# CONTENT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I will discuss developments within contemporary theatre, where I see two tendencies as being most acute: the leaving of theatre buildings, letting audiences into the performance space, and working with participation. I propose that a new form of dramaturgy has emerged, a dramaturgy that I call *spatial dramaturgy*.

Theatre practice has gone through some radical changes since the 1980s. Behind the two main tendencies I named above there are also: 1) a decentralization and fragmentation of linear narrative; 2) performing in found spaces (public spaces, buildings originally not conceived for purpose of theatre as well as places in nature); 3) using 'authentic' material for creation of performance (again the use of space as material in site specific; community theatre where the community is the material; or other existing materials - authentic events or people - used in documentary theatre); and 4) physical and mental activation of audience (participatory theatre, sound walk performances, interactive scenographies etc.). In this thesis I will describe these four factors – decentralization and fragmentation of narrative, found space, authentic material, and activation of the audience – to propose that the practice of theatre, both making and reception have altered, and describe how the practice of dramaturgy has changed to become what I call *spatial dramaturgy*.

The dramaturgy of a performance is a narrative, a sequence, a composition, a system of meaning and experiencing of a performance, as well as the unfolding of this system within a performance in space and time. It is a practice of making theatre composition that can be done by a dramaturg, a director, or any other team member, or exercised as a group practice - collective dramaturgy. In this thesis I will not be interested in dramaturgy as a practice of the dramaturg and the professional role and position of the dramaturg in the process, rather I will use the

term dramaturgy in its other meaning: a spatio-temporal composition that is the structure of the unfolding of a performance.

My main case study is *Apology of the Escapologist* (*A szabadulóművész apológiája,* that I will also refer to as *Escapologist*) a performance by the Hungarian group Krétakör Company from 2009, that will be the primary example of the strategies of spatial dramaturgy.

*Apology of the Escapologist* took the audience through eight separate spaces, with a variety of functions (a garage, hospital, offices, public square, etc.), none of them originally built for theatre, in a series of events that took place in Budapest District 9 over the course of eight weeks from March 8th to May 1st, 2009. *The Apology of the Escapologist* performance had five parts consisting of eight scenes. So it took place in eight places, over the course of nine weeks; each scene was took place in a different place on a different day. The performance was conceived in such a way to give a specific experience to the audience. This experience was based in the dramaturgy, a theatre 'journey' very different from the usual 'drama on stage' theatre experience. The audience had to make sense of the fragmented story, had to choose how to follow the story physically - where and when to go, and had to dedicate time. The audience physically entered the play space.

*Apology of the Escapologist* incorporated many new theatre forms and media in its individual scenes: site specific, installation, community theatre, public space performance, etc. – that also proposed a variety of ways to experience a performance. The fragmented narrative of *Apology of the Escapologist* was based in authentic material: the real personal experiences of the director Árpád Schilling and in the community of Budapest District 9, where the performance took place.

*Escapologist* took place in found spaces, spaces not originally built for the purpose of theatre: city streets, the garage of *Gödör Club* (a place in the center of Budapest where the new National Theatre building was originally supposed to stand), *Gödör Club* itself, *Krétakör* headquarters, a public bath, a former hospital, a pensioner's

club (and in the bus on the way there), and the square in front of Corvinus University. All of these places and buildings were within the area of the Budapest District 9, where *Krétakör* have their headquarters, *Krétakör's* neighborhood. These spaces not only functioned as a place to perform and as context, but also provide new specific spacing – spatial relating - that had dramaturgical influence on the relationships within the performance. The spaces of Budapest District 9 also provided one of the main themes of the project – the theme of a local community.

In my analysis of the dramaturgy of *Apology of the Escapologist* I will focus on three main aspects of the dramaturgical system: the narrative, spatiality, and inclusion of the audience. In order to analyze the spatial aspect of *Escapologist* I will explore the space of the performance as: a) shared space, b) found (authentic) space, c) fragmented space.

The spatial dramaturgy that I am writing about is not a 'dramaturgy of space,' not a dramaturgical unfolding of space, but rather the spatial unfolding of dramaturgy. I use 'spatial' to describe - dramaturgy has entered another dimension – the third dimension. Here space is a metaphor for 3D relations between audience and performance.

The spatial dramaturgy - dramaturgy unfolding literally through physical space - that I will be describing has a strong political aspect, because it is a dramaturgy that aspires to be dramaturgy that provides for active positioning within the performance.

As I will show in detail later - placing, positioning, and relating play crucial roles in the theatre, whether this is the positioning of and relating between characters (in performances based on pre-written plays), or positioning of and relations between theatre elements (in post-dramatic theatre: words, sounds, colors, volumes, movement, sound, light), or even more complex relations between the real and imagined, as well as the audience and performance in the more contemporary forms mentioned above. In all these cases the core of dramaturgical composition of

a performance in time and space is always about placing, positioning, and relating. In the shared meaning- and experience-making process that happens between the audience and performance, spatial positioning plays a crucial role.

In contemporary performance the audience becomes part of the performance and thus the performance space becomes a shared space. In site-specific, immersive, and other forms the audience enters the performance space physically. The audience can often choose their place in the space, or even walk around the space during the performance – and are given the opportunity to see the performance from many sides and positions.

But what is even more important is that here theatre creates an opportunity for the audience to be aware of their position and gain an understanding of it. This, is in my opinion, the theatre as political project, or the theatre event as the "last human venue," that British theorist Alan Read wrote about in his book *Theatre, Intimacy and Engagement*[1]. If I am aware of the specificity of my own position and perspective, I can begin to understand the position and perspective of other individuals and start negotiating for the position of and within the group. This is where, what Lehmann in *Postdramatic Theatre* calls the *response-ability* (Lehmann 1999: 185), an ability to respond and to be responsible, can begin.

The fragmentary dramaturgy, dramaturgy of fractured, incomplete, and open narrative that I will describe in detail later, leave room for activation of audience to create their own sense of meaning of the (expanded understanding of) narrative. Shared, found and fragmented space of performance provide the opportunity for the audience to find their place in the performance, not only mentally but also physically. The audience is moving through performance; they are present within scenes. They are co-creating the performance from inside. They are very obviously present.

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[1] Alan Read. Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement: The Last Human Venue. Book. Basingstoke [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

*Krétakör Company* from 2006 – 2009 underwent a major shift in theatre making – from drama theatre in theatre venues, to the fragmented, found space and community project of *Apology of the Escapologist*. The project was received with resistance by the Hungarian public and critics used to a different kind of spectatorship. And one of the first impulses for me to begin researching this project was the question why did the director Árpád Schilling take on the big risk that has turned critics and audiences, previously very devoted to him, against him; and why did he stop using theatre tools that were 'working' to take the risk of exploring new tools.

*Krétakör* was a highly respected and known Easter European independent company before the change. The very fact that they were independent, and had no permanent space was a curious factor proving their resilience and talent within the Eastern European context. Site specific, community theatre, theatrical installation, new circus, and street performance in the Eastern European context of critics (as well as some spectators) are considered 'not to be theatre,' which in local contexts is often an accusation of being 'not good.'[2] From this point of view and in this context creating *Escapologist* could be considered an almost self-destructive act. The big question for me is then why would a successful company making good theatre decide to 'stop doing theatre.' And I want to look at this self-destructive act actually as an act of renewal, an 'escape' into something new.

This renewal in my opinion is about doing theatre differently: creating decentralized performances that audiences can enter; where the point of view of the main creator – the director – is not the main, central view anymore. In *Escapologist* audiences had to 'find their place' and by understanding their position had to take part of responsibility for the creation of the performance themselves. I will show that all of the above described dramaturgical strategies are part of a decentralized, de-hierarchized, non-homogenous nature that provide the key to understand the motivation behind the *Escapologist* case.

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[2] See below in the Appendix, the interview with Hungarian theatre critic Tamás Jászay.

The project was a direct reaction to the socio-political state in Hungary since the late 1990s. The political climate of the time and the type of government, led by FIDESZ (Hungarian Civic Alliance, a major national conservative political party), whose ruling in Hungary now can be defined as authoritarian. Using seminal political theory definition of authoritarian government by Juan Linz (1964) I will show this government as a centralized political system, without a clear ideology, that demobilizes its citizens. Authoritarian politics are becoming increasingly common in Central and Eastern Europe. The spatial dramaturgy of *Apology of the Escapologist* as I will show attempts the exact opposite: it is a decentralized narrative and performance, with a clear ideology (open, decentralized) that attempts to activate its audience.

I am taking into account that theatre cannot be properly analyzed with political terminology. For instance, ideology in political terms means something different than when used in context of theatre. But I think that Juan Linz's definition will be useful to reflect on strategies used in *Apology of the Escapologist* and I will try to define 'centralized', 'without ideology', and 'demobilization' as rather direct opposites to what Árpád Schilling is purposely using here: 'decentralized' (fragmented narrative and performance); 'ideological' (a clear set of questions and ideas); and 'mobilization' (activation of audience). I will define these terms as dramaturgical and not political terms, but dramaturgical with political aspirations.

I will propose this dramaturgy as political because it mobilizes audience to take active part in the meaning making process. That the audience is a co-creator of theatre is of course in partly true of any theatre. I will take it as a given that all theatre performances take final shape in individual minds of audience. But what is important for spatial dramaturgy is that the audience becomes aware of the fact that they are making their own meaning. By taking a specific position in space, their position, from which they also see other audience members' positions: they can see themselves seeing, as well as see others seeing from other positions.

It is also important here to say that I distinguish 'hard' politics from 'soft' politics. The 'hard' politics is the daily work done by politicians, that influences movement of people and goods across the globe, sets laws etc. – in short the governing. The form of political that I am interested in this thesis is the 'soft' politics. 'Soft' politics are ways in which we relate to each other and to the world - the everyday ethics of social existence. 'Taking a position' is in my opinion the beginning of politics. For 'soft' politics it is important first to understand one's own position (the specificity of the position that is a product of many aspects – culture, upbringing, financial and psychological circumstances, etc.). After understanding one's own position one can start understanding others' (their specific positions and reasons behind them) and enter into relations and dialogue as well as be changed. In many ways I find this 'soft' politics as important as the 'hard' politics, and potentially as influential in society. This 'soft' politics is the core of the political of the theatre, an art form where live people meet and relate to each other.

The whole of Apology of the Escapologist is a large mental 'stage' that the audience enters, and where they can see each other, and their own selves actively making meaning, and are part of making of the meaning for each other. So the specificity of Apology of Escapologist lies in the fact that the director Árpád Schilling purposely created decentralized/fragmented narrative in a decentralized/fragmented form in order to activate them and draw the attention of the audience to their shared responsibility in the process of making meaning. In this way the performance was a reaction to the immobility of Hungarian society. This immobility, that Schilling describes in the interviews I have made with him, was provoked by the inability to criticize the new political system – after the euphoria of fall of the Iron Curtain - as well as inability of people to act democratically, to demand their democratic rights. Schilling wanted to provide a potential of social activation at least on the micro level of the performance. And I believe that this is exactly what the Hungarian audience showed resistance to: the necessity to move, go to many spaces and take their position in the performance.

*Escapologist* was a unique project in the Eastern European context where many forms of theatre are still considered 'not to be theatre' or at best experimental and alternative (often also called *para-theatre*). Also, I think that it is important to put *Escapologist* 'on the map' of contemporary theatre history, because it shows a new approach to 'political' in the theatre. This project is unique in the European context in its scale and also in its different times and locations. And I couldn't find any other performance in recent European theatre history that was separated into so many events over such long a long time period. For this reason, I take *Escapologist* as my primary example, in addition to other companies and my own work in describing this new practice in dramaturgy – spatial dramaturgy.

Both the *Apology of the Escapologist* project as well as my own research is (despite the fact that his thesis is in English) strongly grounded in the Eastern European theatre context. *Escapologist* project is a unique event in recent Hungarian theatre, as well as in the wider Eastern European context. The use of site specific, community theatre is a more recent trend in the area than in Western Europe. But despite the fact that some of these aspect of the project are not new in Western theatre context I hope to prove that some of the specifics of the project, such as 'total fragmentation' of the performance (separation into individual events), are unique on the global world scale. Further I hope to prove that *Escapologist* is significant for some of its very crucial dramaturgical strategies and motivations in contemporary theatre.

Before and since *Apology of the Escapologist* in 2009 Árpád Schilling and the now smaller team of *Krétakör* have created a number of projects developing the theatre making ideas of the *Escapologist.* These projects will be mentioned only partially. But it is important to say that the *Escapologist* was the peak in the series of experiments and projects in establishing a completely new way of working for them.

My descriptions and analysis of the project are beyond establishing success and failure within it but rather focus on analyzing the intention and experimentation

with the ways of executing these intentions. This is also due to the very character of the new way of working in which a multiplicity of possibilities of positioning of the team and audience is a crucial aspect that points to the multiplicity of truths, successes and failures alike. In this sense '*the escape'* and '*the apology'* are taken as metaphors for trying and searching, as well as wanting and failing as tools of the process but also as goals.

Unfortunately, I have not had a chance to see *Apology of the Escapologist* live since it was performed only in spring 2009, and was never performed again. But I found this project so relevant to contemporary thinking in the theatre especially in Eastern Europe and an extremely good illustration of my thinking and practice that I have decided to write about it anyway. I have done thorough research based on extensive video, audio, photo and textual documentation made by company members, and I have done a series of recorded and unrecorded interviews with the makers.

I have written this thesis from the point of view of practicing dramaturg working in devised and site specific theatre, which is important when I write about the dramaturgical strategies, some of them I have used in practice. I also write as native of a politically troubled country Yugoslavia/Serbia, where I grew up in the 1980's and early 1990's (the Slobodan Milošović era of nationalism and wars in Yugoslavia) and this is where my strong interest in the political arose.

Both of these aspects (practice of dramaturgy and being native of political Serbia, living in Prague and working in Europe) are reasons why I am a dramaturg who has suffered loss of language and found a new language and theatrical tool in 'space,' and I am looking for new ways to be political in the theatre.

No less important is the fact that during the research and writing of this thesis I became a mother. In this sense I have a connection to Árpád Schilling, who had become a father at the time of *Escapologist*. And in my opinion this new situation provoked him to think differently.

Besides being originally Serbian, I have studied, live and work in the Czech Republic as well as in an international context. So here I have to confess and apologize in advance for my thinking that comes out of a number of different theatrical discourses at the same time. This stepping back and forth between theatrical discourses is of course often an advantage in the sense of large overview of things, but can cause an imprecision in terminology that I tried hard to avoid but nevertheless apologize in advance for.

From 2008 – 2015 I was artistic director of *Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space*, and I think it will be obvious that the international scenographic context has also left a strong mark on my thinking about dramaturgy as a spatial activity.

I would also like to make clear some use of some of the terminology. Firstly, I would like to point out that I will use the term theatre interchangeably with the term performance. The term performance is used more often for contemporary forms of theatre mainly under the influence of performance studies that puts theatre into larger context of wide span of performative activities - social, political, anthropological, and psychological. I will use the term theatre because in my opinion it is important to show how theatre itself changes, rather than merely reflecting the changes in terminology.

Further, I will use the term performance for the theatre event itself (the act of the performance) as well as for the specific theatre work – a theatre production. I will use the term performance to describe theatre production and the events of *Apology of the Escapologist* despite the fact that they could be also defined as a project. The multi-space and time character of this performance directly invites us to define it as project, a series of performances, and not one united performance. But as I will show the point of *Apology of Escapologist* is that it is a decentralized event, a performance that is a non-homogenous series of scenes taking place in different spaces and times.

I will use term political in connection to spatial dramaturgy and *Apology of the Escapologist* but not in the sense of activity done by politicians or in the sense of a specific political project (left or right). Specific political projects are not on my agenda directly. Despite the fact that there are more than hints in this work of my own political preference, I am interested in the 'political' in the sense of how people relate to each other, how they understand each other and how they potentially take action together (social-politics). I also believe and hope to show that despite the fact that Árpád Schilling's project is a direct reaction to specific political movements in his country, he also did not have a concrete political project in mind but aimed at creating a space where people relate, and think about who and how they relate - a place where audiences see themselves seeing and positioning, among other things.

I am writing about dramaturgy but I need to note here once again that I will not be considering the role of a dramaturg or the position of a dramaturg within theatre institutions and theatre process. Rather I am considering dramaturgy itself - as structure and strategy, whether it is done by a dramaturg, director, performer-creator, or a collective. I will explore dramaturgy as I said above as both a process of making and the overall architecture of a theatre performance. It is important to approach dramaturgy beyond the activities of the figure of the dramaturg in contemporary theatre. This is because in theatre not based on a play pre-written by a playwright, dramaturgy becomes the structure itself, the core of the performance. Where audience does not follow one story but is facing often disparate theatrical elements. Dramaturgy here is not only the 'gluing' element that keeps all the other theatrical elements together – but a new 'narrative' logic – responsible for the overall experience of the performance in time and space by the audience.

I would also like to point out the problems I had connected to imprecise translations of Hungarian texts into English (mainly by Árpád Schilling himself). I took the liberty to make very slight corrections in some of the quotes of the translation. Also, the interviews I made with Árpád Schilling, since both of us are non-native English speakers include a number of grammatical and syntax mistakes, but unfortunately also some simply imprecise use of words. The quotes from

interviews are sometimes hard to understand precisely, and must be understood 'intuitively.' I decided to correct only major mistakes in order not to muddle the meaning even more.

My research also included symposia and publications directly and indirectly connected to the topic. During my studies I have published a number of articles: *Prague Quadrennial at Intersection* in *Monitoring Scenography 3*: *Space and Desire*, *ZHdK* (2010); *Cultivated Chaos: Moment Specific Dramaturgy* in *No More Drama* (Dublin: Project Press/Carysfort Press, 2011); and *A Short Summary: Expanding Scenography 1999 - 2015, Notes Towards a History of Curatorial Developments of the Prague Quadrennial in Theatre and Performance Design Journal Issue 1*. I am part of the editorial board of that journal published by Routledge since 2014. In 2012 I co-edited together with Richard Gaugh an issue of academic journal *Performance Research, On Scenography*. Since 2012 I have been on the editorial board of that journal also published by Routledge in Great Britain. During my studies and while I was artistic director of the *Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space* I have convened and organized series of symposia, that aimed to create a meeting space for theory and practice in the field of theatre space, scenography and dramaturgy: series of four symposia about exploring new understanding of scenography  - *Expanding Scenography* in Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2009); Riga – Latvia, *About Scenography and Spectatorship* (2010); in Belgrade, Serbia *About Authorship and Scenography* (2010); and in Evora, Portugal, *About Criticism and Scenography* (2010); and further in 2012 *SharedSpace: Devised Dramaturgy* symposium (co-convened with Danish dramaturg and academic Dr Synne Behrndt, together with Archa theatre and KALD DAMU); in 2013 *Layering Reality: The Right to Mask* symposium (co-convened with PSi President Dutch theorist Maaike Bleeker and German artist Julian Hetzel); and in 2014 *Spatial Curation* symposium about theatre space as a shared space.

Finally, I would like to give my special thanks to Dr Synne Behrndt my external supervisor for hours of work on this thesis all her detailed notes and guidance. Special thanks also go to Bálint Juhász, head of Krétakör archive, and program

## 2. RHIZOMATIC FRAGMENTATION

In this chapter I will first describe the traditional understanding of dramaturgy as analysis of narrative, then come to more decentralized, fragmented ideas of dramaturgy mainly of the late 20th century. The decentralized, fragmented dramaturgy allows for the audience to become co-creators of meaning and this is in my opinion a step towards spatial dramaturgy that is physically entered by audience. I will 'start from the beginning' and look into transformation of dramaturgy historically, before I go on to describe the contemporary form of *spatial dramaturgy*.

I will follow developments in dramaturgy from – beginning with performances based on plays and focused on unified plots, as defined by Aristotle in *Poetics*[3] (335 BC), where the plot consists of elements that work in unison to create unified narrative, up to visual dramaturgy as defined by Hans Thies Lehmann in *Postdramatic Theatre* (1999) where the de-hierarchized stage elements work in a fragmented, somewhat chaotic way with each other, and where the plot is not the most important element that 'holds' everything together.

I will first explore, 'narrative dramaturgy' – dramaturgy concerned with analysis of the play, where the play is the central element of performance, where dramaturgy is bound directly to the play, and secondly 'visual dramaturgy' – dramaturgy that considers the total 'landscape' of performance with all the performance elements as equal aspects in the dramaturgical equation. The final destination of this thesis is a dramaturgy that I call 'spatial dramaturgy.' But on my way to defining it it is important to go back in history and look in detail into the decentralization of plot and narrative, and de-hierarchization of stage elements, because dramaturgy was for a long time considered to be identical with play analysis.

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[3] *"[T]he plot, being an imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed."* Aristotle, *Poetics*, section 1447a. Perseus Digital Library, Online E-book, accessed 26 Nov. 2010.
http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0056

I will dedicate a big part of this chapter to the de-hierarchization of stage elements – the big shift toward theatre where the written play is not the main, central element, and will sometimes call this shift decentralization. Both de-hierarchization and decentralization are strategies with political sub-texts, this will be important in my analysis of spatial dramaturgy as political.

Another strategy I focus on in this chapter in detail is fragmentation. Fragmentation is a dramaturgical process of decentralization of narrative that is important for a de-hierarchized way of working with stage elements in performance. While fragmentation seems to be a strategy belonging to the twentieth century (modernist literature, postmodern philosophy), in theatre it has been used surprisingly rarely and mainly since the 1960's. And I will also introduce something I call *rhizomatic dramaturgy* as extreme form of dramaturgical fragmentation.

## 2.1. Introduction

From Antoine Artaud's[4] decentralization of theatrical elements to the decentralization of character as described by Elinor Fuchs[5], decentralization took many shapes and entered individual levels of performance of the twentieth century theatre gradually. But originally the narrative written by playwright was perceived to be the core of a theatre production and all other theatrical elements were supporting this central element – the dramaturgy of the written play. I will call this dramaturgy simply 'narrative dramaturgy' because it was closely connected to analysis of the action and characters of the play, and research of the context (mainly historical) of the play. This 'narrative dramaturgy' is considered with plot

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[4] See: *The Theater and Its Double* {Le Théâtre et son double ,1938) from Antonin Artaud and Susan Sontag (Ed), *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings,* Book*,* Berkeley: U of California, 1988.
[5] Elinor Fuchs, *The Death of Character: Perspectives on Theater after Modernism*, Print, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996.

and characters – the story. Acting, movement, scenery, costumes, lights, and music were used to illustrate this story of the narrative. The theatrical production was being created by following the text: the stage directions of the play and dialogues and monologues to be spoken by characters.

In British and North American theatre tradition (in practice) the playwright is still the most important artist of the performance. All the other team members including director follow their lead. In Eastern Europe and Germany for instance today the theatre based on plays still largely prevails, but the interpretation of the play done by the director has primacy. This is thanks to the change in understanding of theatre that started with emergence of role of theatre directors.[6]

Dramaturgical interpretation means that the narrative of the play is not merely followed and illustrated but that the director is presenting his own understanding of the text, by either being in dialogue with original meaning, or by creating completely new meanings using the play. The theatre directors entered into a dialogue with the play (the playwright) adding their own point of view on the material. Here individual stage elements costume, lighting, voice, body, space, music bacome tools for staging the interpretation. By becoming tools for interpretation, the stage elements gained new roles and were repositioned within the dramaturgical hierarchy where the play used to have the primacy. From this point in theatre history individual elements were employed for their specific qualities, to be dramaturgically used to the full within constellation of a theatre performance. They were not necessarily *depicting* anymore, but gained more complex dramaturgical function within the whole. In Czech Republic and other Easter European countries, this type of theatre is called 'interpretative theatre.'

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[6] Directors such as Max Reinhard or C. S. Stanislavsky at the end of 19th century, who employed theatrical interpretation of the dramatic text in directing a play, that I take as the first step on the way to decentralization of stage elements. And already Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874 – 1940) took his interpretation so far that he created his own theatrical method/language, Biomechanics.

The practice of dramaturgy was from its beginning perceived as analysis of plays, help on the way to depicting the plot where the dramaturg is often perceived more as historical researcher of historical facts and circumstances (and this is often the case in North American understanding of role of dramaturg also called a *literary manager*). But in interpretative theatre dramaturgy became an active tool for interpretation and translating the strategies of narrative of play into performance. It got associated with *translation* of literature into theatre language: the staging, translation of textual language into the language of stage, and establishing of new readings of the plays. Dramaturgy here became a tool for interpretation: the *staging*, as opposed to analysis of play. It is not only a tool to investigate what is already there in the play and to strengthen it but to actively add what is not there yet – an interpretation, a version, a commentary.

Performances of the *Krétakör Színház,* the main example of this thesis, before the change in 2008 were exactly this type of theatre: interpretative performances in which the director examines the play, questions and even shifts the meaning and changes the theme of the play, the characters, and the dramatic situations. For instance, it would create new interpretation from a new point of time like in Krétakör Színház's performance *Baal* (1998), or would create meaningful cultural interpretation of plays not written in the country where it is watched like in Krétakör Színház's *W - workers' circus* (2001) based on fragments of Georg Büchner's unfinished *Woyzeck*. Adding new layers of meaning to the play, changing historical and geographical context of the play, cutting the better part of the text (like in Krétakör Színház's the *Seagull* 2003) has become one of the main features of theatre in the second half of the twentieth century. In all these performances the director Árpád Schilling had a vital impact on the understanding and experience of the audience. Here the plot, the narrative of the play is not the main line to be followed by audiences but director's interpretation of it.

## 2.2.  *Dramaturgical Decentralizations of Postdramatic Theatre*

The strengthening of the director's perspective in the theatre after the primacy of the play is defined by Hans-Thies Lehmann as *postdramatic theatre*, and this sums up the developments in the theatre over the last four decades. Lehmann describes this theatre as a 'theatre of landscape' (inspired by playwright Gertrude Stein as I will write later), where the dominance of the dramatic narrative is exchanged a spatiotemporal relating of numerous elements on stage (lighting, sound, movement etc.). Decentralization is one of the main aspects that govern the new dramaturgy: "The de-hierarchization of theatrical means is a universal principle of post-dramatic theatre. This non-hierarchal structure blatantly contradicts tradition, which has preferred a hypotactical way of connection that governs the super- and subordination of elements, in order to avoid confusion and to produce harmony and comprehensibility." (Lehmann 2006: 86)[7] The traditional hierarchy that Lehmann is writing about is very simple: all stage elements are 'subordinated' to the play, often the narrative of the play, in order to produce a better understanding of the play in the audience. In this theatre 'comprehensibility,' understanding has priority over the more intuitive somewhat confusing experiencing. In the following pages I will describe a theatre that challenges the unity of the play, of unity of the subject matter, the unity of theatrical elements, but most of all one that challenges the unity of meaning, interpretation, and makes for a somewhat 'confusing' experience. But I find this confusion to be a place for the audience's creativity.

In his book *Postdramatic Theatre*[8] Lehmann describes theatre works where the text/play becomes just one of the equal elements of dramaturgy. In this theatre the construction of the performances is created though a set of (often unconnected) theatrical images. These images are produced using a variety of stage elements. An important example of decentralized narrative and language - the content and the form - can be found in the work of Belgian theatre Needcompany led by director Jan Lauwers. Their performances consist of text, singing, dancing, stage installation,

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[7] Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
[8] First published in German in 1999 and in English in 2006.

films on stage to create complex theatrical events. Each element has its strong position within the dramaturgy of the performance and is carefully placed next to each other within dramaturgical composition. Here I will use the example of Needcompany's *Isabella's Room – laugh and be gentile to the unknown* (2004[9]) which is a fragmented story of one character. *Isabella's Room* is not a play, it is 'a script' including all elements written, or better said - created - especially for this production. The performance is built around 'a biography' of the character of Isabella.

*Isabella* begins in her room, but her room is not conventional private room: it looks more like an archeological museum and it points to the fact that her room is probably not spatial but temporal. The story, a story of the life of Isabella, is told from birth to death, the most conventional human plot that all the structures of human narratives are mirrored upon. But this seemingly conventional form of plot loses its central position (and clarity) in the relationship to the other stage elements because of the way the narrative is 'told' or better said staged. The use of singing, dancing, presenting, re-telling, and things happening in parallel onstage creates a multiplicity, a certain chaos of meaning. A very different way to tell a life story, where life is not being perceived as linear but as a de-hierarchized system of events/memories. Isabella is surrounded by different family members and friends (alive and dead) and these fragments, memories are remembered, reenacted by different people differently, are remembered wrong and right, or completely lost, or purposely retold inaccurately – pointing to the multiplicity of perspectives. The narrative is important, but not it's clarity. In the place of comprehensive narrative we find a confusing narrative. In *Isabella's Room* life is something forever 'unknown' just like the archeological artefacts that lay almost mute and mysterious in a bare museum display.

*Isabella's Room* is not linear story with clear meaning. It is as Lehmann points out, a landscape. Writing about Lauwers, Lehmann says "stage space, bodies, gestures,

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[9] *Isabella's Room – laugh and be gentile to the unknown*, dir. Jan Lauwers. (Belgium. Needcompany, Premiere: Cloître des Carmes, Festival d'Avignon 9 July 2004).

movements, postures, timbre, volume, tempo and the pitch of voices are torn from their familiar spatio-temporal continuum and newly connected. The stage becomes a complex whole of associative spaces composed like 'absolute poetry" (Lehmann 2006: 110)[10].

The theatre of landscape is poetic and not dramatic, it is visual and not literal, it is a theatre of images and sounds. It is a theatre of a different logic – the logic of a dream where "an essential quality of the dream is the non-hierarchy of images, movements and word. 'Dream thought' form a texture that resembles collage, montage and fragment rather than a logically structured course of events. The dream constitutes the model par excellence of a non-hierarchical theatre aesthetic." (Lehmann 2006: 84)[11] Theatre of landscape is the theatre of director Robert Wilson, of *Needcompany* and composer-director Heiner Goebbels, as well as some of the performances by Krétakör Színház before 2008, including above mentioned *W-Workers' Circus* (2001) and *Leonce and Lena* (2002).

In connection to this de-hierarchized theatre of landscape that is based in image and not in plays, Lehmann defines a new kind of dramaturgy, where instead of performance "regulated by the text one often finds a visual dramaturgy […, that] does not mean an exclusively visually organized dramaturgy but rather one that is not subordinated to the text and can therefore freely develop its own logic" *[12]* (Lehmann 2006: 93)[13].

Postdramatic theatre marks the shift from narrative dramaturgy of analysis of plays to visual dramaturgy, where the stage elements not only depict the play but are constituting elements of the performance in their own right, often without a clear, linear plot. Stage and stage elements are here emancipated from the dramaturgy of

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[10] Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
[11] Ibid.
[12] First mention of visual dramaturgy appears in the writing of Norwegian theatre theorist Knut-Ove Arntzen in the early 1990's. See *A Visual kind of Dramaturgy: Project theatre in Scandinavia,* Knut-Ove Arntzen in *Small is Beautiful, Small Countries Theatre Conference* in Glasgow, Theatre Studies Publications, Department of Theatre Studies, Glasgow 1991
[13] Ibid.

the play to dramaturgy of theatre image, where "the aim is no longer the wholeness of an aesthetic theatre composition of words, meaning, sound, gesture, etc., which as a holistic construct offers itself to perception. Instead the theatre takes on a fragmentary and partial character." (Lehmann 2006: 56-57)[14].

All of this is in rather sharp contract to the thinking about theatre in Aristotle's Poetics (written about 335 BC), where he described tragedy as "an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole," and where the "the plot, being an imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed."[15] Aristotle's *Poetics* were for centuries at the core of theatre discourse –the analysis of drama and so at the core of dramaturgy. The unity of the plot, the characters, and the situations, and their unity within the narrative, are elements of drama that in practical dramaturgy become (and to this day in drama-theatre are) the main tools for analysis and translation of the text of the play into the language of stage performance. The theatre that represents the play that represents the plot consists of actions of characters where the reversal of the situation marks the 'climax' – the peak of the play that is built in such a way to inspire pity and fear in the audience, "effecting the proper purgation of these emotions."[16]

While it is not fully clear what Aristotle means by unity or purification and in contemporary theory there are many new ways to look at these issues[17] – the interpretation of the meaning of Aristotle's writing on tragedy by theorists (and practitioners) is clear: in this theatre all narrative is homogenous and unified. And Aristotle even directly warns us against plot being 'episodic' – "Of all plots and actions the episodic are the worst. I call a plot 'episodic' in which the episodes or

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Aristotle, *Poetics,* Part VIII. Accessed Jan, 15, 2017
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1974/1974-h/1974-h.htm
[16] Ibid, Part VI
[17] For example: Weber, Samuel. *Theatricality as Medium.* Book. New York: Fordham UP, 2004.

acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence. Bad poets compose such pieces by their own fault, good poets, to please the players; for, as they write show pieces for competition, they stretch the plot beyond its capacity, and are often forced to break the natural continuity."[18] In contemporary postdramatic theatre the story is not perceived as linear and unified, understanding of what 'natural continuity' is has changed. And contemporary theatre opposes Aristotle's unities and it often becomes purposely 'episodic.' Just like in *Isabella's Room* the 'story' of Isabella consists of numerous episodes from her life told from different perspectives of different characters, where the 'stretching' of the plot is not 'bad poetry' but it is purposely open, and I would say democratic, a way to see a story beyond a unified point of view and single meaning.

The traditional coherent plot of a 'well made'[19] theatre play, based in theories of unity of action of Aristotle's (that follow a series of conflicts within group of characters through a series of situations connected in one story), in contemporary theatre is atomized into fragments. And coherence of the plot often disappears. Dramaturgy of fragmentation is a strategy that is employed to create gaps in the narrative to activate the audience and be filled by them.

This strategy I call 'democratic' because it allows for the radical possibility of 'difference.' Audiences are provided with spaces to be filled with different interpretations, different thinking – with critique as well as different imaginings. A series of fragments of episodes of an open composition that have been 'emancipated' from one central clear plot and meaning.

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[18] Aristotle, *Poetics*, Part IX
[19] To make things more complicated Italian neoclassicists in 16th century added unity of space and time of the play to Aristotle's unity of the plot. By this dramaturgical rule action of a play had to be resolved within twenty-four hours and in one location, and was the governing rules of the dramaturgy of play that was the core of theatre. From then on it was understood that the core of performance is the plot of the play that historically has its peak in the 'well-made play' of the 19th century promoted by French dramatist Eugène Scribe.

### 2.3. Bertolt Brecht's Interruption

Interruption, a form of fragmentation of narrative was one of the main dramaturgical strategies of Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre that activates audiences to think critically. In the epic theatre the separation of fragments, where different episodes are clearly disconnected, and its new constellations were to create gaps in meaning to create a critical distance. Bertolt Brecht was one of the first theatre artists to provoke audiences to oppose re-living the feelings of fear and pity (described as central to theatre in Aristotle's Poetics), and to create his own standpoint on theatre performance. Brecht talks about fragmentation as 'separation of elements' in his *Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre* (1930) he introduction to his opera, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahogany* – where "*one scene does not make another,*" but "*each scene stands for itsel*f," where instead of dramaturgical '*growth'* one finds a '*montage'*, where there is no '*linear development'* but '*curves'*, where there is no '*evolutionary determinism'* but dramaturgical '*jumps.' "When the epic theatre's methods begin to penetrate the opera the first result is a radical separation of the elements.*" (Brecht 1996: 33)[20]

Brecht also writes about the separation of parts in *A Short Organum for the Theatre:*

> "As we cannot invite the audience to fling itself into the story as if it were a river and let itself be carried vaguely hither and thither, the individual episodes have to be knotted together in such a way that the knots are easily noticed. The episodes must not succeed one another indistinguishably but must give us a chance to interpose our judgment. (If it were above all the obscurity of the original interrelations that interested us, then just this circumstance would have to be sufficiently alienated.) The parts of the story have to be carefully set off one against another by giving each its own structure as a play within the play."[21]

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[20] Brecht, Bertolt. Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic. New York: Hill & Wang, 1996. Print.
[21] Part 67 in Brecht, Bertolt. *A Short Organum for the Theatre*, Web July 2014
http://blogs.evergreen.edu/stagesofdiscovery/files/2011/10/Brecht-2.pdf

The drama here is created by the 'knots,' by elements that are 'disjointed,' that do not make perfect sense next to each other but provoke questioning and analysis rather than uninterrupted following of the united plot, creating a potential for critical positioning instead of inspiring fear and joy.

## 2.4.  Fragmentation in Drama Theatre

*Theatre of the absurd* of Ionesco, Beckett and Genet in the middle of the twentieth century also challenged unity of plot and meaning - where the plot is not the main carrier of unified meaning within a play. The play is perceived as having an incoherent plot and even in certain performances that are built thematically or situationally it disappears completely. Lehman describes theatre as the landscape anticipated by Stein: "a defocalization and equal status for all parts, a renunciation of teleological time, and the dominance of an 'atmosphere' above dramatic and narrative forms of progression." (Lehmann 2006: 63)[22]

In recent contemporary playwriting fragmentation is one of the basic tools. One of the examples is *4.48 Psychosis* (2000) by Sarah Kane, one of the most produced plays at the beginning of the millennium, where narrative fragmentation starts from the fragmentation of character. Writing about state of clinical depression Sarah Kane represents the illness and something that divides the self apart into schizophrenic sub-selves with different desires, needs and feelings – written as a set of a number of voices. These voices are separate, have different dynamics, forces and focus and sound like very different characters, yet on paper they are written as one monologue. The playwright leaves it up to the director and audience to make sense of (or simply experience) the multiple voices within one self and divide it into specific lines of voices, where multiplicity of voices points to the schizophrenic multiplicity of points of views within one self. Hans Thies Lehmann

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[22] Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

talks about Stein, Beckett and Kane being directly connected to the formation of the landscape of visual dramaturgy of postdramatic theatre[23].

The directors' theatre of interpretation of the second half of the twentieth century also uses fragmentation as a dramaturgical tool, through dissecting the plot, re-ordering it and re-creating new contexts. The examples of fragmentation within playwriting and directing are about dissecting the one coherent story - its characters, plot, situations, and perspectives - and creating new fragments, re-ordering them into new dramaturgical constellations and sequences and giving the audience new points of view on the story. Like in the example of the plays of Sarah Kane we can understand plot only as 'expended field:' there is no conflict between the characters that helps the linear development, the growth of the plot, there is often no story, only the unidentifiable voices that sometimes are separate and sometimes relate to each other. We 'feel' that there is a 'logic' behind it but it is not explicit. As Lehman points out here the equality takes over priority of plot, multiplicity of time takes over the linear understanding of time and the 'atmosphere,' the 'feel' of what is performed becomes more important than what is said. Possibility of multiple experience takes over against unified meaning.

### 2.5.   Open Structure

The same multiplicity of meaning and interpretation happens *within* the above mentioned *Isabella's Room* by Needcompany, where the numerous people from Isabella's life 'retell' / reenact bits and pieces of her story from their own points of view, creating a multiple point of view epic and not a plot of sequence of conflict between characters. Here Isabella's is 'viewed' from multiple points of different characters, in different contexts - points in time and space that sum up to a

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[23] But I would also like to note that examples of fragmentary dramaturgy though tightly connected to visual dramaturgy are only a portion of the examples of post dramatic theatre for Hans Thies Lehmann.

somewhat 'cubist' (seen from all sides) portrait – of Isabella seen from multiple perspectives in which lies are just versions of a story. Rather, a set of conflicting, or better said decentralized, not unified perspectives, memories, and lies that in total do not create a 'drama,' but are 'a theatre of landscape' (Lehmann 2006: 93)[24]. In all three projects this point of difference is achieved through decentralization of the main character's story, because it is told through different characters' perspectives and  voices, and so it stops being one coherent story. In all three examples the decentralization of dramaturgy happens through decentralization of the main character's story; in *Needcompany* through decentralization of unity of truth of one life, in Sarah Kane through multiplication of character.

In *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (1988) German literary theorist Manfred Pfister writes about interruption of linear finity. This is a quote from a very small fragment in the book otherwise fully dedicated to what I call narrative or dramatic dramaturgy. This is a surprisingly rare mention of interruption of linear finity in dramaturgy within theatre theory,[25] besides Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* written a decade later, in the languages that are accessible to me[26].

> "The unity of plot that occurs in the idealized type of closed structure can be disrupted if a number of different plot sequences are given equal importance and are thus no longer minor sequences subordinate to a 'main plot'. In such cases the structural openness consists in the fact that the story is no longer presented as a closed, hierarchically arranged whole, but as an ensemble of individual sequences that are relatively autonomous and isolated from one another." (Pfister 1988: 24)[27]

This quote very precisely describes what I wanted to point to in the example of *Isabella's Room*.

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Much of the writing for instance about Ionesco's plays that are non-linear, is focused on their 'existential' and philosophical aspects rather than on the practical, dramaturgical techniques used to build this non-linear system.

[26] English, Serbo-croat, Czech and Slovak languages.

[27] Pfister, Manfred. The Theory and Analysis of Drama. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988. Print.

But what I am especially interested in in this quote is what I think of as political aspect of 'disrupted' dramaturgy – that "that the story is no longer presented as a closed, hierarchically arranged whole." A dramaturgical system that is 'not closed' is open to wide span of interpretations, it is not representing strict meaning - one meaning to be consumed by audience. Simply put it is open to 'difference', it is open to different interpretations, positions and points of views. Allowing 'difference' to co-exist is for me one of the most important political projects today. This 'difference' can co-exist for real only in non-hierarchical systems, where no one is better than anyone else. De-hierarchization is one of the most important aspects of contemporary theatre, that is in the same time it's most political project. And here I am talking about de-hierarchization of stage elements but also de-hierarchization of meaning, of imagination, as well as de-hierarchization of power and responsibility within the theatre system on the level of staging and perceiving.

Interruption was already for Brecht at the core of political thinking for political theatre. Interruption (fragmentation or autonomisation) is the first step towards an opportunity for audiences to position themselves towards the performance on their own account, critically, within decentralized systems of meaning.

In contemporary devised theatre this openness and de-hierarchization is taken to another level. First, the roles within the theatre team change, projects are 'devised' together, thought-out rehearsals and roles (actors, writers, designers) are shared. Devising often means collective creation. Furthermore, very often devised theatre does not work with a pre-written play and the texts (if existing at all) are created through rehearsals. And more importantly the texts are equal elements of the de-hierarchized dramaturgy.  Where, in the place of play we can speak about a '*score or script of performance'* as described by Richard Schechner in *Performance Theory* (1988)[28], that includes all theatrical elements.

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[28] Schechner, Richard, and Richard Schechner. Performance Theory. New York: Routledge, 1988. Print.

