology of an SLA: the fact that these ideas are tested by means of the theatrical

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<sup>2</sup> Nu Nu does not believe in the intercultural theatre formulas – its interest lies solely in the SLA's ontology.



spectacle is secondary. It is important to stress that this particularity distinguishes the company from other companies who might be working with actors from other cultures or languages in England, under the general banner of interweaving performance cultures. Nu Nu is not primarily preoccupied with creating theatrical output; the company does not want to make it in the theatre world or to prove its worth to the theatrical world - its main objective is to test in practice philosophical ideas about the SLA. The results of that experimentation might take the form of a theatrical spectacle, but the latter is only a secondary product and it is not of immediate interest to the two theatre-makers. This detail explains Nu Nu's rather unusual profile in the English theatre market and its particular (heterotopic) positioning in rapport to the latter. The role of the practice has been to test and develop an alternative to the current SLA manifestations in England. The practice-based research side of the project has not been considered a central element, from which all judgements about SLA and his/her ontology emanate. On the contrary, the two performance pieces developed throughout the period of practice-based research (and analyzed later on in the course of this thesis), along with the establishment of Nu Nu Theatre, were meant to represent merely alternative coordinates on a rhizomatic map of possible ontologies/genealogies of SLAs in England. In the course of the thesis, I have highlighted a number of examples of SLAs being made or being born. Amongst those examples, Nu Nu's SLAs (studied in the two theatrical projects) represent distinct case studies. The practical work (together with elements pertaining to the theoretical investigation) allowed me to identify the two versions of SLA currently active in England, which I have called *Migrant-SLA* and *Nomad-SLA*. I have arranged these two versions of SLA in the hourglass model and – with the help of the practical work – I have been able to realise the shift in the third chapter of the thesis, proposing the schizo-SLA as another possible version of SLA. The practice-based projects have therefore been imagined as integrated in a wider (rhizomatic) map of possibilities, where shifts, jumps, cul-de-

sacs for an SLA are always possible. This map of possibilities is in full evolution and my critical reflection represents only the intensification of a particular itinerary within an ever-evolving map of second language acting in England. I am pointing at – with my example of an SLA, with my theatre company and its practice-based research projects - just one possibility amongst many others. The result of my investigation – the figure of the schizo-SLA – is of course, only another dot on the bigger, full of other dots, evolving map of second language acting in England. The schizo-SLA does not represent a final answer to the question of who is an SLA but appears as the result of a tensioned, at times contradictory dialogue (articulated through practice) with the other current solutions (Migrant and Nomad). It is also important to underline the distinction that I am making between practice-as-research and practice-based research. By saying that I undertook practice-based research, I want to make clearer the fact that I have used the practice to develop my theory: part of my theory (specifically the discussion surrounding the schizo-SLA) is based on my practice (materialized in the two theatre projects and realized under the umbrella of Nu Nu Theatre).

*Nu Nu Theatre* has located itself at conjunctions between various physical and non-physical spaces, the first such conjunction being that between philosophical ideas/concepts and theatrical performance. Even though it is formally located in Bristol, the company does not possess any permanent residence other than the current domicile of its two founders: its location is therefore imagined as a purely itinerant one, changing along with the address of the two founders. The space that it has most often used for rehearsals and the premiering of its experimentation is represented by the two theatre spaces belonging to the Theatre Department of University of Bristol. Coinciding with the period of research, the life of Nu Nu has been very much connected to the space generously provided by the Theatre Department. In the first five years of its life, Nu Nu has depended very much on the University facilities and infrastructure and sometimes even

on small amounts of funding to help it produce its experiments at the crossroads between theatre and philosophical thinking. A fragile establishment of the company was therefore possible, establishment which otherwise - given Nu Nu's ultra-niche ontological experimentations - would have proven particularly difficult, given the current theatre market conditions. Nu Nu's relation to the university has been one of semi-parasitism: although the main purpose for establishing the company was that of research/experimentation into the ontology of an SLA, Nu Nu has also managed (to some degree) to promote itself on the theatre festival circuit. The company's productions have been presented in festivals in the UK and abroad, one project (*Billie Killer* obtaining *Arts Council England* funding and other projects benefitting from various types of support from external institutions. Therefore, utilising the facilities and infrastructure of the Theatre Department has enabled not only the functioning in a closed (fully academic/experimental) circuit but also sometimes the promotion of Nu Nu's experiments in the wider theatre market. In the article *The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses*, Fred Morten and Stefano Harney emphatically declare that:

The only possible relationship with the university today is a criminal one. [...] one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of. (Morten, Harney 2004: 111)

What other, better temporary location and initial abode could the only company in England dedicated to testing the ontology of SLA's (such unusual topic), find other than the University, with its welcoming stance on research refugees and gypsies and with its "commitment to what we call the prophetic organisation." (Morten, Harney 2004: 111) Places of refuge askew to the English stages and screens, the two theatre-spaces of the Theatre Department offered an ideal temporary environment for Nu Nu's safe incubation, not implying an automatic need for exposure to and contact with the wider arts/theatrical market, yet not totally preventing a certain

degree of opening-up of the experimentation to the wider audiences. The profound sense of isolation and withdrawal (on the *desert island* of a theatricalized ontology) was fulfilled through such a semi-parasitical model of subsistence: a theatre company that is not primarily about theatre existing in isolation, experimenting and opening-up to wider audiences only as much as deemed opportune. In a certain sense therefore, my ontology as an SLA in England (and subsequently, the auto-ethnographic reading of the theme of second-language acting) was informed by the subsistence in the safe, hidden corner of the University. My coming into being as an SLA was also a product of relative poverty (Nu Nu's lack of financial means and ampler space/infrastructure), which underlined and reinforced the need to exist (and start from scratch) in isolation. Nu Nu's SLAs have certainly confirmed Will Kymlica's idea – expressed in *Multicultural Citizenship – A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* – that "the choice to leave one's culture can be seen as analogous to the choice of taking a vow of perpetual poverty and enter a religious order." (Kymlica 1995: 86) Led by an instinct for withdrawal, the two SLA's of Nu Nu experimented on themselves – in controlled reclusiveness and poverty - playing with philosophical ideas of being, in a monastic type of existence, nurtured by a semi-parasiting of the University facilities. In that sense, Nu Nu follows (modestly) in the footsteps of other illustrious experimenters, such as Grotowski or Barba, who have also worked withdrawn and reclusive: the first with minimal resources and in an imposed "poverty" and the latter making "austerity and solitude [...] synonymous with the *Odin Teatret*, which was once described as a monastic outpost of theatre on the edge of Europe." (Bharucha 1993: 55) Nu Nu – in its adamant focus on SLA's ontology – is emboldened by similar principles of austerity and isolation. The only significant difference lies in the fact that Nu Nu's concern has never been primarily theatrical, but to understand who we are or can be as SLA's. Nu Nu exists therefore as a heterotopic site: in the no-where created by the actors' desertion of their native language and culture and the

subtraction and isolation from the official scenes and screens of England (and generally from the idea of producing theatre). The actors' instinct to live and create as if on a *desert island* influences *Nu Nu Theatre's* heterotopic spatial and non-theatrical emplacement, as Foucault calls it:

Today the site has been substituted for extension which itself had replaced emplacement. The site is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements; formally, we can describe these relations as series, trees, or grids. (Foucault, 1984: 46)

In the *Third Chapter*, I will talk in greater detail about Nu Nu's heterotopic localisation and the role that heterotopia plays in the confrontation with *grammaticality*: the aspect of localisation will be shown as crucial to the establishing of a third way for an SLA's coming into being.

## 1. First Chapter: Towards an Ontology of the SLA

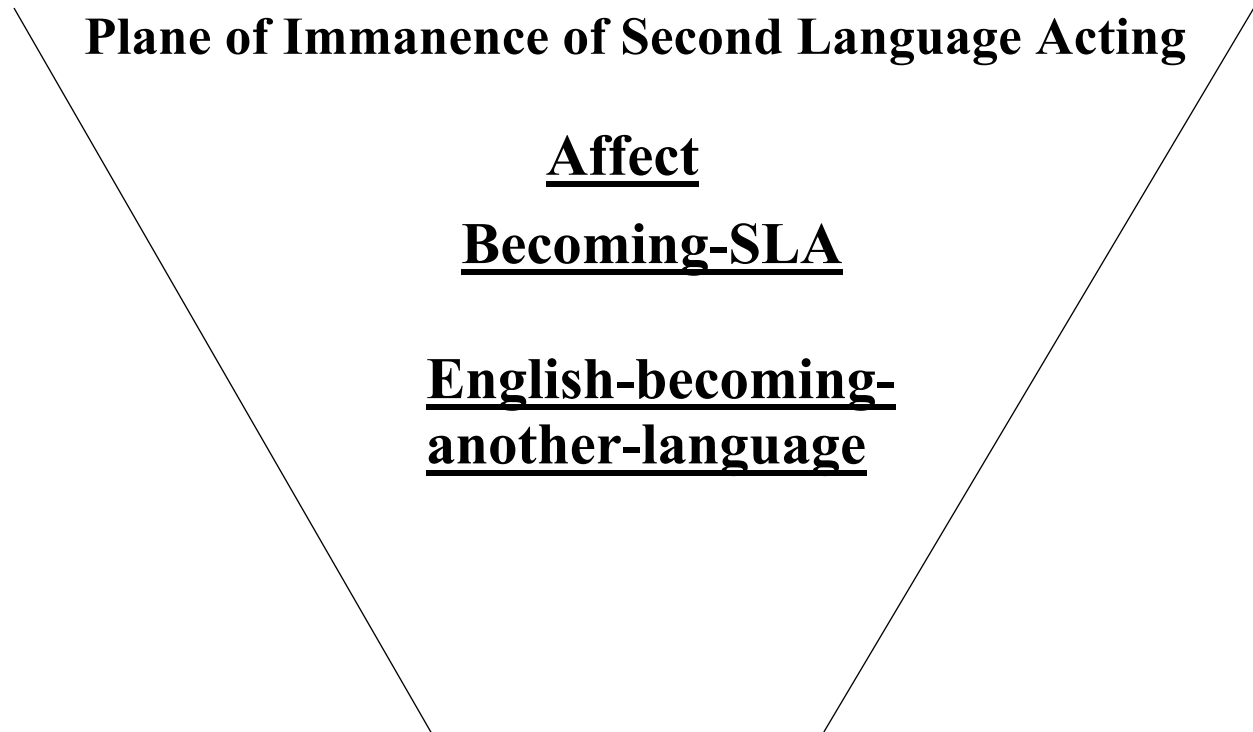


Figure 2. The upper part of the hourglass

### 1.1 Immanent SLA

In the light of the auto-ethnographic approach, I will note that my debut as an SLA was in a farm field, in a tiny village of Herefordshire, England. There I was, at the beginning of 2008: a professionally trained actor from Romania (who had performed in a number of important theatre projects on some of Bucharest's prestigious stages), newly arrived in the tiny village of Harewood End via the Agricultural Workers Scheme, which was, at the time, one of the very few options available to people who wanted to come to live and work in England. The idea of a self-fashioning and a self-propelling of an SLA from within an immanent condition is directly linked

to this personal experience of functioning like a kind of shipwreck in the middle of the green farm fields of England. Inspired therefore by the auto-ethnographic stance, the ontology of an SLA proposed here is seen to emerge from a sense of being lost in a corner of the world: “In these angles and corners, the dreamer [i.e. the SLA who dreams about the *desert island*] would appear to enjoy the repose that divides being and non-being.” (Bachelard 1994: 145) That is the personal reality which sustained – both topographically and artistically – my emergence as an SLA: the stasis and rupture caused by departing from my native language and having just entered a non-native one. The annulment (the repose between being and non-being) of myself as a professional Romanian actor began in this stasis, which contained the promise of a re-birth as an SLA. Being in between being and non-being does nothing else but to indicate the great potential for a subtractive ontology of a future SLA: lost, thrown, shipwrecked on the professional *desert island* of the farm field, the sudden sea of repose inscribes and pre-empts the possibility for the actor to emerge afresh.<sup>3</sup> The conditions are ripe for a new emergence, a self-fashioning, as Gaston Bachelard explains, triggered by the simplest of events: “He [the dreamer/the future SLA] is the being of an unreality. Only an event can cast him out.” (Bachelard 1994: 145). Isn’t this much anticipated event the very act of speaking/uttering in the second language English? Did my re-emergence from the shipwreck (this time as a future/potential actor in another language) not begin with the first words chanted in English whilst planting strawberries? The second language English, sewn into by my Romanian-speaking mouth in an uttering. Two distinct syntaxes, grammars, two worlds of sound touching each other to produce a zone of contact, from where that post-apocalyptic “atomic object” (Jöttkandt 2010: 75) can take off in any direction. The suture of codes pertaining to two languages in utterance carries every time the

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<sup>3</sup> There is an incomplete, ruptured un-actor that lies here at the intersection of being with non-being. It contains what Alain Badiou calls an “atomic object” ready to enter into a “new possibility of formalisation” (Jöttkandt 2010: 75).

promise of an SLA that waits to be born. What more than the very act of speaking in a second language English could make me feel as though I belong to the wider family of SLA's including famous actors such as Alexander Dreymon, Juliette Binoche, or Sofie Gråbøl? What else could unite me – a former actor turned farm worker - with these other second-language actors if not the second language utterance itself?

The argument that I put forward therefore is that the very act and event of uttering in the second language English intrinsically characterizes and brings into being both Binoche and Gråbøl as SLA's, together with a Bulgarian, Greek, Indian, Chinese actor and myself. Anchoring an SLA's ontology in the act/event does not put me or the Bulgarian actor who plays in amateur productions on an equal footing - from a professional point of view - with Binoche, Gabrol or Dreymon. What this auto-ethnographic-instilled approach is able to achieve is a change of perspective, a break with the way we may be currently inclined to determine who an SLA is. We are inclined to understand an SLA mainly as a product of the complex machinery of stages and screens, instrumented by directors, writers, casting agents, cultural institutions, etc. Anchored in the auto-ethnographic reading of isolation and withdrawal, the research project proposes a new perspective: it insists on the capacity of an SLA to self-create, to affirm herself from within the very act of utterance, autonomously vis-à-vis the stages and screens that are currently seen as the God-like, transcendental "makers" of SLA's. By way of this new perspective, I am able to enhance the voices of minoritarian, not-yet-formalized, often incomplete experiences of existing or becoming an SLA in England. It is these minoritarian experiences that hold the key – I argue - to a truer ontology of the SLA. Having pursued this line of argument, it is crucial to make the following distinction: SLA's on English stages and screens are indeed a minority. That does not make them minoritarian, however. Minoritarian – in its Deleuzo-Guattarian sense - refers to the condition of being able to create and affirm oneself from within, to be able to articulate and



speak an alternative language, to be able to propose an alternative emergence rather than the existent one. With regards to the concept of minoritarian, Deleuze and Guattari warn that:

It is important not to confuse ‘‘minoritarian,’’ as a becoming or process, with a ‘‘minority,’’ as an aggregate of state. Jews, Gypsies, etc. may constitute minorities under certain conditions, but that itself does not make them becomings.’’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 321)

Laura Cull, in *Theatres of Immanence - Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance*, further explains that ‘‘a minor practice is not necessarily one performed by those identified or identifying as belonging to a ‘minority’ group, as they are conventionally defined.’’ (Cull 2012: 20) Being minoritarian therefore does not necessarily refer to a suffering from marginalization but more to a movement of subtraction from what can be considered the major. An SLA’s ontology searches for precisely what is minoritarian in the existence of an SLA: ontology is about how much autonomy an actor can gain in her emergence, how much she has been able to define – through her act-ing - an alternative, self-sufficient standard of acting in a second language in relation with a major (existent and established) standard.

If we recognize the act and event of uttering (the mysterious anastomosis of elements pertaining both to the native and the second language) as the sole and true source from which an SLA emerges, we will gain a novel understanding of how an SLA can appear autonomously, from the minoritarian condition of being-nothing: ‘‘...the event is a-subjective. The event comes before and generates the human subject out of ‘‘larval’’ selves.’’ (Mullarkey 2010: 173). The ontology of an SLA searches for the originality and minoritarian tone of such ‘‘larval’’ states, disposed in a chaotic fashion and arranged asunder and in spite of the major rule of level of professionalism and/or talent, exposure on a local or national level, etc. Under the generous umbrella of the act/event in the second language, I can obtain an ‘‘image from below’’ of the particularly heterogeneous and inconsistent landscape of experiences, trajectories, models and manners of second-language acting in England. By setting the act of speaking/uttering in the second

language at the very centre of the ontology of an(y) SLA, I underline the actor's innate and permanent minoritarian condition, which describes a much larger realm than that of the stage and screen. Maintaining the auto-ethnographic lens, I ask: why should I not connect the experience of emerging (or being "cast out" as Bachelard says) as a Second-Language Actor in England directly to the first act/event of actually act-ing in second language English, namely when I was a worker reciting/chanting in the English farm field? My emergence as a larval SLA in England was not therefore my first appearance in a role, in an amateur production of *Lloyd George Knew my Father*, at the local theatre in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. Instead, my murmuring of a childhood song in second language English, in the middle of a field, denoted my true inception (and my re-birth) as an SLA. Working in the field, I kept murmuring: "Horns-growing Billies, Open to Mum Billies/Mummy brings you milk in teats/In her back/A ball of salt/Cornmeal/In her heel/In the armpits/Tuft of flowers"<sup>4</sup> That was the event that truly cast me out (matrixed my re-birth) as an SLA in England. Does it not therefore appear justified to extend the horizon beyond the limiting experience of acting in a second language on stages or on screens and connect an SLA's ontology directly to those other randomly scattered events and acts of speaking second language English: in the street, in the field, on the phone, on the plane, on the shop floor, etc.?

As briefly mentioned in the introductory paragraphs, the totality of second language acts on stages or on screens – all belonging to art's realm – will be defined here (borrowing from Deleuze) - as the *plane of composition* of second language acting. To this *plane of composition* - which is an articulation (or framing) of the act/event in a second language through artistic means – I add the *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing. As Maaïke Bleeker explains in *Deleuze and Performance*: "The vector of movement of thought is taking shape through concepts (in the case of philosophy), compositions (in the case of art), or knowledge (in the case

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<sup>4</sup> This was the rough, raw, instinctive translation of a childhood song that many Romanians from my generation have learned from their Grandmothers, or in nursery and primary school.

of science).’’ (Bleeker 2009: 157) Therefore, when looking at acts and events of second language utterance on screens and stages, I look at the *plane of composition* of second language acting (and face the cultural studies reading of who an SLA is). But am I not – by focusing solely on the *plane of composition* - denying wider possibilities that might and indeed inform an SLA’s ontology? Therefore, my argument is that it is necessary to extend the perspective beyond the plane of artistic (cultural studies) understanding of the SLA and look at the birth of this kind of actor from a philosophical perspective, anchoring it (the birth) in a *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing. By taking that route, I ’’dip’’ the concept of an SLA’s emergence on screens or on stages in the ’’acid bath’’ of an immanent SL Act-or moving and act-ing freely on the streets and in the fields of England, in the second language. By anchoring his/her ontology in an immanent dimension (in a philosophical reading therefore), I will be able to better understand who an SLA is.

Laura Cull – quoting Deleuze – stresses the idea that ’’each apparently individual utterance is already connected to the collective’’ (Cull 2012: 61). My isolated position – singing/reciting a song in the middle of England - does nothing else than help me realise this multiplicity of voices that I connect with through the simple utterance. I realise – through my minorisation exercise in the second language (the song, the utterance, the act) - how close I get, in my blissful isolation, to Binoche or Dreyfus, but also to the Indian sales assistant speaking/acting in second language English in his shop in Luton. Deleuze praises connecting to the multiplicity through minorisation, by subtracting (isolating) oneself: ’’the only way one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted.’’ (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 6) In that corner of the countryside, I know that with my singing/reciting of ’’Horns-growing Billies,’’ I already speak in the same voice or in lieu of both of the Polish builder in Bristol and of Juliette Binoche at *The Barbican*. I am emerging as a Second-Language Act-or not on screen or on stage, but right here, in the field,

hand in hand with the other Romanian farm workers but also with a great French actor on a mainstream English stage. Connected through subtraction to the widest spectrum of acts in the second language, the autopoiesis (over-spillage) of an immanent SLA can be envisaged as growing from the bottom (the repose of between being and non-being) upwards, towards *becoming*. Therefore, during my research into who an SLA is, I will be in the company not only of actors like Juliette Binoche, Maria Marinca, or Sofie Gråbøl. I will also be accompanied by the immanent, larval SLA in a German flight captain who pilots a Lufthansa plane from Berlin to Birmingham and announces the landing to his multi-national audience in a second language English. I will be accompanied by the incumbent, immanent SLA in the Spanish bartender who takes a cocktail order (in English) from a Romanian client in a London bar; the immanent SLA cum a Chinese dignitary addressing the British press in English at a UN summit; or the larval SLA in the South-East Asian-accented voice explaining - in English - over the phone - all that a UK customer needs to know about their broadband contract. I see an immanent SLA when a taxi driver in Birmingham asks the client - in "broken" English - "Λi:rpɔrt"? A Polish plumber in Peterborough equally indicates the larval state of an SLA, a Mexican sales assistant in Oxford John Lewis too... Within the subtracted condition of the *desert island*, on which I utter my little childhood recitation, I effectively start my autopoiesis as an SLA, connected with and part of the greater flux of acts generating other larvae such as myself. All our acts in the second language English are indicative of a *plane of immanence*,<sup>5</sup> filled by SLA's in-the-making, because, as Felix Guattari has suggested: "Art is not just the activity of established artists but of a whole subjective creativity which traverses the generations and oppressed peoples, ghettos,

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that all SLA's share the same underlying identity. Quite the contrary, as Laura Cull notes: "Neither Spinoza nor Deleuze is saying that immanence means that there is a fundamental identity that unites all things." (Cull 2012: 7) What unites all SLA's is the minoritarian nature of their participation in various acts and events of second language utterance: the atomic object that each such participation will engender. Therefore, when I ask myself who am I as an SLA or who is an SLA, I do not respond that I am this or that, but that I originate in this or that act or event.

minorities’’ (Guattari 1995: 91) Movement within the *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing invites potential lines of growth, that Badiou’s ‘‘atomic objects’’ may follow, denoting the multiple potentialities of formalization. It is the act and the event of speaking in the second language English that unites all SLAs<sup>6</sup>, allowing us to grow ourselves from within it as SLAs<sup>7</sup>. I argue that it is not under the organization of an external force (the stages and screens with their ordering regime instrumented by directors, casting directors, playwrights, programmers, character breakdowns, etc.) that an SLA’s *who* is being determined. On the contrary, an SLA’s potential for autopoiesis is found embedded – as a seed, as a virtuality, as a larva – in the event and act itself: ‘‘but the event is inseparable from the texture of the being brought to light.’’ (Guattari 1995: 81). Therefore, what my present search for an ontology does, is to put the ‘‘=’’ symbol (in terms of potential for autopoiesis) between Binoche and the German pilot or the non-native English speaker who is a taxi driver. Once this new perspective is unleashed, I can envisage SLAs (as they are being created and given to us by the stages and the screens) as only a limited variety from an array of many other possible formalisations of larval SLAs. The shift of perspective allows me to embed the analysis into what Laura Cull has described as ‘‘a static plane of immanent creation [pitted] against God’s transcendentalism.’’<sup>8</sup> (Dale 2001b: 136) In other words, by looking at an SLA through the lens of the *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing, I am denying the stages and the screens (and their creation apparatus) the God-like power and entitlement to fashion, to give birth to an Actor in a Second Language. In my ontology, an Actor in a Second Language is embedded – immanently – in the creative process of

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<sup>6</sup> The sense is that it unites us in a multiplicity obtained through subtraction (n-1): as such, the act and the event of second language acting offers each and every speaker an opportunity to become minoritarian in the second language. Each in our own way, we are able to create a different subtraction from the major standard of the second language acting.

<sup>7</sup> With immanence ‘‘order and change are seen to emerge holistically from things themselves.’’ (Wiltmore 2008: 12)

<sup>8</sup> This shift of perspective marks an epistemological break also in the sense in which it instates the actor at the centre of artistic creation and self-creation. There are no more demiurge-directors (like Brook, Barba or Wilson) who determine (in relation to their wider aesthetic programme) who an SLA is or should be. By shifting the perspective to the plane of immanence, an SLA becomes both the creator of herself and of the aesthetic of her emergence.

sewing together native and second language codes, irrespective of that process happening on stage or in the fields or shop floors of England. Therefore – from the point of view of the stage and screen apparatuses’ claim to be producers/makers of SLA’s – my perspective necessarily appears anti-productive (subtractive). To look for who an SLA translates into a withdrawal from the transcendentalism of the stages and screens. By distrusting the forces that give birth to the SLA from the outside, I am putting the onus on the actor to give birth to him/herself through plugging into a constellation of acts which all point to the *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing. Perhaps - in a more fundamental way – architecting an ontology equates with discovering the concept of SLA in a newly-found freedom (freedom also suggested by the re-birth on the *desert island*): a liberation of the actor from the condition of having to be told who he/she is/should be by an external force. Subsequently, the treatment of the theme of who an SLA is moves beyond the cultural studies interpretation (which reduces the discussion to who and what makes an SLA and in which particular conditions) and into the free regime of performance philosophy, which allows me to ask – liberated from cultural studies conditioning - who is an SLA? Freedom is the dominant characteristic of immanence, as Laura Cull has shown: “It was Spinoza who discovered that ‘freedom exists only within immanence’, Deleuze and Guattari argue.” (Cull 2012: 225)

In order to emerge autonomously as an SLA – in the context of a newly found freedom, on a *desert island* – it is necessary to subtract to be able to arise again as integral to a rhizome and “plane of pre-subjective delirium and pre-individual singularity.” (Deleuze 2005: 13)<sup>9</sup>

Contemplated from the solitary observation point of Harewood End, Herefordshire, the *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing is indeed marked by a delirious (in the sense of multi-directional, non-regulated, non-unitary) stream of acts in the second language and a myriad of

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<sup>9</sup> This is in line with Guattari’s description of the plane of immanence, which is “an Idea to the nth degree that integrates the set of all powers of the disjoined.” (Guattari 2006: 395)

virtual, pre-individual singularity-SLAs: yet un-formed, un-defined, un-named, possible and future SLAs. In subtraction, an aspiring, a wishful self-emergent SLA lets him/herself loose in this evolving, non-formalised network/rhizome of virtual nodes.<sup>10</sup> Subtraction marks a courageous new turn, a new avenue for self-emergence - "as the proper name of being [as] everything that is woven from the void." (Ling 2010: 51)

It is the very act/event of uttering in the second language English (this act/event transforms the act-or's body into an immanent theatre in a second language) that can fundamentally determine who an SLA is and who he could be. In support of that, I quote Gilles Deleuze's – in *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life* – concept of habitus/habit, which "begins from the moment it defines a subject: a habitus, a habit, nothing more than a habit in a field of immanence, the habit of saying I." (Deleuze 2005: 11-2) As soon as I start singing/reciting Horn-growing Billies" in the second language English, I start saying I am an SLA: caught in the habit, I can start to give birth to myself as an SLA.<sup>11</sup>

As a habit, an act, an event, an encroachment of languages develops in a mouth and in a body of an act-or, an immanent SLA can be spotted there in the making. As I continue to repeat my chant in the field, I become an SLA, I move my larval-SLA towards formalisation. From this point onwards, the emergence and over spilling of myself as an SLA depends on how the habit grows and establishes itself, and what direction it takes. The premise that my argument works on is that the more creative the habit of act-ing in the second language English is, the more vividly and originally an SLA can emerge. The key questions now are: What do I understand by creative habits in the anastomosis of codes from a native and a second language? Do all the acts of uttering in a second language English automatically imply a degree of creativity? By creative

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<sup>10</sup> This jump into the flow of virtual nodes allows an aspiring to self-emergence SLA to fight against genealogy (God's transcendentalism) and instead to float in a milieu "from which [she] grows and which [she]overspills" (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 21)

<sup>11</sup> This is not what every actor does: an SLA has to emerge by saying I at the conjunction of two languages.

habits, I understand all those acts in a second language English that are spoken/delivered in a minoritarian language, therefore submit to the requirement that "they [...] affirm the fundamental variability at the heart of language by placing it in 'continuous variation'" (Cull 2009: 9). Somewhere in Bristol, in front of a local café there is a Rroma Gypsy lady who sells the *Big Issue* magazine. As people pass her by, she greets them with an elongated "hi:ləʊ! mʌgə'zɪn plɪz." In her wailing, prolonged utterances in English, the Gypsy lady is bringing forth an immanent-SLA charged with creativity and originality. The *Big Issue* vendor is not imitating English but improvises with it in a way that reveals the second language in "continuous variation." Her acts of uttering are always pregnant with a creative jazzification of English. What the lady achieves with her short refrain is not an imitation of the second language: in fact, she unveils and at the same time creates additional space in the spoken English language (through a minorization of the major standard of uttering). She uses the major/standard English as the original tune for her improvisations and she moves forward with the language into yet unknown territories. Isn't the short, repetitive, jazzy utterance in English denoting an immanent theatre of second language act-ing, in which the *Big Issue* vendor repeatedly says "It is I and this is who I am"? Indeed, the *Big Issue* vendor proves very apt and creative at building a personal presence within the English language. Her signaling of a virtual, larval SLA solely through the means of short, repetitive utterances raises the curtain on a fascinating immanent theatre in the second language. Her short invitation to potential customers (repeated so often that it becomes almost mechanical and incantatory, similar somewhat to my lullaby chanting in the farm field) fulfills the central function of a refrain, which Ronald Bogue sees as able to "provide that single point of order in a field of chaos [allowing to] organize a stable domain around that point" (Bogue 1996: 256). The Rroma Gypsy woman fulfills all the criteria of an emergent SLA: she is



completely subtracted and isolated in the English language<sup>12</sup> and – on that *desert island*, like a lost child – is forced to function (to create herself) in and from within a linguistic void. The woman’s utterance signals – in a Bachelard-inspired reading - a coming out of the shell of immanence and thus the appearance of an SLA via a sort of dialectical ontology as in the following: ‘‘since it does not come out entirely, the part that comes out contradicts the part that remains inside.’’ (Bachelard 1994: 108) In her utterance, one can contemplate the shelled organism of the larval SLA in full splendour: an English language in which the lady builds her presence utilising tools, codes from the Romanian and the Rromani languages. Coming out of the shell of immanence is realised through continued improvisation, establishment of habit and refrain as Deleuze and Guattari have advised: ‘‘to improvise is to join with the world, to meld with it. One ventures from home on the thread of a tune.’’ (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 311) What else is the Rroma Gypsy woman doing if not coming out of her immanent-SLA shell into a foreign language by way of a tune, which she repeats and repeats until she establishes her foothold on the *desert island* of the second language. She proves very courageous and creative in the repetitions of her refrain when she creates a particular (distinct) rhythm (musicality) in the English language by uttering the little formula<sup>13</sup> and making the English language vibrate from within, generating thus extra space and extra presence<sup>14</sup> in it. Her utterance resounds in the immanent theatre of second language act-ing, which is now represented by her mouth, by her entire body. Evidently, there is no formal stage or screen framing of this event, yet the *Big Issue* seller clearly signals the emergence of an SLA bravely ‘‘carry[ing] the burden of [her] own transformations’’ (Wiltmore 2008: 12). The stubborn repetition of the same few words for a half-

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<sup>12</sup> As it is immediately evident, she knows very little English besides her ‘‘Hello! Magazine, please!’’

<sup>13</sup> Please note the difference between uttering it (the English language) and uttering in it. The lady undertakes the first act: she utters the English language, therefore re-creating it from scratch, by improvising with it instead of submitting to its major standard.

<sup>14</sup> ‘‘This first stage is preliminary to the establishment of a territory: make a mark; find a calm center; tame chaos.’’ (Holland 2013: 75)

day shift is inspiring to the listener/spectator through its creativity, rawness, originality, truthfulness. Similar acts take place elsewhere and everywhere in England: for instance, the Polish driver of a National Express coach to London as when delivers his (intensely-rehearsed) humorous performance in English about safety on board at the beginning of the journey assorted with equally funny interventions throughout the journey to announce various stops. All such acts and events (underlined by a habit of saying I in the second language) signal the larval SLA coming forth and over-spilling from an immanent condition. Further, my argument is that the Rroma Gypsy woman or the Polish driver do not deliberately employ ‘‘methods of stammering, whispering’’ (Deleuze 1997: 247) in the second language. Quite the contrary, these SLA’s in-the-making rather genuinely, directly, impetuously and in a free, non-programmed fashion jazzify the second language English: that is their inherent, immanent ability, one which has not been programmed by methods of stammering or whispering. Both the Rroma Gypsy and the Polish driver are not made SLA’s but SLA’s coming into being from an immanent field. For such act-ors, the only option is to give birth to themselves in the second language. The *Big Issue* seller’s repetitive utterance is foremost a survival strategy, which functions outside the aestheticizing tendencies of an(y) Artaud-inspired technique of altered pronunciation that might point towards a new musicality of language hidden beneath the words.<sup>15</sup> On the contrary, what we observe in the examples above is a pure form of immanent theatre in the second language English, an aestheticizing that comes from below, in full rawness. There is in it no deliberate search for an aesthetics, there is no interest in revealing any ‘‘autonomous musicality’’ (Cull 2012: 71) in the second language: the act of utterance is raw, and musicality is immanent to it, occurring involuntarily. Any hint of rehearsal of the utterance comes under the umbrella of an

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<sup>15</sup> This is perhaps the model of *Orghast at Persepolis* (1971), in which Peter Brook asked poet Ted Hughes to imagine a ‘language of tones and sounds, without specific conceptual or perceptual meaning’ (Hughes 1971: online resource) This is a top-down, God-like transcendental aesthetic decision – the Gypsy woman is engaged in an existential search for an abode in the second language, hence the jazzification of it.

amateurish, childish (the child in the dark metaphor) aesthetic, which enhances the rawness of the SLA's presence. These non-native act-ors do not deliberately employ methods of stammering, whispering and mumbling, they simply contain these methods, they simply are (the embodiment of) these methods. Therefore, the type of utterance that might result from professional (stage and screen) actors who conscientiously and deliberately employ such methods, is incomparable – in its originality and authenticity - with the Rroma Gypsy woman's immanent theatre of wailing, whispering and stammering in the very simple refrain 'Hello! Magazine, please!'<sup>16</sup>

To be able to analyze some of these ideas through practice, I have devised a theatre piece called *Billie Killer*. The piece represents an experimentation with how - in a theatre setting – we (the two SLA's at Nu Nu) can grow from our own survival-determined, creative engagement with the second language, as we had started to do when we were farm workers, singing/uttering our little childhood refrain. The *Billie Killer* piece has been purely experimental (a testing of the idea that an SLA can give birth to him/herself from his/her own utterance) and therefore any concern with the artistic value of the piece has been considered secondary. *Billie Killer* tested how – during its 40 minutes - a (non-native) act-or plays with/improvises her emergence and manages to give a certain consistency of growth from within the point of suture between native and second language elements/codes. On stage, we (the two SLAs) aimed to understand how it would be possible to grow ourselves as SLAs (and the theatre piece itself) out of the utterance of the 'Horn-growing Billies' lullaby. Also, the curiosity was how our theatre piece might be

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<sup>16</sup> Again, this is not an SLA tasked with jazzifying the second language English by a transcendent aesthetic God as a "Dadaist reaction against the so-called prison-house of language." (Cull 2012: 82) There is no aesthetic to this jazzification: if there is any aesthetic, it is an implicated one, resulting directly from the struggle to act (to exist) in the second language. This can be defined as the creativity and bliss resulted from an SLA trying to create some kind of space/home for herself in the second language.

developed so as to retain the authenticity of the act of speaking in a second language in the farm field.

The rehearsals and performance of the piece took place in the *White Theatre*, which is a studio space belonging to the Theatre Department, University of Bristol. As mentioned above, *Billie Killer* is constructed around the pulsating energy of the "Horn-growing Billies" lullaby/poem. The poem is part of a 19<sup>th</sup> century classical Romanian folk story (called *Capra cu Trei Iezi* which could be literally translated in English as *The Goat and Her Three Billie Goats*), written by Romanian novelist Ion Creanga. The practice-as-research project has retained the main elements of the folk story's plot<sup>17</sup> but has not borrowed or transferred anything else from the original text, apart from the lullaby. The characters of the story are Goat, her three children (the Billie-Goats) and Wolf. Being a widow, Goat has to raise her three Billie-Goats on her own. She is being helped by the children's Godfather, who is none other than Wolf. One day, Goat has to go into the forest to look for food, and upon departure, she advises the children to lock the door behind them, and not to open to anyone unless they hear their mother's special song/chant. The song should function as a password, convincing the children that it is indeed their mother knocking on the door. The greedy Wolf – who for a long time had been planning to eat the Goat's offspring – overhears the conversation and learns the password song/chant. As soon as Goat leaves home and the children lock the door behind her, Wolf tries to persuade the Billie Goats to open the door to him. With a coarse voice and a singing manner rather different than Goat's, Wolf does not convince the children on his first attempt. Enraged, he decides to have his teeth and tongue sharpened by a locksmith so that his voice may finally resemble that of the Goat. On the second attempt, the elder Billie Goat – who had always proved naughtier than the rest – is fooled and decides to open the door to Wolf. Billie, the youngest and wisest of the three children – who had

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<sup>17</sup> Various forms of the story circulate across Europe.

initially advised his brothers against opening the door - finds a very good hiding place and upon the imprudent opening of the door, he escapes Wolf's bloody feast. Wolf leaves the two skulls of the murdered Billie Goats in the window of the house, so as to make Goat believe that they are eagerly and smilingly waiting for her. Upon return, Goat discovers the skulls and the blood and hears all about Wolf's hideous crime from the youngest Billie, who finally comes out of his hiding place. Goat decides to take her revenge and as such, she invites Wolf to a feast, where she poisons him. The end of the piece is represented by Goat's rejoicing dance, through which she celebrates the killing of Wolf.

As noted above, the song/chant that constitutes the crux of the piece resembles – in its structure and rhythm - a lullaby: it is childish and simple. Its translation from Romanian is a very direct, literal, raw exercise which shows little concern for grammatical/syntactical correctness, or conformity with the English language standard. Preserving the childish arrangement of the words in the phrase and their simple rhythm and cadence was the main concern: this denoted an inherent instinct to survive (and say I) in a new language and to construct – as much as possible – a primitive kind of dwelling, a shackle-like abode in the second language. This instinct to construct is suggested by the circular hut-like house in which Goat and her children live.



**Figure 3: The Goat's House – Billie Killer**

This is the song of a tentative beginning, the song of an emergence of the two SLA's. The text of the song is: "Horns-growing Billies/Open to Mum, Billies/Mother brings you/Milk in teats/In her back/A ball of salt/ Cornmeal/In her heel/In the armpits/Tuft of flowers" (see Appendix C: Billie Killer Video: 14m29s – 15m57s) In the light of the auto-ethnographic approach, I can appreciate that the rawness, unrefined nature of the translation might also attain another - hidden - meaning. Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland have observed in *The Play out of Context: Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture* that:

interpreting the source text – consists of delineating several main lines translated into another language, in order to pull the foreign text towards the target culture and language, so as to separate it from its source and origin. (Scolnicov, Holland 1989: 25)

The ad-hoc, unrefined – in the field (quite literally) - translation of the few lines from Romanian to English marks a second order pulling of a foreign text/utterance towards English culture and language. In its utterance, the text functions as an encryption of the emergence of an SLA as she is retreating/rupturing from/with the native language and springing forth (like a shelled being) into the second one. The language of the song is simple, the words are direct, easy to understand even for children, the sentences are short and concise: therefore, the translation exercise is instinctively maintained rather direct, efficacious, somewhat amateurish and aesthetically unpretentious. What is of paramount importance is that the same cadence that the simple verses have in the Romanian language is kept (as a tool for survival and re-birth, as the preservation of some remnants of Romanian language DNA that will sustain a re-birth into English): that is the Romanian code which I bring forth into the second language English. A song which dominated my childhood, now becomes the seat of my new emergence as an SLA in English (not from the stage but from the fields). This was the song on whose uttering depended the establishment of a centre of calm, from which a taming of the chaos of between being and non-being and the inhabitation of the *desert island* could commence. By using the ’’Horn-growing Billies’’ text/song/chant as the basis of *Billie Killer*, the piece remains faithful – in its very inception – to my first point of departure and first act as an SLA in-the-making. The lullaby functions – in similar fashion to the Roma Gypsy woman’s utterings – as the refrain that we (the actors of *Billie Killer*) hang on to, the refrain through which we come out of our shells as SLA’s – this time not in a farm field (although plugged into that immanent theatre), but in the formal location of the studio theatre of the Theatre Department, University of Bristol.

Two of the three actors in the piece speak in a second language English. The musical/instrument-based character – that of Billie – has not been assigned any lines and his stage presence consists of playing a host of musical instruments. Most of the musical instruments are constructed from natural elements: for instance, the actor uses a bamboo stick filled with grains and seeds (to produce a sound similar to that of falling rain), a little broom made of dried bamboo leaves (which produces sounds similar to the whistling of the wind). There is also a whistle and a Turkish drum, joined by a flute. The character of Billie – through its creation of soundtrack – helps to nuance the mood of each scene. More than that, the soundtrack is half-improvised and changes – within certain limits – with every performance of the piece. Therefore, the soundtrack, against the uttered text, evokes a double-orientated jazzification: both on the level of uttering, where the English language is being used as an original tune for improvisation by the actors and on the level of the sonorous mood, where things are continuously improvised in accordance with the general tone and ‘‘feeling’’ of a scene or the emotions evoked by the actors.

## **1.2 Schizo-affect**

The overarching concern in the *Billie Killer* practice-as-research piece has been that of conserving (in the sense of relying on) the authenticity of the second language jazzification enacted by the worker in the field, or by the vendor in the corner of the street. It would have been detrimental to make a conscious effort to ‘‘re-invent,’’ re-frame or theatricalise the emergence of an SLA as it happened in the farm field: that would have put us – as actors and makers of the piece – in the position to frame the utterance, dramatizing it, subordinating it to a pre-established



theatrical aesthetic. Instead, we have kept the raw utterance of the song as the central element of the performance: starting from this minimal amount of text, we have gradually improvised (crocheted/added text and sound), in line with the general plotline of the folk story. Therefore, the whole piece was constructed as an improvisation on and extension of the lullaby song. As such, the jazzification of the English language in utterance was continued at the level of writing the text: we started from the simple (two to four words long) lines of the song to which we have gradually added similarly succinct, non-complex, basic sentences. This knitting process allowed the text/script to grow into a twelve scenes-long score, which served as a guide for the actors in rehearsals. The written scenes are particularly small – they spread in maximum one A4 page – and always contain a detailed explanation for the musical character Billie, on the basis of which the actor decides which musical instrument/s to use and what kind of sound to produce. All the lines are short, childlike, naïve, and are the product of the authentic sensation of stumbling, an uncertainty and incapacity in the second language English. Lines such as, "Open your palms! Look at your fingers! /Your hands' fingers /Aren't of same length /Three Billie brothers /Aren't of same strength" (Appendix A: 243), serve as an example. There is a certain precariousness in the syntax, a genuine fear of elaborating too much in English and that is fully exposed in performance. We, the improvisers/writers of the text treated the English language as if it were a mined territory – at every step, we felt that the second language could betray us, turning against us, wobbly and traitorous. At the same time, that relation to the second language is not being edited or hidden behind movement, costume and musical sound: on the contrary, it is left to float freely as a self-sufficient, non-aestheticized aesthetic. The *Billie Killer* script (and the way in which it was uttered in performance) denotes a lack of complexity and refinement and an arrangement of words/sounds in the sentence which is (and not only appears) particularly impoverished. As actors and makers, we would have had the opportunity to "improve" the text:

we could have worked with a native English theatre-maker/playwright in order to fashion the text and bring it to a more "acceptable" standard for a presentation/uttering on stage. That would however have betrayed the text's "true" line of evolution: being a jazzification of the second language, following its course "naturally" from the farm field straight to the stage.