## 2.6. Rhizome

Researching fragmentation in the theatre Spanish theorist Diana González Martín came to the following division of kinds of dramaturgical fragmentations that illustrate the development of decentralization of the narrative:

> The fragment could be executed, I think, in three principal ways: centrifuge, parataxis and rhizome. The first depends on a centre of axis. Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* can be used as an example for this mode. In the case of parataxis there is, in principle, no hierarchy between the elements. However, although there is no hierarchy between the fragments, they together possess a 'unity' in the performance which is not a linear causal 'unity' but a sense in the whole. Hans-Thies Lehmann defines parataxis as a common trait in postdramatic theatre. The third alternative is the most radical one; the rhizome. As Deleuze and Guattari indicate, in a rhizome there is no center, no hierarchy, no possible connection between the fragments. I point out this alternative although it is difficult to find examples. (Gonzáles Martín On Dramaturgy 2009: 119)[29].

I believe, however, that 'rhizomatic' *is* the right way to describe the next level of fragmentation in dramaturgy after the decentralization of narrative. I would like to argue against Gonzáles Martín understanding of rhizomatic fragmentation on two points: first that rhizome does not mean that there is 'no possible connection', and second that it is not hard to find examples of rhizomatic fragmentation.

This is how *rhizome* was originally defined by Deleuze and Guattari:

> Let us summarize the principal characteristics of a rhizome: unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states. The rhizome is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two or even directly three, four, five, etc. it is not a multiple derived from the One, or to which One is added (n+1). It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills. It constitutes linear multiplicities with n dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency, and from which the One is always subtracted (n-1). When multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis. […] Unlike the tree, the rhizome is not the object of reproduction: neither external

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[29] Gritzner, Karoline, Patrick Primavesi, and Heike Roms. "On Dramaturgy." Performance Research 14.3 (2009): 1-2. Print.

reproduction as image/tree nor internal reproduction as tree structure. The rhizome is an antigenealogy. It is a short-term memory, or antimememory. The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, or antimemory. Unlike the graphic arts, drawing, or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exists and its own lines of flight. It is tracings that must be put on the map, not the opposite. In contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, non-signifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automation, defined solely by a circulation of states. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 23)[30]

What we have in this definition of rhizome is contemporary thinking about systems not as finite, stable and static but as 'living' (in constant metamorphosis and movement). And the new dramaturgical structures have also to be understood as structures of change and movement, rather than fixed.

Here is a very simple picture to illustrate the difference between centralized, decentralized and distributed network systems. The distributed is closest to the idea of rhizome where there is a potential for relation between all parts, but it would have to be imagined in 3D and in motion, as it is impossible to describe a rhizome in a picture.
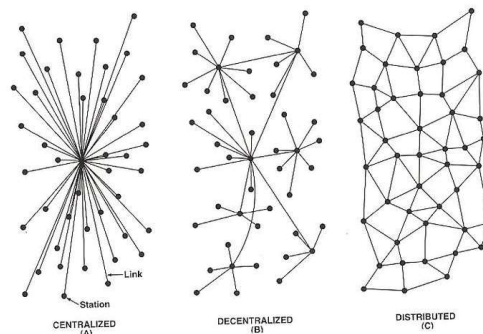


Illustration of centralized, decentralized, and distributed network systems[31].

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[30] Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Book. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1987: 23
[31] Paul Baran, *On Distributed Communications: I. Introduction to Distributed Communications Networks*. Illustration. Printed in *Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center*, Rand Corp., 1964.

The rhizomatic dramaturgy that I am describing is a structure that consists of seeming fragments that (as opposed to elements in traditional narrative that are connected causally and linearly) are connected to each other - any fragment to any other fragment - without a prescribed hierarchy. All parts are important and different connections, relations between the elements provide different experiences or meanings, but all are equally valid. This idea of relating we already find in Gertrude Stein's understanding of a play as landscape: "Landscape has its formation … not moving but being always in relation, the trees to the hills the hills to the fields the trees to each other any piece of it to any sky and then any detail to any other detail … And of that relation I wanted to make a play and I did, a great number of plays" (Stein in Chaudhuri and Fuchs 2002: 125)[32]. These multiple connections are what makes the performance of "very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states" that stand for the landscape of dramaturgy in which it is not so important what the audience *understands* but more what audience *experiences.* And experiencing is a more complex way to understand*.* It's understanding with all your senses and modes of perception.

So, instead of 'no possible connection' that Gonzáles Martín describes, we should rather think about rhizomatic dramaturgy as a decentralized, de-hierarchized system where all elements can potentially be connected to any other elements at any point. This can be understood as a very different unity to linear and centralized, but it is a unity nonetheless. And it is a different way to create meaning.

It is 'antimemory' – something that is becoming. It is not a stable meaning and existence but a constant potential and change. "Unlike the graphic arts, drawing, or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exists and its own lines of flight."

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[32] Fuchs, Elinor, and Una Chaudhuri. Land/scape/theater. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 2002. Print.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 23)[33] Always in motion, it is not representational but performative. It 'does things.' And it 'does things' through the potential of connection between the elements. Here things happen in-between the elements, not from the elements. Which is true of all theatre but it is important to point to the fact that in rhizomatic dramaturgy these relations do not have a purpose of supporting the plot but stand in for themselves. The rhizomatic dramaturgy just like rhizome does not stand either for one nor for multiplicity of individual pieces but for their connections. So, in this structure individual pieces exist in context, in connection and relation to others and in the flux of those relations. And they can be described as 'dimensions, or rather directions in motion' (*dramaturgical vectors* that I will describe later). They are *performative*, units that 'do' something, units that exist in relations and action rather than *descriptive*, units that 'illustrate' something.

These dramaturgical structures, since they are not linear and causal do not have beginning nor end, they are like a landscape seemingly starting and stopping where our sightlines starts and stops. So they do not provide for a genealogical experience, but for an experience of performance that is immediate and yet relying on variation. In this dramaturgy we cannot rely (as maker nor as audience) on '*hierarchical modes of communication and pre-established paths*' but experience a '*circulation of states*.' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 23)[34]

Rhizomatic structures do not lack connection, they have a completely different system of relations of elements in-between themselves (and in that sense to the whole). But to our 'eye' that is used to different systems (linear, centralized etc.) this often looks like 'chaos.' The rhizomatic dramaturgy confirms that "chaos is order not yet deciphered"[35], it is order not visible for human eye.

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[33] Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Print. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1987.
[34] Ibid.
[35] "Chaos is merely order waiting to be deciphered" Saramago, Jose, and Margaret Jull. Costa. The Double. London: Vintage, 2005. Print.

Dramaturgically this also means very different understanding of unity, unity that does not come from centralized meaning and is not pre-determined. In my opinion and opposed to what González Martín says, it is not very difficult to find examples of rhizomatic fragmentation in contemporary theatre. It is frequent since the 1990's in the work of contemporary performance companies such as or *Forced Entertainment* and *Superamas*, as well as dance companies such as *Ultima Vez* where the decentralization of narrative finds an extreme form: where narrative does not exist anymore, which is probably what González Martín meant as her idea of *rhizomatic*. These performances are composed as non-linear structures. The fragments are not pieces of one story anymore they are fragments of many stories, thoughts, ideas, situations, but not centered or united. Sometimes these performances are 'thematic' built around a theme or concept or even situational, but sometimes this theme or concept (used as initial building block) is lost behind the layers of possible interpretations and points of views (within the performance as seen by audience). And here the core of the performance is not a story but a rhizomatic system without hierarchy. Parts of the narrative are so unconnected (in the traditional sense of plot and theme) that this performance is often held together almost merely by the unity of the performance's architectural space.[36]

British company *Forced Entertainment*, existing since 1984, led by director and writer Tim Etchells, who have dedicated their work to exploration of fragmentation and working with it conceptually within their dramaturgy is a clear example. The image of this fragmentation can be found in Tim Etchells´ description of a rehearsal of the Forced Entertainment's *Bloody Mess* that premiered in 2004: "Richard and Robin danced with some bedroom exuberance to the Heavy metal anthem *Born to be Wild* meanwhile Cathy lay center-stage on the floor as though dead and Terry wept above her as though grieving, splashing her face with bottled water to stand in for tears, while on the far side of the stage Claire stood, eyes toward me, the

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[36] "*For me, having accepted the conventional frame that there is an audience constituted in an auditorium and that there is a stage and that what we are watching is on the stage, I can start to open space and possibilities*." Walser, Dagmar. Tim Etchells: Can You Trust the People Sitting Next to You? interview, Performance: Body, Time, Space. Spec. issue of Passages 57.3: 20-23. Prohelvetia: Swiss Arts Council. 2011

audience, took off her own clothes and stepped into a gorilla costume." (Etchells in On Dramaturgy 2009: 75)[37]. Here fragments played simultaneously formed a complex landscape of multiplicity, associative and simultaneous network of actions.

These rhizomatic performances of contemporary performance companies are certainly not dramas with plots that are complete and whole. But neither are they fragments centered on one character or theme like plays of Sarah Kane. They are a 'bloody mess' that often seemingly does not make sense, in the sense of linear, causal order, but make a fragmented sense of complex multiplicity that does not represent specific plot, but provides for a landscape, an 'atmosphere' to be experienced with many senses rather than understood only with the mind.

Literary theorist Arthur Danto says any non-narrative text can be translated back into narrative because of our 'narrative instinct,' and in contemporary fragmentary theatre "the task of making sense is delegated elsewhere" (Etchells in On dramaturgy: 75)[38].

An image of this dramaturgical fragmentation that challenges our way of understanding homogenous narrative, and irritates audiences' need to make sense can be found in the work of Superamas. Here is *Youdream* (2010) as described by a Belgium theatre critic Mia Vaerman:

> Narrator sketches a picture which subsequently appears on a big screen: a Polish princess saves her country by delivering herself to Napoleon. But halfway through the scene her character turns out to be a role in yet another drama piece, which takes place on and next to a theatre stage during World War II. The emperor's sweetheart is actually a member of the resistance. In the ridge of the theatre where she performs the Napoleon play, she is transmitting messages to the Allies. Theatre in film in a film within a play. This war movie in black-and-white was shot in the Plateaustraat in Ghent: personal reality is also seeping into the plot. At the end the real actress, the Polish Agata Maszkiewics, comes to greet the audience. Then you suddenly see her seated between the other spectators as well. The princess clothes are the only thing to go by, the rest of the set staggers continuously. The story keeps spinning to the extent that you, as a (real) spectator, go insane from the

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[37] Gritzner, Karoline, Patrick Primavesi, and Heike Roms. "On Dramaturgy." Performance Research 14.3 (2009): 1-2. Print.
[38] Ibid.

constant jumping between story lines. Your brain can no longer follow and is screaming for help. Clarity now! Please![39]

This is a clear challenge that takes the audience to the very edges of their perception. "It is a powerful moment in the show: on the one hand there is the awareness of the game, of the constant 'mise-en-abîme'; but on the other hand you just can't keep up." (Mia Vaerman for CorupusKritik) [40]. And you can't keep up if you are looking for hierarchical logic that ends in what we perceive as meaning in rational sense. This I think works on two levels on the perception of audience. Firstly, the non-clarity activates audience to think. It wakes up their perception. But on the other level audience has to let go of the rational and start 'understanding' in a different way – using a more 'intuitive', sub-conscious, non-rational way. They have to experience it. The audience has to 'dive into' the performance for the performance to start working. This is very much like in everyday life where some things can be understood but most can only be experienced.

I will describe the *Apology of the Escapologist* project in detail later but here I want to mention that it can be viewed in much of the same way. The *Escapologist* took place in Budapest in April and May 2009 and it included cars in the streets full of toys, or chandeliers. Then there was an installation with videos of people watching TV and TV watching them. After a lonely man showers, and makes phone calls. A pregnant woman sings and dances naked. The lonely man makes a spear and makes a whole in the wall where his library is. In another scene after that a girl in a shower commits suicide because Hungarians are xenophobic. After than a man in a box tells a story about bear and a fox… And so on. While I watch video documentation of the *Escapologist* I can see a clear dramaturgical development and a clear set of themes in rhizomatic relations. But for audiences at the time experiencing it – there was mainly confusion. They could not sort out the system behind the fragments. For instance as an anonymous male audience member after seeing *Escapologist* confessed, "Suddenly, I was flooded with information, I couldn't

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[39] Vaerman, Mia. *That´s Entertainmente!,* CorupusKritik, VTI, February 22, 2013
http://superamas.com/IMAGES/SCANPRESS/2011/MiaVaerman_Yd_ENG.pdf
[40] Ibid.

sort it" – (speaking about the multiple visuals in the GaP video and photo installation).[41] In this radical rhizomatic fragmentation the elements of narrative do not belong together anymore, they are 'a bloody mess' where '- disparate and irreconcilable elements are placed side by side and left to fight it out' as director of Forced Entertainment Tim Etchells writes (Etchells in On Dramaturgy 2009: 75)[42]. This is an extreme challenge for the audience who are used to making sense of the performance through construction of a story. And this has proved to be a real challenge for Krétakör's audience who were used to a drama theatre situation where the audience is led through a single, homogenous story and given a clear 'route' to follow. In the radical fragmentation of rhizomatic type audience is left to their own devices and they are encountering a set of unpredictable, unconnected parts that force them to be activated and then shout *'Clarity now!'* – understanding their own lack of understanding, and propose that clarity is maybe not the goal. Rhizomatic dramaturgy is primarily a performance of multiplicity, of simultaneous existence of units/'directions in motion,' that all have equal dramaturgical potential. Like Richard and Robin dancing to the Heavy metal anthem next to Cathy lying on the floor looking dead, and Claire putting on the gorilla costume in the *Bloody Mess*. Or in the *Escapologist* where in the end the artist could not even control which fragments / parts of the performance are seen by audience. And the audience also experiences this radical possibility of radically different readings through the possibility of not understanding.

In this performance of multiplicity, we understand that the theatre audience has an 'anarchic way of watching' the performance, as British director and scholar Alan Read describes this idea (Read 1995: 37)[43] that each audience member creates their own understanding including both rational and experiential that is completely unique and different to all the other audience members even in the same evening.

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[41] Anonymous audience member in the audience commentary in the DVD 2 – extras of the Krétakör, Apology of the Escapologist DVD, published by Krétakör, Budapest, 2010.
[42] Gritzner, Karoline, Patrick Primavesi, and Heike Roms. "On Dramaturgy." Performance Research 14.3 (2009): 1-2. Print.
[43] Read, Alan. Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement: The Last Human Venue. Basingstoke [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

Each audience member comes equipped with different knowledge, history, emotions, identity, and creates a completely unique frame of associations to the performance. So the audience does not receive one unified meaning from the makers and they do not all interpret it all in the same way, meaning is decentralized. The rhizomatic dramaturgy supports this anarchic existence of meaning and experiences, where there are 'rules but no rulers,' a system with no hierarchy. Radical, rhizomatic fragmentation of cultivated chaos understands this 'anarchic way of watching' and answers with an anarchic way of creating potentialities for the seeming chaos within the dramaturgy of the performance, and creating countless gaps to be filled by audiences.

Today's world is a world where the way the information is processed, and the kind of information that is processed, changes the way we understand and practice dramaturgy. Rhizomatic performances of cultivated chaos consist of fragments with numerous and parallel parts of plots, parallel desires, parallel times, and spaces entering and exiting dramaturgical composition at will. Each fragment has its own independence in this de-hierarchized logic and as we will see later, its own language. Or as Lehmann describes landscape dramaturgy as a dream because "[t]he dream constitutes the model par excellence of a non-hierarchical theatre aesthetic." (Lehmann 2006: 84)[44]

Today's world is a rhizomatic world of multiplicity. It always was, but with the new means of communication like digital television and Internet, this multiplicity of 'truths' and existences has become very visible. Multiplicity of points of view of many people are present all the time. And our reality now consists of this multiplicity.[45] This is probably why European contemporary companies working with performance have no need to give excuses for presenting something that can be perceived as a dream or chaos. The label of absurd situation (of Beckett), dreamlike landscape (of Lehmann) or psychotic hallucination (of Sarah Kane) is absent. In

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[44] Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
[45] Although Internet has started unfortunately being used in recent years by politicians for exactly the opposite: narrowing, trolling, and homogenizing.

*Youdream* performance (that I describe later) a performance about the 'internet way of perceiving,' the Superamas company show that the dreams are now reality. Non-linear, non-causal systems do not have to be explained away as dreams anymore. This new dramaturgy of (what I see as) 'cultivated chaos,' chaos created to make rhizomatic sense, a new way to understand a whole that presents a multiplication of stories, their fragmentation and combinations.

In many ways this theatre reflects exactly the world as we experience it today in our everyday lives that influenced by intense traveling, communication and the internet. Today's world is a world of multiplicities, diversities, distances, fragments, multiple perspectives, things taken out of their context and put back into a different context, of non-linear reading, of understanding that the other person is 'coming from somewhere else.'[46] We don't need to call something a dream in order to 'hold it together,' 'dream logic' has become reality logic. We don't need to see the world as homogenous in linear, causal way. Paradoxically, this simultaneous existence multiplicity of rhizomatic dramaturgy is perceived as 'chaos' for an audience used to the linear, 'logical' narrative. And this is understandable because we are talking about very complex dramaturgical systems. But this 'not understanding' or 'being confused' is not just a mistake or a problem it is actually a very important point of the rhizomatic dramaturgy. This 'confusion' takes us to our limits of understanding rationally, it points to the limits of rational thinking, and provides for other forms of perception. In theatre theory this way of perceiving beyond meaning is often called *experiencing* as it includes many senses and levels of consciousness. But to this I want to add that this that *confusion* is also a creative state – one in which the audience 'thinks' more, it associates more, it creates more meaning then if the 'meaning' was clear in the first place. It can take you beyond your previous 'knowledge.' This confusion can also be a critical confusion that allows you to have distance because of the not understanding. But this confusion has another possible

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[46] During writing this thesis that I started writing in 2009 things have unfortunately changed radically. Now this point of view is disappearing from societies in Eastern and Central Europe rapidly, under the burden of recent political and historical events.

layer: allowing one to be with something radically different, something confusing. And this is the true political potential or rhizomatic dramaturgy.

Here I would like to review some basic concepts of rhizomatic dramaturgy: rhizomatic dramaturgy is a dramaturgy of multiplicity. Firstly, it is multiplicity of narrative. Here instead of one centralized plot of drama theatre, we find a 'narrative' that is decentralized and one that includes a multiplicity of fragments of multiple stories. The 'world' of rhizomatic dramaturgy is not united in traditional sense – it does not represent one homogenous set of characters, in a homogenous situation (of conflict between characters), in a homogenous place and time. Rhizomatic dramaturgy allows for the world of the performance to present in my opinion a more complex world view than a play of one homogenous plot (let's say a play happening in a family living room showing a set of a few characters in a crisis), because it can present multiplicity of points of views and positions in a more complex, de-hierarchized, rhizomatic way (where nobody's and no truth is more true than others). Not presenting one homogenous of the perspective on the world but enabling presentation of a greater number of 'points of views,' autonomous parts of stories, environments, possibilities, situations, colors, to enter the grand constellation of the performance.

And while I describe the developments in dramaturgy from causal, unified plot to non-causal, fragmented dramaturgy (and in much detail), I want to make the point that while making contemporary performance in my own practice (for site specific, dance, conceptual dramaturgy etc.): I do not think of our plots as broken. As theater makers we do not necessarily ourselves perceive our narratives as fragmented. We do not start with a unified plot that we break after. On the contrary: we start with themes (issues, questions, problems, subjects, or even simply images and pieces of material or even just 'notions') and make constellations from these materials. So while it looks like fragmentation from the traditional point of view, and from the point of audience used to unified plot, but from the point of the makers the seeming fragmentation is just a different unity: non-homogenous, decentralized unity.

This non-hierarchical, often rhizomatic theatre aesthetic is built upon belief of existence of simultaneous multiplicity (even if built intuitively, unconsciously by the artist). What I mean is that if one believes that other people have the right to be different - to have different needs, different points of views, and beliefs etc.– and that these realities exist in parallel to one another - one starts to see world and reality as multiple. The performances stop needing to be one homogenous, closed off piece that aims at a unified truth, but rather performances become open works that do not aim at being whole, homogenous and finished. And this *is* political: it is about inclusion and difference.

Rhizomatic fragmentation is a dramaturgical chaos cultivated by artists to create mental space for the audience to join in the creative process. This is a decentralized narrative that draws the content from outside the homogenous story, from outside of unified point of view, and creates a breaking point for dramaturgy perceived as analysis of play based in plot and characters, where the unfolding of the plot makes for the spine of dramaturgical sequence. Here dramaturgy stops being purely a critical or interpretational study and becomes an artistic force within the performance making process because it becomes involved creatively and not merely analytically. Dramaturgy - if we start understanding it as life of and in-between the fragments - becomes the 'spine' itself. It becomes the structure of the performance instead of the plot - something that audience is *doing* and not just *(pe)receiving*. The dramaturgical structure is 3D and in motion, an organism rather than structure. But how is that 'organism' constructed?

### 2.7.  Ordering of Rhizomatic Dramaturgy

The dramaturgical sequence, ordering of the rhizomatic unconnected fragments is a crucial question of practical dramaturgy for today's theater makers, who are not ordering the sequence according to the story. This is especially important if we

understand dramaturgy, not as analytical practice of dramaturg but as a system of unfolding of the performance, as a complex system of experiences. Dramaturgy is a sequence itself. It is a structure that takes place in time.

Tim Etchells in a talk back after their performance of *Void Story* at Archa theatre in Prague (September 21st, 2011) talked about ordering the fragments simply by rehearsing, trying out fragments in different order until they find the right one, knowing the right order only by experiencing it on stage. And the famous dramaturgical key to devised theatre is the question 'does it work?' The 'cultivating of the chaos,' the making is both conceptual and experiential. Dramaturgy here oscillates between a specific dramaturgical concept and experiential implementation of the concept within rehearsal. So the ordering is not created *rationally* but *experientially*, and this is why for audience it also works (or doesn't work for that matter) on the level of experience.

But the fact that the dramaturgical sequence of independent fragments is not built analytically in preparation for a rehearsal, but experientially within rehearsals (because it is not a 'natural' plot sequence), does not mean that the dramaturgical order of fragments is not important. On the contrary, the idea that the audience is extremely busy attempting to understand the order of things, like in the *Youdream* example, points to the fact that the positioning of independent fragments is a vital thing, though the logic of the ordering can be purely experiential. Tim Etchells describes this in his essay on dramaturgy of Forced Entertainment, It is "as if our dramaturgy were all positioning of information, not just temporal but also physical – a matter of where things are coming from." (Tim Etchells in On Dramaturgy 2009: 73)[47] Positioning of autonomous fragments within performance in the fragmentary theatre becomes the main strategy of dramaturgy. Situation and positioning within situation is one of the basic dramaturgical tools, that of course applies to narrative, analytical dramaturgy, where the situation/conflict between characters is one of the main building blocks of the plot. But what we have here are

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[47] Gritzner, Karoline, Patrick Primavesi, and Heike Roms. "On Dramaturgy." Performance Research 14.3 (2009): 1-2. Print.

fragments that are not in 'service' of a plot, but independent, de-hierarchized elements in constant relating and movement modes, a relating that does not provide for unified, causal meaning, but a multiplicity of meanings/experiences. So we can speak about different dramaturgy of situating the elements, fragments (and not just the 'psychological' dramaturgy of characters).

"Where things are coming from" can also be viewed as one of the main dramaturgical tools - 'vector.' (Something like Brecht's 'engine' that is 'driving' the structure. This tool was described to me by my dramaturgy Prof. Mgr. Miloslav Klima during my MA studies of dramaturgy at Prague Academy of Performing Arts. But I have never found literature on this. It came to me directly from practice.) This 'vector' is a tool for analysis of motivation and 'movement' of character within plot in a play. Imagining the 'vector' helps to understand the direction and desire of a character (or a group, divine beings, history or whatever the force of the play is) and determines the possibility of direction, development, movement of the 'narrative' of the performance. 'Vector' is further determining (because it includes motivation as well as goal of action) of individual situations – scenes of the play as well as the overall situation – the theme of the play on the whole. Simply put, the 'vector' is a tool for creating dramaturgical dynamics of a play.[48]

The 'vector' can be used in fragmentary dramaturgy to determine how the dramaturgical dynamics of a fragmentary performance is made. Ideas of *Where things are coming from'* as well as what is driving the things, and where things are going to is connected to dramaturgical fragments that allow for exploring the autonomy of the fragments – their specific positing, and context as well determine potential connections with other fragments. By trying to decipher *'where things are coming from'* – audiences are looking for relations between fragments, and are directly being engaged with the constellation. But what is most important is that

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[48] I find the idea of vectors especially interesting in context of contemporary thinking. For instance, in physics where physicists *'no longer speak of [basic stuff] in terms of solid, inert particles but of fields, forces and energy: words that describe their interrelation rather than their nature'*. Midgley, Mary. Are You an Illusion?, Place of Publication Not Identified: Routledge, 2015. Print. p. 143

both the question 'where things are coming from', as well as idea of 'vector' not only include the starting position and the final point of destination but that they stand for the movement. And this is the rhizomatic system in which elements are "dimensions, or rather directions in motion" (Deleuze, Guattari 1987: 23)[49]. In fragmentary dramaturgy we can say dramaturgical dynamics is created by multiple vectors that are positioned in movement. These 'vectors' are created through a set of gaps between rhizomatic fragments/scenes – between which there is perhaps 'no possible connection' at first glance. So, instead of elements in rhizomatic dramaturgy we find 'directions in motion' or 'vectors.'

And this is how we operate in practice as dramaturgs in devised theatre. When we watch/experience material (scenes, situations, partitures, ideas) created in rehearsal we look for potential of the material that has to be understood/felt in movement. We try to 'see' this material in (existing and not-yet-existing) context – the potential, that cannot be seen as stable, but is in constant becoming.

Here we can say that dramaturgy is not analysis or interpretation but that as Flemish dramaturg Marianne Van Kerkhoven wrote: "Dramaturgy is movement" (Kerkhoven in On dramaturgy 2009: 11)[50]. Narrative or dramatic dramaturgy is *movement* because it is about unfolding of situations between characters in time within the plot. In postdramatic dramaturgy where the plot is not a provider of basic homogenous meaning - the *movement* (or metamorphosis in Lehmann's terms) becomes the structure itself – the movements of elements in relations. So, it is no wonder that Etchells writes that ordering can be done only through experiencing it in rehearsal: ordering is also unstable and in movement.

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[49] Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Print. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1987.
[50] Gritzner, Karoline, Patrick Primavesi, and Heike Roms. "On Dramaturgy." Performance Research 14.3 (2009): 1-2. Print.

## 2.8. Conclusions About Rhizomatic Dramaturgy

We can conclude that contemporary dramaturgy has gone through very crucial changes from 'narrative' dramaturgy connected directly to a pre-written play, to dramaturgy that includes all of the stage elements – a decentralized and new (more democratic) system of relating. The de-hierarchization has happened on three levels: the level of stage elements – the pre-written play is not the central element anymore; the level of meaning – there is no central, homogenous meaning; and on the level of the making of the performance – the playwright and the director are not the central authors of the performance, other team members, and audiences are becoming co-creators.

This de-hierarchization of elements has led to what we perceive to be fragmentation. We can say that fragmentary dramaturgy represents decentralization of the homogenous story and thus a multiplication of stories and the potential for multiple perspectives that are allowed their full independence. Fragmentary dramaturgy also is more multiple from the receivers' side. In the theatre each audience member always has a different understanding of what is going on and experience that is different from everybody else in the audience, these experiences are unified by the plot. So we can say that theatre is a place of both multiplicity and unity of this multiplicity. But in fragmented dramaturgy, where the audience is purposely left to their own devices, they are invited to understand that their experience must be *unique*, because there is no unifying element. Audiences are eligible and made aware of this "anarchic way of viewing" – they are able to create their own versions of the stories. So we can say here the audience enters the dramaturgical equation. It becomes responsible for the making meaning process.

We can say that rhizomatic dramaturgy works with confusion rather than layout of clear homogenous meaning of a performance. It proposes situations of unconnected fragments being put on one pile to fight it out, and the audience has to call for '*Clarity now!*' It is a 'composed ambiguity', or a potential for multiple meanings.

The audience here can experience its own lack of understanding. Rhizome also activates spectators to search for "where things are coming from," to create new connections between fragments and thus new meanings. The audience continues to follow the completely separate fragments and form them into new constellations of meaning. Partially this is due to human inclination towards understanding and making narratives – a need that American art critic Arthur Danto describes when he says "that however non-narrative a given historiographic text may seem (statistics, economics, etc.) it can always be translated back into narrative form" (Jameson 2000: 167)[51], Frederic Jameson calls it "narrative instinct." This narrative instinct pushes us to find meaning and connections even where there seemingly are none. Fragmentary dramaturgy explores and stages this narrative instinct to the full to create gaps of meaning and thus activate the audience. So, in the view of this "narrative instinct," if we go back to Diana González Martín's statement that (what she calls) rhizomatic fragmentation is difficult to find, and say that perhaps it is neither hard to make, nor hard to find, but it is difficult to *perceive it as such* because our narrative instinct will always influence us and get in the way of our letting things be disconnected, and make meaning.

It is important to state that decentralized, fragmentary dramaturgy does not propose one homogenous meaning (or possibly no meaning at all), but it does create the opportunity for each audience member to create their own individualized versions of meaning. As an anonymous female spectator of the Escapologist confirmed, "The aim is to enter with your own thought and finally leave with your own thoughts"[52] She was speaking about GaP video and photo installation of the *Escapologist* project. Here reception becomes autonomized as well – each audience member has somewhat separate experience of the fragmentary dramaturgy. Each audience member has their own separate perspective that is an active element in making of the dramaturgy. As the audience we accept that there is no homogenous

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[51] Jameson, Fredric. *Brecht and Method*. London: Verso, 2000. Print.
[52] Anonymous audience member in the audience commentary in the DVD 2 – extras of the Krétakör, Apology of the Escapologist DVD, published by Krétakör, Budapest, 2010.

meaning, nor right or wrong way to experience the work. We let go of the 'authority' of the single, centralized, provided meaning, and join the creation of anarchic multiplicity of interpretations. So here we can talk about decentralization of meaning in theatre and thus the creation of a multiplicity of meanings within a fragmentary dramaturgy.

So dramaturgy becomes a creative act - instead of an analytical one - by becoming a more constituent part of the making of these performances. But the audience also become creative participants who do not merely witness performances but who actively participate as co-creators of meaning. The fragmentation creates gaps through which the audience can enter the performance. Here the viewer enters the equation of making the meaning.[53]

In this new situation, dramaturgy is not responsible for analysis and 'translation' of play into a theatre performance anymore because there is no play. Dramaturgy here is relation between multiplicities: relations between fragments and their constellations. Here the constellation of fragments is the new dramaturgical composition, where the order of fragments, the sequence as we saw in the Forced Entertainment example is often constructed within process of rehearsals – i.e. live. One of the main principles is activation of the audience towards thinking through things, searching for clarity, by creating seeming non-clarity - a cultivated chaos. Here the issue of "where things are coming from" within dramaturgical constellations of fragments is a constructive element of the narrative of the performance. It is the question that audience follows, and that is answered in "anarchic way."

Rhizomatic dramaturgy can best be defined as an anarchic dramaturgy of cultivated chaos that is not defined by the authority of one story, but allows for a system of 'vectors' of relations to appear from the autonomy of independent fragments of multiplicity of stories, in an equation that includes forcing the viewer to finish the creation themselves, though an individualized meaning making process that forms

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[53] And we can speak about this meaning not existing without the (subjective) viewer.

a potential for multiplicity of meanings from a theatre performance. In connection to contemporary performance practice of fragmentary dramaturgy, it is also necessary to redefine dramaturgy from a critical dramaturgy of text-based analysis, to an artistic field that works with dramatic elements and stands for the constellation, structure, composition, the logic of the script of the performance. This constellation incorporates inter-relations of elements in constant metamorphosis, change, movement, and flux. Dramaturgy, seen as a logic of inter-relations within the constellation of elements in contemporary performance is a tool of situating – relating, framing, positioning and contextualizing of these elements within the composition of the performance.

## 2.9.   The Rhizome as Spatial

I would like to point out to two important aspects of the rhizome and rhizomatic dramaturgy: the political aspect and the spatial aspect, both of which are important for my thesis and for the dramaturgy that I am describing. The rhizomatic dramaturgy creates conditions for new ways of relating: non-hierarchical, decentralized relations in motion. And this is political: no element, or vector has a long term centralized power. All elements have equal potential and possibility of relating within the system. This is a precondition for multiplicity. In rhizomatic dramaturgy elements become 'vectors', they exist only as trajectories and movements, and only in relation. So we can say that rhizomatic dramaturgy is a 'politics of multiplicity, interdependence and relations.' As I will show in the next chapters – in spatial dramaturgy audience members become elements of the performance – they become 'vectors' of their own and enter in to the interrelations of the performance.

It is also important to understand that the rhizome is spatial. This relating in flux happens in space. And here I would like to note that understanding of space has changed radically in contemporary theory. Space is not perceived as something

static and permanent anymore – but as something that is in constant change and movement and most importantly something that stands for multiplicity. British social geographer Doreen Massey in her seminal book *For Space* (2005) writes about space as multiplicity. If we understand time as a succession of one thing after another. We can view space as one thing next to another. She writes about

> space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity. Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space. If space is […] the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality. (Massey 2005: 9)[54]

Since rhizomatic relating cannot be viewed as static or two dimensional it has to be perceived as spatial where individual elements are viewed as 'vectors' or 'dimensions, or rather directions in motion'[55]. This new understanding of space is important for the new understanding of rhizomatic dramaturgy and especially the *Apology of the Escapologist* project for two reasons – understanding of space as 'multiplicity or contemporaneous plurality' and as 'a product of interrelations'.

In the next chapter I will describe *Apology of the Escapologist* in detail, but here I would like to note that these two aspects are important dramaturgically and politically. In the sense that I take dramaturgy as an 'art of relating,' where *Apology of the Escapologist* is an example with very specific and explicit ways of relating in space, where this dramaturgical relating in space purposely points to the socio-political relating among people, among the multiplicity. This spatial aspect of rhizomatic dramaturgy is what interests me most in the *Apology of the Escapologist* as my main example.

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[54] Massey, Doreen B. *For Space*. London: SAGE, 2005. Print.
[55] Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Print. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1987

### *3.* **THE ESCAPOLOGIST CASE**

In this chapter I will describe *Apology of the Escapologist*, the project by Hungarian Krétakör company from 2009 that is my main example for 'spatial dramaturgy.' This project marked an important change in the thinking and operating of Krétakör Company.

First I will introduce the initial phase of Krétakör Színház's work, from its establishment in 1995 until 2008. In this period, the independent Hungarian theatre company Krétakör produced performances based on classical plays mostly in spaces with division between the stage and the auditorium. This is important because it represents a very different way of working than the *Apology of Escapologist* performance of 2009.

In 2008, the Hungarian director Árpád Schilling changed the name of his company from Krétakör Színház to the shorter Krétakör, removing the Hungarian word for theatre - színház **-** from the title and disbanded the company of about forty people - actors and other company members. The contrast to their subsequent *Apology of Escapologist* project that I will describe below in detail is striking: it took performance into non-theatre spaces, used a multiplicity of media, and brought a community on stage. But most importantly it took many days to see the entire performance; it did not happen in one place in one evening. Such a radical change in making theatre connected to this specific company in post-communist Hungary was a shock for audiences and critics alike.

The description of the nature of the change - of the performance from 2009 - where Árpád Schilling himself became the main character, the escapologist, from the inside 'me' (his room, his story) to the outside world (stories of communities, spaces of communities), and the context in which it arose will set basis for me to describe an important change in dramaturgy not only of this company but also in wider sense of contemporary theatre, in which space and spacing a play crucial role.

### 3.1. The Beginning: Krétakör Színház 1995 - 2006

Krétakör in Hungarian means chalk circle, a reference to Brecht's play *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* as Anna Veress, dramaturg of Krétakör Színház wrote in her article about the company summing up the first years of its existence. It "represents a small, enclosed area designated in space, which we can point at, saying, 'look here, something is happening within this circle. […] Over time, the chalk will be carried away on people's shoes and washed away by the rain, so we will draw another circle somewhere else and thenceforth that will be our designated space, our theatre." (Veress in Hungarian Theatre, 2003: 134[56] ). Drawn from Brecht´s epic theatre the Chalk Circle is a space for theater that travels, appears and disappears, a theater space that happens and represents the independence of Krétakör. In 2008 Árpád Schilling decided that the word theatre no longer represented the activity he wanted to perform and he took out the word theatre, leaving only Chalk Circle as the title of the company: a fleeting, roaming designated space.

Krétakör Színház, with theatre in the title, existed from 1995 – 2008 and was one of the most prominent, experimental and successful independent companies in Eastern Europe. The company made productions mainly based on drama plays, the 'classics,' for instance – Bertolt Brecht's *Baal* (1998), Ferenc Molnár's *Liliom* (2001), Georg Büchner's *Leonce and Lena* (2002), Moliere's *Misanthrope* (2004) and Ibsen's *Peer Gint* (2005). These performances represented what is described as 'director's theatre' - productions where the director is central to the creation of new interpretations of plays and autonomously creates another layer of theatrical meaning, 'added value' to the playwright's text, where dramaturgical input is substantial and '*major script revisions subordinated even important texts to the*

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[56] Due to lack of access to exact bibliographical date for this article (called *The Shabby Paradise*, published in *Hungarian Theatre* in 2004) I am including the link Hungarian version of the article in online Krétakör archives Veress, Anna. A Krétakörről – azoknak, akik most hallanak róla először, 2003.12.01. Krétakör archives, accessed July 22nd, 2016,https://archive.kretakor.eu/?p=WyIyOTE5IiwiaHVcL2FydGljbGUiLCIjcG9wdXBBcnRpY2xIIl0=

*demands of our performance'* (Veress in Hungarian Theatre 2003:140)[57]. Some performances such as *Nexxt* (2000) were based in plays written specifically for Krétakör projects by playwrights as well as with writing contributions of the company such as in *Fatherland, My All…* (2002) but all of the performances held unity of a play, of a story[58], and all of them held one vision of the director Árpád Schilling. These performances can be considered 'interpretative' theatre, where director adds a layer of his own interpretation to the existing play.

Krétakör Színház was internationally widely well received even among audiences who are not partial to drama theatre, theatre based in plays where actors enact a narrative based in characters and situations. In part it was favored because it used a variety of theatrical tools, incorporating visual elements, music or movement and was known for producing projects in variety of styles. The performances were always different than the previous ones. The production of *Leonce and Lena* (2002) had strong features of puppet theatre where "the actors double the musicians … and puppeteers, operating the marionettes in the story's climatic scene." (Veress in Hungarian Theatre, 2003: 137)[59] While in *W-Workers' Circus* (2001) based on Büchner's *Woyzeck,* Krétakör worked with physical expression inspired by the theatre of cruelty of Antonin Artaud. As the dramaturg of the performance testifies it was "played on a sand-covered platform enclosed by iron bars, inside of which the actors are trapped, mostly naked. This is a brutally physical, darkly poetic piece, teeming with the strong images of the theatre of cruelty." (Veress in Hungarian Theatre, 2003: 136)[60] Andrea Tompa in an article about contemporary Hungarian theatre for journal Theatre wrote: "*Woyzek* then could be called, in part and homage to Artaud; *Liliom* would bow before Brecht; *Leonce and Lena* experiments with Peter Brooks's aesthetics; *Seagull*, with Stanislavsky – and

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[57] Ibid.
[58]*BLACKland* (*FEKETEország*, 2008) did not have one unified linear story. This performance was mostly made through the ideas of the actors - like *Teatro Godot* (1996), the second production of Krétakör.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

additional productions incorporate aspects of circus, German hyperrealism, and cabaret, among other styles." (Tompa in Theater, 2008: 22)[61]

In his productions Árpád Schilling used specific tools to tell specific stories. The form did not precede the material. For instance, Árpád Schilling read Büchner's *Woyzeck* as deeply brutal play, about cruelty of society and thus resolved to draw inspiration from Artaud's theatre of cruelty. In the *W-Workers' Circus*, inspired by *Woyzeck*, all elements of performance: sounds, music, costumes, light gained equal place, that produced atmosphere of cruelty working with all the senses. The material, in these cases the play, would determine the style and the language (better said languages) of the performance. And every performance was done in different style. This required from the actors to change the way of working or even learn new skills for every performance. "Some characteristics of his work [are] improvisatory work with actors, intense use of actors' physicality, Brechtian "alienation" effect presented through song and grotesque counterpoint." (Tompa in Theatre 2008: 20)[62] This way of working required strong commitment from the actors and long and concentrated workshops before starting individual rehearsals, that position the performer in a place within theatre that is closer to the above mentioned theatre of cruelty or the poor theatre of Grotowski rather than typical Eastern European drama theatre of repertory type, where actors get very little physical or mental challenge, continuously working mainly with text and using other theatrical tools rarely.  This again reflects what the Krétakör Színház was – an ever-changing chalk circle that constantly transforms.

*Krétakör Színház* was an independent theatre company without a permanent space, which was still quite unusual for theatre companies in Eastern Europe, and in the 1990's was quite unique.

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[61] Tompa, Andrea. *Hungarian and Independent: New Artists Bring New Forms of Existence*, Theater, Yale, vol. 38 no. 2, 2008.
[62] Ibid.

The tradition of using non-established theatre spaces for productions has roots in the history of the Hungarian theatre in the 20th century, but mostly within the work of companies that were ignored or banned during the communist regime. The most remarkable example is Péter Halász[63] who moved his productions to his apartment when his company was banned. Hungary also had a strong culture of high quality amateur companies working in different locations.

The company 'traveled' from space to space and has performed and premiered in different theatres in Budapest from drama theatres such as *Szkéné, Merlin Theatre* and *Thália Theatre[64]*, to more experimental performance venues such as *Trafó*. As Árpád Schilling says himself, young directors at the time could not choose where to direct, they had to be invited to theatres and travel from space to space. "I had to travel among different theatre venues. A large amount of movement helped me to understand how this could not be pressure from outside, how it could be a decision. The first performance I made I had to play in three or four different places – in one place I could make one performance, in the second two performances and after came the third place, […] and I had to play my repertory in four different places. It was not my choice, it was the situation, (Árpád Schilling interview p.192) According to Árpád Schilling at first the movement from one space to another was not a choice. It was a necessity provided by circumstances. Later it became a possibility for spatial freedom and Árpád Schilling has rejected invitations to join state funded permanent theatres that are in some countries in Eastern Europe called ´stone theatres´ (stone being reference to the theatre architecture of heavy static building).

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[63] Péter Halász (1943 – 2006) founder of several theater companies in Budapest and New York City including the Kassák Studió (the apartment theatre), the famous Squat Theater, Love Theater and Varosi Szinhaz.
[64] For instance, the first Krétakör productions (*The Big Game*, 1996) and *Baal* (1998) were invited to famous Katona József Theatre's studio (Kamra). Later Árpád (and some of his actors were working in Katona József Theatre (but not as Krétakör). Krétakör had a period of being hosted and integrated in Bárka Színház.  They went to Thália from there (causing a brake up of the Bárka ensemble).

And Krétakör had the difficulty of being valued and accepted as a professional theatre ensemble (according to its achievements) because working without a permanent established space was associated with amateurism. 'Stone theatres' represent not only the permanent architectural features but also permanence of state funding, that often goes only to companies residing in these venues. This way of funding of repertory theatres almost points to funding of the buildings rather than companies, where these companies are dependent on the building for the funds. Árpád Schilling rejected this system, giving up the company's artistic, financial and spatial freedom. Despite the fact that joining a 'stone theatre' also brought steady funding, Krétakör *Színház* stayed independent.

But although some of the performances were created for less conventional theatre spaces, for instance *Love* (1999), that was designed as an open-air performance that was toured with a truck, which was the stage itself; *Fatherland, My All…* (2002), that was done for a circus space, or others were toured to non-theatre spaces like *Baal* (1998) that was performed in a deconsecrated church.[65] Besides that, the company used *Komárom Fortress* (on the south bank of Danube near Slovakia) for their site-specific, work in progress demonstrations for instance for *Leonce and Lena*, *W-worker's Circuse*, or *BLACKkland*. Still Hungarian public perceived Krétakör (as the chalk circle where 'something is happening') as 'theatre'[66] – a conventional theatre happening in spaces where stage and auditorium are fixed and separated.

In 2008, the year of disbanding of the company, Krétakör Színház was at that time a theatre company at its peak. It was functioning as an independent production entity that in 2008 had just gotten their own headquarters in the very center of Budapest including series of rehearsal spaces, residency spaces and offices (a place

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[65] *Baal* was performed in 1998 the festival, called Zsámbéki Nyári Színház (also known as Zsámbéki Szombatok). Zsámbék has ruins of a church from late Romanesque - early gothic style. At this festival Krétakör showed work demonstration for *W - Workers' Circus* (2001), and *Fatherland*, *My All* (Hazámhazám, 2002) in different locations.
[66] See interview with critic Tamás Jászay Chapter 3.9. of this text.

the members of company called Krétakör's Base at Gönczy Pál street). In post-socialist Eastern Europe, where most theatre companies are state or city operated and housed in traditional theatre venues their situation was really exceptional. They had a large group of original Krétakör fans of about 5 000 people[67] (Árpád Schilling interview p.211).

The company has performed at major theatre festivals around Eastern and Western Europe, Asia (for instance major festivals such as *Edinburgh International Theatre Festival*; *Kunstenfestivaldesarts*, Brussels; *Europalia Festival*, Belgium; *Wiener Festwochen*; *Festival d'Avignon*; as well as other festivals and venues *MC93 Bobigny*; *La Comédie de Reims*; *La Rose des vents - scène nationale*  in France; *Oerol Festival*, Terschelling, the Netherlands; *New Drama Action Festival*, Vilnius; *Festspillene* in Bergen, Norway; *Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center*; *Seoul Performing Arts Festival*; and  *Carrefour Theatre Restival*, Quebec, and *Theatre Festival*, Pilsen Czech Republic). They were winning theatre awards such as the Grand Prix at Belgrade's BITEF international theatre festival, the first prize of festival Premiers Plans d'Angers and the New Theatrical Realities award of the Europe Theatre Prize, as well as approximately another 72 between 1995 and 2009 (and another three prizes between 2011- 2016) prizes of different theatre festivals and magazines. Árpád Schilling was being invited to direct for Schaubühne Berlin, Burgtheatre in Vienna and Teatro Piccollo in Milan. By all standards Krétakör Színház in 2008 was a theatrical success. And it was at this very point Árpád Schilling decided to make the radical changes within Krétakör.

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[67] A report about for *Escapologist* project says they had circa 4000 mail addresses before the profile shift of the company, most probably addresses registered for their newsletter. (It is also mentioned only 79 people out of this 4000 - registered for the events of the *Escapologist***.** Krétakör Archives July 22nd, 2016:
https://archive.kretakor.eu/?p=WyIzMTIyIiwiaHVcL2FydGljbGUiLCIjcG9wdXBBcnRpY2xlIl0=
)
In 2006 they had 33,000 spectators in Hungary and abroad (Krétakör Archives July 22nd, 2016:
https://archive.kretakor.eu/?p=WyIyOTA5IiwiaHVcL2FydGljbGUiLCIjcG9wdXBBcnRpY2xlIl0
=
In 2007 the total number was 24,705 (Krétakör Archives July 22nd, 2016:
https://archive.kretakor.eu/?p=WyIyOTA4IiwiaHVcL2FydGljbGUiLCIjcG9wdXBBcnRpY2xlIl0
=)

## 3.2. Krétakör Change 2006 – 2009

The transition into the new way working had started already in 2006 with
*Astronomer's Dream, a* site specific and community project, and *hamlet.ws* (2007),
a project with educational elements that is performed in secondary schools in
Hungary to this day. In 2008 Krétakör and continued with two unusual productions
*Father Courage* coproduction with French street theatre company *Le Phun*, that
took place in open air on Szentendrei Island, former pioneer camp during at
*Szentendre Summer Festival*. It had elements of street theatre and site specific, it
was devised and did not have a linear story. The same year (May 2008) in MC93
Theatre in Bobigny, France Krétakör opened *Éloge d'Escaplogist* (*Apology of
Escapologist* referred to by company members in French in order to differ it from
the Hungarian *Apology of Escapologist*). The project worked with locals living in
outskirts of Bobigny and included elements of their art – parkour, hip hop and
graffiti[68].

Krétakör's profile change was announced in early 2008. The last performances of
the Krétakör Theatre were presented June 2008 as a mini festival called
*Krétakörmenet* (Chalk Circle Thread) in Merlin and Millenáris Theatres. Where they
showed the *Seagull*, *BLACKland*, *Leonce and Lena* and *hamlet.ws* as well as The
Burgtheater version of *Hamlet*, directed by Árpád Schilling (*Hamlet3*, 2005). I will
describe the reaction of the Hungarian critics to the change in the company later
on, based on an interview with critic Tamás Jászay. But here I just want to mention
that Árpád Schilling said that at that time around 2007 the critics had a feeling that
Krétakör was not going to do any new shows, despite the performances I have just
named.

In early spring of 2009, after the change of name and disbanding of the company,
Krétakör opened the *Apology of the Escapologist – Urban Therapy (A*

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[68] *Éloge d'Escaplogist* according to company members and videos from the archive a very
different project to the Hungarian *Escapologist* and this is why I will not get into detailed
description here.

*szabadulóművész apológiája), a project that marked the peak of the beginning of the new Krétakör, without theatre in the title of the company.*

### 3.3. Dramaturgical Architecture of the Escapologist

*Apology of the Escapologist was an elaborate project-performance consisting of five dramaturgical parts (Overture, The Pit, Laborhotel, Artproletarz, and Finale) taking place in seven separate events in seven different locations at different times.*

*Each of the different spaces featured different and independent parts if the dramaturgy of the performance, an independent section of the whole that had its own space, time, and narrative. Each part had its own structure and form, and all were devised in collaboration with artists from different fields and included public space installations, video installation, performances, community theatre, site specific theatre, gatherings, sound-guide tour etc. All of this made the project seemingly inconsistent, fragmented in story, style, and language.*

*Apology of the Escapologist began with an installation of cars around the streets of Budapest. In the second part - a site-specific photo installation of a woman alone in her room, and a naked man who broke through a wall in his house alone. In the third part in a site-specific performance a man and a women had a fight, and told their stories, a few weeks later there was a performance - a meeting with a pregnant women (singing) in a public bath, a birthday party for an eighteen year old in a deserted hospital, and a dance-party for seniors in Budapest District 9. All events except the cars in the streets and installation in Gödör Club in the center of Budapest took place in the District 9, it was a part of the concept to remain local in the district where the company's base was.*

*Escapologist's* construction of dramaturgical parts was somewhat complicated. It began with an introductory part the *Overture* – a car installation in the streets of

District 9. The main three parts included: 1) *Gödör* (meaning pit in Hungarian). The first part was divides into further two: 1a) *Cemetery* – an installation of cars and 1b) *GaP* a large-scale video installation - both in the spaces of Gödör Club. 2) *LaborHotel* – the second part at the Krétakör headquarters consisting of two lines of a series of separate scenes.  3) *Artproletarz* the third part consisted of 3a) *Oxicotin* 3b) *18 Plusminus* and 3c) *Everwalk*. The project ended with a *Finale* – celebration in the streets of District 9.

*Apology of the Escapologist* opened in 2009 and took place from March 8th, 2009 to May 1st, 2009.

Here is the list of individual parts that made up the dramaturgy of the *Apology of the Escapologist* (2009) with original titles in Hungarian where different:

1. *Overture* installation took place in the streets in the center of Budapest March 8th - 15th, 2009
2. *I ACT: Pit (Gödör)* ongoing installations took place in *Gödör Club* in the center of Budapest
   *1. a. Cemetery (Temető),* March 20th – 29th, 2009
   *1. b. GaP (RéS),* March 27th – April 5th, 2009
3. *II ACT: Laborhotel,* performance took place in company's base in District 9. It was performed 12 times from April 10th – 19th, 2009
4. *III ACT: Artproletarz,* all parts in total were performed 12 times:
   *3. a. Oxytocin* in public bath in District 9 April 20th – 24th, 2009
   *3. b. 18 Plusminus* in an abandoned hospital in District 9 April 25th – 27th, 2009
   *3. c. Everwalk (Örökséta)* in local community club in District 9, April 27th and 29th, 2009
5. *Last – Finale* celebration in the streets in District 9 on May 1st, 2009

### 3.3. Escapologist Main Description

*Overture* took place in the center of Budapest, the passers-by could encounter cars filled with piles of stuffed animal, piles of toy cars, or recycled trash, piles of coins. By filling the inside of something so ordinary as a car parked in a street with unusual, almost surreal content, the beginning of *Escapologist* questioned our everyday perceptions and what we call reality. The inner spaces of cars, filled with different installations were like human beings with their 'hearts or minds open' to the public, like opening up of something private, the 'inner' space to the public eye. It proposed something unusual within the everyday realm, announced that something is about to open and inviting audiences to join, but more than that it proposed certain fragility with these installations open in public space.



The Apology of the Escapologist / Overture; photo: Dávid Udvardy

The Apology of the Escapologist / Overture; photo: Dávid Udvardy

Texts on car trunks indicated that this was part of a larger project and invited the passers-by to become audiences by following the next steps, inviting them to go from the street to the *Gödör Club* art space. The first dramaturgical section the *Pit (Gödör)* consisted of two parts: *The Cemetery (Temető)* and *the GaP (RéS)*. *The Cemetery* featured the cars previously parked in the streets now displayed in the garage of *Gödör Club* with some of their parts burned, as if their tops have exploded. Inside the cars spectators could see videos of people sitting in their homes, some ironing, hugging each other or reading newspapers but mostly staring into the camera not doing anything. On closer inspection one realized that these people are watching TVs, but also that the TVs are watching them, though the camera recording their actions. These were not actors, but real people not acting, sitting in their real homes. And they are moving very little, almost immobile, staring into the camera.

The Apology of the Escapologist / GaP; photo: Dávid Udvardy

The Apology of the Escapologist / GaP; photo: Dávid Udvardy

Upstairs in Gödör Club - the *GaP* was a large-scale multiple screen video-photo installation in *Gödör Club* with multiple screens with installations of photos and films. One of the main photo-films follows a man - Árpád Schilling the character - at home alone. The man is in his bed, he is taking a shower, he is eating in the kitchen, he is on his cell phone, he is shitting. He is masturbating. He weighs himself. The video is in black and white and his rooms seem white and empty. He is growing a beard and withering together with his house plant. He takes one of his books and the books spill, making a mess all over the space. He runs around the house taking bits and pieces of objects around the house and makes a spear. He throws the spear into the book shelf and makes a small hole in the wall. He looks to see what is outside. He throws his spear into the TV and breaks it. In a rage he enlarges the gap in the wall. Through this gap he enters another space. He exits covered in blood and feathers into a miniature, cozy (womb-like) red theatre, where children are sitting in miniature seats. He looks scared and they look scared. They are watching him and then they start laughing. His wife is also sitting and

watching him. The whole scene looks like a nightmare and is in fact the first step towards escape from the artist's nightmare of separation, solitude and focus on one's own self.

In one of the other installations in the *Gap,* in the same space: the Gödör Club, one could see documentary footage of Lilla Sárosdi (Schilling's wife) during pregnancy, sleeping, or dancing naked at home, or in a hospital bed in pain, playing with herself, eating an orange; in a car with a hole in the roof and through this hole sand was sand flowing continuously into the car (like a sand clock). And a photo installation with a series photo of photos of Lilla and Árpád with audio instructions on parenting.

The *GaP* takes the *Escapologist* main character Árpád Schilling from immobility to action, from passive watching TV to understanding that there is a world outside that needs to be explored. The gap stands both for the grave that is *Escapologists* own room, where he eats, shits, and sleeps being as he describes in his production notes a 'dead man,'[69] as well as for the gap in the wall that he makes with his spear to create an exit into the new world. His perspective shifts from private, individual inside (his own lonely room) to public (miniature public theatre).

*Gödör*, as in *Gödör Club* where the first part of the *Escapologist* took place, in Hungarian means the pit. This pit is a whole in the ground in the very center of Budapest, right off the central Deák square. The surface area of the Pit is a club featuring parties, concerts, while the underground areas are used for exhibitions and theatre performances. Originally the pit was dug to start the building of a new National Theatre in Budapest in this very place. In 1999[70] the right-wing party, Fidesz - Hungarian Civic Union, a major conservative party in Hungary, decided to

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[69] A quote from the Escapologist booklet, translation from Hungarian, not available in the online archive at this time.

[70] The construction was stopped in the autumn of 1998. The decision about the new location was made public in 1999. See for instance Central European Review: http://www.ce-review.org/authorarchives/csardas_archive/csardas12old.html July 2nd, 2016

build the controversial National Theatre building in a different place outside of the center leaving two underground floors and one floor above the ground of the unfinished for a while.[71] The pit is a scar in the center of Budapest that marks a questionable political decision to build the national theatre in a hard to reach outskirts of Budapest. On the other hand the new building is unusually tasteless architecture featuring, as *Theatre Architecture in Central Europe's* online database says "full-size bronze statues of the most outstanding Hungarian actors, a symbolic gate (…) leading to the shape of a ship functioning as a "foundation" of the theatre building, surrounded by a pool of water, out of which emerges the tympanum of the demolished National Theatre."[72] The fact that the National Theatre was 'banned' to the outskirts of Budapest as well as its tasteless design representing the ship of Hungarian nation surrounded by water, and greatness of the actors eternalized in bronze, point to how the Hungarian government, I think purposely, misunderstands the function of theatre: it should be on the side and not at the center of social life, it should represent 'greatness' without questioning.[73] The *Escapologist* performance is looking for the opposite, the new social relations with the audience thus begin their journey in a hole, in a theatre pit. In an empty space, an empty hole of a *not-to-be* National theatre, connecting the director's own personal story of loneliness to the scar in the center of the city, pointing out that the 'escape' is also a political journey that aims to correct the misrepresentation of theatre as a passive vessel of the nation's greatness.

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[71] The plans about the area were announced after a long delay in August 2000. The Gödör was finished by 2002.

[72] Anonymous. *The National Theatre*, Theatre Architecture Database, February 16, 2012
http://www.theatre-architecture.eu/db.html?filter%5Blabel%5D=&filter%5Bcity%5D=&filter%5Bstate_id%5D=14&page=2&theatreId=185

[73] Corruption was probably an important factor in this story (for both land areas and the winning constructing companies) that would deserve further investigation in another research project. For instance, the environment of the new location for the National Theatre was an investment area of Sándor Demján's Trigránit Company. Demján's business was linked to Fidesz in many ways.

The second section of the project, the *Laborhotel*[74] was a site-specific theatre performance that took place in a series of rooms at the Krétakör headquarters. The ´dramaturgical funnel´ took the audiences from the not-to-be National theatre, the public space in the heart of Budapest to the Krétakör private 'home' space, where the company works and creates.
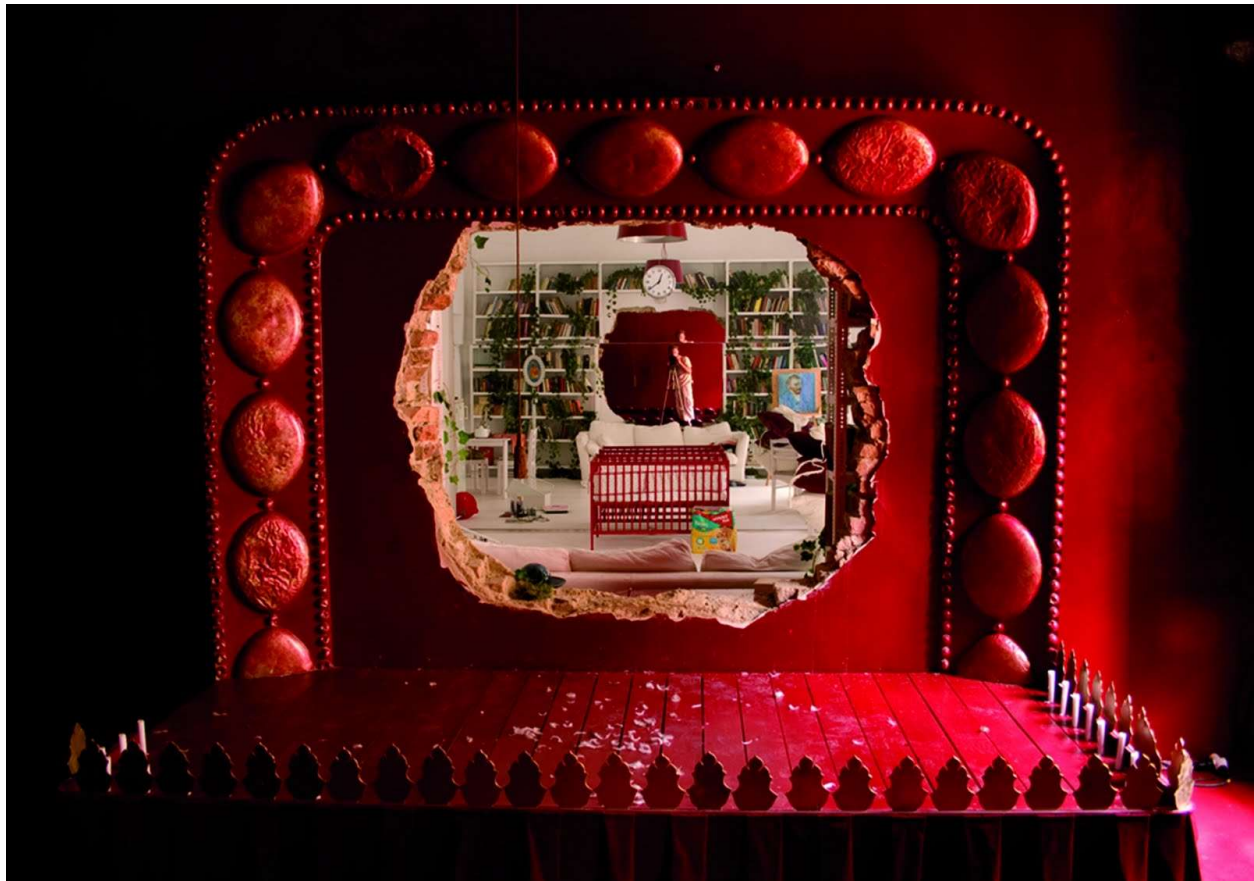


The Apology of the Escapologist / Laborhotel; photo: Péter Fancsikai

*Laborhotel* was the most elaborate and the most theatrical section of the *Escapologist*. In this part the audiences come inside a typical Budapest residential building and entered the performance space through an outside balcony typical for Budapest architecture connecting the whole floor of the building. Through the balcony the audience came into the first room where they were given drinks and

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[74] Tickets to *The Laborhotel* didn't cost money, but they were only available only to those who visited the *RéS* exhibition. Those who attended got a link for registration.

food. Once gathered, the audience was led to another room - a miniature red theatre with tiny seats like for children (the same little theatre that appeared in the artist's nightmare of the previous part). The stage was very shallow and behind it there is was a hole in the wall, the same hole Árpád Schilling came through in the previous part, through which one could see somebody's living room. In the living room, sitting comfortably in their bathrobes Árpád Schilling and his real-life wife Lilla with their backs to the audience were chatting, the hyper-realistic chatting turned into fighting about Árpád being self-centered and neglecting his family for art. The fight ends with Árpád Schilling leaving and slamming the door. He reappears in the miniature theatre space and sits on the stage in front of the



The Apology of the Escapologist / LaborHotel; photo: Dávid Udvardy

audience giving an explanation of his views on art, reality and life.[75] After, Árpád Schilling separates the audience into two groups and sends them on their journey through the Krétakör headquarters. From here each half of the audience has a different experience of the rest of the *Laborhotel*.

This was the experience that the first group of spectators had going from one room to another in the spaces of Krétakör headquarters: They start in a baby's room with drawings on the wall and a cradle in the middle. They see Lilla speaking to her child - a girl in her twenties sitting in the cradle. The girl is an artist and plays music on her computer. Later two men pass by on the balcony, they start talking to her but when one tries to enter her room from the balcony, she becomes very nervous and they get into a fight.

From the baby's room spectators go to a common bathroom with multiple showers. A group of girls is taking a shower. After they finish they go leaving one girl behind. She calls somebody on the phone. She complains in French about other girls treating her badly and about the xenophobic ways of Hungarians. The person on the other side does not understand her complaints. They get into a fight. After putting down the phone the girl commits suicide. The police come and establish the place as a scene of a crime.

From the shower room the audience is taken to a photo-studio where they encounter a photographer. The artist gives a long philosophical monologue about art, while his model is waiting sitting cramped in a corner, immobile. He never touches the camera; instead he has an assistant who manipulates the camera. The phone rings and he answers it. The person on the other side of the line is very upset. He tries calming them down but it ends with a fight. By the end of the scene

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[75] Schilling, Árpád. *A szabadulóművész apológiája - LaborHotel szövegkönyv*, (script of Apology of the Escapologist LaborHotel performance in Hungarian) in Krétakör archive, Accessed July 2nc, 2016.
https://archive.kretakor.eu/?p=WyIyOTE3IiwiaHVcL2FydGljbGUiLCIjcG9wdXBBcnRpY2xl0=

one realizes that the phone call is real and that the man is speaking to the women from the shower in the previous scene.



The Apology of the Escapologist / Laborhotel; photo: Dávid Udvardy

In the last, fourth scene of the first sequence version we see an older photographer being interviewed by a young man who questions his strict view on art and life in a storage room.

In the second half of audience has started their journey through space in the same storage room where the first group ends. Here a man is trapped in a cardboard box. He asks one of the audience members to call his wife on the phone (on the phone was hid real life wife). The audience member tries speaking to the wife apologizing for the man's delay. After the phone call the man in the box tells the audience a tale of a life-developing love and friendship between a hunter, a bear and a fox. He does not exit his box.

In the next space, the studio, the audience encounters a scene between a young man and a woman in sand. The interaction between the man and the women is that of communication of two people in early stages of falling in love, performing intuitive communication, simple sounds, and excitingly funny moments. The woman seems to have a control of the situation and the man has problems articulating himself. She laughs at him with love. The scene ends with the man being pulled to the heavens with a rope, through a hole in the ceiling.

From the studio the second half of audience is taken to the multiple showers space where man and women are having fun. Men are singing, dancing and sliding in the showers. A man and a women flirt. The flirting is successful. They leave together.



The Apology of the Escapologist / Laborhotel; photo: Dávid Udvardy

The last scene takes place in the baby's room where Árpád's wife Lilla sings a lullaby for her baby with the audience. Schilling's baby Fransiska was really there at the time. This is how the *Laborhotel* – the site-specific part of the *Apology of the Escapologist* in the Krétakör headquarters ends. *Laborhotel* was a place where the makers and the audiences were united in space - a place of 'laboratory' for the makers and a place of start of discovery for the audiences – a 'hotel,' a private-public space, where the director exposed himself and inner doubts to the view of the audience in order to publicly dissect and question them together. But *Laborhotel* is also a place of 'labor' as in giving birth to the baby, where something happens, where something is born out of 'labor.'



The Apology of the Escapologist / Artploretarz - Oxytocin; photo: Dávid Udvardy

The third part – the *Artproletarz* section of the project took place in a series of different spaces of Budapest District 9: in a public bath, an abandoned hospital, and

a community house[76] where seniors gather. *Artproletarz* had three parts. The *Artproletarz* section of the project consisted of three events with non-professional volunteers taking part in the performance, in three different sites in Budapest District 9 where Krétakör headquarters are located. In the first section of *Artproletarz* - the *Oxytocin* (oxytocin is a hormone important for female body and mind during and after childbirth) audiences went to a public bath, exchanged their clothes for bathing suits, entered a pool with water and from there watched a performance consisting of stories of birth and rebirth, documentary narratives told by men, singing of pregnant women and children aged 4 – 7 years.



The Apology of the Escapologist / Artploretarz - Oxytocin; photo: Dávid Udvardy

For the second section of *Artproletarz* audience went into abandoned *Schöpf-Merei Ágost Hospital* in Budapest District 9 to celebrate an imaginary birthday of over a

[76] Ferencvárosi Művelődési Központban web page (Ferencváros Cultural Centre), accessed July 2nd, 2016, http://www.fmkportal.hu/

dozen teenagers. The audience was welcomed by their parent, one person - a male actor dressed as a woman, a mother and a father in one. After giving the presents the party goes wrong, the birthday-children get nervous the way teenagers tend to get nervous and spoil the party. The audience follows them from room to room in the hospital where they tell their individual stories.



The Apology of the Escapologist / Artploretarz – 18+-; photo: Dávid Udvardy

The last part of the *Artproletarz*, *Örökséta* - the *Everwalk* took the audience on a bus ride around less known parts of the Distinct 9, with an audio performance featuring members of the municipal pensioners club telling their stories of life, love and loss. At the end of the ride the audience entered the club itself where they joined the elders' party to dance and play lottery games. With the *Artproletarz* the *Escapologist* entered the community. Árpád Schilling decentralized the story by taking it from his own self at the site of the *LaborHotel,* to decentralized theatre spaces, and non-actors as well, taking the authentic spaces and people of the district in to the theatrical structure.

The Apology of the Escapologist / Artploretarz – 18+-; photo: Dávid Udvardy



The Apology of the Escapologist / Artploretarz - Everwalk; photo: Dávid Udvardy

The Apology of the Escapologist / Artploretarz - Everwalk; photo: Dávid Udvardy

For the *Finale* of the project, *Krétakör* created a temporary park in Csarnok tér together with audiences, a square in front of the *Krétakör* headquarters, behind the main Budapest public market where after a walk around the district they had a picnic together. This was a final celebration of public space and togetherness of the community. The gathering.

The Apology of the Escapologist / Finale; photo: Dávid Udvardy

The Apology of the Escapologist / Finale; photo: Dávid Udvardy

### 3.4. Decentralization of the Character into Multiplicity

What audience could see was as series of situations/episodes: a man trapped in his own home; a series of scenes about a husband and a wife; a girlfriend and boyfriend fighting; old photographer talking to young photographer; people watching TV; a baby; a birthday of a teenager scene, dance party with retired people etc.. *Escapologist* was very hard to follow. There is no clear linear story. The scenes were disconnected. And this was hard for the audiences used to story progressing in a causal way. It was 'rhizomatic' in the sense of Gonzáles Martín perceives it: 'with no possible connection' between the episodes.

Looking at the video and other documentation today the seeming disconnection between the scenes actually makes a lot of sense, in an almost linear way. And I tend to think about *Escapologist* as both a narrative and not a narrative at the same time. For the audience at the time – the scenes were dispersed fragments – for the audience *Escapologist* was not a narrative. They were inside and from inside they could not see the whole 'picture.' They could experience pieces and connect it through experiencing it. On the contrary from my point of view – where I can see the whole map of the *Escapologist* via extensive documentation– it is a narrative, not a traditional causal, linear narrative but never the less a narrative with clear beginning, middle and end. But this 'narrative' can be seen only when one has an overall view on the project in the form of the extended documentation on the DVD. This dual perception of the dramaturgy of a rhizomatic piece in my experience as practicing dramaturg is not unusual. The makers often perceive a very coherent structure or a narrative that is constructed in such an open way not to be perceived as coherent by the audience. This dual 'attitude' towards dramaturgy makes possible for two things that are almost paradoxical: for the makers to have a rather clear picture of what they are making and for audience to have room for their own imagination and experience.

So, watching the DVD I see the coherent dramaturgical 'stream,' almost narrative behind the rhizomatic performance. This narrative is about Árpád Schilling

dissolving into the community: it starts with him alone in his room, continues with his family life, and ends with communities of different ages of the Budapest District 9. I will write about this 'paradox of the spectator' being too close to the thing to see it all in a later chapter, but now I want to describe *Escapologist* in detail and I will try to describe it in such a way to show how it both made and did not make sense.  All of the scenes are steps along a path that not only provides for a new rhizomatic decentralized meaning but are also something like a bridge from one way of making theatre to another, from individual to community creation. As Árpád Schilling described himself it was something like a funnel[77] that was meant to lead the audience from one place to another both physically from one event to another as well as mentally from one way of thinking to new way of thinking.

The performance started with the director himself at center of the story. The naked man breaking the wall was the director himself - Árpád Schilling, and he was talking to his real wife who was really pregnant. As Árpád Schilling says himself the change that was at the core of *Apology of Escapologist*, demanded that the person initiating the change step in and show himself 'at the center of stage.' The material required the form: **"**Because I was the escapologist, the one leaving the past, trying to do something new. Didn't know exactly what, but I was the one doing it and felt that I needed to be in the center of the story in order to tell it." (Árpád Schilling interview p. 212) This situation of putting one's own self into the center of the art piece and exposing artist's own body is a very common way of expression in visual arts and is at the core of performance art since the 1960's: "Because in the history of art it is a possibility, […] the artist can be in the middle of the piece if he chooses. […] For me it was really important to […] be in the project and take risks, and show the people I don't want to hide this, my person, I don't want to choose somebody else, an actor in this situation. […] It was a chance for [direct] communication." *(*Árpád Schilling interview p.212) Árpád Schilling aimed to start from a reality that was in this case represented by his own person, he wanted to use his own self as a starting point and as material for the change.

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[77] Notes from a private, unrecorded interview, Budapest, 2010.

Despite the reference to performance art, that uses artists themselves as material for art, Árpád Schilling exposes himself in *Escapologist* in different, theatrical way. Árpád Schilling here is both himself and a character. Or better said: himself as a character. As he said himself: "I was this person, this character, I was not just a specific person; I was a metaphor in this context." (Árpád Schilling interview p. 212) He is Árpád Schilling within a certain dramaturgy of *Escapologist* that becomes a heightened Árpád Schilling: 'Árpád Schilling' functioning in the dramaturgy. He wanted to put himself on stage, expose himself as a character, to take the risk of starting the company's transformation from his own story and person. But for the theatre audience and critics in Hungary in 2009, according to Árpád Schilling, this was one of the unsettling aspects of the performance.[78]

Contrary to this, and contrary to dramaturgy of drama theatre that focuses on unity of story and character: in the third part there is no Árpád Schilling - the main character – disappears completely. The escapologist from the title is Árpád Schilling himself – the director, the artist. The whole project itself was a tool for an escape. With the *Apology of the Escapologist* Árpád Schilling was trying to find a way away from the prison of accepted theatre conventions – the drama theatre he has previously made with Krétakör Színház. As he said himself that it was a "Houdini project, I am in chains in the water and had to get out." (Árpád Schilling interview p.199).

The third section of the performance project consisted of another three parts: a story about pregnant women, a story about teenagers and a story about elderly people. In these sections there is no Árpád Schilling the character, who escaped - what happens in its place is a community. The community is of the specific district where Krétakör resides: "It was the 9th district, the district of our place because we got this office from the government and we tried to focus on it, and show the people different communities in the area: the bath, and the old hospital, the culture house, and people of this district. Real persons, and new real people from this district who are very generous and make a show and actions for these people who

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[78] See appendix interview with Árpád Schilling.

came." Once Krétakör moved into the district, they decided to enter into it, to explore it and not just use is for their office anonymously. They wanted the people to know them and they wanted to know the people. "You could meet again with the city and the people of this city."

But as the quote continues we can see that the move from Árpád Schilling himself as the character at the center of the performance to end of the *Apology*, where instead of Árpád Schilling we see the community of District 9 is not a mere escape, it's a transformation:

> It was a spiritual way because it was cars and buses with the possibility of children's words, and cars who died and had to be born again through this story of this guy[79] who finished his life because he has to wake up. And after this the question is 'OK, you have a child and family and they are really nice. But [..] you can see real questions about reality in the different places. You can go to the bath, to talk about the world, you can go to the hospital and you can meet old people in their eighties, nineties... […] *Escapologist* project was like birth situation for me. […] It's a rebirth situation. How does a child come from one world to the other world? How does an artist go from one world to the other world? How can we know our city again? How can we see again the faces of our neighbors? This kind of idea was the main philosophic problem.

(Árpád Schilling interview p.207). This need to go from one world to another, from self to the community in the terms of narrative and from spaces designated for theatre into the spaces of the community in spatial terms - is at the core of the performance.

The term escape stands for getting away from something. It points more to the point of departure rather the final point, the point of arrival. So, in a sense *Apology of Escapologist* title points to the fact that Árpád Schilling is running away from something, without fully knowing where too. Escape here stands for a start of a movement, a possibility of movement, activation. Árpád Schilling wanted to activate his own self as a possibility for others to move too, be activated to. The rebirth stands for activation.

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[79] Árpád Schilling the character.

In short: *Escapologist* is a story about a man, who starts understanding that his one point of view is limiting. He decentralizes himself, and allows for multiple positions, through allowing others their own positions. In the end one finds an entire community, a celebration of community instead of one lonely man.

### 3.5.  Rhizomatic Fragmentation of Escapologist

I would like to go back and look at the levels of fragmentation described by González Martín, the: centrifuge, parataxis, and rhizome (where I will take rhizomatic fragmentation to be my own interpretation as the potential of connections between all elements, instead of the no connections of González Martín). I think we can find all three types of fragmentation in *Krétakör's Apology of the Escapologist.* Or better said: Escapologist is a journey:
   a) from centrifugal (Schilling alone in his room, a clear dramaturgy centralized around Schilling and his wife in the *Pit* and *LaborHotel*)
   b) to parataxis (decentralization and de-hierarchization in *LaborHotel* where new characters begin to appear)
   c) to a section that in a way aspires towards rhizomatic fragmentation[80] (appearance of community people in *Artproletarz* – children, pregnant women, teenagers and old people; as well as the audience themselves becoming the 'performers' in the *Finale* celebration at the end.)

So, the centrifuge, parataxis and rhizome are actually individual forms of fragmentation and stages of decentralization within the project. Here is a closer look into how that journey unfolded:
In the first part the *Pit* everything – cars in the street, people on TV watching TV, slide installation of Árpád Schilling, videos of his wife lonely wife in labor, all point to Árpád Schilling and the 'gap' he is in. Árpád Schilling is here the center.

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[80] That I do not define as without connections at all like González Martín but contrary as possibility of connection of all parts to each other but without clear a center and hierarchy.

Everything is disconnected yet still here whirling around one central problem: Árpád Schilling.

The second part, *Laborhotel*, represents the process of decentralization of the axis into what Gonzáles Martín calls parataxis. Here Árpád Schilling separates the performance into two –the story line A of the man and story line B of the women (his wife). Both 'stories' are 'landscapes' in the sense that Lehmann describes, that are not telling a specific narrative story but are representing series of emotions, *states*, confusions, opinions and ideas. The male line of the 'story' presents political and artistic way of thinking told through a clearer sequence of actions (that for the most part end in fights) while the female represents motherly, emotional, intuitive approach to life told through completely de-hierarchized poetic images. And there is no hierarchy between the line A and the line B, neither is better nor more right. There is also no hierarchy within the scenes of the individual lines either. The scenes can not to be understood individually but only through seeing the whole line (A or B) in total as the whole. This represents parataxis that has no hierarchy but still has a unity of its own.

The third part *Artproletarz* within the dramaturgy of *Apology of Escapology* represents a direct aspiration towards rhizomatic dramaturgy. Here the *Escapologist* Árpád Schilling is in search of decentralization that aspires *towards 'no center, no hierarchy, no possible connection between the fragments'* through the series of three sections of the next act of the performance - *Oxytocin*, 18 *Plusminus* and *Everwalk* – that included pregnant women in a public bath, an 18th birthday celebration of a group of teenagers, and pensioners dancing and having a tombola in the pensioner's club. In these parts neither the character of *Escapologist* Árpád Schilling nor his wife appear at all and here are included people and situations that were not mentioned in previous parts.[81]

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[81] Further these last parts of the performance were not directed by Árpád Schilling, but by his three Hungarian colleagues: Adél Kollár, Bea Nagy, and Márta Schermann.

Through *Laborhotel* and in *Artproletarz* Árpád Schilling achieves decentralization from being the center of axis, towards a new de-hierarchized balance with other characters within the narrative of the middle of the performance in order to aspire towards the third part in which he disappears, where in final sections of the project there is no visible connection of the parts. *Escapologist* plays on the tip of the line between axis and parataxis, because it starts with centralization of a story and decentralizes it through the course of the performance. In the end the parts seem to be completely disconnected and yet we 'feel' that there is a possible connection behind.

*Apology of Escapologist*, represents the transformation of Árpád Schilling from a centralized understanding of his story, to the rhizomatic story of Árpád Schilling, Árpád Schilling as a rhizomatic 'system' that is not in a linear, causal, hierarchical relationship to others and events, but is in an organic de-hierarchized relationship. This is in my opinion *the escape* he was trying to enact. We could say that Árpád Schilling created the project as his own ritualized disappearance from the unified center into rhizomatic existence in the *Escapologist*.

In the next section I will describe this 'journey towards' rhizomatic dramaturgy as spatial by describing the spaces and spacing in detail. But first it is also important to note that this performance was not well received by audiences or critics and to understand why.

### 3.6.   The Failure and the Aim

This project has proved to be a challenge for the audiences. The performance took eight weeks for the audience to see in its entirety. This was a very new time and space situation for audiences used to performances in theatre spaces. In order to follow the *Escapologist,* they had go to eight different places over the course of almost nine weeks, and had to invest more time, unlike standard theatre

performance where one buys a ticket and usually comfortably sits down in the auditorium for the duration of the evening. Each dramaturgical part was independent in space, form and dramaturgical 'language.' *Apology of the Escapologist* project was a challenge for the audiences not only in the sense of space and time but also in the sense of the story. For many members of the audience as well as for the critics it was incomprehensible and shocking. For them it was not 'rhizomatic.' It simply did not make sense[82].

The new situation has proved to be a very serious challenge for the Krétakör Theatre followers who were used to seeing one performance, one experience, in one space, in one evening. They were used to a very specific theatre system in which things are in their place: audience the auditorium and performers the stage and the director can be everywhere but only during the rehearsals, where the story has one homogenous plot; a plot in which only written characters would appear, never the artist representing their own selves, nor the people of the community themselves. Only a total of 79 registered members of audience committed to following the whole of the *Apology of the Escapologist* and estimated the total of approximately 1000 people that have seen individual parts of the project[83] despite the fact that it was done by the most famous Hungarian director at the time and that a lot of events were for free.[84] Compared to the 5 000 fans of Krétakör Színház, that usually came to performances and subscribed to information about

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[82] The final part of this chapter is dedicated to description of Hungarian theatre context – reaction of critics and audiences as described by Hungarian theatre critic Tamás Jászay.
[83] Production of the company estimated the total of approximately 1000 people had seen individual parts of the project (except the installation on the street that could have been seen by any passers-by). The Krétakör report for that year includes the number of audience members for *Laborhotel* part performed 12 times: 422 audience members and all three parts of the *Artproletarz* that was performed in total 12 times: 536 audience members. It cannot be verified how many different audience members saw the individual sections, especially in the case of *Artproletarz*, the number of audiences for three different parts/events, that could have been visited by the same audience members. From Krétakör archives accessed July 22, 2016:
https://archive.kretakor.eu/?p=WyIyOTE2IiwiaHVcL2FydGljbGUiLCIjcG9wdXBBcnRpY2xlIl0=
There is no information in the archives regarding numbers of audiences for the other parts of *Escapologist*.
[84] Audiences had to buy tickets *Artporletarz*, the rest of events were for free (*Laborhotel* for instance was for free, but audiences had to register).

the company this was a devastating change. And at the time Árpád Schilling took it to be a failure.

The question is why such a successful functioning independent company changed their way of making theatre to such an extent at a risk of antagonizing their audiences and critics and losing them. In the explanation on Krétakör web pages within the description of the company at the time one finds that challenging the audience and entering new relationships with the viewers was actually the aim of the change. "We need to break new ground […]. Accepted theatre conventions do not allow passive audiences to become active participators, which is exactly why we want to loosen up and expand these conventions."[85] But the aim is not only to break theatre conventions and create participatory theatre that is merely enjoyable or entertaining, as is the case with some contemporary participatory theatre of 'dinner theatre' kind or other interactive performances. The aim is to mobilize and activate creatively and socially: "Developing conscious […] relations with audiences may open up new creative and social horizons. We wish to involve every form of creative art that allows the research into people as moral and social beings as well as innovators."[86] The audience here should discover their moral and social as well as creative capabilities. This points to the fact, that this new relationship with audience as *moral and social beings'* and the creation of space for them within performance is exactly the aim of the change. This is actually the opposite to what Easter European critics would call theatre – narrative drama, often linear, that is staged in a conventional setting with stage / auditorium separation, where audience is 'left alone' to experience the performance.

The end of the quote that describes the new aspirations, the change of Krétakör on their web is interesting. It reads: "The thing we are dealing in does not oppose theatrical mentality – it is theatrical mentality itself."[87] Árpád Schilling here

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[85] www.kretakor.eu September, 2011
[86] Ibid.
[87] About the company on their web pages http://kretakor.eu/#/krétakör/about-us/2008-2 accessed January 20, 2012

anticipates that audiences and critics will label the Escapologist as 'not theatre,' label often used in Eastern Europe for theatre not taking place in 'proper' theatre spaces and based in 'proper' theatre plays. The theatrical mentality he is writing here about, in my opinion, is the theatre as social space, place of positioning. And he was trying to utilize this socio-political potential of theatre, where space plays an important role.

I will describe and explain the importance of space in the performance for the overall dramaturgy and the activation of audience in the next pages in detail but here I wanted to point to the basic difference before and after the change in 2009 that *Apology* signifies. As stated above, before 2008 Krétakör Theatre presented their shows in a variety of theatre venues, 'travelling' from one theater space to another, the company was always an independent, travelling, ever-changing chalk circle. The chalk circle always represented a space of temporary truth, as "*the truth of the theat*er *for this case*." The change, the transformation was always at the core of Krétakör: "The chalk circle represented rebirth, as if when drawing the circle, we begin something. We are borrowers that have access into the interior of the circle. When you have finished, you mop up the chalk and say goodbye to each other. The Krétakör is not meant as permanence, on the contrary," as Árpád Schilling wrote himself on web page of Krétakör Theatre before 2009.[88] Krétakör Theatre further used s variety of styles, and gained new theatre 'languages' as their material – the game demanded it for each new performance. Theatre for the Chalk Circle - Krétakör was always an activity of transformation, 'the temporary space of truth,' but the new way of working, the new dramaturgy was to help this 'temporary space of truth' be more socially aware and significant.