With writing *Billie Killer*, we aimed to give a textual/scenic visibility to the *plane of immanence* of the second language act-ing, conserving its authentic vibration, encapsulated in the speech-song that had travelled with me unchanged from the farm to the stage-laboratory of the Theatre Department. The evidently unaesthetic, almost anti-scenic simplicity of the lines is organic and sits in line with the ontological preoccupations of Nu Nu Theatre: it utilizes the writers' relative poverty of knowledge of the second language's vocabulary and their genuine fear of taunting the beast of the scenic second language. The lines' directedness hides an inability of the second language speaker/writer to express in words/utterance the entire wealth of her feelings. As such, a text that for a native speaker would have unfolded in an elaborate, refined, stylized manner, for the Second-Language Actor simply over spills from a simple/naïve utterance in the field, creating a script poor in words, in style and in performability. Again, it is important to underline the fact that the text is the product of an authentic fumbling in the second language and not a programmed aesthetic choice. In this way, the raw experience of emerging as an SLA in the middle of the farm field is channeled straight into the making and uttering of the text, an action that echoes what Deleuze and Guattari call for, in the "Postulates of Linguistics" chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: "One introduces an internal pragmatics into language" (Deleuze, Guattari 2004 :108) The non-scenic, non-standard (ontologically-inclined) style of the text/script allows the pragmatics of immanent theatre of second language (the pragmatics of uttering in the fields, shop floors and so forth) to enter the writing, uttering and

ultimately the production process of *Billie Killer*.<sup>18</sup> However, it is precisely this inherent poverty that helps the actors and the writers to preserve – in the text and later in its staging - the reality of the experience of singing/uttering the song somewhere in the middle of the field. The entire text – together with its involuntary, random aesthetic (however impoverished and askew that might be) – grows out of the experience of uttering the song. This is the first step taken by an SLA who ‘ventures from home on the thread of a tune’ (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 311). Together with his own self-propelling from the entrails of the song, the SLA creates the production itself (the performance is the very thread of the tune; an ontological adventure) over-spilling from the same spring. With this practice-as-research activity, I was curious to understand what characterizes this over-spillage: what precise element in the act of uttering is able to travel and be transferred (intact) from the *plane of immanence* of the field to the *plane of composition* of the performance on stage. In order to tackle this question, I return to Joff Bradley, who suggests that we should think about the *plane of immanence* as of a completely chaotic and unpredictable totality of ‘degrees of power that correspond to affect and the affected, active or passive affects or intensities’ (Bradley 2015: 192). From Bradley’s description, I will concentrate on the notion of *affect*. In *Billie Killer*’s journey (on or as the thread of a tune) from the *plane of immanence* to the *plane of composition*, the SLA’s ensure authenticity by carrying over the treasure of *affect*. The encroachment between native and second language codes (that Romanian DNA remnant transferred or applied to English) during the act of utterance triggers *affect* and *affect-s* both the act-or/speaker and the audience. In other words, the act of suturing codes belonging to two languages proves a costly one: it *affects* directly by weighing upon its doer/act-or with an unavoidable intensity. Therefore, the emergence of an SLA from within what I have earlier

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<sup>18</sup> When writing/crocheting his text, the actors – partially incapacitated in the second language – are, in fact, using English in a minor style. By inadvertently and involuntarily impoverishing it, by squeezing it out of its standard, expected beauty and volume, by bastardizing it, the actor who writes the text does nothing less than ‘use the minor language to send the major language racing.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 116)

called the habit of second language utterance, must be tied to, depend on and in a sense be equivalent to the act-or (the doer, the speaker) experiencing and producing *affect*<sup>19</sup> amidst the very utterance. *Affect* – in the reading that the present research gives it (one evidently inspired by Deleuze and Guattari) – refers to the price that the speaker, doer, act-or must pay (in her body) for producing the act/event of utterance in the second language. Therefore, the creativity of an emerging SLA is measured in the expressive bodily (and not only) transformation that the act-or experiences and bestows upon him/herself involves as he/she the event of uttering. This reading of *affect* is in line with the connotations that Deleuze and Guattari assign to the concept:

It is a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act. L'affection (Spinoza's *affectio*) is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include "mental" or ideal bodies). (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: xvii)

Therefore, both in the Roma Gypsy woman's uttering and in the utterings of Greta Garbo or of Sofie Gråbøl, we are looking for that inculcated expressivity where the speaker's body is being *affect*-ed by the very utterance. *Affect* takes the form of an expressive augmentation or diminution of the body's capacity to act, like the *Billie Killer* actors' sensation of an impossibility to express themselves properly in the second language. This special kind of *affect* - produced in second-language utterance - is an anastomotic *affect* of in-between languages that constitutes the unique mark of an(y) SLA<sup>20</sup>. *Billie Killer* allows the schizo-*affect* (the wobbly,

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<sup>19</sup> This again is never about Peter Brook and Ted Hughes (or others) deliberately "inventing" or searching for a new language (like in *Orghast at Persepolis*), a primordial language which could point us towards what critic Irving Wardle has called "the route back to the springs of drama itself." (Smith 1972: 239) On the contrary, *affect*-ing and being *affect*-ed in the case of an SLA is inherent to the utterance itself: it is an action that does not put us on a route to drama itself, but indeed reveals an existent, lurking immanent theatre of second language acting, vibrant with *affect*.

<sup>20</sup> No other (native speaking) actor could produce this unique kind of *affect*, unless by acting or faking it, by subscribing it to an exterior (non-immanent) aesthetic. The affect that David Suchet seeks to produce in the character of the Belgian detective Poirot for instance, is charming yet nevertheless falsified, "acted." The speaking (as if) in a second language does not really affect the actor, it does not cost the actor as it would a non-native actor. The affect in this case is theatricalized rather than authentic.

insecure, irritatingly simplistic utterance that modifies the body of the non-native actor) to exist unhindered and unresolved: the utterance is left as an open wound through which the audience can contemplate the emergence of an SLA directly plugged into her/his immanent condition. In that sense, the utterance of an SLA on stage (as the *Billie Killer* project tests it) attains that particular quality found in what Deleuze calls "the language of schizophrenia" (Deleuze 2004a: 29) when applied to the reality of speaking from in-between languages. Therefore, an(y) SLA is defined by a *schizo-affect*: the result of a conjoining of codes coming from two (or more) languages. In *Billie Killer*, there is no effort to "cover" the actors' schizz-ing in the second language: there is no aesthetic, theatrical mask put onto this particular type of *affect*: no taking over of the *schizo-affect* by a certain accent (Hear, hear my utterance is Eastern-European!). The *schizo-affect* is there to stay, and it reveals elements from two languages (native and second) as they are not completely coming together, antagonizing each other in the space of the same utterance. The important nuance is that this *affect*-imbued utterance of the SLA – similar as a formula to that of schizophrenic language - is schizophrenicized in its very inception and being. Therefore, the *affect* that this kind of uttering produces is inscribed in the very uttering and refers back directly to the body of the act-or rather than being deliberately constructed and laid upon the body of that actor thereafter or by a God-like instance (the Intercultural director for instance).<sup>21</sup> *Billie Killer* loyally follows the authenticity of this *schizo-affect* as the unique for our emergence of SLA's. This anastomosis of two languages produces the *schizo-affect*, which generates and occupies territory, as it is expansionary both in the linguistic, mental fields but also in the body of the act-or and evidently moves further towards the audience. In *Billie Killer*, Nu

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<sup>21</sup> In other, words, this is *affect* contained and not imposed, triggered or modelled from the outside. This is the kind of language that director Robert Wilson talks about when he recalls his meeting an autistic child who "would take ordinary, everyday words and destroy them." (Wilson 1978: 22) Wilson also talks about the language of a deaf person, who cannot fully speak the hearer's language: "So perhaps that's a language too, like French is a language." (Wilson 1987: 25)

Nu's two SLA's do not seek to artificially impose upon themselves an augmentation or a diminution of the body's capacity to act in utterance: this happens naturally and involves for instance extra inputs of air, a more intense tensioning of the facial muscles, an overly-increased or decreased activity of the body, a more effortful (perhaps less natural, less standard) presence of the body needed for uttering in the second language. In the writing of the text for the piece, diminution is signalled by the poverty of the sentences and by their precariousness: the body of the actor/writer is forced through a similar experience of diminution of the capacity to act: not enough can be said, not enough can be uttered because there is never enough knowledge of words or indeed inherent ability to deliver the words, there is never enough capacity to articulate properly in the second language. Therefore, the utterance is always exaggerated (but not artificially) incomplete, strenuous, consuming. Bachelard offers a possible clarification in this direction, particularly with regards to the process of diminution: "A permanent invalid, this great dreamer bestrode the intervening space in order to "plunge" into tininess. [...] Distance [...] composes a miniature of a country in which we should like to live." (Bachelard 1994: 72) Isn't an SLA also a permanent impotent utterer in the second/major language (somehow like Wilson's deaf person example) who always has to invest extra energy, concentration and stamina in order to be able to achieve a forever never-perfect utterance? Don't all the lines of *Billie Killer* - short, rhythmical, sometimes made up of one or two words - signify a miniaturisation of the body of the actor in the second language into an unavoidably impoverished, schizo-affect-ed tininess? Isn't the refrain-like repetition of "Horns-growing Billies" a sign of the augmentation of the actor's body (an unnatural growth together with the repetitive tune) into the space of the stage and into the space of the second language? This excess or lack of energy and of space is in fact a schizo-affect that flows freely from the actor's body (in utterance) and creates the SLA, framing the (ontologically-inclined) theatre piece at the same time: "Affect is contagious and excessive

(though not transcendent) kind of force” (Cull 2012: 128). This kind of excess is left to evolve freely, hand-in-hand with the actor in *Billie Killer*, as it is this excess that uniquely characterizes the emergence of an SLA.

In the journey between field and stage – in the crossing of the bridge between *plane of immanence* and *plane of composition* - *affect* marks the energy of emergence, the source of life: without it, an SLA does not truly come into existence (is not engaged in the ontology). What *Billie Killer* shows is that the schizo-*affect* (encapsulated by the thread of the tune) that energizes the utterance in second language English always promises a self-sufficient spectacle (perhaps not a theatrical one but an ontological one, nevertheless): nothing else needs to be added, nothing needs to be framed but everything needs to grow according to the free circulation of schizo-*affect*. The emergence of the SLA is silver-lined by the phylum of schizo-*affect* that crosses the *Billie Killer* piece from beginning to end: in my proposed ontology, the SLA (together with the theatre piece) is being created as this phylum is unwound and never the other way around.<sup>22</sup> The spectacle of schizo-*affect* of the Roma Gypsy *Big Issue* seller is self-sufficient in its “hi:ləʊ! mʌgə'zɪn plɪz.” The *Big Issue* vendor - when she sews together (with and in her mouth and her body) native with second language codes – subjects her body to a visible intensity, to schizo-*affect*. On one side, an augmentation, a disproportionate launch takes place in the direction of the second language, when the energies of her body are overly stretched in the woman’s long “i:” in *hello* or in the shortened, sharp, intense *ɪ* in *please*. In the opposite direction, the listener, the audience of the vendor, will become acutely aware of (will acutely perceive) the diminution of the vendor’s body in what could be called her wail-like-uttering, a

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<sup>22</sup> That is to say that Wilson’s autistic child’s uttering embeds enough affect to build a spectacle around it. The utterance itself is an immanent theatre in that “foreign”, new, unknown language resultant from an autistic take on the standard language. It is enough to follow the thread of the child’s uttering to see the immanent spectacle. Brook and others begin from the spectacle, looking to provoke an affect that is always artificial, false. They more than often overlook the affect ingrained and its potential to become spectacular.

distinctive musicality of the uttering combined with a physicality which is at times contorted; with a facial expression that attains particular expressiveness in the effort to pronounce the foreign, alien words learned by heart. All these transformations occur because there is an extra energy at work, a certain degree of excess – oriented either towards lack or towards surplus.<sup>23</sup>

The woman offers a spectacle of immanent theatre of second language act-ing.

In similar fashion, most of the text of *Billie Killer* is made up of short, brief, simple sentences that function as schizo-*affect*-imbued refrains. With their short, abrupt, stupid-almost, frugal sentences the two speaking actors show themselves schizo-*affect*-ed at that tense point of suture between their native and second language. The result is either an incantatory, elongated pronunciation<sup>24</sup> (invested in a body that can never find its comfort zone and remains permanently caught in a diminution/augmentation dyad, never at home in the second language): this marks the construction of the ontological theatre piece from below, in the transfer of authentic schizo-*affect* from the *plane of immanence* to the *plane of composition*. Different tonalities, unusual intensities of voice and and couplings of sound are emerging - these are not tried, rehearsed or edited. They always contain a heightened degree of unpredictability<sup>25</sup> which potentates the schizo-*affect* of the SLA. Often these utterances sound embarrassing for the actor (my case in the second scene, which proved almost impossible to utter or to physicalize, leading my body towards collapsed, inappropriate, awkward movement), erroneous as they often do not reach the form wished or dreamed by the actor<sup>26</sup> – which puts into sharp relief schizo-*affect* as the result of a schizophrenization from within, immanent to the very uttering in-between languages. The target-

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<sup>23</sup> Again, this spectacle of immanent-SLA coming forth occurs naturally, organically, as a necessity and effect of *affect*; all that is needed is to allow this authenticity that comes from within to flow freely and grow into an ontological spectacle, and not seek to control it.

<sup>24</sup> This is not a deliberate, but an inherent (perhaps even non/anti-musical or ab-musical) musicality, resultant of the concrete difficulty and extra effort invested by the actor in the utterance.

<sup>25</sup> No matter how well-rehearsed a line might be, its utterance in the second language always presents the real danger that the forever non-native mouth will produce some sort of slip of tongue, some unforeseen error.

<sup>26</sup> The utterance is far from "proper," standard, expected English.



missing utterings insinuate themselves into the bodies of the actors: sometimes the movements of the actors become evidently imprecise (not deliberately so but they reflect the imprecision and the shaky ground of the utterance itself). Therefore – in *Billie Killer* – the wailing-like, operatic sometimes, abrasive and misconstrued utterings are not aesthetic solutions: they are exactly what they are, and as they come, schizo-*affect* playing its own spectacle and engendering and founding the bigger spectacle – the *Billie Killer* piece itself. Schizo-*affect* in *Billie Killer* represents natural, unedited and unembellished growths of space (linguistic, sonorous, and bodily) from within the anastomosis (in which the uttering body is caught up) of native with second language. In *Billie Killer*, schizo-*affect* designates a mixture of unease and excessive effort<sup>27</sup>. That has to do with the actor's crude realization that, although formally trained as a professional actor, his/her body is not able enough in the second language and needs re-evaluation<sup>28</sup>. The mouth, the diaphragm, the body in general is being asked to cope with a new type of uttering, and as such is continuously left exposed, vulnerable to a strain that is very hard to handle and is there to stay. The actors in *Billie Killer* often struggle to emit properly (the words literally don't fit or can't be fitted inside their mouths and bodies), to produce correct, organic sounds in the second language English. The actors suddenly feel that they lose control of their bodies or their breathing; the facial mask becomes uncontrollable (often seems to acquire a life of its own), the act of utterance becomes embarrassing or strenuous, and that spills over into physicality and movement, producing ab-normal, non-theatrical expression. Paradoxically, at the same time, there is a sense of excitement and expansion, with an inherent possibility that the body of the actor (as a machinery of uttering) can forge beyond its known territories. This is schizo-*affect*: a costly

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<sup>27</sup> Excess can go two ways: it can mean either too much or too little effort. The ‘‘Where to go?’’ utterance – for example - encapsulates a certain laziness of the actor's mouth, a lack of effort and acuteness in pronouncing the English words.

<sup>28</sup> The re-evaluation of the actor's body will be discussed in the *Third Chapter*.

encounter experienced directly in her body by the actor.<sup>29</sup> This encounter – in *Billie Killer* – always remains under the auspices of the street, of the field, in continuation of the *plane of immanence*. The wails, the elongation of words, the pronunciation in English are self-taught: some might look and sound awkward, but that makes them all the more relevant to the ontological spectacle.

Who is an Actor in a Second Language? An actor who allows herself to be nurtured by *schizo-affect* as his/her body undertakes blissful, yet abnormal visitations of the second language. Having now established that, I can say that whilst the simple act of speaking in a second language points to an immanent-SLA – an SLA ready to come into being – *schizo-affect* represents the pulsating power that allows for growth, the vital energy that feeds that emergence of an SLA. *Schizo-affect* produced at the junction of languages represents therefore the stable feature of an SLA and also his/her element of dynamism. This is a feature in constant vibration and oscillation: with every new utterance, with every new sewing and re-sewing of the native with second language, another level of energy is discovered, another diminution or augmentation of the body is being generated. The free movement of *schizo-affect* (the thread of the tune/utterance) is the marker of the chemical reaction established between the native and the second language in the body of the actor. *Schizo-affect* is the energy that animates the entire upper edge of the hourglass and ensures its *bottomlessness*.

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<sup>29</sup> Oshi Oida – a Japanese actor in Brook's troupe at *CIRT* Paris – was noting in his autobiography: "Because I am dreadful at speaking English and French, I can't play big parts in Peter Brook's productions." (Oida, 1997: 103) On the contrary, I argue that precisely this difficulty represents the creative streak in the second language actor Oida.

### 1.3 Becoming-SLA = English-becoming-another-language

*Becoming* is another loan from the Deleuzo-Guattarian repertoire and one final tool with which to frame the ontology of an SLA, discussed in this First Chapter. As I descend with the argument from the upper part of the hourglass towards its middle part – drawn further down towards the *plane of composition*<sup>30</sup> - I discover the unique linguistic territory that an SLA (like no other kind of actor) designates and creates. *Becoming-SLA* signifies the process through which an SLA (always borrowing from its immanent condition) delimitates for him/herself a particular expressive content: that particular bodily and linguistic performative space that schizo-*affect* energises and finally settles onto a *plane of composition*. Inspired by the Nietzschean cosmological theory of existence, *becoming* is an important concept in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking that - as *The Deleuze and Guattari Dictionary* clarifies – “asserts continuous process and denies religious and scientific theories of existence, which presume that, in one form or another, being may have a final state.” (Young, Genosko, Watson 2013: 41) With this final addition to the upper part of the hourglass, I complete the argument that the ontology of an SLA cannot and should never be seen able to produce a final, clearly delineated artistic profile.<sup>31</sup> Instead, I will be talking about *becoming-SLA*, a process of coming into being of the SLA, unfolding on the endlessly crossable bridge between the *plane of immanence* and the *plane of composition* and equally indebted and rooted in both. Within the passage between of these two planes, an SLA begins to create her own, unique expressive territory (both on the level of the

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<sup>30</sup> I am moving the ontology of an SLA from the *plane of immanence* onto the *plane of composition* of the stages and screens. As noted, it is Deleuze's view that art and philosophy are two different ways of interpreting chaos (philosophy, generates the *plane of immanence* whilst art generates a *plane of composition*). Deleuze also says that art, life and philosophy can indeed be joined as “the same shadow that extends itself across their different nature and accompanies them.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 218) My argument traces that shadow.

<sup>31</sup> In *Chaosophy*, Felix Guattari explains that becoming designates a world where: “rigid oppositions don't have to apply, where self and other, man and woman, parent and child – and actually do – exist simultaneously in the same person. What matters there is not the existence of reified, polarized entities.” (Guattari 2009: 201)

body and on the level of language). The *who* of an SLA exists therefore only as a processuality that encompasses the augmentation-diminution movements triggered by *schizo-affect* (on one hand) and on the other hand, the articulation of a particular expressive space (linguistic first of all) unique to this kind of actor. *Becoming*-SLA represents an expressive intensification of the growth of *schizo-affect* towards the *plane of composition* (the performative prolongation of the ontological act on stage and/or screen). In the multiplicity of directions or opportunities for growth that *schizo-affect* may open up, *becoming*-SLA represents that marked, personal, unique iteration and establishment of growth (similar to an impasto in painting), which remains still plugged into the immanent theatres of the act/event of second-language uttering, yet present on the stage or screen.<sup>32</sup>

The present study does not focus on how well Binoche masters the second language English in the role of *Antigone* at *The Barbican*, but on how, in the role or through the role, Binoche constructs a novel itinerary of *schizo-affect* into and asunder from the second language English: how much expressive, *schizo-affect*-ed space she adds to the English language through her performance of the role. With the introduction of the *becoming*-SLA tool, I am able to look at the traces that the energies of the immanent depths may leave during an SLA's performance on the stage or on screen. Addressing that itinerary of *schizo-affect* (which should ideally lie hidden in every role performed in a second language) allows me to put on the same plane Binoche's acting in the English language with my own act-ing in *Billie Killer*, and with that of Gerard Depardieu in Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* film. *Becoming*-SLA allows a mapping exercise that evolves in two directions: horizontally, as I link actors (of unequal professional standing and unequal exposure) who act in a second language on stage or on screen. *Becoming*-SLA draws a

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<sup>32</sup> Greta Garbo, Antonio Banderas, Marlene Dietrich, Penelope Cruz and others display such establishment of growth, detectable in their unique styles not only of performing the part, but also of performing/uttering the second language English.

unifying line between myself modestly performing in the Theatre Department Bristol to Binoche's grandiose performance at The Barbican. Vertically (in-depth), *becoming*-SLA creates a map that abridges the actors of the stage and screen with the act-ors of the farm fields, shop floors and so forth: this connection with the bottom, with the earth as it were, allows me to understand the degree of freedom and imagination with which the stage and screen actors act in second language English (how schizo-*affect*-filled their roles are).

By employing the tool of *becoming*-SLA I fulfill the promise of authenticity and uniqueness enshrined in the *plane of immanence* and seek to move it onto the *plane of composition*. I allow myself the possibility to look at an SLA on stage and on screen always from the minor towards the major and set my measuring compass of *becoming* as the centre of the "struggle against the very real phenomena of domination of the major" (Sauvagnargues 2016: 21). By pointing down towards the shop floor and the street, I valorize more than anything not the capacity to utter 'well' or according to a given norm, form or aesthetic in second language English. On the contrary, I bank (as shown in *Billie Killer*) on the difficulty of uttering properly, which is always the basis of unique, original, beautiful itineraries of schizo-*affect* in the second language English. I shift perspective decisively from proficiency of "imitation (mimesis) [of the second language] to [proficiency] of becoming (mimicry) [of the second language]." (Sauvagnargues 2016: 52) If, for instance, I compare the *becoming*-SLA evoked by the *Big Issue* vendor to that of Romanian actor's Ana Maria Marinca in a particular role in an ITV series,<sup>33</sup> I might deem that the Roma Gypsy woman is engaged on a firmer course to *becoming*-SLA than the Romanian professional actor. The *Big Issue* vendor does not approach English through mimesis as much as Marinca might do in one of her television roles. As a consequence, Marinca is delivering a mimetic/dead (as best as she can in relation to a set standard) performance in English, which does not contain

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<sup>33</sup> In the *Second Chapter*, I will talk about Marinca's secondary role - a Czech prostitute - in the ITV series *Maigret's Dead Man* (2016).

(or minimally contains) the quality of *becoming*-SLA. This kind of reversal on the value scale occurs because the basis of *becoming*-SLA is the mimicry of the second language (unavoidable by any SLA), which unveils unexpected and beautiful forms (indentations or carvings/de-territorialisations of the English language) rather than imitations of an existent or imagined, self-imposed or externally-imposed standard.<sup>34</sup> *Becoming*-SLA involves mouths and larynxes, facial muscles, tongues, unusual or “wrong” utterings, dysfunctional flows of breath, hisses, distorted vowels, etc. as they are instrumentalised for a de-territorialisation of the second language English, making the latter tremble and jump from within. Responding to the question of who an SLA is by invoking the concept of *becoming*-SLA equates with measuring, assessing the degree in which the cost imposed by *schizo-affect* transforms the actor into a machine for de-territorialising the second language.

The nature of the process of *becoming*-SLA is complex, elusive and fluid, therefore particularly hard to capture. That is why I will focus on two of the “exterior” indicators and symptoms that certify that such a process is ongoing. The first indicator refers to the creation of a linguistic “stage” on which an SLA dwells and performs. Such linguistic stage takes shape from within the second language (as it is crocheted by the DNA remnants of the native language) and is a materialization of the theatre of immanence hidden in every act of utterance. The second indicator of an ongoing process of *becoming*-SLA refers to a rediscovery and re-evaluation of the body of the actor in utterance and will be discussed at length in the *Third Chapter*, in the context of the practice-as-research project called BANDIT. Being able to say that an actor is engaged is a process of *becoming*-SLA – I argue - is dependent upon the emergence of a space of uttering in which to house the actor’s utterance during her performance on stage or on screen. The formula

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<sup>34</sup> This standard and the ways in which it is induced or self-induced will be discussed in the second chapter of the thesis.

of such linguistic/utterance space is the following: second language-becoming-native-language<sup>35</sup>. A relatively clearly defined space-in-language in which an SLA can perform is absolutely necessary to the ontology of an SLA: without it, an SLA remains unhoused by any language (or housed too much by one language), irrespective of which role she performs and on which stage or screen. The concept of one-language-becoming-another is suggested to me by Deleuze and Guattari, in the “Postulates of Linguistics” plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*:

That is why Pasolini demonstrated that the essential thing, precisely in free indirect discourse, is to be found neither in language A, nor in language B, but in language X, which is none other than language A in the actual process of becoming language B. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 117)

Who else could an SLA be if not the creator and the upholder of such a new streak of language, which is nothing other than a second language English in the process of becoming the native language Romanian via jazzification and de-territorialization? English-becoming-Romanian or becoming-Spanish (like in *Billie Killer*), or becoming-Chinese, etc. is a conquest that never reaches a firm shore: the second language is never completely *become*-d into the native language, whilst the native language is never sharp enough nor strong enough to complete the de-territorialization (and the annihilation) of the second language. The deterritorialisation and jazzification should however be strong enough to dent a living and performative space within the second language: a niche (a “stage”, or a theatre) in which an SLA is able to perform. It is assumed that an actor cannot perform a role before finding a stage/platform on which to perform it. Similarly, an SLA cannot perform a role before finding a stage on which to perform it, but – most importantly - not before having found a linguistic “stage” within the second language on

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<sup>35</sup> This formulation has two meanings: the second language becoming the native language of the actor (in my case, English tending to become my or like my native language) but also the second language becoming native-sed (Romanian-ised) in the mouth and the body of the actor.

which to perform the utterings of that role. That extra stage that an SLA needs is called English-becoming-native-language.

An actor is truly engaged in a process of *becoming* only if he/she manages to articulate (to create from within, using the crochet of schizo-*affect* upon the second language) this unique space of one-language-becoming-another-language (which the Roma Gypsy vendor and others so admirably realize). As hinted above, this oscillating, elusive region where two languages are being sewn together can be called English-becoming-Chinese, English-becoming-Punjabi, English-becoming-Italian and so forth, depending on what the native language is of the act-or who speaks the English language. It is important that we do not put the equal sign between English-becoming-Romanian and a Romanian accent in English for instance: this leads to an oversimplification and a narrowing down of the creative wealth present in every suture between a native and a second language. In this sense, John Edwards – in *Sociolinguistics – A Very Short Introduction* - notes that

No two people speak exactly alike. [...] However small a dialect or accent group might be, and however fine-grained the restriction to specific styles and registers or jargons, at least some variation could still be found at the individual idiolectal level. (Edwards 2013: 19)

I argue that not only can variation be found in individual idiolect in a second language, but most of all creation and *becoming*. About an SLA, we should not be able to say “What a charming accent he/she has!” but “What a charming, new English he/she creates!” In *Billie Killer*, the concept of *becoming*-SLA was experimented with in the sense of a display of the expressiveness of the zone of encounter between the two languages, which we have called English-becoming-Romanian and English-becoming-Spanish. This display has been allowed to evolve in an organic fashion initially in the process of writing the text: as noted, it effected a shrunk, dry, impoverished English language – which sat somewhere between English and Romanian (also



with the help of the rawness in translation). In *Billie Killer*, we (the makers) sought to unearth and define our personal style within the second language English, by beginning to articulate what could be called a personal lingua.<sup>36</sup> What the writing, acting and production of *Billie Killer* affirms is that the true language of an SLA cannot be the second language nor the native one, but indeed a new language: a language resultant not of mimesis but of mimicry, of de-territorialization never in obeisance of an established standard. *Becoming*-SLA implies a behavior similar to Bachelard's creature, in its emergence out of a shell: "A creature that comes out of a shell is dialectical. And since it does not come out entirely, the part that comes out contradicts the part that remains inside." (Bachelard 1994: 108) The dialectical tension of English-becoming-Romanian consists in the fact that both languages remain painfully and incompletely interlocked within the body of the same creature/utterer. Since the *who* of an SLA begins in and with the act of utterance, I am justified to say that English-becoming-Romanian is the linguistic materialization of the act of coming out of the shell of immanence. The writing and the uttering of the *Billie Killer* text can indeed be compared with such a coming out of the shell: a playful testing (sometimes timid, always wobbly) of the territory of the second language. The utterance (and together with it, the body of the actor, as I will explain in the Third Chapter) - like a shelled creature - remains caught up in the permanent dialectical materialization of one language in the course of becoming another, of a body belonging to two regimes. Therefore, the expression and sign of *becoming*-SLA resides in an actor's transforming and adopting the second language from within (by soaking it into *schizo-affect*), making it "stammer, or mak[ing] it "wail," stretch tensors through all of language [...] drawing from it cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities." (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 115)

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<sup>36</sup> The life of this expressive lingua goes beyond the poor image of accent. About an SLA, we should not say "What a charming accent she has!" but more "What a charming English she creates!"

As previously noted, the swarm of stammers, wails, stretches (ingrained and inherent in the nature of any second language act/event) frame the schizo-*affect* and this allows an SLA – in the process of *becoming* – to articulate a minor version of English, called English-becoming-another-language:

Minor languages are characterized not by overload and poverty in relation to a standard or major language, but by sobriety and variation that are like a minor treatment of the standard language, a becoming-minor of the major language. The problem is not the distinction between major and minor language; it is one of becoming. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 116)

*Billie Killer* uses a particular modality to frame the creation of English-becoming-Romanian: the native Romanian actors jazz-ify the second language English, they de-territorialize it, in the same way (as mentioned before) that a jazz player takes a particular tune and subjects it to an intensive improvisation. The actors – involuntarily almost – put the second language English coming undone, by making use of their unskilled, rough mouths and tongues, unaccustomed to utter the English language “properly.” Again, it is crucial to observe that such “coming undone” is not a Brook-like aesthetic, theatrical exercise as seen in *Orghast* (1971) or *The Cherry Orchard* (1988) but more like the product of an impossibility to utter properly (as Wilson’s deaf or autistic person experiences). We are talking about an ontologically-fuelled de-territorialization (a de-territorialisation that is vital for an SLA’s emergence and an un-artist’s re-birth). This is a de-territorialisation anchored directly in the immanence of schizo-*affect*: it comes from below, from within the actor. “Becoming is always a move away from the molar towards the molecular, away from the majority to the minority, away from the oppressor and toward the oppressed.” (Holland 2013: 107) The agency remains entirely with the actor, who – moved by schizo-*affect* – operates at the level of language in such a way that s/he satisfies an instinct to construct a linguistic realm for her/his own survival. In that sense, not being programmed from above and non-programmable in general, the articulation of English-becoming-Romanian or English-

becoming-Spanish is a move away from the major standard of uttering. The creation of English-becoming-another-language is a matter of life and death for an SLA<sup>37</sup>. The result of this free and existential de-territorialising exercise is represented by the emergence of the new tune called English-becoming-Romanian: a branching out from English, which not only carries the personal creative mark of a particular actor<sup>38</sup> but also carries the mark of *becoming*-SLA. This is a distinct sonorous<sup>39</sup> realm, a growing graft onto the standard tune of the English language, however, attaining its own – as it were – de-territorialised territoriality, wrapped in and sustained by the space-creating powers of *schizo-affect*. I see English-becoming-Romanian as an utterance realm obtained through the activation of an inherent instinct of jazzification of the non-native language by the act-or. Again, this instinct is inherent in the actor (and waiting to be unlocked from the act/event): the wails, the mis-intonations, the augmentations of body under the pressure of second language pronunciation cannot be controlled by an aesthetic programme (they cannot be therefore deliberate, as they lose their immanent dimension). These variations within language are effectively inherent in the act of speaking the second language. Asperities, idiosyncrasies, errors, mispronunciations, they all erode and drill into the second language during utterance, making the language wail, stammer, shake. Charged with the energy of *schizo-affect*, this de-territorialised territory becomes livable: it becomes a part of the very organism of an SLA, as the creature finally comes out of its shell and tucks itself into the schizo-language.

It is Marlene Dietrich's drowsy, languorous, and lazy way in which she utters the second language English: there is a creation of a language-becoming-another-language there, which, in

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<sup>37</sup> Without this vital space within the second language, an SLA is condemned to non-emergence.

<sup>38</sup> Every actor de-territorializes in his/her own style – this style cannot be imposed from the outside; it must be invited from within.

<sup>39</sup> This is a realm of utterance not of musicality. It does not signal a theatre that can function without language, but an immanent theatre that emerges from within an English-becoming-Romanian. This is not Mallarme's "turning [language] into music, into painting." (Lotringer 1978: XV) but a language in transition that communicates and produces theatre from within.

turn, supports not only Dietrich's artistic work (the character/s that she plays) but also allows for the affirmation of her creative persona who speaks in a sort of English-becoming-German. There is only one Dietrich English, marked by an unmistakable English-becoming-German-ness. This is not simply a manner of speaking the second language with an accent, it represents a real creation within and forthwith from the second language English. With her eroticized utterances, Dietrich is creating a linguistic habitat for her unhoused performing body. Horowitz notes that:

Though Dietrich was considered an unimportant German studio player, Sternberg was instantly convinced that, by stifling her formidable effervescence, he could evoke an impassivity insolent, mysterious and dangerously erotic. (Horowitz, 2008: 218)

It is indeed the uttering of the second language English, and the implicated *schizo-affect*, which turn Dietrich into a 'Flying Dutchwoman who with her shady past is condemned to wander the Earth.' (Horowitz 2008: 221) Dietrich invents and grows an English-becoming-German linguistic space filled with eroticism, insolence and stiffened effervescence, which, in turn, creates her as an SLA. Her art is present both in the creation of the linguistic space and in how she fills that space with *schizo-affect*.<sup>40</sup> English-becoming-Swedish is Garbo's own sonorous stage (the sound of her instrument) in the second language English, created by utterings as through mouth of a Sphinx (Garbo speaks!<sup>41</sup>): this kind of spoken English is Garbo's second tier creation and persists beyond the characters portrayed by her on screen. Her mark in the history of film acting also includes her particular version of English. Actors such as these, create a personal variant of foreign-ized English, which denotes nothing else but a marked, expressive intensification of *schizo-affect*. Therefore, if a native actor and a second language actor share the fact that they both portray/perform characters (which implies training, skills, talent, inspiration, etc.) the latter has to push the creative effort onto a second level. Without creating her own,

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<sup>40</sup> It is the English-becoming-German that makes Dietrich 'stateless, itinerant, [...] the embodiment of ennui.' (Horowitz 2008: 220)

<sup>41</sup> The famous MGM advertisement for the film *Anna Christie* (1930).

uniquely schizo-*affect*-ed second language-becoming-native-language, an SLA will have not fully emerged on the *plane of composition*.

*Billie Killer* is conceived like a tune, like a song-thread of utterance. On its thread, an SLA can experiment with constructing her own schizo-*affect*-filled linguistic space. Within a musical-sonorous background (created by the various instruments which intervene throughout the performance), the piece allows an experimentation with English-becoming-Romanian and English-becoming-Spanish: the ever-changing sonorous background functions as a metaphor for the general jazzifying and de-territorializing of the second language English by the actors.<sup>42</sup>

*Billie Killer* experiments with how the three SLA's can articulate their own, unique second language English's. English-becoming-Romanian or English-becoming-Spanish are theatres of utterance with no other materiality than that of the utterance and no boundaries other than those determined by the actor's schizo-*affect*<sup>43</sup>. English-becoming-Romanian is the linguistic surface of what Holland calls 'an amorphous soup of *becomings*' (Holland 2013: 56) Within this soup of possibilities and directions, the SLA is engaged in *becoming* (in playing with and following various intensities described by the schizo-*affect*. For me, for instance, acting in *Billie Killer* meant that every utterance of the lines of the text in the second language English produced a new possibility, a new opportunity towards *becoming*-SLA. The vowel *e*, for instance, has never felt properly positioned in my mouth during speech. There was an intrinsic, unsurpassable mismatch between my Romanian way of saying *e* (grown as it was into my body since early childhood) and an alien *e* in English that I had to fit in. In some scenes – like Scene 2 (see Appendix C, *Billie Killer* Video: 9m18s – 9m50s), where Wolf teases and frightens little Billie – my body was

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<sup>42</sup> We weren't looking for an exterior musical quality of uttering – like Artaud and his followers. What we knew was that the de-territorialisation of the second language by the 'foreign' mouth would unveil an inherent musicality.

<sup>43</sup> This is why *Billie Killer* is not a directed piece: it is a following in the tracks of the actors' affect. Incidentally, this mapping of affect happens on stage: it takes the form of a theatre piece, but it is not directed by an external eye or mind; it is schizo-*affect* that directs it.

visibly schizo-*affect*-ed in utterance: there was a sense of awkward positioning of the body (drawn in different directions by Romanian and English), resulting in an impossibility to move properly on stage, an incongruence between the text and my body. Plenty possibilities to move or to utter the lines were attempted – however, the feeling of painful effort and tearing remained. It was due, most probably, to the fact that I, as an utterer, could not find a suitable place for the English words in my mouth. The stretching, the effort to find the suitable space for my utterance triggered my quest for carving a place for myself askew from the new home of the second language English. *Billie Killer* – in essence – was an exercise of finding each actor’s place of maximum comfort within the English language. My tongue, my teeth, my mouth, etc. would – with every uttering – be playing with and searching for the ‘right’ position in order to emit a particular vowel or a particular syllable, word, etc. With every attempt, the uttering come out different, as the dialectical nature of existing within the suture of the native and the second language was always present. The more utterances, the closer to and the more aware of an English-becoming-Romanian which I can create and hold as my language and mine only: the unique echo of my own *becoming*-SLA. *Billie Killer* is a (playful) experimentation conducted by three actors on themselves in order to test how it is possible to generate a territory of *becoming* in-between languages, where an SLA can comfortably live and express him/herself. There is another final and very relevant consequence of the experimental process of self-emergence implied in *becoming* and signaled in *Billie Killer*. The notion of *becoming*-SLA emboldens me to leave behind for good the idea of an act-or imitating sounds in the second language<sup>44</sup>, seeking to produce them as a native speaker would do (or as my non-native ears might imagine it)<sup>45</sup>:

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<sup>44</sup> Herbert Blau shows that for Deleuze, mimesis is “an impediment to becoming, which is always incomplete, no mere copy or imitation, in which this resembles that, but a process.” (Blau 2009: 25)

<sup>45</sup> Can us – “non-natives” – ever be sure that what we assume as the standard of uttering the second language is the real one, and not a distortion or an impossibility to hear embedded in our non-native ear?

Becoming is never imitating. When Hitchcock does birds, he does not reproduce bird calls, he produces an electronic sound like a field of intensities or a wave of vibrations, a continuous variation, like a terrible threat welling up inside us. (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 336)

Encapsulated in the wider metaphor of *becoming-animal* (in opening the *Billie Killer* performance, the actors *becoming-SLA* is also being signaled when they say: “If I put this head and skin on, I become Wolf or Goat!” (see Appendix C, *Billie Killer* Video: 1m50s – 3m.00s). The actors do not play animals, nor are they animals: they become-animals by putting on the ceremonial masks and capes. By putting on the capes and masks, the actors become de-territorialised variables of the animals invoked. In that gesture, whatever is molecular/major in a goat, a wolf, etc. is de-territorialised by and in the actor. As Deleuze and Gattari explain: “You do not become a barking molar dog, but by barking, if it is done with enough feeling, with enough necessity and composition, you emit a molecular dog.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 303) Deleuze and Guattari continue to say that “The wolf is not fundamentally a characteristic or a certain number of characteristics; it is a wolfing. The louse is a lousing, and so on.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 264) Similarly, on the level of language and utterance, the actors can never truly be in the second language (they haven’t been born in it), but they *become* in it: by *becoming* in it they appropriate it in a creative way. I could say that we, the actors, are not speaking English in *Billie Killer*, but we are in fact English-ing.

*Billie Killer* and its testing of *becoming-SLA* signals that the act-or has taken the helm of her own making: with its core lullaby song-speech, *Billie Killer* represented for me a journey from the bottom upwards as a self-propelling SLA. This movement of self-creation recognizes that – as an act-or – I will never be able to emit sounds in a second language in a native way, but only in a native way of the second order (re-born on the *desert island*). *Becoming-SLA* enshrines the who of an SLA as that of a creator of the second order: he/she not only creates/performs the role

on stage, but also has to re-create the language of the role, by languaging (in) the second language. Binoche's uttering of the first verse of *Antigone* will be different with every performance: the actress's th, for instance, will be askew with every new utterance, because this sound (as well-rehearsed or well-embodied as it might be) has not been born nor embedded in her speaking organs/body. That is why, *becoming*-SLA is always an experimentation process at the crossroads: a schizo-*affect*-imbued process – tool within which an SLA fashions herself. In the upper part of the hourglass, the true performance space is no longer just the professional stage or the film set (with its managers, directors and administrative institutions): the actual, real ‘stage’, the real battlefield is the mouth and the tongue, pitted towards the creation of a new version of English, one that is unique to that forthcoming SLA only.



## 2. Second Chapter: Grammaticality

### 2.1 The Neck of the Hourglass

The present chapter marks a further step in the auto-ethnographic discourse. The discussion coagulates around my moving from the immanent theatres of the farm fields to me seeking roles on stage and on screen, with representation from a talent agent. My collaboration with an agent – which meant a practical step towards the existent *plane of composition* of second language acting – has triggered the questions of what place could I find for myself (as an SLA) on the English stage or screen. Who will safely cross me over the bridge from the immanent theatres of second language act-ing of the farm fields onto the stages and screens of England? Can I maintain the rawness of those initial experiences as an SLA during the crossing? Is it in any way profitable for me as an SLA to make that crossing? Will I ever get the opportunity to play important parts (like *Hamlet* for instance) on an English stage or screen? Will I ever be taken seriously as an actor given that I do not speak the language at the same standard with my so-called native colleagues and my competency is always deemed sub-standard or non-standard? Could I still dream to give birth to myself – on a *desert island* – following Foucault’s famous advice that “we have to create ourselves as a work of art”? (Foucault 1982b: 237) All these questions emerged during my collaboration with a talent agent, between 2009 and 2011. The most important guarantee presented by my ontological exercise is the ability to independently determine who I am/can become as an SLA, an endeavor that Foucault describes in terms of a continuous technique of liberation:

a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality. (Foucault 1988: 18)

The upper edge of the hourglass, with its immanent theatres of second language is open to a bottomless freedom: it invites an infinite advancement upwards (an increasingly intense application of Foucault's operations) towards ever more possibilities of *becoming*-SLA, ever more diverse, unexpected and unpredictable, surprising manifestations of *schizo-affect*, ever more radical, uncensored grafts of the minorization apparatus of utterance onto the second language. Overlooking the uplands of the *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing, I contemplate its *bottomlessness*: a suction upwards towards the complete transformation of the second language through ever more massive, ever freer growth of English-becoming-another-language. The upper edge of the hourglass allows me to envisage the death itself of the second language English caught in a spiralling process of becoming another language.<sup>46</sup> In the hourglass model that I propose, there is however, a bridge leading from the bottomless *plane of immanence* - a conceptualization of an SLA on the philosophical territory (engendering the possibility for autopoiesis) - to the existent *plane of composition* (the actual place that is currently assigned to an SLA on the English stages and screens). As noted in the Introduction, the *plane of composition* marks the conceptualizing of an SLA (defining who an SLA is) with the tools of art: in other words, the existent *plane of composition* tells us who an SLA is or can be, directly through the process of making theatre or film. The *plane of composition* of the stages and the screens brings into the frame – as I will show below – a more intense exercise of power<sup>47</sup> in relation to which it will be crucial to determine how and if an SLA's minorisation can truly become – on the existent *plane of composition* - "a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy."

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<sup>46</sup> Isn't *becoming* the true nature of every language and doesn't becoming also imply a form of death of that language (particularly of its unifying functions)? Language seems to always be on the verge of its death and annulment – ripped apart as it is in utterances by so many mouths and voices. This is death by a thousand utterances, as every speaker kills the unity of language by creating a new idiolect with and in every utterance. In this continuously dying unity of language, the non-native utterer is like the messenger of death: her non-native speech epitomizes death that is waiting in the wings.

<sup>47</sup> How is an SLA defined on the plane of composition and by whom? Can I still freely make myself an SLA on this plane just like on the plane of immanence?

(Foucault 1980b: 101) During this passage from one way of conceptualization to another, *bottomlessness*'s sand grains charged with freedom – the immanent theatres of second language act-ing (mouths and tongues, diaphragms and teeth biting into a second language to feed a *becoming-SLA* process) – travel towards the lower half of the hourglass, which (in my geometrical figure) denotes the existent *plane of composition*. The abridging of the two planes is jugulated into what is graphically represented as the neck of the hourglass. What in theory should have been a straight passage from immanence to composition (both theoretically bottomless at each end, making the shape resemble a cylinder) is now twisted in the form of a neck. Therefore, instead of a wide abridgement between the immanent stages of the street and the compositional stages and screens of England – a strangulated geometrical figure appears.<sup>48</sup> It is the aim of the present chapter to explain why and how such a narrowing down occurs. The chapter identifies a loss of quality in the way that an SLA is being thought in the crossing between the *plane of immanence* and the existent *plane of composition*. I argue that the appearance of the strangulated zone is due to the restrictive force exercised by *grammaticality*. *Grammaticality* is a concept inspired by Felix Guattari and I use it to designate certain mechanisms of coercion and inscription (mechanisms that currently define who an SLA is on the existent *plane of composition*). These mechanisms obstruct the free passage of the concept (the who of an SLA) from its immanent (philosophical) condition to its composed ("thought" through art) condition. *Grammaticality* is a term that designates a narrowing down of how an SLA is "thought," in a way that opposes the idea of *becoming-SLA*. *Grammaticality* appears as a machinery made up by people, techniques and institutions: theatre managers, casting agents, audiences, native speakers, employers, language teachers, speech coaches, casting directors, cultural programmers,

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<sup>48</sup> My argument here does not refer only to (re)presentation: namely, to what an SLA is chosen to (re)present/act on the stage and screen. The argument refers to how an SLA is presently being "thought" or conceptualized on the *plane of composition* of England's stages and screens.

policy makers, film makers, producers, castings, profiling's, character breakdowns, conceptions, conventions and unwritten rules about how English should sound on stage or on screen, etc.

As mentioned in the Introduction, grammaticality's definition – in this particular research project - is centred around the linguistic elements. Given the fact that I have identified the ontology of an SLA to be rooted in the act of minorizing a (major) second language, of sewing together elements pertaining to two distinct languages, it is necessary to focus on the force of grammaticality as evident at the level of the linguistic. However, grammaticality's definition is – in my view – much broader and takes into consideration the entire theatre production apparatus/machine, grammars and the economies/techniques, especially of mainstream/realist theatres. Beyond the linguistic focus, grammaticality's definition reaches into the core of the Western theatrical tradition of representation. It could be said that grammaticality controls the (re)presentational function of theatre, in all its guises, from Aristotle to Artaud, from ancient to contemporary theatrical paradigms. As long as theatre will concern itself – in any style or form – with talking about, discussing, (re)presenting life grammaticality will dominate in one form or another. Grammaticality encompasses therefore all those necessary edits (but also structures and composes) which make possible a translation of life, of the human, of certain themes, events, realities from “real” or lived life onto the stage or the screen. During this transition, from life to the stage (through acting) certain elements need to be compressed, others need to be eliminated, others will need to be composed, transfigured artistically, lost in favour of other elements, etc.