But despite the temporary character of the Chalk Circle from its beginnings the contrast to the *Apology of the Escapologist* is significant: a) there were numerous art forms and media used within one performance – including installation and

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celebration; b) one performance took place in eight places over the course of nine weeks – none of them 'stone theatres;' c) the director himself entered the stage[89] - was the starting point of the narrative; d) the narrative was so fragmented that audience could not make clear connections; and e) the community itself ultimately entered the stage. All of this was unusual for Hungarian theatre after 1989.[90]

In order to make theatre making more significant and socially aware, Árpád Schilling had to make changes in the approach start from himself. He put himself at the center of the story of the performance. His story got decentralized and ends with the 'story' of the community. So the final, end point for Árpád Schilling is the community; and the audience had to go through a series of different spatial situations in order to get to the community in the final part.

Árpád Schilling's feeling of failure and disappointment are understandable. *Escapologist* was a somewhat clumsy, unexperienced attempt. Hungarian audiences did not have experience with similar projects and had no reference or 'tools' to help them follow it.

*Krétakör* did not have the tools either, they were inexperienced at this type of theatre and did not know how to guide the audience through this complex journey. And here I mean that they did not know how to make this type of experience 'bearable' and 'enjoyable' for the audience, did not know how to guide and keep their attention in so complex a project.

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[89] Árpád Schilling has played several characters in earlier *Krétakör* performances. For instance, the role of a 'game-master' introducing the production at the beginning of *Liliom* (2001).
https://archive.kretakor.eu/?p=WyI0IiwiaHVcL2FydGljbGUiLCIjcG9wdXBBcnRpY2xlIl0= July 2nd, 2016
[90] Above mentioned Péter Halász staged not only himself but his entire family including his small children in their home during the period they were banned. This is an important Hungarian antitype of the *Escapologist* project. To have the creator be the main protagonist was an important characteristic of the Hungarian performance art too before 1989. For instance, in the work of: György Galántai, Tibor Hajas, Miklós Erdély, Gyula Pauer, etc.

### 3.7. Summary of the Project

*Apology of Escapologist* is a performance project that begins as a story about a person, Árpád Schilling the character, a loose, fragmented story evolving around one person that over its course makes a significant shift towards working with authentic people and spaces of the neighborhood. In the narrative sense we could say that Árpád Schilling opened his own story up for others to enter, and he created a space for others, his audience, the community of District 9 to enter into. But it is more than a story about the director and the people of the District. The performance aimed to create space for engagement: director with the community, community with the city, audience with the community space. This point to the important shift in dramaturgy. This is a dramaturgy where the performance entered the space of the audience - the community and the audience entered the space of performance. In this dramaturgy the narrative aspect is important but the exchange between the performance and the audience/community itself becomes the deciding factor and the goal of the performance.

*Apology of the Escapologist* took the audience and the makers away from the conventional theatre situation of one performance, in one evening, in one place for one audience, to a project that took them out to the streets, to the *Gap Club*, to the inner spaces of *Krétakör* headquarters and finally into the community spaces. The project took the escapologist Árpád Schilling from the inside 'me' (his room, his story) to the outside world (stories of communities, spaces of community). In the next chapter I will describe the political context in Hungary of that had deciding impact on Árpád Schilling, his need for change and search for social significance. Here I would like to point to briefly to the political aspect of role of audience in the performance. The *Apology of the Escapologist* proposed new places for audiences within performances, new roles for the audience as active participants. In the context of socio-political situation at the time in Hungary, a post-communist country where citizens were still passive, not-yet used to democracy, and an authoritarian government was approaching, this new role in theatre performance was also propose a change in the role of citizens in society. *The Apology of the*

*Escapologist* project was not only a formal change, a change of aesthetics but ambitiously wanted to provide a laboratory space for social experiment and change.

*Escapologist* was a theatrical escape in the sense of experimentation with content (rhizomatic 'narrative'), with the form (use of variety of media – installation, performance, celebration, community theatre etc.), as well as with the audiences (positioning of audience within performances). Árpád Schilling was looking for ways of exploding the homogenous worlds of conventional theatre, where there is a clear separation of stage and auditorium. This separation is not only physical via a clear line, a raked stage or other architectural tools. Throughout history the stage space has stood for other places and times. And one of the most important features of contemporary theatre (20th and 21st century) is the dissolving of this separation. Árpád Schilling very consciously, I think, mobilized against this separation, moving the audience through spaces and proposing the Chalk Circle (Krétakör) space of action (stage) as a traveling space. Not only did he move the Chalk Circle from one theatre space to another like in the first incarnation of Krétakör Színház as a theater company, but in *Escapologist* he did a performance that took place in non-theatre spaces, created new relationships with authentic spaces, communities and audiences as well as new spatial and social contexts. And while this traveling dramaturgy is in contemporary theory described as nomadic[91] theatre, I am interested in the traveling aspect as well as these other spatial tools that Árpád Schilling used. This is why I am interested in exploring a broader spatial dramaturgy.

The *Escapologist* was an expedition through a dramaturgical sequence that leads to deeper interaction with the city, with social issues, with the locals, with the others, in interaction with 'real life.' In order for both the makers and the audiences to become more active participants (as the above-mentioned announcement on the Krétakör web stated), they reimagined the theatrical act from a passive artistic

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[91] Nibbelink, Liesbeth Groot, M. A. Bleeker, and N. Verhoeff. Nomadic Theatre: Staging Movement and Mobility in Contemporary Performance. Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht, 2015. Print.

viewing, to a more active socio-political and thus potentially critical relating. Activation here means that audience entered the stage (already in LaborHotel), but also that they interacted with the performance directly (for instance in the E*ternal Walk*, where they danced with elderly people or in the *Finale* where everybody built, sang, and ate together – artists and audiences together). For me activation in the *Escapologist* means a 'being with,' 'being part of' rather than in the sense of participatory theatre where the script is directly interactive and goes like: 'if you do this, I will do that.' This type of interaction that can be found in some type of participatory performance and is seemingly more activating is often very formal and only *represents* interaction. The activating ambition of Árpád Schilling was quite different. The Finale, the final stop of the *Escapologist* project, was a celebration, a return to the roots of theatre of sorts, a ritual where there is no separation of performers and watchers, the doers and thinkers.

The new performance making included destabilization and decentralization of many aspects of theatre. In *Escapologist* there is no single homogenous plot, compact narrative disappeared. Escapologist was structured through a series of independent parts taking place in different spaces and places. Each of these parts could be viewed as self-contained stories that taken together presented a dramaturgy of *Escapologist*, that included: cars in the streets; video story about the artist himself; *LaborHotel* consisting of further sub-stories; and the three part Artproletarz. Each of these parts of *Escapologist* had its own separate specific location – street, ex-National theatre, hospital, square, bus, cultural center etc. The company's up until now one homogenous place for performances, the conventional theatre stage, here also disappeared and was exchanged for specific, authentic public spaces that provided opportunities of setting for new spatial relations with the audience. The character of the homogenous narrative was also gone. Instead of one autonomous, psychologically unified character we find series of people that only remind us of each other only vaguely. The characters do not stand for linear causality of plot but are rhizomatic stepping stones along the way - the dramaturgical connections were made in rhizomatic, spatial way. So, while we can say that the character at the beginning (in the video installation), the lonely character staying in his room, is

very probably connected to the lover character in the *LaborHotel*, we cannot be sure if he is connected to the young photographer or the old photographer (or both) also in *LaborHotel*.

The written, psychological character of the causal plot was replaced by the author / director himself - Árpád Schilling – as the central figure in the beginning parts of the *Escapologist*, where Árpád Schilling there becomes a blurring between character and a real person, between a stage persona and the artist himself. This 'both a character and a real person' figure was that was the centerpiece of the beginning parts of the performance project, in the later parts he was replaced by numerous separate characters (some of them vaguely connected to the beginning figure) that in the final parts of the project were replaced by people of the community, non-actors and non-characters, people of District 9.

This exchange of the central character for the artist himself that dissolves into other characters and later real people, the community also points to the new mode of performance making. Árpád Schilling came out of the shadows, from the protected position of 'outside the stage' from where theatre director controls the making of the performance into the center of the performance, turning himself into part character part real person, where he stood literally naked (in the *GaP*).

This gesture can be read as a gesture that stands for the need to find a new position within his own artistic process, and searching for a new way of being part of the performance making. And I think we can also here see many levels of attempts of strategies of sharing a theatre performance here. First of course on the level of experience of the performance, but as well as on level of sharing personal experience (Árpád Schilling character/person), and finally the sharing of the process of the making (audience become co-creators - co-actors of sorts; and don't forget that the final scenes in *Escapologist* were also directed by other directors - Adél Kollár, Bea Nagy, and Márta Schermann).

These changes had the aim to create new potentials for experiencing a performance: using characters on the verge of reality and fiction and other characters vaguely connected to them; the entering of non-actors, 'authentic' people into the equation; experiencing stage action and images on the verge of reality and imagination; as well as of course non-causal, non-linear connections between parts; and most importantly the inclusion of the audience in the narrative - the relations in-between the makers and audiences that ultimately influenced the experiencing of performance and created the possibility for what was a decentralized (rhizomatic or even anarchic!?) understanding of the performance, where each audience member is left to their own devices, left to wonder freely and seek their own interpretation - they share the responsibility of relating (understanding, experiencing, and critical positioning) with and within the performance. They're responsible for synthesizing and 'doing their own dramaturgy.'[92]

But all this wild experimentation and searching along with the dissolving of Krétakör theatre in 2008 created a lot of controversy within theatre community in Hungary. And it is important here to see at the 'situation' form the point of view of a Hungarian theatre critic since there was such a negative response at the time.

### 3.8.   Interview with Hungarian theatre critic Tamás Jászay

Here I would like to dedicate an entire section of my thesis to Hungarian theatre critic Tamás Jászay' point of view of on the *Escapologist* project and the theatrical context surrounding it. This is necessary due to the controversial reception of the performance. This section is specifically about *Escapologist's* context, but it also sumps up *Krétakör's* 'journey of change.'

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92 Patrice Pavis in his keynote speech *Dramaturgic Processes: Toward a Reevaluation of the Role of the Dramaturge?* at *Play – Relational Aspects of Dramaturgy* March, 15-16, 2012; Ghent, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, University College Ghent, Belgium.

I did a Skype interview with Hungarian theatre critic Tamás Jászay on July 21st, 2016 to fill in the gaps I was missing in the story of *Escapologist*, especially about the reaction of audience and critics at the time. In 2013 Tamás Jászay finished his PhD thesis *KÖRÜLÍRÁSOK (FEJEZETEK A KRÉTAKÖR SZÍNHÁZ TÖRTÉNETÉBŐL: 1995–2011[93])* [CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS (CHAPTERS FROM THE HISTORY OF KRÉTAKÖR THEATRE: 1995–2011[94]) 2011)] at the University of Szeged, Hungary. He had not seen all parts of the project, mainly the parts happening nearby the Krétakör office building, but he does remember the happening and atmosphere around it well*.* Tamás Jászay was one of the rare critics that wrote a long analysis of the DVD-edition of *Escapologist* for Színház ('Theatre,' May 2010)[95].  Below are from notes[96] from my interview:

> *Since its establishment in 1995, Krétakör Theatre had gradually become the most important Hungarian independent troupe. Hungarian audiences and critics are quite conservative, despite a strong history of experimental theatre in the 1960's (for example like Péter Halász's Squat Theatre that moved from Hungary to New York in 1970's). After the change of regime in 1989, the main enemy of the public– the communists - were gone. And in the first decade after communism especially, the newly established democracy was perceived as being in a peaceful phase without enemies. Because most of the best theatre during 'communism' was political theatre against this enemy, the state - in many post-communist countries' theatre had 'lost its purpose' in a way. So, in 1990's theatre in Hungary became mainly about entertainment. It took a long time to recover from this. Other than entertainment, mainly 'classical' plays such as Chekov and Shakespeare and sometimes Brecht were performed on Hungarian stages. Audiences liked to sit in the dark, clap, and then go home.*

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[93] The entire thesis available online. Jászay, Tamás. KÖRÜLÍRÁSOK (FEJEZETEK A KRÉTAKÖR SZÍNHÁZ TÖRTÉNETÉBŐL: 1995–2011)  [CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS (CHAPTERS FROM THE HISTORY OF KRÉTAKÖR THEATRE: 1995–2011 ) 2011)], the University of Szeged, Hungary. In Hungarian. Accessed August, 8th, 2016: http://doktori.bibl.u-szeged.hu/1924/1/jaszay_phd.pdf
[94] Title and abstract of the thesis in English: http://doktori.bibl.u-szeged.hu/1924/3/jaszay_tezisek_angol_final.pdf accessed August, 8th, 2016
[95] Jászay Tamás Schilling Árpádról és a Bázisról. *Elveszett vagy átalakult?*, Színház, HÍRKER Rt., Budapest, May 2010, accessed August, 8th, 2016http://old.szinhaz.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=35654:elveszett-vagy-atalakult&catid=42:2010-majus&Itemid=7
[96] Unfortunately, the interview was not recorded but Tamás Jászay kindly reviewed and authorized my notes.

*There was a waiting list for tickets for Krétakör's shows and people had to wait for months to get them. The company was also popular among the critics. Árpád Schilling the director of the company has found a language that both audiences and critics could understand. The company did some experimental and political shows beginning already in 2000, for instance the BLACKland (2004) and Hazámhazám (My homeland, my homeland, 2002) – that marked the beginning of Hungarian political theatre AFTER 1990.*

*They had big groups of followers. Almost all of the company's shows were directed by Schilling, and he was exceptional. Most directors that make 2-3 performances per year begin to repeat themselves in their work because of their frequency of work. But in Schilling's case this did not happen. The performances were always with different actors, styles, playwrights. He liked to try out different forms. But when he reaches what he set out to achieve, he never went back there. So audiences never knew what they would get from Krétakör. There was always a surprise. When Krétakör appeared in the mid-1990's it was a brand-new voice in Hungarian theater.*

*But for one or two years, from around 2007-2009, it seemed that they did not do any new shows. And nobody (actors, the audience, nor critics) wanted to accept that Árpád Schilling decided that once they are at the top, they had attained everything – audiences, prizes –that it was over. And after 2007 nobody saw them or wrote about them, because they did not make drama performances for the stage like they used to. They became invisible. Audiences and critics felt that Krétakör Theatre didn't exist anymore.*

When I asked him about the reaction to *Apology of the Escapologist* project by critics and audiences he said that: "the duration was unusual, the location strange. There was no single venue or one ticket. It was not a familiar situation for theatre critics and audiences"

"Almost no one from the so called professional theatre world took seriously what Krétakör and Schilling did during the Escapologist series: all of its features go against what we call and think about as theatre - its duration, its locations, its participants, the way how people were let into the spaces, etc." I asked him about articles written about the Escapologist after the project because I could not find any. To which he replied:

*There were only a few short articles if I remember well, that made a kind of a report of what happened in and around the Krétakör base, but I think I was the only one that time who tried to analyze it as a work of art. Most of the critics simply didn't accept it as something that has to do anything with theatre or with arts in general. They took it as a hazardous experiment, but*

*they didn't feel the need to understand or to analyze it. And it was typical over the next few years: critics (and spectators too!) were shocked and disappointed at of the end of the 'old' Krétakör and they didn't understand (and didn't want to understand) a word from the new path Árpád started to walk down. [97]*

In the interview Tamás Jászay goes on to say that after the project Schilling wrote on the Krétakör blog that the project was a big failure because they didn't manage to address new audiences. Neither critics nor audiences were prepared for *Escapologist*, for an event that took place almost 2 months to follow. And at the same time they wanted more performances based on the classics from them - the Krétakör they knew.

Critics were very disappointed because when they asked for tickets they were told that they had to buy tickets and that they had to attend all parts of the project. There were no press tickets. Tamás Jászay thinks that the reason behind not giving out press tickets was that the new way of doing theatre was about democratic values for Krétakör – if you want to attend you pay the same price as everyone else, plus you have to attend all the stations of the whole event, so you have to make yourself free for 8 nights in an almost 2 month-long duration. There were no free seats. There were no best seats. Also, you had to show a ticket from the previous episode in order to get the ticket for the next episode. You could not get in without it. And so, the press said: if you don't need us we will not be there.

It was also unusual that Árpád Schilling created fluid border between fiction and reality in *Escapologist*.  For instance, in the first part of *LaborHotel* Tamás Jászay witnessed the argument scene between Árpád Schilling and his real wife and actress Lilla Sárosdi. And Tamás Jászay says that as a spectator you did not know what to do. You don't want to see Árpád Schilling and his wife argue, even though you know it is theatre. This was taken further in *Loser* (2016) the performance in which Árpád Schilling in the opening scene stands strips naked on stage and asks

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[97] Quote from email from Tamás Jászay to me, Sodja Zupanc Lotker, on July 5th, 2016.

audience members to write messages to the Hungarian government on his body.[98] He has accepted to make this step, to get on stage himself, despite the fact that it's easier to give instructions to actors as director from the auditorium.

All of this (the combination of difficult duration and spacing of the event, no free tickets, etc.) caused the *Escapologist* not to be unsuccessful. Tamás Jászay thinks that behind what appeared to be a theatrical arrogance of Árpád Schilling lay something else. Árpád Schilling was fed up with the traditional theatrical system in Hungary that has its roots in the socialist regime, its conservative structure, but the company had, at the time of starting a new way to do theatre, little knowledge of how this new way of theatre works. They knew a bit about Augusto Boal's work from *Theatre of the Oppressed*, but that was about it.

And Árpád Schilling wanted to create a unique event that would change peoples' lives. And Tamás Jászay believes that if someone took the whole moth and followed the whole performance – they were changed - that the project was a unique and powerful event. There was no explicit political message in the project. Later works for instance like *Day of Fury* (2015)[99] and *Lúzer* (2014)[100] are more directly

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[98] When they played the show abroad the spectators could write messages to the Hungarian intelligentsia.

[99] Description of the Day of Fury premiered 2015 from company's web http://kretakor.eu/project/the-day-of-fury/ accessed on July 21st, 2016. *The play's theme is man's endless vulnerability. The plan is to examine the extremist manifestation of the social hierarchy by using the theatre's tools. The question that we ask the audience is: is it possible that we are still cavemen in the 21st century? "I am going to stage this play with the participation of Krétakör's superb, internationally renowned actors. I am planning to make it an actor-centered play, in which there will be no illustration but the tension created by the acting men. Simplicity and precision in Bergman's style, a lab medical report on the marginalized half of Europe. My goal is to inspire a heated debate after the play by the members of the audience but not about what they saw but their own life: about their vulnerability and responsibility." – Árpád Schilling.*

[100] Description of *Lúzer* from company's web http://kretakor.eu/project/luzer-en/ accessed on July 21st, 2016. *"We have had enough of the restrained analytical artistic approach that explores our present and past. The authorities have stomped on our faces with their heavy boots. It is time to scream! That is why The Party is no more and that is why we have Loser instead. If you visit us, you will learn what you have to do. You will find the answers to all of your questions. Ours is the Theater of True Hope. We know what will make the future brighter." - Árpád Schilling. In a way, Loser is the sequel to the play The Party. However, the story changed in its core dramatically throughout its creation. Loser is not only a distorted mirror of our times but a bold and unexpected creative gesture.*

political[101]. But there are implicit political messages that are framed by the dates and places. For instance, the beginning and end of performance: beginning on the 8th of March (leftist Women's Day) and end 1st of May (International Worker's Day or in some places Labor Day) both point towards the political left. Also, the placing of *Escapologist* – for instance the Gap is the place where the National Theatre was not built for political reasons. Also, in the performance you could see real pregnant women, old people, young students age 16-17. And Tamás Jászay thinks that Árpád Schilling wanted to show that classical theatre does not care for these people and that theatre should deal with them too.

In the year of *Escapologist* Árpád Schilling had received the prestigious *New Theatrical Realities* prize in Wroclaw. Other winners came with performances that they showed in Wroclaw. Only Árpád Schilling came alone, without a performance. This was the year when he stopped doing 'theatre.' And Tamás Jászay remembers one of his colleague's Hungarian theatre critic at the time exclaiming: Such a pity it's not theatre! Critics adored all of the Schilling's works But none of them accepted *Escapologist* as theatre.

Since 2009 Árpád Schilling has been doing what you could call 'useful' theatre. In his writing, he became more and more didactic. His work was not like before. And audiences and critics did not understand and asked: Why do we need this?

After the performance at the Prague Quadrennial 2011 *jp.co.de* the Hungarian critics understood that maybe this is theatre and started to write about Krétakör again[102]. And since 2011 Schilling began making shows (meaning stage

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*The story's main character is Lilla, the actress, who faithfully follows her husband Árpád, the director, who is battling the system. Their life becomes subordinated to the will of the rebellious artist, who consistently and without compromise stands up to the oppressive power.*

[101] And before that there were according to Jászay not too successful shows called *The Party* (A part, 2014), dir. by Schilling and *Corruption* (Korrupció, 2014) dir. by Márton Gulyás (that time managing director of Krétakör). Both these were dealing with politics, power and the life of people who suffered from them.

[102] Krétakör has brought a whole bus of critics from Budapest to Prague in June 2011 to see jp.co.de. In my opinion it is the context of the Prague Quadrennial, a big international theatre event with long tradition, that has accepted Schilling's work as theatre that got the

performances) again. "Now they are written by him, not based in classical plays. But it's back to black box theatre and you watch and clap and that's all. It makes critics comfortable. But we still wish he would do Chekov.[103]"

The problem of theatre criticism in Hungary is a problem of knowledge. All knowledge is based on the past. Because critics are of older generation, 50-60 years old, there are no new critics to invent new ways of describing the new theatrical languages. The critics are getting older and their idea of theatre is based in the Hungarian theatre of 1980's[104]. "And of course, they reject it when Schilling gets on stage and gets naked."

But the same was in France, when Schilling did the French *Escaplogist L'éloge de l'escapologiste* (2008) in MC93 Bobigny. (This version was different than the *Escapologist* I am describing. The only thing they have in common is the title. This version used local youth of different races who worked with street art and sports around the whole building in Bobigny). French reviewers according to Tamás Jászay also questioned if this performance theatre or not. "Critics coming from the center of Paris were disappointed that they come all the way to see black and Arab youth draw something on the wall. They asked: why do we want to watch this?"  And even Patrick Sommier, director of MC93 Bobigny was also disappointed with this and became nostalgic for the time when Krétakör did theatre.

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Hungarian critics to change their minds. Paradoxically, at the same time it was the Czech theatre critics that criticized jp.do.de for not being theatre. For instance: Mikulka, Vladimír, *Průšvih jménem Krétakör* in Lidové noviny 0862-5921 year. 24, no. 155 (2.-3.7.2011). My translation of the title of article is *Calamity Called Krétakör*.

[103] Apart from to his authorial projects, he accepted the invitation of the most famous Hungarian repertory theatre, the Katona József Theatre where he directed *Faust I-II* by Goethe (2015). The duration was again extreme, they played it for 2 evenings and according to Jászay it can be taken as an ironic gesture. Unfortunately, it cannot be seen anymore, the famous actor who played Mephisto had a stroke some weeks after the premier.)

[104] Comment by T.J. when reading this text: *"Of course there are a few younger critics, but being a theatre critic is not a guarantee that you could pay your bills at the end of the month."*

According to *Krétakör* themselves, the change marked by the *Escapologist*, the 'escape' was inspired by the need to find new theatrical relationships to audiences (as we saw from the Krétakör web information) as "*moral and social beings*." Through the 'escape' Árpád Schilling decentralized his own story. He deconstructed it in order to reconstruct his life story, his personal self as well as art story – the way he creates theatre. The escapologist (Árpád Schilling) 'disappears into the narrative and dissolves into the community. So, we can say that the 'escape', the dramaturgy of *Escapologist* marked a journey towards community and towards creating a possibility for the audience to understand that by entering the project they are taking certain responsibility for their interpretation, their positioning and their relating with the performance and each other as I will show in the following chapter. All of which was a certain kind of "theatre rehearsal for the revolution," (A. Boal 1985: 122)[105], where the audience was to begin understanding their shared rights and responsibilities towards the community.

I would like this chapter about *Escapologist* and the big change in *Krétakör* that Árpád Schilling made to be explained with his own words. He explains the change best:

> *Because behind all these decisions to escape and stop there was one reason: how can we go deeper into society, not just call them to watch our shows. The other possibility was to go to them, to play with them, to invite them in the game, to involve them, to try to communicate, to try to be actors in the original meaning – to act, to do something. So this was one of the original reasons to escape. Because of this I decided the end of this project had to be something that was not about me, about the people and cooperation between these people – people from the street, from the district where our offices are. (*Árpád Schilling *in interview p.213)

There are three important reasons behind the change and the 'decentralization' of Árpád Schilling. The first one is the creative decentralization. He wanted to share the creative process with others: "I decided in the beginning that I had to be in the middle of this project but the result of this project had to be out(side) of me, where people do not see me, something that doesn't come from me. That is why I chose

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[105] Boal, Augusto. Theatre of the Oppressed. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985. Print.

three persons to work with these kind of questions, birth, puberty and before the death. And I met three girls who were interested, they had worked with amateurs and civilians so they knew how this worked. For me it was really important to give them this chance to work without me." (Árpád Schilling in interview p.213) The 'three girls' he is referring here to are young directors Adél Kollár, Bea Nagy, Márta Schermann that directed the *Artproletarz* parts of the project.

Second reason behind the change is personal. At the time when he got married and got a baby-girl, he was looking for a possibility to incorporate these newly gained points of views and to decentralize his own:

> *In the middle point there was this birth moment and the big role of the woman in this moment and then the men just reflects, just uses the camera but can't be an actor, he is in this fragile situation but he is not the actor and woman can be more and more an actor during this project. [...] I tried to build a myth from our personal stories, of the man and the women and the new woman, our daughter. The women's way. And I can imagine it would have been another story if we didn't have a daughter. For me it was very personal and sometimes I used our family story as a metaphor, sometimes I changed the reflection on the reality because of our personal story. So it was half-fiction and half-real story. But a really important question: if open this situation, because it was a very man … and the work methods, director was male and everything was very masculine, the interesting question for me was if I wanted to escape and I had to think about this attitude as well, it's a masculine attitude. For me it was clear if I wanted to change maybe I had to understand this other type of thinking.* (Árpád Schilling in attached interview p.213)

The third reason behind the change was the developing political situation in Hungary that I will describe in more detail in the next section.

### 3.9. Political Context in Hungary

In an interview for Le Monde in 2012 gives a direct explanation for making what I consider highly political theatre:

> *I meet many foreigners who ask me: "How can you stand that Orbán is in power? How come you do not fight against him?" My answer is: "What can I*

*do alone?" I did not vote for Orbán and I would never. I express my opinion wherever I can. On the occasion of our national holiday on March 15, 2011 there was a demonstration. I was asked to deliver a speech in front of thirty thousand people. And so I did, but I am not sure whether this made any difference. Instead of shouting "Orbán, get out!" I would rather fight on familiar turf. What I am interested in is how we can reinforce or even create an independent culture that strengthens civil society.* [106]

This quote indicates that the *Escapologist* project among others was a direct reaction to the socio-political state in Hungary since the late 1990's.

I will go back to exploring political aspects of the dramaturgy of *Escapologist,* but in order to understand the need for decentralization of making and being in theatre of Árpád Schilling we have first to understand the political situation and political mentality of the time in Hungary at the end of 2000's, that it is closely connected to the rise of right wing Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Union party led by Viktor Orbán, a "party which defines itself as "Christian, right-wing, and nationalist."[107] This strengthening of this rightwing conservative, nationalistic current is marked by strong effort for centralization of power and of homogenization of values through series of legislative changes.

*Fidesz* party won municipal elections against the ruling *Socialist Party (MSZP)* in 2006 (15 out of 23 mayoralties in largest cities and in 18 out of 20 regional assemblies). This gave *Fidesz* enough power to call for what Hungarians called a 'social referendum' – a populist referendum on revoking government reforms (including newly established doctor visit fees and other medical as well as higher education fees). This referendum took place on March 9th 2009 (one day after the first day of *Escapologist* project that started on March 8th.). In April 2010 Fidesz won parliamentary elections by 52.73%. Apparently, the victory of Fidesz is not mainly due to their populist politics – but was a result of resentment of people towards the ruling *Socialist Party* and their Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány and

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[106] Salino, Brigitte. *Árpád Schilling: We Have Reached the Peak of Apathy,* interview, Le Monde Newspaper, France, January 28th, 2012.
[107] Gati, Charles. *Hungary's Backward Slide,* New York Times Newspaper, December 12, 2011

the 2006 political scandal, when there was a leak of audio recording from internal MSZP party meeting in which Ferenc Gyurcsány used strong language against his own party and the country, taken out of context.[108]

A majority of 52.73% of voters in parliamentary elections resulted in Fidesz getting 262 seats out of total of 386 seats in the National Assembly – enough votes to change the constitution. Fidesz started working on constitutional changes right away and in 2010 managed to create a major international conflict with Slovakia (reported to be on the verge of war) by awarding all Hungarians around the world - and especially in the region - with dual citizenship.

This is what professor Charles Gati[109] wrote in December 2011 for New York Times in the times approaching the announcement of the new constitution:

> *Appealing to age- old nationalist suspicions, government propaganda has come to compare Western banks to Soviet tanks and Brussels to Moscow, while rather lame and much too infrequent criticism from Washington or Berlin is angrily rejected as interference in domestic affairs. Official Hungary is imagined to be an island surrounded by foreign enemies. Orban, though heading a country that is a member of both the E.U. and NATO, keeps assuring domestic audiences that the West is in terminal decline.*
>
> *The new basic law, or constitution, entered into force Jan. 1[110] draws on a golden age of Hungarian history that never was, echoing the professed values of the old Kingdom of Hungary. More dangerously, Parliament has curtailed the power of the Constitutional Court while it has created several councils that could override Parliament in case the current government loses its majority; members of these councils are to serve nine-year terms. […] Hungary is no longer a Western style democracy. It is an illiberal or managed democracy in the sense that all important decisions are made by Orban. Hungary is similar to Slovakia under Vladimir Meciar and Poland under the rule of the Kaczynski twins."[111]

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[108] See more in the October 2012 interview with Árpád Schilling p.225
[109] Charles Gati is a professor and interim director of Russian and Eurasian Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington.
[110] New Hungarian Constitution entered into law on January 1st, 2012
[111] Gati, Charles. *Hungary's Backward Slide,* New York Times Newspaper, December 12, 2011

In part these trends are taking place due to the post 1989 revolution era, when privatization included selling of most of state properties and companies to foreign companies. Post offices, highways and newspapers in today's Hungary are not owned by the state, or Hungarians, and this creates strong need for new national movements within the Hungarian people. The situation is misused by political parties that get the popular vote through insisting on the strengthening of Hungarian identity (and their own power) at the expense of other nationalities and races (particularly Slovaks, Romas etc.) At the time of conception of the *Escapologist*, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Árpád Schilling has been living in a country that is strengthening its national identity (created through a negative relationship to outside world) and creation of legislation that is not tolerant to difference.

Creation of outside enemy is a populist political strategy used in recent times for instance by Serbian politician Slobodan Milošević that caused dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Balkans Wars of the 1990's as well as by George Bush in post September 11th America, and is becoming a common political practice in recent years around the world. Establishing of an 'outside enemy' provides for a possibility of creation union of community not through 'sharing' and dialogue within the community but through negative relating towards a threat from outside against which the community has to resist, if not fight. This 'enemy from outside' is not only different, but is usually also perceived to be trying to destroy the community. In fact, the 'outside enemy' is a diversion from the real problem posed from inside the community.

So we have to understand that this is the environment in which Escapologist project was made within Hungary that was 'closing off' towards the outside and different despite it being a county inside the European Union of the 2000's. But the Hungarian authoritarian politicians are also using strategies against the 'inside enemies' – creating laws against any kind of opposition, difference of perspective or way of life. But in order to make clear the extent of its dramatic changes in Hungarian socio-political life towards centralization I have to describe in detail the

constitutional changes from 2011 that were its peak. In order to illustrate them correctly I will quote at some length the New York Times[112] article *Hungary's Constitutional Revolution* by Kim Lane Scheppele[113] from December 19th, 2011 where she writes that Fidesz "have used this power in the most extreme way at every turn, amending the constitution ten times in their first year in office and then enacting a wholly new constitution that will take effect on January 1, 2012. This constitutional activity has transformed the legal landscape to remove checks on the power of the government and put virtually all power into the hands of the current governing party for the foreseeable future."

It is important to start understanding this situation by noting that this is all happening in a state with a new media law where press has limited freedom, meaning that flow of information is reduced.

> *A draconian set of media laws created a new media board - staffed only by Fidesz party loyalists with a chair who is appointed by the Prime Minister to a nine-year term. This board can review all public and private media for their compliance with a nebulous standard of political "balance" and has the power to bankrupt any news organization with large fines. It is not surprising that the media have become self-censoring.*

It also limits religious rights:

> *"The new constitution also accepts conservative Christian social doctrine as state policy, in a country where only 21% of the population attends any religious services at all. The fetus is protected from the moment of conception. Marriage is only legal if between a man and a woman. The constitution "recognize(s) the role of Christianity in preserving nationhood" and holds that "the family and the nation constitute the principal framework of our coexistence." While these religious beliefs are hard-wired into the constitution,*

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[112] I am quoting *New York Times* here because the Hungarian media does not give objective picture for the reasons I will describe below, while the Czech press where I currently reside does not give almost any information on the dramatic situation in Hungary. All New York Times quotes are taken from their on-line archive.

[113] Kim Lane Scheppele, *Hungary's Constitutional Revolution* in New York Times newspaper article published December 19th, 2011. (Kim Lane Scheppele is a Laurance S. Rockefeller Professor of Sociology and International Affairs in the Woodrow Wilson School and the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University)

*a new law on the status of religion cut the number of state recognized churches to only fourteen, deregistering 348 other churches.*[114]

And in the same time it gives the new government unlimited power:

*In a democracy, the population can "throw the bums out" and replace the government with a different one that can change the policies that do not have public support. But that will be nearly impossible under this constitution. In addition to compromising institutions that are necessary for a free and fair election - like a free press and a neutral election apparatus - the new constitution embeds Fidesz control even if another political party defies the odds and wins an election.*

*The new constitution makes huge swaths of public policy changeable only by a two-thirds vote of any subsequent parliament. From here on, all tax and fiscal policy must be decided by a two-thirds supermajority. Even the precise boundaries of electoral districts cannot be changed by simple majority vote, but only by a two-third supermajority. If a new government gets a mere majority, policies instituted during the Fidesz government cannot be changed.*

*That's not all. The long arm of the current Fidesz government can grab and shake any foreseeable future government through the officials they are now putting into place [office for the public prosecutor (term of office 9 years), the head of the state audit office (12 years), the head of the national judicial office (9 years), the head of the media board (9 years), the head of the budget council (6 years)]. Each of these positions has been filled with Fidesz party loyalists who will be able to conduct public investigations, intimidate the media, press criminal charges and continue to pack the courts long after the government's current term is over. […]*

*The only parties that might replace Fidesz in the current Hungarian landscape are the Socialist Party or, in a real nightmare scenario, the far-right Jobbik. Under laws that preceded Fidesz's election last year, political parties that are anti-constitutional may be banned. [...] According to a proposed constitutional amendment, the crimes of the former communist party will be listed in the constitution and the statute of limitations for prosecuting crimes committed*

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[114] "*On January 1, over 300 denominations lose their official status in Hungary - including their tax exemptions and their abilities to run state-funded schools. While most of the denominations are tiny, many are not. Among the religions that will no longer be able to operate with state approval are all versions of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Baha'i, as well as many smaller Catholic orders including the Benedictines, Marists, Carmelites and Opus Dei, and a number of major Protestant denominations including Episcopalians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, Methodists, and all but one of the evangelical churches. One each of the orthodox, conservative and liberal Jewish synagogues are recognized; but all other Jewish congregations are not.",* Kim Lane Scheppele wrote in a later article *The Unconstitutional Constitution* for *New York Times* newspaper, published on January 2, 2012.

*during the communist period will be lifted. The former communist party is branded a criminal organization and the current opposition Socialist Party is designated as their legal successor."*

So, the new Hungarian constitution of January 1st, 2012 that has among other things renamed Hungarian Republic to Hungary – taking the republic out of the name and pointing to the fact that the next political phase might be beyond democracy became law (ironically this is the same way Krétakör entered the phase in which it stopped being theatre). The change of constitution took place a little less than two years after *Escapologist* project took place in 2009. *Escapologist* project was created in the political environment during which extreme change of constitution in 2011 was at its peak. Árpád Schilling made *Escapologist* because he understood problems in his country and wanted to do something about his own self and the audience.

All of the above described points to the authoritarian politics of centralized power, where decisions are made by a group of people – one party, that creates an environment in which other points of views, other opinions, and strategies are restricted directly by a constitution that provides long term unlimited centralized power to one party. (And here I was quoting mainly changes connected to political, social, religious and private life while not touching on financial and economic issues[115] that are as determining of a country during a financial crisis, a crisis that

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[115] In her next article *The Unconstitutional Constitution* Kim Lane Scheppele wrote after the constitution was ratified, she wrote on January 2, 2012: *"The new law on the central bank (the Magyar Nemzeti Bank or MNB) gives the prime minister the right to appoint all vice-presidents of the bank. […] The new Economic Stability Law […] creates a permanent flat tax, requiring all personal wage income to be taxed at the same rate, starting in January 2013. While the law does not specify the rate of taxation, the very flatness of the tax sets limits on how much the rich can be made to pay. […] The flat tax will be extended to corporate profits in 2015, when a new provision kicks in to require equal taxes to be levied on a corporation's "achieved results." Given these constraints on the shape of new taxes, Hungary is unlikely to be able to balance its books for the foreseeable future. […] the Hungarian government has been in financial trouble. It borrows in foreign currencies, and the debts balloon each time the forint (the national currency) falls. Between June and December [2011], the Hungarian forint fell 13% against the euro and 18% against the Swiss franc […]. Under the previous Socialist government, national debt expanded, causing Hungary at the start of 2008 to turn to the IMF for emergency support."*

in Hungary started 2008/09 at the time of making of *Escapologist*). Fidesz uses strategies of political repression, as well as repression of media and freedom of speech, strengthening its own influence over Hungarian community based on the idea of the external enemy – while directly repressing freedom of choice – multiplicity of identity by restricting gay marriage, abortion, and a large number of religious persuasions.

It would be highly incorrect to look for the roots of the problematic situation in Hungary of the late 2000's and early 2010's putting all the blame on *Fidesz* and Viktor Orbán. The success of Fidesz is possible for multiplicity of historical reasons. The depth of Árpád Schilling's effort of decentralization and activation can be better understood if we understand the difficulty of finding ways to position oneself and act politically when living in Easter European post-communist world that creates a particular political atmosphere. Coming from this world posits two important obstacles in being politically active: one is deep mistrust of a commune, community or any kind of being part of a group, because of the history of socialist and communist politics in the Eastern Europe of the second half of the twentieth century that misused social community for specific political power. This made it hard for people to decide to be part of community and take responsibility for what that entails. The second obstacle is the very freeing from the first obstacle: democracy connected to capitalism that came as a relief after communism – after the revolution in 1989 it made sense that people were unable to be critical towards this new order and incapable of envisioning new political orders that might suit them better. Árpád Schilling is in his writing at the time of making of Escapologist in 2009 open about being resigned to capitalism: "Democracy is a lie, because the many is not more right, just more strong" (Schilling in *Theater* 2008: 43)[116]; yet at the same time resigned: "If we cannot come up with a system that is better than capitalism, then we must, how-ever distrustful it may be, comply with its rules." (Schilling 2008: 33)[117].

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[116] Schilling, Árpád. *Notes of an Escapologist,* Theater, Yale, vol. 38 no. 2, 2008.
[117] Ibid.

The change from communism to capitalism also left long term traces on theatre culture. During communism 'art worked as communal experience' (Schilling 2008: 32) in Eastern Europe – in Hungary as well as Czech Republic or Poland; a large number of theatres were capable of creating clear theatrical – political metaphors against the ruling communist order, and were functioning as centers of intellectual resistance, the only places where if only through metaphor the truths could be told. In the aftermath of the revolutions of 1989 people simply believed that there was nothing or very little in democracy and capitalism to be criticized and theatre was left without its previous socio-political function.

In the above quoted article *Notes of an Escapologist* for *Theatre Magazine* in 2008 Árpád Schilling describes contemporary Hungarian theatres (theatre institutions as there were extremely few independent companies at the time) as traditional in the sense of producing performance in the end of 19th century realistic style, while pretending this is contemporary. It is a "mammoth skeleton in the frozen ground" (Schilling 2008: 34)[118], "not a meeting place, but the opportunity for self-representations or, rather, a museum trip." (Schilling 2008: 36)[119] Here he also describes the relationship of the theatre institutions as "harmonic" with the governments "based on the age-old system of 'I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine'' (an arsenal of lesser and greater corruptions)." (Schilling 2008: 31)[120]. Unfortunately, here people go to theatre out of habit – because their parents went or simply to seek entertainment – a critical angle on society or system or individuals in not on the program. And this is unfortunately true of a big part of Eastern Europe.

But Hungary is specific within Eastern Europe for something that Árpád Schilling calls apathy. People there cling to status quo partially based in nostalgia. There is a strange illusion of no change in Hungary; an illusion that things are the same going back even a century ago. A good illustration is the fact that contemporary

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[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.

Hungarian National Assembly has 386 seats - only 27 seats less than Hungarian parliament (413) of Austro-Hungarian Empire times in 1910[121] that covered a much larger geographical area. In Hungary time is moving slowly.

Partially this apathy comes from simply being comfortable.

> *Hungary was one of the best countries in the old Soviet bloc. Because there was the revolution in 1956, to Soviet power, the empire, wanted revenge. So [the communist leader Janos Kadar] chose the way of compromise.*

This meaning non-resistance to installment of strong Soviet influence over Hungary.

> *It was a quite rich country during these years, and people felt that things were OK. […] most of the people were in a very comfortable situation. Cars, flats, everyone had a job…*
>
> *And after the change of system[122], people wanted to feel the same. They wanted to be comfortable. They didn't think of democracy, there was no revolution here, no revenge against the communist party, so it was a very warm, nice change. There was no problem, no secret files of the communist era (they are still secret, they were not opened for the public. […] They kept the same measures of the state, the same institutions, the same social distribution, the same measure of everything, like in the communist era. […] So, socialist era, but in the middle of Europe, and in the middle of capitalism. And I think before 2008 and 2010 – when Fidesz won for the second time, it happened, it was the reason of the big state deficit, the debt. It was just 'OK, if you need money, you will get money – for culture, for this, for that', but we don't have to change anything, because people don't want anything from the state, and the state doesn't want from you either.*
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> *[…] Everything was changing in a big way, new relations to Europe, to the US. But Hungary remained the same. It is the same, like Balaton is a big lake and we are next to the water, and that is all*. (Árpád Schilling interview p.224-225)

Balaton being a large lake of 592m2 in the west of Hungary, largest in Central Europe often used as metaphor for peace and leisure.

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[121] This is the number during the last parliamentary elections of Hungarian Parliament of the Austro-Hungarian empire.
[122] After 1989 revolution against communist regime.

But this is the way Árpád Schilling talked to me in the interview in October 2012, at the time when he himself had already lost a bit of vigor. In the Notes from 2008 his voice is still very strong and angry:

> *To be sour in Hungary is not simply a right; it is a fundamental duty. Just like loathing, envying, sputtering, grumbling, nitpicking, looking for flies in ointments, conning people, grassing on people, spitting on people nicking, whining, despising, backstabbing, brownnosing, cheating, betraying, shit-stirring, plotting…" (Schilling 2008: 34)[123] The list goes on and takes a whole long paragraph. "The fact remains the same: we are in trouble. We have no answers – nay – we have hardly any questions. A chaos of notions in the head, professional under-preparation, inability to cooperate, coupled with an unshakable belief in our indispensableness, a flaunting of powers, a desperate clutching at formerly useful connections." (Schilling 2008: 35)[124]*

What he is describing is a Hungary in which people are not used to use their voice, a Hungary of apathy. And at the time when financial crisis hit Hungary in 2008-09, the social reforms (against which Fidesz made the social referendum in 2006) which were very much needed and because of the crisis were to be even stricter – people chose the opposite - the right wing Fidesz.

This apathy also causes or is caused by the lack of dialogue. Difference is taken for granted and not as something to be examined, explored and understood:

> *Because after 2000 this very strict left and right showed people that they had to be either on the right side or the left side […]. In 2008 I felt that there was no communication, that people didn't want to communicate with each other because they believed […] that one was on the left, and the other on the right, and they were not curious to talk about these questions more, to find a way to agree and realize that they were thinking the same.*
>
> *[…] The other thing I understood was a really big border between the intellectuals and people, between the city, the capital, and the countryside. There was no communication, no understanding. […] And I thought: with this theater, I can give a chance to intellectuals to think about different things, but I have no link to the other people. I have a chance to meet thousands and thousands of intellectuals, but I have no chance to find young people, no chance of finding people in the countryside.* (Árpád Schilling interview p.214)

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[123] Schilling, Árpád. *Notes of an Escapologist,* Theater, Yale, vol. 38 no. 2, 2008.
[124] Ibid.

This feeling of disconnection of people is crucial as a starting point of the *Escapologist* project – through which Árpád Schilling wanted to get connected himself to the people by putting his own self on stage and connecting people to each other by creating new spatial and mental situations in which the stage and the audience are not strictly separated anymore.

This disconnection is a sign of apathy as well as lack of need to take an active part in socio-political life. People in Eastern European countries even after twenty years of democracy are still learning ways to express themselves and have active political life - responsibilities and rights. As if it is hard to understand: "Freedom does not mean that I can buy anything that was made to cater for my needs but that I am capable of making my own decisions" as Árpád Schilling says himself (Schilling 2008: 34)[125].

Consumer culture, as well as authoritarian politics, as well as apathy, all create a situation of dependence of individuals on the socio-political system, dependence on pre-scribed desires and rules. This dependence further creates an incapacity to be actively involved with others, which is devastating for the feeling of a healthy community. Difference is not communicated but hidden from others. This provokes negative autonomisation – separation of individuals into inactive, non-communicative cells.

When he started the *Escapologist* project Árpád Schilling believed that this can be changed. Paradoxically he saw the possibility of change in the fact that it was not an outside enemy – the politicians who were 'guilty' of the situation of dependence and apathy, but the people themselves. In his *Notes* written for journal *Theatre* published by *Yale University Press* in 2008 he states: "Today it is not the politicians, the one ruling class, that we must criticize, but society itself.*"* (Schilling 2008: 33)[126] and "How long can we run away from facing our own responsibility, incompetence – ultimately, our own stupidity – by forever demonizing those

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[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.

running the country" (Schilling 2008: 37)[127] and "Although politicians try to make us believe that there are […] different enemies, today we, ourselves, are the enemy." (Schilling 2008: 33)[128].

This is the central issue of *Escapologist* in my opinion – this "*we, ourselves, are the enemy"* and this is the starting point of the *Escapologist.* The change has to start with us. The beginning of the project is Árpád Schilling himself who becomes a central figure, a dramatic character that is to undergo a transformation through a set of dramatic situations that will examine them, challenge him and ultimately change him. By putting himself into the center of the performance Árpád Schilling is putting the 'lime-light' on himself, coming out of the shadow and publicly taking on the responsibility in a very personal way. This is an invitation to the audience to also take on the responsibility – and Árpád Schilling created very concrete, literal ways of for audience to enter 'the stage' – from being present in the stage space in the *LaborHotel* to joining the celebration in the *Finale,* where they 'became part of' the performance. This is how theatre becomes a place of political 'battle', where instead of shouting '*Orbán, get out!'[129],* Árpád Schilling invites the audience to be activated and create a dialogue that are at the core of healthy political society.

Árpád Schilling has always, even before the change in 2008, perceived theatre as a political space and this is illustrated by his choice in naming the company after Brecht's *Chalk Circle*. But the seriousness of the political climate in Hungary pushed him to rethink the political within theatre. Simply talking about politics and representing it within the theatre narrative was not enough anymore. Árpád Schilling was irritated by the apathy, disrespect of difference and lack of dialogue and has decided to find ways to incorporate this problem within his own work. Through the new *Krétakör* Árpád Schilling is exploring the incorporation of multiple possibilities of difference, different points of views, and critical positioning – social and political activation of both the makers and audience – within the performance.

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[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] See quote from Le Monde from the beginning of the chapter.

As he stepped into the little theatre from the lonely white library at the beginning of *LaborHotel* he entered a tiny theatre with small chairs for children. "We are all children from a point of view" (Escapologist brochure[130]), in this moment Árpád Schilling sees his own self from an outsider point of view and understands the difference of points of view – both in space, the theatre, as well as in time, point of view of different ages. But he also understands that we are all the children from a certain point of view, meaning that 'who we are' and 'what we do' is influenced by our point of view, by seeing things from where we stand – mentally and physically. What is crucial here is not the understanding of the fact of the specificity of the point of view, as much as the possibility of activation, of change. Who we are and what we do can be changed if our point of view changes. For the point of view to change we have to move within the mental and physical space, but the change is possible. "Man himself changes slowly, but conditions of life, the written and unwritten rules around him, change all the more quickly (although I would hesitate to call this progress)." (Schilling 2008: 35)[131]. At the heart of the possibility of political change for Árpád Schilling lies a personal transformation, change of personal position. "If we want to change the way the community works, we must first change ourselves" (Schilling 2008: 64)[132].

To go back to the socio-political situation in Hungary at the time of dissolving Krétakör Theatre and the making of *Apology for the Escapologist,* it was a place of apathy and lack of communication between people in a still post-communist world that had still not resolved old historical issues and is barely getting used to new ones. In this situation the authoritarian government of FIDESZ is gaining strength and centralizing power and homogenizing social values. This is the socio-political situation the 'escapologist' was trying to escape.

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[130] Árpád Schilling in Apology of the Escapologist brochure accompanying the performance, published by Krétakör, 2009. Working translation from Hungarian.
[131] Schilling, Árpád. *Notes of an Escapologist,* Theater, Yale, vol. 38 no. 2, 2008.
[132] Ibid.

### 3.10. Anti-authoritarian Dispositions of Escapologist

In 1964 Spanish sociologist and political scientist Juan Linz defined authoritarian regimes as "political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones." (Linz 2000:159)[133] And I think that from the descriptions above it is clear that we can describe *FIDESZ* style of governing as authoritarian.

Authoritarian governments are systems with centralized political systems, systems without clear ideology that demobilize the citizens. We can see these aspects clearly in contemporary Hungary, best shown in the steps taken in the changing of the Hungarian constitution in 2011, but this type of governing appears in other Eastern European countries including Russia. And it is no surprise that Linz's was researching transitory periods between totalitarian and democratic systems when he defined the 'authoritarian.'

*Apology of the Escapologist* is in my opinion direct reaction to the growing authoritarian government that has more and more influence on daily life in Hungary. And I want to focus briefly on the three main aspects of authoritarian ('centralized political systems', 'systems without clear ideology' that 'demobilize the citizens'), in order to show that opposite system is at work behind the *Escapologist* performance.

*Apology of the Escapologist* is a performance that was decentralized on many levels: on the level of the narrative (nonlinear, fragmented narrative), level of character (the main character disperses into community), on the level of space and time (many spaces and many times of performance), it was even partially

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[133] Linz, Juan J. Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000. Print.

decentralized on the level of the creative process (the last part *Artproletarz* was directed by three other directors).

When we talk about ideology we have to know that of course ideology of performance is very different to political ideology. Yet, we can say that behind every performance there is a system of ideas. One of the main tasks of dramaturg and dramaturgy is to define this system – the main ideas as well as their relationships. I would even go as far as to say that behind devised theatre systems there is something I call a 'dramaturgical consciousness.' The consciousness of the performance is when the system of ideas, the ideology, gains its own independent life outside of its makers. There is often in the devising process, but not always, a moment when the makers start feeling that the system of ideas is so full that the makers are not making it anymore, but on the contrary the ideology inspires the makers and is making the performance itself.

It is also important to say that this ideology of performance has to be clear and visible to the makers, while on the other side audiences do not have to know all the exact details of the ideology but they need to 'feel' that there is a firm ideology behind it so they can 'trust' it in order to start looking for ideology themselves and experience their own version of the performance.

The 'clarity of ideology' of the *Escapologist* is many-fold and problematic. Watching the documentation of the project I can see clearly the ideology behind it: the decentralization on many levels, activation of audience, democratization of a performance event. And I see clearly how connected or rather in opposition to contemporary Hungarian politics it is.

From the point of view of the audience (and critics) the ideology of the performance was not clear. They did not know what they were 'entering,' and could hardly orient themselves when they 'entered.' This is probably dues to two main factors: first that Hungarian audiences not being used to performances outside theatre stages that include moving of audiences and communities on stage; the second factor is

the sheer size of the project that did not allow the audience to be able to map the whole performance easily, the fragmentation of the event of the performance made it harder to see for the average audience members. And by demanding that you have to show ticket of previous part of the project to enter the next *Krétakör* limited one important part of the freedom for audience to watch any part that they please and in any order that they please, which in my opinion would have been much stronger dramaturgical statement.

But I think that *Apology of the Escapologist* was a 'jump into unknown' for Árpád Schilling. The project was experiment, a risk, a try-out of a different way to do theatre. So, while some intentions were clear to Árpád Schilling there was also a lot of unknown including, many questions in the domain of how to execute it. This factor of the 'unknown' is an important factor in the ideology of *Escapologist* not being clear to the audience. And despite the seeming failure of the performance with audiences and critics, and the un-clarity of its ideology, I do understand the risk of the change of the way to do theatre, and the way to present it to the audience that Árpád Schilling had to take, especially with the understanding of the political situation in Hungary. And I do think Árpád Schilling did take the right steps to introduce the audience slowly into the 'new' ideology (first installations on the street, then video installation part where the situation of escapologist is described etc.). But the detailed reasons why *Escapologist* did not succeed with audiences and critics are a topic for another whole thesis, while this one is focusing on deciphering the intentions behind the making.

The third important aspect of an authoritarian regime is that it 'demobilize its citizens.' *Escapologist* proposed a decentralized point of view for the audience in order so that they could see the performance from many sides and positions – by moving through space. Here I would like to note that decentralization of point of view is a key political aspect of *Escapologist*. Viewing is one of the key aspects of contemporary political theory, starting with feminist theory of the male 'gaze' (1970' feminist film theory), understanding 'who' is watching and how that factor influences the understanding of the thing observed is crucial. The thing observed

does not exist by itself, it is made through the gaze. In *Escapologist* Árpád Schilling sought a certain 'democratization' of the gaze, of the point of view: multiplicity of ways of seeing and the multiplicity of ways to understand and experience the performance. To provide a possibility of many gazes to be present at the same time not only mentally but also physically – spatially. Making the multiplicity of gaze through space was a way to make them visible – to emphasize them.

In the next chapter I will describe in detail how the audience moved in space and found their position spatially, and was activated to mentally and physically take part.

All of these strategies can be defined as socio-political or soft politics - but nonetheless political.

Here theatre is not what literary critic and political philosopher Frederic Jameson (*Archaeologies of the Future*, 2005)[134] defines in literature as a 'fantasy'- a private, psychological escape tool, but it is 'science fiction' in Jameson's view a 'social fantasy' – an opportunity to envision changes in society, a fantasy to be shared.

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[134] Jameson, Fredric. Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions. New York: Verso, 2005. Print.

## 4. SPATIAL DRAMATURGY OF ESCAPOLOGIST

In the previous chapter I described rhizomatic dramaturgy as an open dramaturgy with a clear political subtext – decentralization, de-hierarchization etc.; and I described the journey within the *Escapologist* project as being towards that kind of dramaturgy. In my thinking, it is very important to understand rhizomatic dramaturgy as 'spatial' in the sense of '*contemporaneous plurality'* that Massey is writing about: all elements co-exist in a de-hierarchized system and have the potential for relating to each other, they are open 3D systems.

In this chapter I will describe spatial dramaturgy, dramaturgy that creates conditions for new relationships between audience and performance physically, literally spatial terms. *Apology of the Escapologist* is a good example of this spatial dramaturgy. It took the performance and audience from two-dimensional relating of watching from one place, to a three-dimensional relating where audience can enter the space of performance mentally but also physically and influence what is happening on space by their presence. The new spatial relating is mentioned by Hans Thies Lehmann only in two of the last chapters of *Postdramatic Theatre* called *Theatre of 'Shared' Space* (Lehmann 2006: 122)[135] and *Dramatic and Postdramatic Space* (Lehmann 2006: 130)[136], but I will look at it more closely to propose that this is one of the most significant new features of contemporary dramaturgy.

The 'spatial dramaturgy' that I will describe in this section is defined by three important features: the space where the performance takes place is 'authentic' space that becomes part of the theme of the performance; the space of performance is shared with the audience; and the performance is not taking place in one location but is fragmented into many spaces over the course of time.

Performing in non-theatre spaces and new spacing - inviting audiences into theatre spaces, 'freeing' the audience from their seats in the auditorium, has been one of

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[135] Lehmann, Hans-Thies. Postdramatic Theatre. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
[136] Ibid.

the significant features of the theatre of the twentieth century. We can start with futurist performance interventions at the beginning of the century, political theatre in the US since the 1960's – Living Theatre, Bread and Puppet, Guerrilla Girls, Fluxus*,* and visual artists working with 'happenings' – all performed in public spaces, streets, places of protest. There were influential experiments with performances in non-theatre spaces all thought the second half of the twentieth century:  from environmental theatre of American director and theorists like Richard Foreman in the 1970's, to theatre in found and industrial spaces (directors Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine in the 1980's), or the rise of Dutch large scale, spectacular site specific performance in the 1990's (Dogtroep company and Grif theatre). Polish theatre theorist Kazimierz Braun declared in 1979 (influenced by the developments in the theatre of the sixties and seventies) in his seminal book *Second Theatre Reform?*[137] that the next step for theatre development will be in completely leaving the theatre building and creating opportunities for interaction, participation and ultimately co-creation of audience, this was to be the 'second theatre reform' of the twentieth century.

These ideas are even more urgent today, in times when for the larger part of the day we live our 'virtual' lives online and there are only a few places left in our public life where communities meet live and can experience the sense of interaction and sharing in the social sense. This is proven by the rise of theatrical genres that provide for living interacting and new ways of relating within performance – interactive and immersive theatre, community and site specific theatre, interactive and sound walks etc., of the last decades. Theatre is in this 'last human venue' as theorist and director Alan Read[138] says, a place where living people meet that provides a situation for direct encounter as well as confrontation. That in contemporary performance, the performance provides for an audience to be part of

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[137] Working translation of title from Polish *Kazimierz Braun: Druga Reforma Teatru?* (1979)
[138] Alan Read. *Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement: The Last Human Venue*. Basingstoke [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

it and thus "they negotiate process of democratization and redefine relationship between members of community." (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 50)[139]

This is of course very different situation from the theatre that I started with, a theatre of unity of plot but also unity of space. And "[i]t may help to recall once again Aristotle's insistence that a tragic plot should be capable of being taken in at a single view. The unity of such a view presupposes a stable and detachable point of view, a fixed position from which the plot can be taken in as a unified whole. This in turn presupposes a certain arrangement of space: a clear-cut separation, for instance, between stage and audience, actors and spectators." (Weber 2004: 283)[140] Theatre taking place outside theatre buildings, where audiences can walk around the space(s) challenges this unity of point of view, proposes that there can be a multiplicity of possibilities and points of view of watching. They propose a new understanding of viewing and a move away from authoritative homogeneity of watching. The blurring of the division between stage and auditorium is a radical move. The audience is invited to join the performance, to join in the space.

In the *Apology of the Escapologist* the audience had to go through the entire District 9: the projects began in the streets with car installations, moved to parking lots and later to the *Gap* – the ex-National theatre space – where a slide-installation of the 'lonely life' of Árpád Schilling took place. From there the audience had go to the Krétakör headquarters for *LaborHotel,* and subsequently in the third section *Artproletarz,* the audience went to a public bath to meet pregnant women, to a hospital to meet some teenagers, and to a pensioners' club to have a dance party with the elders.

In total *Apology of the Escapologist* took place in eight different places in Budapest District 9 – a street, the garage of Gödör Club, Gödör Club itself, Krétakör headquarters, a public bath, ex-hospital, pensioners' club (and a bus on the way

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[139] Fischer-Lichte, Erika. The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.
[140] Weber, Samuel. Theatricality as Medium. New York: Fordham UP, 2004. Print.

there), a square in front of Corvinus University in District 9. The audience had to go to eight different places over the course of eight weeks to see the entire *Escapologist,* each part had its own time-space and was separated by days. So, besides the fragmentation of plot here we find another level of fragmentation, that I will call 'total fragmentation.' Total fragmentation is when the (unity of) space and time of performance, the production itself is decentralized, the performance becomes a series of performances in different places and times. This creates an opportunity for a very different experience of a theatre production for audience. In this chapter I will speak about space in *Escapologist* and this spatial fragmentation that causes 'total fragmentation' in detail.

The use of space is unique in *Escapologist* because it proposes a number of new possibilities of engagement for audiences, possibilities that are representative of tendencies in contemporary theatre: first *Escapologist* moved the line between audience and performance to include audience spatially into the equation of the performance; secondly for the most part the audience was able to move freely and find their place within the individual spaces of the *Escapologist*; after the audience was brought into multiple authentic spaces (of the community) of Budapest District 9. And as I will show that this created conditions for:
   a) inclusion of the audience into the equation of a theatre performance;
   b) multiplicity of space and thus the opportunity of visibility of a multiplicity of points of views;
   c) that it enabled positioning and situating as dramaturgical strategies for relating of performance elements (including the audience).

In my view the use of space in *Escapologist* shows a few major approaches to space in contemporary theatre such as 'authentic (non-theatre) space' (1), 'shared space' (2) – space that is inhabited by audiences and performance in the same time, but it also (and this is the special aspect of the project different to other theatre projects) 'fragmented space' (3) – performance taking place in a multiplicity of separate spaces at separate times. The use of space in this way in the performance marks the next level of fragmentation - fragmentation in 3D, fragmentation that is

strengthened by a spatial dimension of fragmentation. In this sense spatial dramaturgy is truly rhizomatic: it is a dramaturgy of relations among dimensions in motion, where connections are made across space and time.

This spatial dramaturgy represents a major shift in relating within the dramaturgical system to include the audience very directly, the role of audience within dramaturgy of a theatre performance. While fragmentation creates a mental gap for the audience to enter the performance – spatial dramaturgy allows for the audience to become part of the performance. For this reason, I will describe the use of space from the point of providing possibilities for audiences within performances rather than from the point of a 'narrative' being placed in space. I will be talking about dramaturgy not from the point of view of narrative and audience, but through space-audience dynamics.

### 4.1. Authentic Space

An important feature of *Escapologist* performance was that it did not take place in buildings pre-designed to be a theatre. The spaces where *Escapologist* took place are not theatres – spaces designated for theatre performance and built especially for that purpose.

The initial car installations of the *Overture* took place directly in the streets of Budapest. In the first section *The Pit*, the center piece was a video installation of Arpad in his lonely room, took place in the authentic space of the 'not to be National Theatre' - that I described earlier - the Gödör Club and its garages. This space with huge grey concrete walls illustrates the situation of theatre as an isolated, desolate place of separation – in which two dimensional black and white installations take place. The installation and the space are huge and the audience is small – the relationship between audience and the 'performance' is out of proportion. This *Pit* also represents the absurdity of Hungarian politics that moved

the National Theatre to the outskirts of Budapest and left an empty crater in the center of the city, leaving a mark on the culture that is leaving the city.

The second part *LaborHotel* takes place in the Krétakör headquarters, an authentic space of work - a laboratory. The headquarters take up the whole of the third floor of a building in Budapest otherwise used for living. They include approximately one rehearsal space, 5 office rooms, a kitchen, two small residency spaces and another 4 rooms used as storage. This building where this part took place was previously a school. During *Escapologist* part two the *LaborHotel* these offices were 'filled' with a theatre performance about a husband and wife and a child, and thus they became a place where three aspects intersected: work, family and theatre.

From the not-National Theatre, and work place of Krétakör audience went in the third section directly into spaces of the local community: in *Oxytocin* into a public bath, in *18 Plusminus* to an abandoned hospital, and in *Everwalk* – after a drive with a bus though the distinct – to a pensioners' club. All of these spaces where *Escapologist* took place are in Budapest District 9. This district is the neighborhood of Krétakör - this is where they have their headquarters, where they 'live.'

As I have mentioned before there have been a number of companies, directors and movements throughout the twentieth and beginning of twenty-first centuries that have left theatre venues to perform in other places. Some companies started using abandoned industrial spaces as alternative theatre venues in the late 20th century (for instance Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine) that resulted in many of those spaces being turned into theatres permanently. Other companies use the site as inspiration and basis for the theme and spatial concept, dramaturgy of the performance – site specific strategies - such as Dutch theatres Grif theatre (1975 – 2003) and Dogtroep (1975 – 2008) theatre that had their peak in the 1990's.

But the connection to authentic space is extremely important in *Escapologist*, and illustrates the need of Árpád Schilling to reconnect to 'reality,' the society and in this sense *Escapologist* is close to the political theatre of Living Theatre and Bread

and Puppet Theatre that performed in the streets to be where the people are and not only for designated theatre audiences. The spaces of District 9 and the district itself, the community of District 9 are, we can say the aim, the final destination of reconnection for Árpád Schilling. The shared space of Escapologist is literary shared performative space physically inhabited by both audiences and performances but it is also literally a shared space of community – authentic spaces of the city. So, in the *Escapologist* audiences rejoin the community through going back to the authentic spaces of the community as well.

These authentic spaces also become the scenography – the place of performance, as well as part of the story. In the beginning these places are more formed, designed – for instance in the *Laborhotel* the room/scene where the little red theatre is, or the Schilling family living room in the first scene after *Escapologist* escapes his gap. Later in the *Escapologist* these spaces are minimally adjusted, the same as narrative and form, they are left as they are – the public bath, the pensioners club. Both the shift in theatre architecture and the scenography mark the shift from theatricality of theatre as art towards theatre as social agent where the community, the people and the relations – the positioning between them becomes more important – becomes the scenography itself. In the theatre that uses found spaces the boundary between architecture and scenography is blurred – both become part of the dramaturgy that provides possibilities for spacing, relating, and positioning of performance and audience in space physically but also mentally.

Here architecture and scenography both become dramaturgical contexts - situations active in meaning creation .

a) In the section called *Pit* the performance begins in the context of a cultural and spatial crater in the center of the city left after politicians evicted the National Theatre to the outskirts of Budapest. Dramaturgically this makes for a very personal beginning with Árpád Schilling in his lonely room – actually take place in the location of a political problem – thus making the beginning of *Escapologist* start at the intersection of a personal and political crisis.

b) In *LaborHotel* the audience enters the context of the workspace by entering the headquarters of Krétakör, the space where audience usually were not allowed into. Again the space, together with the content of the scenes created an intersection: *LaborHotel* tells a story of a man and a woman, husband and wife - Mr. and Ms. Schilling. The private story is told in the workspace and ironically proves that the wife is right – in the fight scene she accuses the husband of being too involved with his work. The audience is watching this scene from a tiny red theatre, in the spatial context of the Krétakör work-space.

The spaces of the third community section *Artproletarz* do not mark out a dramaturgical conflict of content and environment, on the contrary they mark a merging of auditorium and stage.

c) The audience enters the pool in the public bath to be in the place where pregnant women do preparatory exercise before giving birth in *Oxytocin*.

d) In *18plusminus* some teenagers have a birthday party in the spaces of an ex-hospital where their birth could actually have taken place.

e) And *Everwalk* takes place in the authentic space of the pensioners – the club where they gather.

f) The last part *Finale* took place in the streets once again, in one of the central squares in District 9 near the headquarters of the company.

Now when lined up and retold like this it seems like the spaces were chosen very carefully and on purpose to create this specific meaning. But from the private interviews with the makers, I know that finding the spaces for the *Escapologist* was not easy or straight forward. Making theatre outside theater spaces designated specifically for the purpose brings a lot of organizational problems – permits,

security, equipment, promotion etc. *Escapologist* in the end did not take place in the dramaturgically ideal spaces originally intended in the concept. But what I find interesting is that, whether the meanings that we read from the spatial context of *Escapologist* were particularly or only partially intended or not - it does not matter. What matters is that the found space always brings its own meaning into the equation – creating active dramaturgical context – that can be read by different people differently.

What definitely did not happen by chance is the need for Árpád Schilling to exit the inside of the theatre venue and 'go outside into the world,' to make theatre in the authentic spaces, spaces of the community. This is a very concrete gesture – the act of performing in a non-theatre space in *Escapologist* is a political gesture. First, it came from a need to break with the tradition where the theatre building is a separate space, and separates the theatre performance from the rest of the world. And secondly it attempts to make a point, and to my mind a political point and that is that this space (specifically the space of District 9) is 'our' space – it is the community's space.

The space where theatre takes place is not a separate space-time somewhere else, but here and now, and through that it reconnects with and takes responsibility for the 'authentic' spaces and invites audiences to take responsibility for this space, this environment, this here and now. By escaping the theater building *Escapologist* is grounding the theatre deeper into the city, into the society itself. In *Escapologist* the scenography is social scenography, found and rebuilt environments that are dramaturgically active agents. These 'space as active agents' functioned as (physical) environments of placing and positioning – relational environments (as I will show below) that because of their very 'authentic' nature became (mental) environments, places where situating and contextualizing play an important part in the dramaturgy.

These authentic spaces are at the same time the theatre itself, they become the theatre 'architecture' – the found stage and the auditorium and the foyers

themselves. This found architecture is more appropriate than the stage for the *Escapologist* not only because the project literary illustrates escape from conventional theatre-making and theater-perceiving situations but also because – dramaturgically – it allows for new spatial relations between the audience and the performance. The audiences experienced seeing the performance from the outside (in *GaP* and *LaborHotel*), going through the performance as a journey (*LaborHotel*), entering the performance space (*LaborHotel*) and the merging of the 'stage' and 'auditorium' (*Artproletarz*). This spatial positioning, placing audience and creating specific spaces for them within the performance becomes spatially possible in non-theatre / found spaces, it becomes part of the dramaturgy – the spatial relationship of the audience to the performance becomes a determining aspect of the dramaturgy of the individual scenes, and of the overall performance – the 'story' it is telling - the story of the *Escapologist,* who is looking for new ways of relating within his theatre-making.

### 4.2. Shared Space

In the postdramatic theatre Hans-Thies Lehmann talks about post dramatic theatre as a 'shared space' where audience and performance are together. This space is "experienced, used and, in this sense shared equally by performers and visitors" (Lehmann 2006:122)[141].

Part of the premise of shared space is the absence of a homogenous plot and story of a performance that would form a 'unified world of the performance,' a fragmentation that creates gaps so the performance can be entered by audience mentally. "For the performers the 'action' of speaking, reading, improvising without a plot, role or drama represents a challenge. In this arrangement they are not afforded the protection of the stage, being open to all sides, including the back, to the gaze, the de-centralization, perhaps also the disturbance and aggression of

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[141] Lehmann, Hans-Thies. Postdramatic Theatre. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

impatient or annoyed visitors." (Lehmann 2006:123[142]) So, the audience is not only present but has to be taken into account dramaturgically, it has influence on the outcome.

But it is important to note that only a few examples of 'shared space' in Lehmann's book that actually illustrate projects where spectators' bodies are literally present within the space designated for performance, within the performance space. These examples can be mainly found at the end of the book in the paragraph about site specific in '*Dramatic and Post Dramatic Space*.' (Lehmann 2006: 150)[143] and in Theatre of 'Shared' Space (Lehmann 2006: 122)[144], despite the fact that new theatrical forms such as site specific or immersive theatre in recent decades have become one of the main strands of contemporary (and post-dramatic) theatre. It is important to emphasize this because I believe the 'shared space' of Lehmann is actually 'shared space' not physically but actually mainly 'temporally.' In post dramatic theatre audience and performers inhabit the 'here and now' together (as opposed to a separate 'here and now' of drama theatre with unified narrative that represents another space and time). In post dramatic theatre there is only one shared space and time, but for the most part in post dramatic theatre the audience does not enter the spatial equation of performance physically, the line between audience and performance is still very strong, and the common 'here and now' has clear limits.

What is important is that Lehmann defines two crucial aspects of the 'shared space' and those are theatre as 'situation' and 'responsibility' of spectators: "As theatre is thus understood as a 'situation' it simultaneously takes a step towards the dissolution of theatre and its amplification. It links up with the attempts of the 1960s and 1970s, in which the roles of the spectators and the actors had already begun to merge, and it quietly radicalizes the responsibility of the spectators for the theatrical process, which they can co-create but also disturb or even destroy

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[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.

through their behaviors." In this theatre audience is activated mentally and the dramaturgy is not finished without an audience.

Erika Fischer-Lichte says: "The spectators do not merely witness these situations; as participant in the performance they are made to physically experience them." (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 40)[145]. In Gob Squad's *Kitchen (You've Never Had It So Good)* where audience became performers in live made films, the immersive theatre of British Punchdrunk, the work of Rimini Protokoll (for instance *Situation Rooms*) or the scenographic projects of Dries Verhoeven and community-making projects of Lotte van den Berg (both from the Netherlands) come to mind. But I also think that this removal of this line includes taking the audience into the 'situation' of theatre, creates an opportunity for activation and further radicalizes audiences' responsibility within the theatrical event. The audience enters the stage and the difference between the 'spectacle' and 'spectators,' the 'watched' and the 'watchers' is blurred.

For Árpád Schilling moving and removing the line between audience and performance was one of the goals of the *Apology of the Escapologist* and the changes in Krétakör's practices. It marks a big change in the approach to theater from conventional drama theatre (where something is presented to audience) towards relational forms of theatre performance that have (as I will show in detail later) come out of specific political needs to rejoin the community and the social sphere and reconnect in life and art. For the audience this further means creating the possibility to join the theatre situation, enter the dialogue, and as I will show, to understand their specific position/perspective (within the dialogue), as well as understand possibility of choice and change.

It is important to follow how this line between audience and performance changes and moves throughout the project. And here I will describe the levels of changes of relations between performance spaces and audience spaces step by step.

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[145] Fischer-Lichte, Erika. The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

a) The project starts with the installation of cars in a public space. This is the 'natural' space of the community (audience) where there is no line between the performance and its public. We can say that here the performance enters the space of audience, but only to take it from there into the space of performance in the next 'chapters' of the *Escapologist*. This introductory section *Overture* can be considered an invitation to a performance space as well as presupposition, or a 'wish' of the ultimate goal of *Escapologist* – the merging of the space of the audience and performance into the communal space.

b) The first part - the *Pit* is made up of the *Cemetery* and the *Gap (Gödör)*. *Cemetery* includes cars in the garage of the Gödör Club that have videos of people watching TV at home (and the TVs watch them through the cameras recording them). This section does not propose a new spacing but it illustrates the basic situation of separation of audience and the thing they are watching in a static, passive way, like TV. Here Árpád Schilling lets the audience see themselves in the situation of conventional passive reception.

c) On the other side is the *GaP* where we see a two dimensional, black and white Árpád Schilling in a black and white video and photo installation in Gödör Club the (non-National theatre space). The space of the club is a huge hall with high ceilings with a series of large scale screens where videos and photos are projected. Here the audience entered the space of the installation and could move anywhere in the club, choosing the order of watching the installation's parts and having freedom of movement. But the space of performance was actually somewhere else – it was in the space within the video (lonely and private), a space that the audience cannot enter. What is interesting here is that the audience has freedom of movement and choice but the problem is on the other side – on the side of the performance. Árpád Schilling is trapped in the video in his lonely room where he performs basic daily activities lonely in his white room. What he points to here I think is that

the problem is not on the side of audience but on the side of the maker and that the performer- theatre maker feels the barrier even more than audience. It's up to the performer who should be activated first – to become an active actor (in the socio-political sense) and break the line, the barrier. Árpád Schilling does just that at the end of the sequence of the photo installation when he breaks with his spear, making the hole in the wall where his library is and exits into the miniature red theatre where laughing children and his wife are waiting for him.

d) The second part, *LaborHotel* took place in Krétakör headquarters in a traditional Budapest apartment building in District 9. It began in a traditional theatre situation where the audience is seated in a miniature red theatre and through a real whole in a wall watched a scene in a living room where Árpád and his wife Lilla in their bathrobes are having an intimate talk and later a fight. Árpád starts the scene by talking directly to audience and declaring that this is theatre, that it is not real and is acted. But this scene ends in a quite cruel and domestic, where the fight between Árpád and Lilla looks absolutely real, a fight about life and acting and theatre where the audience are in a perverse situation of a voyeur watching a cruel, intimate scene between a real husband and wife.

e) From here the audience had to travel through four further spaces in the Krétakör headquarters (in two separate groups A and B as I described earlier). Each of the rooms is both a performance space and audience space, with no division. The audience have entered into the playing space of the *Escapologist* and had to find their place within it. Whether entering the nursery, the bathrooms where men and women are taking showers, or a photographer's studio, the audience was always confined within the fourth wall with the performers in individual rooms of *Krétakör* headquarters. (This situation was very much like for instance situation in the seminal *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* (1969) by Jerzy Grotowski, where audiences entered the space of performance conceived as hospital rooms in an insane asylum and could

move around freely and sit on beds.) Here the audience entered the spatial equation of the performance and thus became part of the situation of the performance. But despite being in the same space, the audience did not interact with the performance. Their presence marked involvement but did not invite direct interaction.

f) The third part *Artproletarz* was a section where the line between the audience and performance was stripped down to yet another level through interaction. I would say that the 'stripping' happened in two different directions. Firstly, the level of interaction was raised – the audience here could sing, talk to and dance with the performers. When dancing with the performers, touching them marks the final stripping down of the traditional line. As one anonymous audience member recounted: "I was impressed by how close they let us and by the feeling that this wasn't theatre at all, rather a huge game." [146] But in the other direction the line is stripped because the performers are not performers anymore (not professional actors). These parts were performed by people from the communities themselves – pregnant women, teenagers, and pensioners. The line, the boundary between theater and audience here was blurred completely.

g) The audience and theatre become one in the last part of the *Apology of the Escapologist* - the *Finale*. *Finale* was a festive event in the streets of Budapest District 9 where the audience and the makers of the *Escapologist* gathered in a public space, built a temporary park on a square, had a picnic together, sang songs and sent balloons to the sky together. The audience became participants.

The journey of audience from the ex-National theatre, and through Krétakör headquarters, through other authentic space of District 9 is a journey from traditional theatre spacing to a merging of the audience and performance. From the

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[146] Anonymous audience member in the audience commentary in the DVD 2 – extras of the Krétakör, Apology of the Escapologist DVD, published by Krétakör, Budapest, 2010.

passive separation of audience 'watching TVs' and the maker being closed off in his lonely room with a lot of books, to sharing spaces together physically in *Laborhotel*, to interaction and bringing community into the theatre in *Artproletarz* – to the *Finale* where there is only community and no separation of audience and performers.

Moving the line between audience and performance that kept bringing them closer throughout the show towards the final festive celebration where they are together, points to ritualistic forms of theatre where audience and performance exist in a shared space. This is the end point of Escapologist that finishes with a festival, theatrical event celebrating community. Writing about carnival Mikhail Bakhtin says that it "is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because it's very idea embraces all of the people. While Carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it." (Bakhtin in Crang and Thrift 2000: 81)[147] Just like a carnival this celebration was inclusive, made by people participating. But this celebration - moving through the streets, singing from the street to the windows, building a temporary park – did not point to the fact that there is no life outside it but it literally created a community life, it created a community space. This recreation of the community of audience and performance in shared space built by the community was the goal of Árpád Schilling in the *Escapologist* project. Theatre here is not a way to escape life, but part of life and even a constructing element of social life.

This shifting of the line between audience and performance enabled audiences to be one of the elements in the rhizomatic, decentralized dramaturgical relations of the performance. By having a choice to dance or not to dance with the old people, and who will they dance with specifically in the *Artproletarz*; a choice to join building of the celebration of the *Finale* part, to join the singing, eating etc., to join the celebration – the audience became part of the performance. They became participants. The audience entered the unpredictable, multiple 'shared spaces' and had to orient themselves within them.

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[147] Crang, Mike, and N. J. Thrift. Thinking Space. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

In these conditions we have to redefine the dramatic situation, one of the key elements of theatre. In drama, the theatre situation stands for an (often unresolvable) conflict between the characters at the core of the play, as well as a series of sub-situations (and sub-sub-situations – so-called "beats") of that main conflict that create the chain of the unfolding of the play. Dramaturgically it is crucial to establish the position of each character in detail as well as individual relationships between the characters in order to both analyze the play and propose new readings of it to be translated into stage action. In contemporary theatre, which is not necessarily based on pre-written plays, the dramatic situation is redefined to mean positions and relationships (conflicting or not) between dramatic elements (beyond characters only). And this situation often includes audiences, who are literally often even physically put into specific situations in contemporary theatre – specific environments, specific positions within or towards the performance, spaces that they 'experience and use.' So, contemporary theatre can often be understood as one overall 'situation' rather than 'narrative.' Since the situation is one of the crucial elements of theatre as Lehmann writes: "As theatre is thus understood as a 'situation' it simultaneously takes a step towards the dissolution of theatre and to its amplification" (Lehmann 2006: 124); the situation is entered into by the audience – and becomes a shared situation.

### 4.3. Fragmented Space

The space of *Escapologist* was also fragmented on two levels: mentally and physically. In previous Krétakör Theater performances for the most part the audience sat in the auditorium of conventional theatre venues– in *Escapologist* the audience had to move around the spaces and find their own place within the authentic and shared spaces. This way one centralized, homogenous point of view that the audience maintains through the performance in conventional theatre was broken.

In the installation part of the *GaP* the audience could move around the space just like in a gallery. In *LaborHotel* the set of scenes in different rooms created a possibility of 'journey of perspectives' from scene to scene. Audiences could also choose their place within the scene – 'a journey within the scenes.' They were directly part of the performance space, merging with the situation. For instance, in the bathroom scene where the audience become part of the bathroom party or in the baby room scene where they sang a lullaby with Árpád's wife Lilla.

In the *Artproletarz* the audience's homogenous, unified perspective disappeared. For instance, in the *Oxytocin* where audience entered the swimming pool –where the theatrical perspective completely disappeared to become an everyday perspective. Theatricality and the 'everyday' merged in *Everwalk* where audiences joined the lotto and danced at the pensioners' club. And this was also the case in the *Finale* where the audience and makers made a picnic together in a square in Budapest District 9.

Throughout the performance, the audience had the opportunity to discover the potential of their choices connected to freedom of movement. For the most part in the *Escapologist* the audience could go and stand or sit anywhere, this points to the possibility to form their free and individualized perspectives. This understanding of perspective and breaking it begins with the escapologist himself: the character of Árpád Schilling in the *GaP* video is breaking a hole in the wall of his lonely room wall in order to see and enter the world outside. Perspective is important in the beginning of the *LaborHotel* where the audience in the little red theatre watched or better said peeped in like voyeurs to see the domestic fight in the first scene of the *LaborHotel* through the same hole in the wall made by Árpád Schilling in the previous part. The hole was framed by the scene behind the little theatre stage. The hole became the proscenium frame. After that the scene in the *LaborHotel* segued into subsequent scenes where the audience had to enter the scenes and find their own place where to stand, there were no seats or other spaces designated specially for audience.

In the *Apology of the Escapologist* brochure containing director's notes on the project he writes: "Mobility is the first option that allows greater immersion. If the creative process from the first phase of this is the agility, it allows for diversity of viewpoints." (Schilling in Brochure 2009)[148] By mobilizing the audiences, making them move from one place to another as well as within the spaces themselves Árpád Schilling allowed them to enter into the space and literally, spatially, to have their own point of view. By allowing a multiplicity of people to become insiders he allowed for the space of *Escapologist* to become physically 'shared.' But at the same time it was also 'fragmented,' the single homogenous, central perspective is gone to be exchanged for multiplicity of perspectives. This fragmentation of space happens through the multiplication of spatial perspectives that audiences experience, the possibility to enter the space freely and walk around. The theatrical space here is 'fractured' into the multiplicity of perspectives of individual audience members.

Any theatre performance in any theatrical space observed by a group of people of course includes a multiplicity of perspectives – both spatially and mentally (no matter how minimal). But in the *Escapologist* this multiplicity of perspectives is strengthened and made obvious by allowing for audience movement from one place to another as well as within individual sections/scenes (as in other site specific, found space performances in contemporary theatre) and thus this 'freedom of interpretation' is amplified and made explicit.

In a way by 'manipulating' the audience into movement Árpád Schilling made visible to the audience the opportunity of spatial choice that is a choice of perspective. Each member of audience could have their own 'personalized' perspective by literally choosing their position in space, by being dispersed in space from other audience members, and sometimes having the possibility to change perspective, position during the performance, one that ends in the non-hierarchical

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[148] Árpád Schilling in Apology of the Escapologist brochure accompanying the performance, published by Krétakör, 2009. Working translation from Hungarian.

place of celebration where there are no actors and spectators but only equal participants. So, Escapologist can be seen as a journey from a division of roles (actors and spectators) to everyone becoming participants.