All this work of translation falls into grammaticality's remit. Perhaps the grammatical forces are at their most violent when the theatrical/acting conventions are realist/naturalist – then the claim to produce characters, situations, texts that are so-called true to life is at its highest. The need to convince audiences that, on stage or on screen, they are watching or contemplating so-called real people/humans makes the forces of grammaticality manifest in a more acute way. Could, for

example, a theatre director cast a Chinese SLA to play the role of a young Welsh farmer?

Wouldn't that render the character totally unbelievable, unconvincing, untrue to life? Wouldn't that collapse the realist convention's claim that it can produce true-to-life characters?

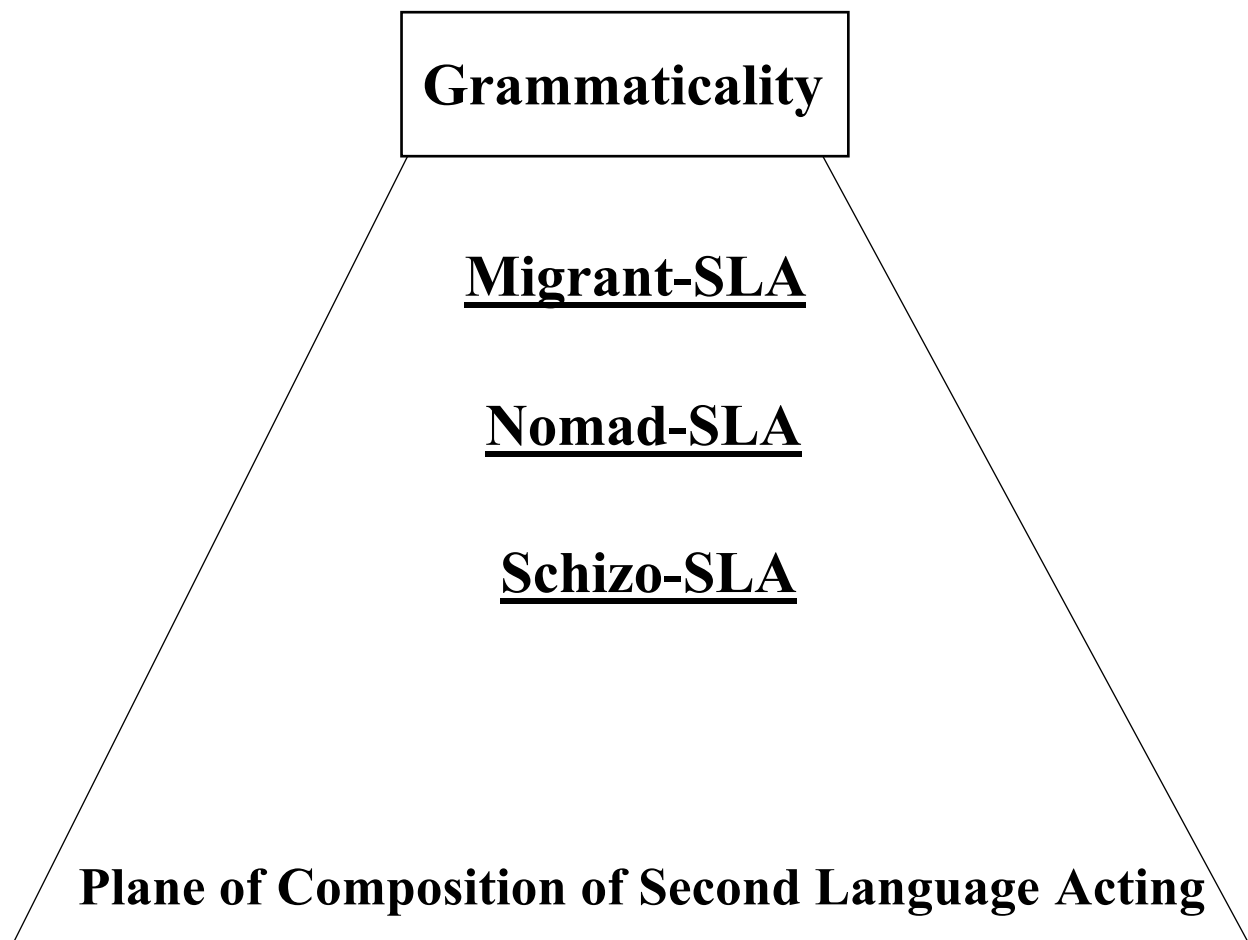
Grammaticality also manifests itself with fuller force in mainstream theatre and cinema. In order to produce saleable, commercially viable theatre plays or films, it is easier and safer to present characters that are immediately recognizable and identifiable by large sections of the audience. It is more likely that English majority audiences will recognize themselves in a Hamlet played by an English actor at the National Theatre, rather than in a Hamlet played by – for instance – an SLA of Chinese origin, in the same theatre. Mainstream theatre depends on the ability to reach wide audiences by allowing them to easily recognize themselves in the characters and situations presented on stage or on screen. Therefore there are economic considerations to adhering to conventions and grammaticality: it is a complex mechanism by which increased levels of recognizability of characters and roles are ensured.

Drawn now towards the lower half of the hourglass, the reality of *becoming*-SLA<sup>49</sup> is captured by *grammaticality*, which assumes the transfer of the immanent theatres of second language acting and of the ontological processes of the fields or shop floors onto the compositional stages or on screens. This chapter shows how *becoming*-SLA is coerced by *grammaticality* into pre-determined, ossified, and fixed forms. These definitive, fixed responses to the question who is an SLA are stripping *becoming* of its intrinsic value of freedom and freeze it into stereotypes. In the neck of the hourglass, we enter a logic where the productive links with the bold, bottomlessness-inclined immanent theatres (where first language elements are playfully grafted onto the second language) are censored, suspended or annulled, as they make their way onto the compositional stages and screens. *Grammaticality* forces a delinking of the process of *becoming*-SLA from

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<sup>49</sup> This means a new answer to the question who an SLA is: one different to the one given on the plane of immanence.

within the bottomless grid of immanent SL act-ing, which can grow freely in so many varied directions. With the intervention of *grammaticality*, the street vendor on her immanent stage, wailing her long vowels in all weathers is suddenly detached from the performance of *Margret Queen of Scotland* given by the Danish actor Sofie Gråbøl, on the stage of the National Theatre London. English-becoming-another-language is reduced to a series of easily identifiable accents or mannerisms/competencies of uttering, whilst *becoming-SLA* is reduced to two identities, names (or who's). As Figure 4 shows, *becoming-SLA* is filtered by *grammaticality* onto the existent *plane of composition* in two main guises: *Migrant-SLA* and *Nomad-SLA*. Both these categories reduce the process of *becoming-SLA* to the question of an SLA being labelled as the "other," the outsider to the English language: the foreign, non-native utterer.



**Figure 4: The Middle and Lower Part of the Hourglass**

Therefore, as I move from the *plane of immanence* to the existent *plane of composition*, the question “Who is an SLA?” is being given a rather different answer. As noted above, there are certain elements in the way we conceptualize an SLA, which are lost in the transition between the two planes.<sup>50</sup> If in the upper part of the hourglass there is a de-territorialisation of the second language by the act-or under the force of *schizo-affect*, in the neck of the hourglass, there occurs

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<sup>50</sup> Again, this is not a question of mere representation in the sense of transferring (in stage or screen representation – as character) the *Big Issue* vendor. Quite the opposite, it is about a more “refined,” more profound transfer: *becoming* is a quality, a process rather than the representation or reproduction of the image of a character as taken from the street and put on stage.

a re-territorialisation of that initial de-territorialisation which simplifies, reduces and obstructs the free movement of schizo-*affect*. The result is thereafter decanted in the lower part of the hourglass into what I have identified as the fixed forms of *Migrant-SLA* and *Nomad-SLA*. The interest is to show what kind of re-territorialisation of deterritorialization is instrumented through *grammaticality*, so that the SLA's connection with the immanent theatres of utterance in a second language is severed and reduced to mere formalism and stereotypy.<sup>51</sup> As such, the existent *plane of composition* (therefore the way in which the concept of SLA is currently distilled on English stages and screens) appears as constricted and incomplete. This chapter focuses on the situation in England and interrogates how and why an SLA very often ends up (re)presenting the stereotypical "other", the migrant, the foreigner on stage and/or on screen, without being given access to greater roles, which do not depend on accent. As I will show, these stereotypical roles often use the deemed "foreign" element in the English utterance<sup>52</sup> as the defining feature for understanding and (re)presenting who an SLA is on stage or on screen, hastening therefore the transmutation of the *becoming-SLA* process (and of all its accompanying vitalism) into its fossilized replica, locked into a stereotypical character/role. It is important to stress again that the research addresses second language acting and actors in England<sup>53</sup>. For that purpose, I will be using a number of examples of SLA's active on the English stages and screens: they provide an image of how – on the existent *plane of composition* – the freedom inscribed in the immanent theatres of various second language acts/events is restricted, misunderstood and mis-represented. Given the limited space available, I have chosen representative examples from a

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<sup>51</sup> An SLA's *becoming* is transformed – on stage and screen – into the superficial image of the non-native, foreign utterance. An SLA is often asked to represent her own non-native utterance on stage: in such case, the actor is being controlled via his/her utterance.

<sup>52</sup> The foreignness of utterance is only the image of *becoming* – it is its carcass emptied of *affect*.

<sup>53</sup> This connects the discussion directly to the *desert island* argument in the Introduction. It is precisely the mis-conceptualisation of SLA's on stages and screens in England that makes the self-emergence of an SLA possible (as I will show in the *Third Chapter*) as if happening on a *desert island*.



somewhat wider pool: the selection seeks to underline the contrast between the diversity of experiences of being an SLA on stages and screens in England and the narrowness of the categories in which all these actors fall (*Migrant* and *Nomad*).

The analysis continues to draw on Deleuze and Guattari, mainly by quoting the concept of *grammaticality*. Studying the mechanism of *grammaticality* helps to illuminate how who an SLA is - on the existent *composition plane* of the stages and screens – is often determined based, not on criteria of creating a schizo-*affect*-imbued English-becoming-another-language (or minorisation of the second language), but is based on a pre-established, inflexible standard for how the utterance in the English language should sound. The censorship and ossification tendencies inscribed in and produced by *grammaticality* are further unpicked by invoking Jacques Derrida’s theory of hospitality. I will also draw from Michel Foucault’s thinking on the topics of power and disciplining.

I should reiterate that *becoming*-SLA attains centrality to my logic, since from within its immanent nature, an SLA is seen to be able to create him/herself in an autopoietic exercise: an emergence that implies ‘‘maintaining and creating consistency without imposing unity, identity or organization – without resorting to bare repetition of the same.’’ (Holland 2013: 9).<sup>54</sup>

*Grammaticality* is the counterforce that goes against *becoming*’s radical, disorganising grafts onto second language: the SLA is given to wear the ‘‘other’s’’ mantle and a foreigner’s name, when in fact, his/her real name is that of *becoming*. *Becoming* is not necessarily anti or non-(re)presentational, but representational of what is non-(re)presentational in theatre or screen. This chapter prepares the terrain for the final chapter, which will propose a third (alternative) route for

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<sup>54</sup> Repetition will later be identified as one of the tools with which grammaticality fixates an SLA into an inflexible who: the utterance is never seen as becoming, as ever-changing and evolving, but as a fixed category of a non-native, foreign, repeated way of utterance.

an SLA to affirm him/herself as a self-made a work of art, fighting the regulation of *grammaticality*.

## 2.2 Grammaticality

*Grammaticality* is the machinery through which a coercive passage from the *plane of immanence* to the *plane of consistency* is achieved. This machinery sits in the hands of people (which enact censoring techniques) and institutions, the gatekeepers to the stages and screens of England. The idea that *grammaticality* exists and operates as a filter between *becoming*-SLA and the existent *plane of composition* has been inspired by my personal contact with a talent agent who has represented me for a period of time after I had left the farm fields. In the conversations had with the agent, great emphasis was put on what he used to call my so-called ‘‘Eastern-European’’ accent. The agent had decided that my best-selling point as an actor who wanted to get acting work in England would be the perceived exoticism of my ‘‘non-native’’ accent. That is why the acting roles that the agent would apply for on my behalf came under the wider (completely false) banner of Eastern-European characters (Polish soldiers in the Second World War, the Russian character in the play *A Place with the Pigs* by Athol Fugard, vampires and so forth). The experiences of attending casting sessions for those types of roles have also led me to consider the idea of the existence of a *grammaticality*. Being often asked to produce a more ‘‘Eastern-European’’ attitude/behavior/accent – for instance for the role of the vampire in a TV commercial for a garlic preserve - has shed some light into how restrictive the road from field to stage can be for an SLA in England. The restrictive nature of the character breakdowns, where very specific accents are assigned to each character is another indication in that respect. As such,

I have started to envisage *grammaticality* as a complex machinery relying on people, economies, institutions and techniques, for articulating and reinforcing how an SLA is being "thought," what place and significance he/she is assigned on the existent *plane of composition* of the stages and the screens. As a concept, *grammaticality* derives from a Guattarian theory, which describes the capitalist submission of individuals via language: "Capitalist power is not only exercised [...] through police, foremen, teachers, and professors, but also on another front which I call the semiotic subjugation of all individuals." (Guattari 2009: 278) This machinery (based on the discreet imposition of certain standards of utterance) disciplines an SLA, forcing him/her into particular niches and categories of roles, through the complex exercising of what Michel Foucault has called a "microphysics of power" (Foucault 1979: 26) For an SLA, the tasks of building an artistic CV, or seeking representation by a talent agent or agency, registering and participating in a casting process always implies a detailed profiling through *grammaticality*: an investigation and questioning which is always concerned with an SLA's utterance<sup>55</sup>. Instruments for profiling such as registrations with agents and casting agencies often prevent a non-native actor from feeling/being on an equal footing with other native colleagues. Character breakdowns – for theatre and film productions - almost always feature direct references to the accent in which the character should be spoken/acted. Almost every casting call contains such filter of accent, which – when applied to an SLA – becomes a serious obstacle in the competition for a part. The example of *Spotlight for Actors* is a representative one in this direction. *Spotlight* is a London-centred organisation for casting that describes itself as follows:

Spotlight connects performers with roles in theatre, television and film productions. Casting professionals choose Spotlight to cast their projects because performers on

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<sup>55</sup> Arguably, all actors or performers have to undergo such a profiling. For an SLA however, this profiling seems too often (if not always) be done exclusively through the lens of his/her so-called non-native utterance. Hypothetically speaking, the director of a *Hamlet* production at the RSC would be able to consider for the main role five first language actors from five different regions of England (even though they all have different regional accents). However, it is highly unlikely that the director would ever consider an SLA for the role of *Hamlet*, because of the so-called non-native-ness of his/her speech.

Spotlight are recognised as the industry's best. [...] We know the industry inside out and use this knowledge to support our members. We're motivated by bringing people together, helping actors to get cast and casting directors to find the right performer for every role. That's why we're always looking for better ways to help our members connect - just as we did back in 1927. (Spotlight 2019: online resource)

Registering with *Spotlight for Actors* is absolutely necessary for both represented and non-represented professional actors. Being the biggest database of performers/actors in the UK, *Spotlight* is used by the great majority of agents or un-represented performers to get acting jobs: it acts as the direct link between actors and most of the producers/casting directors for theatre and film productions in England. Registering as an actor with *Spotlight* involves not only uploading a professional CV onto a dedicated profile page, but also completing an online form which asks questions about the native accent and other accents that an actor might be able to speak in or imitate. The role breakdowns that the actor or the agent gets via the *Spotlight* engine almost always contain a clear indication/specification of the accent required for that role. This apparently simple and benign filter put between actor and film or theatre producer/director becomes extremely limiting in the case of an SLA: it institutes a sharp separation between the SLA and the first language actor. An SLA will never be able to compete with a so-called native actor in uttering a particular regional English accent, for instance. The issue of accent, in the case of an SLA (much more so than in the case of the so-called native actor) becomes a barrier to getting the acting job: the ability to play this or that accent becomes an instrument with which *grammaticality* designates who an SLA is/can be on screens or on stages. That is achieved via the simple act of registration, through the interrogation about abilities/competencies of utterance, as ultimately *grammaticality* fulfils a function of instituting the delineation between what it defines as native and non-native actors:

Disciplines use procedures of partitioning and verticality; [...] they introduce, between the different elements at the same level, as solid separation as possible; that they define compact hierarchical networks; in short, that they oppose to the intrinsic, adverse force of

multiplicity the technique of the continuous, individualizing pyramid. (Foucault 1979: 220)

As specified before, the capital question is: having to function within such a system of triage, can a non-native actor like me ever hope to be invited – for example - to a casting for the role of *Hamlet* on an English mainstream stage (RSC for instance)? Can it be convinced that, as an SLA, I will have equal chances to the role of *Hamlet* as my so-called native colleagues? Most probably not. The profiling based on accent, that *grammaticality* instruments through simple processes (such as *Spotlight* profile construction, character breakdowns, etc.), puts an SLA in a significantly disadvantaged position in relation to her first language colleagues. Whilst a first language actor can switch from one regional accent to another<sup>56</sup>, for an SLA it is impossible to do that, as the “foreignness” of her utterance (the innate inclination to minorise the major language) is a feature that persists and cannot be hidden. From that point of view, *grammaticality* works as a procedure for distinguishing native from non-native, assigning roles to actors according to a hierarchy dictated by the deemed/expected competency in utterance. Such separation and organisation give rise to a macrostructure with centre and periphery, which stratifies what otherwise should have been the rhizomatic, unregulated minorization and *becoming* inscribed in an SLA’s natural ontology: *Spotlight* is an example of how ‘‘colonized rhizomes’’ (Best, Kellner 1991: 101) of potential *becoming*-SLA are captured into a rigid structure, based on clear delimitations. All other such search engines (where actors can find acting jobs) function on similar formulas of triage through specification of accent. Amateur or professional castings (a quick review of *Theatre Bristol* or *Theatre Wales*, *Arts Jobs and Opportunities*, *The Stage* websites will demonstrate that) almost always question what the

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<sup>56</sup> A native actor can play *Hamlet* even if natively, he speaks with a Scottish accent (see the example of David Tennant), for instance. A non-native actor will probably never be invited to audition to play the famous character on an English stage.

utterance of the actor sounds like.<sup>57</sup> This way of allowing access to roles – via a process of investigation and establishing what the foreign actor’s accent is - is predicated upon what Foucault has identified as the dichotomy that establishes clear (yet discreet) lines of separation between non-native and native. This superficial and discriminatory manner of allowing access to roles encourages stereotyping and the attaching of labels to what is deemed to be a non-native actor:

Generally speaking, all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal) and that of coercive assignment of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc.) (Foucault, 1995: 196)

Imposing order and disciplining the immanent theatres of second language act-ing by separating second language actors from an entire pool of acting jobs gives rise to centres and peripheries on the existent *plane of composition*. In its turn, such a centre-periphery (native/non-native) dichotomy enables the emergence of a model of ordering where an SLA’s utterance is forced to gravitate around the elusive centre always established and controlled by a native utterer. But who can precisely establish what is native and what non-native in the utterance of a language? Is it the rules of grammar, is it the ways in which certain sounds are sounded? But, as I have noted in the ‘Introduction’, in my view, native must be equal to minoritarian, understood in a Deleuzian sense. Minoritarian implies the power to creatively challenge the second language from without: that is the true nature of native-ness in a language. Not being born in or with the language but being able to minoritize it from within or without. Therefore, *grammaticality*’s delimitation of

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<sup>57</sup> In general terms, this way of partitioning actors could be inscribed in the wider view that capitalism partitions individuals into set categories, according to what are deemed to be their most useful skills. That would explain my agent’s insistence on my Eastern-European being my best-selling point: that would have increased my chances of getting work (no matter how stereotypical the parts played) and his chances to make a profit. In this sense, the division of work which applies in the case of non-native actors can be seen in the wider context of capitalism as a “repressive social system, which ‘subordinates’ diverse social groups.” (Best, Kellner 1991: 197)

native-non-native is artificial – it takes into account elements pertaining to the ability to reproduce standards of utterance, instead of calculating potentialities for minorization, for pushing the limits of language. Whilst minoritarian regimes from within might change in theatre (for instance, the increased acceptance of regional accents on stage), the minorization of the English language from without (by the second language speaker) is almost never accepted. The establishing of a ‘logo-phono-centrism’ (Larnelle 2010: 23) becomes the main achievement of *grammaticality*. Against such an elusive (in the sense of mobile) centre, all other (especially the deemed non-native) utterances are evaluated. The centre marks a standard of native utterance that *grammaticality* enforces, to which an SLA never can gain full access, because minorization is never considered. Does this logo-phonic centre imply a manner of utterance like that of Sir Ian McKellen, Lawrence Olivier, Dame Judy Dench on stage or on screen? Does it uphold the regional accent of another native actor? Does it invite and promote the accents of the suburbs? It does not matter, because achieving a native-like utterance standard in English is impossible to any non-native speaker, according to *grammaticality*.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, never being able to reach that centre and achieve the standard puts an SLA in a position of asking him/herself: Should I try to speak more like Judy Dench, more like the Queen, or Ian McKellen, like that Scottish actor or in that Geordie accent? How can I increase my proficiency in the second language? How can I become more like a first language speaker? The SLA on the existent *plane of composition* appears ultra-marginalized, as ‘falling between linguistic or cultural stools means risking social marginalisation.’ (Edwards 2013: 37) There are no clear statistics with regards to how many ‘non-native’ roles/characters are being written/created for stage or screen but based on my

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<sup>58</sup> In the first chapter, I was expressing my doubts that an SLA can really hear the standard imposed by the logo-phono centre correctly. Drawing from Wilson’s example of the deaf/autistic people speaking, I ask if such speakers can truly relate to what us, the non-deaf or non-autistic people perceive as the ‘normal’ standard of utterance/speech. Will they ever be able to hear what we call our ‘normal’ utterance standard? Isn’t an SLA in a similar situation? Can a non-native ever properly hear/perceive how *the* native utterance really sounds and reproduce it afterwards, since that actor has not been born into the language?

observations throughout a period of ten years, that number is extremely limited. With indeed very few exceptions, all "big" parts are written for and entrusted to the so-called native actors, in a sort of embedded prescriptivism that confines the second language actor to the very margins of acting in England. During an overview of the characters available for actors across England (via search engines as *Spotlight*, *The Stage*, *Theatre Bristol*, *Casting Call Pro*, etc.) it becomes clear that the aspect of accent in the English language is in more than 95% of cases one of the main features in the description of the character to be cast. The unreachable standard of the expected "native" utterance as modelled by *grammaticality* contributes to marginalisation and in relation to such elusive, unreachable structure, an SLA's utterances are constantly quantified, measured, weighed, controlled and censored. In this game of centre and margins "the only appropriate yardstick of correctness are community norms." (Edwards 20113: 8) The yardsticks of correctness with regards to utterance are set through *grammaticality*.

Bhiku Parekh - in *Rethinking Multiculturalism* – notes that "in a multicultural society the state belongs to them all, and the fact that some of them are in a minority should make no difference to their claims on it." (Parekh 2006: 96) In a similar way, in the multi-utter-ant community of actors in England, the minority of SLA's should be able to make their claim to play *Hamlet* or *Lear* (or whatever part they want) on the English stages and screens. That, evidently, does not happen. *Grammaticality* acts like a "semiotic machine" (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 92) of utterance and its laws and yardsticks of correctness separate what is utterable from what is not utterable in a character on stage and on screen and prohibits the equal claim of SLA's to the existent *plane of composition*. Why the importance of accent and of utterance in general?

Because the native-ness of utterance is the main means through which the (re)presentation of a character is achieved on stage or on screen and with which an audience identifies.<sup>59</sup> In other

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<sup>59</sup> As we have seen in the cases of Garbo, Dietrich or even some of Brook's actors, an SLA usually portrays a character that goes beyond the mere representation of a specific region, place, culture. Should the SLA's character



words, when the producer or the director asks the question “who is speaking?” in this or that character, the answer must be uttered in the correct manner and tone imposed by the unwritten rules of the community, never in a minorizing way. Bruce Wiltshire noted in *Role Playing and Identity: The Limits of Theatre as Metaphor* that “an actor must stand in for a character... and through this standing in the audience member stands in for the character.” (Wiltshire 1982: 42-43) Before this dual identification takes place (before the audience gets the chance to stand in for the character), there is a director or producer, a curator or mediator who him/herself stands in for the character. In the name of the community/audience, he/she asks *Hamlet*: in which accent do you speak, Prince of Denmark? Do you speak like Olivier, or Tennant, or Cumberbatch or do you speak English like a Polish SLA? Standing in for a character that could be played by a ‘non-native’ actor is always difficult, as it is realised through a power-intensive, repetitive investigation: Where are you from and what is your accent? Your accent is foreign, unrecognizable, non-conforming with what we traditionally know about how *Hamlet* speaks! As such, allowing an SLA to stand in for a certain character equates to deciding who that actor is in the second language: in other words, you can’t be the English *Hamlet*, but you can be the Polish soldier or the Romanian cleaner. As I mentioned above, it rarely happens that the breakdown of a character will not enlist clues as to how that character should/must speak the English language: what region of the linguistic realm does the given character belong to? What social class does the accent indicate? Therefore, faced with the spectre of the centrality of what is deemed the native utterance, an SLA often corrects and disciplines herself:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (Foucault, 2004: 76)<sup>60</sup>

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therefore be drawn from a post-representation/post-dramatic equation, where: “a play is not peopled by individual characters” (Fuchs 1996: 172) where the “constricting knot of rational language” (Fuchs 1996: 70) is avoided? I argue against that. An SLA must be able to play all kinds of roles in all genres.

<sup>60</sup> This aspect will be further elaborated on in the section regarding the *Migrant-SLA*.

In this way, SLA's might feel from the onset discouraged to apply for roles other than those of "non-native" speakers (foreigners), positioning themselves at the margins of the selection and casting process. Many actors will then welcome the idea that their non-English accent, its exoticism, its foreign-ness is indeed the best-selling point of their art.

The establishing of who an SLA is works both ways: on one side, the existence of a centre and of a periphery in utterance ability (which are coordinated through *grammaticality*) and a more or less continuous self-censuring and self-examination of a SLA always trying to achieve a so-called native-standard utterance, instead of pursuing minorization. Therefore, striving to demonstrate an elusive native or native-like standard in the second language also equates to a seizure of power by *grammaticality* over the actor's utterance, as Guattari explains. This power takeover may often affect the first language actors as well, who often have to renounce their particular ways of uttering in order to play a certain part. However, this centre/periphery, non-native/native dichotomy affects an SLA in the most fundamental of ways, as it condemns his/her to the condition of permanent outsider:

Certain types of politics of power, certain types of arrangements of power, certain uses of language, notably national languages, are normalized in the context of a historical situation, which implies the seizure of power by a certain linguistic case, the destruction of dialects, the rejection of special languages of all kinds - professional as well as infantile or feminine. (Guattari, 2009: 286)

*Grammaticality* is a set of embedded norms which are enforced both by the people directly involved in the making of art (actors, directors, casting directors, producers, etc.) and also through technique and tradition (for instance a certain "school" or tradition of playing Shakespeare in England), wisdom and knowledge accumulated and circulated via training and habit (this is how you should speak *Hamlet*).<sup>61</sup> "A phonological and syntactical machine"

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<sup>61</sup> The idea of grammaticality came from my curiosity: Will any SLA get to play such major roles on stage or on screen? If not, why not?

(Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 101), *grammaticality* functions like a defence mechanism for the existent *plane of composition*'s native-ness: it is pitted against what it catalogues as the non-native utterance, similarly to what Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Dasgupta – in *Interculturalism and Performance. Writing from Paj* – have described as “an immune system which responds to invading pathogens.” (Weber 1991: 35) *Grammaticality*, as the gateway to the *plane of composition* of stages and screens in England is the enemy of an SLA's emergence from (or in direct relation to) its immanent condition.<sup>62</sup> Deleuze and Guattari link *grammaticality* to the restrictive nature of the law:

Forming grammatically correct sentences is for the normal individual the prerequisite for any submission to social laws. No one is supposed to be ignorant of grammaticality; those who are belong in special institutions. The unity of language is fundamentally political. (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 101)

Therefore, controlling who speaks in a character and how a character speaks becomes crucial: only by ensuring a certain standard of utterance can the audience recognise itself as belonging to a community unified in the hearing and the understanding of what is being said by the actor/character. Steven Grosby – in *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction* - explains that “the child learns, for example to speak the language of his or her nation and what it means to be a member of that nation as expressed through its customs and laws.” (Grosby 2005: 9) An SLA – considered or assuming him/herself to be a non-native speaker of the English language - cannot fully and duly represent on stage a member of that nation/community and his/her utterance is coerced and channelled by *grammaticality*. In as much as - in a Nietzschean reading - “the subject is only a product of language and thought,” (Best Kellner 1991: 22) an SLA cannot be allowed to utter as she pleases/can on the stage. The character that he/she stands in for must be

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<sup>62</sup> I will talk about a possible solution to this dilemma in the third chapter of the thesis.

perceived as a normative member of that particular community/nation, so that the members of the audience (epitomizing the wider nation), can – in their turn – stand in for the character.<sup>63</sup>

The way in which I employ the concept of *grammaticality* refers not only to the issue of forming grammatically correct sentences but – as seen - most importantly in the issue of uttering *grammatically* acceptable (‘correct’ from the point of view of the norm generally accepted by artists, makers, producers, educators, audiences, etc.) words and sentences. More so, the standard of *grammaticality* is always determined and imposed by the native: the native institutions, people and traditions always get to assess and interrogate the second language speaker’s utterance and measure it against a forever-unreachable standard situated at the centre. *Grammaticality* on stage and on screen presides over a unifying, homogenous way in which to speak, hear, (re)present<sup>64</sup> and reproduce (in utterance) on stage the image of the community/nation<sup>65</sup>. Deleuze and Guattari – in *Postulates of Linguistics (A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia)* – explain that “A language seems to be defined by the syntactical, semantic, phonological constants in its statements.” (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 94) In their statement, the word language can easily be replaced with *grammaticality*.<sup>66</sup> This sits in line with the functionality that Bhiku Parekh assigns to the national language (which evidently implies a unifying way of uttering, even if that implies unifying diverse but native idiolects<sup>67</sup>) the role of ‘repository of [the nation’s] thoughts, feelings, memories, hopes and fears and moulded its speakers' minds and hearts in a specific

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<sup>63</sup> This formula is challenged – for instance – in the post-dramatic theatre, which does not allow the creation of clear identities or subjects on stage through utterance, rejecting ‘such concepts as personal and social identity, unity, or harmony’? (Best Kellner 1991: 290)

<sup>64</sup> I am here referring to the representational character of theatre and acting in general as opposed to the non-representational character of acting in the post-dramatic paradigm. This is in line with how “Deluze defines art as a capture of forces, not as a representation or imitation of nature.” (Sauvanargues 2016: 89) It remains to be seen if the post-dramatic theatre paradigm can really fulfill its non-representational promise.

<sup>65</sup> The Queen’s English – with its immanent theatre - sits close to the centre of the nation’s utterance.

<sup>66</sup> Deleuze and Guattari continue by opposing language (or grammaticality – the system of rules and constants) to the collective assemblage of enunciation, which “concerns the usage of these constants in relation to variables internal to enunciation itself (variables of expression, immanent acts, or incorporeal transformations” (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 94).

<sup>67</sup> However diverse in its embracing of regional dialects, such national utterance remains closed to the non-native, to the non-national.

direction.” (Parekh, 2006: 6) There is also a unifying utterance (a distinct dimension of a national language), which implies a community at the level of hearing/understanding of what is being uttered; a feeling of recognition/identification/standing in between members of the same community/nation (I recognize you! Your accent is Welsh, or Birmingham, etc.) and a subsequent identification with and standing in for the characters played on stage or on screen. We can talk therefore about a tendency towards unifying utterance inherent to *grammaticality*, and I link it with Bhiku Parekh’s idea of independent and autotelic agency:

Once a culture is viewed as an integrated and self-contained whole, its development can only be explained by reifying it and endowing it with a collective spirit possessing the power of independent and autotelic agency. (Parekh, 2006: 79)

On stages and screens, a nation utters its stories, utters itself, debates itself, (re)presents itself and listens to itself. The audience (often constituted by a majority of first language speakers) must be able to recognize and identify themselves with the ways of uttering: thus, a sense of community is achieved and the wholeness of the nation is re-asserted. In that context, an SLA’s utterance is always unrecognizable: What is that character’s accent? Who is speaking? There is always mistrust that the foreign utterance can really be considered authentic. Therefore, the role of *grammaticality* is to provide a translation of the foreign-ness of the actor’s utterance, as Felix Guattari reminds us in *Chaosophy*:

the national language is the instrument of translability which specifies each person’s way of speaking. An immigrant does not speak the same way as a teacher, as a woman, as a manager, etc., but in any case, each is profiled against a system of general translability, (Guattari 2009: 286)

The immanent theatre of the *becoming*-SLA sits in total opposition to the unifying, harmonizing tendencies of *grammaticality*: an SLA’s “untameable” utterance reminds all that – in Guattari’s words: “there is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a

political multiplicity. Language stabilizes around a parish, a bishopric, a capital.’’ (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 8) That is not a comfortable reminder for those uttering the nation.

*Grammaticality* is a system that enables – on stage and on screen – the takeover of certain dominant way(s) of uttering<sup>68</sup> for the purpose of mutual recognition between members of the same community/nation and their subsequent identification with the characters on stage. In *Living in the End Times*, Slavoj Žižek talks about language ‘’as the medium which sustains our entire worldview, the way we experience reality.’’ (Žižek 2010: 103) To that, I would add that language (in its uttered form) is a way in which we experience fraternity with our co-nationals, with our community into hearing and listening, influencing the way in which we tuck ourselves comfortably into the home of our uttered and re-uttered nation. Evidently, the second language English utterance of the SLA can never be neutral: it reminds its listeners that ‘’a nation exists only insofar as its members take themselves as members of that nation and act accordingly, it has absolutely no content, no substantial consistency, outside this activity.’’ (Žižek 2010: 231) There is no real community of utterance unless the speakers decide so: the arrangement of regional accent or foreign accent is also appears very frail. As I have shown, utterance attains deep political signification. As such, *grammaticality* has to select, curate and establish the standard that must prevail at one certain time. In that respect, Tariq Modood (2007) – in the study *Multiculturalism* - makes this important remark: ‘a state must use a language and so a choice must be made, which language? How many languages? Hence state neutrality about language is impossible.’ (27) Modood’s interrogation could be reframed as ‘Which kind of utterance must

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<sup>68</sup> Again, however diversified that way of uttering would be on stage, it does not provide for the non-native utterer. In addition, any form of takeover by a dominant language is problematic. In Brook’s multi-accented, internationalised casts, we are dealing with an abolition of the dominant way of uttering (a particular accent in English for instance). However, this dis-organisation on the level of utterance does not always create English-becoming-another-language. Such cacophony of accents is interesting to quote only for the fact that opposes the ordering function of *grammaticality*. It does not always allow for the appearance of language-becoming-another-language.

that play or that film use? How many such styles of uttering are to be used and how diverse should they be? How will the foreign actor's utterance utilized?' Again, Guattari (2009) says that the capitalist/state power which uses the national language as a 'machine of a system of general law that is differentiated into as many particular languages as will specify the particular positions of each one.' (286) The stage and the screen use *grammaticality* to filter and choose, bringing in front of an audience particular modes of speaking, which utter – in a non-neutral manner - the nation's/community narrative.<sup>69</sup>

The case for the diversity of accents – lately promoted on stages and screens across England – is achieved with the same tool of *grammaticality*.<sup>70</sup> Ironically, diversity of accents does not eliminate the standard, it simply makes room for multiple possibilities, whilst the maker of the hierarchy and the curator of those possibilities remains in place. The existence of these models of diversity does not change the fact that *grammaticality* is ultimately the machine in charge of selecting and arranging diversity itself. The de-centering of the major language/utterance on the stage or on screen through diverse types of accents or idiolects ‘remains constrained within the confines of a new re-territorialisation, of the capitalist framework of profit which encloses the entire process.’ (Žižek 2010: 264) This re-territorialisation/rearrangement is always in the hands of *grammaticality*. However, the essence of an SLA's ontology is that he/she should hold the key to both de-territorialization and re-territorialization. In this context, an SLA is in the condition of an outsider, who is given the chance to either attempt to obey the given standard (a standard which she will never be able to achieve perfectly), ascribe herself to the diversity strategies<sup>71</sup> or

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<sup>69</sup> See for example, the recent increased interest of the stage and screen for regional accent. The foreign accents have not yet been recognized as part of that diversity yet.

<sup>70</sup> In that sense, it is useful to look at the questionnaires for diversity when applying for an acting/directing/internship position in theatre and film. Also, the callouts for such positions, which stress a preference for BAME artists for instance. All these tools belong to grammaticality and they help to impose a standard, be that the standard of diversity. But the SLA destroys the second language, he is pitted to kill it, not to enrol him/herself in a discourse of diversity, which is controlled from the centre.

<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that currently, theatres or film production companies do not have a diversity policy which is dedicated to SLA's (as there is for BAME artists, for instance).

remain confined to the margins or be excluded, referred – as Guattari notes – to ‘special institutions.’<sup>72</sup>

With respect to England, Aleks Sierz underlines the importance given to the English language (and the way in which it is uttered) on the *plane of composition*: "a good example of the Englishness of British theatre: one of this culture's characteristics is its love of words."

(Sierz 2011: 5) I would go further and argue – supported by Elinor Fuchs’ opinion - formulated in *The Death of Character. Perspectives on Theater after Modernism* – that we are not talking just about an increased interest in words in English theatre, but about ‘phono-centrism,’ as a ‘privilege accorded to speech in Western thought’ (Fuchs 1996: 73) Who a speaker is, is often determined through speech, and utterance assigns the speaker to the right box. In the crossing of the bridge towards the existent *plane of composition*, it is the function of *grammaticality* – by and large – to decide who an SLA is. An SLA must offer him/herself fully to this translatability machine. Asking *grammaticality* to respond to the all-important question of who is an SLA, invites a taking-over, an absorption and a disciplining of the SLA’s minoritarian powers, and a confiscation of the immanent, sublime theatres of second language act-ing. The suggestion made by the linguist and Yiddishist Max Weinreich that "a language is a dialect that has an army and navy." (Edwards, 2013: 9) appears - in this context - fully justified: the army and the navy of the existent *plane of composition* (the English language of stages and screens) is *grammaticality*. In England, the love of words that Aleks Sierz talks about still functions as a main tool for recognizing/identifying who the character is, who is speaking, on stage or on screen: *grammaticality* remains the tool with which identity and belonging are being organized or assigned. The discourse of diversity, of the decentred utterance vis-a-vis the standard is still

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<sup>72</sup> Such an aspiring special institution is the heterotopia called *Nu Nu Theatre*.



controlled by *grammaticality*, through the theatrical/acting function of (re)presentation.<sup>73</sup> The presence of an SLA on the English stages and screens remains quite rare and very often associated with exoticism and otherness/foreignness: currently there is no particular, specific function assigned to an SLA on the existent *plane of composition*, not even in a diversity of utterance strategy. Peter Brook makes an interesting, poignant remark in that sense:

In England, artistic experiment is always viewed with suspicion while in France it is a natural part of artistic life... Paris has a long tradition of being a melting pot for artists from all over the world. (Brook 1998: 155)<sup>74</sup>

In as much as an SLA enacts an experimentation on the level of utterance – proposing new sounds, new spaces within the second language, new possibilities of imagining the utterance of a community and a nation – he/she is regarded with suspicion. An SLA still has not been assigned a proper role on the existent *plane of composition*: she is eminently hovering at the extreme margins. As such, to anticipate the discussion in the next chapter, a possible route for an SLA would be to seek to cross directly (defying *grammaticality*'s power) from the *plane of immanence* to an alternative *plane of composition* through an act of self-creation and self-affirmation.<sup>75</sup> *Grammaticality* rests upon the precept that "a rule of grammar is a power marker before it is a syntactical marker." (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 84) An SLA in the process of *becoming* is articulating a new, foreign-ized, non-standard version of English, which stands against the accepted norm of utterance as *the* power marker. I return there to the auto-

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<sup>73</sup> My argument is that however generous the discourse of diversity in utterance would be, there is still a machinery of control and translability embedded in that very discourse of diversity. The problem is not necessarily the lack of diversity (although the discourse of diversity currently omits SLA's) but the existence of *grammaticality* as the result of an obsession with words: its dominance as a strangulating force at the crossover between immanent theatres and the stages and screens of England.

<sup>74</sup> This confirms the SLA's isolation in England and its potential character of *desert island* for an SLA, with *grammaticality* seen as a way of ensuring the desertification of the theatrical/film/acting island.

<sup>75</sup> If we go back to Robert Wilson's discussion about the language of the autistic or deaf person, an alternative *plane of composition* for SLA's would function on a similar basis: why should SLA's have to learn to speak English according to the standard of *grammaticality* and not speak their English-becoming-another-language and set that as the standard, in spite of *grammaticality*?

ethnographic element (the need to be wandering alone on a *desert island*) and argue that in this power struggle, an SLA - through withdrawal, through subtracting herself from the powers of *grammaticality* - may be able to affirm herself on an alternative path, which may lead altogether to an alternative *plane of composition*. Foreshadowed by *grammaticality*, language can be seen:

as a vehicle for the communication or imposition of common sense, language represents herd behaviour, consolidates a stratum of shared orthodoxy, and shows strong affinities with territorialisation and State-form. (Holland, 2013: 29)

On the contrary, the inherent role and function of an SLA should entail creating minoritarian languages/utterances which go against the autotelic wholeness of the community and the shared orthodoxy of a nation's utterance. *Becoming-SLA* is opposed to *grammaticality* as a regulatory system imposed from on-high, a rule which the minoritarian always contests, in its emergence and self-propelling from below:

But the same abstract machine of power can be found at work in major languages, where the propriety and meaning of statements and words are determined from on high by grammars and dictionaries, instead of the dynamic expression of existential states and/or successful communication by or among speakers. (Holland, 2013: 117)

An SLA that emerges from the theatres of immanence of second language acts/events is an agent of discord, who unveils that forms of linguistic/utterance fraternity and recognition (which can sometimes be called accents or recognizable dialects) hide a power takeover and represent in essence ludicrous coalitions:

Group identity requires boundaries, preferably ones to be proud of, and expressions of linguistic exclusivity can buttress them. In and of themselves, these comments are inaccurate and ludicrous, but they are socially revealing. (Edwards, 2013: 62)

*Grammaticality* is pitted against *becoming* because it is based on recognition through repetition of the same standard and imitation of the latter: however, an SLA's utterance never comes out the same way as it did a minute ago, it is forever becoming something else, always sliding into a different register. That considered, *grammaticality* can be seen to represent a darker side of

language which makes evident that "language is not life, it gives life orders. Language is command, linearity is order. A sentence is a Judgment. [...] Language imposes its form on reality" (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: xv). The order inscribed in the standard of utterance – order given to the SLA – is utter that way, utter like this, utter like me, imitate me, the so-called native, utter like a native! In this sense, any standard of utterance is suspect of hiding an ordering and disciplining machine and therefore that component must be ditched and replaced with *schizo-affect*, which illuminates the power of the individual speaker to reconfigure the language anew from within, challenging the illusion that we all belong to a community only in as much as we belong to a fraternity/fraternities of uttering.<sup>76</sup> Submission to its ordering means allowing *grammaticality* to respond – in lieu of the actor - to the fundamental question of who an SLA is. As Guattari says in *The Anti-Oedipus Papers* – "The statement is the law. It produces an abstract subject." (Guattari 2006: 35). Maintaining the link with the immanent theatres of the fields or of the shop floor, represents – I argue - the way forward for an SLA who faces ordering/disciplining by *grammaticality*. An SLA should not seek *grammaticality*'s hospitality in the second language English.

This brings the argument to another important point: the connection between language and hospitality, on which Levinas poignantly commented: "The essence of language is friendship and hospitality." (Levinas 1979: 305) An SLA, in his/her passage from the *plane of immanence* to the existent *plane of composition*, could also be envisaged as a guest-suppliant in the second language. *Grammaticality* therefore functions not only as a machinery of ordering/disciplining but as a hospitality machine as well. Jacques Derrida argues that: "Hospitality is due to the foreigner, certainly, but remains, like the law, conditional, and thus conditioned in its

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<sup>76</sup> Philosopher Vilém Flusser notes that "the immigrant [...] is hateful; he is ugly, because he exposes the beauty of home as nothing more than petty kitsch." (Flusser 2002: 95) What else does an SLA do – in utterance – if not to challenge the idea of accent, of community in utterance, exposing it as kitsch?

dependence on the unconditionality that is the basis of the law.’’ (Derrida 2000: 73) In theatres, in film production companies, in the plays of playwrights, in the scripts of script writers, in the minds of directors, in the assessments/decisions of casting agents, in the courses provided by speech trainers, in the impressions of audiences, etc. an SLA is also seen as seeking hospitality in the language. *Grammaticality* intervenes to ‘welcome’ the ‘non-native’ actor as the latter seeks access to the existent *plane of composition* of acting in the English language. It is worth noting – again at this point – that the presence of SLA’s in English theatre and film is rather reduced and quantitatively marginal: with a few notable exceptions, there are indeed very few second-language actors to have played important, substantial parts (and in a sustained manner) in English film or theatre.<sup>77</sup> This aspect will be detailed further in the second part of the present chapter. Noteworthy is also the fact that English mainstream theatre and film industry does not display a particular clarity with regards to the role of SLA’s (there is no room, as seen, for SLA’s in the diversity programmes of the stages and the screens): the latter are usually used to fill whatever gaps there are, if any.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the conditions under which the English stage and screen offer hospitality to an SLA are restrictive and condemn an SLA to often being defined through stereotypes. There is, as I was noting above, a lack of integration of such an actor: in the writing for stage or screen, in the creative and diversity strategies of the theatre and film industry. Despite the fact that there are so many so-called ‘non-native’ speakers/act-ors in the farm fields, shops, factories, train stations, etc. of England, their utterance is not proportionally represented on stages and screens.