Multiplication of perspectives is experienced by the audience but are also illustrated in the narrative, that shows that multiplication of perspectives was one of the main concepts behind the project. In *GaP* we see a man (Árpád Schilling) with one point of view struggle to get out of his closed off space – this part is presented within the installation of photos showing multiple views of the man in his lonely room. The man, Árpád Schilling, gets into the second part the *LaborHotel* through a hole in the wall and here his perspective is divided to form two story lines: story line A and story line B – the male and female parts of the story, where perspective continues to be multiplied. For instance, in the male A part of the story we can see the same scene from two points of view – for example the scene when the French girl in the showers frustrated with Hungarian girls being xenophobic calls somebody on the phone before she commits suicide. After which we see in another room the scene from the other side of the phone conversation – the photographer boyfriend incapable of dealing with the situation on the phone.

From the duality of the story of the *LaborHotel* the audience went into *Artproletarz* as a part of a community that illustrated a multiplicity of perspectives of other people through a series of sections featuring people of various ages – pregnant women and unborn babies, teenagers, and seniors. This part proposed a multiplicity of issues connected to different age groups – proposing another, higher level of multiplicity of perspectives, where the audience was faced with these 'other people' while in the same time also understanding their own belonging to a certain group – their own otherness.

But there is another layer of movement and fragmentation in *Escapologist* – a literal physical fragmentation of space - the performance took place in a number of spaces at different times. The multiplication of spaces ('stages') is a common in contemporary performance, namely in site specific theatre or performances using

the strategy of journey through space – however usually these take place at one time. *Escapologist* took place over the course of almost eight weeks and within that period the audience had to move across nine different locations in Budapest District 9 in order to follow the performance as it was intended. *Escapologist* is not one united performance but a series of fragments taking place at different times in different spaces. By separating already independent story fragments into separate time-spaces that have to be travelled to in order to 'connect' Árpád Schilling proposed another level of fragmentation. I call this 'total fragmentation.'

In *Escapologist,* the independent dramaturgical situations (fragments) took place in separate spaces in separate times (total fragmentation) – this activated the audience spatially. *Escapologist* could not be seen in one 'take': the audience had to put in some effort to follow it. Not all audience members even saw all of the fragments, so different audience members saw different sets of fragments.

So, in *Escapologist* not only did the perspectives within scenes become fragmented and multiple but the space itself became multiple – fracturing the theatrical performance into total multiplicity.

And here we should remember Doreen Masseys redefinition of space "as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity […]; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere, therefore of coexisting heterogeneity. […] If space is […] the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality." (Massey 2005: 9)[149] This 'allows' for multiple perspectives and more importantly multiple existences (in the same time, in parallel non-hierarchical way). This 'coexisting heterogeneity' is illustrated in the *Escapologist*'s multiplication of perspectives. But also by the 'total fragmentation' of the performance. The performance was decentralized and instead of taking place in the unified world of one theatre space in one evening it took place in the streets, at the non-National theatre, offices, hospital, public bath and senior club. By making audiences invest the effort of moving through space Árpád Schilling activates the

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[149] Massey, Doreen B. For Space. London: SAGE, 2005. Print.

imagination of parallel multiplicities of space. Total fragmentation and travelling through space, taking different positions in space allows the audience to very literally see and thus understand, to experience the 'diversity of viewpoints.'

Everybody can imagine time as multiple because we experience it in a sequence in movement and we all know that there is more to time than this 'moment' the section that we are experiencing, because it is escaping us, and becoming at the same time. To understand multiplicity of space one does have to use one's imagination. It is not enough to experience space, one has to move in a space. The same way that the time moves around us, for us, it takes a bit of effort. To imagine the coexisting, parallel multiplicities of space – one has to imagine places where one is not at the time. Places where other people are at: other points of views, parallel points of views in space. And Árpád Schilling attempted to create conditions for the audience to experience exactly this multiplicity through his theatrical use of space.

In his quest for decentralization, breaking the homogeneity of theatre Árpád Schilling used this 'multiplicity of space.' Through fragmentation of space of the performance of *Escapologist* Árpád Schilling not only illustrates the decentralized multiplicity of theatre event and the multiplicity of perspectives connected to it – which he is 'escaping' into, he also establishes the multiplicity as a condition. And this thinking is closely connected to the political. It is a reaction to centralization in contemporary political life in Hungary.

This decentralization of the theatrical space – which turned one united theatre space into a multiplicity of spaces, is the most distinct feature of the *Escapologist* project. It took the decentralization of the story - the fragmentary dramaturgy to the next level of 'total fragmentation.' It also allowed for deeper grounding, connection to the community by entering into the multiplicity of spaces. But it also proposed an obstacle for audiences – they were manipulated to be mobilized and had to put an extra effort into 'following' the performance.

This "anarchic way of viewing" as British scholar and director Alan Read terms it, where each audience member has a very different experience of the performance influenced by who they are, their perspective, how and when they are seeing, that here they experience not merely mentally but also physically in space. But what is important is that in this decentralized, fragmented theatre of the *Escapologist* the audience experiences both their own individuality and the sharing. They experience their individual choices and perspectives – by being put in a position to physically choose where they stand in the stage space, and later by having to make the choice whether or not to join the dance or the celebration.

At the same time the project provides for the possibility for audience to come together among themselves and the performance in the 'shared space' while they are experiencing multiplicity – through the fragmentation of story and (what is specific for *Escapologist*) the fragmentation of space. The dynamics of decentralization, autonomisation of individual perspective and at the same time the creation of community through performance within the dramaturgy of *Escapologist* is somewhat paradoxical but in my view crucial. *Escapologist* allowed for individuals to be formed as fragmented while it lured them back into the community.

> *Theatre is a sort of social model: a community, where the individual must find his or her personal freedom within a paradigm of rules, and in fundamental terms, he or she must exist and create in keeping with the guidance and expectations of the leaders. The collective goals, in an ideal case, coincide with the aims of the individual, but one must be prepared for compromise and to accommodate others. Individual performance slots into clearly circumscribed system of expectations, but the individual is expected to bear responsibility.* (Shilling 2008: 31)[150]

This is a crucial and very politically charged dynamics that Tim Etchells describes more simply when he says **"**In theatre performance, you're always dealing with the constitution of the community; you're always building up that social space of the

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[150] Schilling, Árpád. *Notes of an Escapologist,* Theater, Yale, vol. 38 no. 2, 2008.

auditorium, creating an experience which binds and links it. But it's also very interesting to divide the audience." (Etchells Interview for Passages[151])

This 'division' of the audience as well as creation of community is exactly what *Escapologist* aims at. The journey of the *Apology* is a journey that creates possibility of positioning but within the group. And it creates important dynamics between the individual and the group – the space becomes more and more shared throughout the performance (the line between the audience and performance slowly disappears). Ultimately *Escapologist* takes the theatre and the audience out into the real space into the world – the community space, fragmented space of multiplicity.

## 4.4.    Dramaturgy as Spatial

Visual dramaturgy – as we saw is a dramaturgy of theatrical performance 'not subordinated to text'[152] that takes constellations of all theatrical elements into account, where images become autonomous to text, where images do not add to the meaning, to the illustration or clarification of text but make the text more ambiguous and complex is also insufficient. Patrice Pavis in his lecture at the conference *Play – Relational Aspects of Dramaturgy*[153]noted that "the postdramatic dramaturgy does not relate to the outside world (beyond the performance) and is a closed system unwilling to open to outside world," and thus can be defined as closed dramaturgy. Pavis was pointing to the fact that the postdramatic dramaturgy

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[151] Walser, Dagmar. *Tim Etchells: Can You Trust the People Sitting Next to You?* interview, Performance: Body, Time, Space. Spec. issue of Passages 57.3: 20-23. Prohelvetia: Swiss Arts Council. 2011

[152] Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print. p. 93

[153] Patrice Pavis (Univ. of Kent at Canterbury) - *Dramaturgic Processes: Toward a Reevaluation of the Role of the Dramaturge?* Lecture on March 15th, 2012at conference *Play – Relational Aspects of Dramaturgy* March, 15-16, 2012; Ghent, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, University College Ghent, Belgium.

is not a socially engaged dramaturgy. Spatial dramaturgy is a continuation of strategies of visual dramaturgy towards a more engaged dramaturgy.

When we are talking about the total fragmentation of *Escapologist* we are talking about a performance that "tends toward a high level of interactivity, where the spectator is expected to construct a narrative, fill in the gaps, make choices, adopt a position or even engage directly in the action" (Turner and Behrndt 2008: 198). This is how Synne Behrndt and Cathy Turner describe site specific performance when talking about issues of new dramaturgies in one of the latest books on theory and practice on dramaturgy in English *Dramaturgy and Performance* (2008).

For the performance open to the outside world in a multiplicity of spaces like that Turner and Behrndt describe as site specific, the visual dramaturgy of postdramatic theatre creates gaps and potential choices for audiences, but only mentally. In the *Escapologist* the physical activation creates opportunities for audiences to understand their own activation, and show it to others, and in that sense to commit publicly to activation. The audience becomes an 'insider' within the performance and one of dramaturgical elements. The need for redefining dramaturgy and its strategies after the audience entered the equation is obvious. This is well described by Dutch dramaturg (working in experimental theatre, installation and dance) Marianne Van Kerkhoven who writes in the special issue of *Performance Research Journal - On Dramaturgy* in 2009:

> …[The] spectator [is] alternatively brought into a theatre or a museum context, with and alternation between 'looking at something' and 'walking in something.' An alternation between observation and immersion, between surrendering and attempting to understand. And in this way, the spectator can determine independently his own standpoint. Perhaps more important than the here-and-now character of the theatrical experience is today the consciousness of the spectator that, in or inside a performance he can alternatively be alone, individualized and together with other spectators. The dramaturgy emerging from this situation is a dramaturgy of perceiving, a dramaturgy of a spectator. (Kerhoven On Dramaturgy 2009: 11)

It is important to note that here – when trying to redefine dramaturgy Marianne Van Kerkhoven describes the dynamics of individualization and at the same time the importance of being together with other spectators.

Describing a series of performances of different artists working with the journey through series of spaces 'nomadic performances' that 'traverse everyday spaces, often taking the form of a journey' Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt in one of the most recent books trying to redefine role and function of dramaturgy in contemporary theatre write:

> *The journey through the city proposes a structure that is deliberately open to the invasion of the everyday. Still more so than in the site-specific theatre pieces, this engagement with space seems to force open the dramaturgy of the work, making the audience aware of their own (literal) progress through the performances. Again, we see a dramaturgy of process – one that deliberately forces itself into a live engagement with space and audience, rather than attempting to predict and dominate that encounter*. (Turner, Behrndt 2008: 197)

But how do we define and make this 'dramaturgy of perceiving,*'* a dramaturgy that can be entered and influenced by audience becomes the '*dramaturgy of process - a live engagement with space and audience.'* We could look at the development of dramaturgy from *analytical dramaturgy* of drama –dramaturgy of words, where the action of characters is a crucial factor; to *visual dramaturgy* of theatre, where the action of theatrical elements is the crucial factor – to what I would like to propose as *spatial dramaturgy*, where the action of the audience is the most important factor. Spatial dramaturgy is not a strategy of words of images but strategies of encounter – encounters of separate positions in one shared space. This dramaturgy is an unstable dramaturgy that lets audience become part of the equation and thus becomes partially uncontrollable.

We could say that this dramaturgy is a strategic 'chaos,' the opposite of a dramaturgy of strategic systems of analytical and visual dramaturgy (where words and images can be directed/controlled though open to interpretation). It is not just 'visual' dramaturgy to be seen from outside and interpreted mentally but

dramaturgy to be entered and activated by audience - a 'spatial' dramaturgy. Where dramaturgy does not influence the end product, the final feature of the performance, but creates potential for multiplicity and encounter.

Synne Behrndt defined the contemporary (devised) dramaturgy as a "strategy for creating conditions for something to happen"[154] in a conference at Ghent University on dramaturgy as relational strategy and I think this is a good starting point for defining spatial dramaturgy. Spatial dramaturgy is a theatre strategy that creates conditions for multiplicity, encounter, and positioning – it is a theatre strategy of theatre 'entered' by audience. It is a 3D dramaturgy of here and now because it is ultimately created with audience during the performance – and thus it is a dramaturgy of process (theatre-making) and not product (theatre), where relating, positioning and contextualizing become its important aspects. Spatial dramaturgy is a dramaturgy of multiplicity (of space) and of here and now (made in this space) entered (again spatially) by audiences where the dynamic between creation of community and individualization of perspective is crucial. And this is specifically apparent in the total fragmentation of the *Escapologist*. The spatial dramaturgy as a dramaturgy of 'creating conditions for something to happen' is a dramaturgy where the something that will happen is a decentralization, binging multiple perspectives. The artist(s) create a space that is open, and the audience's participation in that space also determines what will happen.

And we have to say that this dramaturgy that is 'entered' into by the audience is a dramaturgy of positioning and relating – one that goes beyond aesthetical dramaturgy of analytical and visual dramaturgy – into social dramaturgies of engagement. Dramaturgy stops being mainly an aesthetic strategy - it goes beyond a literal analysis or aesthetic composition – and becomes a socially engaged strategy. Enabling a multiplicity of perspectives, and proposing open spaces where this multiplicity can happen, where the audience is invited to be active - which in

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[154] Synne K. Behrndt (Univ. of Winchester) - *Dramaturgy and the Facilitation of Encounters – Space, Audience and Curation,* conference contribution given on March 15th 2012at *Play – Relational Aspects of Dramaturgy* March, 15-16, 2012; Ghent, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, University College Ghent, Belgium.

my view is a form of social engagement. This is exactly the direction where escapologist Árpád Schilling was escaping towards – from theatre as aesthetics towards socially engaged theatre.

## 5. SPATIAL DRAMATURGY: POSITIONING, RELATING

In this chapter I will focus on positioning, a key concept and strategy of spatial dramaturgy. And I will show that positioning is the main strategy of *Escapologist's* spatial dramaturgy both in the sense of strategy as well as being the main topic of the performance.

As I have written earlier positioning is an important tool of all kinds of dramaturgy –narrative dramaturgy, visual dramaturgy, and spatial. In narrative dramaturgy we analyze and translate to stage language the positioning of characters towards each other, and within the narrative. Through positioning of characters, we analyze the dramatic conflict of the play and develop the individual relations and situations. This positioning can be psychological – relating towards friends and family, or social – positioning within larger political or social groups of people. Positioning of the character can carry within itself the character's history, their psychological predispositions, social standing, as well as be influenced by specific situations (somebody's death, accident, or war for example). This positioning is not fixed and stable, it is a relational positioning that goes through development throughout the play. It consists of the motivations and directions of the characters, but these are diverted and changed by entering relations with other characters in different situations. In this dramaturgy stage elements help 'illustrate' the narrative and the audience watch from separate space, auditorium.

In visual, postdramatic dramaturgy the emphasis is not on the positioning of characters and the situation, but on positioning of the stage elements, relationships between lighting, sound, movement, text etc. The positioning of stage elements is spatial and temporal and it creates composition in space and time. It can be analyzed through distances, placing, dynamics, contrast and other compositional aspects. The outcome, the experience of audience here is not focused on following a narrative. Here we can talk about an 'emotional dramaturgy.' The audience follows positioning, the composition of stage elements as an experience in and of itself, follows it 'emotionally,' intuitively. And 'understanding,' following the

narrative (if there is one at all) becomes secondary. In this dramaturgy, stage elements become the primary tool, in place of the play, but the audience usually stays in their own separate space, watching from outside. Here individual stage elements are part of a complex composition of 'positioning' - a set of relations in movement, where individual elements bring their 'histories' – previous meanings or experiences they created with them.

I do not understand positioning as something static and finite. I am writing about positioning in flux, a rhizomatic positioning. This is positioning in motion, reactive positioning that changes with the situation. Responsive positioning that is constantly losing and gaining stability. It is a positioning within multiplicity, movement and space. Positioning here includes the position, point of view/ perspective, relation to other elements and the change of all those in time.

In spatial dramaturgy the audience become another important element that enters the positioning, because they literally enter the performing space. In this way they can physically influence the relationships within the 'stage' space. But crucially they can see their own positioning within the performance (that usually happens mentally) in space. These two aspects – the audience influencing the dramaturgy by their presence, and the creation of awareness of audience of their own positioning – are the two main aspects of spatial dramaturgy that I am interested in.

Positioning is an important political concept: positioning towards political issues and towards other people is at the basis of politics. But more to the point positioning is also a key political concept in my understanding of spatial dramaturgy. It is the basis of socio-political relating within performance, and a tool of understanding this relating. So, as I am interested in the social aspect of spatial dramaturgy I would like to stress that both of these aspects have political implications. We can say that in narrative dramaturgy the play and the relationships within the play are the most important elements. In visual dramaturgy, there are more 'players' within the dramaturgy field – the many stage elements that have more equal status within the

dramaturgical composition. In spatial dramaturgy the audience gains their position within the composition and the space.

An audience entering the dramaturgical situation, their positioning means that an unknown and unpredictable elements enter the dramaturgical composition. This effect is used in different performances to different degrees. In some performances audiences become an element that brings change and accident into the performance that can change the 'outcome' substantially, change the positioning of all the other elements. In the *Escapologist* project audience's role was not so much to complete change the outcome, but it was more about establishing the presence of audience, to acknowledge it from the side of the makers but also for the audiences to acknowledge their own presence. The goal in *Escapologist* was for audiences to start understanding that they are not and cannot be neutral outsiders just observing, but that they are part of the situation – even if only through their simple presence. This awareness of simple presence can theoretically have more impact than a participatory performance in which audience has to do things, change things and make decisions. Such performances are often activating the spectator to such a degree that they paradoxically become too entertaining, and the spectator is too focused on their own physical or mental goal. *Escapologist* in my opinion aimed at subtler participatory situation – in which the audiences were to understand that they are part of the situation, that they have to find their position within the situation.

As I have shown earlier, in the *Escapologist* project audiences were made aware of their own physical and mental positioning within the performance. So, positioning first functioned on the level of self-positioning: understanding one's own position and seeing that one's understanding of things is influenced by this position. This position can include all previous experiences and knowledge as influenced by cultural, geographical, psychological, social and other aspects. I find this crucial: if one's understands specificity of one's own position, one understands 'where one is coming from' – one can also understand a certain relativity of this position too, because one begins to understand that others have their own specific positions

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influenced by their personal specific experience and knowledge. This is in my opinion a sound basis for open dialogue between people. And in that sense positioning functions on the second level as positioning towards something or someone – other people, the space, situation etc.

An important aspect of this positioning is understanding the specificity one's own positioning in context. By specificity I mean the uniqueness of the position but also more importantly that the position is conditioned by a specific background, context and spacing. And finally the dramaturgical positioning that I am interested in has a possibility of change, shift within it.

Lehmann in *Postdramatic Theatre* addresses the political by saying that "theatre can respond to this only with a politics of perception, which could at the same time be called an aesthetics of responsibility (or response-ability)." (Lehmann 2006: 185) Politics of perception here are a means of creating conditions for perception of an audience that is extended beyond passive receiving of meaning. In spatial dramaturgy, perception is extended to mean that audience experiences things from inside, and that inside audience has its autonomy, conditions to understand its own positioning and also multiple potentials of positioning physically and mentally within the performance. By creating these conditions artists create conditions for 'response-ability' – the ability of audiences to respond. This is exactly the escape / journey that Schilling wanted to take his audience on: from passive TV watchers of the *Overture*, and visitors to the 2D, black and white installation that they watch from outside, and then gradually throughout the *Gap* section they become observers-players in order to take them towards 'an aesthetic of responsibility' in which the point of viewing is the core of political positioning of the *Escapologist*.

## 5.1. Positioning as Topic in Escapologist

*Apology of Escapologist* has positioning at the heart of both the topic and its narrative, and the way it interacts between performance and audience. Here I would like to look at the narrative more closely from the perspective of positioning.

In the very beginning we see abandoned cars. After that in the first act we see a man positioned as alone and lonely, with a very singular point of view. This is Árpád Schilling alone in his room in the *Pit* part. In the *Cemetery* section there are video installations of films of people 'watched' by TV, while the audience members could enter the installation and watch the TVs from inside, change channels and not only become the people watching TVs but in return also be watched by people 'inside' the TVs who 'watch' them back. The TV watchers (both the audiences and the people 'inside' TVs) are positioned as passive outsiders and so is Árpád Schilling. The moment Árpád Schilling wants to get out of his lonely room, he has to break the hole through the wall using the spear, it takes a lot of effort and he ends up in tiny red theatre. He exits his room and lands directly on the stage of the theatre. He is positioned here on stage, as an actor, to be watched. He is being activated but at the same moment he is activated he enters the space where he can be seen. And he is being watched. The theatre is full of children staring at him. This is how the first part ends. The man has been activated, the man escaping enters a realm where he becomes visible and thus 'surveilled.' What he does next will gain new importance because there is an 'outside' view on him.

What happens here is that Árpád Schilling, in order not to be alone, has to be activated. The main 'condition for something to happen' here is the entering onto the stage itself. The stage is the new situation. He is not passive anymore but being activated means entering space where there are others.

In the second part of the *Escapologist* the *LaborHotel* Árpád Schilling's story becomes a dual story. He is not alone anymore but becomes two people in one. Two different stories are positioned next to each other, each with a different

narrative and storytelling style. Árpád Schilling turns his single story into - story A and story B – the female and male point of view on the same story. Árpád Schilling is not alone anymore, he is activated but in order to be that he has to admit the full right of the 'other story' to exist. The story is not homogenous anymore it has become dual and fragmented, each of the stories consists of sets of fragments. The audience here enters the story spatially, in the *LaborHotel*, they become part of the equation of the multiplicity, and they literally, spatially enter relations within the performance. What is very visible here is the need to enter relations with other people, namely his wife. And what happens is in itself a decentralization – one person becomes multiple people and stories. From theatre of one person's point of view, the homogenous story theatre of the first section we get to the second part – theatre of multiple stories told through fragments.

In the third part *Artproletarz,* Árpád Schilling disappears. In the place of Árpád Schilling's decentralized, fragmented story we find the community itself: a party with the teenagers, swimming with pregnant women, a lotto with pensioners. The character of Árpád Schilling becomes the group, the community, and it becomes clear that the story of *Escapologist* is a story of a lonely man, that becomes a family man that becomes community, about the dissolving of the self of Árpád Schilling into the community. *Artproletarz* creates conditions for new positioning within the group, closer connection between people – partying with, swimming with and lottery with – with people who, as was established in previous parts have their own, different positions and points of view. This points to a new complex positioning within the community – that also aims at a closer connection with the community. From the theatre of multiple stories, we get to a theatre of total multiplicity, entered and performed by community.

But it is also important that the narrative of the *Escapologist* begins in the lonely room. This lonely room is 'built' into the dramaturgical narrative in order to create Árpád Schilling's autonomy, to fragment him from the rest of people, and set his clear borders, to define him. In order to be decentralized he needs first to be defined. The same goes for the audience. It is first defined as an audience in order

to later become part of the performance and in the third part to be dissolved into the community.

*Escapologist* is a journey of positioning for the audience, too. In the first part the story of a character was 'told' (through video installation about Árpád Schilling alone in his room in the *Pit*) to the observing audience. In the second level things become more fragmented and complicated. Here in *LaborHotel* multiple stories (of a man and a woman, and the baby, and the photographer, and his girlfriend that commits suicide) and their fragments were told to the somewhat confused audience that could experience the multiplicity of interpretations. In *LaborHotel* the audience also entered the equation spatially. They were part of the stage of the scenes.

## 5.2. Autonomisation

Fragmentation of the whole event of the performance is, central to the spatial dramaturgy of *Apology of Escapologist* and points to the fact that Árpád Schilling connects to Bertolt Brecht's thinking far beyond borrowing the title of Brecht's play for the title of Schilling's company the *Chalk Circle*.

American literary theorist Frederic Jameson in his book *Brecht and Method*[155] calls the fragmentation *autonomisation*, and confirms that the autonomisation is a central strategy for Brecht's method of epic theatre, that is named "from the way in which the episodes of a narrative (…) cut up into smaller segments tend to take on an independence and autonomy of their own" (Jameson 2000: 55). The words *independence* and *autonomy* already have political connotations exceeding their aesthetic function. But I would like to point out the fact that this is a strategy to 'see things anew,' to see them 'critically.' And that the end goal is not to separate

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[155] Jameson, Fredric. Brecht and Method. London: Verso, 2000. Print.

things but to propose a possibility to see the 'system' or the composition anew, differently as a whole.

The autonomisation of fragments on the level of the narrative is one where we could see that Árpád Schilling started off separating himself in his lonely room, narrative is the first level of autonomisation in *Apology of the Escapologist*. The other autonomisation happens on the level of what I would like to start calling participants. This autonomisation of participants happens by establishing autonomy of individual positions of individual participants. The makers and the audiences are not taken for granted but are examined to be reestablished as individual and specific. The first participant - Árpád Schilling is put to the center and his position in his lonely room of the GaP is established. He is autonomized, his borders are clearly established. But the participants on the other side – the spectators are also autonomized. The audience is not established as a group but as individuals 'each standing for itself,' who can choose when and from where they are watching; as well as to see other spectators watching from their positions.

*Escapologist* begins with *Overture* (introductory installation of cars in the streets), *Cemetery* and *GaP* (installations of cars and video installation at *Gödör Club*). For audiences/subscribers of Krétakör Theatre walking through/ inside an installation as separate individuals was a new experience, different to sitting in the seat of the auditorium for the duration of the performance.  This individualization (autonomization) of audience is opposite to the type of audience formed in theatre where there is a clear space designated for audience: the auditorium that turns spectators into a group. The *Escapologist* starts in a different formation that allows for individualization.

The end point of the performance is again forming the audience into a group. Not an 'audience group' but a 'community.' This happens not through creation of an auditorium but through allowing audiences to become part of the community in the *Oxytocin* (a scene with pregnant women), *18 Plusminus* (birthday party), *Everwalk* (dance with elderly people) and the grand *Finale* (the picnic and party in the streets

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of District 9). But Árpád Schilling first allows the audience to establish themselves as autonomized individuals before entering a group. And this is an important political move – I think it points to the fact that one can become a responsible element of community only if one is established as individual first.

What's important in *Brecht and Method* is that the logic of autonomisation implies human action in the sense that it provides for critical thinking that reveals "what has been taken to be eternal or natural – the reified act, with its unifying name and concept – as merely historical, as a kind of institution which has come into being owing to the historical and collective actions of people and their societies, and which therefore now stands revealed as changeable." (Jameson 2000: 60)[156] Such is "Brechtian autonomisation: its capacity to act out our own possible and virtual actions, its use of a one-time (…) spectacle to energize a public into a sense of multiple possibilities."

Árpád Schilling first fragmented, autonomized his own self in order to analyze the situation. He fragments his own self so he can see his own place in order to go further, to change. This allows for possibility to later (within the second and the third part of the project) to create possibility of analysis of the community, the society and to propose multiple possibilities that can stand '*revealed as changeable*.' Multiple potentials here stand for both a multiplicity of positions (points of views of individual people) as well as multiplicity of possibilities as a potential for change. Both of these were and still are highly needed in Hungary country of apathy, centralization of values, and lack of communication.

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[156] Jameson, Fredric. Brecht and Method. London: Verso, 2000. Print.

### 5.3. Points of Looking

One of the main implications of autonomisation is individualization of points of view. Autonomisation allows us to see the particularity of our point of view. In contemporary performance points of view are an important dramaturgical factor. One main perspective provided by the static spatial position of the audience as well as one main interpretation provided by a director are not the core of the performance. The audience is expected to move more freely both spatially and mentally through the landscape of the performance. In order for them to understand what they are seeing: it is important for them to understand their own perspective, the position from which they are seeing -  that is influencing what is and how it is being seen.

In her seminal book *Theatre and Visuality* Maaike Bleeker[157] writes that: "what seems to be just 'there to be seen' is, in fact, rerouted through memory and fantasy, caught up in threads of the unconscious and entangled with the passions." (Bleeker 2008: 2)[158]. Viewing cannot be taken for granted as singular and objective. The initial position of the viewer and their own awareness of the specificity of their position are crucial for the viewing. Maaike Bleeker further writes "the claim to understand a given phenomenon, or to recognize its truth, involves accepting the responsibility, not just for the explanation itself, but also for the point of view implicit in that explanation." (Bleeker 2008: 35)[159]

As he steps into the little theatre from the lonely white library at the beginning of *Laborhotel* he enters a tiny theatre with small chairs for children. In the Escapologist brochure he writes that "we are all children of our point of view" (Shilling in Escapologist brochure[160]). If the point of view is part of what we are seeing, we become part of what is seen. And for the whole first part of the

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[157] Bleeker, Maaike. Visuality in the Theatre: The Locus of Looking. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Working translation from Hungarian.

*Escapologist* we could say that Schilling is trying to get rid of his centralized point of view that keeps him lonely, treating point of view as a construction to be deconstructed and reconstructed. And he does the same for audience: he takes away their safe place in the auditorium, that represents a place from which everything can be seen, to the point of view of an insider, somebody who can move freely within the scenes.

But I think the third condition is not just for Árpád Schilling to see the audiences watching, but to provoke them to see their own selves observing, by simply taking them out of their fixed seats and letting them walk around the scenes. Spectators see each other in space. And they see each other choose their placing in the space. Lehman writes that **"the politics of theatre is a politics of perception."** (Lehmann 2006: 185). Árpád Schilling's politics start with determining his own centralized point of looking (literally him alone in the room making a hole in the wall) and later letting audiences become insiders, who lose the seemingly privileged stable position from the auditorium, in order to gain their own position that can be changed, that is in motion.

This multiplicity of perspectives is in my opinion at the heart of much contemporary performance. And this multiplicity of perspectives comes through fragmentation of the narrative that illustrates the multiplicity of points of view but it also allows for fragmented perception or better said multiplication of fragments of experiences.

Here I would like to point to the fact that these different points of view and awareness of specificity of points of views is strengthened dramaturgically when experienced in space as a 'spatial phenomenon.' As Doreen Massey's definition of space from 2005 shows that space is a true dimension of multiplicity, where 'difference' (in this case different people with different points of views) can co-exist next to each other in the same time. And the spatial approach to theatre (use of found space, audience entering performance space and multiplication of performance spaces) that enables this to come to the fore in the performance. The audience is made aware of the specificity of their point of perspective through

spatial constellation of performative elements (including the audience), because they can move in space and change their position, they can experience the performance from many points of view. In this movement they also see others in space move and have different spatial perspectives.

## 5.4. Positioning/Relating

The spatial dramaturgy this constellation is entered by a new element – the audience. The dramaturgical composition becomes a social composition. And we could say that this spatial dramaturgy is 'built' through a series of meetings/encounters.

First there is the encounter of the makers during the preparations and rehearsals. In contemporary devised theatre – commonly made as collective work – this encounter is often the basis of the core of performance and sets the tones, rhythms and themes of performances. Encounter can be both a conflict and a consensus. But there is also an encounter with space. In theatre made in found spaces, understanding and dialogue with the chosen space(s) is an important part of dramaturgy, if not the dramaturgy itself. The maker's relation to the space comes out through the dramaturgical use of the space and provides for a spatial situation that influences relating in and to spaces for audiences. Relating to 'authentic' community performers comes after, in the third part of *Escapologist.* And then there is a community of an audience: one that relates to the performance, with and in space, and among each other.

So, the performance making and the performance itself become a series of relations entered into by audiences, a flux of meetings through which the performance is made. This is all of course true for drama theatre done in theatre buildings as well. And we could say that all 'performativity' is characterized by existing, and is created only 'in-between' - for instance in-between the performance and audience -

or in-between the stage elements. In spatial dramaturgy this aspect is heightened, focused on and thematized, because the audience becomes physically a 'part of' things.

In order to enter these complex relations one needs to first establish their own position/perspective. I believe one cannot relate actively if one does not understand their own position. And I think this is what Árpád Schilling was trying to show and do in the *Escapologist*: a) he established his own self, in his own room as the starting point very clearly b) he was providing a slow entrance onto stage for the audience – helping them understand the importance of their position.

Talking about first dates with his future wife Árpád Schilling describes a situation in which instead of promising unity he first needed to establish independence – for the real exchange to occur. He told Lilla*:*

*"You know I love you, but freedom is really important for me. And it was a strange reflection, because traditionally at this point, in the beginning, somebody is supposed to say 'I don't want to live without you'. […] And I told her that I am saying it because I had a lot of experience in being in a community, and it was really important for me to know that you are here because you want to be here." (Árpád Schilling interview p.222)*

He has said this at the time when the company was going through the change at the time of *Escapologist*.

I would say that the *Escapologist* even attempted to become a rehearsal of creating a new 'us,' a group, a new community – in a socio-political sense. And what Árpád Schilling was trying to show through the fragmentation and provision of specific perspectives, was that in order to be part of the group ('us': participants – audience and the makers) you first have to be independent, autonomized. After you can re-enter the community as free, self-deciding entity, that freely takes part.

# 6. EXAMPLES OF MY WORK WITH SPATIAL DRAMATURGY

In this chapter I would like to briefly introduce a few examples from my own practice working as a dramaturg that are connected to spatial dramaturgy. Most of them directly illustrate points raised in previous chapters (points of looking, situating, reading from material). However, the section describing how I as a dramaturg physically enter the space of performance adds an additional layer to my analysis of the practice of spatial dramaturgy.

## 6.1.  Situating

Situating in spatial dramaturgy has multiple layers. First there is situating the project in its particular contexts – spatial and social. The context, the environment – Budapest, District 9 and the political situation in Hungary at the time – is the basic dramaturgical starting point of the *Escapologist* project. It is the space, and the theme, as well as 'ultimate destination' of the project.

The performance is situated in a specific environment, and this situating becomes the theme, the narrative of the performance. Secondly, situating stands for situation of individual points of views – pointing to the specific individual individualized points of looking. So the audience also becomes situated within the specific environment, situated within their own point of view (in order to see it better) but also situated within the performance itself.

There is something conceptual in this dramaturgical situating. Things and people are placed, misplaced, displaced and put into new relations. Often these relations cannot be predicted and so what arises are dramatic situations that have no controlled meaning or development. As Etchells says about fragmentation: "disparate and irreconcilable elements are placed side by side and left to fight it out" (Etchells in *On Dramaturgy* 2009: 75). Situating is an act that is controlled but things that happen after are also a series of accidents. The same goes for the

resulting meaning. In *Escapologist,* we can find the illustration of this in the situating of the *Everwalk* section where the audience was put into the situation of a dance party of elderly people in the pensioners' club.

This tool of situating or conceptual approach to environment makes dramaturgy very close to curating. I have used 'situating' in my own curatorial work, work that is very based in 'placing' – placing of artists next to each other, placing of work into specific spaces, and into specific environments in order for specific 'narratives' to unfold.

In *Tribes*, a project that works interdisciplinary between and among the fields of exhibition, performance, and festival, I 'exhibited' living people in full-body costumes and mask in public spaces, where the public space was considered to be a gallery location.[161] I created some very strict but very open rules to start with: a group of minimum 3 people dressed in the same or similar 'dress code' would take a walk and have similar behaviors. The idea was also to explore the elements that make a group a group. I invited artists and students to propose their tribes through and open call.

The selected *Tribes*, in total there were over 80 groups in masks and costumes during the 11 days of the *Prague Quadrennial* in June 2015, walked along a strictly designated route through the center of Prague. The route started at the Naprstkovo Museum of Asian, African, and American art, sort of ethnographical museum, and the tribes walked from there to the Staromestska Metro stop, from where they rode the metro to the Můstek Stop. From Můstek they walked to the river, along the way they had a task to buy something for 50 crowns in the Národní třida area where a lot of working people are and pass through throughout the day. Once they got to the National Theatre they had their picture taken, and then continued across the bridge to Kampa Park, where there are a lot of children, parents and other

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[161] For me this was important step in the framework of the *Prague Quadrennial 2015*, exhibition of scenography, that has been struggling with the impossibility of exhibiting scenography throughout its history. So, the project was an exploration of what exhibiting is.

residents in the summertime. From Kampa they had to enter Charles Bridge – an extreme location during the summer due to the crowds of tourists and the heat. From there they went back to the museum. So the frame was the basic rules, and the situating was the strictly designated route. Everything else was allowed.

Many, many situations took place during the *Tribes* project, so many that they could not all be counted or even documented, but for illustration purposes I would like to mention for example: the *Blue Tiered Heroes* by Massimo Furlan – where during one part of the tribe's wandering, a group of men over 60 years old, dressed in superhero costumes laid down on the grass in Kampa Park. Or when 5 little girls 8 years old and under dressed in white-princess-paper-dresses walked over the bridge with Hradčany and the Prague Castle as scenography in the background. Or when two waiters discussed whether they should call an ambulance or whether the people (Julian Hetzel's tribe performers) lying on the pavement downtown 'just art.'

It was an exercise in situating as well as controlling - strict rules vs. accidents, that allowed for two realities – the constructed and the everyday – to have a dialogue. Here one thing put next to another created a situation.

### 6.2.  Points of Looking / Points of View

The multiplicity of perspectives of the audience in space, one of the main tools of spatial dramaturgy, was exercised quite literally in a performance I worked on as dramaturg with Dutch director Lotte van den Berg in 2014 called *Cinema Imaginaire* produced by *Spring Festival* Utrecht. The audiences' perspectives became the dramaturgy of the performance. In this performance the audience gathered in front of the theatre and was met by a 'guide.' From there, the audience

walked together to the Utrecht main train station.[162] At the station the guide announced:

> *For next one and a half hour we will work here. This is our studio. I would like to ask you to turn off your phones. This place is made to distract you. But please try not to buy anything and don't talk on the phone in the next hour and a half. Everything else is allowed.*
>
> *Here are your stop-watches. Set them for 10 minutes. When I say "go," we will all press our watches together.  You will turn around. When you make your first step your movie will start. This movie is made especially for you. It is really true. Your eyes are the camera.*

This was all that audience was given at this point. The audience walked off and came back in 10 minutes. When they came back they discussed what they had experienced. The simple framing of everyday life as a film, your eyes as a camera enabled audiences to approach everyday life in creative ways, or better said made them aware that we all are 'framing' our existences during the day – deciding what and how to watch. They became aware that this decision has a direct impact on what and how we are living. The moment: "This movie is made especially for you. It is really true. Your eyes are the camera," always worked. It was a moment of empowerment for most people (festival audiences), though some people felt confused by this challenge. In between the individual scenes 'shot' by the audience they had a chance to talk to each other about their experiences: some of the people took a narrative approach, even a specific genre approach (some people made thrillers for example) some people took more documentary approach (simply editing reality) and others took essayistic approach (combining pictures with philosophical and personal insights). Some people walked around aimlessly pretending to know what they are doing, but not as many as I expected.

For the next part of the 'film' the guide said: "Now you'll continue making your film. Your film has five scenes, you just made the first one. For the next scene I want to

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[162] The performance was done in many different cities in most of the cities it took place at the train station or other busy public space. In London it took place on Trafalgar square for instance.

ask you to find a subject. The subject can be a person or a thing, a theme, or space itself. You choose a subject and portray it. (In your own way.) You can make your movie nonstop. In one long shot. You can also use montage. This part too takes 10 minutes. Please set your stop-watches." The task continued in similar fashion giving the audience several other simple 'tools' for watching. During the performance the audience spoke about experiencing their own power over watching as well as understanding that different people have different perspectives and different approaches to these perspectives. One generally assumes that everyone watches the same way they do but during this performance one understood that everyone's watching is different.

I think there are three things that are significant about this performance: there were no actors – the audience themselves were the performers and creators; the simplicity and concreteness of tasks gave freedom to the audience to 'play;' and thirdly audience could go anywhere in space with no spatial restriction (some wandered very far and would return quite late. But the group always waited patiently for them).

When the tasks were completed the group followed their guide back to the theatre. They would enter a workshop or similar working back room of the theatre. They would take chairs and make a semi-circle. The guide would say:

"Now we are back inside. And what we are going to try to do is to watch back what we have seen outside." Then the guide would turn on an old projector light without the film, as the light framed a single chair which became the stage. "This is the place where films are projected. This is our stage."

*What I would like to ask you all, one by one, in your own time, to sit here and you tell a short moment out of your films, just a short moment, in your native language. There are two things I want to ask you to do: one is you do it with closed eyes. And speak in present tense. Don't say: I was at central station and I saw a lot of people. Say: I am at central station and I see a lot of people, as simple as that. Say what you saw.*

*You are not obliged to, of course. If you really don't feel like doing it, you don't have to. But please try. Know that sitting here and telling this short moment out of your film is something, but listening to each other is also something.*

In this moment the audience's personal perspectives became stories to be shared. The overall experience of most of the audience members that did[163] this performance was that it was exciting to understand one's own perspective as well as the difference of other people's perspectives, but the most exciting moment was this end moment of sharing. Somehow the films were not finished or fully existing when existing only in one's head. They become real by sharing it with others.

The example of *Cinema Imaginaire* I think illustrates directly the specificity of perspectives as a dramaturgical tool in contemporary theatre but it also illustrates how individual perspectives gain potential within the system of relating in the theatre.

### 6.3. Potential: Reading from the Material

Reading potential from material is one of the main goals of a dramaturg in a rehearsal process. Material here meaning topics that are on the table, visual, audio and movement research material, or whole scenes devised within rehearsals. Usually, the dramaturg is there to see the potential in the existing material. The potential is a theatrical potential of meaning, experiencing, or situational potential. And this is especially true in the theatre that is not based on previously written plays. Theatre that is created entirely through rehearsing – from scratch. In projects such as the *Escapologist*, where the community, spaces, and people become the material and topic of the performance, the dramaturgical strategy of 'reading from material´ is very direct.

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[163] Please note that I am using 'to do a performance' and not 'to see a performance' a term that is gradually entering our lexicon thanks to the changes in the way theatre is experienced.

A different, particular form of ´reading from the material´ in my dramaturgical work can be found in my work with HoME theatre company. This company way initially established in 2006 by Howard Lotker, my husband, to make performances in people's homes called *DoMA / at HoME*. The idea was to create site specific performances in apartments. Site specific for us here meant not only that the performance was made for the specific space, here an apartment, but also that the performance was *about* the space and the people living in it[164]. The process of the making of these performances is very quick. We usually take about 5 days to research the space and the people, at the end of research we designate the main themes for the performance – based on the specific spatial and content potential of the apartment. What we consider material is: the street and the building where the apartment is situated; the apartment itself spatially – organization of rooms; the furniture and objects in the apartment; and finally the stories and lives of the inhabitants themselves - the inhabitants always perform alongside the artistic team. The overall theme and genre of the performance is designated by the overall atmosphere in the apartment. For instance, for a performance in the outskirts of Prague housing project building, where a former Hare Krishna family lived with their 3 children, we chose the theme of reincarnation and the cycle of life, for an apartment where only Erasmus students live for a few months at the time, we decided to make an intimate comic family opera. After the theme is designated performers co-creators (we don't use actors, but work with independent artists who create their own work) go into a period when they work together with the family. After about 2 days we look at everybody's material, read the potential, and then put that material together in specific order, rethink the spacing, and possibly adding final connecting elements. Here reading the initial material – the apartment and the inhabitants who also participate in the presentation – is the key aspect.

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[164] Since 2006 HoME has done over 15 performances in apartments, majority in the Czech Republic but also in Mexico, Israel, Germany, Slovakia, Norway and Finland. See: http://www.divadlohome.net/shows/doma.html, accessed Feburary 11, 2017

The ´travelling´ of audience[165] through space is very important part of the dramaturgy also: in some apartments, the audience had to go from room to room one by one; in others the audience could go anywhere at any time, while in others there was a very specific order of scenes that audience travelled through. In this case ´reading the material´ is at the core of the project and is happening in all phases of the project. This is of course true in a lot of site specific, community, and documentary projects in contemporary theatre. And this is true to a large extent of *Escapologist,* the aspects of the project that took place in and for a specific district of Budapest and with and for the people living in it.

I also use ´reading from the material´ strategies when teaching devising dramaturgy. We use found material, pictures, poems, objects, philosophical ides, movements, sounds etc., that students either bring, find in specific places, or I give to them. As the starting point we analyze the potential of materials.[166] With students we next try to perform individual aspects and potentials of the objects. Or

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[165] Audience usually consists of friends and family of the inhabitants as well as acquaintances of performers and organizing theatre or festival. This is mainly due to safety reasons as well a limited number of spaces for audiences in apartment spaces.
[166] For instance, every object has many levels of potential. Here are some that we have discovered up till now:
  - Basic semiotic information level (What is it?)
  - What do we call it?
  - Functional potential basic (What is it made to do?)
  - Functional potential other (What else can it do, what we do not expect)
  - Phenomenological potential: color, sound, shape, soft/hard, touchable (functional and non-functional)
  - What does it look like? Metaphorical potential
  - What does it behave like? Metaphorical behavior potential
  - Potential in context (does it become something else in different context)
  - Potential in time (Potential to get old, reparability, decay, age.)
  - Reference cultural
  - Reference psychological (personal)
  - Memory of the material (scars)
  - Archetypical reference (symbolism)
  - Familiar (human, non-human, story-triggering)
  - Where does it come from?
  - Where does it go to die?
  - Does it have inside and outside?
  - Raising curiosity potential (to touch, to open etc.)
  - Possibility of chemical consistency change
  - From which side we see it (contextual potential)

we work with groups of objects but make dramaturgy through only through one layer (semantic, symbolic, or functional for instance.) Slowly, we start making more complex combinations of working with the potentials, and adding other kinds of materials. We let material and materials ´tell us stories,´ or give us conceptual situations, or take us wherever it needs to take us. In this exercise I want students to focus on the material and not on themselves. I want them to experience creating from the material and not from their own heads. Finally, of course all results have much of their makers in them, who the student is, but this aspect does not come out from the student's calculated, pre-determined ideas - by going down this diversion they come through on the outside, through the material. And the student is capable of reaching further into their less well known territories. There are many unknowns – but the potential of the material is always very specific and concrete. The steady territory to work with.

The ability of the dramaturg to see potential – things that are not there yet, things that are there in traces but cannot be seen properly yet, things that could ´work´ is the ultimate talent of dramaturg (working in non-drama theatre especially, as there is no play to ´return´ to, no playwright to take as authority) combining perceptiveness and imagination. These are the kinds of things we always see in materials – topics, researched materials, or material devised by performers. Ultimately, I also think that audiences in a way are also always ´reading the material´ and working with its potential, those are the bridges of connection in contemporary theatre, when there is no narrative to follow. Because I think stage is neither place of reality nor simply of imagination – but of potential.[167]

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[167] Theatre is a 'rehearsal for a revolution' as Brazilian director Augusto Boal wrote in the Theatre of the Oppressed (1993).

### 6.4. Dramaturg Inside

When installation art (art entered by spectator) first appeared in approximately the 1960's it was criticized by modernist theorists for its 'theatricality.' It did not exist 'autonomously' by itself, independently to the viewer. It existed only through the presence of the viewer, and further it could not be grasped from outside. The spectator has to enter it and thus the spectator loses their overview and the work of art loses its independence. Of course from today's point of view of a theatre-maker this critique seems close to ridiculous, as in today's theatre we value this interdependence of performance and audience. Additionally, a democratic openness to perception of different views is viewed today very positively. At the same time, I must admit I am very intrigued by the idea that once you enter the performance you cannot see it entirely anymore. There is a certain paradox in the idea that once activated, once you enter (as audience) and become a participant, you at the same time can have less of an overview. I call this paradox of the spectator. You 'act,' co-produce it but in the same time it escapes you. This capability of performance to escape us. Not to be useful and clear but to be ambiguous. And I think this is what makes it art and not political activism. Political activism fixes existing problems but art opens unknown territories. And that can happen only if the goal is not completely fixed and clear.

Despite this paradox that when you enter you see less, as a practicing dramaturg I have a tendency to enter performances. First time I entered a performance was in the performance *Skrz* (*Through*, 2011) with HoME theatre company. This performance was arising in very hard circumstances. There was barely any money for production and individual co-creators/performers had different personal problems at the time. Because of these difficulties, I decided to experiment with two things. First, to make a performance that pretends really hard to make sense, but that in reality is doing everything to actually not make sense at all. This was an exciting and challenging experiment in the fragility of make-believe of theatre. But more importantly I decided to perform in it. What I have experienced as a performing dramaturg was extraordinary: not only could I control what happens

hands-on, not only could I influence rhythms and dynamics within the performance directly but I could actually 'feel' the dramaturgy of the performance rather than 'follow' it.

Now, in spring of 2016, I am working on a media performance *Stereopresence* with Mexican artist Cristina Maldonado. The performance deals with her personal story connected to Alzheimer disease, in a conceptual way: creating ways to be in two places at once through projection and media – just like how in an Alzheimer person's body is here but their mind can be somewhere else completely. (Here too we can see the multiple realities at work in the performance.) But the performance is constructed in such a way to resemble ways of thinking – the scenes are different ways of thinking at work. And as I was watching from outside, thinking if something works or doesn't I had a realized that I cannot change it with words from outside but that I have to enter into it, and do something. So that's what I did. I simply entered and did something and then exited again to watch from outside. So now this performance has two layers - one of double presence and the other of entering and exiting, being present inside and outside. This *doing dramaturgy by performing* is I think what most of the devising artists that perform in their own performances experience: Gob Squad, Superamas or Czech companies Vosto5, Warriot Ideal etc. And I would like to point out that here too the division between doing and thinking is blurred.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, I have explored my notion of 'spatial dramaturgy' using *Apology of the Escapologist* project as the main example of this type of dramaturgy. *Apology of the Escapologist* was a project that marked a transformation of Krétakör company's way of making theatre, it was a spatial journey from narrative dramaturgy toward rhizomatic dramaturgy, in which all narrative elements and stage elements begin to co-exist with one another in a more decentralized system. In the final phases of this journey we find, for instance in *Everwalk*, audiences joining a dance party for elderly people, or joining a celebration in Budapest District 9 public spaces in *Finale*. And so audiences not only become part of the stage space but also took part in the activities, and become part of that rhizomatic system. With this project Árpád Schilling aimed to propose potentials for new relations within theatre performances but also new ways to relate within a community, in this case a particular community of people living in Budapest District 9. Space and spacing was one of the main tools enabling this. The role of the audience within the theatre performance was redefined mainly through strategies on using space: the audience entered the stage space, they become part of a 'shared space;' they could choose and change from where they were watching within the stage space; and in the final parts they even became part of the action within the stage space. Beyond finding this new 'spatializing' of the audience, one of the main elements that defines spatial dramaturgy is that the location itself becomes one of the main topics or materials for the performance (District 9 itself and its communal spaces). Audiences experienced the performance as a series of separate scenes in different spaces and times, so they experienced it as a journey, where spacing, situating, points of looking and relating in space played crucial roles.

I explored this project mainly because I was interested in the political motivation behind this way of working, as a journey towards rhizomatic, de-hierarchized, decentralized dramaturgical system that has a political sub-text. I was also interested in exploring dramaturgy that is not using language and text as its main tools. I wanted to explore this expanded understanding of dramaturgy.

When entering a theatre a spectator makes a decision to enter a shared space with other people and thus has to understand that he enters a certain togetherness that is quite a complicated situation. One has to not only find one's own independence, autonomy, point of view and freedom – responsibility for one's self, but also to enter into a group and thus enter into relations. Entering a group first means entering into relations in which one has to be responsible for one's own independence / autonomy – but one also enters into relations with other people and thus assumes responsibility towards these other people as well. This we can call the politics of audience within the performance, where the role of audience plays a crucial aspect. "Performance slots into a clearly circumscribed system of expectations, but the individual is expected to bear responsibility." (Schilling 2008: 31.) Director Tim Etchells describes relationship with the audiences of a Forced Entertainment performance working with fragmentary dramaturgy: "there is a sentence, […]in *Showtime*, where Richard says to the audience: 'We're gonna to do what we're gonna do, and you're gonna do what you're gonna do.' There are the rules, the expectations, but the night is always fragile. Anything can happen." (Etchells interview for *Passages*[168]). The makers of the performance make a system of dramaturgical rules fragmented with gaps so the audience can enter it and '*do what they are gonna do'* in their own anarchic way, which is inevitable. But the audience has to bear the responsibility for their own actions within the structure. This aspect of audience responsibility, that can be found in any kind of theatre was something that was highlighted using *Apology of the Escapologist*'s new spatial dramaturgical tools.

In the dramaturgy of contemporary theatre that is fragmented and open, as Lehman writes in the *Postdramatic Theatre,* "the dramaturg should no longer be defined as the controlling power of the theatre." In the theatre where structures are made to be entered by spectator "he or she is not just the guard of the institution (a kind of 'police') or the advocate of the text (a 'literary adviser') or the advocate

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Walser, Dagmar. *Tim Etchells: Can You Trust the People Sitting Next to You?* interview, Performance: Body, Time, Space. Spec. issue of Passages 57.3: 20-23. Prohelvetia: Swiss Arts Council. 2011

of the audience (the first 'outside eye' in the rehearsals), the dramaturg may instead become a negotiator for the freedom of theatrical experimentation and risk." (Lehman *On Dramaturgy* 2009: 4). Although I have not written in this thesis about the role of dramaturg but about the practice of dramaturgy (that can be done by anyone or everyone in the theatre working group), I still feel that it is important to note that the role is also changing with the practice. If the dramaturg is the advocate of the audience, and in the new theatre performance entered by audience, then he is not an 'outside eye' anymore but perhaps must become an 'inside ear?' If the dramaturg is not advocating the text, how does he/she know what they are advocating? How does one advocate for freedom and theatrical experimentation and risk? Answers to these questions belong to another thesis, there is no space for further argument here. Here, in my conclusion, I would like to highlight the political potential of theatre as a place of a possibility for change. That was an important impulse both for Árpád Schilling to make the *Escapologist* and for me to write about it.

We can say that theatre has been accused of manipulation and lies and looked at as the ultimate non-political form, a spectacle to make audiences passive ever since Plato's cave.[169] We can hear echo of this critique still in contemporary philosophy. For instance, in the work of French semiologist Roland Barthes, who writes that: *"the theatre is precisely that practice which calculates the place of things as they are observed: if I set the spectacle here, the spectator will see this; if I put it elsewhere, he will not, and I can avail myself of this masking effect and play on the illusion it provides."* (Barthes 1977: 69). The core of the problem of theatre is the spacing and how things are concealed and revealed through spacing.

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[169] *"The cave dwellers do not understand what they see, not because they are blind or in any other way intrinsically deficient, but because they are bound – unable to get up and move about and thereby to experience the relativity of their point of view. Their positions are fixed and stable, but the very stability of their point of view prevents them from seeing it as situationally conditioned"* (Weber 2004: 5)

But I want to stress that thing are *both* concealed *and* revealed. And that uncovering, revealing or empowering can be a strong political force. And I would like to stress that despite the critique of theatre as entertainment, illusion and spectacle we have to think that political (or social) change is not possible without imagination: we have to imagine things the way 'they could be,' the way that 'they are not yet.' And this is what I am interested here.

Painter George Mathieu traces (in his article *From Aristotle to Lyrical Abstraction*) the development of aesthetic idea through centuries "from the ideal to the real, from the real to the abstract, and from the abstract to the possible" (George Mathieu in *Eco* 1989: 88)[170]. I find this 'possible' a crucial word to describe contemporary theatre, that in my opinion is not really interested in neither only the imaginary nor just the real – but is actually looking for this *possible*. Somewhere between documentary and theatre; between community performing and community watching; between site as a subject and site as place of performance. The world in between the real and imaginary.

I found great inspiration for finding new ways to look at theatre as practice in a book by social geographer Edward W. Soja called *Thirdspace – Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places* (1996)[171]. In this book Soja explores work of social philosopher Henri Lefebvre namely his idea of 'third space.' Like Massey, and to a certain extent me as well, for Lefebvre and Soja 'space' is a metaphor, a tool to explore systems differently, through exploring different layers and aspects of 'space,' and looking for ways to analyze things in complex ways without binary divisions (that are often the easiest way to analyze things).

In quite a simplified way we can say that: The Firstspace is the physical space – where objectivity and materiality are privileged, and where space is understood as outcome and product. The Secondspace is mental space: "spatial working of the

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[170] Eco, Umberto. The Open Work. Cambridge: Harvard UP, n.d. Print.
[171] Soja, Edward W. Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places. Malden: Blackwell, 2014. Print.

mind" (Soja 1996: 79)[172], and it represents a "masterful and complete ordering of reality" (Soja 1996: 80)[173]. In contrast the Thirdspace is the space where "Everything comes together […]: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history."  (Soja 1996: 56) and just like rhizome "it's disorderly, unruly, constantly evolving, unfixed, never presentable in permanent constructions." (Soja 1996: 70)[174]. All theatre can be considered to be a Thirdspace. But the *Escapologist* project that aimed to blur the boundary between theatre and 'real life,' where audiences became participants, walking on the tip of that boundary is to my mind trying to make the audience aware of this Thirdspace: in which the constructed and accidental, imagined and real, performed and static, artistic and political come together to form new relationships between the binary positions.

First this approach emphasizes an understanding of multiplicities present and a 'radical contemporaneity' of things, it emphasizes multiplicity and complexity of 'points of looking', possibility for things to 'co-exist'. Secondly, it breaks with artificial division of things and enables us to see things more complexly.

I find this non-binary way of seeing space very useful for understanding theatre as a form. I find this understanding of space to actually be at the core of theatre as a practice. And I think it is especially visible and purposely worked with in contemporary and devised theatre. Instead of discussing whether theatre is real or not, if it's a spectacle or politically engaging, if it's subjective or can be objective – we should accept that good theatre should be both. Just like life. Theatre understood as Thirdspace as 'everything,' is an open, lived space. This 'everything coming together' theatre is probably like fragmentary dramaturgy, somewhat

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[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.

chaotic theatre that has no clear (causal) logic, but it's a way to reach into the unclear, into the unknown, into elsewhere.

A good example of this is the fact that when we put an 'authentic' people, for instance the pensioners from the *Everwalk* part of *Escapologist,* 'on stage,' they in a way become less real, they become performed, something framed. They are not merely their everyday selves anymore. The same goes the other way around, and we all know it from good theatre performances, when we put something 'unreal' on stage – a text, object, person – it strangely becomes 'real.' The same way, when we put something subjective 'on stage,' for instance lonely activities of Árpád Schilling in his room in the video installation part of the *GaP*: this subjective becomes, if not straight forward objective, at least a 'shared subjective,' neither subjective nor objective. And so on… I think I don't need to describe individually how these things come together in complex connections in detail. It is clear how mind and body are connected for performers, but also for audiences in the performances where they are moving around – they at least participate bodily partially.

I find the connection of the real and imagined to be highly political idea. I see the connection of real and imagined in the potential of reality, the possible. Things do not change into something they are not, but they can change towards something they are not yet, but have potential for, or something they are not yet visibly. Seeing this potential in reality for me is the ultimate connection of the 'real and imagined' and a strategy for change. Without imagination: no change. And interestingly, Lefebvre apparently considered practice of politicians to be practice of pure (I would say unreal) construction, while the domain or artists belonged to the Thirdspace – imagination tightly connected to reality.

Lefebvre apparently called cities "possibility machines" and I think theatre is also a "possibilities machine" where things can happen, things can change. This is exactly the aspect of theatre that Árpád Schilling wanted to emphasize and utilize. Take the 'reality' through the theatre possibilities machine and try to propose change. In

today's world when we can imagine almost anything except real political change this idea might be crucial.

But more than anything I see this ´possible´ and the 'potential' as well as the connection of real and imagined to be one of the key ideas in practical (spatial) dramaturgy within rehearsing and devising.


### 8. POST SCRIPTUM *Árpád Schilling in 2016*

On June 17[th,] 2016. I went to Budapest to make the final interview with Árpád Schilling.[175] The situation I have found Árpád Schilling, Krétakör as well as Hungary itself in were very different from when I have interviewed him last time in 2012. Despite the fact that the situation was more extreme, Árpád Schilling seemed paradoxically to be in a better mood and I will try and explain why here.

Árpád Schilling talked about the many projects that he and Krétakör had made since 2009. They had tried many forms, many coproducing partners, in many countries. They had tried street theatre, political education in schools, explored forming a political party, as well as continuing to do opera and theatre performances. The company Krétakör included many different people during that time, and as Árpád Schilling said himself, mainly young people that have a lot of energy to give to project for approximately three years, then there is a changing of the guards. It has been a lot of work. Over time they lost their subsidy from the state and are currently on the 'black list' for any kind of future projects supported by the state. The Hungarian government has also created very high taxes for independent projects including high taxes for international partners working on projects in Hungary, according to Schilling this is done in order to disconnect Hungarian organizations from international networks. He also spoke about how

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[175] Due to malfunction of the recording device this interview was not recorded and the writing in this chapter is based on my notes made during the interview.

there are no open bids, calls for applications for open projects supported by state but that everything is decided by 'experts' connected directly to the state.

The teachers that they have been working with are under strict control. One of the teachers made a speech during a public event in which he talked about independence, freedom and integrity, and was threatened by his superior the next day with losing his job. A major theatre magazine lost its subsidy after starting a discussion about the connection of politics and theatre. (And all theatres are fully politically controlled.)

Árpád Schilling said he feels lonely in Hungary and doesn't want to work there anymore. He said that there are people who think like him about the political situation but are silent about what is going on in the country and think that they will be spared if they silently continue 'doing their job,' and don't act upon their beliefs, but that they don't understand that being silent is also being political, except it does not make the situation better. Árpád Schilling believes that if you don't 'deal' with politics, you cannot maintain your autonomy; being silent and private is a fake autonomy. This situation resembles silence and self-censorship during communism and Árpád Schilling said that now he feels the situation is very similar to the last ten years before the revolution. There is a strange combination of complete state control (the worst of communism) with obsession with money (the worst of neo-liberal practices) and a rise of far-right fascist parties.

The other important change is that now Árpád Schilling sees a strict division between his theatre work and the work of Krétakör, now called Krétakör Foundation (since 2012). He says that when he works in the theatre, he works as independent artist and does not use the name Krétakör anymore. He does not make 'interpretative' theatre, theatre based on plays, but writes his own texts for theatre, and works for and in traditional stage spaces. He said that if he did not have a family to support (he has two children now) he would not do theatre. Directing is profession and theatre is simply a way to make money. And he does not want to earn money through the Krétakör Foundation. Instead he wants to donate money

and time to the foundation. He said he finds some joy in writing the texts but that he does not need to direct theatre anymore. He also said that he does not want to die a theatre director, and that it makes him sad to see colleagues who make performance after performance based on Chekhov or Shakespeare especially in today's Hungary. And I think what he means is that the tools and the overall approach are so old-fashioned, so centered on the director and so detached from audience and reality. He is working on a short 10 minute film about Revenge, that will explore his own anger, and daydream about 'killing someone' as a revenge for what is happening in the country. But he feels that this is his private problem and will completely finance the film on his own. He is excited to experiment with a new form but does not know where it will take him.

The Krétakör Foundation[176] on the other hand will continue doing purely social, political, and educational projects: for instance, political education in high-schools (youth 14-18 years old), or a big conference for Hungarian NGOs, where they will have the opportunity to connect with one another in order to have more impact. Árpád Schilling feels that such platform is lacking and that the NGOs practice is fragmented, that creating a network and a platform for exchange and cooperation would help projects to have greater influence on society. At this point, in June 2016, Krétakör Foundation has finances for 6 more months of existence, Árpád Schilling says he is grateful for this time that he and his colleagues will devote to rethinking the existence and goals of the foundation, with an opportunity to work in a more focused way throughout longer periods of time. This is very different to the multiplicity of problems and issues that Krétakör tried to cover in the previous 8 years (from experimenting with many new theatre forms, to community work, educational projects, films, visual art projects, and political activism), which in my opinion was natural as they were trying to fill the many gaps that exist in today's Hungary in art, theatre and social and political life.

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[176] Already in 2012 on the double-DVD disk titled *Krétakör Works 2008-2009* they define themselves as "Krétakör (Chalk Circle) [...] professional art studio and production agency, which creates creative community games applying experiences of social sciences."

The strict division of art and politics is very interesting here of course, since I am looking at the spatial dramaturgy of *Escapologist* as a political dramaturgy. I have noticed this need for division of activism and art in other people before especially in countries where there is a more extreme (negative) political situation (I have noticed it with many artists in Egypt this year 2016, or with Belorussian curator Eva Neklyaeva working in Italy.) There is a specific situation in which theatre or art does not have enough impact anymore in a socio-political situation that has to change, in those moment direct action with specific and clear goals is more necessary. At this point I myself have a layered understanding of the connection of theatre and politics. While I believe that much of good theatre is political merely thanks to the fact that it enables us to see things differently, I also believe that direct political action is more effective in the short term. But I also believe that theatre and art are somewhat 'above' politics, and 'above' ethics – that they are tools to question politics and ethics (among other things) rather than enforce concrete political and ethical projects.

The main reason that Árpád Schilling does not want to 'combine' theatre and social and political practices of the foundation is because he feels that when working with a community (for instance Roma children or high school youth) a strange day always comes when he has to start directing them, putting them on stage and focusing light on them in specific moments. He said that the children maybe enjoy this moment, though they don't understand why this needs to happen. But for Schilling this is a strange moment of manipulation that is against all the work that has been done before that moment – all the dialogues and exploration with children. He also said that that the theatre has different timing than social work. With theatre you take a few months and present the work in a few hours. Social work takes years and the outcome, the product is often elusive, invisible and long-term. And he was tired of trying to present the outcome of the project in a short time, an expectation made by both grant-giving foundations and co-producing curators of festivals, and venues. This is the main reason behind the shift toward full-time social work of the foundation.

Looking back at *Escapologist* Árpád Schilling said that this was definitely a project that has started this new path for him. He also said the project could not be done today because they are on the 'black list' and could never raise funds of get permissions for space (streets, abandoned buildings, etc.). Back in 2009 they were one of the favorite companies and could achieve all that. He says he thinks that today the project would paradoxically be better received by both audiences and critics. Firstly, both audiences and critics are after 8 years used to new ways of doing theatre, and they understand the motivations behind Krétakör's projects better. Also now there is overall positive view on Krétakör's projects among theatre critics. Árpád Schilling sees that the environment was 'unprepared' for *Escapologist* back in 2009.

Unfortunately, he says, this better understanding of *Escapologist*, would also come from the fact that the situation in Hungary is much more extreme: 'aggressive, conservative, and chauvinist,' and there is strong presence of fear and control in the society. The problems that *Escapologist* addressed are much more obvious and people would understand the need for activation, participation and positioning as well as the need of re-connection with the community. Interestingly, as an example to provide this he uses the problem of women in the society and says that today the problem of the position of women is much more obvious: there are politicians that publicly declare that woman's place is at home and they 'should bear us children,' as if women that do not give birth to children are not worthy. He talks about this man-woman relationship in the *Escapologist*, that I think I did not initially understand or see as important either. And he says that *Escapologist* was questioning what giving birth does to women, how it changes them physically and mentally and the sacrifice that it takes, referring to the great pain of birth. And he thinks that today the audiences could better understand the need to discuss how children change us, both for better and worse, but mainly change the way we see the world.

To conclude, Árpád Schilling said that he has the impression that this moment now in his life he is in the final scene of the *Escapologist - Finale*, where the audience

and performers make a picnic together, in freshly laid out grass in the center of the city. A scene where there is no acting, no theatre, no stage but everybody is together, talking and making together.

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## 10.    APPENDIX 1 THE APOLOGY OF THE ESCAPOLOGIST (URBAN THERAPY) CREDITS[177]

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Árpád Schilling

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Máté Gáspár

TECHNICAL MANAGER

András Éltető

FINANCIAL MANAGER

Péter Vámosi

ARTISTIC ASSISTANT

Péter Fancsikai

ARTPROLETARZ COORDINATOR

Márton Gulyás

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Márton Ágh

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Mátyás Erdély

EDITOR

Szilvia Papp

MUSIC COMPOSER

Bálint Bolcsó, Imre Bozsóki LIchtenberger, Marcell Dargay

DIRECTOR

Adél Kollár, Bea Nagy, Márta Schermann, Árpád Schilling

DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT

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[177] Credits from https://archive.kretakor.eu/en/projects March 3rd, 2017.

Adél Kollár

DOCUMENTARY

Balázs Féjja, Ferenc Gerendai, Zsolt Hunyadkürti, Gábor Péter Németh, Viktor Németh, József Szabados, Csaba Tóth

18 PLUSMINUS

Mária Bánfalvy, Viktor Baradla, Sára Belecz, Zoltán Belényesi, Éva Blaskó, Panna Bodor, Beáta Brecz, Dorottya Csákány, Tibor Csáky, Rózsa Csányi, Kata Csomor, József Dencs, Sándor Dessewffy, Marika Fekete Tóth, Sziszi Gonda, Otília Horváth, Janka Jáger, Zsolt Kapelner, Lili Anna Kuruc, Márta Lőrinczi, Attila Molnár, András Nyírő, Szandra Papp, Judit Pataki, Zoltán (Lady Dömper) Petróczi, Tamás Polánszky, Lajos Sárközy, Péter Takács, Ilona Verőné

MUSICIAN

Mátyás Ölveti, Csongor Veér, Péter Mező, Péter Kondor

SINGING

Kata Tüske, Réka Szász, Dóra Rácz , Nóra Rácz, Kinga Pap, Alma Nagy, Eszter Légrády, Killa Köllő, Sarolta Komlósi , Klára Kassay, Éva Juhász, Marietta Hajdó, Luca Döme, Klára Cserne, Krisztina Bognár, Judit Biksz, Szaffi Asbóth

OXITOCIN

Anna Weiszburg, Barbara Villei, Balázs Sebestyén, Rita Rózsavölgyi , Judit Répás, Vanda Sarolta Petrucz, Sára Petrucz, Annamária Paulovics, Judit Pataki, Márta Neobauer, Andrea Nagy, Linda Lisztes, Dávid Kresalek, Samu Gryllus, Ilona Gaál, Judit Forgács, Sándorné Dzsaja, Krisztina Dragonya, Mária Dezsenyi, Sándor Dessewffy, Ferenc Dávid, Kati Cser, Katalin Acsai

OPEN COURT

Alíz Miklusicsák

BRICK OUT MARATHON

András Szalai

LABORHOTEL

Jeanne Candel, Péter Fancsikai, Zsolt Nagy, Juliette Navis Bardin, Ernő Zoltán Rubik, Lilla Sárosdi, Árpád Schilling, Franciska Schilling, Sándor Terhes, Orsi Tóth, Milán Újvári, Marc Vittecoq

WALK FOREVER

Ferencné Borsos, Lajos Csala, László Dóka, Béla Duka, Gyuláné Fekete, Magda Gergely, Győző Janda, Hajnalka Kertész, László Kertész, János Kiss, Marika Kiss, András Kovács, Ilona Kurucz, Erika Lakatos, Nelli Ligeti, Ildikó Majtényi, Sándor Polgár, Marika Rizmayer, Ildikó Strausz, Péter Takács, Sándor Varaka, Jenőné Vlasics, Mátyás Zavecz, Mária Zavecz Mátyásné

## *11.* APPENDIX 1 Árpád Schilling Interview January 2012 Budapest, Hungary

I have conducted these two interviews (in appendix 1 and appendix 2) with Árpád Schilling in January and October 2012 in Budapest, Hungary. They include some of the quotes I have used in the thesis but it is worth publishing it this way in full length because of large quantity of information it contains that did not make it into the thesis. I am adding it to my thesis in full length with only basic language editing.

Sodja Lotker (SL): We will talk about the making of the *Escapologist* project, the changes in the company and politics. But maybe we could start with space. Literally with space – you could tell me exactly why you decided to leave the theater building.

Árpád Schilling (AS): Firstly, it was not a decision, it was just a situation. Young theater director had to find a place, or places, to make theater and I didn't choose space, I got a space from a person who could give this possibility to me and I had to travel among different theatre venues. A large amount of movement helped me to understand how this could not be pressure from outside, how it could be a decision. The first performance I made I had to play in three or four different places – in one place I could make one performance, in the second two performances and after came the third place, and the fourth place, and I had to play my repertory in four different places. It was not my choice, it was the situation, but I got to thinking that maybe I had different possibilities, maybe I could decide where I can show what.
The first thing was to play in as much places as possible. Because I thought we had to play more and more times because it was the possibility for audience to come and see. Later I understood that we could decide which space to use. Because I became a more known director and had more possibilities to choose.
For instance we made this performance and there was a possibility to do it in a summer festival. The festival was around an old church which wasn't used. The piece was a about this person who is very radical, nonreligious person, and we thought it could be interesting this very radical story around the church.[178]
But it was in '98, so years after I started to make theater, it was the first moment when we started to think about this possibility, how we can use this situation between the story, the concept and the message, both in action and in space, the meaning of the space. I think it was a very organic development, because the

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[178] Performance *Baal* (1998)

background was not conceptual. We were young people who want to make theater learned step by step what was the line between possibility and artistic decision. We tried to use more possibilities. For example, in 2002, when we wanted to make a performance about the history of Hungary after the system changed, from 1989 to 2002, those thirteen years of history. We started to think where could we show it, the idea was maybe in the circus, because in Hungary there is a circle situation in politics and maybe it is a vicious circle, so we have to go back in time again and again. Is there is a circled space? And the other question was whether it should be like a clown play – a lot of clowns, the politicians like clowns, people like clowns, and simple circled space would be ideal. Maybe we could go to the capital circus in Budapest, and ask the boss of this circus if we could do it in their place? And at that time, they were starting to think about new types of action in the circus, and they told us yes, okay, this is the right moment. We tried to open the traditional circus line with clowns, and maybe it was good to go there and do it then - I had good reputation, in 2002 I was a good brand among the people and the critics, and maybe interaction could be good between the theater and the circus, so we chose it. And that was the moment when we absolutely chose one space.

But the church was different. It was not a functioning church. It was an old church, from the Middle Ages. It was like a museum... But there was one moment, when Baal, after many bad situations, after losing everybody, friends and women, stands absolutely alone by the big wall of the church. We used more light and there was a huge shadow of him on the wall of the church. This was the one iconic image of the whole performance. This is the guy who is absolutely alone in front of the God. This was the moment when we used this possibility, the meaning of the space and the meaning of the performance. But I think that most of the time we just used the space and we gave this possibility to people to connect.

SL:    This choice in your work - it is really interesting the way it works. You often talk about things that are controlled and that you have to control them, but somehow I think you manage to combine a completely controlled choice with this hyper open dramaturgy where people actually can think what they want. How does that work? Where is the possibility of the unknown, how does it come in with this choice and control? How do you keep the control of the unknown?

AS:    First of all, I was in the absolutely traditional theater school and learned a traditional way of directing from a very traditional theater maker whom I liked very much, but we didn't do other types of theater.  In this kind of theatrical thinking, the main person is the director who has to choose everything, and advises or gives instructions to the actors. It is one way and one school and I like it very much, because that way I could learn something as a student. If we didn't learn these traditional rules, there would be nothing to leave. And I think it is not a real choice if you can't choose between things.

And I needed to leave. I needed to know something, to understand something, to use something and then leave, go further. To use ephemeral situation is a decision. So for me it was really important to learn these strict rules and it was very important every time I made theater. Later, when I met some strong imaginative actors, it was really important to understand they can have the right to choose, because they are those who have to take the responsibility for the performance. First I thought how I can be a controller, and the second step was okay, I keep my control but I can give it to you, and you, and you, because you can do it, you can change something during the performance. This was a very important moment during the *Seagull*[179] performance. It was absolutely directed, the classical direction and the Chekhov piece and I am the director who direct this with actors. But after 100 performances I told actor maybe you can change the concept, change something, because you know the text, you know the concept, so maybe you can change, maybe you can choose something... decide something.

I told people: 'I don't want you to change the concept, because if somebody starts to play in one piece, it is very disturbing for the other actors and it is not a common play, it is just one person's exhibitionism'. But I noticed that the most radical actors, step by step, were starting to change the concept and it was the moment when I had to tell the actor: 'OK, stop. Because we don't, or maybe you don't understand the system'. So, we tried to change small things, and then bigger things, and at one moment I came to the stage, entered the performance and started acting and I saw the question on the faces of the other actor: what are you doing? I don't know how to act. It is not my character. So, I had to be like me. And this is why we had to change, we had to write the piece, a new piece, and this was one moment when I realized: OK, it is the border. We have to go back to *Seagull*. But if you want to this kind of action, we have to learn it, we have to try. And it was the moment when I tried work on improvisation form with some actors, so it was a new step.

My idea was: I will give you some frames, I will give you some spaces, text, basic idea, and you can develop it, do it like improvisation. For me it was very important from the beginning of work in the theater to use the energy of the people. Because when I was an actor in a group, it was important from the beginning to use the energy.  So, there were two ways for me: one, you can direct something like a *Seagull* - there is a text, and you can give advice to me but I will choose (as an actor). It is a piece, I say what I think of it, you tell me what you think of it, and after I start to work on it. This means you can give me some ideas but I will decide what will be the performance. The movement, the set.

The other was like *BLACKland* project[180] - there was a situation in Hungary and we had to talk about it because it was our story. I didn't know what the piece would

[179] Performance *Seagull* (2003)
[180] *BLACKland* project (2004)

be. But we had to do it, we had to write it so that actors could give me propositions, what we thought about this country, what could be interesting, theatrical, from this situation. What could we use, and what form, what kind of style and what type of set or costume. It was absolutely open, but at the end I had to choose... Somebody has to choose it, but it was a more open situation than the situation in the *Seagull*.

In the *Seagull* the rules were much more strict.

In the case of *BLACKland* the question was our common situation, political situation, so you (actors) have to tell me what you think about this country, I can't decide. I just talk like one person, person who is dealing with this problematic situation but it is just one opinion. So, what do you think? It was a very open situation. But in the end I had to choose the costume and stage and other things because I knew there will be a tour in the open and in the other places, so it had to be a construction. But it was a really important experience and in this kind of theater the political connection of actors is very important. In this situation, they behaved like the citizens and I behaved like a very open minded artist and for me it was really important they'd choose the material.

Because if we said something on the stage, we'd have to be convinced whether we thought that was good or not. To avoid the stupid situation when the actors say something, and the audience asks us about it, and the actors say: 'we don't know'. It was the real question, we had to face the spectators. And it was the first moment for me, about 2004, when I understood it was a really radical thing that we could say something in front of the people, and that after maybe they will ask us something and we'd have to answer and they would trust us. Maybe this was the moment when I started to think I maybe wanted to continue this way, to make improvisation games or to use improvisation.

One thing is a really good actor who can do what the director asks, the second is the good actor who can choose from the different ways to play, but the third level is an actor who thinks something about the world.

SL:     So, how did you take it to another level, when you 'closed' the theater and continued with it?

AS:     When I understood I wanted to go more artistically, thinking how could we develop improvisation and common work and different ideas and new disciplines and cross-over production and so on.  And the other question was political - who can stand in front of people and talk to them without the safety of the theatrical frame, the character? Everybody used - the names. Not characters names: but their names. There were chairs on the stage with their real names on and it was a political message: actors who don't want to hide behind a fictional name.

But it was my idea and the actors didn't understand the real question. For them it was an idea, and they used it. But it was not a political idea, it was an artistic idea.

I have a name, a real name and in this situation, I choose to use it. It was an artistic experiment, not a political decision. And I understood it, some years later - I understood I needed some people who know what the difference is between aesthetic choice and the political.

SL:    When you say politically, what do you mean by 'political'?

AS:    Political is when I can tell people I'm thinking something, I am hoping, I am fighting for something. I'm not just asking a question, I have an answer. So, I can be in front of people and say: yes, it is my thought, it is my opinion, and I do something against it, or for it. That is not like a traditional actor who just does what he is given. But I choose. I am sure that this issue is something of importance.

SL:    So, when you make performances now, you are convinced in something politically, but at the same time is not a political manifesto, like you want to persuade people to do the same. And at the same time you are creating something like a democratic space, an open space.

AS:    We like to speak to people. When people come to our space they can talk like us, they then can talk about what happened. People can say what happened with us, talk like in a community, why we didn't function, why we functioned, way it was good or not...
A very important question for me is also the team. The basis, the group. We need a basis where we agree with each other. Because if I am the only person who is talking, if I am a traditional director and I do the talking, it is okay, that is normal, I say it and you are an actor, you are an artist as well and I told you what I think. So, this kind of dictatorship is OK. It is the artistic way, it works. It is the theater space and I am the boss, and after that we will leave that space and go to another space and somebody else will be the boss there. So, that's not a problem. But where there is a group situation, it is really important that we agree about things because it can help the message, it is not just one person's idea. It is a practice. It is something that other people can understand as well. It is not a teaching situation it is a – there is a group, who believes in one thing, one practice, one type of thinking, a type of artistic or political ideas, and they try to make other practice it. But it is really hard to build this kind of group, because I had a group for 13 years, and the situation was like this: this is my concept, and you are my actors. But the new situation is much harder to build because the first thing this young people did was to come to me and ask: 'Arpad, what do you think about this work?  Arpad, what do you think about this?' You know, that kind of communication. I send them away saying: 'I don't know. I don't know'.
If I don't know you have to decide, you have to do. But I have to listen to you. And if needed to tell you: 'don't do it, I did it before', or: 'if you do it will be too much...

but do it again, try this'... But give the possibility to see me as a person who doesn't know anything. Like write something and say: 'Hey man, what do you think about this?' This is real communication. But sometimes it is also really good to use the experience. So I tell them: 'use me!' and 'use my name'. Because in 20 years I would like to use their name. So, for me this is like good business.

SL:   An investment.

AS:   This network between people is really important for me. We have to use each other.

SL:   You have a strong position, right? So, the way not to influence them with your position is actually not to tell them, just to have it. Is that true? You know what you are doing, but they don't?

AS:   Yes, I know something, but I don't know what will happen, what will be the best thing to do.

SL:   The change and the mistake are the things that you hold on to, right? So opposite to traditional theater?

AS:   Yes, but in this kind of plan, I think at the end of the action some element can be the same as what was in the original plan. The question is not only how we can put through the accidental situation in this plan, because our plan is not to save our plan, our plan is to how we can form our plan through the accidental situation.

SL:   And it's making it stronger through having a dialogue with other people. But to go back: you still do projects in theatre where you direct.

AS:   Yes, both ways of doing theatre are important to me. One is very important for me politically, or in a sense of community, for issues how we can build a community. But for me it's also important to do something else. Sometimes I have to share myself a lot. I wake up in the morning and share, share, share, and give, give, give. And in such moments it is important to have this thing where I just have an idea. And I just do this one thing.

SL:   How do I maintain my strong point of view in connection with other people? It is a very interesting thing because I think a lot of theater is too open and very open, but it does not have the core, and I think it's somehow the main question of contemporary theatre.

AS:    Yes. When I was in Archa in Prague, one of the artists, this woman, who made this very nice project showed it to me. It was full of immigrants, a lot of people in the street... like a market. This is like a business situation for me, I have two Chinese and two other immigrants and one doesn't have a leg, he is very handicapped, they are on the stage and they dance and do what they want. And she asked me what I thought.  And I said: it is beautiful what they do, they are here, but if you do just this, for me it's not enough. So it is beautiful, and it is a very good culture house, but the question is how you use this frame, what they do... It is an important question for me.

Like in Priestess project[181], it was a really interesting method. There were 16 children. I didn't build the performance with children directly, just sometimes. I worked with three actors, told them what their role is. But the children didn't have one direct lead from me. I have created a situation. I tried to be one step ahead, and I give you some advice to the actors. They had to work with the children and building happened directly between the children and actors. And we see that on the stage. We didn't see just children and some actors, we saw a team. Because the children really trust the actors. And this real connection was my aim: not to show things, a construction I made.

We made interaction theater in a village while making the Priestess, in the countryside with lot of talking during the action, talking to people, the spectators. After we asked people: what was it you saw? What was this? And they told us: Theater. Stupid question, it was theater. We played, we talked – simply theater. See the interaction, see the contact, theater. You play, we talk, it was good. This situation is much more open. It was very beautiful, because we don't like situations where nobody is curious.

Intellectual people, they know the practice, they know how they can express, and it is really important they have all the words and things to express opinion. But the people in the village were people who have no possibility ever to share opinions, nobody asks them. They are out of democracy. But for them it is absolutely normal situation to 'yes, it is cool, it is good because there is a moment when I can tell something'. But the people who can say things all the time, they just like 'no, I don't like it, or it's good, because of this or that'. This is the kind of 'professional thinking' that theoreticians, critics and I think some spectators as well have.

But the people who are outside the official culture, are very, very open when they can say something. Then they saw themselves on the screens because we made some interviews with them in the countryside, I invited them to show these pictures, and they saw themselves, and they said: 'it is us on the pictures' and we talked. And it was very radical, they were laughing and whistling, a real community

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[181] Priestess project is the third part of the Crisis Trilogy (2011), devised in Romania and premiered in Budapest.

feeling. But the people who go this kind of event in the capital are like: Why? What do you want with me? It is a very strange moment.

SL:    I also want to talk about how you dealt with the 'story' in *Escapologist*? How you worked with it? Because it is not a classical narrative. For instance in A and B in the *LaborHotel* – A is much more a story, and B is much less a story.