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<sup>77</sup> This state of facts supports the *desert island* premise of the auto-ethnographic approach that this research project rests upon. There are no SLA’s to have played big parts in productions of the great classical playwrights like Shakespeare or Chekhov on England’s main stages or screens. From that point of view, the *plane of composition* that I tried to enter as an SLA is like a *desert island*.

<sup>78</sup> Theatres in England usually embrace an ethos for diversity (BAME in particular) but that does never include SLA’s. Within the wider discussion on diversity of regional, less heard, less represented voices and/or accents, the foreign accent, which has been given no attention.

The existent *plane of composition* appears rather hermetic to an SLA and to the foreign voice (writer, actor, director) in general: an overview of England's most prominent theatres will reveal that they do not employ SLA's on a sustained basis, nor do they make any mention of the foreign accent in their programmes for inclusion and diversity. As such, in England, there is ample scope for an SLA to seek to affirm him/herself and propose his/her own alternative *plane of composition*, by creating him/herself anew as an absolute artist (as Deleuze advises) on a newly-discovered *desert island*.<sup>79</sup> The "non-native" actor is put in a difficult condition to, quoting Rustom Bharucha, "seek the friendship [hospitality] of the big fish" (Bharucha 1993: 86), which is *grammaticality*.<sup>80</sup> Hospitality is currently given – as I will show further – on a temporary basis and on condition that an SLA is made to wear the constricting characterological mantle of the foreigner. Therefore, it is important that the SLA refuses such hospitality, because, as Felix Guattari warned: "Saying something's name could be a way of eating it." (Guattari 2006: 388) By naming him/her a foreigner or a non-native or an exotic "other", *grammaticality* has already partly eaten/consumed the *becoming*-SLA: it has already re-territorialized the immanent condition and transformed it into a stereotype.<sup>81</sup> Jacques Derrida, in his conversations with Anne Dufourmantelle, curated in the book *Of Hospitality*, notes that: "Whatever the forms of exile, [native] language is what one keeps for oneself." (Derrida 2000: 82) The native tongue can be thus understood as that ultimate place of refuge, which an actor-crocheting in the second language always preserves. This place of refuge (these DNA remnants

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<sup>79</sup> Given the relatively reduced number of SLA's active in England and a relatively diminished attraction exercised by the English stage and screen (compared to Hollywood or to Brook's or other international theatre companies for instance), there is scope for an SLA (like me) to denounce a need to be offered hospitality and propose an alternative way of composing the SLA in England.

<sup>80</sup> An SLA who wants to assimilate to a *plane of composition* onto which she has only a marginal place might more readily fall into a stereotypical categorization, marked by an unhospitable exchange with the "big fish."

<sup>81</sup> That is why the question of the cultural interweaving – on stage and screen in particular – has always been hindered by the language obstacle. In that sense, Bharucha notes that "one unfortunate aspect of interculturalism is its seeming disregard for, if not transcendence of linguistic specificities of nation-states." (Bharucha 1993: 120)

as I was calling them in the previous pages<sup>82</sup>) is part of an indestructible internal space to which Michel Foucault makes reference in *Of Other Spaces*:

The space of our primary perception, the space of our dreams and that of our passions hold within themselves qualities that seem intrinsic: there is a light, ethereal, transparent space, or again a dark, rough, encumbered space; a space from above, of summits, or on the contrary a space from below of mud; or again a space that can be flowing like sparkling water, or space that is fixed, congealed, like stone or crystal. (Foucault, 1984: 3)

This shell<sup>83</sup> that the native tongue - in Bachelard's interpretation – always remains and is indestructible: it remains inscribed in the facial muscles, in the tongue, in the way an actor moves her diaphragm or thinks. The native-ness present in any second language act has an unsurpassable materiality which is set on a collision course (minorisation) with the translability forces of *grammaticality*. The true power of this internal space becomes manifest through *becoming*, which remains essentially untranslatable: it cannot be reduced, either to the mantle of foreign utterance or accent, nor to a specific identity/subjectivity. The first tongue is like a "sort of second skin, [that] you wear on yourself, a mobile home" (Derrida 2000: 89). This makes acting in the second language a burdensome sewing process, pregnant with the unshakable weight of first language codes (that internal space) being automatically inserted into (infesting) the second language during utterance: these transformations cannot and should not be locked into a narrow definition like "he/she who now speaks/acts in English has a Romanian or a Chinese, or a Polish accent." This mobile home/shell – a guarantor in fact of *becoming* - is an SLA's true "force of resistance, [...] a counter force against [...] dislocation" (Derrida 2000: 91) by

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<sup>82</sup> These DNA remnants might be associated with Lacan's *lamella* – that fine membrane which remains after the complete destruction of the self. However, such a comparison might tempt us into psychology and psychoanalysis, which is not the aim of the research.

<sup>83</sup> In the *First Chapter*, I argued that an SLA emerges like from a shell. In keeping with this metaphor, the shell is represented by the native language, which an SLA will always carry within.

*grammaticality* and a creative reservoir for crocheting in the second language. As Derrida suggests:

"Displaced persons," exiles, those who are unrooted, expelled, rootless, nomads, all share two sources of sighs: their dead ones and their language... [these] often continue to recognise that language, what is called the mother language as their ultimate homeland, and even their last resting place. (Derrida 2000: 87)

The tension between what is first language (shell-like) and what is second nature in the utterance is a defining feature of an SLA and needs to be maintained as the only possible source of *schizo-affect*, allowing an SLA to graft onto the second language an utterance territory called the English-becoming-another-language:

Well, speech, the mother tongue, isn't only the home that resists, the ipseity of the self set up as a force of resistance, as a counter-force against these dis-locations. Language resists all mobilities because it moves about with me. It is the least immovable thing, the most mobile of personal bodies, which remains the stable but portable condition of all mobilities. (Derrida 2000: 91)

The unshakable first-language-ness makes the encounter of an SLA with the *grammaticality* of the second language on the existent *plane of composition* always problematic. Any naming, any coercion, any translation risks destroying *becoming* and therefore the capacity of the internal space of the actor to create an English-becoming-another-language. *Grammaticality* and the SLA's encounter should be left problematic and conducted in spite of each other.<sup>84</sup> This tension and power struggle influences and perhaps ultimately determines who an SLA is, and the direction taken by the SLA's ontology. An ontology decided by *grammaticality*

''eating/naming'' the SLA can never be a genuine ontology. Hospitality into the second language

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<sup>84</sup> Again, this encounter should not be artificially provoked (in search of a new language of theatre, a la Brook): its nature and existence is immanent, inscribed in and inherent to the second-language utterance itself. The *affect-producing* encounter of two languages is creative in and by itself, containing the seeds of growth for an SLA and pointing to a novel *plane of composition* of second language acting. Manipulating this encounter deliberately – as opposed to letting it grow – leads to an artificial ontology (or genealogy) of an SLA (which can be identified also in the intercultural ventures of Brook and others).

is always given to an outsider conditional upon the naming: whatever is foreign in utterance needs to be properly labelled and named: the audience needs to be able to comfortably step into the shoes of the character played – Oh, I know that he/she is Chinese, Polish, Greek!. The naming (or the judgement) that is given to an SLA impedes on *becoming*: the quality that denotes an SLA's power to carve a space for herself in the second language, to fully exist as a body coming out of its shell. The exchange is always unequal between an SLA and *grammaticality* because the latter will always claim possession of the standard of language (this is my native language, you come into it and must adapt to its laws and rules, upholding its autotelic unity)<sup>85</sup> whilst the former quite often renounces the idea of self-emergence and allows herself to be "eaten" – as Guattari says – through being categorized or typed. It could be argued that all actors need to be named. However, the condition of the SLA is very particular, because it is fixed in one name, in one margin: that of the foreigner. In *Englishness and National Culture*, Antony Easthope likens the ability to conform to the standard (which can be the standard of utterance) to "being able to drive a car, when the mechanics of driving become curiously embodied and instinctual" (Easthope 1999: 3-4). But for a second language speaker, utterance is anything but instinctual.<sup>86</sup> Actors often feel the urge to utter to a certain standard of English (as if they were first language English speakers), according to a standard recognized and imposed through the power of the majority, the major style, the "shared orthodoxy." Going on this path changes the *becoming* process into its very surface, projecting it as an exotic feature or accent.<sup>87</sup> An SLA – in utterance – should serve as a stark reminder that language should never - as Anne

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<sup>85</sup> Just like in Robert Wilson's example, why couldn't I (an SLA) claim to have and set the standard of uttering in the second language? Why can't the deaf utterer claim that her language become the "normal" language?

<sup>86</sup> I was asking previously: what if an SLA's ear cannot hear the "native" standard of utterance correctly? What if his/her "non-native" ear is forever corrupted and can never hear nor understand the "native" standard?

<sup>87</sup> I ask if accent really exists. As Edwards notes, every utterance marks an independent idiolect, an accent on its own: utterance is the theatrical dimension of language, its immanent theatre, therefore any new utterance engenders a new idiolect, a new theatre of language.



Sauvanargues says – “function as a system centred on its own grammaticality but [should be] constantly set into variation, thrown off course by singular usages that set it adrift.”

(Sauvanargues 2016: 191). Defying *grammaticality* and being set against its always-conditional hospitality, the unshakable second skin of first-language-ness in utterance<sup>88</sup> concurs to realizing an authentic crossing onto a new *plane of composition*, one that is not dictated by *grammaticality* but pitted against it. Co-habitation with *grammaticality* implies an SLA is allowing him/herself to be matrixed in a trial of hospitality/translability surrendering his/her de-territorialising powers held over the second language. The power is handed to *grammaticality* and an SLA is locked into (an)other’s name:

Systems of signification are always linked with formations of power and each time the formations of power intervene in order to provide the significations and the significative behaviors, the goal is always to hierarchize them, to organize and make them compatible with a central formation of power, which is that of the state, of capitalist power mediated by the existence of a national language, the national language being the machine of a system of general law that is differentiated into as many particular languages as will specify the particular positions of each one. (Guattari, 2009: 286)

As such, an SLA’s utterance and ultimately her mouth and body are being confiscated in the neck of the hourglass. The only power that an SLA truly has (that which distinguishes him/her from the “native” counterparts) - to minoritise language from without - is ceded, reducing the potential for the creation of an English-becoming-another-language. Felix Guattari explains the implacability of the process of being translated and uttered by *grammaticality*:

This implies that no one can ignore the meaning of words. Linguists like Oswald Ducrot insist on the fact that language is not simply an instrument of communication, but also an instrument of power. The law, as the culmination of sexual, ethnic, and class struggles, etc., crystallizes in language. (Guattari, 2009: 236)

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<sup>88</sup> Again, this native-ness of an actor should not be confused with its own surface - its stereotypical representation which is often called native accent - a reductive interpretation of an actor’s capacity to generate new space – original idiolect – in the second language.

An SLA's work to produce a minor English language should however remain paramount: such "non-standard," non-matrixed,"non-native," alien utterance cannot be ignored as it speaks about the ability of the second language speaker/actor to unsettle the comfortable home of the "native", by unveiling its formalisms and military, disciplining, controlling functions.<sup>89</sup> The utterance in a second language – anchored in schizo-affect and unfettered by *grammaticality* – is a tool for the creation of new horizons of ordering and dwelling in the second language. This is what Laura Cull also argues for in *Theatres of Immanence*: "Minorities tend to be closer to the creative, self-differentiating powers of life (and specific forms of life, such as language) than those who conform to a standardized model." (Cull 2012: 20) Secondly, and equally important, utterance creates alternatives to the existent *plane of composition* – proposing misgenation in language, denting of language.

The fundamental question that emerges in this middle part of the hourglass is therefore how the SLA can confront and survive the forces of *grammaticality*, preserving his/her freedom to affirm oneself in direct connection with his/her immanent condition. Only after such a fundamental question has been settled can I affirm that I foresee an ontology of an SLA in action, with a proper establishment of an SLA into his/her own *plane of composition* on the English stages and screens. Until then, *grammaticality* still sets the "non-native" utterance into the mould of the "other" who is speaking - be that "other" a *Migrant* or a *Nomad*, as I will show below.

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<sup>89</sup> This aspect will be discussed in the beginning of the *Third Chapter*, with reference to the thinking of philosopher Vilém Flusser.

### 2.3 Migrant-SLA

I have identified two possible answers that *grammaticality* gives to the all-important question of who is an SLA in England? These two answers are *Migrant-SLA* and *Nomad-SLA*. I do not employ the terms *migrant* and *nomad* in order to describe the citizenship/immigration status of the SLA: instead, these two attributes signify levels and quality of hospitality granted by *grammaticality* into the existent *plane of composition* to an SLA. Also, the concepts of *Migrant-SLA* and *Nomad-SLA* do not seek to define pure states of who an SLA is on the existent *plane of composition*: an actor can alternatively be either a *Migrant* or a *Nomad-SLA*. Both categories mark qualities, intensities and conditions which arise from the confrontation of the actor – in a certain role or production – with the demiurgic forces of *grammaticality*. The term *migrant* is used to denote a limitation of the power of the actor to create English-becoming-another-language. On the other hand, *nomad* signifies an increased degree of access and creativity permitted by *grammaticality* to the actor for a particular role. At the same time, *nomad* denotes the rootless, ephemeral character of such access, its temporary and precarious nature.

The definition given by the *Oxford Dictionary* to the word migrant is: “A person who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work or better living conditions.” (English Oxford Dictionary: online resource). Tariq Modood notes about migrants that they “do not have a distinct societal culture” (Modood 2007: 34) and are “unable to create a new one as they lack the political, economic and other institutions which form the spine of a societal culture.”

(Modood, 2007: 32) I identify the *Migrant-SLA* to be the most marginal instantiation of an SLA - from the point of view of *grammaticality* – on the existent *plane of composition* of English stages and screens. In this condition of an SLA, hospitality is only granted on the margins of the

*plane of composition* and does not entail nor trigger the creation of an English-becoming-another-language. The *Migrant* condition of an SLA implies an actor who is identified (or identifies him/herself) with the character mainly through what is called native accent in English: the character played is defined as Eastern-European, or Indian, Chinese, etc. therefore the second language actor's role consists mainly of conveying an Eastern-European, Indian, Chinese, etc. accent. The actor's creative participation beyond that point is very limited. The most extreme version of the *Migrant* condition of an SLA is a character that is played only through the accented English of the actor: the actor's performance being reduced to a mere re-representation of the so-called accent in English. Such characters are stereotypically constructed as "foreigners" and usually appear as small, insufficiently developed roles. In this condition, an SLA remains trapped in a way of uttering that is entirely non-creative and relies only on repetition (on stage or on screen) of a so-called accent. The *Migrant*-SLA is allowed minimal, marginal access to the existent *plane of composition*, via short, stereotypical, life-hollowed roles. The actor experiences therefore the lowest tier of hospitality from *grammaticality*. In this guise, the SLA is allowed to approach the utterance in the second language entirely from the position of a supplicant: the one who has moved from one language to another and who, by losing their native societal community of utterance has altogether lost the ability and right to create any new one. Will Kymlicka points out that "a nation is a societal culture: a language, a set of social structures, norms and relationships, institutions and cultural ways." (Kymlicka 2001b:18) Once that is lost, it is at the discretion of *grammaticality* to decide what degree of access should be granted to the non-native actor into her new, second language.

*Migrant*-SLA represents perhaps the most superficial answer given by *grammaticality* to the question who is the SLA? Such characterization implies a massive deceleration of the process of *becoming*-SLA, and it plays out (in the role) as a "fixed and normalised identity within various

social institutions [stage and screen] by way of binary opposition.” (Best Kellner 1991: 100)

What else can a Romanian actor be asked to represent on stage or on screen if not what is assumed to be her most basic condition: that of a migrant in the second language? In binary opposition with the native utterer/actor, she can only have competencies to play roles of “foreigners.” Therefore, when asking who is uttering the role/character in the second language English, *grammaticality*’s answer will be: an immigrant and a foreigner now utters/speaks! This kind of reductive answer evidently translates into the actor receiving and/or performing mainly or exclusively roles of immigrants and foreigners: roles constructed almost exclusively on the idea that the actor’s utterance is alien, acts as an intrusion, is dissonant in relation to the “native” standard of the second language. In this first condition of an SLA, a doubly-framed (repeated) imitation is required from the actor: the native accent in utterance is repeated and reframed on stage or on screen and becomes an integral part in the construction of the role played: “Could you sound more Eastern-European, please?” they used to ask me at castings for television films or commercials. The interconnection of native and second language in utterance must always be explained – in how the part/the character is constructed – not as creative, but as “foreign” and in contravening a/the native/known/accepted standard. The utterance always produces foreseeable and stereotypical strategies: a “foreign” accent, as the main means of characterizing the role of the “other.” The present analysis notes that in England and the UK in general, the *Migrant-SLA* characterisation predominates, in a situation where the roles of and for “foreigners” in English theatres and films are already scarce. The need for non-native actors is limited (I was noting beforehand that there is no “plan” for such actors and no vision as to what their contribution could be to the wider *plane of composition* of stage and screen) and the roles available to them are therefore limited in number and scope. This occurs in a context in which even British-born ethnic actors suffer from prejudice and stereotypical casting, as actress Lucy

Sheen notes in her interview for BBC News: "East Asian actors are rarely cast in non-race specific roles and are frequently expected to put on a Chinese accent when acting." (Cheung 2018: online resource)

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the case of SLA's: very rarely such actors are given roles in which they can step further than what is deemed to be their "non-native" accent in the English language. The free creation of SLA's is strictly controlled on the existent *plane of composition* of theatre and film through the filter of the "foreign" element: characters are constructed and cast according to strict rules regarding ethnicity, nationality, accent, etc. and the *Migrant-SLA* guise appears as a particularly reductive way of identifying who an SLA is. From that point of view, the streets, the airplanes, the shop floors of England offer us – paradoxically – many more opportunities to discover interesting examples of English-becoming-other-language's and more fascinating examples of *becoming-SLA*, with considerably more interesting, more human-like characters than those proposed by the stages or screens. In its immanent condition, an SLA is always far from being asked to represent and act "differences [that have] become reified and fetishized" and which "can produce rigid barriers between individuals and groups." (Best Kellner 1991: 213) Doesn't the double-framing that happens when a non-native actor has to re-represent (repetition in the Deleuzian sense) her foreignness on stage or on screen, reinforce such rigid barriers? Doesn't that double-framing of foreignness reinforce the idea that Polish actors should be offered to play only roles of Polish people on stage or on screen? Doesn't that risk reducing an actor to a mere carrier of accent, instead of a creator of characters? The Polish sales assistant giving a tannoy announcement in a shop in London or the Italian hairdresser cutting my hair display though infinitely more freedom to play at the seams between their native and second languages than a Polish or an Italian actor on the English stages and screens. Sophia Loren remarked:

In America, Italians were either waiters or gangsters. All they saw was a foreign actress; they tried to change me [...] I was not given roles that fit me well enough to become a successful actor.’’ (Kashner 2012: online resource)

Whilst the stage or film actor is restricted by the conventional, superficially-constructed roles of Polish or Italian migrants, the real migrants (and perhaps the real SLA’s) – the sales assistant and the hairdresser – have the true liberty to improvise and create complex characters in the second language. The question is why do these immanent theatres of second language acting cross the bridge onto the existent *plane of composition* in such a deformed and reduced way?

Returning to the Derridean logic, it seems justified to say that, in the case of a *Migrant-SLA*, hospitality in the home of the second language remains very much ‘‘like the law, conditional’’ (Derrida 2000: 73) upon the actor accepting the identification – in character – with her deemed non-native accent. The impossibility to evade towards the freedom of creating his/her unique English-becoming-another-language is built into the structure of the character that the actor is offered to play. Under the heavy weight of the second skin of the deemed native accent, the characterization *Migrant-SLA* appears both as a definitive label and the seemingly sole entry route for an actor into the existent *plane of composition* of second language acting. *Migrant-SLA* is the most reductive and most frustrating mantle that can be given to an SLA to wear in character and the most severe censoring of her inherent process of *becoming*. For a migrant worker (an Indian Engineer for instance) entry into the English labour market is often regulated through visa requirements or other such arrangements. Similarly, a *Migrant-SLA* is allowed access onto the *plane of composition* of acting in England only in the narrow and constricting visa arrangement of the non-native utterance stereotype. Reversely, the Indian engineer (in his job and outside it) is probably much freer and more creative in the way she interacts with the second-language English than an Indian actor would be. As such, it is often more fascinating to listen to the Roma *Big Issue* vendor expanding her own burrow-like personal expressive space

in the English language rather than listening to an Eastern-European actor imitating, re-producing, re-repeating a so-called “Eastern-European” accent in a film or on stage. Hospitality in the second language remains conditional upon the actor renouncing his/her right to sculpt into the second language, and to conquer thereby the second language in his/her own way. The creative capital of a *Migrant-SLA* is reduced to representing the non-native utterance ossified into a stereotypical type of utterance: Eastern-European, French, Italian accent. As noted above, soon after leaving the farm fields, I have had the good fortune (?) to be represented by a talent agent. After several casting sessions, I felt inclined to ask my Cardiff-based agent to forward my profile for roles other than those of Eastern-Europeans. When explaining to him that I also felt confident to perform other types of characters (French, Italian or British for example.) the agent pointed out that my Eastern-European name and accent were my best-selling points, therefore I should remain within that niche and make some money out of it. I felt that if I followed his advice, I would probably be able to get some acting jobs but my potential career as an actor would never move beyond my non-native accent. Therefore, I decided to end my collaboration with the agent and become an independent theatre-maker. In the light of the impact that an agent/intermediary can have on the ontology of an SLA, I will proceed to identify two kinds of *Migrant-SLA*: *Migrant-SLA*'s who benefit from an agent's representation and non-represented *Migrant-SLA*'s. Just like with any other migrant workers who offer their services to native employers, the *Migrant-SLA* with an agent seeks hospitality in the second language English via an intermediary (himself part of the *grammaticality* machine) who negotiates (like any employment agency) who the SLA can be.

In this respect, I will quote the example of Ana Maria Marinca. She is a Romanian-born actor, who has trained as an actor in Romania and has relocated to London around thirteen years ago. Her artistic CV (particularly her work in the English language) comprises work for *Channel 4*,



*BBC, ITV or National Geographic*. Marinca has co-starred with 'native' actors such as Benedick Cumberbatch in the British television series *The Last Enemy* (BBC, 2008) and Brad Pitt in the American production *Fury* (2014). Marinca has also worked on stage: I can mention her appearance as Mariana in *Theatre de Complicite's Measure for Measure* by William Shakespeare, presented on tour at The National Theatre in 2006; another appearance was in 2013 at the *Royal Court Theatre*, in the role of a naturalized Polish probation officer in the production *Routes*, directed by Simon Godwin. In 2009, Marinca has appeared in a solo piece based on Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*, at the Young Vic in London, under the coordination of the French director Christian Benedetti. An overview of Marinca's professional CV shows that – in almost all her film parts – she has had to play foreigners' names: to be more precise, two categories of foreigners. First of all, she has played Eastern-Europeans, like the episodic roles Natasha in *Hotel Babylon* (2006), Nadiya Tereschenko in *Holby City* (2011) or Vika in *Five Minutes of Heaven* (2009). In her most recent television appearance in the 2018 ITV series *Midsomer Murders*, Marinca plays the role of pathologist Petra Antonescu: a character of rather unclear nationality, if we are to judge by Marinca's way of speaking but rather firmly anchored (through the name of the character) in the Eastern-European-ness stereotype. In the role, it is visible that Marinca attempts to utter as close as possible to what she believes to be a native standard<sup>90</sup>: admirable as it is, her effort is blocked by the forces of *grammaticality* in two ways. Firstly, her name is a foreigner's name, an Eastern-European's name. As she moves onto the *plane of composition* of second language acting, the following question is being asked: Who is uttering? The response is: this is the character of a young (non-English) woman called Petra Antonescu.

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<sup>90</sup> I was asking – in the previous chapter – if a non-native actor can ever truly understand what the native standard in English is. Can that native English utterance really ring in an SLA's ear or is it that an SLA is forever deaf to the native standard and instead advances – involuntarily even – towards an English-becoming-another-language?

Her name is the name of a foreigner<sup>91</sup> and that contrasts rather strongly with Marinca's visible efforts to produce a personal version of English.

It has been visible in some of her appearances that Marinca has worked (and constantly works) to define herself through the way she speaks English, by seeking – for example - to neutralise some of the strong consonants that characterise the Romanian language, whilst elongating and enlarging the 'a:' sounds, for instance. Whilst in the Romanian language the 'a:'s are usually wide open sounds (somewhat similar to Italian), in English they tend to be covered in the palate in the mouth. This denotes the possible emergence of a style of uttering in the second language: an immanent uttering stage characteristic only to Marinca. In many of her appearances however - like the episodic role of a Czech prostitute Maria in *Maigret's Dead Man* (ITV, 2016) - Marinca is forced to "wear" a very thick Eastern-European accent superimposed on a thinly sketched portrait of an Eastern-European prostitute. Such inconstancy of utterance and a stereotypical construction (writing) of the characters (such as that of the Czech prostitute) does not allow the actor to grow and affirm her own creation of English, or to leave a more permanent, more pregnant, unique and lasting mark on the *plane of composition* of second language acting in England.

As I have argued in the previous chapter, there can be no SLA based only on acting potential, talent and inspiration (like in the case of a native actor): there always has to exist a second-tier creation at the level of language. Without the creation of a unique idiom of English-becoming-another-language there can be no consistent affirmation of an SLA on the *plane of composition*. In Marinca's role in *Midsomer Murders*, the energy and dynamism carried by such a potential *becoming*-SLA is not exploited either. The actor's accent in the role of the pathologist is

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<sup>91</sup> It does not mean that because of the name, the character is not good: it means that the character is not much more besides the name of a foreigner. Binoche's name at *The Barbican* is *Antigone*: this is perhaps a foreigner's name too, but how much more than just a foreigner does the name *Antigone* evoke.

evidently non-native; although it is difficult to attach a particular nationality to it, it remains however an untraceably "foreign" accent. The actress' rehearsed harnessing of the utterance in English enhances – paradoxically – her character's foreign-ness. There is a tension inherent to the character, as the actor tries to achieve a personal way of speaking English, whilst the character is sketchily written as an Eastern-European doctor. Whatever may appear as uniquely transitional, liminal, and creative in Marinca's incomplete control over the English language is never pushed further and built into the life of the character. As such, the tension makes evident – by contrast – the "otherness" of the character and of the actor. Given the reduced breadth of the character (in terms of its humanity and also number of scenes/lines), the actor cannot establish herself firmly in the second language, through the creation of a unique style. The access into the second language of the actor remains marginal and as such, Marinca's potential for *becoming-SLA* is obstructed. If we continue to look at the Romanian-born actor's CV, we can observe that the names given to her characters have very often been those of "others." For instance, the character that won Marinca a BAFTA for Best Actress was also that of an Eastern-European. In *Sex Traffic* (2004) directed by David Yates, Marinca played the role of the Eastern-European (Romanian) prostitute Elena Visinescu, where she performed in both Romanian and English. In the *National Geographic* series *Mars* (2016), the actress plays the role of Marta Kamen, the Russian space mission's exobiologist and geologist. In all these roles, Marinca's characters – by being named/labelled with the reductive mark of non-native accent (even more detrimental when that is conflated into the non-existent category called Eastern-European accent) – are deprived of the energy of *becoming-SLA*. The roles remain too much dependent on the non-native accent and they reveal *grammaticality's* action to reduce the actor's presence in the second language to the margins: restricting access to the width of the *plane of composition* through strict, stereotypical roles (always roles of foreigners) specifically designated for SLA's.

It is important however to note that Marinca has also played names of foreigners other than those from the generic Eastern Europe: for example, she plays the role of Yashim Anwar in *The Last Enemy* (2008), or that of the au-pair Dita in *The Politician's Husband*, a miniseries showed on BBC Two in 2013. The characters with such names are – from the point of view of utterance - de-humanized carcasses expected to speak in an accented English. The otherness built in the characters and the way they speak is reified and becomes anti-productive, as it reinforces the stereotype of the ‘‘foreign’’ As a result, an SLA very often gets offered roles based on nationality: the Polish caretaker, the Russian spy, the Romanian kitchen or farm workers - Oana Pellea in *I Really Hate My Job* (2007) and Alec Secareanu in *God's Own Country* (2017) - the Indian doctor, the French au-pair, etc.

Gerard Depardieu could also be seen as a *Migrant*-SLA for his appearance as Reynaldo in Kenneth Branagh's 1996 film version of *Hamlet*. Taking advice from a Polonius played by the English actor Richard Briers, the French Reynaldo agrees to follow Laertes in Paris and report back to Polonius on the young man's activities. In short, brisk lines, Depardieu replies in a French-accented English to a first language English-speaking Polonius who – if we were to apply the same psychological realism rule that was applied to Depardieu – should be speaking with a Danish accent. In Depardieu's role, a *grammaticality*-instrumentalised psychological realism is at work but it seems to apply only to the character that comes from France. But what about *Hamlet* himself, who is a Danish prince? If Branagh would have kept with the psychological realism convention to the very end, he surely should have spoken with a Danish accent as *Hamlet*. Evidently, that wasn't necessary because *Hamlet* is so much more than the name of a Danish, non-English prince: he is a human being. For Reynaldo, however, a different rule applies: his character has no other important feature apart from that of being French (attached to it the stereotypical scheming character associated in folklore with the French) and speaking

English with a French accent. Nicholas Spice, in the article "Up from the Cellar", published in *The London Review of Books* summarizes the advice to actors given by Nobel-prize winner novelist and theatre maker Elfriede Jelinek in the short piece "I want to be shallow" (1983). Jelinek (quoted by Nicholas Spice) warns against the convention of psychological realism, "because it allows us to escape unpalatable reality by taking shelter in the "luxuriousness of personality, losing ourselves in the depth of individual character." (Spice 2008: 5) On the contrary, for a non-native actor, the misconstrued application of psychological realism is another way for *grammaticality* to restrict the actor's access to characters of all types and nationalities and deny an SLA access to that luxuriousness of personality, which should be contained by all characters on stage or on screen.

Paradoxically, in my view, in the role of Reynaldo, there are indications of a *becoming*-SLA in the utterance of the second language English: Depardieu frames the stereotypical French-ness assigned to him but instills it with his well-known charm, involuntary humor and cunningness. The French actor's expressive physique – a gargantuan face animated by a pair of very shrewd eyes – is superimposed on an utterance which is sharp, abrupt, barking-like at times, imbecile-like throughout, although remaining tied to the stereotypical French accent sonorities. What makes Depardieu's presence in the film that of a *Migrant*-SLA is the reduced length of his text and the discriminatory psychological-realist treatment of the character: a few lines, most of them single-worded, do not allow the actor to intervene – with the entire force of his talent – both on the level of character creation and on the level of creation in the English language. The shortness of the actor's presence on screen is also remarked by Todd McCarthy's review of the film in

*Variety*:

the non-Brits on hand prove a mixed blessing, with Robin Williams passably amusing as a very fey Osric but Jack Lemmon just not equipped for the occasion as one of the palace guards who spots the ghost. Gerard Depardieu fortunately has few lines of any length to say in his one scene as Polonius' servant Reynaldo. (McCarthy 1996: online resource)

Therefore, *grammaticality* (the casting of roles and the convention of interpretation in this instance) determines the intensity with which an actor can create in the second language English: very often, the roles assigned are too short and offer too little space for the actor to truly emerge as a creator on two levels (character and utterance).

Alec Secareanu – a young Romanian actor – plays a migrant farm worker in the British drama *God's Own Country* (2017) directed by Francis Lee. The name of the farm worker in the film is Gheorghe: a typical Romanian name in the older generations of Romanians, particularly in the countryside. Gheorghe is a young Eastern-European immigrant hired by a farm in Yorkshire to help during the busy lambing season. Johnny is in charge of running the farm, where he lives with father Martin (who has suffered a stroke and can no longer look after the farm) and grandmother Deidre. Having to spend a week camping in the fields looking after the ewes, the two men engage in an amorous relation. Throughout the film, the two protagonists consume their relationship in episodes of direct conflict (there are scenes when the two men fight or when Johnny calls Gheorghe a Gypsy) or incredible tenderness (the scene when Gheorghe and Johnny's kiss for the first time, for instance): finally, Gheorghe moves in with Johnny to look after the farm. The film has received accolades and critical acclaim. From the point of view of my analysis, Secareanu's role (which is pivotal to the film) brings forth illuminating contradictions. Despite the considerable length of the role, the character of Gheorghe seems to remain strongly attached to the Eastern-European (Romanian) accent.<sup>92</sup> I would not decisively point to a lack of imagination and freedom in the way Secareanu creates his own unique space in the second language. It was most probably not the particular interest of the director/producer to further construct Secareanu's style in uttering the second language English. However, as I have

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<sup>92</sup> Who is uttering? Who are you? I am Gheorghe – I am a Romanian! Who is an SLA? A Romanian!

argued, an SLA's creation is not complete if it doesn't work on both levels: creation in the actual acting of the part and creation of a style in the second language. In this particular instance, Secareanu's utterings in a second language are engulfed and overcome (rightly so, perhaps) by the captivating love story. Secareanu has a charming lazy way of uttering in English, exuding a sense of sexy paralysis in the jaws and cheeks, which adds to Gheorghe's exoticism, making him sexy and childish at the same time, attractively different and mysterious. Throughout the role, the actor remains attached to the rawness, unedited-ness of his utterance in English: the latter does not appear worked on by the director nor by the actor himself and as such, it adds to the feeling of an authentic, raw love between two complete strangers. Secareanu is charming with his 'taciturn,' incomplete, lazy and passive utterings. The utterings of the foreigner are never as sharp and as present as that of the native: this puts Gheorghe's character in an interesting complementarity with Johnny (played by Josh O'Connor), who is very agile and energetic in the way he speaks. This difference in the quality of utterance in English constructs an interesting balance of power and contrast between characters, portraying Gheorghe as the more vulnerable (through his imperfect, often delayed reactions in utterance) yet stronger: the one who, through candidness manages conflict, soothes suffering and anger. The bearded actor, bear-like looking, with his wide eyes seems to swallow the English language instead of projecting it outwards. This denotes a taciturn, different way of relating to life, complementing Johnny's agitated and intense nature. The rawness of the second language utterance is cleverly inculcated into the fabric of the character and the plot, which gain in depth as such. Secareanu's naturally guttural, from-the-back-of-the-mouth/cheeks-dead/widely-open-brown-eyes utterings in English are not conscientiously created: they are nevertheless involuntarily and cleverly absorbed into the character. The participation of the actor in constructing Gheorghe's identity through uttering in the English language is minimal (and therefore expressive in the context of the story) - the actor

simply speaks like himself; there is no composition at the level of utterance. The slowness in Secareanu's utterings (which seems to be originating in a difficulty to articulate some of the sounds of the second language English) is also left raw: the director and actor do not charge the creative potential of this lack of speed in English. Left as it is, this feature adds to the gentleness of the character, as Gheorghe is somehow *becoming*-animal or becoming one with the animals. In this middle-of-nowhere farm, his big, brown eyes, his stumbling, slow, guttural utterance make the "foreigner" similar to the other innocent creatures: just like them, Gheorghe elicits a sense of peace and serenity that complements the atypical nature of the love story and the rawness and child-like directness of the amorous encounter. It remains however undeniable that Secareanu (and we are looking here at the actor who will theoretically need to grow as an SLA in England) – in the role of Gheorghe - is attached to a foreigner's name. The character is – justifiably in this case – an "other," an outsider not only to the language, the customs and the country but also "different" in terms of how he approaches life, conflict, relations with animals, sexuality. In this role, the non-native utterance is aptly integrated into the character's portrayal, providing additional substance.

The reason for which I have included Secareanu in the category of *Migrant*-SLA lies in the curiosity about how the actor will be able to grow himself as an SLA in future roles. Will his future roles all be roles of foreigners? Will the actor be able to evolve on the existent *plane of composition* by creating his own signature idiolect in the English language? What we know with certainty is that, up to the present, Secareanu has only been offered roles of "foreigners" in England. Evidently, Secareanu is only a young actor with a whole career/life ahead of him, therefore it is premature to anticipate a future direction for him. However, his CV might indicate a trend. Recently, Secareanu has appeared in another important production: the television series *Baptiste* (BBC 2019), where he plays an Amsterdam-operating ruthless Romanian gangster



(Constantin Baracu), who displays psychopathic tendencies. Another role of Romanian and another character which reinforces the stereotype of the Romanian trafficker/gangster. Secareanu has also appeared in Simon Longman's play *Gundog* (2018) staged at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, London. In the play, which is set in an isolated farm, in which two orphaned sisters live, Secareanu plays "a stranger, a foreigner, far from home, and trying to scrape a living through picking fruit and stealing metal for scrap." (Tripney 2018: online resource). In both these productions – on screen and on stage – the actor has been playing roles of Romanians and/or foreigners.

Categorizing Secareanu as a *Migrant-SLA* is not a reflection of his abilities as an actor: quite the contrary. Rather, it reflects a concern that the actor might remain locked within a certain group of roles and characters, with his possibilities of *becoming-SLA* being reduced to a list of non-native names and characters. The process of *becoming-SLA* implies an actor's advancement in the creation and establishment of an English-becoming-another-language, which grows to influence who that actor is. *Migrant-SLA* means an actor stopped in her tracks as she launches towards the formation of a language of her own. In that sense, the quality of *Migrant* reflects a limitation, a marginalization of the actor's creative powers in utterance: he or she always plays a "foreigner" (and usually a character that is not complex and most often intensely negative). The actor behind the character of Gheorghe appears – for the moment – to have been consigned to play only roles of foreigners (it is perhaps also important to note that many of these roles are based on stereotyping or reinforce stereotyping, like the Romanian gangster Baracu, which heavily stereotypes the Romanian émigré). Secareanu seems to be forced – by *grammaticality* - to portray (solely) Eastern-European characters.

A similar concern emerges in the case of Maria Marinca. As noted above, her roles are also mainly those of Eastern-Europeans and "foreigners." I have included her in the *Migrant-SLA*

category because the mantle of “foreigner” tends to mean less-complex, more shallow characters: always immigrants and always immigrants with problems deemed specific to a certain geographical region (Eastern-Europeans for instance are usually portrayed as low skilled, violent, murderous, tenebrous, generally negative characters). This is a recurrent problem in the film industry predominantly, and it concerns ethnic actors in particular: British actor (of Egyptian descent) Rami Malek has recently refused to play the role of an Arabic-speaking terrorist in the latest James Bond film. In a recent interview, Malek said that:

It’s a great character [...] but there was one thing that I discussed with [director] Cary Fukunaga. We cannot identify him with any act of terrorism reflecting an ideology or a religion. That’s not something I would entertain, so if that is why I am your choice then you can count me out. But that was clearly not his vision. So, he’s a very different kind of terrorist. [...] [Bond 25] is another extremely clever script from the people who have figured out what people want in those movies. (White 2019: online resource)

In the same way, Marinca’s appearance in the ITV series *Maigret’s Dead Man* (2016) as the Czech prostitute Maria reinforces the stereotype of the foreign/Eastern-European prostitute. It seems almost futile to note that not every woman coming from the East of Europe is a prostitute. Apart from this blatant reinforcing of a stereotype on screen, for the entire duration of the film, the character’s story (one which included only suffering – there seemed to be no light in Maria’s life) is almost obliterated by the strong, brutal, violent repertoire of utterances prescribed under the so called Eastern-European accent. We learn nothing about Maria as a woman throughout the entire film, apart from the immediately expected Eastern-European stereotypes: the underground life, the running away from authorities, being part of gangs and other dubious networks, a deceitful, shrewd, subterranean nature. There is no humour, no playfulness, no “other” sign of life in Maria apart from the suffering induced by always living below the surface and being the victim of all sorts of wicked men. The all-tortured, all-suffering nature of the character (which appears shallow precisely because it lacks a counterweight of emotion, beauty, light, humanity,

humour) is expressed through a continuous suite of raw shouts, clenched jaws, brutal, savage-like utterances, through tense, scared looks and a scruffy general appearance of the character. This one-dimensional writing of Maria makes her hollow as a character: she is the stereotype of the Eastern-European woman-prostitute, transformed into a brute, de-humanized by her ordeal. The lack of freedom and inventiveness at the level of utterance is detrimental to how the actor could project (at least minimally) the humanity of the prostitute woman. In the hospital scene, for instance, Maria's nuances of suffering are overshadowed by a deliberately thickened "Eastern-European" accent in which the words are being uttered. The actress does not speak: she howls (like a savage beast rather than like a civilized human), terrified that – by confessing to detective Maigret – she will be killed by the dangerous men that "look after" her. Whilst this is not a criticism to Marinca's gruesome portrayal of suffering and trafficking, it is a criticism of the writing of the character. It is as if the actor is not called upon to play a real human being (which includes the portrayal of suffering but not only): instead, the actor is asked to portray the carcass of that suffering. As in Malik's example, it is not religion or ethnicity that defines the character of the terrorist – religious conviction is just one ingredient in the more complex portrayal of a murderous mind. Maria's grotesque pairings of mouth and sound, her continuously disfigured face, which utters roughened, sharp-edged sounds in English are the only things we have at our disposal – as audience – to understand her character, her humanity. Maria appears not only as a morally disfigured character, caught in a series of dubious affairs of the underworld, but she is also a linguistically disfigured character: her utterings (in the hospital scene and not only) seem to be that of a beast, coming from an "other" world. The problem is that the character is just suffering, howling and nothing else. This a stereotypical foreigner who in her always-awkward display of reactions and verbiage can only shout: there is no light, no tenderness, no alternative sounds or utterings in Maria's repertoire. The foreignness of her utterance relates to the

decrepitude of her physical appearance, creating the cliché of the abused Eastern-European prostitute. Despite the actress's evident efforts to represent Maria's story through use of intense emotion and physicality, the main signals that we, as an audience, receive are utterings that testify to Maria being an Eastern-European. There is not much else to her mantle/name apart from the rough clenching, the fierce battle between the harshness of the Eastern-European jaws savagely biting into a 'noble' English sound. Not only morally fallen but also linguistically corrupt. It is an image of suffering (and only that!): the suffering of a trafficked, abused Eastern-European prostitute, topped with a suffering of an English language molested by the prostitute's savage jaws. This functions as a double imitation/repetition: the suffering of the character superimposed upon the suffering and the violence of utterance in the second language. There is no poetry, no freedom, no creativity, no contrast implied in the encounter of the actor's body and the second language here. The heavily-blown utterings obliterate empathy with the foreign character, doubly-exoticising it, making its otherwise realistic suffering (it is undeniable that many Eastern-European women are being trafficked as prostitutes to Western Europe) somehow less real and rather distant. Maria is a mis-represented Eastern-European woman, a lifeless, one-size-fits-all mask of the prostitute. This is not a unique occurrence that concerns only actors from the Eastern parts of Europe, as British actor Lucy Sheen (of East Asian heritage) points out in her interview for the BBC:

The representation of East Asians tends to be stereotypical or involve racist tropes (in TV and theatre). [...] Women are generally depicted as slim, petite, long-haired, submissive 'lotus blossom' types, prostitutes, or illegal immigrants, while East Asian men are portrayed as asexual or effeminate. (Cheung 2018: online resource)

As these examples prove, a *Migrant-SLA* – under the restrictive force of *grammaticality* - is put in a position to represent disembowelled mantles of foreigners, empty shells that grow to represent stereotypical views of the 'other.' Actor Lucy Sheen argues again that 'there's a

sense that they [the East Asian actors] are only allowed to play themselves in a certain kind of way - often involving Pidgin English or being an immigrant.” (Cheung 2018: online resource)

The non-native actor is asked to wear a diminishing, life-taking mask: as empathetic as it might be, the directorial gesture of showing a prostitute only as a caged beast does nothing else than strip that character of life, rendering it an empty shell. Offered simplistic characters like that to play, actors become *Migrant-SLA*'s, playing and uttering hollow foreigners; these actors' characters end up being signified by their utterance and not vice versa. This reinforces the concern that *grammaticality* intrinsically contains the biased view that a non-native actor should only be used to fill the gaps and allowed to play mainly the foreigner characters.

Actor Pinar Ogun's experience of acting school in England might also justify that concern. Ogun was born in Turkey and she moved to England in 2004: here, she completed an acting course at LAMDA in 2006. She returned thereafter to her native Turkey, where she began a career in theatre and film. Her experience as an international student (scholarship recipient) of an English acting conservatoire might give a glimpse of how *grammaticality* (with its people and institutions, pedagogues, techniques and agents) "thinks" an SLA. In her oral presentation for the *CreativeMornings Cardiff* programme 2017, Ogun made the following remarks:

So...I was the only foreigner in my class, and I was constantly working on my English obsessed with speaking like a British person [...] One day, one of my tutors stopped me and said: 'Pinar, stop! No matter how hard you try, you will never, ever speak like an English person. Even if you do, they will never cast you as an English person. Just stop it! You will always be a foreigner! (Ogun 2017: online resource)

What the examples of *Migrant-SLA*'s with representation (by agents) show is that *grammaticality* directly shapes who an SLA is and determines what characters he/she can represent on stage or on screen. Directors, writers, agents, producers, audiences all have an impact in maintaining the *Migrant-SLA* at the margins of the second language, permitting little advancement towards creating a unique style and a self-growth from within.

The second type of *Migrant-SLA*'s refers to those actors who are not represented by agents and therefore have to rely mainly on independent, self-devised work in order to carve their place on the *plane of composition*: their activity consists of independent, often multidisciplinary, fringe work and often involves taking on roles in amateur and semi-professional theatre and short film projects. This is a very fluctuating and heterogeneous group of actors, which is particularly hard to map. As expected, without representation, it is harder to find regular acting work and as such, these actors' activity is not constant. I have chosen a few examples that illustrate both the diverse nature of the projects done by these *Migrant-SLA*'s, the interdisciplinary nature of the projects, the volatility of the non-native actor's presence on the *plane of composition* but also the connection to the name of migrant. A *Migrant-SLA* of this type often proceeds – the same way as a *Migrant-SLA*'s with representation does – to create work under the mantle of the foreigner and under the heavy weight of the non-native accent. The independent work produced often relies on the specificity of the actor's non-native utterance as the principal seed for the construction of the character/performance. Bound as they are - through a lack of representation and a relative sense of isolation on the fringes of the *plane of composition* – some of the *Migrant-SLA*'s do not always choose to engage in *becoming-SLA*, but often remain temporary foreign tourists in the second language English.

In contrast to *Migrant-SLA*'s with representation (who are to a certain degree forced by the *grammaticality* to immediately embrace foreigners' roles, as they have to work to make money for themselves and the agent), this other type of *Migrant-SLA* chooses to perform for herself the censoring role of *grammaticality*, internalising it. Sometimes due to less awareness, less training and/or competence in the field of acting, this kind of actor names him/herself, frames him/herself in the role of the outsider. Displaying, exaggerating and banking on their exotic utterance and exotic persona, such *Migrant-SLA*'s promptly and naively respond to the question Who is

uttering? Their answers are: It's me, the Portuguese character, the Lithuanian character, etc.<sup>93</sup> In other words, this type of *Migrant-SLA*'s often opts to construct their characters/roles (and sometimes the entire performance piece) based on their otherness: they employ their exoticism as a way to capture the audience's attention.<sup>94</sup> The uneasiness of not being able to overcome one's native accent, of not being able to master English to a desired or expected (usually RP) yet illusory standard might also explain these *Migrant-SLA*'s choice to frame their utterance through foreignness. Paradoxically, this inclination to somehow explain themselves, to excuse themselves for not being like native English speakers produces the adverse effect from *grammaticality*.

Elina Alminas is an Estonian-born and London-based actor and theatre-maker. She graduated with a Theatre and Performance degree at *Goldsmiths University* and has been living in the UK for the past ten years. (Alminas 2018: Online resource) In 2016, Elina has devised the one-woman show *LAURA* and performed it at the Battersea Arts Centre, Soho Theatre London and *Etcetera Theatre*. The *Soho Theatre*'s webpage provides a short description of the performance: "Join the frenzied Russian bride on an intimate rollercoaster journey as she reflects on her life with disco tunes, chill pills and booze." (Stagedoor 2018: online resource). The introduction of the performance piece makes clear the actress's source of inspiration for the character that she is playing, as Elina later confirmed, in an interview for the website *WestEndWilma.com*:

Coming from a Russian background I decided to make a piece that shows how it is still very common in Eastern European culture (as well as many other places around the world) for women to believe that the most important thing in life is marriage. (Alminas 2018: online resource)

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<sup>93</sup> I argue that an SLA should above all strive to be an actor in the second language English rather than a Portuguese or a French, or a Chinese actor in the second language English.

<sup>94</sup> This is not a profitable course of action in the long term: an SLA should instead engage in becoming, which sometimes implies going against the expectations of the audience. Here I am – says an SLA - playing Hamlet, even though you, my audiences, would not expect to see a non-native English actor playing this character.

The question is why did Elina feel the need to tie (so evidently) her identity on stage to her identity off stage? Did she feel more confident to capture the audience's attention by linking – in a comedic key - the performance directly to her native culture? Treating a very specific topic (Russian attitudes to marriage), the performance piece offers ample space for Alminas to demonstrate how important her roots have been in creating the character. *LAURA* – framed by a wider feminist with an Eastern-European flavour context - primarily acts as the actor's gesture of opening up and embracing the audience. By exposing a theme so personal to Alminas, so relevant to her native culture, the piece also serves as an introduction for the actor: through the performance piece, Alminas seems to want to tell the audience this is who I am and this is where I come from. Beyond the "foreign" eccentricities and the bizarreness of the character of the "bride," the fascinating aspect in Alminas's performance consists in the actor's attempt to re-create herself from within her own utterances, to affirm her emergence in *becoming*-SLA. Producing a range of fiercely seethed English-becoming-Estonian vowels and hissed cascades of consonants, body and sound couplings which give sonorous frame to the story of the bride, Alminas begins to establish her own space in the second language and emerge as an SLA from within her own playful, childish, excessive utterance. The actor's hysterical laughter and crying, the excessive facial muscles twists which serve a better emission of sound, help to produce the image of the maddened Russian bride but also give a sense of an SLA coming forth. By anchoring the character in her native culture, and by contextualising it in the story as she has, Alminas has begun her independent adventure of *becoming*-SLA. She has chosen to begin that journey by naming herself Russian, which makes her – in the light of our argument - a *Migrant*-SLA. The question arisen is: How or if Alminas will be able to grow out of the mantle that she has assigned to herself. How will she outgrow the Russianness/Eastern-European-ness that she has laid as the foundation of her emergence as an SLA? Will she be able to move her experimentation in the second language acting into a higher



gear (beyond the representation of her origins), where she can tackle other types of roles, beyond those with which she might feel she entertains a stronger cultural link with?

As can be observed, in the case of a *Migrant*-SLA without representation there is no intermediary which to enact *grammaticality*'s translation process. Here, there is no external agent (casting director, director, producer, etc.) to censure, name and translate the utterance of actor: this *Migrant*-SLA names herself: often with the name of the foreigner. The risk for this kind of *Migrant*-SLA (unsupported by an agent, often with little financial security in the profession) is that she might remain blocked in a cul-de-sac where:

Like the stalled temporality experienced by the subject who is unable to integrate [...] time stands still for the migrant, for whom days turn into months waiting for papers or for work, waiting in refugee camps or at border checkpoints, waiting in detention centers to be sent back to a home that is unsustainable, only to begin the entire process anew. (Lauzon, 2011: 23)

The danger is represented by the actor's self-labelling as a migrant/foreigner on stage: the label risks remaining in place. Beyond the self-marginalisation risk, what is particularly exciting to follow in the *Migrant*-SLA without representation is his/her (often involuntary) élan and courage in 'attacking' the second language in utterance. This kind of creative approach is salutary, and it promises an emergence of the SLA from within the immanent theatres of utterance and of English-becoming-another-language. Another example of *Migrant*-SLA without representation is that of Portuguese-born Xavier de Sousa, who characterises himself as "performer-maker, curator and producer" (de Sousa, 2018: online resource). De Sousa has developed a solo project called *POST*, in which he performs in second language English. The project was started in 2016 and has been presented in venues in London, Cambridge, Norwich, Exeter, Poole, Manchester, or Leeds. Introducing the project, de Sousa's artist website reads:

*POST* is a new theatre show by Xavier de Sousa inviting you to join us at the table, eat yummy Portuguese food, drink potent Cachaça, get merry, make new friends and challenge what exactly makes a 'nation'. (de Sousa 2019: online resource)

In the beginning of the performance, de Sousa starts cooking a Portuguese potato and kale soup and presents a short history of the part of Portugal where he was born in. It becomes quite clear in the first few first minutes of the performance that de Sousa's presence on stage is inspired by his Portuguese-ness. Taking on the role of a narrator-facilitator (a non-fictional, non-theatrical persona therefore) de Sousa will facilitate a discussion (in which the audience is invited to participate at certain moments) about being a migrant and what it means to be a Portuguese living in Britain. *Ovalhouse* – who commissioned the work – notes on its events page that: ‘‘POST is an exploration of what it means to be a migrant, of constantly inhabiting a ‘national limbo’ and failing to be adhering to border and identity-defining norms.’’ (Ovalhouse 2019: online resource)

Within the colloquial and friendly atmosphere built during the performance (audience members drink Portuguese alcoholic beverages, exchange views, ideas, sometimes personal information and get to share the Portuguese food cooked by the actor), de Sousa's exercise of acting in a second language (I say exercise because the performer is not a professionally-trained actor) has a particular poignancy. Rooted in the performer's Portuguese-ness, his performative discourse is again an embracing of the audience through difference, through the otherness of the person speaking on stage: Portuguese food, memories, geography, drinks, all help to construct the image of the Portuguese migrant. Not being focused on portraying a fictional character, the actor improvises freely in the second language English, with little attention paid to the creation of utterance, its conformity or correctness from the point of view of *grammaticality*. Divested in all the things Portuguese on stage - food, drink, references to history - an English-becoming-Portuguese emerges naturally, its immanent theatres present in the relaxed utterance, in the sense of easiness with which the body of the performer moves and utters. De Sousa's great

achievement – from the point of view of my analysis – is the pristine transfer of casual speech from normal life onto the stage, in performance. However, the character that de Sousa involuntarily portrays (by that I mean that his character is not deliberately constructed or acted as such but becomes apparent through the mere uttering, mere narration, the mere cooking, the mere action) is essentially that of the Portuguese migrant who is interrogating his condition within the wider question of nationhood. The case of de Sousa's performance is very interesting from the point of view of the freedom he allows himself as a performer to use the second language (he uses the language more than playing with it/re-creating it on stage – he is a performer more than an actor). The utterance is not poetry, nor Chekhov, nor Shakespeare: it does not involve noticeable intensifications and growth, as the performer remains quite casual throughout the piece. His ‘‘character’’ or persona on stage does not evolve according to a dramatic plot. Utterance in the second language does not – most of the time - implicate the conveying of emotion. The use of the second language is therefore mostly colloquial and serves normal, diurnal communication of ideas, facts and/or opinions: the piece is something akin to a discussion round the dinner table.

Despite the coagulation of the piece around the problematic of identity and of the migrant, the notable element in *POST* is how the more intrinsic question of language is taken out of the equation of staging the performance. Because there is no question of constructing a fictional character or following a fictional storyline (including projecting emotion through utterance) during the performance, de Sousa is never in a position to impersonate anything or convince the audience of his character's verisimilitude through the use of language. Paradoxically, that gives him freedom to utter in the second language in a personal, personable manner. The performance is as such a monologue delivered in a very relaxed, yet personal and auto-biographical manner, interspersed at times with dialogue and interaction with the audience.

The second language English (penetrated by free-flowing Portuguese-ness of the performer) evolves towards a casual English-becoming-Portuguese. De Sousa begins to construct (or indeed affirms, if that is his casual way of speaking English) his own territory and style within the second language English. This territory is marked by freedom and conviviality, although lacking in the intensity and expressiveness characteristic to dramatic theatre. By approaching his performance in a second language in a relaxed way (there is little theatricality to the piece apart from that of the performer performing on a stage), de Sousa manages to avoid a direct confrontation with the forces of *grammaticality*. De Sousa does not pretend to be an actor: he is simply a performer who uses the second language English to talk about his memories, thoughts, feelings, to explain dance routines or food recipes to the audience, to ask questions, etc. Engaged on that route, de Sousa demonstrates an admirable instinct for freedom in utterance. The particularity of de Sousa's performance consists in the fact that he remains bound to the image of the migrant. The curiosity is what will de Sousa do with regards to utterance in the second language in his next projects? Will he be able to maintain the same level of relaxation? Will he continue to develop his style of utterance? It is hard to assess responses to these questions, firstly because de Sousa works across disciplines (therefore he does not always produce text-based, nor theatre-resembling pieces). The particularity of *POST* is that de Sousa is ultimately a *Migrant-SLA* but not because of how he interacts with the second language: de Sousa manages to suspend the confrontation with *grammaticality*, even though he speaks in the second language for more than an hour. His *becoming-SLA* starts to flow as naturally as he moves around the dining table, as easy as he exchanges ideas or light jokes with the audience, or as graciously as he dances. Admittedly, there is no representation of a character (the character is an involuntary result of the presence of the performer on stage), there is no madness either, no intensity behind this *becoming*. Will the process of *becoming-SLA* evolve with de Sousa or remain at this "relaxed"

stage? Will he ever be able/wanting to play, for instance, an Ibsen character in English, in a cross-disciplinary performance piece? Will he ever want to do another such project?

*Migrant-SLA* is not Marinca or Pinar Ogun as a whole: *Migrant-SLA* is an incomplete, unfinished, jugulated route to *becoming-SLA* in a particular role or on a particular stretch of career: *Migrant-SLA* is Marinca or Ogun (voluntarily or involuntarily, knowingly or unknowingly) renouncing their rights to fully accommodate themselves, to make creative dents in the second language English. The establishment and growth of a free carving into the second language is not completely achieved for a *Migrant-SLA*: in reality, she has been relegated (or has relegated herself) to the banlieues and cul-de-sacs of the second language. Despite being able to respond themselves to the question of who is an SLA in as creative way as possible – as shown – often-times the non-represented *Migrant-SLA*'s also choose to define themselves primarily as foreigners and represent themselves as such in the character/s they create. What is particularly productive in the work of unrepresented *Migrant-SLA*'s is their relative closeness to the immanent theatres of second language of the street, of the fields and shop floors. The self-devised, independent work produced by such SLA's leaves room for a particular rawness of the utterance and sometimes (like in de Sousa's example)<sup>95</sup> for an inter or cross-disciplinary approach, which liberates the utterance and allows it to evolve to a certain degree. Unlike the represented *Migrant-SLA*'s, the unrepresented ones are not so directly influenced by the agents of *grammaticality*, as their performances and characters respectively are self-directed, whilst often there are no other actors in the performance pieces (usually non-represented *Migrant-SLA*'s create solo pieces). Both represented and unrepresented *Migrant-SLA*'s, however, by being assigned or assigning themselves the image of the foreigner, help to create for themselves a marginal dwelling place within the second language, playing therefore – to some degree -

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<sup>95</sup> Or in the case of German stand-up comedian Henning When, who does not play theatre characters as such on stage: he plays himself (a German-born stand-up comedian).

*grammaticality*'s game. Such actors do not construct a distinct *plane of composition* of second language acting (or an addition to the existent one): instead, they create a partition and a niche within the given *plane of composition*, designated to themselves only: in other words, they lock themselves into the margins. They exclude themselves from the competition for the front row (the big roles, the non-foreign characters, the mainstream theatre or film) and "their exclusion itself is the mode of their inclusion" (Žižek 2009: 101) in the ferocious identification mechanism of *grammaticality*. Even if, through the otherness that they display with their characters, the *Migrant-SLA*'s de-territorialise the second language, that de-territorialisation is often minimal/non-impactful and there is an immediate re-territorialisation and a closure of the whole process by *grammaticality*: in other words, the de-territorialisation of the second language is not mad enough.

## **2.4 Nomad-SLA**

A *Nomad-SLA* is an actor who receives and/or performs ampler, more generous roles: if the roles are representing migrants and/or foreigners in the second language English, these characters are often very complex, non-stereotypical and offer an actor ample chances to leave her own creative mark in the second language in performance. A *Nomad-SLA* may also be offered roles of non-migrant, non-foreigner: great roles of the universal dramaturgy, which are not accent-bound. This opens up a performative territory where the foreignness of uttering no longer represents the principal trait of the role and character: uttering no longer sustains, reinforces or re-represents the non-native-ness of the actor in the character and the narrative/plot. In England, such roles are particularly sporadic, and they appear to be very much dependant on a

couple of conditions. The first condition to be fulfilled is that a *Nomad-SLA* should be a well-known actor (with an international career most often), able to move between important performance venues, to participate in important, mainstream productions, playing important roles in both theatre and film projects. This pre-condition makes a *Nomad-SLA* – in comparison to a *Migrant-SLA* – a rich nomad, an actor-flaneur – part of a ’’nomadic elite, who travels a lot, expanding their world, [in contrast to] the disenfranchised poor, who travel [migrate] to improve their condition.’’ (Lauzon 2011: 15) One second important condition that needs to be fulfilled in order for a *Nomad-SLA* to appear on the *plane of composition* is the existence of a dedicated cross-cultural infrastructure that facilitates the creation of English theatre or film productions with international actors. These institutions and networks (The Barbican for instance or large-scale film or TV enterprises – like pan-European television productions which involve BBC, Sky, ITV and other non-UK production companies) guarantee the financial, aesthetic and infrastructural networks within which a reputed *Nomad-SLA* is invited to work. Given the often big-scale of such projects, their cost in financial and infrastructural terms, the availability of actors of high calibre, etc., *Nomad-SLA*’s appearances on the English stages and screens are quite rare and most definitely marked by inconstancy. Therefore, it can be said that a *Nomad-SLA* does not and cannot establish her roots firmly into the second language English: instead, she is relatively mobile between her native *plane of composition* and other second language ones<sup>96</sup>. Given the inconstant, sporadic, unpredictable nature of such cross-cultural projects in cross-cultural infrastructures, a *Nomad-SLA* in England remains bound to the specificities of particular projects (one certain play in one certain theatre, one certain role in one certain TV production)<sup>97</sup>: a more prolonged process of *becoming-SLA* in the English language is not

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<sup>96</sup> For instance, Binoche does not only work as an SLA in England, but also in the United States.

<sup>97</sup> That is also probably due to the British system which is not based on ensembles but is very much project based. Despite that, a *Nomad-SLA* does not achieve the same level of continuity and permanence as a native actor does (If

accomplished. As mentioned, such an actor moves with relative ease into the second language English for particular characters and roles, only to thereafter move back into the native language or travel towards other second languages. The work of these actors is of high resonance and is framed by powerful institutional and financial support. Unfortunately, no such actor has established a more permanent presence on the English stages and screens, like Garbo or Penelope Cruz have done in the United States. I will exemplify the presence of *Nomad*-SLA's in England with a few names.

The Swiss-French-German actor Alexander Dreymon, who completed his acting studies in London, was chosen to play the main part in the BBC series *The Last Kingdom*, launched in 2015. With an extremely fine-tuned, almost un-traceable (yet still non-native) utterance, the actor has created the popular character of the *Viking Uhtred of Bebbanburg* in the TV series. In a 2015 interview for *The Irish Examiner*, the actor talks about utterance having been a principal element in the construction of the character:

To play the character, the German-born actor had to master a new accent – but to make matters more complicated, the accent was an invented hybrid. “It’s very specific,” he said. “We wanted something that really stood out from the Saxons and from the Danes... And we tried out lots of different things and had quite a few debates about what it was going to be, and I’m really happy with what it ended up being. “I wasn’t on board at first, but in hindsight I think I’m really happy with the way it went, and I think it works... I took it as a challenge, and I think the accent somehow made the character in the end.” (Dreymon 2015: online resource)

The distinction that the present analysis makes between a *Migrant*-SLA and a *Nomad*-SLA coincides with the one that Dreymon’s comments infer: in his case, a considerable degree of freedom and imagination were used to create an utterance that is specific only to that particular SLA and that particular character. An unidentifiable accent was invented in order to define who

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we consider the example of Sir Ian McKellen – no *Nomad*-SLA has had a similarly long-lasting career in English theatre/film).



the SLA in that particular role. The actor's native German or French accent have not been considered as bedrock and starting point for the character played. Today, after the series has been broadcast with great success, it would be difficult to imagine an Uhtred speaking in a German or French accent. What the example of Dreymon shows, is that the character has not been left – in its construction - at the level of a simple representation of the “other,” of the foreign invader. Work has been conducted at the level of utterance as well as at the level of ensuring the complexity (the humanness) of the character. Therefore, the actor is so much more than a non-native speaker on the screen: he is a co-creator of language and also of a complex part. Dreymon and the team's creation of an imagined Viking accent appears to function as an experiment on how to emerge as an SLA into the second language English. In this instance, it is the temporary, casual suspension of the forces of *grammaticality* that allows this experiment to take place. As the character creation (including the writing/directing) moved well beyond a simplistic exercise of carrying forth and enhancing the non-native-ness of the actor directly into a shallow character (like often occurs in the case of a *Migrant-SLA*), Dreymon leaves a powerful mark with his innovative, unique second-language utterance: there is no other non-native actor who possesses that kind of utterance in the second language. Had Uhtred been imagined only as a character which speaks in a German accent, it could have been played by any other actor (native or non-native), as all there was needed was a so-called German accent: a unifying, stereotyping function of *grammaticality*. Dreymon's art consisted not only of acting, but of uttering. The manner of uttering that has captivated audience's imagination during the three series of *The Last Kingdom* can be indeed seen as a series of unexpected, creative emissions and concatenations at the junction between two or more (as the actor is Swiss-German-French) languages. Dreymon's physical qualities, his imposing overall screen presence have been well assorted with the hybrid version of English-becoming-other-language. Dreymon's particularly interesting utterances in

this role have added to the attractiveness of the character, to its inherent and original, non-stereotypical exoticism and complex otherness, to its overall aura of courage. The couplings of Dreymon's handsome face and body with the beautiful, untraceable oddities of his utterings, projected the character Uhtred into a sort of mythical, sexy, valiant past fantasy which could not have been otherwise created had the actor relied solely on performing a clear-cut, stereotypical foreign accent in the English language. These beautiful *affects* - couplings between beautiful silvery-blue eyes with a Viking-ed English sound, muscular prowess with wild battle roars, long hair with foreign-ly-hissed and rounded English-ed vowels during the love scenes – have been well arranged in the complex role of the audacious, fearless, yet sensual Viking Uhtred. Although the character and the series have known great success and popularity, there have been critics who would have liked to see Dreymon's performance reduced to a question of traceability of accent<sup>98</sup>. This can be illustrated by a rather sarcastic review in the Daily Mail, written by TV critic Christopher Stevens. Stevens notes:

Best of all is the hero Uhtred (Alexander Dreymon) who veers from South African to Norse to Russian, often in the space of a line. He looks like Giant Haystacks and sounds like Greta Garbo. [...] What *The Last Kingdom* deserves is a cameo appearance from Arnold Schwarzenegger. He's got the build, he's got the accent and with practice his stilted acting might just be wooden enough. (Stevens 2017: online resource)

Paradoxically, what Stevens inadvertently does here is to bring into relief the many colours and functions of *affect*<sup>99</sup> in the role of Uhtred, how these colours and nuances imaginatively vary and become interchangeable in Dreymon's performance and how they underpin holistically the role from within the utterance. Therefore, Stevens's observations fail to discuss the becoming-SLA of Dreymon (and its inherent creativity) and launches into a political debate, whose main focus seems to be that of stripping down the character and actor of their complexity and reducing them

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<sup>98</sup> The startled, confused critic asks himself who is actually speaking here?

<sup>99</sup> This is not a Brook-like cacophony: it is the construction of utterance starting from and with the actor. The utterance itself becomes therefore an immanent theatre of second language acting.

through the perplexed, rather naïve questions of: But who is speaking? I can't recognize you! Where is that accent from? Where are you from?<sup>100</sup> It seems that the critic would prefer to see the main actor put in his rightful place: every utterance should have its own clearly assigned compartment in the language, according to the 'original' nationality and ethnic origin of the utterer: every utterer should play her/his own nationality. Stevens inadvertently confirms the validity of my description of the *Migrant-SLA*, which once again appears to inspire a regulated way of constructing and portraying characters in the second language English: not in line with the creativity and freedom inscribed in *becoming-SLA* and inventing an idiom called English-becoming-another-language but in line with a compartmentalisation, a relegating and a putting into place of the actor by *grammaticality*. Stevens decides to return the character of Uhtred (and with it the actor) to the fundamental question who is speaking? Applying such restrictive filter for the character of Uhtred, Stevens signals the much wider diminishing tendency inscribed in *grammaticality*, which gives an indication of the creative confinements that a *Migrant-SLA* often experiences in the second language, reduced as she is, (exclusively) to the accent of the country/place that she comes from. But, as can be observed, the forces of *grammaticality* are temporarily suspended for a *Nomad-SLA*. Another example in that direction is Sofie Gråbøl. The Danish actor Sofie Gråbøl is the star of the Danish TV series *The Killing*, which has proved very successful with UK audiences. In 2014, Gråbøl was invited to perform the role of *Queen Margaret of Scotland* in the trilogy *The James Plays* (written by Rona Munro) at the National Theatre London. In an interview taken during the rehearsals period, the actress remarked that:

I have never done theatre in English and it will be a great challenge for me... really... and part of it, of course is, language. Luckily, Margaret, that I am going to play, was Danish, so I guess...what a coincidence, stroke of luck! (Gråbøl 2014: online resource).

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<sup>100</sup> There is a great emphasis on accent and where accents come from in English theatre – part, probably, of English theatre's phono-centrism, which Aleks Sierz hinted at.

Despite the actress's anxiety with regards to the standard of her utterance in performance, the character written by Rona Munro is a deeply complex *Queen Margaret*, allowing Gråbøl to work on the character in full freedom, with the immediate link to the 'foreign' utterance taking second place. Rona Munro has created the character based on historical research: Margaret of Denmark, Queen of Scotland (born in 1456) was indeed Danish (the daughter of Christian I, King of Denmark): she had been betrothed to James of Scotland (James III) in order to settle a tax matter between Scotland and Denmark. At the age of thirteen, the then-princess Margaret marries King James III in Holyrood Abbey and becomes Queen of Scotland. With this example, my analysis will bring into discussion the issue of how fortunate emerging of *Nomad-SLA*'s occur, when there is found a match between actor, author, role and venue. Arguably, it is also important to ponder how much of Gråbøl's appearance in a major production on mainstream stages in Scotland and England might be due to the notoriety she had previously gained via the character played in *The Killing*. It is very hard to quantify or affirm anything with certainty in that direction, but it is evident though that Gråbøl's being known to the UK audiences has done nothing else but to aid the actress in entering the major theatrical production on the English stage. Surely, another (perhaps not so well-known in the UK) Danish actress would have had considerably less chance to play the part: that is because, as noted, a *Nomad-SLA* comes into being in favourable conditions, which put the actor directly on the mainstream stages and screens. I return – again and again – to the question of who: who is that particular actor who can be accepted to play in a reputed English venue such as the *National Theatre*? We are talking about the *Nomad-SLA* - borrowing from Jacques Attali – as of a rich nomad who "experience[s] the world vicariously and safely" (Lauzon 2011: 19) in contrast with the poor, aspiring nomad (a *Migrant-SLA*) "seeking to escape from the destitute periphery" (Lauzon, 2011: 19) or as I argue, often locking herself further in that destitute periphery.

With the example of the Danish actress, the difference I make between a *Migrant*-SLA and a *Nomad*-SLA comes into sharper relief. On the existent *plane of composition*, regulated by *grammaticality*, the question is no longer who an SLA truly is or who an SLA can be (in the sense of *becoming*) in the second language English. It is now a question of who can (in the sense of who has a right or indeed a possibility) to actually be(come) an SLA. In the case of a *Nomad*-SLA therefore, the question of self-emergence is almost irrelevant. In the case of the *Nomad*-SLA, there is no growth from below of the SLA. There is simply a transfer – at the highest level – of actors from language to language.

From the examples presented, it can be inferred that to a *Nomad*-SLA a temporary suspension of *grammaticality* is granted. A *Nomad*-SLA is allowed to roam relatively free in the English language, in an apparent – yet fragile – freedom, which is unfortunately only temporary. This fragile freedom is sustained by a powerful infrastructure of important venues and production companies, and complex characters often written especially for actors with a particular status. One aspect that is relevant in Gråbøl's example is that she is allowed – in contrast to a *Migrant* -SLA – superior access to the second language English on stage and in film, although she is never totally free of her Danish-ness. In an interview for *The Independent* (2017), Gråbøl talks about the aspect of her non-native utterance with humour:

I did a play at the National Theatre in London, where I was supposed to be Scottish. I said to the director, 'I can't speak Scottish... just speaking English is enough of a challenge!' So, I spoke the best English I could and thought, 'This is brilliant!' Then Sir Ian McKellen came to see the show one night, and afterwards he asked, 'How did that actress get that amazing Danish accent?' I was doing my best, but I do obviously have a big fat Danish accent! (Rampton 2017; online resource)

This example begs the following question: does an SLA ever have free reign in the second language English?

Juliette Binoche is another example of *Nomad*-SLA: she made her debut in the English Theatre in 1998, as protagonist in Luigi Pirandello's *Naked*, staged at *The Almeida Theatre* in London. As the *Playbill* publication mentions, Binoche's first appearance on an English stage was a result of *Almeida Theatre's* "tradition of attracting top name film actors" (Playbill 1997: online resource). Quoted in most of the presentation materials and critical reviews of *Naked*, Binoche's Oscar-winning role in the film *The English Patient* (1997) had very likely been a factor in the French actress being chosen to play a leading role in the English language, on a mainstream English stage. Binoche has returned to another reputed English stage in 2015. This time, she appeared at the *Barbican*, to play the central role in Sophocle's *Antigone*, under the baton of the Dutch theatre director Ivo van Hove. Toni Racklin, *Barbican's* head of theatre at the time, explained Binoche's participation in the project as part of his institution's "international programme [that] enabled these two world-class artists to meet and collaborate for the first time." (Ellis-Petersen 2014: online resource) As in the case of Gråbøl, we can talk about a particular kind of environment, constituted through a fortunate marriage between a famous non-English actor-nomad (supported by an internationally-acclaimed director) and a mainstream venue/institution (with its entire creative and curatorial machinery), orientated towards producing international, high-calibre theatre productions. Working on a similar model to the *National Theatre London* who invites the famous Danish actress, the Barbican is a *grammatical* machinery even more clearly steered towards international-ized horizons. This is a performance venue with a philosophy to temporarily suspend *grammaticality*, with the ambition to create a high-standard international theatre programme (which sometimes may include SLA's). This philosophy, together with a policy of bringing top international artists to a City of London that manages trillions of dollars annually have made possible Binoche's temporary and stellar nomadising through the English language on stage. Symbol of an aristocratic rank of SLA,

present – temporarily - in a part of London inundated by international finance, Binoche is a *Nomad-SLA* (an elite type of SLA) playing mainly for the elites:

The benefits to the City of the Barbican's presence are at least two-fold: the Barbican helps attract members of an international labour aristocracy – financiers – and, through its daring architecture and cosmopolitan artistic programming, it continually rehearses the ideals of creativity and risk-taking on which the financial services economy ostensibly rests (and which are understood to be the characteristics that make finance the exemplary form of post-Fordist industry. (McKinnie 2009: 120)

As such, Binoche will probably never be seen playing the role of a foreign worker in a London restaurant in the same way as (for instance) the Romanian actress Oana Pellea plays in the film *I Really Hate my Job* (2007), directed by Oliver Parker. *Nomad-SLA*'s like Binoche will never be a *Migrant-SLA*, but always actors akin to a “transnational entrepreneur[s] [that] moves between global cities, not between countries.” (McKinnie, 2009: 116)

In the present circumstances, a *Nomad-SLA*'s existence in England is bound to the functioning of a global network of international-ized suspension of *grammaticality*: the Danish actor is bound to international television or film co-productions, Binoche to the circulation of important directors such as Ivo van Hove. Being bound by such inconstant and costly arrangements, a *Nomad-SLA*'s presence in second language English is not continuous and it does not leave more pregnant marks in terms of style<sup>101</sup>. A *Nomad-SLA* is always sustained (albeit for specific projects which do not allow the actor to establish for him/herself a true style in the second language) by strong institutions such as the *Barbican*, which have a clear focus on gathering international talent and setting new standards in performance including international artists:

The Barbican, with its strong commitment to international-standard arts, has brought talent from every quarter of the globe for audiences to enjoy. Just like the City, it has been unafraid to experiment, take risks and occasionally get it wrong in the single-minded pursuit of excellence. And just like the City, it has thrived. (Hopkins, Orr, Solga, 2009: 121)

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<sup>101</sup> Like Garbo has left in Hollywood and in the history of American cinema, for instance.

There are not many such institutions in England, hence the temporary and sporadic appearances of *Nomad*-SLA's. This type of SLA is also sustained - as it was in the case of Binoche or Marinca (details provided below) often by other foreign minds which hold important powers in the creation process<sup>102</sup>: often these foreign minds are those of directors. In the case of *Antigone*, it was the directorial clout of Ivo van Hove, the reputed Dutch theatre maker, who juxtaposed a vision for collaborating with international artist Juliette Binoche upon the wider vision of the Barbican to create high-calibre international theatre events. In Hollywood, Penelope Cruz has been "grown" as an SLA by director Pedro Almodovar, as was the case with Garbo, Dietrich, or Banderas. Maria Marinca provides another example in this direction, complementing as such, the example in which she was a *Migrant*-SLA. Marica has featured as the main/sole character in *The Young Vic*'s production (2009) of *4:48 Psychosis*, directed by the French director Christian Benediti. It is evidently hard to ascertain how much this formula of collaboration - between two or more non-native English speakers (actor and director) - could enable a (at least quicker) suspension of *grammaticality*, avoiding therefore that the non-native actor is being translated/cast exclusively as a foreigner. What we know for sure is that Marinca had collaborated with Benediti previously, mounting the same play, in Romanian, in a translation made by Marinca herself together with a friend. (Sierz 2009: online resource) We also know that: "Christian Benediti [...] is well known in his native France for his explorations of tough contemporary plays by writers such as Edward Bond and Mark Ravenhill." (Sierz 2009: online resource). It could be inferred therefore, that within the safer environment of the co-operation between non-native English-speaking artists, a temporary suspension of *grammaticality* would - in theory, at least - somewhat easier to achieve. It is probable that within associations of non-native speakers, the matter of "proper" second language usage is not as relevant. Would it be

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<sup>102</sup> The SLA is not creating herself, not emerging herself but is often being effectively "made" by the director.



possible that within such communities and associations of non-native actors and non-native directors, that an SLA may find an increased sense of freedom from the long arm of *grammaticality*? May such communities and associations lead to an increased sense of not having to always wear the mantle of the "other" in performance, as none of the participants is a native speaker? Would such communities foster in an SLA a state akin to that described by Sophie Gråbøl in an interview for *The Independent*: "It's funny because in my mind, I don't have an accent!" (Gråbøl 2017; online resource) It is hard to appreciate the impact (if any) that such an association/community of second language artists would have on overcoming the forces of *grammaticality*, on precluding them. In other words, it is not clear whether it is best to work solo or in collaboration with other fellow non-native artists (including actors, producers, directors) in order to alleviate the burden of *grammaticality*.<sup>103</sup> Keeping that in mind, we could ask if Marinca's solo appearance in the adaptation of Sarah Kane's *Psychosis 4:48* (sustained by the French director-collaborator) isn't in fact functioning as a very necessary exercise of self-isolation. Self-isolation on a *plane of composition* where the expected standard of English so often condemns the SLA to being solely a *Migrant*. The missing ensemble – in the case of *Psychosis 4:48* (Kane does not specify the number of characters, but staging's of this particular text have always relied on more than one actor) – could also function as a sign that an SLA tends to be a rather lonely presence in English theatre. Sometimes solitary or surrounded and supported by a similarly non-native director – an SLA may be able to afford the temporary avoidance of the powers of the *grammaticality*. However, even if the SLA performs in an important venue (such as *The Young Vic*), that avoidance of *grammaticality* proves only partial. In this respect, Dominic Cavendish's review of *4:48 Psychosis* for *The Telegraph* is eloquent:

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<sup>103</sup> The immigrant composition of early Hollywood has produced results in that sense. It is hard to imagine how such a context could be replicated in contemporary England. That is why *Nu Nu Theatre* advocates for random meetings of solitary schizophrenic SLA's rather than for the establishment of SLA's communities as such, whom would only ultimately result in multi-national Brook-like troupes.

It's a compelling but self-conscious interpretation, and when the actress finally starts speaking, you swiftly glean that her English accent is only passable. A number of the lines are gabbled into indistinction. (Cavendish 2009: online resource)

As can be noted, the critic does not focus solely on the aspects regarding the portrayal of the character. Since Sarah Kane does not specify nationalities/ethnicities, let alone accents of the character/s, the critic's focus on Marinca's quality of utterance in the second language denotes the *grammatical* machine hard at work to assess the rigour and the standard of the actor's utterance in the English language. How many lines spoken of native-speaking English actors have been gabbled into indistinction in other similar performances? How many lines has Judy Dench mis-pronounced? Probably many. Cavendish insists though in identifying the foreign-ness of the actress as the reason for the gabbling into indistinction of certain words. He insists on telling us that she is not a native English speaker. At this time, on this solitary *desert island* that the existent *plane of composition* is, there is no clear indication if there are indeed any feasible strategies which would ensue an elimination or at least a creative overtaking and avoiding of the power of *grammaticality*. We have on one side, the global venue, which creates and promotes an aristocratic type of *Nomad-SLA* and on the other side the marginality of the *Migrant-SLA*, often solitary or sometimes hooked on ephemeral, time-limited micro-communities, with inconsistent growth and *becoming*. It appears that neither the *Migrant-SLA* nor the *Nomad-SLA* can roam free within the second language for very long: a *Migrant-SLA* cannot properly develop her creation of English-becoming-another-language, whilst a *Nomad-SLA* stays in the second language far too little time for a true growth of *becoming-SLA* to ensue.

Therefore, the middle part of the hourglass does not seem to fulfil the promise enshrined in the *plane of immanence* of second language acting: *grammaticality* interrupts (with varying degrees of force) what was expected to be an unregulated flow of utterance as that of the street, of the shop, of the farm field. On stage or on screen – the *plane of composition* that we have reached in

the lower half of the hourglass - such freedom is rare and when it occurs, it attains a temporary nature and remains conditional. The middle part of the hourglass defeats the expectations for an SLA to be a true 'poet unhoused and wanderer across [the second] language.' (Lauzon, 2011: 17). It ensues instead a *grammaticality*-based careful calculation and dosage of who is entitled and who can be allowed to nomadise/minoritize (and to what degree) on the existent *plane of composition* of acting. For a *Nomad*-SLA an infrastructure is put in action (albeit temporarily) - director, production team, writer, venue - which makes possible a certain horizon of freedom for the actor to work with the second language English. The grammatical force that in the case of a Migrant-SLA would lead almost instantly to stereotyping, is temporarily suspended for a *Nomad*-SLA: his/her roles are richer, denser, more human-like, more elaborate and therefore the utterance becomes part of a humanized character and not simply a sign of otherness. The native-ness of the actor's utterance is a plus, and it is embraced and brought in to enhance the character. A *Nomad*-SLA remains however just a sort of temporarily privileged *Migrant*-SLA. Gråbøl did not continue to carve her space in the English theatre, as her performance in the Danish Queen seems to have been (for now at least) a one-off occurrence. It would be interesting to see her playing Gertrude – for instance – on an English stage, alongside other fellow English actors. That would allow the actress to truly work to establish her dwelling into the second language and to create a style which goes beyond acting and involves the birth of a personal idiolect of English-becoming-Danish. In her interviews for the English press, the Danish actress often returns to the question of her foreignness, of her native accent, to her fear of performing in English, etc. A *Nomad*-SLA exercises therefore only a privileged route of access into the second language, but one which is granted in a temporary fashion, and sustained by both the actor's prominence and by a team of creators who support that actor in a particular role by a careful choice of the part and of the right project. This does not fulfil the ideal of freedom enshrined in

the *plane of immanence* of second language act-ing. Is there an alternative route for an SLA?

Who can an SLA really be on the *desert island* of the existent *plane of composition* of stages and screens in England? The *Third Chapter* will try to answer that question.

### 3. Third Chapter – A Third Way

Vital to my investigation is to determine whether indeed there can exist another, alternative who of the SLA, in which the coercive forces of *grammaticality* have been finally overcome and a self-emergence and self-creation of the SLA from within the act is fully at work. In the previous chapter, I have established that as an effect of the translability process (the passing through the neck of the hourglass), a rigid, castrating genealogy<sup>104</sup> is put in place of an ontology: as such, the actor is (or has to be) identified and labelled (on the *plane of composition*) as the French, Romanian, Chinese SLA, often through a tautological repetition and re-representation in character of the actor's so-called accent in English.

If I were able to identify the possible key to an alternative who, I would also be able to transfer the *becoming-SLA* (in all its glory, vitality and freedom) onto a novel *plane of composition*, liberated from the perils of the middle part of the hourglass (*grammaticality*) and thrown into a newly-found *bottomlessness*. This second time, *bottomlessness* will be facing not upwards but downwards, breaking the hard, lower edge of the hourglass and providing scope to imagine the continuation of a genuine ontology of the SLA, overcoming future *grammaticalities*. Such rediscovered sense of *bottomlessness* would engender an SLA's enhanced, intensive awareness of the force that she has to create herself by adding and shaping new territory within the second language English (called English-becoming-another-language), in spite of or askew to *grammaticality*. To understand the (third) way towards such an alternative who, I will be revisiting the concept of *desert island* - proposed by Gilles Deleuze (2004) and mentioned in the

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<sup>104</sup> The genealogy is encompassed in the questions: Who is speaking? What is your accent? Where are you from?

*Introduction* and that of *heterotopia* as explicated by Michel Foucault (1984 and 1991). As I advance the argument towards the final stage of an SLA's ontology, rediscovered post-*grammaticality*, I will again quote the concept of *bottomlessness*, in line with how it has been defined by philosopher Vilém Flusser (2002 and 2005) and discuss it as an existential solvent for the appearance of a third type of SLA in England. The discussion will be reinforced by a deeper reflection on Nu Nu Theatre's aims (continuing therefore the analysis in the Introduction) and an analysis of the second practice-as-research project, entitled *BANDIT*.

### **3.1 Nu Nu Theatre - Heterotopia**

The question of becoming Second-Language Actor in English (on the *plane of composition* of England's stages and screens) should be linked to the realization that the current "who" of an SLA is defined as a relative prison of repetition (the "non-native" actor is more than often glued to who he/she is in real life, having to reiterate his/her "native accent" over and over, in almost all of the roles that he/she performs). Alternatively, sporadically *becoming*-SLA might be a temporary attribute of rich nomad-actors, allowed via a suspension of *grammaticality*. This *becoming*-SLA is one that does not continue, unfold or bloom: it is instead ontology stopped in its tracks. There is – under the current rule of *grammaticality* – no ample, continued, sustained *becoming*-SLA on the English stages or screens. Therefore, the solution proposed by this research project is an SLA who emerges from the *plane of immanence* and seeks to construct her/his own alternative *plane of composition* through the activation and intensification of an instinct for separation and subtraction and a plunge into *bottomlessness*. Thus, such an SLA can subvert the translatability force in *grammaticality* and is able to have him/herself re-born (on a new, personal

*plane of composition* on the *desert island*) rather than having to be "born" by the translability machine. As such - looking for a third possibility/way to be born as an SLA – the actor should take act of and reject the cul-de-sac who's that the *grammaticality* machine puts in front of him/her. Continuing with the auto-ethnographic stance, I say to my fellow SLA's in England and to my agent: I can't allow *grammaticality* to tell me who I am. I will withdraw from the forces of *grammaticality* and attempt to construct my own *plane of composition*, on which I am free to create my own utterance, play the roles that I want to play and become an SLA unrestricted by translability. In this process of self-fashioning, I am able to experiment with English-becoming-Romanian and "carry [the second] language to its limits, to its outside, to its silence [death]." (Deleuze 1993: 142) I have used my own incapacity to compromise<sup>105</sup> – in any way - with *grammaticality*'s translation processes as a springboard for a new, more aware, more direct, unmediated response to the question who am I as an SLA. Creating in spite of the translability powers of *grammaticality* must be based on the idea that I, the SLA, am the one who de-territorialises the English language in utterance and therefore I should be the one who re-territorialises it in the role and character, creating my own *plane of composition* of second-language acting. Such re-gaining of the power to fashion myself cannot be obtained any other way but by withdrawing from the system of *grammaticality* and by plugging oneself into the immanent theatres of the street vendor, shop keeper, flight captain, etc.

*Nu Nu Theatre* was created in order to test - in practical terms - the idea of a "third-way" for the post-*grammaticality*, self-emergence of an SLA. *Nu Nu*'s actors have strived to begin articulating a type of SLA, engaged in a battle not to have to represent the foreigner, the migrant, the nomad,

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<sup>105</sup> Compromise with *grammaticality* could be translated – to use the words of Lara Nielsen and Patricia Ibara in *Neoliberalism and Global Theatres - Performance Permutations* - as a form of "soft belonging [to the second language which] makes no demands but offers no sacrifices [...] it mollifies biculturalism's [second language's] challenge." (Werry 2015: 35) As a "non-native" actor, I do not want to soft belong to a *plane of composition* that is curating me almost always as the exotic foreigner, the immigrant, the stereotype. I want to be able to give a name to myself and a mantle to carry on a *plane of composition* that I myself architect.

the other on stage. Nu Nu Theatre is therefore a vehicle which to put in practice the ideas regarding the capacity of an SLA not only to create herself as an autonomous artist but also to give rise to an autonomous *plane of composition* of second-language acting. In that sense, Nu Nu Theatre fills a void in the English theatre market, by being the only theatre company dedicated exclusively to the study of SLA's ontology post-*grammaticality*. Nu Nu is a heterotopia. Heterotopic spaces are defined by Michel Foucault as:

real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. (Foucault, 1984: 3)

A counter-site to the restrictive *plane of composition* controlled by *grammaticality*, Nu Nu grows in an environment in which the recluse SLA's can enact the utopia of their existence in subtraction and withdrawal, on the *desert island* of their re-birth. Heterotopic spaces can be understood as spaces of "otherness", which are neither here nor there. In the essay *Of Other Spaces: Utopia and Heterotopia*, Foucault elaborates on such spaces of chasm, which exist only as a result of relations between different spaces:

But among all these sites, I am interested in certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralise, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect. (Foucault, 1984: 3)

Nu Nu Theatre enacts the utopia of subtraction and of the *desert island*, at the cross-roads of languages, university facilities and home, performance and philosophy/ontology. A valuable perspective on the heterotopic nature of Nu Nu could be gained by quoting the medical definition given to the term heterotopia, which according to the dictionary is an "abnormal displacement of a bodily organ or part" (Collins English Dictionary, 2019: online resource). The location that Nu Nu articulates for itself is a direct effect of the restrictive nature of *grammaticality* and augurs for a semi-parasitic growth and spreading between various spaces and sites (such as the university,



international festivals). Excluding itself from the re-territorialising movements of the translability machine, Nu Nu seeks to become real as a kind of abnormal growth – a strange way of adapting to an existence outside the machine’s restrictiveness – growing itself like a chin on the seemingly beautiful, perfect face of *grammaticality*. Nu Nu’s heterotopic disposition is an indication of how the force of *grammaticality* itself is capable (through the marginalisation of the other, of the foreigner) to generate/sustain a third (heterotopic) way for the emergence of the SLA. An effect of the inter-relation between the Theatre Department at Bristol University and performance venues in Oxford, London, Gothenburg, Sweden or Yerevan, Armenia (where Nu Nu has presented its work) articulate a heterotopic abridgement in which an SLA (in her subtraction) can find a floating abode.<sup>106</sup> Such a positioning functions on a principle similar to spandrels in architecture:

By generalisation... a spandrel is any space necessarily and predictably shaped in a certain way, and not explicitly designed as such, but rather arising as an inevitable side consequence of another architectural decision (to pierce a wall with a rounded arch, to build a stair at a certain height from the floor, to construct a multi-storeyed building with windows in rows). (Gould 1997: 10752)

Nu Nu’s is a spandrel-like emplacement emerged as a result of the coercive pressure exercised by *grammaticality* and its conditional hospitality vis-a-vis the non-native actors. Not fully recognized as free creators (meaning creators beyond the guises of *Migrant* and temporary *Nomad*) on the English stage or screen, the founders of Nu Nu had to find or indeed invent a place (or better said a propitious, nurturing relation between spaces)<sup>107</sup> for their utopian dreaming:

These ‘‘interstitial spaces’’ are thus the proper place for utopian dreaming – they remind us of architecture’s great politico-ethical responsibility: much more is at stake in architectural design than may at first appear. (Žižek 2010: 278)

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<sup>106</sup> The company rehearses and premieres in England, but it presents the work in places such as Gothenburg, Reykjavik, Yerevan or Helsinki. As such, the location of Nu Nu can be said to be somewhere between in England and outside of England, mirroring the actors’ being and non-being in the English language and their being and non-being on the *plane of composition* of the English stages and screens.

<sup>107</sup> This space does not offer the stable abode of *Odin Teatret* in Denmark or that of Grotowski’s *13 Rows Theatre* in Opole, Poland. Nu Nu’s location is constructed as a multi-pronged parasitism between the University of Bristol Theatre Department, other non-English venues, various venues which may offer space at very low prices, etc.

The spandrel and the chin that *Nu Nu Theatre* locates itself in is not a proper site, but the heterotopic effect of a continuous semi-squatting and parasiting of various spaces, sites, languages, audiences. It is *grammaticality* itself and the way it unwelcomes the SLA onto the existent *plane of composition* that conditions and almost imposes the need to create a theatrical spandrel such as Nu Nu, which follows not a theatrical but an ontological manifesto. A third (heterotopic) way becomes therefore an existential fight for Nu Nu's SLA: the duty to survive and take advantage of the cul-de-sac put in front of us by *grammaticality* and make use of the possibility to germinate in a self-created, semi-parasitical heterotopic space, to re-emerge (as if) on a *desert island* as a fully liberated, autonomous (Deleuze's absolute creator) artistic entity.<sup>108</sup> To *grammaticality* and its institutions, Nu Nu opposes (or attaches onto, like a chin) its heterotopic emplacement:

Heterotopias are not real, but they mirror the real. These imaginary locations are, nevertheless, able to (re)-interpret the space of the real. Heterotopic space is particularly productive in theatre, which is predicated on the structuring of imaginary worlds that vary in their relationships with the 'real' world. (Tompkins 2009: 191)

*Nu Nu Theatre* is not real as the institutions, venues controlled by *grammaticality*: it is indeed a utopian replica of those, and it only represents the mirror reflection of the realness of those institutions. *Nu Nu Theatre* is the only company in England (and the UK) that deliberately and consciously dedicates its space and energy to researching a third-way ontology of SLA's (that goes against the general instinct of a theatre company to produce performances that attract audiences and propose original *theatrical* discourses). The company replicates as much as possible - excluding evidently the financial conditions and the infrastructure – the conditions of any professional theatre, whilst maintaining its reclusively experimental/ontological stance, by

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<sup>108</sup> Unwelcomed in the mainstream theatre or screen – through a lack of programmes, strategies regarding SLA's – Nu Nu puts up its tent wherever it finds a crack, a possible hint of openness, a link between spaces, languages and worlds. (this can be a venue or a festival with less clear curatorial targets, etc.).

keeping the SLA as always the protagonist of the theatrical work, in a context where second language usage is not subjected to any form of control of accent, translatability or localization:

A heterotopia [...] is 'a space [...] of alternative ordering. [...] Heterotopias organize a bit of the social world in a way different to that which surrounds them.' (Tompkins 2009: 190)

In the two practice-as-research projects undertaken for the present research, English-becoming-Romanian has been studied as a linguistic heterotopic utterance site from within which a third kind of SLA can emerge. The copulation between native and second language elements constitutes the fundamental linguistic and ontological place from within which Nu Nu's SLA's operate, or from within which they emerge, in a process of *becoming*. The theatre company is built around the following idea: it is not very important which location/venue/institution is being parasited, as long as the heterotopic home of the SLA, which is English-becoming-another-language, remains intact (unregulated by *grammaticality*). Here we have a heterotopic space, of in-between languages and in-between physical locations, a spandrel for a sort of SLA-parasite who can work in England and in the English language although never precisely in it. Isn't that a luxury similar to that afforded by the rich *Nomad*-SLA Juliette Binoche?

Nu Nu's SLA's are sheltered from the translatability processes: they have the opportunity to (re)emerge as parasite-actors living and expressing themselves in a doubly-heterotopic space (in-between languages and in-between performance sites). This has always been the case with the two SLA founders of Nu Nu: from the point of view of *grammaticality* they technically do not exist as actors, as they have not used the services of casting agencies, have not participated in professional casting sessions, did not act in plays or films other than their own, and do not seek to act in films or plays cast through the channels of the translatability machine. Despite that, no one can say that the two actors do not in fact exist as SLA's in England: as they squat all possible cracks, their creative output is very concrete (some of Nu Nu's productions have received awards at

international festivals or been presented to audiences in the intimate space of the Theatre Department). Nu Nu's presence is palpable as is its actors' dwelling place: an audible/sonorous heterotopia called English-becoming-another-language, uttered in theatre venues of in-between here and there. On another level, Nu Nu was envisaged as a heterotopia of crisis:

In the so-called primitive societies, there is a certain form of heterotopia that I would call crisis heterotopias, i.e., there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc. (Foucault, 1991: 4)

Nu Nu exists as a heterotopia of crisis in as much as the two SLA's manage their withdrawal and un-participation in the mechanisms of *grammaticality*, whilst all the same being able to produce theatrical work that is shared with audiences. Nu Nu speculates this regime of crisis (the marginalisation of an SLA by *grammaticality* combined with the actors' instinct for withdrawal and isolation), defining an SLA as the always-uninvited guest, the "traveller who interrupts the meal of his host" (Serres 1982: 16). Parasiting, interrupting, creating heterotopic dimensions wherever possible, never fitting (and often not footing) the bill, constitute the coordinates of the realm from within which an SLA could begin an independent self-growth, argues Nu Nu.

At the same time, when I talk about the intermediary result of the copulation between a native language and a second language English, I refer to the spatiality of utterance, a spatial reality proper, which Beaujour Klosty assigns to bilingual writers in *Alien Tongues*: "Bilingual writers feel that their languages have volume, that they take up space and that there is a physical distance between the languages that they master." (Klosty, 1989: 38) This, I argue, applies equally to the utterance in the second language, which involves an equally voluminous space created in the sewing (or the copulation between) of one language with another. I am therefore talking about English-becoming-another-language as of a real linguistic space with its own dimensions and volume, which is then superimposed upon the performance space resulted from parasiting and

vagabondage amongst performance venues, festivals, etc. In conclusion, the double heterotopia evoked by Nu Nu leads me back to the observations in the first chapter, where I affirmed that the mouths and bodies of the second language act-ors/speakers are the real theatres/stages/screens on which SLA's play their roles. The joint ventures between bodies of actors and the second language in utterance represent perhaps the most essential, primordial, heterotopic spaces in which an SLA performs: they therefore constitute the crux of the heterotopic space articulated by Nu Nu. Those primordial stages have their own heterotopic concreteness and are plugged directly into the immanent second-language act-ing stages. Therefore, in a certain sense, it is less important where an SLA performs (theatre, gallery, festival, etc.) because the main theatre is the SLA's mouth and body and her heterotopic language is English-becoming-another-language: the important nuance, as I will show further, is that in Nu Nu's abode, this primordial theatre remains safe from the censoring of *grammaticality*. Immersed in its self-created freedom, Nu Nu's SLA may be able to avoid the rule of *grammaticality* and cheekily add him/herself to it, like the unwanted chin, through "the display of hybridity – its peculiar 'replication' – [that] terrorizes authority [of *grammaticality*] with the ruse of recognition, its mimicry, its mockery." (Bhabha, 1994: 165)

Philosopher Vilém Flusser's post-apocalyptic vision of language permits an even more focused reading of what Nu Nu proposes as the heterotopic utter-ant abode of one language in the process of becoming another. Flusser notes that "the ineffable hides (so to speak) within the meshes of language, it hides between the words we think, and through these openings we are always in contact with it." (Flusser, 2005: 6). This is the locus that Nu Nu has set camp in: the within the meshes of language. Where else could Nu Nu's proposed third-way SLA dwell if not in such a heterotopia?

The heterotopic establishment of Nu Nu Theatre is rooted in the overall concern with an SLA's freedom of creative expression. How can an SLA emerge and create herself without being

subjected to the laws of hospitality managed by *grammaticality* on England's stages and screens? Nu Nu searches for a way/ways to establish an SLA in England that is less temporary/accidental than a *Nomad*-SLA (but enjoying similar freedom and access to great parts), and totally liberated from the constricting label of *Migrant*-SLA. How can an SLA (re)emerge more permanently, more intensely onto an alternative *plane of composition* (which is preempted by the heterotopic emplacement of Nu Nu at the intersection of languages and performance sites) after eschewing the translability tests of the middle part of the hourglass?

In order to respond to these questions, Nu Nu always returns to the idea of existing in subtraction (giving birth again to oneself/coming out of the DNA remnants mixed with the elements of the second language) and functioning as if on a *desert island* (a post-apocalyptic, post-*grammaticality* heterotopic support for an alternative *plane of composition* created by the SLA only for and through herself). In Nu Nu's view, the (re)emergence of an SLA on an alternative *plane of composition* fed by the *desert island* must begin in an actor's technique of the self cum subtraction, which creates/adds materiality to/nurtures the post-*grammaticality* heterotopic space:

Freedom is produced through these techniques of the self [...] fearless speech and the care of the self. Freedom is agonistic and creative; it results from not submitting to an external power but generating a power that is exercised over oneself so that one can be worthy of exercising it over other. (Oksala 2011: 116)

Nu Nu Theatre offers its two makers the environment in which to exercise such techniques of the self, aimed at achieving or at least beginning to taste an agonistic and creative freedom. Nu Nu's heterotopic disposition appears as the result of *grammaticality*'s dead-end solutions and fake ontology (genealogy in disguise) of an SLA. It is therefore not only subtraction and longing for a *desert island* that emboldens Nu Nu, but *grammaticality* itself, by inviting another (a third) solution for the SLA. Therefore, locked in, as he/she is by the guises of *Migrant* or *Nomad*, Nu

Nu's SLA is forced to invent him/herself via a third route. The necessity for an alternative *plane of composition* – architected by the SLA for him/herself - is directed (and in a way imposed) by *grammaticality*, as Foucault underlines:

practices of the self are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group. (Foucault 1988: 11)

It is on one hand the temptation of the immanent theatres of the farm fields, shop floors (which precedes/prefigures the logic of subtraction and isolation on a *desert island*) and on the other hand, the inescapability of the restrictive nature of *grammaticality* that leads to the need of establishing (sheltered by Nu Nu) these particular practices of the self. Under this banner of practices of the self, I will talk about *bottomlessness* and the schizo-SLA.

The central idea that the present research project puts forward and sustains is that an SLA on the existent *plane of composition* of English stages and screens - produced, stamped, "thought" by *grammaticality* - cannot never fulfill their ontology as an SLA: he/she will always be – to a lesser or greater degree - a product of a censoring and translatability testing<sup>109</sup> which is totally uncontrollable by the actor. Furthermore, what I argue (being inspired by my own experience of searching for who I am as an SLA) is that whomever has been deemed a "non-native" actor can truly become an SLA (again, this is valid in England) only as a result of a second birth. This second emergence (a self-emergence pushed onto an alternative plane to the existent *plane of composition*) can only occur after having acknowledged, understood and surpassed the mechanisms of

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<sup>109</sup> This should not be confounded with the translatability test that any actor has to go through for obtaining and playing a part. That translatability process looks at talent, versatility, physique on a relatively equal footing with utterance. What I argue is that an SLA – this particular species of actor (perhaps in certain ways similar to an autistic actor or a deaf actor, if we are to go back to Wilson's example) – is exposed to a double translatability test: not only does she need to be able/talented enough to play the role but most importantly she needs to be able to (properly) utter the role in the English language. Therefore, utterance becomes the cornerstone for making an SLA translatable. As such, I argue that an SLA does not emerge solely from her capacities/talent to act but most importantly from her capacity to create a unique style of second language and that is why – unless she emerges herself – she will always be labelled as either a *Migrant-SLA* or a *Nomad-SLA*.

*grammaticality* and nevertheless after having carried forth the immanent SL theatres of below: fields, shops, etc. On the *desert island*, in the second birth, the source of the ontology of the SLA is represented by both the immanent forces of the act/events of utterance and the conscientious surpassing of *grammaticality* (which presents the SLA with a fake second birth). The subtractive, isolationist instinct, the wish to pull away which was the crux of my and my partner's departure from our birth country and first language, starts to pay off in this final stage of the ontological journey. The original instinct to exist separated, lost and alone as artists, shipwrecked on the *desert island* is revisited (with renewed intensity) when *grammaticality* desert-ifies all the possibilities for freedom with its fake birth/ontology of the SLA. The withdrawal instinct - now rediscovered - becomes the weapon with which to construct an emergence for myself as an SLA and a maddened tool with which to articulate my third way-ontology.

The *desert island* (a heterotopia which Nu Nu wants to echo) on which this third type of SLA begins her self-creation (second birth) is the very minus in the subtraction: it is the distance/the cut inflicted between the actor and *grammaticality* and fed by the actor's isolationist instinct (schizo-affect transformed into an abode). This is a conscious action of minus-ing oneself from the second language English and from the existent *plane of composition* yet somehow continuing to utter on stage or on screen. It is these repeated minuses (suggested by the name of the company which – in Romanian – means "No! No!" or rejection, refusal, departure, subtraction) that articulate a chin to the existent *plane of composition*. The action of subtracting from the second language should grow in intensity and tend towards perfection (in the heterotopic shelter offered by Nu Nu, the University and so forth). Therefore, if the *Migrant* or *Nomad* appear finite (their genealogy seals their identity), fully formed categories (images of the other, or temporary presences of the other), the third way opens the possibility for SLA's to aspire towards becoming absolute artists. These absolute artists inhabit the *desert island* whose spirit they take upon



themselves and – spurred by the implacability of *grammaticality* - they fully engage in a process of *becoming*-SLA. Therefore, instead of following the normal route – that of accepting the who-isation (identification/subjectivation) by *grammaticality* (the illusion of soft belonging which implies being given a mantle that is either reductive or reductive through its provisory nature) – the third way is rooted in desertedness as the fertile field of self-creation. The fertility of this heterotopic territory evidently implies the SLA's force of resistance and continuous re-affirmation against being named *Migrant* or *Nomad*. The bigger the realisation that the SLA is a minorizing shipwrecked – in the second language and on the existent *plane of composition* - the bigger and more maddened the separation from the forces of the translatability machine. Equally, the greater the instinct to withdraw, the ampler the new chin-like additions to the existent *plane of composition*. The movement of separation creates the very dwelling place for this other version of an SLA:

Those people who come to the island indeed occupy and populate it; but in reality, were they sufficiently separate, sufficiently creative, they would give the island only a dynamic image of itself, a consciousness of the movement which produced the island, such that through them the island would in the end become conscious of itself as deserted and unpeopled. The island would be only the dream of humans, and humans, the pure consciousness of the island. (Deleuze, 2004: 10)

In other words, Nu Nu's SLA's are parasiting the desert-ifying winds of *grammaticality*, attaching themselves to them and working/emerging in countermotion, affirming themselves like abnormal (crisis) actors askew of the regulatory body of the translatability machine. The key to de-territorialising the second language English and re-territorialising it again on a new, askew *plane of composition* lies therefore in the SLA's identification with the movement that brings them to the *desert island* in the first place:

For this to be the case, there is again but one condition: humans would have to reduce themselves to the movement that brings them to the island, the movement which prolongs and takes up the élan that produced the island. (Deleuze, 2004: 11)

Isolating oneself – through parasiting in countermotion to *grammaticality* – Nu Nu’s SLA’s ride on the élan which otherwise would be wasted in redundant re-representations of the “foreigner.” This élan that Nu Nu Theatre is built on (and the *raison d’être* of its two SLA’s) is the result of the maddened rupture with the home language and home culture, used thereafter as a fuel for creating a new *plane of composition*. This is an energy of loss, of tearing and of apocalypse that supports the third emergence of an SLA in England: it is a counterforce which denies regimentation, identification, or naming by *grammaticality*. This is the energy of madness that Kincaid was talking about and which I have mentioned in the *Introduction*: “Everybody who accomplishes anything must leave home” (Kincaid, 1995: online resource). All SLA’s – including those already “born” by *grammaticality* as *Migrants* or *Nomads* – should contain such élan of rupture. Eugenio Barba asks: “What was my first day in theatre? Perhaps it was the day I lost my mother tongue and made myself into a foreigner, in a country which was not the country of my birth.” (Barba 1986: 19) The third way for an SLA – as envisaged by Nu Nu – originates in such departure from one’s native language and marks the emergence of a kind of parasite-actor. Nu Nu’s SLA strives to bring this parasitical and disruptive movement to a maddened perfection:

To that question so dear to the old explorers – “which creatures live on deserted island?” – one could only answer: human beings live there already, but uncommon humans, they are absolutely separate, absolute creators, in short, an Idea of humanity, a prototype, a man who would almost be a god, a woman who would be a goddess, a great Amnesiac, a pure Artist, a consciousness of Earth and Ocean, an enormous hurricane, a beautiful witch, a statue from the Easter Islands. (Deleuze, 2004: 11)

The third-way SLA does not necessarily work fully against *grammaticality* but positively parasites it, moving alongside it. Michel Serres – in his work *The Parasite* – affirms that “to parasite = to para-site (to eat next to)” (Serres 1982: 7) The third option for an SLA has to result therefore in tandem or in asunder-ness with *grammaticality*’s *Migrant* and *Nomad* solutions,

drawing on or learning from some of their characteristics in order to propose a parasite "who has the last word, who produces disorder and who generates a different order." (Serres 1982: 3)

The desertedness sustained by the apparent inescapability of translatability, the nothingness and the cul-de-sac facing Nu Nu's SLA constitutes the ideal solvent in which the élan of the shipwrecked starts to move, creating a "derived rupture and an original re-beginning."

(Deleuze, 2004: 98) Refusing to work with an agent (under the given conditions), refusing to follow the example of other SLA's in England (and become either a *Migrant* or a *Nomad*), I – as an SLA – have had to re-create myself from the very cul-de-sac that *grammaticality* offered me.

As such, I argue that without *grammaticality*, an SLA cannot (re)emerge onto the alternative *plane of composition* and grow/utter herself:

Far from compromising it, humans bring the desertedness to its perfection and highest point. In certain conditions which attach them to the very movement of things, humans do not put an end to desertedness, they make it sacred. (Deleuze, 2004: 10)

The third way for an SLA is a bringing to perfection of the desertedness instilled by *grammaticality*. Nu Nu's SLA can do that – first of all - by taking the immanent theatres of the street forward through the middle part of the hourglass, and fighting thereafter (under conditions which I will discuss further down) for a re-birth onto the novel *plane of composition*:

First, it is true that from the deserted island it is not creation but re-creation, not the beginning but the a re-beginning, the material that survives the first origin, the radiating seed or egg that must be sufficient to re-produce everything. (Deleuze, 2004: 13)

In the safe, nourishing space parasited from the Theatre Department, Nu Nu's SLA's can produce the work that they dream about: not subjected to the plans, programming, frameworks or strategies (even and especially those for diversity) of the mainstream venues or by the rigid requirements of the specific needs of casting calls. This third type of SLA works towards becoming Svetlana Boym's free man of *Nostalgia*: "someone who succeeds in developing inner

freedom, independent from external politics'' (Boym, 2001: 342) inherent in *grammaticality*. The third type of SLA - a maddened wanderer (unlike the temporary, rich *Nomad*) across the non-native language – is moved by a special type of freedom about which Tijana Miletic talked in *European literary immigration into the French language: readings of Gary, Kristof, Kundera and Semprun*: ''the ultimate, frightening freedom of the immigrant is in this ability to use the new language in any way he wants.'' (Miletic, 2008: 96). The maddened freedom of the third type of Second-Language Actor to use the new language as he/she pleases is the basis of all theatrical work done by Nu Nu Theatre. Therefore, an SLA (emerging via the third route) recognizes that belonging to a fixed abode in language is no longer feasible,<sup>110</sup> meaning – in Nu Nu's view - that the true freedom of expression of an SLA can only be found in the violent rupture with the first language and in the mad venturing into the second one. Any tendency of the actor towards soft belonging to *grammaticality* denies that energy of rupture, stopping the free play in the second language and allowing an SLA to be labelled by the translatability machine. The techniques of the self/ontological training of Nu Nu are aimed at maintaining this energy of rupture as the source of life for the SLA.

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<sup>110</sup> That is why the creation of an English-becoming-another-language is paramount, as it encompasses processuality, never-ending editing and re-editing, a kind of re-lived ad infinitum homelessness and nomadising across a language that is time and time again de-territorialised to suit the non-accommodating non-native utterer.

### 3.2 BANDIT - Bottomlessness as an Ideal Solvent

The main purpose of the performance *BANDIT*, produced by Nu Nu Theatre as part of the present research project, is to understand the nature of such energy of rupture and test some of the practical-ontological conditions (techniques of the self) for the emergence of a third type of SLA. The second practice-as-research project, this theatre piece takes its inspiration from the rupture with the home of the native language as experienced by me, the performer of *BANDIT*. The piece is an example of how an SLA can utilise and channel the often violent and traumatic departure<sup>111</sup> from the first language/culture into performing in a second, borrowed, parasited English language. Concomitantly, the performance of *BANDIT* comprises a series of practical, ontological exercises – imagined and developed by myself, together with the director of the piece Ileana Gherghina (the other SLA and co-founder of the company) – which sought to liberate the utterance apparatus/body (with a special focus on my diaphragm) from *grammaticality*'s luring spectre during my speaking/uttering/performing in the second language English. The acting methodologies, devised for the production of *BANDIT*, revolve around the idea of a liberated body in utterance of the second language. The aim is to produce constellations of acts of second language speech coupled with exercises for the actor's diaphragm. These exercises for the diaphragm are an integral part of the spectacle, so they reverberate aesthetically, having an importance in the depiction of the character. They have been facilitated by simple physical attitudes like lying on my back and getting up fast whilst speaking, rolling on the floor whilst speaking, walking at a varied pace and emitting the text at a certain speed, collapsing on the floor mid-speech, uttering text at great speed from uncomfortable physical positions, or simply from

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<sup>111</sup> In *Billie Killer*, there is an interest in the playfulness that marks the departure from one's native language.

the standing position. The disruptive effects of second language speaking were also amplified with other bodily interruptions, such as abrupt movements, like falls, standing-up, using imaginary objects to obtain unusual physical postures, whilst speaking the text. The other important element of focus for acting/devising exercises when working on *BANDIT* was the task of identifying and ways of producing schizo-affects and specific de-territorializations and re-territorialisations of the second language English. *BANDIT* works on two levels: it contextualises and puts into a scenic parable the violence of an SLA's break-up with the native language and, at the same time, it constitutes an experimentation with liberating the performing SLA's diaphragm/body from the powers of *grammaticality*, whilst conducting schizo-affect. The text of *BANDIT* was inspired by Experiment Pitesti: a shocking exercise of re-education-through torture that aimed to create a new type of man, apt and ready to ensure an implementation of the Communist regime in Romania. In the prison of Pitesti (a medium-size city in the South of Romania), during the years 1951/52, the Communist authorities were experimenting with what they called the "re-education" of political prisoners through torture. Constantly beaten, forced to eat their own faeces and drink their own urine, to torture each other, to invent accusations and testify against their friends, relatives, and colleagues who had not yet been arrested, the prisoners of Pitesti were subjected to a continuous programme of beatings, interrogations, and humiliations designed to eventually crush their moral strength and personalities. In the Pitesti prison, the torturers assigned the political prisoners the generic name of bandits. Being a bandit automatically implied being an enemy of the state and of the newly imposed social order: as such, all bandits needed to be radically re-formed within the widespread gulag of those dark years, in which the prison of Pitesti appears as the most atrocious flesh and soul mincer. The text of *BANDIT* is constructed exclusively from fragments of testimonies from survivors of the Experiment Pitesti: apart from the arrangement and sequencing of those fragments of

testimonies, there is no other element of creative writing or fiction involved in the writing process. The long monologue that makes up the text is therefore a summa of collaged testimonies belonging to various torture survivors and if there was any form of creativity involved in the writing of the text, that could be marginally traceable only in the translation and collaging/sequencing of the disparate testimonies. The latter were crudely translated from Romanian, minimally edited and detached from within their immediate biographical contexts: the particular biographical elements pertaining to the tellers were left out in order to illuminate a series of nude accounts of violence. Testimonies came in the shape of fragments of memories, or written accounts, experiences half-told in front of a camera, memories effaced by the passing of time or by their deep traumatic impact on the survivor. The fragments were arranged into a surreal flow<sup>112</sup> of events, which a generic character – I have given him the name *BANDIT* – has to go through. On one indefinite day (a day) in one indefinite December (a December), a student-*BANDIT* is arrested together with his best friend Anton, scooped up by the police in the middle of a stroll, imprisoned, put on trial, and sentenced to twenty years in prison. Imprisoned, *BANDIT* is being starved, tortured, his friend Anton brutally killed, more torture follows, finally pushing *BANDIT* on the verge of suicide. Although the text does not effectively clarify if, in the end, *BANDIT*'s suicide attempt succeeds, it becomes rather clear that after the programme of incessant beatings and gruesome interrogations and the loss of his dear friend, the character is left hanging somewhere between life and death. The last scene of the text, which encapsulates this conscience of existing in-between life and death (scene that attains a particularly surreal, fantastical tone) is also a direct translation of a survivor's testimony. A political prisoner had been taken to hospital with severe health problems occurred because of torture. Doctors, compelled by the hospital's hostile policy towards political prisoners, refused to administer

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<sup>112</sup> It is only the arrangement of the fragments of testimonies that appears to narrate a surreal set of events. In reality, all fragments of testimony that have been put together are authentic accounts of terror and torture.

treatment in the first instance. At the very last minute, the doctor decides to operate, and the patient's life is left on a knife edge. Only after the fall of Communist rule in Romania, the survivor recounted – in a filmed interview - the psychological, oneiric, mystical journey experienced during the risky surgery. That political prisoner (whose testimony became the utterance of *BANDIT*) – in the middle of surgery - experienced his self-transformed into a miniaturized blue human travelling towards a beautiful, serene, blue place, where he joined millions of others who had similar blue contours. As he advances alongside the mass of miniaturized blue silhouettes, *BANDIT* absorbs the peace, serenity and warmth of the place:

There was such a silence... such a serenity... I don't know how to describe it... The silence of a grave... I haven't been myself in a grave, so I don't actually how it feels but I can definitely say that there was ABSOLUTE SILENCE. (Appendix B: 271)

After a while, he suddenly feels that he is being pushed back. A state of desperation takes hold of the dead man living, when he senses that now he will have to return to earth (to his prior life therefore), leaving behind the peace and serenity of the blue space. The survivor's account ends poignantly with an expression of desperation: this utterance of despair has also been translated and included as the end and culmination of the *BANDIT* piece. Thus, the audience will not be able to ascertain whether *BANDIT* truly returns to life or indeed remains forever caught in the passage between life and death. Testimony after testimony linked together in a surreal structure, the text of *BANDIT* was envisaged as a continuous flow of violence, pestilence, terror, and trauma that are building up for this final line in the final scene:

And when I started to fall through that pitch-dark area, I got really terrified... And in my mind, I was saying: "God, why did you have to take me from there? I am not dead. I am alive... Only now I'm going to die, when I crush onto the Earth!" (Appendix B: 272)

This climax represents a jump into the bliss of nothingness: *BANDIT* has been tortured so much that his suicide attempt and the in-between life and death experience in the blue realm announce a



final and victorious release. It is precisely this final state of mind and conscience that the SLA invokes in the rupture with his/her native language and the advancement towards the second. Nu Nu associates – in *BANDIT* – the character’s experience of nothingness with the radical rupture with life, with self, with the security of the native language that the SLA uses later as fuel for giving birth of himself on the *desert island*. The plunge taken by *BANDIT* in the in-between life and death zone symbolizes the dangerous existential game that an(y) SLA has to immerse him/herself into: a suicidal game<sup>113</sup> (that of leaving behind one’s native language and venturing into a second one) that brings the actor right to the edge, to the shore of the night, as Derrida in his dialogue with Dufourmantelle) has called it in *Of Hospitality*:

the fact that man does not belong to himself, that his meaning is not Meaning, that human meaning comes to an end as soon as one reaches the shore of Night, and that Night is not a nothingness, but belongs to what ‘is’ in the proper sense of the term. (Derrida 2000: 44-46)

Nu Nu’s SLA – like *BANDIT* – speaks from that shore of the night, and his/her utterance (together with the re-born actor) is rooted in that nothingness and bottomlessness which truly feeds the coming forth of the third kind of SLA. The collaging of the disparate voices of the survivors as a technique for constructing the textual flow allowed the makers of the piece to hide the true identity of the victims of torture and the historical context of their experience. Subsequently, the SLA (literally) speaks in the names of (or as) numerous torture victims, located himself on a narrative shore of the night. All the separate voices of the survivors go under the radar, as their traumatic experiences are de-personalised, de-contextualised, de-territorialised and dissipated into the underground bunkers of the character *BANDIT*. The actor does not perform or narrate about the experiences of Romanian victims of torture: in turn, he

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<sup>113</sup> It is no wonder that many actors (in my native Romania, for instance) associate leaving one’s native language with professional suicide, noting that it is impossible to exercise the acting profession without the shelter of the language in which one was born.

becomes the carrier-voice of an indirect discourse of many torture survivors which: "is not explained by the distinction between subjects; [but] rather, it is the assemblage [...] that explains the voices present in a single language." (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 88) This is the voice arising from the *bottomlessness* of in-between two languages, the shouting from the shore of the night, the child's humming in the dark: this time, it is not the playful, innocent tune that emerges from the Goat's hut in *Billie Killer*, but a violent, mad, ruptured one. This is the ever-growing shouting of *BANDIT* in Scene 3 (see Appendix C, *BANDIT* Video: 19m.53s – 21m00s), when he recounts how Anton was killed by his torturers: the most intense part of the scene is constituted by a crescendo of the voice, culminating with the actor slapping his face with both hands. There is no psychologisation involved in the delivery of the short monologue, no interest in phrasing or editing the emission in accordance with the meanings of the text. The voice of the actor rises to speak from the abyss, from nowhere: it pushes itself further up, toward the plateau of shrieks, and the text follows suit. The text is a support and a pretext for a voice that learns how to utter in English-becoming-Romanian, trying intensities, palpating the surrounding space.

The SLA who performs the text connects his own violent experience of breaking up with the native language (and having to live as an actor forever on the shore of the night) with the edge-of-life experience evoked by the multi-voiced character. Being almost entirely stripped off from its historical context, the text conveys violence and terror in as pure a state as possible, as spasmodic discourse of voice and mouth emerging from *bottomlessness*. It is therefore deliberately made hard for the audience to situate the terror and violence evoked by the text within a clear, well-detailed historical context, and as such, both actor and audience are faced with a seemingly unmotivated, unexplained (therefore leaning towards a fantastical) story of beatings, tortures, death and suicide. The SLA has no clear identity: this is not a Romanian character talking, and not a Romanian SLA. The short video at the beginning of the performance

(see Appendix C, *BANDIT* Video: 0m.00s – 2m08s) gives a brief indication that all the terrible events might have happened somewhere in the East of Europe, after the fall of the Iron Curtain but does not – in any way – allow it to become clear that it is a uniquely Romanian experience. After the short video ends, the story about a student who is arrested and imprisoned, tortured and driven to the verge of death reclaims its true surreal aura, detached - as the SLA himself functions - from a clear, final identity. *BANDIT* is the theatrical parable of becoming-violence, or of becoming-neither-dead-nor-alive of a character, played by an SLA who is neither Romanian, nor English, nor an immigrant, nor a foreigner, but just a *becoming*-SLA. Nowhere during the text is Communism or anti-Communism mentioned, nor is Pitesti, nor Romania, nor anything else that might link the text to a particular place, event or cultural context. In this way, *BANDIT* becomes a piece that invokes trauma, torture and violence per se, whilst the character is not assigned a given identity, associated with a particular nationality, age, historical era, etc. The apparent reasonless nature of the story is thus deliberately created, so as to allow the SLA to study (behind the mask of the character) his own narrative of violent rupture with the native language and the subsequent violent stroll through the second language English. The violence of the SLA's experience in crocheting in the second language is studied in parallel with the violence which the character *BANDIT* experiences during his imprisonment. The array of multi-perspectival testimonies pertaining to various lives and personal experiences of torture, reunited in this multi-angular and collaged thread, allowed the individualities of the survivors to recede, depersonalizing and de-individualizing the flow of darkness in *BANDIT*. Concomitantly, this strategy created ample scope (and room) for the SLA to hide behind the text, where, unhindered by any representation of and responsibility towards accent, he could talk about and study the suffering, the liberation and the maddening experience of ditching one's first language. It was therefore possible for the SLA to ponder – sheltered by the parable of the piece and of the

character – his own positioning on the precipice of the abyss of losing one’s native language. The translating and collaging technique were instrumental to creating a (metaphorical) stream of traumatic consciousness apparently devoid of ownership, behind which an SLA could hide himself, without the audience being aware of it. Therefore, the performance of *BANDIT* unfolded on two levels; one that regarded the audience (the SLA transmitted, uttered, narrated, acted the fantastical story of violence) and another one (an ontological exercise, on which I focus here) which allowed the SLA to study himself (his body/diaphragm and the producing of schizo-affects) in rapport to the terror of separation with the native language. In a certain sense - returning to some of the observations made in *the First Chapter – BANDIT* utilizes the actor’s experience of *becoming*-SLA (which implies the violence of leaving behind the home of native language) as a template for the creation of the character and the ontological exercise: it is from within the experience of becoming an SLA that the role emerges. The script utters itself from within, the work blooms in deep connection to the actor’s own experience of *bottomlessness*.<sup>114</sup> This is the case with the scene of *BANDIT*’s re-education (see Appendix C, *BANDIT* Video: 13m10s – 15m20s), where the array of torture methods is exposed, accounted and recounted by the actor in a frenzy of the voice: the rhythm is particularly fast, the words are spoken with an immense haste, the breaks are present just for the actor to be able to catch his breath. The text is a pretext for testing of the voice and of the flow of air in articulation, for speaking the English language at various speeds and intensities. Whilst the actor is playing with the levels of violence inflicted on the uttering (speed, hastiness, negligence in articulation, continuous flow), the text toes the line, it emerges as secondary to a violent effort in utterance. It is the process and experience of *becoming*-SLA, which inspires and sustains the ontological dimension of the

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<sup>114</sup> This marks the creative powers of an SLA, which are steeped within him/herself and do not rely solely on the story told by the script or the playwright. Almina or de Sousa utilise the same technique, with the difference that they begin with a narration about their migrant status. *BANDIT* avoids that avenue as it is bound to fall into the hands of *grammaticality*.

script, bringing it forth from within, fuelling it. The actor's own experience is sublimated into the performance material and supports its delivery. Renouncing the idea of always creating himself through some sort of representation of difference (I am the Russian bride, I am the Romanian survivor, I am the Portuguese migrant, etc.) Nu Nu's SLA says: I am one who experienced violence, or I am Wolf, I am speaking from *bottomlessness*, I am becoming, etc.

Apart from his performative discourse for the audience, it is the proximity and the possibility to encounter nothingness that motivates the actor's ontological experimentation in *BANDIT*; it is the blinding, maddening game of leaving behind the shelter and cover of the native language that feeds the internal, ontological adventure of the SLA during performance. In light of what I have discussed in the preceding chapters, this practical research allows me to exemplify how the *plane of immanence* of second language acting is being re-discovered by the SLA's maddening and disturbing feeling of treading on the edge of nothingness. A re-discovered, re-invented, re-charged dimension of schizo-*affect* is being unleashed by the actor during the performance of *BANDIT*. As shown, the first dimension of schizo-*affect* has been identified as freedom of playfulness: an SLA plays with and in the second language. The ontological echo of that playfulness – as explored in *Billie Killer* - is marked by looseness, ignorance, childishness vis-a-vis second language English. That represents the first level of self-creation by an SLA. With *BANDIT*, the SLA now moves further with his game, taking a second step towards an alternative *plane of composition*. *BANDIT* signals a second stage of the self-propelling and emergence (growth and establishment of that growth) through a different kind of recovery and reconsideration of the immanent second language acting. In *BANDIT*, that is achieved through expressiveness exacted from the violent, sacrificial (therefore not playful) departure from one's first language and the free, demented ride thereafter of the second language English amidst the rendition of a gruesome script. If in *Billie Killer*, Nu Nu's SLA employed playfulness (the child

in the dark singing a tune to tame fear) in her courtship of the second language, *BANDIT* signals the moving into a second gear, where the SLA creates her own *plane of composition* right from the edge of the abyss:

Night for Patocka, is "the opening onto what disturbs." It asks us to go through the experience of the loss of meaning, an experience from which flows the authenticity of philosophical thinking." (Derrida 2000: 46)

*BANDIT*'s stepping out of being alive experience and his dwelling in the blue space of the midway between life and death signifies the intensity of the maddened rupture with one's native language. That is the acid bath always needed, which does not deny playfulness but builds upon it "I liked it there! It was beautiful, serene..." (Appendix B: 272): this is the right place from where to unleash the creation of an alternative *plane of composition*. *BANDIT* allows me to finally determine how far I can go and indeed should go in forsaking my last burial place (Derrida's name for the mother tongue) in order to liberate my immanent SLA towards its self-affirmation. The intensity with which this double-edged excitement of linguistic suicide in the first language on one hand, and maddened, violent flaneur-ing in the second language on the other hand, gives another dimension to the creative liberty upon which the alternative emergence of an SLA is predicated. There is no longer just an emergence through playfulness of separation with the native language and easiness of crocheting utterance in the second language, like in *Billie Killer*. In *BANDIT*, there is a violent playfulness which encourages the non-native actor to carve for himself ever more territory in the second language: had there been a third practical project for this research, it would have had to be conducted as a continuation to this violent playfulness<sup>115</sup>. If *Billie Killer* marked the emergence of a playful, ignorant, naïve, song-singing,

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<sup>115</sup> This is *becoming-SLA*'s energy which is transferred into the emergent, post-apocalyptic *plane of composition*. A permanent swirling and twirling in relation to the second language, a schizo-unsettledness which is now playful, now violent, now this, now that, epitomising the un-bordered nature of *becoming-SLA* and the continuous creation and addition to a new *plane of composition* of second language acting (the movement of the *desert island*). Therefore, an SLA is never static as *Migrant* or temporary as *Nomad* but is schizo.

wolfing SLA, the second practical piece augurs for the emergence of a *BANDIT*-ing-SLA: the actor puts into action the nuclear power of her rift with the mother tongue as the explosive material that annuls the forces of *grammaticality*. It is this blissful playfulness coupled with the intensity of rupture that enable an SLA to become the maker of his own dent into the *plane of composition*. It is through this combination of playfulness and violence and whatever might come next<sup>116</sup> that Nu Nu's SLA can escape the translatability machine, which wants to establish identity, giving it final form. The verge of the abyss brings forth the *BANDIT*-SLA: never a migrant yet a dangerous, disruptive nomad, relentless in her instinct to copulate over and over again with the second language English, a type of reasonless nomad that Best and Kellner – paraphrasing Deleuze and Guattari - described in *Postmodern Theory. Critical Interrogation: Foucault and the Critique of Modernity*, as:

a new postmodern mode of existence where individuals overcome repressive modern forms of identity and stasis to become desiring nomads in a constant process of becoming and transformation. (Best, Kellner, 1991: 77)

The reckless, reasonless nomad-cum-*BANDIT*-SLA – I argue – must define the presence and activity of an(y) SLA in England. Nu Nu's SLA is not seeking abode/hospitality in the second language, as he does not wish to soft-belong to the forces of *grammaticality*. *BANDIT*-SLA is an actor who has come into the second language to disrupt and copulate with it, and therefore roams freely, destructive and mad, working/uttering/performing despite and in spite of an always adverse *grammaticality*. The measure in which an SLA is able to accept and assume her homelessness (a schizoid un-belonging neither to first nor to second language) gives the measure in which the freedom to copulate with the second language becomes productive and expressive and life-giving (ontological).

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<sup>116</sup> In future projects there will be ever more additions/facets to the process of *becoming*.

Nu Nu's SLA engages in what Dan Watt has called a *schizo-stroll* across the second language: "The theoretical trajectory of the schizo-stroll becomes one of accepting the homelessness of being, and the revel of perpetual movement." (Watt, Wolfreys 2009: 102) It is very important to return here to the idea of the *desert island* and how its inhabitant (Nu Nu's SLA) can be seen - through the eyes of philosopher Tatsuya Higaki - as a "solitary schizophrenic devoid of an Other." This aspect should be further nuanced by Deleuze and Guattari's thinking on schizophrenia. In *Chaosophy – Texts and Interviews 1972- 1977*, Felix Guattari asks the following question: "Rather than psychiatry why not schizophrenics, the mad people themselves?" (Guattari 2009: 60) I paraphrase Guattari, asking: Rather than a *grammaticality*-made SLA why not a schizo-SLA? Why not Nu Nu's *BANDIT*-SLA? Who else can better create on the *desert island* of post-grammaticality if not a schizo-SLA engaged in schizo-stroll across the second language? Who else, if not a schizo-SLA, can carry over and re-charge again and again a freedom (in all its expressive glory) similar to that of the Roma Gypsy woman's, of the German flight pilot's, of the Chinese takeaway seller's onto an alternative *plane of composition*? Wouldn't it be the schizo-SLA who could fulfil the role of "de-territorializ[ing] themselves to the limit" (Guattari 2009: 52) displaying the unique "capacity to range across fields." (Guattari 2009: 59) in the abyss between the native and the second language? Isn't that the prototype of actor that can never be told who she is and thus cannot remain trapped in a fixed form imposed by *grammaticality*? Isn't a schizo-SLA the perfect actor to stroll in-between the immanent theatres of the street, farm fields and planes together with performing on screen or on stage? Isn't that the SLA's curse and unique quality at the same time – to enact ontology and performance at the same time? Reinforced by the violence of the rupture with one's native language, the playful liberty of such an actor gives the complete image of the true who of an SLA which is *becoming*: "when a schizophrenic says "I feel I am becoming a woman, I feel that I'm becoming God!" it's as if he were passing beyond a threshold



of intensity with his own body.’’ (Guattari 2009: 63) I will return to the link between *becoming*, schizo-stroll and the body in the final part of this chapter, when I discuss the SLA’s diaphragm. Violence and playfulness (and not the submissive representation of otherness and difference) is the method with which Nu Nu’s SLA constructs the heterotopic linguistic territory that he/she will later inhabit. In as much as he/she schizo-strolls – a schizo-stroll involves both the violence and the playfulness-to-the-limit of schizophrenia - an SLA exists or better said *becomes* in the heterotopic space that he/she inhabits. The who of an SLA is therefore never fixed, and it represents the map itself of such a schizo-stroll in the chiasm between two languages.

What sustains, therefore, such a schizo-who<sup>117</sup>? The solvent that supports both the freedom/playfulness and the violence (and the overall technique of the self of Nu Nu’s SLA’s) is – as I have hinted above - the shore of the night. Another name of this existential condition is given by philosopher Vilém Flusser: *bottomlessness*. It was this series of violent losses that led Flusser to developing a radical theory of *bottomlessness* (*bodenlos* in Portuguese), which informs the third emergence of the SLA. I am referring to a newly found existential state, that of an absolute exile (another possible name for the *desert island* dweller), marked by a violent push to liberate oneself from the second skin the native language and by an effective rejection of *grammaticality*:

Even reason forever lost its bottom. One could never rid oneself of the conviction - totally irrational, but appropriate for the times - that "actually" one should have perished in the gas ovens; that from this point on one is leading an "unforeseen" existence; that through emigration one is responsible for separating oneself from one's home, to throw oneself into the yawning abyss of meaninglessness... from this point on one is consuming one’s own energy, not the energy that comes roam the nurturing earth... A life in bottomlessness had begun. (Flusser, 2002: xx)

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<sup>117</sup> The actor is evidently not a schizophrenic, but only exists in a schizo-relation hooked as he/she is onto the native language, whilst dancing about in the second language.

Encapsulated in the *BANDIT* character as the shore of the night (the edge of life), the existential state of *bottomlessness* represents the solvent that binds together playfulness and violence and ultimately (morally, ontologically and performatively) sustains the schizo-stroll of Nu Nu's SLA, away from the first language and across (in and out of) the second language English.

*Bottomlessness* begins to be evoked in the suicide scene as an inclination towards stasis and the stopping of the flow of life, as a thirst for abandonment and liberation in death: "As quickly as I could, I grabbed a hook-shaped shard and aimed for the throat - to cut it from behind, (I was thinking!) and so to die sooner." (Appendix B: 268) The scene (see Appendix C: *BANDIT* Video: 42m05s – 48m17s) is delivered as a very direct, relaxed utterance, whilst the actor is on the floor facing the ceiling: the stasis present in the voice, the absolute relaxation of it, its floating in a sea of low tone and volume, the whispers all remind of the beauty to come, of the death to come, of the limit between life and death. This repose of the utterance carries the text towards the serene planes of *bottomlessness* in full view in the final scene. The reliance on *bottomlessness* and its underpinning of the entire existence of *Nu Nu Theatre* is crucial to the articulation of the present theory of a third way for an SLA. It is in the solvent of *bottomlessness* that Nu Nu's SLA's bathe their entire practice. The sense of absolute loss/departure of one's native language and the impossibility/incapacity to return to it, both lead to a heightened sense of *bottomlessness* existence in a region of in-between languages.<sup>118</sup> *Bottomlessness* signifies the abandonment of Nu Nu's SLA's to the forces of rupture and divorce with the first language and first culture (the pulling away of the inhabitant of the *desert island*), a renouncing of all that the native language might offer in terms of shelter and on the other hand, an always-cynical, distrustful, radical, antagonistic interaction with the second language. *Bottomlessness* reflects the fact that Nu Nu's SLA's work in the second language in a situation of isolation and defiance at

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<sup>118</sup> In-between signifies a double subtraction: a violent, traumatic rupture with the native language and a distancing from the second language (a working-against its grammatical, pulling forces).

the same time. They have both renounced the idea of "making it" in acting in the second language: that implies applying for castings, getting an agent, seeking roles in minor or major productions in England, trying to become an actual part of *grammaticality's* translatability machine, in which the currency seems to always be the so-called native accent. Instead, Nu Nu's SLA's abandon themselves to *bottomlessness* (propitious solvent for the thirst for the *desert island*) as their sole source of creative power, as the only avenue that leads them forward in the creation of the heterotopic space in which to dwell, setting themselves on a process of *becoming*. Sheltered therefore in their heterotopic chin, having renounced their exchange currency with *grammaticality* (defying therefore the notion of native accent as an identification and representation tool on the existent *plane of composition*) *bottomlessness* becomes the solvent of Nu Nu's SLA's creativity: a reservoir of schizz-ed rupture and violent nomadizing – every time present and differently sublimated in any theatre piece that the actors produce. In a certain sense, this kind of *bottomlessness* recreates and re-frames – in this lower edge of the hourglass – the blissful *bottomlessness* of the *plane of immanence*, the one which initially engulfs the second language, pushing it towards its death. Auto-ethnographically, *bottomlessness* translates the urge of the actors – painfully roaming through the second language - to kill themselves as actors (the instinct that the character *BANDIT* epitomizes) through the abandonment of the first language and the absolute defiance of the second one. Performatively, *bottomlessness* transports the instinct of rupture and death onto the stage or screen, to be absorbed into an alternative *plane of composition* of second language acting, which is nothing other than continued ontological experimentation. This particular idea is suggested in the last scene of *BANDIT* (the shore of the night, and the character's jump into the blue *bottomlessness*) but also in the short animation video that starts the performance piece. Poignantly, the short animation video illustrates how Churchill and Stalin divided Europe with the infamous 'percentages agreement' episode. The

leaders famously met at the *Fourth Moscow Conference* in 1944 and sealed the informal arrangement – known since then as the ’’percentages agreement’’ – through which Europe was divided into spheres of influence. In his book titled *Memoirs of the Second World War*, Winston Churchill recollects in great detail the atmosphere in which this informal, yet dreadful agreement was produced. Churchill said to Stalin:

Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans. Your armies are in Rumania and Bulgaria. We have interests, missions, and agents there. Don't let us get at cross-purposes in small ways. So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have ninety per cent dominance in Rumania, for us to have ninety per cent in say Greece, and go about fifty-fifty about Yugoslavia? While this was being translated, I wrote out on a half-sheet of paper. I pushed this across to Stalin, who by then heard the translation. [...] Then took his blue pencil and made a large tick upon it and passed it back to us. (Churchill 1991: 226)

The short animation video functions as a parable of the traumatic, definitive rift experienced by a *BANDIT-SLA* and the earthquake (leaving behind native language) that creates *bottomlessness*. The fall of the Iron Curtain, which is the only historic, cultural reference provided in the story of *BANDIT* – symbolizes the SLA's violent, traumatic rupture and severing with the home of the first language and the first culture, underlining altogether its irremediable nature. Nu Nu's SLA's – in this short, animated passage – comment on their personal experiences of *bottomlessness* seeking to give an artistic form to the shock of untying themselves from the native language. An Iron Curtain descends between themselves and their mother language. A sense of despair/tragic realisation prevails alongside a sigh of relief that now homeless, the actor has nothing else to do other than allowing him/herself to float (schizo-stroll) in *bottomlessness*. The feeling of being cut off and of resignation in front of the shore of the night is perhaps most evidently suggested in Scene One, where *BANDIT* reproduces the conversation that he had with his friend Anton in the first days of their incarceration:

- Anton, why you say that we'll be released? I asked.
- That law student (another inmate) told me that either they give up or there's a war starting.

- But Anton, how can you believe that? Why would they start a war? For me? For you? For the few here in this prison? Can't you see that we've been sold? (Appendix B: 259)

Therefore, Nu Nu's SLA's departure from the Romanian language and their existence against the English language is inextricably and symbolically linked to a post-apocalyptic, post-traumatic instinct to separate with one's history, one's country, one's former life, one's language, whilst concomitantly succumbing to the dream of living lost and in isolation, on a *desert island*, immersing themselves into what novelist Norman Manea has called an "infinite exile." (Manea 2008: 65) In the second language. Quoting the "percentages agreement" in the beginning of the piece functions as a symbol for the moment of rupture and the desolate, yet energizing throwing of the actor into the abyss. As an integral part of the auto-ethnographic discourse, the percentages agreement also symbolizes the point zero of the emergence of an SLA: the infinite exile, the search for the *desert island*, and the *heterotopia* which Nu Nu represents, all originate in this traumatic moment.<sup>119</sup>

The experience of the character *BANDIT* mirrors the abrupt, violent departure from one's home (the exit from the shell of the native language): the character is similarly torn away, arrested, investigated, interrogated, tortured, with all his experience culminating in a mental state where nothing matters any longer. That kind of post-traumatic schizo-itinerary also underpins Nu Nu's SLA's emergence and affirmation. *BANDIT*'s final decision to end his life – triggered by a lengthy programme of torture – is a commentary on Flusser's similar sense of abandonment, thrown-ness and *bottomlessness*. *BANDIT*'s desperate jump into the saving hands of death (in the final scene) is the ultimate impulse towards creativity, as it releases the energy of blue *bottomlessness* into which the character moves and floats: this space "of a colour blue [...] very

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<sup>119</sup> The departure from one's native language has a negative, traumatic impact on Nu Nu's SLA: that explains why the affirmation of Nu Nu's actor as an SLA is done as a *via negativa* through subtraction, conserving an urge to uproot, to create always through antagonism. Nu means No in Romanian.

hard to describe'' (Appendix B: 270) is the foundation (fragile and without bottom as it is) of Nu Nu's heterotopia. It is from a similar in-between life and death realm that an SLA's creative energies emerge: this is schizo-*affect* re-discovered and re-instrumentalised on a new, alternative *plane of composition*. This is the locus where Nu Nu's third SLA dwells: in the traumatic tearing of herself from the native tongue and in the pessimistic, cynical, destructive wandering through the new, blue, deserted, scorched, *desert island* of a never reachable second language.

Flusser turned his back on the notion of homeland and embraced the idea of homelessness: he argued that home (the German word *Heimat* denotes both home and homeland) should not be accepted as a transcendental value: ''Home – Flusser said - is not an eternal value, but rather the function of a certain technique.'' (Flusser, 2002: 92) A radical, traumatic, yet liberating break with the secure home/shell (of the mother tongue) is needed – argues Nu Nu – and an SLA should always push him/herself to exist at the edge of the night, where *grammaticality* will have lost all of its leaven. At the same time, there is a need that the SLA rejects the idea that the second language could constitute a potential new abode. An SLA should instead profess a schizo kind of uprooted-ness in the second language, steeped in the madness of her traumatic break with the initial home. Bottomlessness is the needle with which the actor perforates into the second language. An SLA expels herself from her native language, subtracts herself from *grammaticality* (plunged into the *bottomlessness* of the traumatic experience) and schizo-strolls (maddened) through the second language, de-territorialising it:

The expelled are uprooted people who attempt to uproot everything around themselves, to establish roots. They do it spontaneously, simply because they were expelled. It is almost a vegetable process. (Flusser, 2002: 107)

Therefore, Nu Nu's SLA does nothing else but to uproot everything around herself in the second language English, never establishing a belonging to it: instead, every contact/copulation with the second language English is a new, destructive, corrosive and intense, episode in an open-ended

*becoming*-SLA process. Every meeting of the actor with the second language marks a copulation (needle perforation) towards a different horizon of rootlessness, for the creation of a new image and instantiation of what I have called English-becoming-another-language. This form of schizzed self-determination and self-making from within the de-territorialised meshes of the second language requires an SLA to always remain in touch with the violence and free floating of her thrown-ness which is always an effect of what Svetlana Boym calls a radical "depaysement" (the urge to depart for the *desert island*) (Boym 2001: 290). This should make any non-native actor – argues Nu Nu - a schizo-SLA who emerges from within the entrails of her own rupture, re-imposed upon the second language. We see therefore an SLA freeing herself from *grammaticality* through *bottomlessness* (a higher/second degree consciousness of her orphaned and schizo non-belonging to any of the two languages): freedom which *BANDIT*-SLA does not want to relinquish – the freedom of the desiring nomad which madly injects his/her eggs (remnant linguistic DNA) into the second language English:

In my now hard-won freedom, it is I who ties the binds that connect me to my neighbors, in cooperation with them... Unlike the one who is left behind and who remains mysteriously chained to his neighbors, I am instead bound to them by my own free will. These ties are not less emotionally and sentimentally charged than his chains, but rather just as strong and more independent. This, I believe, demonstrates what freedom means. (Flusser, 2002: xxi)

For its SLA therefore – Nu Nu argues - the discovery of a personal solvent of *bottomlessness* is the condition that ensures his/her emergence in that particular guise, which is liberated from a *grammaticality* that identifies, names, orders. Flusser accepted *bottomlessness* as an existential condition, his inescapable despair giving rein to a new, intoxicating sense of freedom:

The changing of the question 'freedom from what?' into the question 'freedom for what?' - this turning of one thing into another, which is characteristic of hard-won freedom - followed me like a basso continuo through all my future migrations. (Flusser, 2002: xx)

Nu Nu's SLA – orphan as he/she is of her native language and defiant and ignorant of the standard of the adoptive second language - follows into Flusser's steps. The experimentation that Nu Nu's actors undertake on themselves produces a particular prototype of SLA: one who refuses to soft belong to the second language; a non-native actor who remains a desiring, therefore disruptive, uprooting nomad. Nu Nu proposes a third type of SLA (one who refuses to be defined only through difference and otherness) – a *BANDIT-SLA* who moves ever further away from the native language, yet never closer to the second language, but always in spite and askew of it. This model of SLA is one that creates for herself subtracted possibilities and creative avenues inscribed in a *becoming-SLA*. The repeated reiteration<sup>120</sup> of the rupture with the native language (like the continuous scratching of a wound, not allowing it to heal), and an ever-corrosive, intensive stroll across the second language gives rise to the *BANDIT-SLA* who is - in Deleuze and Guattari's words in *The Anti-Oedipus Papers* - "a schizophrenic out for a walk" (Deleuze, Guattari 1983: 2) in the second language. The post-traumatic *bottomlessness* of infinite exile is the ocean that surrounds the *desert island*. An alienated, demented, despairing yet glorious prototype of schizo-SLA – a *BANDIT-SLA* – gives birth to him/herself in the heterotopia of Nu Nu.

### 3.3 Recalibrating the Diaphragm

The question of freedom, madness and playfulness can ultimately be translated as a question of liberating the body of an SLA from the *grammatical* machine of translatability. With an SLA being mainly an utterer, it is obvious that the very thing held captive by *grammaticality* is the

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<sup>120</sup> The true, valuable repetition (which Deleuze talks about) is produced in the schizo-SLA and not in the fixity of accent and otherness, imposed on the actor by *grammaticality*, Nu Nu argues. This true repetition is always a repetition in uprooting, a repetition in rupture.



body producing the utterance itself.<sup>121</sup> I am talking therefore about a censoring and confiscation of the mouth, of the tongue, and ultimately of the entire body of an SLA, which all risk being re-written and re-organised by the translability machine. The latter eventually organ-ises the body of the "non-native" actor, deciding who she is.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, the question of the freedom to schizo-stroll in bottomlessness can be rephrased as a question of how the uttering organ (and the body) of an SLA can be subtracted (together with its expression, which is utterance) from *grammaticality*. The schizo-affect that the body of the actor experiences in the conjoining of a rupture with the first language and an extreme de-territorialisation of the second language is always at risk of being confiscated by the so-called common-sense-ical/normalizing (meaning anti-schizo) translability machine. It is therefore schizo-affect (and the uttering body of the SLA together with it) that needs liberating in performance. The practical work on *BANDIT* is an experimentation in that particular direction: *BANDIT* represents the SLA's secret (meaning conducted away from the audience's eyes) investigation into how he can liberate his own diaphragm from *grammaticality* during the second language utterance, enabling and energizing it for the schizo-stroll.

*BANDIT* was directed by Ileana Gherghina, the second SLA co-founder of *Nu Nu Theatre* Company. As noted above, the SLA's performance consists in the delivery of a 45 minutes long monologue interrupted at somewhat regular intervals by five short videos. The monologue that the SLA has to utter is divided into seven scenes, which narrate – as detailed before – a student's journey from the moment of his unjustified arrest to the moment when he pushes himself in the

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<sup>121</sup> Sauvagnargues notes that "linguistics and stylistics can no longer be hierarchized as a theory of speaking and speaking well." (Sauvagnargues 2016: 17) Schizo-SLA reclaims her utterance form the hands of those who prescribe what "speaking well" on stage or on screen means. This reclaiming refers to any kind of prescriptivism, be it positive (towards diversity) or negative. This is a schizo-actor out for a walk, her contact with the second language is therefore always unexpected and conducted from deep within, never under the regulation of an outside force (but in askance to that force), as well-intentioned as that force might be (for instance, the agent who generously and genuinely advised me to stick with my Eastern-European accent).

<sup>122</sup> Similar to Kafka's *Penal Colony* where the torture machine confiscates the body of the accused and writes it.

territory of in-between life and death. The set of *BANDIT* is minimal: it is constituted by a big white board (approximately 4m long and 3m high) on which the performer draws or writes at various moments throughout the performance, as and when dictated by the unfolding of the narrative. For instance, *BANDIT* sketches, on the white board - in charcoal - the figures (better said the contours or silhouettes) of his friend Anton and of his fiercest torturer Eugene. At other times, the performer writes on the board fragments of phrases that he is at the same time uttering: a gesture akin to that of a teacher/lecturer who whilst speaking, writes down ideas, concepts, words. Throughout the performance, the SLA engages in an imaginary dialogue with the characters drawn on the board and uses the white surface as a support on which minute, significant details of the incarceration experience are notated. The (bottomless) whiteness serves as the springboard into the narrative and functions as a surface that supports the evoking of the violent events. For instance, at one point in the beginning of the performance (see Appendix C, *BANDIT* Video: 4m41s – 6m05s) the SLA stares into the clean whiteness of the board to describe the prison cell. Suddenly, the board becomes the door to the cell and the cell itself thereafter. Against this blank, bottomless canvass, the SLA dips in and out of *BANDIT*'s narration, either remembering what had happened to the character or indeed reproducing – in the present time – dialogues with the torturers or accounts of the scenes of torture. That is what the audience sees/hears during the performance of *BANDIT*.

However, from the point of view of the SLA (and his own ontological narrative behind the mask of the character), the 45 minutes-long monologue presupposes a sustained exercise of utterance in second language English, including shrieks, whispers, shouts, in various tones and volumes of voice. The crux of this uttering exercise is located in the SLA's diaphragm. During rehearsals, the SLA (together with the director of the piece) have observed that the emission of the text in the second language needed a physical seat and point of support: they have identified that point

to be the SLA's diaphragm. Crucial to the respiratory and uttering processes, the diaphragm is an essential organ to all actors who have to utter text on stage. This particular organ carries the column of air from the tips of the lungs, pushing upwards and making the vocal cords to vibrate. That is thereafter transformed into a flux of unarticulated sound, which is pushed into the mouth, where the process of articulation ensues. Therefore, the effort of breathing and articulation that the SLA undertakes during the 45 minutes performance (which includes - as I noted - whispering, screaming, singing whilst moving, collapsing to the floor, shouting whilst jumping or rolling, etc.) relies very much on the diaphragm. This particular organ has been identified as the fixed point (from the point of view of the actor) on which the whole performance/ontological experiment hinges. The diaphragm – in *BANDIT*, more so than in *Billie Killer* - plays a central role: it anchors the actor's breathing process, voice, utterance and articulation and provides all the necessary mechanical support in order to produce such a long delivery of text. Generally, throughout the performance, the text is uttered in a certain tempo, in order to create both a rhythmic vibration of the actor's diaphragm but also to expose the [volume attained by the sewing] line between the first and the second language. This linguistic territory needs to be filled with schizo-affect, therefore the diaphragm and the breathing of the actor must create an envelopment of air for it. There is an artificial (unjustified from the point of view of what could be called the psychological representation of the character/plot) way of speaking/projecting the text, with increased attention being paid to how the breath and the column of air is pushed out of the actor's body and with concern for how this air envelops the actor. This makes the utterance – throughout the performance – appear deliberately pushed, continuously forced, not coming out in a natural, relaxed (realist) way, but sustained by an ever-expanding, mechanically-diaphragmatically-induced pillow of air/breath. The body of the actor is tensioned-towards-breathing from the first to the last line, from the narration in the opening scene, all the way

through the tensioned scenes of torture, into the suicide scene. In this an almost total relaxation of the body – lying on the floor facing upwards – happens, producing a calm-yet-ardent breathing, which sustains a whispered colouring of the [air space of the] performance. Finally, the last scene (that of the narration of the bottomless territory between life and death) is the moment when the actor’s diaphragm – like an overheated engine – is revving its last movements, sealing the breath-made space of the performance, emboldening it with its last vibratory impulses, coming from *bottomlessness*. This is a version in breath of the *desert island* which the schizo-SLA inhabits. The fact that the utterance of the text is controlled mostly through rhythms and speeds, vaults and interruptions (less influenced by psychological nuance or intention – the text is delivered rather than acted/emoted, allows a freer circulation of the English-becoming-Romanian sounds. The utterance is not thought but executed: in that way the pairings of Romanian and English elements come into being more naturally, are uncontrolled and uncensored. The role of the diaphragm is similar to that of the bellows – it fills up a bubble of air, which gives life and space to the performance of *BANDIT*, a space where English-becoming-Romanian, with its schizo-affects can circulate. The question of breathing is therefore central to *BANDIT* and to the way in which I characterize the schizo-SLA. Diaphragm is vital to breathing and breathing is particularly important in the ontology of an SLA because:

breathing constitutes the emergence of an articulatory process, a process obedient, of course to the lawfulness constitutive of language; but it is in breathing that we come closest to the most primordial level of being, that level to which, and by which, the speech of the Self is most deeply attuned. (Kleinberg-Levin 2018: 7)

For us, the makers (director and performer) of *BANDIT*, it was vital to be able to construct a breathing technique and a breathing exercise-cum-performance that allowed the schizo-stroll to proceed in full force. Only a good, apt breathing process can support the utterance of the Self, or in other words the ontological unfolding of the SLA into a breath-made performance space.

Speaking from within *bottomlessness* implies a way of speaking that creates volume, enhances,

enlarges the territory of English-becoming-Romanian and the space of the schizo-linguistic self of the SLA. A good use/employment of the diaphragm is the artifice that ensures a breathing process that sustains such a speaking from the shore of the abyss. The respiratory openness of *bottomlessness* implies the need to be anchored in a strong and well-trained diaphragm: trained for an utterance not in Romanian (first language) nor in English (second language) but in English-becoming-Romanian. The whole body of the SLA (carrying the (re)presentation of character and plot with it) will have to follow the diaphragm in this schizo-opening towards the world, in utterance – through a breath-led construction of space.

In order to subtract himself from the powers of *grammaticality*, which translates and encodes utterings (which are – as shown - vitally connected to the mouth, air, sound, diaphragm and ultimately to the body of the actor), an SLA must reconsider and re-establish the relationships that he/she entertains with all the various body parts (and ultimately with all the body) involved in the second language utterance in which he/she can breathe properly into the English-becoming-Romanian. In other words, *BANDIT* is an ontological investigation which asks the question of how does the schizo-stroll through the second language embolden/change the body of the SLA? Also, what kind of a body (diaphragm) does an SLA need to attain/train in order to be able to schizo-stroll (uttering such a long text) through the second language English?

Therefore, this last step in the argument invites a reconsideration of the entire body of an SLA in the light of the discovery of a new mechanics for the schizo-*affected* uttering body (requested and necessary for *any* schizo-stroll):

To liberate man, it will be necessary to rebuild him without the organs which are the instruments of God's oppression in the human form – measuring it, structuring it, articulating it; in other words, judging it: For tie me down if you want to, but there is nothing more useless than an organ. When you have made a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatisms and restored him to his true liberty. Then he will re-learn how to dance inside out... and that will be his true side. (Artaud 1976: 104)

If I replace God with *grammaticality* in this quote, I am able to fully understand the sheer force and relentlessness with which the translability machine works, measures, captures, cuts and edits the mouth, the diaphragm, the muscles, the body of the SLA. The experiment on my own diaphragm in *BANDIT*, allows myself as an SLA to radically re-define the relation to my body – in spite of *grammaticality* - and attempt to re-position/re-evaluate/re-train<sup>123</sup> the function of the diaphragm in the utterance of the second language English. The purpose of the experiment is that, as an SLA, I reconnect on a different level and on another frequency/intensity wave with this internal organ crucial to speech and ultimately with my entire body. As such, the organ itself changes its nature<sup>124</sup> (becoming therefore more resistant to schizo-strolling), striving towards an ability to ‘dance inside out.’ (Sheer, 2009: 42) If *grammaticality* affects something in the body of an actor, it is precisely breathing. Breathing is the first victim, I argue, of *grammaticality*. The induced or self-induced obsession with producing conformist, good, acceptable, tolerable utterings in second language English (literally) strangulates the breathing process, cripples the diaphragm, ruins the relationship between the actor’s body (expressed by its capacity to ventilate air) and space (performance space in particular). In *BANDIT*, I was preoccupied exclusively with breathing freely, with exercising my diaphragm. What can be more significant – for me, as an SLA performing for an audience made up of mainly first language English speakers – than metaphorically/performatively tell them: ”here I am, in front of you, taking ownership of your so-called native language! I can breathe in it; I am free in it; I breathe in front of you and I am not afraid!”

The narrative flux is supportive of such kinds of experimentation because it allows the actor to glide through the text at various speeds and intensities. If in *Billie Killer* the purpose was to

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<sup>123</sup> The question is where in my body do I (as an SLA) locate the intensity of the traumatic rupture inducing *bottomlessness*.

<sup>124</sup> This is not a change in the anatomical nature of the organ: it is a change in the intensity with which the organ works, its *affect-ive* dimension or functionality.

accustom the mouth/body of the SLA to an ignorant, naïve playfulness on stage on par with that of the farm fields, the aim of *BANDIT* is to train the diaphragm to engage fully and resist the violence of the schizo-stroll. In *Chaosophy*, Deleuze stresses the double-sided-ness of the schizophrenic process: on one side "first, there's an amazing "breakthrough," a breaching of the wall [...] but the second element is still present in this process: the risk of collapse." (Deleuze 2009: 66) It is such tonifying, strengthening and intensifying of the functions of SLA's body in uttering, that lies at the centre of the *BANDIT* project: in the creation of an alternative *plane of composition*, the maddened utterance must be sustained by a re-tonified body, able and ready to sustain and conduct creatively the schizo-affect created in the schizo-stroll, towards an amazing breakthrough and away from a collapse.<sup>125</sup>

In *BANDIT* (as in all of Nu Nu's productions), there is no consideration whatsoever given to accent. The utterance in the second language English is never representational of otherness: the actor does not intend at any point to play an accent, idiom, dialect or identify with any regional or international characterisation through utterance: *BANDIT* is an entity without genealogy, which tells the audience a story about pain and torture. For the actor<sup>126</sup>, the text offers a pretext for a pure exercise of utterance, akin to those undertaken by actors during warmups for the voice or the body. From the point of view of the SLA, the long monologue is not being uttered so as to convey feelings, emotions or thoughts to the audience<sup>127</sup>: it is instead a 45 minutes long warm-up

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<sup>125</sup> Guattari goes on to say: "Obviously Artaud was schizophrenic. He accomplished his brilliant "breakthrough." He broke through the wall, but at what risk? The price exacted is a collapse that must be defined as schizophrenic." (Guattari 2009: 66) The SLA proposed by Nu Nu (bathed in *bottomlessness*) is oriented towards the same kind of dangerous game.

<sup>126</sup> It is important to underline – again – that the performance has two discourses: one for the audience (wrapped by the story, the actions, the movement, video, the text spoken by the actor) and one which belongs only to the actor. It is the latter that counts more to my analysis: this internal, un-seen, private, personal discourse comprises the actor's work with and on his own diaphragm: the audience does not see and cannot know about this "hidden" discourse.

<sup>127</sup> A conveying of thought, emotion and feeling nevertheless automatically takes place - it is the representational function of the utterance: it tells a story (unlike Brook's *Orghast*, where the invented language does not communicate meaning as such, but claims to convey emotion directly, through utterances stripped of their meaning-making dimension).

exercise focused on the intensity with which the diaphragm works in utterance. There is no particular focus by the SLA on “acting” the text, instilling emotion in it or conveying emotion and communicating meaning to the audience: the accounts of the torture survivors put together are sufficient to achieve that, as they speak and tell the story for themselves. The work of the SLA – in *BANDIT* – does not therefore consist in creating or experiencing authentic emotion and padding the text/performance with it. The SLA focuses her entire energy purely on the emission of the voice/words/sentences/text in the second language English. Gradually, as the performance advances and the diaphragm aggregates in more intense, more ample movements to utter the words, sounds, phonemes, the organ re-calibrates itself. What results is an utterance that has been stripped of its surface (which is accent), its organization being left free of the forces of *grammaticality* (speaking well, correctness of articulation, etc.) and exposed to the corrosive nature of the schizo-stroll. As David Abram notes in his article ‘The Commonwealth of Breath’, “words [...] are nothing other than shaped breath.” (Abram 2018: 270). How can the SLA shape the breath into a schizo-utterance? How can that be achieved in practice? Through an instrumentalization of vowels and consonants, which are the elements with which breath is shaped into words. The vowels have been of particular importance in my study of the diaphragm (during *BANDIT*) because these sounds have had the role of creating and asserting liberty at the grafting point between first and second language.

I have taken into account what John Durham Peters (2018) has noted in ‘The Media of Breathing’, namely that “a consonant is an unvoiced abstraction, an asymptote marking a vocal sound’s point or manner of articulation, but a vowel marks the flow of breath through the lungs, larynx, and vocal tract.” (Peters 2018: 190) Durham Peters also recounts Spinoza’s example of playing the flute, with consonants functioning like the fingers on the holes and vowels representing the very breath that flowed through the musical instrument. (Durham Peters 2018:



190) The vowels – the direct connection of the diaphragm with the exterior space – have appeared as a direct result of a strong diaphragmatic contraction. In the moments of tension - like the scene when I recount the killing of Anton (see Appendix C, BANDIT Video: 17m56s – 22m00s) - the vowels have remained somewhere in-between Romanian and English, keeping an explosive tendency (especially the ‘a’s and the ‘e’s, pronounced as violent ‘a’s and clear, solar ‘e’s ) from Romanian combined with their English tendency to elongate, to allow a coda of sound. The ‘i’s have been again spoken/enunciated as a combination of the Romanian closedness of the sound (‘i’s have a definitive, grave, inward pronunciation in Romanian) with the elongating, melodic tendency found in the English language. This playing with vowels in between two language has locked the body of the actor in antagonistic internal movements: a tendency to physicalize the Romanian vowels, superimposed on suppressed physicalisation in the English vowels – a schizo-affect of coming out of the body and going in at the same time that is present throughout the performance. In the moments of relative bodily relaxation - like in the penultimate, suicide scene - (see Appendix C, BANDIT Video: 42m40s – 43m54s) vowels more fully take on their function as carriers of breath: in the whispering, guttural ‘hrrr’s that sustain the monologue of that scene; in being a blanket that underpins and lifts the actor’s body from under, pushing it towards the imponderability that is going to come in the next scene (the final scene when the character recounts the experience between life and death).

The SLA experiments with his diaphragm/breathing through vowels in a totally new way, as the organ is exercised in direct contact with the second language (which moves on the diaphragm like a conveyor belt), it allows itself to be burned by the latter, to be directly and randomly schizo-*affect*-ed in it. This exercise is based on the premise that a diaphragm, like a mouth, or like a tongue is taught to work in a certain way in the first language and at the same time, it is tempted or coerced (by *grammaticality*) to work in a certain way (to imitate the so-called native

standard) in the second language. Nu Nu's experiment trains the organ to escape both the burden of the first language and a looming *grammaticality* implied by the second language utterance, through an intensified focus on breathing. Once put in this schizo-stroll condition, the organ (and subsequently the entire body of the actor) is more exposed to schizo-*affect* and has to somehow reboot itself, in order to withstand the destructive forces of the schizo-stroll. This re-calibration of the organ/body – argues Nu Nu – should constitute the crux of the training/the technique of the self of an(y) SLA. *BANDIT* is therefore about organs re-learning, organs dis-organ-ised from within their usual dwelling/habitus (first language) and exposed directly to the second language: naked organs starting to dance inside out; organs left to twist and turn like earth worms exposed to the burning sun of the second language, in the schizo-stroll.<sup>128</sup> As it seeks to relearn how to vibrate and respond (defiantly) in the visited (second) language, the diaphragm brings to the fore a reinvented, intensified, more aggressive version of itself, which is crucial to the process of *becoming*-SLA: this is a process of learning to speak/to utter otherwise: in *bottomlessness*, post-traumatically, post-apocalyptically, on the *desert island*, like a madman, not under the standard imposed by *grammaticality*.<sup>129</sup> *Becoming*-SLA is realised by means of utterance leaving a burning mark onto the schizo-affected body of the actor. This (beginning of) training of a body expecting *becoming*-SLA necessarily tramples accent, which is now revealed as a disposable surface of utterance,<sup>130</sup> a mere measuring tool in a Procrustes's exercise cutting of the body of the actor, condoned by *grammaticality*. *BANDIT* proposes a stripping away of the norms of

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<sup>128</sup> This does not happen in singing (opera for instance) where we cannot talk about utterance but about the body's capacity to emit sounds sung on various tones and intensities. The singing (in its use of diaphragm) supports utterance in any language; therefore, the organ is never exposed to the words as such: there is an intermediary purporting zone between organ and utterance, which is the musical sound/the sung voice. In the case of speaking, the words are linked directly to the organ and the schizo-SLA is transformed directly by the words that she utters (just like the schizophrenic who says I am becoming God! This is akin to the autistic or the deaf person's utterance.

<sup>129</sup> Be that the standard of diversity. Schizo-SLA is a parasitical, destructive agent and not one which wants to be integrated by an(y) discourse of diversity.

<sup>130</sup> Accent can no longer be considered a measure of difference and an indicator of ontology for the SLA. The difference comes from within, plugged as it is into the abyss of *bottomlessness*. The difference is now schizo.

accent by plugging the second language utterance straight into the entrails, into the organs of an SLA, through the event/act of utterance: this is a blind, schizz-ed learning (or puncturing, or injecting, or copulating) and at the same time conquering/deconstruction of the second language, through intensified breathing.<sup>131</sup>

The utterings in the second language start to become truly costly to the actor, as he no longer focuses on the accent but works directly on the naïve, unstable and always violent bondage of the voice/flow of air with the burning sun of the second language, during the schizo-stroll. Getting to schizo-utterance – which is the main purpose of the training exercise called *BANDIT* – means reaching far beyond the technological pretence of accent or of diversity in uttering. As can be seen throughout the performance, my vowels oscillate between a first language kind of impetus and openness in the moments of great tension, like in the scenes when I recall Anton’s killing or my own torture (see Appendix C, *BANDIT* Video: 17m56s – 22m00s and 22m40s – 28m16s). These vowels are uttered in full force, in confident shouts, sustaining long phrases, and long breaths. Breathing is liberated, the diaphragm pushes like a piston and the SLA breathes out, creating his *desert island* made of air and breath. The greatest achievement of an SLA on stage must be to stop the obsession that he/she is speaking in a second language. For this liberation to happen, the SLA needs to learn how to breathe freely. This is done mainly through vowels – they liberate the body of the actor; they are literally the winds of liberty.

David Abram continues to explain that consonants, on the other hand, are ”the shapes by which we sculpt our sounded breath, forming words with the tongue, lips and teeth as we exhale.”

(Abram 2018: 270). They are the fingers that cover the holes of the flute, as Spinoza showed.

The consonants were crucial in articulating the English-becoming-Romanian in *BANDIT*. In the

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<sup>131</sup> This is an alternative kind of training of *BANDIT*-SLA’s utterance: it is a training predicated on a stubborn, destructive, erroneous-even learning, never in tune with the correctness, well-spoken-ness or diverse utterances programmed under *grammaticality*.

scene where I recount the first episode of the torture programme (see Appendix C, BANDIT Video: 10m08s – 17m15s), I jump on the floor all of a sudden (mid-speech) and begin to race through words and sentences, describing at great speed the way in which my torturers revealed and used their instruments of torture. The consonants are being produced at a very fast pace, as the mouth cuts through the flow of air, in a physical movement that is marked by tension, agility of gestures, and unpredictability of movement. In this scene, consonants are like canines that bite into the flow of air and voice, shaping the vowels. However, carried forth on augmented, energized vowels, the hardness of the consonants like ‘d’s, ‘r’s and ‘t’s (specific to the Romanian way of uttering) is reduced – the consonants lose their individuality, agglomerate in swarms of intensity colouring the strong flow of airy English or more explosive Romanian vowels. To temper the hardness/canine cut of these swarms of consonants, I sometimes, instinctively, borrow from the delicacy of the English ‘t’s and ‘d’s, which are always eager to reach right at the tip of the teeth. However, in the moments when I need to inhale, the ‘r’s become rolled (like in Romanian or like in an RP English, hitting the palate with the tongue and allowing it to vibrate there, artificially triggering the diaphragm to move. In the moments when the character (and the actor) catches his breath, the ‘r’s melt and move to the back of the mouth, to become more English-like. All these to and fro from Romanian to English and back have direct effects on the body of the actor: they translate into schizo-affects, a constricted, contorted utterance, muscles clenched in depicting torture whilst being permanently ventilated by a diaphragm that blows out the wind of expansion and relaxation.

The words of the text – the collaged testimonies – become (during training) nothing other than measures of violent exposure of the organ (diaphragm), movements within rupture making the internal organ dance inside out, all aimed at a *becoming*-SLA that announces a long sought-for Body-without-Organs of the SLA (the body of the actor immersed in the *bottomlessness* of the

traumatic rupture with native language and mad encounter with the second one). *Becoming-SLA* is – in *BANDIT* - about an organ-ing/diaphragming-SLA of the second language text, in line with Deleuze and Guattari's definition: "the wolf is not fundamentally a characteristic or a certain number of characteristics; it is a wolfing. The louse is lousing, and so on." (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 264) The schizo-SLA is schizo-ing in the second language, never playing the diversity card, but the mad card. *Becoming-SLA* takes the form of a continuous exercising of the diaphragm (and by extension of the body) through breathing, organ left alone to cope in the *bottomlessness* of the schizo-stroll (which always functions like demented and askew to *grammaticality*): every utterance signals a new stage in *becoming*, and every utterance always marks a different spasm in the second language (a mad re-learning of the second language that never can settle itself into a standard<sup>132</sup>) painful in its twinning with a dis-organised organ. Therefore, the SLA in *BANDIT* ventures towards and announces a Body-without-Organs, where the utterance organs have been challenged in their normal functions and are left to roam freely, producing not as habituated, but as vectors, as randomized, intensive directions in the schizo-stroll, as directions for *becoming*:

His [Deleuze's] early work on Spinoza foregrounds this, when he showed that bodies cannot be defined in terms of forms, organs, functions, or subjects. Rather, they must be defined kinetically, in terms of an infinite number of particles in relations of 'motion and rest', and dynamically, in terms of 'the capacity for affecting and being affected' - that is, an intensive determination. (Young, Genosko, Watson, 2013: 51)

In *BANDIT*, second-language acting – in utterance – is completely subdued by *schizo-affect*: the words turn the organ inside out to produce *becoming-SLA* (schizo-diaphragm-ings-SLA or schizo-mouthings-SLA, every time in novel, un-ordinable forms). This is an intensive, burning

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<sup>132</sup> Again, the audience, the critic, the agent, the theatre programmer might say: "But that actor has a foreign accent!" This mark of foreignness or otherness no longer counts. The SLA has already engaged in the schizo-stroll: in it there is no otherness.

relationship, a detour from the fixity characteristic to the regime of *grammaticality*<sup>133</sup>, which militarizes pronunciation/articulation into clear identities (be them read in a diversity key) and accents. *BANDIT* is a dissociation of the body of the actor – in the *bottomlessness* of English-becoming-Romanian – to re-emerge as a dis-organ-ised tool with which administer the alternative foreign actor's *plane of composition*. The second language usage, which I have described as a playful, mad, violent schizo-coupling between an SLA and a second language augurs therefore for a re-evaluation of the body itself of the SLA. Torn as he is from the habitual organ-icity of the first language utterance, the body of an SLA is left exposed, liberated – in *becoming* – to face (playfully and violently) the burning second language sun:

Considered apart from unifying and functional 'organs' or 'organization', bodies involve power, expression and endurance; considering the body as an 'organism' in advance, the argument goes, suppresses those very capacities. (Young, Genosko, Watson, 2013: 51)

The study of the diaphragm of an SLA is a response to the question of how to re-discover *bottomlessness* and immanence in the lower half of the hourglass (having eschewed the narrow neck of *grammaticality*). The *bottomlessness* of immanence (in the first half of the hourglass) can be re-invented in the lower half of the hourglass only if an actor's body (his breathing) is liberated (and evidently trained towards and into that liberation) so that he can schizo-stroll through the second language:

The body without organs does not lack organs, it simply lacks the organism, that is, the particular organization of the organs. The body without organs is thus defined by an indeterminate organ, whereas the organism is defined by determinate organs. (Deleuze 2003: 47)

An extra layer of violence and of burning is being asked from the actor, so that the bridge with *grammaticality* is definitively burnt and the lower edge of the hourglass is pierced towards a new

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<sup>133</sup> Paradoxically, the diverse use of language claimed by so many English speakers (American, Canadian, Australian, Scottish English, regional accents, etc.) is not what Nu Nu's SLA aspires to. It is the schizoid use of language that schizo-SLA seeks, the disruptive, destructive, insubordinate version of speaking (that of the deaf, that of the autistic, that of the dogs, cats, parrots who are taught by their owners to bark or to Miaow words in English).

*bottomlessness*. As a result, a totally new (schizo)-*plane of composition* emerges. The latter is tied to the Body-without-Organs of an SLA and evolves as a free, rumbling, rhizomatic, swarm-like violent growth, opposing the organ-ised body-in-utterance of an SLA as constructed by *grammaticality*. The SLA as a schizo Body-without-Organs indicates the third way for an SLA: soaked in *bottomlessness*, with the second language de-linked from *grammaticality* and plugged directly into the organ (or vice versa), like the naked wire going straight into the socket. Organs and language coalesce to create painful ontological vectors of intensity (the words however - unlike in some of Brook's experiments - continue to transport meaning), which - in their luminous post-apocalyptic-ness - eschew *grammaticality*. Schizo-SLA fills the space not with utterances in an Eastern-European (or any other) accent but with shreds of burning diaphragm, mouth, tongue grafted onto an ever-evolving English-becoming-Romanian:

The body without organs is the matter that always fills the space to given degrees of intensity, and the partial objects are these degrees, these intensive parts that produce the real in space. (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 326-7)

The utterance within English-becoming-another-language augurs a dislocation and liberation of the body of an SLA from the confinements of its own first language-trained organs. This is what actors fear most - I argue - when asked if they want to leave their mother language: the intense exposure and destruction of their bodies for the re-birth of a new body, which can never properly speak the second language, but always needs to allow itself to be burnt by it. The greatest risk, on the edge of this *bottomlessness*, burning abyss, is the very death of the actor as an actor: his/her utter collapse.<sup>134</sup> I argue that the problematic of acting in a second language can never be reduced to a matter of what could be called proper, satisfactory acquisition of the second language, of training in the RP accent or other types of proficiencies/competencies inscribed in

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<sup>134</sup> This might explain why actors are rather eager to become part of the grammatical machine; to 'learn' to speak the second language at the required, admissible standard. These actors rightly fear their own death as actors.

various *grammaticality*-managed unifying theories of diversity, but always resides in allowing the second language to burn the body of the actor from the inside-out:

For Artaud, organs are useless in terms of the production of vital energy (which is, after all, what bodies are for) and they sap the body's creative potential, forcing it to perform the menial tasks of biological functions. Organs render the body as slave rather than master. (Sheer 2009: 42)

In other words, the second language must be grafted onto the body of an SLA (maybe even as a torture instrument) to then violently grow as English-becoming-another-language from inside that dis-organ-ised body, as Deleuze says: "A tree, a column, a flower, or a cane grow inside the body; other bodies always penetrate our body and coexist with its parts." (Deleuze 2004a: 31)

In the case of *BANDIT*, the English-becoming-Romanian grows (or starts to grow) from within the diaphragm of the SLA. In further potential experimentations the mouth could take the place of the diaphragm to become the protagonist for the performance of the a dis-organ-ised schizo-SLA. *BANDIT* is a model of ontological experimentation with the direct connection of the second language to the organ of the actor, without a passage through the custom checks of *grammaticality*. What is your accent? I have no accent! I am neither native nor foreign, I am mad, says the schizo-SLA: I speak and/as my diaphragm burns!

Schizo-SLA is an SLA that has re-evaluated his/her uttering tools and organs, in a recurring, Sisyphus-like<sup>135</sup> re-training of one's body onto a superior, different level: "We want to recover such elementary faculties as the pleasure of breathing, which has literally been strangled by the forces that oppress and pollute." (Guattari, 2009: 212) What better place to do that than the post-apocalyptic *desert island* of breath sustained by the *bottomlessness* of an ocean of ever-renewed ruptures, subtractions, minuses and Nu's/No's? *BANDIT* is a prototype of SLA – tested by Nu Nu during the period of this research project - that enshrines a violent decoupling from the

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<sup>135</sup> Each one of Sisyphus's apparently useless, bottomless ascents is essentially a new experience – we must accept that! Every new utterance – forever non-native in the second language - is a new experience, a new immanent theatre, a new direction in *becoming*, a new painful encounter during a violent schizo-stroll.



coercive systems of translability: the who of this SLA is a schizo-who dwelling in a heterotopic space grafted askew from language, a subtractive territoriality that eventually becomes the scorched schizo-abode of the actor.

The prototype of a schizo-SLA marks a definitive recuperation of the organs from the captivity of the grammatical machine:

We can no longer sit idly by as others steal our mouths, our anuses, our genitals, our nerves, our guts, our arteries, in order to fashion parts and works in an ignoble mechanism of production which links capital, exploitation, and the family. (Guattari, 2009: 209)

The question of accent in English is – in the case of *BANDIT*-SLA – once and for all overcome – as it is abandoned to the *bottomlessness* of *becoming*.

## Conclusion

The initial intention of this research project has been to understand and make clearer what precisely differentiates an SLA from other actors. The hypothesis was that the main difference would have to lie in how an SLA makes use of the (second) language in performance. By focusing on this particular aspect, I have delved deeper and proposed the question of an ontology of the SLA, seeking to uncover the more discreet processes characterizing the odd, irregular embrace of elements pertaining to two languages in the mouth of an utterer/actor. I have discovered that there exists a plane of immanence full of chaotic/disorganised and act-ing in a second language English, announcing SLA's in the making. The schizo-affect produced at the conjunction between a first and second language is an indicator of the imminent appearance of an SLA. Once this schizo-affect is strengthened, once it gains a trajectory and becomes something akin to a style or a line of flight, we can talk about a becoming-SLA: the true state of an actor who lives on the voluminous border between two or more languages. In my bottomless hourglass model, becoming-SLA advanced further and further away from the matrix of the second language, minorizing it, changing it, grafting it – we were moving vertiginously towards the death of the second language by a thousand cuts, its pulverisation into many shards. The immanent realities governing the birth of an SLA were thereafter opposed to the stark realities of the plane of composition of second language act-ing, a plane on which the free, creative acts and events (which should bring forth becoming-SLA's) are composed into clear-cut identities, (re)presentations of human beings in action and restrictive categories, based on coercive rules of hospitality. The utterer is always seen as demanding or being in need of hospitality in the second language, as one who awaits for permission/seeks approval to access the second language. Such an ordering process is realized through an entire series of techniques and modalities (involving

people and traditions, laws and their application, economies and aesthetics of (re)presentation), which I have collectively called grammaticality. The problem that appeared at this stage of the argument (the neck of the hourglass) was how to recapture, regain or reinvent the freedom specific to immanence on a novel plane of composition of second language act-ing, where SLAs exist, create and express themselves in the full splendour of their becoming. How could that be achieved? The answer was the following: through an injection of bottomlessness, which is seen as a prolongation of the bottomlessness proper to immanence, but to which we must add a specific creative attitude and professional training. In this context, the establishing of Nu Nu Theatre and the practice-based research projects conducted under its umbrella became central. In the constellation of examples of SLAs provided through the course of the thesis, Nu Nu's practical examples signalled one other possibility (like another throw of the dice) with regards to the ontology of an SLA. The definition given by Nu Nu to the SLA (detailed in the Third Chapter) sits in tension and continuity with all the other examples of SLA discussed and therefore deals with the emergence of a novel, unexpected, non-grammatical understanding of who is an SLA and what he/she can be(come). The analysis of Nu Nu's ideas about the SLA allows for another type of SLA to be recognised, one which does not have to fit the categories of Migrant-SLA or Nomad-SLA. The two practical projects discussed in the course of this research project were seen as moving from the playful, childish attitude towards the use of a second language (as employed in Billie Killer) towards a more violent stroll through the English language in BANDIT. When uniting these two distant points, I could show a line that markedly intensified from becoming-SLA to schizo-SLA, describing a qualitative jolt in the search for a solution to the dilemma: how do I (the SLA) escape grammaticality?

The entire Third Chapter has been dedicated to explaining this exit strategy and to presenting the much sought-after solution to the question: who is an SLA if/when freed from the yoke of grammaticality? The solution that I propose – in light of the argument conducted in the first two chapters and filtered through Nu Nu’s practical enquiry and working methods – is that of the schizo-actor, or the schizo-SLA: an actor that is forever twisting and turning in the gap between the first and the second language, a deviant actor, an actor who pushes forth through the accepted barriers of language into the bottomless sky of language shards and remnants, new, malformed, degenerated linguistic and affective forms. A truer, more consistent establishment of an SLA in England (as opposed to the insufficiently free and continuous versions *Migrant-SLA* and *Nomad-SLA*) can be done only as a schizo-actor, I argued. The schizo-actor is an actor engaged in a continuous, painful, inconclusive and impossible to conclude ontology – this actor takes his/her own *becoming* to ever-bigger and more diverse intensities and turns, with a direct effect on his/her own body. This is an SLA that does away with the prescriptions of *grammaticality* (perhaps most visible in the realist conventions of theatre and film acting) and opts for his/her own schizzed ontology, becoming a spectacle, a part, a role and a character.

The question that arises – and is justified in the context of this conclusion – is what can possibly constitute the productivity of such an actor, so radically different – in his/her expressivity and aesthetic function - from other (first language) actors? I would initially be tempted to respond by posing another question: What could possibly be the role of a schizophrenic in society? What can a schizophrenic show us or teach us that we don’t know already or are not able to learn because of being non-schizophrenic? Solitary schizophrenics-cum-schizo-actors – as Nu Nu’s SLA’s have defined themselves – possess the unique gift of being able to reveal an elan of rupture and an appetite for affective wandering through the most unvisited and yet un-discovered corners of the second language. This encapsulates an authentic need and indeed ability to break down

barriers (of language and of theatre language), a non-aestheticized, non-compositional stroll through language/s, producing ontological spectacle (a spectacle that is immanent and not created from without). A schizo-actor is a spectacle in itself – a raw spectacle. That is why I again stress the idea that Nu Nu’s performances are first of all pure ontology (*becoming* allowed on stage and not staged): they reflect only the tortuous effort to become a schizo-actor, with all its shadows and faults. Nothing more, nothing less.

Throughout the thesis, I have focused on the example of an SLA not being offered the opportunity to play Hamlet on an English stage. Why have I focused on this particular character and used this particular example so often? Because we are talking about arguably the most important character that any actor can play, irrespective of the actor’s nationality, accent, gender, and professional level. Every actor dreams of playing *Hamlet*. The Shakespearean character appears therefore to be the zenith of the acting profession – for any actor, the ultimate fortress that needs to be conquered. What would it mean therefore, if an SLA indeed got to play (was invited or allowed to play) this most famous character on an English stage? What would be the productivity implicit in allowing an SLA version of *Hamlet*? I would be tempted to respond by saying that - in the case of an SLA playing *Hamlet* on an English stage – we would finally witness the elimination of the barriers and power games on the always unequal battlefield that is language, theatre, and language in theatre. Such an event could mean that the SLA is no longer considered just another version of a migrant worker (an artistic migrant worker), who should play parts on the English stage in the same way in which other migrant workers would be washing dishes in restaurants or doing other menial jobs. It could mean that there are no longer migrants in theatre/acting, but only artists who minorize the English language in ever-different manners and the relations of power between these minorizations are no longer judged along the lines of native/non-native, as dictated by *grammaticality*. The SLA’s – along with other

marginalized actor-colleagues – would finally be integrated on an equal footing with the “native” actors, the ones who are enthroned (albeit momentarily and interchangeably) by *grammaticality*. But would that be the sole productivity of an SLA on the English stages or screens? Can we ever see a totally language/accent-blind casting on English stages, cleansed of the ballast of the Migrant, Intercultural, Multicultural discourses and judged only through the lens of minorization? I doubt that. Therefore, I am not truly a believer in a full and fair future integration of the SLA into the English acting system through the SLA being offered to play important, cornerstone parts such as Hamlet. I do not believe that an equality of chances will happen any time soon, with *grammaticality* filtering access to the stages and screens.

The most true and plenary productivity of an SLA consists in the ability to chip away at *grammaticality*. The true revolution of the SLA is to produce *Hamlet* himself (and to produce himself as the character of Hamlet) – to steal and parasitize the English theatre’s most famous scripts, with the nonchalance, desperation and rapacity of a squatter. If each SLA in England would do that, the forces of *grammaticality* (which is in essence a centralization of standards) would be weakened. Various desert islands would be created and a whole archipelago of second language acting would ensue, to challenge – through its very own existence – the *grammaticality*-constructed hierarchies. This would unsettle the power relations within the intercultural equations of theatre-making (where there is always a language that has a superior army and navy) and embolden an intercultural theatre from below, a rhizomatic, archipelago-type of intercultural theatre, based on minorization and not on the dominance of a major language. The great force that SLAs have is that of creating themselves as works of art – by squatting the great repertoire which is reserved for those deemed “native,” SLAs will be able to articulate a genre for themselves. Through this subversive, guerrilla kind of ontological practice, the SLAs can establish themselves despite and in spite of *grammaticality*, against its so-called

common-sensical selective processes. This would allow for the establishment of a totally new, rhizomatic, heterogeneous (exactly like the swarms of acts in second language English) *plane of composition* of second language act-ing. This new, alternative *plane of composition* would not only unsettle, resist and disrupt the grammatical/realist conventions of acting, but would resolve some of the dilemmas around how to proceed with Interculturalism in Western theatre and how to fruitfully overcome the greatest barrier to intercultural performance, which is language.

What the work of Nu Nu has taught us – and I must underline again that this work has been toured and presented outside of the confinements of University of Bristol’s Theatre Department – is that it is always wrong to introduce yourself as a migrant or foreign actor. By courageously taking on the great repertoire, the classical repertoire, or constructing accent-blind or accent-ignorant projects such as *Billie Killer* and *BANDIT*, the SLA gives up on the representation of foreigners and migrants and allows him/herself to roam free across the English language.

Therefore, the truest, most poignant lesson that can be learned from the projects and activity of Nu Nu is the following: true intercultural exchange in theatre and cinema can only happen if actors are not labelled according to their nationality and accent; if there is recognition that there are no non-natives (migrants) in language but only minorizing artists, then a true intercultural era can begin. As that appears unlikely, the solution is to critique/interrogate the preconceived ideas about migration in language through parasiting, squatting, freely minorizing the second language English with its most cherished roles and characters. An SLA only needs to come into being in order to challenge the status quo: his/her ontology affirmed in freedom is enough to unsettle.

There is another important shift that my research project announces. In light of the proposed schizo-SLA, an SLA playing Hamlet would not establish equality among actors but instead prophesize the imminent death of the second language, the *grammaticality* that seeks to control it, and by extension the death of (re)presentational, Aristotelian theatre. The schizo-SLA’s

productivity is that of being a messenger of the death inherent in (re)presentational theatre, its always insufficient power to be true to life, to imitate life. The SLA is a living proof of what is always non-representational in theatre (of any genre) – that eludes the (re)presentational function of theatre can be (re)presented by the SLA. The example of *Hamlet*, together with that of the classical repertoire is not accidental – it suggests the incapacity of realist/naturalist equations of theatre to express in a truly complete manner the imitation of life on stage. *Hamlet* appears infinitely more realistic than a kitchen sink play, in which the characters have very strict linguistic, ethnic, and racial descriptions. The classical repertoire tends to permit actors of all nationalities, backgrounds and native languages to play any part. Hamlet is not Cornish, nor Danish, nor Chinese, nor Russian – Hamlet has the great benefit of being simply Hamlet – a human without a biography. A character of Greek tragedy does not have nationality nor skin colour. It is only the realist convention that limits the richness of a character and reduces it to particular regionalities. Interculturalism from below can best be achieved in the great masterpieces.

The final promise and productivity of the schizo-SLA consists of the fact that his/her self-creation is very mobile. The work of Nu Nu has shown that – we have toured our work internationally and have relied more on non-English audiences than on English ones. The ontology from within the meeting of two languages can continue beyond England – the true stage of the SLA is his/her mouth and body and their mobility does not depend on *grammaticality*'s restrictions (venues, localisation, belonging, etc.). The promise and productivity of the schizo-SLA is that of being able to construct an ontological bubble (all sorts of *desert islands*), which can travel in any directions blown by the winds of global English language. When an SLA is performing in English in Spain or in Japan he/she will not be the same as when performing in England. Since for those non-English audiences only the



minorization of the language will count (they won't notice or care about the SLA's so-called accent, as happens in England), the schizo-SLA will have found an increased freedom. In England, the schizo-SLA will have to remain an uncomfortable reminder that no one can definitively say: I am or represent a native of this language.

### **Continuing to look for the Body-without-Organs**

The work of *Nu Nu Theatre* continues. It is the company's ambition to continue to semi-parasite, to enlarge and diversify its heterotopic emplacement, and most importantly to follow the process of *becoming-SLA*. If no other formal host shall be found, Nu Nu will have to return (in the hope of discovering a new desert island and a new *plane of composition*) to the streets, to the living room, to the shop floors: the immanent theatres of second language act-ing that are forever the source of the ontological, schizo-theatre which Nu Nu proposes. The main concern will be to push forward with the experimentation on the Body-without-Organs of the schizo-SLA. Loyal following the schizo-*affect* at the junction between languages, Nu Nu's actors will continue to recalibrate and re-evaluate their bodies, preparing them for the schizo-theatre to come.

This is an actor's repetitively-recalibrated body, which does recognize that "language and syntax have no right to marshal the arts." (Lotringer 2013: xvii) yet he/she still continues to speak on stage, be those immanent (mouth, diaphragm and so on) or the compositional ones. The utterance of the schizo-SLA does not stop, and it refuses to be compensated (like in Brook, Barba, Multilingual or Intercultural/interweaving theatrical practices) by extra movement, costume, imagery, dance, other languages, song and aesthetics in general. The schizo-SLA's utterance is not curated into an aesthetic, nor is it "made nice" for and acceptable to audiences: instead: it is

left to exist solely as the sign of an ontological itinerary. In those conditions, the actor trains to obtain an uttering body that is:

not an empty body stripped of organs but a body upon that which serves as organs [...] are distributed according to crowd phenomena, in Brownian motion, in the form of molecular multiplicities. (Deleuze, Guattari 2004: 34)

This is the body of the solitary schizophrenic, devoid of an Other (of a clear identity, therefore), who has come out for a walk in the second language, cut off – as he/she is - from the home of his/her native language. The refurbished body of the schizo-SLA – reborn out of his/her own entrails (the utterance itself) on a *desert island* etched by a schizo-utterance - is a body liberated from the tyranny of syntax and *grammaticality* but a body that nevertheless continues to speak (perhaps even as a broken body that insists on uttering after the apocalypse has happened). This is an SLA who lives between identities, as he/she has embraced the speaking of one language in the process of becoming another. The character is no longer a character, but an ontological spectacle of the schizo-stroll. Hamlet is no longer the English Hamlet but the subjecting of the well-known character to an English-becoming-another-language treatment. That is a schizo-character, or a character used as the theatrical pretext for an ontological journey (pointing to implicated, immanent theatres). The actor's dis-organ-ising body steals from the dramatic character its linguistic and uttered surface (first layer of skin) of individuality, plunging it into: "deterritorialization and schizoid behaviour until normalizing codes [...] break down and new psychic identities and political [ontological] possibilities emerge." (Best, Kellner 1991: 285) Owning a body engaged in full dis-organ-isation, the schizo-SLA cannot be subsumed to the Intercultural, interweaving or post-dramatic equations: the de-territorialisation cannot be contained by a formula. Therefore, this type of actor is never on course to integrate, to adapt, to fashion and fit his/her body or utterance for the stage or screen: he/she is neither interested in any forms of exchange or interweaving. This is a mad actor on the loose, intent only on infesting and

schizz-ing the second language, destroying it from the base. The schizo-SLA is an actor that brings desertification and death and has nothing to do with the movement between performance cultures. He/she behaves – with every character dragged into the SLA’s ontology – like a messenger of death both for the second language and for the existent *plane of composition* of the English stages and screens. This is a schizo coming prophesizing for a dark future, a suffering emigrant who has come to munch at the host language and culture, to break it into fine pieces and not to interweave with it:

We the uncounted millions of emigrants [...] do not recognize ourselves as outsiders, but rather as pioneers of the future [...] for emigration is a creative activity, but it also entails suffering. (Flusser 2002: 92)

The schizo-SLA’s work is creative in as much as it signals death, there is nothing appetizing about such work, nor should there be. Such an SLA has nothing to give in exchange for being allowed into the second language: he/she is here to plunder, to destroy, to lay his/her claim over the characters of the English stage and screen, which become only petty excuses for a dis-organisational ontological exercise. The schizo-SLA is never an actor of the post-dramatic because he does not give up on utterance and on the dramatic character: he does not hide his foreignness but is adamant on bringing it to perfection.

Evidently, a schizo-SLA neither produces nor invites the death of the dramatic character as we currently know it elaborated by Elinor Fuchs. With such an SLA, Fuchs’s question: ”If we are approaching the end of character on the postmodern stage, what is replacing it? (Fuchs 1996: 175)” appears particularly melodramatic. The schizo-SLA reaffirms the need for dramatic character as an ontological vehicle, one situated at the junction between two languages, a junction whose forks lead to the same destination: the death of the second language English. Character does not ”come [as a] subsidiary to actions” (Fuchs 1996: 23) as Fuchs suggests; it does not die – it reemerges, reinforced but orientated towards another type (or function) of

theatre: a post- kind of theatre, just not post-dramatic, nor post-character-ological. More likely, a schizo-, post-theatrical/representational theatre, which is eminently ontological and semi-parasites the dramatic theatre as we know it.

With the schizo-SLA, we can finally overcome the tormenting question of language in theatre (there is no need any more to claim exchanges or interweaving's, it is just the minor undoing the major). The question has always been wrongly put - one never adds to another language/s or culture/s but one takes out of it, and always through minorisation. Borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari's theory of multiplicity, I conclude that the solutions proposed by the formulas of Inter in Interculturalism or interweaving, the Multi in Multilingualism must be once and for all dismissed. These solutions will never succeed in overcoming the question of language because their mathematical formula is erroneous. The inter in Interculturalism and the Multi in Multilingualism should never be about  $n+1$  (where  $+ 1$  is the foreign element added to a base/native element) but  $n-1$  where  $- 1$  signifies the foreign element who tears bits from the unity of the major standard/native base, by cutting and clipping. Non-native actors and companies, I argue, need to become creators of self-sufficient ontological-theatrical islands through a sustained scissoring/clipping away at the body of the second language, through an insolent borrowing of its grammaticality-controlled, sacred texts/characters. As such a new dawn will ensue: the English scene and screen will be dismantled, dis-organ-ised into an archipelago of micro *desert islands* of the following kind: English theatre/film-becoming-Romanian, becoming-Indian, becoming Polish, becoming all else. At the same time, the non-native theatre artists/actors should refuse to be tricked towards a standard of English utterance: they should instead focus on subtracting their own tongues from the English language and articulate alternative linguistic spheres/domains such as English-becoming-Romanian, becoming-Polish, becoming-Chinese, becoming-Arabic.

In this way, a new, non-arborescent, rhizomatic Intercultural/Multilingual - 1 array of schizo-theatrical and schizo-linguistic relations will flourish: a rhizome of English disembodied theatre/film shreds that have been clipped/minoritized by the foreign, ugly element – an impossible to predict concatenation of shreds, chips, clips and cuts should the English theatre/film become.

### **Final Remarks – Potential Dangers**

What if the schizo-SLA's permanent urge to subtract him/herself does nothing else than entrap him/her even more into the regulatory powers of *grammaticality*? Žižek gives reason to be worried:

That is to say, in the Foucauldian notion of productive power, a power which works not in an exclusionary way, but in an enabling/regulatory way, there is no room for Badiou's notion of the point of inconsistency [...] of a situation, that element of a situation for which there is no proper place (with)in the situation – not for accidental reasons but because its dislocation/exclusion is constitutive of the situation itself. (Žižek 2009: 101)

Advocating subtraction, do I not in fact risk acquiescing to the "signature paradox of neo-liberalism: characterized by the "methodological destruction of all collectivities" (Bordieu 1998a: 95-96) By making myself as an SLA invisible to the forces of *grammaticality*, do I not become the obverse visible: "Badiou's invisibility is thus the obverse of visibility within the hegemonic ideological space, it is what has to remain invisible so that the visible may be visible." (Žižek 2009: 101) And with my semi-parasitic existence, do I not risk becoming just a by-product of *grammaticality*, soon and perfidiously to be swallowed by its writing machine?

What if the true enigma is why continuous nomadic ‘‘molecular’’ movement needs a parasitic ‘‘molar’’ structure which (deceptively) appears as an obstacle to its unleashed productivity? Why, the moment we abolish this obstacle/excess do we lose the productive flux constrained by the parasitic excess? (Žižek 2009: 141)

As I remarked before, the bottomless hourglass is just a cell in a great series of bottomless hourglasses. *Grammaticalities* of all sorts are always ready to strangle the *becoming-SLA* and re-organ-ise, re-contain the body-without-organs of the SLA. They are waiting to confiscate the schizo-stroll and reduce it to its mere shadow. The quest for a third, accomplished schizo-way must be undertaken with ever renewed intensity. Perhaps if more solitary artist-schizophrenics – devoid of an Other - would populate the *desert island* of English stage and screen, *grammaticality*'s regulation would be finally overcome.

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## **Digital recording media: video and photography**

Appended digital recording media is provided in support of this practice-as-research project over two USB sticks, attached at the inner back cover of the thesis.

### **Appendix C: Two USB sticks**

Video:

- *Billie Killer* Video [filmed 2015]
- *BANDIT* Video [filmed 2016]

Photography

- *Billie Killer* Photography [Helsinki, 2015]. Photography: Ileana Gherghina
- *BANDIT* Photography [oxford, 2016]. Photography: Ileana Gherghina

All video and photographic documentation is property of *Nu Nu Theatre*.

## Appendix A: Billie Killer - Text

### Scene 1

This scene should resemble the beginning of a ritual. It should mark the fact that we are all entering the story, 'becoming' - step-by-step - the Goat, Wolf and Billie.

Billie-Goat will have to enter the stage first; the actor-player goes to the instrument, which will be placed in front of the stage. The actor will start playing the instrument. On that song, Goat and Wolf will enter also.

The scene will have to be around five minutes long, but Billie will not be playing continuously. The music for the beginning/entrance should have strong accents/sounds to mark the entrance of Goat and Wolf. The same kind of music will also need to be played at the end of the play, when the Goat dances after having killed the Wolf.

Enter the Actress and Actor and Billie one by one. The two actors carry three capes and three masks. They come to the front of the stage, facing the audience.

**Wolf:** If I put this head and skin on, I become Wolf. Once upon a time...

**Goat:** If I put this head and skin on, I become Goat. Once upon a time...

Goat and Wolf (putting the cape and mask on Billie): If we put this head and skin on you, you become Billie, Billie Goat. Once upon a time...

## Scene 2

This scene will be about seven minutes long. In this scene, we are creating, through words and actions, the forest and we give some indications of the characters Goat, Wolf and Billie.

The music/sound here must be quite light/happy on the surface but rather menacing and profound. This scene must not 'sell' the fact that there is going to be a murder. The performance piece is not realistic.

**Wolf:** If I am in a forest... If I am by this tree... I want to start walking. The leaves will start making sounds under my feet... Feet start moving... But if this forest is virgin... there should be no paths... I can only leave trails... If this forest had no end... a forever forest!! There would be nowhere to go then... Is there a story? If there is one, I might be in its middle! (Wolf is talking to Billie) When you have that skin on, you are a Billie Goat. You are Billie.

Billie is scared and confused by Wolf. He approaches his mother.

**Billie:** Where to go?

**Goat:** You would better find a way ahead... Straight through the forest... You go straight. Better follow the light! (to Billie) Play with me!

Goat starts singing a lullaby to reassure Billie.

**Goat:** A tree falls!

The way it leans!

Billie walks!

The way he learns!

Black-out. Goat/Actress enters the house/hut.

### **Scene 3**

In this scene, Wolf pushes Billie to do naughty things and will tempt him to race. The scene shows how Wolf is trying to deceive Billie, who is the wisest of the three brothers. Also, the scene shows how Goat tries to protect her billie-goats. Although two of the billie-goats are dead, they are still present through the skulls on Billie's cape. In this scene we also see how Goat is being used by Wolf, as he takes a 'tribute' before leaving.

In the first part of the scene Wolf tries to tempt Billie into racing his brothers, into competing. Billie will not make very many movements during this scene and will only reply through sounds, as if caught in Wolf's game. The music should inspire fear after the first two lines, as Billie gets

frightful in the presence of the evil Wolf. Goat intervenes in the game and she tells Billie that brothers are different in size, force, intelligence, etc.: 'A hand's fingers aren't of same length' and so, Billie should never think about competing with his brothers.

When Wolf retreats (after being paid to do so by Goat – the 'tribute') the music must become more 'personal' - it needs to show Billie's personal feelings: scared, hungry, whatever you as a musician will feel at that moment.

The scene will be approximately eight minutes long.

**Wolf** (to Billie) When we play a game, we always want to be the first. Who'll be first to that tree? I'll race you to that tree! Ready, steady, go! (Wolf races to a tree, which is signified by a certain point on the stage)

**Wolf** (to Billie): It's also good to come second or third when you're playing a game. If you can't be the first, it's all right to be second or even third. I'll race you to that tree! (race to the point where the tree is supposed to be)

**Wolf** (to Billie): When you feel fear, do your feet get stuck to the ground? Do your knees get tough and you can't move?

Goat comes out from the house to reassure Billie. She plays a game with him.

**Goat:** Open your palms! Look at your fingers!!

Your hands' fingers

Aren't of same length



Three billie brothers  
Aren't of same strength.

Goat gives Wolf a gift to make him leave. Wolf leaves his place and goes to one side of the stage, saying to Billie:

**Wolf:** I'm faster!

I'm stronger!

Can you catch me?

Can you find me?

**Goat** (to Billie): Are you hungry, little Billies?

Billie responds with sound.

Goat goes to the basket and brings food to Billie.

#### **Scene 4:**

In this scene, we see how hard it is for Goat to survive in the forest and how she needs Wolf's 'protection' in order to survive. The billie-goats are in the house. As she wants to leave, Billie

makes a sound (with the instruments) as if the other two brothers are being naughty. Mum returns, gets Billie into the house/hut and tells all of them (Billie and the two skulls) to keep the door locked as it is very dangerous. She uses her lullaby as a 'password'-song, so that the children know that when mother is back. As she sings the song to them, they recognize her voice and open the door to her. Wolf overhears the conversation and the 'password'-song.

In the first part of the monologue (before Goat says 'My Billies, you are...') the music/sound must be rather 'relaxed' but should contain some accents signifying danger. After the Goat returns to sing her song there is no other music. The scene should be about eight minutes long.

**Goat:** If you ever get lost in a forest, how will you be able to survive? What can you eat? You can stay trapped in the woods for years. But you have to learn to survive... There's grass, there's mushrooms, leaves, roots... You can feed on those for a while... Later, if you're smart enough, you might be able to hunt for other animals and feed on them... Or, if you're smarter than that, you can find your way out of the woods...

**Goat:** When I put this skin and head on, I am Goat.

**Goat:** My billies, you are growing and you're all the time asking for food... I've got three hungry mouths to feed. I have to go all alone into the depths and find food for you.

**Goat:** Children, behave yourselves! The forest is dangerous. In the forest you can get lost or killed easily... Godfather Wolf looks after us. He is protecting you all the time. But I am telling you: behave yourselves! Do not open the door until you hear our song!

**Goat and Billie:**

Horns-growing billies

Open to mum, billies!

Mother brings you

Milk in teats

In her back

A ball of salt

Cornmeal

In her heel

In the armpits

Tuft of flowers.

**Goat:** Lock that door!

**Scene 5:**

This scene should offer an insight into how Wolf thinks. He thinks that living in the ravine is exciting and dangerous; that being evil is exciting and contains something lethal. He is talking about the thin edge between happiness and destruction, between heaven and hell. The music should be somewhat calm, and it must not sound dangerous. It should induce a sense of uncertainty, of limits that are not very clear. It must sound both horrible and peaceful in some way. Think about a reptile and the feeling that you get when you see one: it inspires calm, yet creates anxiety (for many of us, in any case). The music/sound must attain must have that same sharpness but supported by calmness. The scene is about three-four minutes long

**Wolf:** What is ravine? I guess that's when the land has slid... Falling inside of itself... But wherever you want to go, you want to walk on safe ground.

What is a ravine in a forest I say? It has to be something like... like an edge, when you least expect it. A ravine in a forest is even more dangerous because of the trees, because of the green... it's not easy to spot it. If you would get lost in the forest, say... then you think to yourself: 'Yes! I still have a chance to find my way back... back on safe ground'. But if you fall into a ravine... no one can hear you there... the ravine takes hold... you are in this dark place... unknown trees... isolated, fearful... it's very, very hard to hope to live in a ravine! When I put this head and skin on, I am Wolf. The ravine is a peaceful but dangerous place...

## Scene 6

This is the scene where Wolf sings the ‘password’-song at the door. The first time, the billies are not convinced and do not open. Wolf then sings the song in a higher voice to convince the billie-goats that he is actually Goat. Eventually, the door is opened.

The music here must show the alternation between the safety of being inside and the danger that is looming from outside.

When Wolf says ‘We all want to have fun...’ the music should become cheerful, because the brothers think that they are playing a new game with Wolf. When Wolf enters the house/hut the music stops. The scene lasts about nine minutes.

Wolf approaches the house/hut.

**Wolf:** (going around the Goat’s house)

Walls have ears

I guard you my dears

Three little billies

Three little lovelies.

Wolf sings Goat's song:

Horns-growing billies

Open to mum, billies!

Mother brings you

Milk in teats

**Billie:** Who is it?

**Wolf:** In her back

A ball of salt.

Cornmeal

In her heel

In the armpits

Tuft of flowers.

**Wolf** (to the audience): We all want to have fun! The billies want to play, I want to play! Let's be happy! We were all kids once...

**Wolf** (in a higher voice):

Horns-growing billies

Open to mum, billies!

Mother brings you

Milk in teats

In her back

A ball of salt

Cornmeal

In her heel

In the armpits

Tuft of flowers.

**Wolf:** I'm coming!

Wolf enters the house.

**Wolf (from inside):** Where are you? You like playing with your Godfather, don't you, little ones?  
I'll find you! Ha-ha! Come out you little sweethearts! Come out to play!

## **Scene 7**

Wolf comes out of the hut.

The scene lasts about three minutes.

During this scene we must see and/or understand how Billie is the only one left alive in the hut. He has witnessed his brothers being killed. He was hiding in a better place than his brothers, so Wolf could not find him.

The music should feel numb, inspiring a sense of loss and petrification. Billie is no longer capable of coming out of his hiding place - he is in shock. This must be shown through music/sound.

## Scene 8

This is the scene when Goat approaches her house: she first discovers the blood outside, and she starts senses that something bad has happened. The music/sound must be in the same direction as in the previous scene (scene 7). When Goat shouts: 'Billie!', the music must stop. After that moment of silence, Goat decides to take revenge by inviting Wolf to a dinner. The scene will last about six minutes.

**Goat** (coming from the forest): Billie!

She enters the house and sees her two murdered sons.

**Goat:**

Godfather!

Trusted...

Protector

The blood spilled by you...

In a game...

An ending to lives...

Lived in hunger and fear...

As a widow...

Silence.



A sacrifice...

Revenge

Like a dinner...

To commemorate the pain...

For all we have suffered...

Burn the evil!

## **Scene 9**

In this scene the Goat lays the table for Wolf and she remembers her dead ones. The Goat 'speaks' about her pain and Billie must 'play through the instrument' his own feelings about what happened. This scene must be as a duet: Goat is speaking, and Billie is playing. The scene lasts about four minutes.

### **Goat:**

I lay the table and I recall. Dinner around the table. They eat quietly. The forest is like a mother to us. Gives us food to share. Around the table. When the sun comes down on the forest, I lay the table for all of you, my family. I am eager to have dinner with you all. Around this dinner table there is silence now.

I can't hear your mouths chewing the food. I can't hear any throat swallowing. I can't hear any tongues clipping. Today, I have silence round my dinner table. My green grass table... (pause)

We won't be able to finish the food just the two of us and I decided to ask Wolf to eat and drink with us today.

## **Scene 10**

In this scene, Goat goes to Wolf (in the ravine) to invite him to dinner. The lines are said whilst Goat and Wolf are 'dancing' - moving in a sort of danced pattern. The music/sound must show the danger of the fact that Goat has risked her life by going to Wolf's house/place. The music must convey sometimes the danger but also must instate a rhythm, for the two characters to dance on it. The scene lasts about four minutes.

**Goat:** Wolf!

**Wolf:** Who's there? Goat!

**Goat:** Yes, Godfather! My billies have been killed.

**Wolf:** But how? And who?

**Goat:** I don't know, Godfather! Somebody must have known I was away in the forest!

**Wolf:** Terrible, terrible news... Who could have been?

**Goat:** I want to remember them with a dinner. If you want to come... I have some drinks.

**Wolf:** Sure, Goddaughter! I will drink with you and hope for better times.

**Goat:** I have no hope left, Wolf!

**Wolf:** it will pass! it will pass!

**Goat:** Come, Godfather!

## Scene 11

This is the scene of the dinner. All three characters are sitting on the floor. Goat poisons Wolf.

The music must reflect the fact that Billie is at the table with the killer of his brothers. This is someone who would have killed Billie as well.

Wolf dies at the end of this scene. He is led by Goat towards the back of the stage where he will die. As the Wolf starts dying (whilst singing Horns-growing Billies) the music must attain grotesque tones.

After Wolf has died, Goat starts a mad dance and the music will be the same as in the beginning.

The scene lasts about six minutes.

**Goat** (offers Wolf a drink):

This is to commemorate the death of my sons

**Wolf:**

May they rest in peace...

Who would do such a thing?

They will have more peace wherever they are...

Remember them forever...

Little billies...

Sweet little things... Let's drink to their memory.

As he dies, Wolf sings 'Horns-growing billies'

## **Scene 12**

The actors take off their skins and put them to one side.

On this bit, the music must be joyful.

## **Appendix B: BANDIT – Text**

### **SCENE ONE: ARREST, SENTENCE AND PRISON**

What I am telling today is just a little part of what's left in my memory! In the evening, I used to tell my inmates: “Another day has crushed! We're closer to freedom by one day!”

I was arrested - together with my fellow student Anton - in December, for no reason. We were brought for investigation at the Police. Nothing special at first... They asked me how I became friends with Anton. We've been isolated in a cell, with no outside communication.

It was terribly cold and a very bad winter in general. In that cell, with thick walls, there was a constant temperature: that of a humid basement.

We've been kept in the Police's basement for a period of six months and interrogated day and night. Seeing that they could get nothing from us, they resorted to the following method: on a table, in front of us, they displayed all kinds of firearms; they later photographed us and accused us of illegal possession of firearms. We were put on trial and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Not only our testimonies in court have been dismissed but also what we had declared to the Police, under pressure and threat.

Me and Anton were taken to our definitive cell together, in the same van.

Right then, when we got off the van, we started feeling terrified. There was some shouting and whistling... With their eyes, injected by this terrible hate, the guards looked like as if they had just arrived from hell.

We were put in ROOM 4: the last room on our corridor, on the left, in Section 2 of the prison. In the room, another 30 people or so - all students. There was no furniture in there: only mats on one side and on the other side, the empty mosaic floor.

One thing amazed me from the very beginning: students there kept an extraordinary discipline... unbelievable! They were like machines programmed to do certain tasks and they would execute those tasks to perfection. Something unclear was surrounding me from all sides.

On the corridor, you could hear boots clamping. From afar, you could hear thuds, like when you hit a mattress with a stick. You could hear desperate screams, screams of pain.

‘‘What’s with the screams?’’ I asked. ‘‘Nothing! On the top floor, we have the mentally ill and they have seizures!’’

The incarceration regime did not seem that harsh at the beginning. It was fairly gentle. But conditions - all of a sudden - started to worsen very much. We had taken little objects that were very valuable to us in there: like little medallions!? All these objects were one day crushed under the boot and smashed with a hammer. They were turned into dust instantly and so were our hopes for a better tomorrow.

There were days when we would not get out for fresh air. Now, our physiological needs had to be done in a basin, in the same room where we lived. The smell became absolutely horrible! Washing was permitted only once a week and under a cold shower. Food was being sieved first. The broth left was absolutely liquid: no beans, no potato pieces were allowed. The food portions were precisely measured. A portion had become really important in there! Hunger was quite tremendous! It was torturing us greatly, but we controlled it with all our strength, trying to do something else other than think or talk about food.

- Anton, why you say that we'll be released? I asked.

- That law student (another inmate) told me that either they give up or there's a war starting.

- But Anton, how can you believe that? Why would they start a war? For me? For you? For the few here in this prison? Can't you see that we've been sold?

Whispers were going around that the prison was a great centre for the destruction of students. They would be tortured in here until their reflexes and conceptions would change. A terrible darkness was embracing me from all sides.

## **SCENE TWO: BEGINNING REEDUCATION**

The first physical humiliation began with a corporal search by the guards.

- Clothes off! Hands up on the wall and feet apart! Open your mouths, open wide your eyes; roll back your foreskins, crack your ass wide open! What are you hiding?

There, in Room 4, we were beginning reeducation. Alongside beatings, some demented rituals were organised for the moral destruction of the victims... us! If you say hell on earth, it is very little to describe what Room 4 meant to the students. In this laboratory, they did all sorts of experiments with a precise aim. One morning, after we had drunk tea, one of the students, called Eugene, stood up and said:

- We have to understand that the future of humanity is a new system! Society feeds us BANDITS free of charge. We are a bunch of lazy losers, who instead of keeping close to the heart of society, what do we do? We grin and fight against our society! But this is the end of that! Teeth will be smashed, whether you want it or not! No one gets out of here alive until they have denounced their old convictions and without UNMASKING themselves.

- What do you think? he said. Can anyone resist me? I am Eugene - the Alpha and the Omega! No one can take my place! I am the true Gospel! And I am writing that Gospel now! And I've got the paper to write it on your corpses! Attention! We have to extract the deepest secrets, hidden in the creases of the brains of these BANDITS!



At Eugene's signal, around 20 of the inmates took out from under their mats, sticks, planks, elastic cable parts and started hitting the rest of us. I could not have imagined that some of the students there had already been tortured until the erasure of their reflexes of honor and transformed into ferocious beasts. Head, legs, face... it didn't matter if the blows could be fatal.

We quickly realised that the attack was controlled from above. The beating team got organised by Eugene in two rows and we had to pass through the middle under a storm of blows. "Start systematic beating!" shouted Eugene. The procedure had a satanic precision. The one who would show the slightest opposition was struck to the ground and individually beaten, hit no matter where. Whilst hitting us, they started screeching, and with repetitive moves they circled us in a hellish noise. This method - of shrieking and being joyful in the midst of beatings - had a demoralising purpose.

They brought a few buckets of cold water and poured it over us. We came to our senses. Then they started a new round, for about the same length of time. Again, we were brought to our senses and they repeated the procedure three times. After that, they took me to the basin to pee. My pee had a purple colour and a terribly bad odour.

The working method aimed to change conditional reflexes and form new ones - other than those acquired through education. The method was called hypnosis through terror. Torture always lasted until the victim became from a hero, a bastard, from a believer, a non-believer, from tortured, torturer.

In the afternoon of that day (It was a Monday. I can remember that!) Eugene ordered us naked - all those considered BANDITS. We were forced to crawl in a circle and lick the bottom of the one in front of us. Eugene stood in the middle, with a stick and he hit really hard the ones that did not execute his order correctly. This was called Le Manège. The reeducated were watching from the sides, clapping, laughing and shouting: ‘‘hop-hop! hop-hop! hop-hop!’’

Us BANDITS were then sent in a corner of the room; which Eugene called the sty. We were being treated as pigs because - for them - we were not being completely correct and honest. We were ordered to talk like pigs: ‘‘Oink! Oink!’’

### **SCENE THREE: ANTON’S DEATH**

All of a sudden, Eugene pointed at Anton and me, shouting:

- You haven't broken with your creeds yet; you haven't left behind your beliefs. But we are firmly decided to finish off your BANDITISM.

Then another one shouted: ‘‘Get them, boys!’’

The 20 or so reeducated separated again in two groups: one group tackled me, and another one Anton. In a few seconds we were crucified, facing the floor. One was holding one of my arms and another the other arm. One was riding on my back and another had his bottom on my head. They

took out some sticks and started hitting our bottoms, thighs and soles. This lasted for about 10 - 15 minutes. The first blow was so painful that I imagined being cut in half by an ax. My reaction to this pain was not the normal scream. Instead, I started laughing like a madman. Seeing that they were not planning to stop, I relaxed my whole body as if I were dead.

One of them said: ‘He's dead, stop now!’

I was thrown back into the STY, but I could still hear and see everything.

Poor Anton... he was naked, his hands tied to the back. Between his arms they introduced a metal bar and two of Eugene's robots lifted him up until left hanging in the most painful position possible. And then - with a stick as thick as my arm - they started hitting. Eugene was hitting over the face, with ever growing ferocity. With every blow, Anton's cheek, his head... were thrown to the right or to the left.

I had the impression that Anton's neck - fleshless by now - will break and the head will roll off somewhere. I fainted but it didn't last long. Apart from the terrifying pains where I'd been hit, I was feeling healthy.

They brought my friend completely unconscious. He was thrown besides me.

After not more than a minute, I felt how Anton stretched in spasms and trembled, touching me harder with his elbow. And then, he stopped breathing. I felt how his body, stuck to mine, was now gradually starting to cool.

A guard opened the cell door.

- He's dead!

- And the other one?

- He's unconscious, down there!

- Take the dead one out!

That's all I heard!

#### **SCENE 4: MY REEDUCATION**

From time to time, Eugene, came and spoke to me, down there, in the sty:

- Oy, friend, I'm going to kill you with my own hands! Of my own hands you are going to die, you  
BANDIT!

Eugene was staring at me but somehow, I got such courage that I dominated him. I felt he had something particular for me and I was right.

- I do what I want and not what you want! What do you say to that, BANDIT?

He was still staring at me. I kept silent looking at him... straight into his eyes. But not with contempt, nor with severity or revengefully. I was simply looking at him.

- Oh, you fucking BANDIT!

He jumped at me like a snake, like lightning! One hand stuck in my throat, obstructing my breathing. I felt my eyes coming out of the orbits. And just when I was thinking: that's it! I'm going to die... he let me have a little bit of air and then started pressing again. He kept doing this until I lost consciousness. Then he left me to come to my senses. With all the terror of his beatings, Eugene could not induce in me the fear of him.

He slapped me so powerfully, that I went from mid-room right next to the wall, with my head in the feces basin. In the fall, my left shoulder dislocated and the right hand fractured. He then caught me with his left arm and banged a fist into my chest. I twisted on the floor, in an awkward position, fracturing all my ribs on the right side. Then he jumped at me like a beast, hitting me and walking all over me. That beating was anyway useless - I had fainted from the pain. After a while I woke up and in an instant, I felt lifted by punches. Everyone was pulling me from everywhere - neck, nose, feet... Now my feet were up, the next second they were down. I was being pushed to the right and to the left. Thrown like a ball! Just like when excited kids kick the ball really passionately.

They then ordered me to open my mouth and everybody in the room passed in front of me, spitting in my mouth. It would have been impossible to keep my mouth shut. They would have forced it open with wooden chips. They would have broken my lips, the inside of my throat... teeth. Then all of them had to slap me! Oh, God, what a night - to be slapped so hard, so many times!!!

Then they brought an eating tray full of feces, which was spreading a horrific smell. The most terrible sicknesses grew in my entire body. With wooden chips, they opened my mouth and stuffed feces in. I threw up everything in me: stomach, guts, liver... everything inside.

After this operation ended, I was full of feces on my mouth, face, body... They brought me pee to rinse my mouth with! Then they wrapped me in an old carpet, as I was, and took me to the other cells to be shown as an example to those who would not want to reveal all their secrets.

It was finally time for broth they said. A reeducated came with a little tin of salt. He poured a handful in my broth, dissolved it and gave it to me. I looked at my broth bravely, being sure that after eating, I would have a kidney failure and die, getting rid of that never-ending nightmare!!! But my calculations had been wrong. I did not die. That night, the most horrible thirst took hold of me and the whole night I twisted on the floor in unspeakable pains. I was extremely frail by now. Every two steps, I had to pause and sit down on the floor.

## **SCENE 5: UNMASKING**

When they considered that my physical and moral force had been crushed, they started the UNMASKING - which had been the initial purpose of the experiment. Eugene ordered me to take the following position: my hands touching the toes, gazing in a fixed point, no looking left or right.

UNAMSKING consisted of all you had declared to the Police plus testifying against anyone and everyone: fellow students, neighbors, relatives... All you said was later verified through others who were beaten, and the slightest mismatches were severely punished. UNMASKING was otherwise known as the perpetual interrogatory - a suffering that never ceases, an interrogatory where you have to talk continuously. Testifying started promptly.

A reeducated played the role of the official investigator. This reeducated had once been a nice man but because of the horrible beatings, he had collapsed. Now, he was walking about with a pile of files under his arm, thinking that he was an important officer. He wanted me to testify against other fellow students not yet arrested.

I noticed an interesting thing: I preferred being dealt with by Eugene not by other reeducated. I was dominating Eugene, even though he subjected me to the most atrocious tortures.

Seeing that I had nothing to say, they invented some tongs made of wood sticks, like those for cracking walnuts. With them, they pressed my fingers and toes, phalanx by phalanx... During this torture, I screamed my lungs out with pain.

Eugene said: ‘Come on BANDIT! Unmask yourself!’

It hadn't occurred to me that I could lie. I started saying that my Father had a lover, who was having sex with a donkey. My Mother also had many lovers and aroused by that, I had sex with my sister. And in the summer - in the countryside - I'd fuck a calf.

You can see how all these had been invented at the height of my despair. I was entirely sure that the world had fallen into the hands of these people and that they would do what they pleased to us.

The principle of reeducation was this: after you had unmasked yourself and washed away what you used to be, you had to beat your other inmates and reeducate them.

- Oy! You either say what we teach you or it's the end for you. And not only say it but do it. Tomorrow, you'll beat that guy there. I'm not beating anyone, Mr. Eugene. If you don't it means you're still a BANDIT and we'll treat you as one. Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay!

Eugene shook his head at me.

- Sir, no one can change me now!

They wanted us to feel dirty in all forms. Not be able to look anyone in the eyes with pride.

After not a long think, I said: ‘No, Mr. Eugene!’

And God, it felt so good to keep my head high.

## **SCENE 6: SUICIDE ATTEMPT**



The next day, they took me to the Infirmary.

Being very frail, I couldn't move easily so, on the corridor of the Infirmary, they pushed me really hard and I crashed into a glass cabinet. I smashed it, breaking the glass.

As quickly as I could, I grabbed a hook-shaped shard and aimed for the throat - to cut it from behind, (I was thinking!) and so to die sooner. Because of the general confusion and the shape of the shard perhaps, I missed the target. I hit lower, displacing a vertebra in the larynx.

I felt no pain, but I could see my blood shooting at about 2 meters away. I could feel my strength slowly fading. I was also losing my voice. I could hardly whisper by now.

With my last strength, I said to the reeducated: "My innocent blood to fall on your children's heads. I hope to God this happens!"

I still wonder where I got all that strength from!

## **SCENE 7: LIFE AND DEATH**

But let me tell you where I've been and what I saw after that.

At one point, I flew up at incredible speed. I was not aware of how I looked at the time. And I passed through a place... I can't call it tunnel because I did not see it! Very dark in any case... pitch dark! At a great speed! Upwards!

After a while, very slowly, it started to light up... and I saw this limitless area, of a colour blue very hard to describe. I wasn't going up any more... now I was going forward. But not of my own will... I was being led.... Only then I could see myself! I was this big... 50 - 60 cm. I had hands, feet, head but only their contours... which were blue as well. I stopped in the back of a great crowd of billions and billions like me. I was just behind them.

We would move like this (wiggle of fingers) - not by our will! - moving ahead. I could hear, see... but no one was saying anything. There was such a silence... such a serenity... I don't know how to describe it... The silence of a grave... I haven't been myself in a grave, so I don't actually how it feels but I can definitely say that there was ABSOLUTE SILENCE. All of us were moving (wiggle of fingers) and we were going forward. All of us were the same: same length, same shape, everything! We were being moved ahead... just like dragon flies... like that (wiggle of fingers).

Suddenly we were stopped and separated in two groups. In the middle there was something like a road but coming diagonally from right to left... and very leanly inclined.

I wasn't thinking a thing: I was only hearing and seeing. And the only very, very soft rustle that I heard... a rustle like this: phshhhhh!

One like us passed on that road... he had the same length as us, but he was red, like blood. At amazing speed! On that road! But very, very fast! And then another one! 5 altogether. We waited a while. Another 5 passed: this time black as tar. All this finished and we again started our walk.

Then, I felt like I was being turned back...

Behind me, thousands more had been added since I had arrived. I was being led through amongst them, but I wasn't touching a single one.

I got a little frightened... "Where am I going? Why?" I liked it there! It was beautiful, serene... and that pleasant light! And when I started to fall through that pitch-dark area, I got really terrified...

And in my mind, I was saying: "God, why did you have to take me from there? I am not dead. I am alive... Only now I'm going to die, when I crush onto the Earth!"