AS:    In the A and B parts of the *LaborHotel* - my idea was to make two different points of view of the story: like a man and a woman. I wanted to develop one part which is much more story-like, much more text, much more linear, much more logical. And the other with a different point of view, which is less logical, with a lot of strange things and more humor, more interaction. It is very simple. The man's line is very logical and very tragic and with the situation consequences. The woman's story is with a lot of questions, interactions… and the end of this woman's story is her with the child and trying to get the child to sleep. At this moment I thought about this situation when a mother meets the child. It is just questions, a lot of questions and she doesn't know anything, it is a really open situation: 'What do I have to do? I don't know, all I know is that I have to keep this thing.' - that's the woman's story. But the man's story is: 'I know what I know about the thing, about myself, about the world and I am bad'. You know, the typical masculine thinking is: 'Okay, I am the worst thing in the world'.
So, it is a direct reflection of the situation when we had the baby. The changing of the thinking about theater came earlier, because I started to stop the Krétakör story in 2007. In that year we weren't together with Lilla. In 2007 I decided to stop this kind of theater. I decided maybe I would go to the forest and absolutely go out for a year or two, I didn't know what I had to do because I didn't have an idea, and maybe it was important to be far from this thing which I didn't want to continue. In 2008 many things happened in my life, this half year now feels like compressed time, because I had to finish Krétakör, I had to deal with lot of soul problems of the actors and meet Lilla, to be together, and end of May, June, know we will have a baby – so a lot of things at once. And after it was very clear what I had to do, but the conceptual Escapologist, started before, this kind of thing with Escapologist to leave something, to start a new thing.
This Houdini project, I am in chains in the water and had to get out. It was a very iconic situation for me. How we can do it, because it was very personal for me, I was an artist in the water, but I felt that it wasn't just my story, it could be the story of society. It could be the story of the culture and so on, so it was a moment when I thought I had to leave and find a new way which I didn't know. And after these very compressed six months, I thought: 'Yes, we have to work with this question and what it means - this child's life. And I think it is really interesting because it is a spiritual question as well. And maybe this generation can build with this kind of aspect of being a family, with child, what does it mean...

SL:    You were thinking maybe the baby, she would answer your question, in a way...

AS:    Yes, because you are thinking alone. It is a reflection. Because an artist who thinks: What is the world? What is the answer? What does opening mean? What does a new life mean? Moral questions and so on, and then there is a new life and because I am very sensitive to new feelings and new reactions I like very much new situations where I have to adapt, do something. And this situation was the biggest situation in my life that I had to adapt myself to. There was something that I had to build, I had to do something because it was impossible to avoid. If I meet somebody in the street and there was something that I had to react to. Maybe we are together for just one hour or two. It's somebody from down the street and you have to solve the problem, show solidarity, help... but in this situation you feel that it is your life.

SL:    It is your daughter, right? So there is something very personal about it, right?

AS:    Yes, it was real communication. My first moment was when she was born and the nurse took her from the room and took her to another place to weigh her. I was in the room which I had to leave because the doctor came to examine Lilla and this nurse left me with the baby. It was the biggest experience in my life. There was this girl on the weight scale and no reaction. Absolute silence, she just watched. And me in the room.

SL:    Watching her.

AS:    And I didn't know what I had to do. She was on this metal baby weight scale and I was there. I was standing because I thought somebody will come, I didn't want to do something wrong.
This was my reaction. This was what I learned. In this situation, no reaction, like a student in the school. And she started to cry. My reaction was: 'Maybe somebody has to come, because I don't want to do something wrong, because she is very new and maybe I will harm her – my viruses, or bacteria'... So I was waiting, she was crying, and in one moment I thought: 'You are totally stupid. You are the father of this girl, she is waiting for you. Nobody will come'.

SL:    It's your responsibility.

AS:    It was my responsibility. But the first reaction was to go out and ask somebody for help.

She had a problem and I had to solve this problem and then I went to her and tried to touch her and do something. It was very nice because after one minute she stopped crying and this was very good because we met. So in this moment I realized what I had to do. Because before, I could think and avoid a problem, but at this moment you had to do something. And then I started thinking – you know like the artist who always makes bigger picture from one very practical situation to build big philosophical issue: what is the problem of reality? Maybe this problem was when I talked about social problems. I talked about social problems in conferences, made theater pieces performed in front of the people to talk about problems of other people and other places, but maybe it was the same situation as when I met my girl, my daughter. I was standing at one meter distance and thinking that maybe the best I could do was to call somebody else. So I didn't want to go there. I don't know, maybe it was somebody else's problem, not my problem and maybe I was not the best person to help. Then I realized: maybe I was the best who could help. Nobody else could help, so maybe I had to do it. My first reaction was: my task is to show the problems. There is a problem and I will show it, but it isn't me who has to solve it. After this situation I realized that maybe I had to find some real practical reaction. Maybe it wouldn't be the best way, but I had to try.

SL:   Yes, and other people have to understand that it is their problem too. They have to say 'this is my problem', not just passively watch.

AS:   Yes, this is how I have to be active. Because I think it was my most inactive moment in life, when I stood in front of my newborn girl and didn't do anything. What was really important for me. It was not just philosophy but what I felt it: if somebody is here in the world in this kind of society before, earlier, I think there is a big responsibility for the newcomers. Because I think the worst kind of education is telling young people that the young must understand everything that is here, in this society. That they have to adapt, to come and do and learn this and that. And yes, half of the Escapologist project was like this, because they had to understand the rules, but other question is: 'How can I help?' Not just teach, not just educate, but how can I listen to them. Because they have real new reflections. So one young guy, 14 years old,  told a really beautiful metaphor. When somebody asked the young people after the performance 'What do you think you need to do? What is the role of the new generation? What is your task?' this guy said: 'We are like a small stream of water from the earth, just arrived, and a lot of these small, thin streams, it is us, and we are coming to the bigger rivers and making them bigger to the ocean. I am one thin stream and I came and I bring something from somewhere. And I want to put in the bigger river – the question is: is the bigger river curious about me, or not?' It was beautiful, saying this in front of 50, 60 years old people. That you have to see the young as somebody who is bringing

something, not as someone who has to learn something. You have to be curious about the young. It is a totally different thing from what our social thinking is. This is what I try with my daughter, when she comes to me and she tells me: 'I don't like you. I don't love you.' And I ask her: 'Why?' and she tells me 'Because you are working all the time.' And my reaction is: 'Yes, but if you want to eat, we need this and that, you need to understand the links between work and your food. If you don't understand  you will not understand something  about the world. But, you are right'.  I think we have just one half of the answer – 'you have to understand, you have to adapt', but we have very few answers with 'you are right'. And this was my personal impression when I was 20 or 25, as well as now. In the conference yesterday[182], cultural people in their 30s were together in the conference with teenagers about 15, 16 years of age and it was not an usual situation, to speak together. I felt that the people in their 30s were really nervous because we didn't have enough practice to talk, in dialogue. I knew that before, but yesterday I saw a lot of paranoid people...

SL:    For what I am talking about it is very important that you said your truth and your daughter said her truth. And it's the same in the conference, one says the truth, the other one says the truth – but then we don't know what to do with it. Because we know that we are both right, and because we are so used to seeing just one truth. Then we get confused and we get into fights, or we just say goodbye, but we don't know how to deal with this multiplicity, you know what I mean?

AS:    Yes.

SL:    And I think that's something that works in your theater, there this presence of multiple possibilities.

AS:    Yes. Maybe there is not one truth, but one truth which is many small truths …
I have to tell my daughter: 'Okay, I have to work on this thing because it is your request, but you have to understand the situation and you have to adapt to this situation'. You know, when she tells me 'I don't love you', my reaction is not 'Okay, I don't love you either' or 'I hate you'. I always tell her: 'You are right if you don't love me, I understand you, and I hope that tomorrow you will love me.' This way I can understand your point of view and see a possibility to change. And I think this is what I don't feel in the culture and the communication because we have to understand one truth and every time those who are younger have to adapt. For me, this metaphor is beautiful – maybe I brought something, maybe I know something, like the romantic idea of the genius. There is a young person and he or she knows

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[182] National conference on independent theatre and culture in Hungary in January 2012.

something. There are lots of possibilities in the eyes of the young people - we know a genius like Mozart, but we don't see many geniuses elsewhere with answers to our questions. Very new types of answers to our questions.

SL:     But I think you also try this with the audience, genius is not you, not the performance, but the audience, right? So please tell me, how do you make situations in which the audience understands that they have a point of view?

AS:     This is the biggest question. Because when we tried to make possibilities, situations for interaction, communication with people, this was the biggest wall. Is it not too stupid, didactic, heavy? Because sometimes, like in Escapologist, we thought there was a really interesting common game because if you chose this thing you could find something and you could read and understand, it was like a big game in the city. But it was too hard – people were not used to being in this kind of interactive game, before. They just knew how to sit, to watch, to understand. You explain everything about the whole thing, not so much time for us to think.

SL:     They didn't want the freedom when they come to the theater?

AS:     Not just the freedom… a lot of stupid people do not want to use the freedom, creation, creative mind and so on. But we have to understand the context, the historical context of the situation, the social conditions, a lot of things. And I thought 'maybe they need more explanation, more help, we have to do it step by step'. And this is the main issue of different projects – how can we understand this kind of communication? Like when we were doing the Priestess project in the countryside with the Roma and we tried to build this dramaturgical theatrical festival feeling for the villagers. The main point was: how can we lead them through the process, every time to keep them and focus them that they can think what they want? Because we know it is really hard, in the capital as well – how hard will this situation be in the village, where people don't know anything about contemporary interaction? It was very important part of the work to focus on them, to listen all the time. You know, in this kind of big action like the Escapologist project which was two months long in the capital, there was no precise feedback from the people so we didn't know what was happening, really. But in this village there was the possibility to go with the people in the street, to ask and to listen what was happening. If you think that spectators can be adults, I think that we have to give them responsibility. Maybe it is the same like with children. When I am with my daughter, I sometimes feel like I want possibilities for her to be alone to do something. But if she does something alone, and I don't react, don't give my reaction to her, believing it is her job so she has to know what she is doing – she loses something. If I didn't react, it was nothing, it has no meaning. I need the reaction from spectators, and I think that spectators need our reaction as well. If I

don't react to them, they don't see why I am really curious about what they think about me. So, what is really hard is that you build a construction to give freedom to the people and after you have to control it – to react, to follow. It is a very big process. You know the artist usually stops the work, then he puts the product on the table and leaves the place. But in this case, you have to be in the room, you have to watch these spectators, you have to ask them, you have to collect them...
SL:     Because that's when it's creative...

AS:     Yes, I think it is important how you can work two times. You build something. And after you build it anew... If somebody comes from the street who has his own problems, his own questions about the world and faces my work, my proposition is your possibility, you can do what you want - why don't you use it? And he tells me: 'You know, I work in the hospital. You can't do that'. And I say: 'You can do what you want. If you can't find your way in the hospital it is your problem'. You are working here and you know what I have to do so I need your help.
I am open, I am here, but you have to help. This is what I understood and it is really hard because when I build the construction and the people are in the room, it is the moment when I want to sleep. And in this chaos I have to wake up and I have to work again because it is the biggest problem...

SL:     It is not the problem, it is the point. It is what you want.

AS:     Yes. You understand this double job – it is hard to build the construction and you give to people. And the people say: 'You didn't give it to us because you just put it here and you invite us. But you didn't organize this meeting and it is your job'. So I think there's more to the skills, and more to the professional tasks of the artist.

SL:     Are you talking about activating them in a sense? Making a situation in which they don't just look at the thing but they are activated to actually do something – is that what you are talking about?

AS:     Yes, but not just activating, it is giving them the right of reaction. Maybe I'm not the best person to do it, but somebody who represents the artists has to be there on the spot... Personal meeting is needed in this situation. It is totally different from the gallery where I go to see the pictures, or fine art projects. Maybe I don't need this, I don't need to talk to the artist, but for me it is easier because I'm an artist as well. Like it is not necessary for a doctor to have other doctor's work explained. I understand this language and for me it is enough just to see, watch and think and use my experiences, my thoughts, my knowledge about art. But people from the street, they maybe need help. It is very frustrating when

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you don't know how it works and what to do and you are given very bad instructions. We have to understand people's reactions to art. They are very open - the villagers are the proof of that - open to see very strange things, something important happening. I think it is elitism in the arts – we know everything, we know the things. It is demagogy. We have to go back, to keep our emotions, feeling and energy to develop and progress. But every time we have to find the links. For me it is very important to communicate with students, to the young people, to see the young generation who doesn't know much about art. It is very important to talk to them, to use their language and sometimes simplify the language to talk about the world. It is something that is real and after I can go back to the high level artistic group.

SL:     Why do you have the need to challenge yourself through this dialogue with other people?

AS:     Maybe because of my family. My background is very very simple, you know? I don't come from an artistic family and when I go home to meet my father and mother it is a totally different language, not like this. Talking about food and very simple things but with its own system, its own logic. It doesn't mean it is simple, it means different logic. And when I use this logic I understand that maybe I can choose but I chose 15 years ago. I didn't want to go back to my family. I was ashamed of them and I didn't understand that world. I hated them and told them that I had a lot of problems with them because they were this and that. And now, when I have a daughter, and I have to work and Lilla has to do something, the question is what to do with our daughter? And there is my mother and there is my father and they told me that I could give her to them and they could take care of her. And then I see these two people with this girl and I see it is a perfect system. Their logic is perfect for this girl. It is a very simple logic and it is beautiful because there is not so much thinking and now I am very, very proud of my family who are very open to my daughter to build, to help, to understand. They say: 'OK, you have a lot of things and you are a different person. You deal with art and you write publications, and talk to the politicians. But your daughter needs us'.
My old thinking was just to be alone, totally alone. Not to be in the system, not just in my family. The moment I realized I wanted to understand different logics was the moment when I started to read everything – economy and tabloids, everything. I thought that maybe I had to see things – maybe I didn't understand anything, but I had to give it a chance. There are many questions in economy and you read different opinions, and you think I believe in him, and in him, and in him, they have clever sentences and I am not in the economic profession, but it is very important to read it and understand. Just use it, it gives a possibility to me to give an answer, to show my opinion, or ask questions.

So we have to learn a common language, and communication in the community. If I came from an artistic background I wouldn't understand this difficulty, the difference. Had I known this language because my father was a musician, my mother an artist... Intellectuals always say: you don't have to do this, it is not allowed to do this or that. Because they come from a very homogeneous logic. They don't understand the other logic.

SL:    I was talking to Lilla yesterday and about the Priestess film, that the people cannot make difference whether it is a feature film or a documentary and that makes them angry. Because it has to fit a definition. And I realized that people sometimes think that the definitions are there to be followed but they are  there to define what is. They just have to change their definition, you know what I mean?

AS:    Yes. And this is why I made that decision. Maybe we are in a very closed world, the theater,  and we work a lot and we make different experiments, but we are closed and in the same language. And we don't know other languages. There is a question of being effective – how can I help, or talk, or do something where there are real relations. In this life that I lead now I have lots of types of communication: I make scenes, I tried to make a film, I meet inhabitants, I meet students, I go to conferences – different types of communication. But there was just this 'I make a performance, maybe I meet the spectators', there were situations when I thought it was very very closed.

SL:    So Escapologist had to get out of the traditional theater space and move to all these different spaces?

AS:     There was the idea to make this kind of system to collect the people from the old city, to follow them, because there are cars in the streets and a lot of people. And thousands of them walk and watch these cars, thinking 'What is this? What is this number? What is this website?' and afterwards some of them came to the square, to the middle of the city. And there were cars and they thought 'OK, it's interesting, we understand, there are cars, there is a story, there is a narrative, there is a plan, a strange game in the city'. Then they came to the cars in the parking lot and after there was an exhibition, and they could come to watch this strange exhibition.
And these are very radical pictures and strange guys, marriage, the child – very esoteric, strange things. Less people wanted to continue but we thought some of the people must feel there has to be a sense, thought the production is big – too big for just for one guy who wants to show his private life. There are cars, no person. So, the cars in the garage, there is no life, no persons, no action, but there are some videos, TV, and there are people in the TV. There is no real present meeting but there is one person so that is important. And in this moment a real

person of this story and their wife and daughter. And other persons, new real persons, who are actors, but this is not so important, important is this person, this man, this woman, that story. After this point we can go to another area. It was the 9th district, the district of our place because we got this office from the government and we tried to focus on it there, and show the people different community area: the bath, and the old hospital, the culture house and people of this district. Real persons, and new real people from this district who are very generous and make a show and actions for this people who came. My idea was to collect the people from the old city, put them in this kind of machine, through this more real and precise story here (LaborHotel) and after this you could choose where to go, to bath or here and there (Artproletarz). You could meet again with this city and the people of this city. It was a spiritual way because it was cars and buses with possibility of children's words, and cars who died and had to be born again through this story of this guy who finished his life because he has to wake up. And after this the question is 'OK, you have a child and family and they are really nice. But after this situation you can do it, you can see real questions about reality in the different places. You can go to the bath, to talk about the world, you can go to the hospital and you can meet old people in their eighties, nineties... So, you can see whole of life. Escapologist project was like birth situation for me.

SL:    It's a rebirth.

AS:    It's a rebirth situation. How does a child come from one world to the other world? How does an artist go from one world to the other world? How can we know our city again? How can we see again the faces of our neighbors? This kind of idea was the main philosophical problem. And to use the rules of a game. You have to find the cars, and this place, and that place... so you have to be active, you have to find the signs, you have to do it.

SL:    Is the Escapologist a personal story? Or why were you part of the story?

AS:    It was a social question, not a private thing. My problem was that this was 2008 and there was more and more tension in the society. I felt that maybe the problem was that we weren't honest. We didn't show ourselves. We didn't say what we wanted, what we needed, what we were thinking. A lot of shame and frustration. We have to be honest – not honest, open. We have to use information. I started to think: why is there so much corruption? Why isn't there a transparent situation in the state? With applications? Why so many lies in the social area? And I thought: yes, we are very bad people. Or, in post-communist area it is a tradition. Or maybe we do not understand the information, the open information age. It was one issue at the conference yesterday, to talk about applications. There is a very

big misunderstanding – the curators, the application process, what is the time in the application process, what is the moment when information can be open...

SL:     You mean application for grants, for money?

AS:     Yes, and my thought was we had to do it from the beginning to the end absolutely openly. Application I give to the curators I leave open for the people so they can read it as well. And the curators have to decide and give their opinion openly as well to the people. More strict, closed structures mean more and more tension in the society. We have to be open, we have to talk about ourselves.

SL:     So if you want other people to be open you have to be open yourself?

AS:     Yes, but not just talk about your daughter and your school problems. You know, it is not therapy - I talk about a very traditional art situation when somebody puts himself or his story in the middle of the action. From the 60s and the 70s, contemporary art, it is a traditional, normal situation. And because I am an artist, I can use myself – use my story, my body to put directly in the artistic form. I used myself as a metaphor and I said I am like the society - I am very closed and I don't know what I have to do. I think I have achieved everything. I did everything well. I don't know what is the problem but there is a situation and I open myself. And something happens, so maybe we have to change.
But for most people in theater life and who were in our company before, the spectators... it was something really bad... It was like 'you stopped one very famous theatre just for yourself, because you wanted to show yourself. Maybe your problem was that you weren't in front of the people. You've made a big performance and it was a success, but maybe you didn't feel enough success so you wanted to look good and we had to see your naked ass.'
I thought it was a radical change, of course. But not so radical form from the point of the history of art.
I wanted to use a very contemporary art form for a very contemporary social question: How can we open? How can we change? But this issue was very strange for the people. The artistic form was very strange because it was fine arts, a big site-specific action in the cars, and theatrical situation, and community theater together. And there is a narrative and a city and big change of this company and this esoteric, spiritual thing so it was too much for the people.
We needed more time to understand its possibilities. Sometimes when an artist makes radical, big changes, the people think it is nothing, a stupid thing with no sense. Now when I give interviews in this profession, in conferences when I talk to the people, the people understand everything. But I tried to say the same things back then but I didn't have the right words.

So, what we do now in Krétakör after three years are the totally same questions. Open society, how we can communicate, how we can involve people to in the art, how we can talk to young people, how we can make a crossover production, how can we use the city, the capital, site-specific area. But in that moment in 2008 and 2009 I wanted to put everything in, everything that I thought at that time in one project. My soul, my daughter, the society, my artistic point of view, my partners, the themes, and so on. But the reaction was: 'This is too much. We don't understand anything. But we understand you changed a world famous story, a very good story, and you were hidden in this story and we liked you because you were hidden in it. But now you came to the front and you send everybody from the company and talk and talk and drive – so you want to be alone and use all the money alone, so it is the aim, you are crazy'. So the concept was you are absolutely at fault so we have to let go of your arm. And it was very strange because I felt 'I am most consequent now in my life' and the very strange reaction of people that I have lost myself, that I fool myself.

SL:     And you put yourself in a fragile pos*ition*.

AS:     Yes. I was sure that I was *right. A*nd *I was sure of what I was doing. I had no choice. B*ut the reaction was *very negative as if I was doing* something impossible. And I read about these situations before in the novels*. A*nd now it was happe*ning to m.* I knew what I wanted to do and everybody - my friends, people who loved Krétakör were saying 'OK, we don't want to communicate *with* you*'*. And it was very strange after three years they *would send* text message *saying* 'Maybe we can meet...'
Because t*hey feel more and more interest for my work. M*ore and more publications *about it. And* I have to say yes, OK. But it was strange to see it during Escapologist*. It was a lot of work. I*n the middle of this *situation my daughter was born.* Lilla was in the hospital*. A*nd it was a very big project in my life, building the team and keeping it*…*
*D*uring this *project, Peti (Peter Fancsikai) worked i*n the archive. His work was to put books on the shelves. Marci *(Marton Gulyas) was organizing* the bath.
*You know all* the *other* people left after this project. Just Peter, Marci and me - we started to build *from the beginning.* Mate *(Gaspar)* and everybody whom Mate invited after this Krétakör cha*nge told me after this project:* some of them that they don't want to continue, some that it was useless for them. I told them that I didn't want to humiliate them with this kind of project so if they didn't understand it to just please leave the place.
*And* I thought I had to find new people, new artists.

SL:     With the Escapologist*,* you were l*ooking for new ways of working?* So how did the process look then, in the end?

AS:    It was different *than before. I*t was not just theatre rehearsals. We had to make the cars on the streets and the video installations and the community theater. W*e had to make parallel events. I*t was an action which was two months long, and parallel times where we had to develop different things. Our management wasn't ready to do it so we didn't know how to use this parallel work in the end. It was very close to the normal directing way. I had to control everything in the end, because there were no real competences of the members of the management. What we know now, we didn't know three years ago. Big process, big ideas, with big budget - everything was big, but we didn't know how to control it. I had to make a lot of work flow. I would say: you have to do this, you have to do that. So, it was very difficult. In that the process ended up being very close to normal way of directing. I said that I needed cars, the number of cars, I asked the help of the set designer about what we can put in the car. And he would use the team he used every time he built sets for theater or for a film.

SL:    And how did you make the texts, like in the scene with you and Lilla, or the scene in the bathroom?

AS:    I wrote it. I wrote the synopsis, I wrote everything, I just gave my writings to the actors, the usual way, and told them they can fill in, improvise, provide and change the text, but we keep the construction. I wrote it because there was not much time to develop, to try different ways. Only two or three weeks with the actors because. So, it was very fast.
*So, I stayed at the center of the creation. B*ecause I thought that this was the *only way* to save, to keep the safety of the project. But I understood *(*and I think all economy *students know this in school)* it is commo*nplace but it was my experience:* if I build this construction, there are no limits. This was the big experience. There is no limit. *A*fter the *project,* I sat here, in this office, saying 'it is be*autiful, but I made everything'.*
*It is very different now with Priestess project and jp.co.de with Peter and Marci. We share artistic responsibility.*

## *12.* APPENDIX 3 Interview with Árpád Schilling, October 2012, Budapest, Hungary

Sodja Lotker:    I am mainly interested in *The Escapologist*, and what the 'escape' was and why you called it *The Apology of Escapologist* and what you were escaping from and what you were escaping into.

Árpád Schilling:    The first thing, the important question is the Krétakör Company, because at the same time when I did this I also broke the company. So, for me it was important to escape from repertoire theater, escape from permanent theatre company. I had achieved the level which I thought was OK, I had a lot of success, and tours, and work, and we could do what we wanted to. But for me personally, I had more questions, not just what can be the next piece to do on the stage. I have realized that art, or art inside theater for me is not just a possibility to be a member of a company, or community, or be a leader, or achieve success, things like that… For me, a new interesting question was: how can we do theater, for what?

SL:    But why did you call it *Apology of Escapologist*? Why is it a negative thing? The escape?

AS:    Because I thought it was a really hard decision. Hard decision for the spectators, for the artists who worked with me. It was brave because the success of the company at the time was really great. So, when I decided to dissolve the company, there was a big hole after that very successful story. I thought: I know why I am doing this. But a lot of people did not understand – in the company, outside the company, theaters, spectators, professionals, festivals. So, there were many questions and sometimes really aggressive reactions. *Escapologist* in Budapest – one thousand people saw it, but from the original fans – because I had the list – from 5 000 people only 75 people came. It was a very, very strong and clear reaction of the spectators. When I wanted to do something alone after this, they were not pleased, they told me: if you want to work alone, without the company, we will not come. It was a very strong reaction and it was very difficult for me in the beginning, but now, four years later it is absolutely clear why they had this reaction. I thought it is an fascinating situation when an artist makes a decision and this decision is his right: interestingly, all artists who made this kind of decision to leave something, to break something - every time apologized. The artist knows why he made this decision, and he is sure and knows it is his right, but he has to apologize to the people who do not understand that decision. And it is a bit ironic, because I said: OK, I think I escaped something and I am on my way, so it is clear, but I have to say 'sorry' to the people because I chose my way.

SL:    And for you, was it more about what you don't want, about what you were leaving, but you didn't know what you were getting into that much? Was your escape about leaving, without knowing where you were going?

AS:    Yeah. This whole project was about doing something I needed, that I didn't know. I had a story to talk about - myself, decision, family, and so on. I had an idea for this project but I had no idea what I would do after that.

SL:    Why did you have to make a story about yourself? Why did you have to be the main character?

AS:    Because it was I who took this decision, so I was this person, this character, I was not just a concrete person; I was a metaphor in this context. I was the escapologist, the one leaving the past, trying to do something new. Didn't know exactly what, but I was the one doing it and felt that I needed to be in the center of the story in order to tell it. Because in the history of art[183] it is possible to have the artist be at the center of an art piece, I didn't think of putting myself in the center as of something new. I just used a traditional form. For me it was really important to use this traditional form, be in the project and take risks, and show the people I don't want to hide this, my person. I didn't want to choose somebody else, and put an actor into this situation. I wanted to be honest: I have made this decision and I am standing in front of you who come to see this project, so you can ask me. It was a chance for communication.

SL:    I am not sure whether it is on purpose, but it is interesting – with you escaping that in the end you disappear, basically: you escape into the community, in a sense.

AS:    For me this was important, this sign. I didn't know what the next step would be. And how we would develop Krétakör in the future. But I had a vague idea that I had to give a chance to other people to use Krétakör as a 'vehicle', association to get money and possibility and platform for things, for the people to do something. It was not so clear to me because I did not do it before. This kind of work with amateurs and trying to involve people who are not professional directors, actors, and artists it was brand new, for me.

And this was important because of the society, because behind all these decisions to escape and stop there was one question: how can we go deeper into society, not just call them to watch our shows. The other possibility was to go to them, to play with them, to invite them into the game, to involve them, to try to communicate, to

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[183] Schilling is here referring to performance art.

try to be actors in the original meaning – to act, to do something. This was one of the original reasons to escape. Because of this I decided the end of this project had to be something that was not about me, but about the people and cooperation between these people – people from the street, from the district where our offices are.

I decided in the beginning that I had to be in the middle of this project but the result of this project had to be outside of me, where people do not see me, something that doesn't come from me. That is why I chose three directors to work with the issues of birth, puberty and before the death. And I met three girls who were interested, they worked with amateurs and civilians so they knew how this was working.

I wanted to talk about the man character, and then the woman character, in the middle point there was this birth and the big role of the woman in this moment and then the men just reflects, just uses the camera but can't be an actor, he is in this fragile situation but he is not the actor and woman can be more and more an actor during this project. I tried to build a something like a myth from our personal stories, of the man and the women and the new woman, our daughter.
I can imagine it would have been a different story if we didn't have a daughter. For me it was very personal. And sometimes I used our family story as a metaphor, sometimes I changed the reflection on the reality because of our personal story. So it was half-fiction and half-real story.

But an important question: because it was a very 'manly', the work methods of theatre director and everything was very masculine. So, if I wanted to escape I had to think about escaping this attitude as well, the masculine attitude. For me it was clear if I wanted to change maybe I had to understand this other type of thinking.

SL:    That also means less control, the female attitude?

AS:    Yes, and I gave full rights to the three directors. Just in the beginning I talked with them, we talked about the frames, but afterwards they did what they wanted. It was not like *OK, I need you, you can do something but I know what you need to do.* They chose the place, they chose the people, they chose the form and the way how they wanted to involve the spectators. I just saw this performance and if they wanted to ask something they asked, but there was no clear dramaturgy of what they had to do. From me, it was an absolutely honest gesture. The frame was: you are three and you are women with these three issues, you can choose the issues you want, and after you can do what you want, and we'll just give some money and some technical help, but you are free to do what you want. I wanted to show a lot of different things about my personal story, about this escapologist

behavior, about the city, about the attitude of the Hungarian people, of this masculine and feminine energy, so this was a way to achieve that.

SL:     Tell me more about the attitude of the Hungarian people. What do you mean?

AS:     In 2008, when I broke the company and I decided to choose a different way, it was a moment when I understood what for a lot of people was clear even before. But I then in 2008 I realized that Hungary is absolutely divided in two parts with a very strict border between the two. What we can call right and left, but the words are not enough to describe this situation. Right wing politicians sometimes used the communist methodology and leftist abandoned on 'solidarity' and instead used neo-liberal and neo-conservative thinking. So, there were no two clear political sides, just two sides … maybe I can use words like modernist and traditional, I don't know. Just two different ways to thing, not a clear right or left. A total mess. And you could feel it, you felt it was impossible to talk to each other because of this strange way how the politicians polarized the society. It was the worst thing that could happen with Hungary.

After year 2000 this very strict left and right showed people that they had to be either on the right side or the left side. But in reality, people were not right or left, they thought differently about different issues. But because of the way the official politics were: they had to choose sides. In 2008 I felt that there was no communication, that people didn't want to communicate with each other because they believed in this kind of polarization. They believed that one was on the left, and the other on the right, and they were not curious to talk about these questions or to find a way to agree and realize that they were thinking the same. That was one thing I realized.

The other thing I understood was a really big border between the intellectuals and people, between the city, the capital, and the countryside. There was no communication, no understanding, people were writing publications about the countryside, about the village, without having concrete knowledge. I understood that we had to go to the countryside. We had to go the schools, we had to know what was happening with young people. I don't think this is a special Hungarian thing, but for me, because I live here, it was a Hungarian thing, something about our society. And I thought: with this theater, I can give a chance to intellectuals to think about different things, but I have no link it to the other people. I have a chance to meet thousands and thousands of intellectuals, but I have no chance to find young people, no chance of meeting people in the countryside.

I thought success was not our success, it was the common success of this part of the society. Because this kind of intellectuals, performance which we made and this applause was not only for the performance we had made, for the artists, it was something for them as well. *'We understand this kind of theater, we feel we are very intellectual'*, and so on. I realized that maybe it was all a big lie. It was a common lie, we played this game together. I started to organize meetings with spectators to talk about the performance, but for them it was very strange to talk about the performances. They wanted to talk about the artistic surface. They talked like critics, it was very strange for me. They talked like professionals, they talked about the costumes, about the actors' ways. It was strange. If you go to a school, or to the countryside, where people do not go to the theater, for them it is very clear after the performance that they have to talk about the performance. And they ask the most important questions. With very simple sentences, using simple words like children, they ask the most important question. Like a real provocation from spectators. In the small villages, where we played, people would start to argue, absolutely argue, about liberal and religious ways of thinking for instance. But in Budapest, when I asked the people and said we could talk about it, they just said: *'It's really didactic theater and we knew in the beginning what would happen in the end.'* And I said: *OK, but what do you think about this question, liberal and religious? Because it is in the society, and we have a lot of problems because of this, maybe we can talk about this*.' But only the students understood this question. The students in Budapest, who were 16 or 18 years old started to talk about this and ask questions– very direct, provocative questions like '*Do you believe in God?'* Most of these children answered: '*Yes, we believe in God'.* It is very strange because we don't. It was a really interesting moment. But for the adult people it was just didactic, like theory. And I really wanted to know what they thought about the issues. I thought: '*I want to escape this area, this kind of place, I want to leave Budapest, to leave this kind of theater.'* Not because I hated them, but it was really important for me to understand deeply the society. To do that, using a contemporary German piece and talking about problems of the young businessmen or something like that was not enough.

What is really important is what 80% of the society can feel, not the bank officer, but what's happening with the students. And I think it is a real problem in all of Europe. There is lot of theater for small children, and university students, but age from 14-18, which is a really difficult age, for them there is nothing. Because it is very difficult for theater makers as well. How can we talk about this age of puberty, because with small children we can play silly games and it's enough? With students, we can talk about Shakespeare. But between these two ages, what can we do? Because these students don't like the actors, they do not respect theater...
They think *'why be in this theater with 400 people, just watching something, it's stupid, we don't like it'*. But if you go to them, stand in front of them, 100 of them,

and show something that that is important to them, (and you have to know from before, from discussions to know that) you're generous, and talk, and ask… They need their own, unique stories, original stories...

It was what I didn't know, what I had to do – or, I felt what I needed to do, but I didn't know how to do it. When I decided to break the company up, I just told people that I wanted to go to the countryside, I wanted to make pedagogical programs. I didn't know how to do it, but I wanted to. And the actors said: '*OK maybe you don't want to keep the repertoire, you don't want to invite directors, maybe you don't want to go abroad too much, it is very uncomfortable.*' In that moment, I was very angry with them, but now I absolutely understand their fury. It was an absolutely radical decision; they couldn't understand it. And I told them that if they wanted they could keep *Krétakör*, this form, that they could do it, I could give them the name and everything. I just wanted to leave because I needed some answers to my questions.

Because for me it was really bad. Remember, in *Escapologist* there was a picture of me at home, in the sofa, it was my whole day: just staying in the sofa and watching TV? it was impossible. I needed to do something. But I told them: '*if you don't feel the same way, you can continue*.' But they said they cannot continue without me because I founded the company. And I thought that if they didn't want to come with me, and they didn't want to continue without me, there was no other possibility, it would just break up. I didn't want to close the theatre company, I just wanted to find some answers. But they didn't know how to continue or how they could follow me. I just wanted to tell you that it was not just a trick decision of mine to leave them. I wanted to find the most human solution for this.

And after, step by step, year by year, I understood how we can do student programs, how we can involve the people. And I have more questions, but we found some solutions. But it was good to find some young people who wanted to follow me to be directors, make performances etc., but just some of them understand that the most important question about theater performance is how can we communicate with the people.

SL:    And what is the scene about the photographer that only watches about? That scene is very intriguing.

AS:    I wanted to show the moment when the man tries to leave everything. It was the man's story. In every situation, the man was the boss. Man, wants to find the solution, wants to find the answer, give an answer. And in the 'male' B part of the *LaborHotel*, man was like a clown. And the woman found the 'solution'. But she doesn't really want to find a solution, it is not the question of solution or answer at

all. The point for her is just to be together, with the man, with the child, just be together. So, in *LaborHotel* I tried to find these two perspectives, male and female. I wanted to talk about this person, the man, who left the family, and was an artist, the photographer. I thought that the photographer can be a good metaphor for an artist. There is a reality, and he makes photographs of the reality. And specialty of this photographer, played at the end of A story, is that he was a special photographer who just made one picture of one moment, so he just wanted to catch the moment. For me it was a metaphor of all of the artists: how can we catch a moment and what we lose after. And this was his job: to catch the unique moment of the life.

SL:     Catching the moment without being part of the moment. Detachment.

AS:     Yes. I don't want to be in the moment, I just want to transform it: the traditional artist attitude. I don't want to be in historical or emotional moments, I just want to catch the moment and show it. To steal this moment from the people but to also show back to the people. So, he was an artist, and he was an older guy who achieved what he wanted. It was really important that he doesn't make photographs anymore. He has finished when he was on the top. And there is this young person. It is really important there is a young person and the old person and it was like this schizophrenic situation the young part of this guy, or old part of this young guy, it is like a mirror for each other. They played a game like making an interview. An interview is a symbolical situation as well. It is also like a mirror. And the end was a little joke: it was really important for this photographer that nobody can take a photograph of him. He can catch the moment of the other people, but nobody could take photographs of him. We can know what the artist thinks about the world, but we don't know who is this guy.

And the *Escapologist* for me was about this question: who are we? Not just what we do, not just what we can express, can talk about, but the real question: who are we?

In the moment, when the young person makes a photograph of the photographer. It was a moment of uncovering. The photographer gets scared, that someone could make a picture of him. So, he takes the camera from the young man and opens it, but there was no film. And in this moment Péter Fancsikai who played the young person says to him: *'the problem is that you are so scared of this moment'*. Because one is self-confident about finding the questions, concepts, you know what to do, you think you are out of the society, you think of yourself separate etc. But the reality is that you are very thin, you are very scared and small and you didn't want to realize this. But maybe now you do, because I am nothing, I am not an artist, just a young guy. I made an interview with you but I am not working for the

media, I was just having a joke with you. In the situation, this guy could feel that he is ridiculous, this was a moment that was the mirror. It was like an essay, questions and answers were like monologue, a discussion inside one man. And the last moment was like a gun without a bullet: *'I made a photograph. I didn't make a real photograph, but I saw your real face'*. The end of the scene, when Péter left, and Sándor Terhes (playing the photographer) was in the scene in absolute silence and it was the end of the story A but the beginning of story B, the guy who left the woman. It was a possibility to see the end of story A and start story B.

For me it was something like: you are not strong enough in what you thought about yourself, so maybe you have to start again from the beginning, maybe you have to go back and say '*sorry'.* It was interesting understanding the two opposite sides. While the half of the audience watched this scene with Péter and Sándor, that we were talking about, at the same time at the end of the B story, the other half of the audience was in room with Lila and the baby singing a lullaby.

It was interesting to hear people talk about their experiences to each other. I met two guys and it was a really strange and interesting discussion: about art and the morals, the ethical question of art. We were just 10 viewers, sitting in the dark and it was an interesting possibility for people to talk to each other. To share the different experiences. On one side: two guys and theoretical questions, on the other side there were no theoretical questions, just singing a lullaby.

Very important question for me was building the structure. There were questions about the society and a lot of other things, which was important, but on the other hand *Escapologist* also meant for me an escape from the written story. I wanted to write stories and it was really important for me to write complex stories and complex forms and structures. It was interesting how the people could carry the story, because story is very ancient, what we need to tell, a fairy tale, and I wanted to avoid this.  I wanted to have a different structure of story, that can be strange. There were two different parts which could be compared, to find the ends and links between the ends, one end of one is the starting point of the other. It's was an important thing I hadn't done before. I tried to do two different things in Krétakör theater, one was classical contemporary pieces, and the other was community work. Writing something, writing a story, was the third thing, the thing I hadn't done before. I didn't write everything myself because I needed improvisations, creative energy of the actors, to build these frames as much as possible.

SL:     Tell me about religion. I know there is no religion in *Escapologist*, but it is all basically built as a big festive ritual.

AS:    It is really important to me, maybe because of my childhood, because I was in this Catholic Christian family. But for me it was a really big disappointment when I realized how the people behave in the church. Because in my childhood it was an important part for me and I was one of the best, strongest believers. I was a 'professional'. I wanted to do everything precisely. but when I saw the lies, and the priests, all of it.

You know *'you have to love the others as you love yourself'*. It is a really interesting sentence in the modern age where the people don't really love themselves. Tradition was to love yourself and love the other people the way you love yourself. But what happens if we hate ourselves? I find interesting the win-win theory of the game theory. The balance – loving yourself and loving the others – you don't have to love yourself less. It is stupid for me when people talk about sacrifice and focus on sacrifice. I think it is stupid, there is no need for sacrifice, because the original message was that you have to be balanced. You don't have to sacrifice to the others. *Love* yourself, *but* you have to love the others.

SL:    Tell me about aspect of community, that is also related to religion, the dissolving of the company, the *Escapologist*, but even more to your recent performance jp.co.de at the Prague Quadrennial 2011, where you have built a temporary community.

It was interesting to understand that to build a community means that after deciding you want to build this community, you also have to find a way to leave this community. The community that can exist only through the leader is not a real community. The leader has to find a solution to how he can be involved in the community or how he can leave this community. And for me the moment in 2008 when I dissolved the company was a very strong experience. I told the others *'You can keep it. If you love it, you can keep it.'* And the message that came back was *'It's impossible. We can't do it without you.'* And that was 40 people in front of me. It was very fragile. So, it was not a real community. They didn't say: 'yes, we want to do it, and if you want to leave you can leave, we will keep it'. This was painful for me as the leader because they couldn't imagine future of the community without the original leader. After this, a very important question for me became how we can build a community and leave a community.

It was what we tried to build in the story of the *jp.co.de*. The story of a young man called Balász: how he can try to make and lead a community and leave the community. There was one moment in the project when the group went to his office and they said: *'You have to leave'*. And, Balász was very serious, but they started to laugh and left the room. After that we saw Balász smoking, with a very sad face. He thought *'OK, maybe you will throw me from the story, and after it will be your*

*story. But you started to laugh because you didn't think it seriously, you are to infantile to do this. Because this revolution was a good thing. You came to me and you wanted to tell me OK, you have to leave because it is over, so we don't want to continue with you. It is huge. It is what I wanted to achieve. But you started to laugh and you behaved like small children'.*

And after that Balász decides to make a sacrifice, to burn himself. He thought: *'If I don't sacrifice myself, it is impossible to continue this story.'* One shouldn't commit suicide, because suicide is just the last solution, not the aim. For me, the sacrifice is the moment when somebody has no other solution. I am talking about metaphorical aspect of the jp.co.de story. But for me in 2008 it was the same: *'OK, I leave, no problem, and you can continue. But you can't do it, so I have to break the company.'*

SL:     When you are creating something (including community) you are exercising power. The big problem with theater is that you create the frame and then everything stays in it. So, what is interesting for me is how you build a frame that can break and open? Is this why *Escapologist* was so fragmented? To be open?

AS:     Yes, I decide what CAN happen in the end, but I didn't know what WILL happen. It was very difficult, too. After the first part, the people talked about my role in it, the naked pictures and so on. But the most important message: the end, giving leadership over to the three directors in Artproletarz -  they didn't find the link. Audiences and critics didn't try to find the link between different sequences and for me it was the biggest disappointment. Because I thought this whole project was not for me. It was not like a show. It was not a presentation of my greatness or something. I was in the middle...

Some people talked about these three actions (the Pit, LaborHotel and Artproletarz) absolutely separately. They talked about it as new possibilities of the theater but they did not try to understand this dramaturgy.

And for me it was a whole 'story', it was a dramaturgy. Just look at one part, that is OK, but after you have to put back this part and you have to understand the links. Because without this you cannot understand my original aim.

Very few critics or dramaturgs, or other professionals wanted to understand this new form of dramaturgy. To talk about dramaturgy or the new narrative, to talk about the form, the different sequences, and link between the part. I thought there were many interesting questions in *Escapologist*. Maybe I didn't find the best solution for it… But it was theater, it was a program - a pedagogical or a social

program, it was media, art, and so on and I thought it could be really interesting for discussion.

But what I felt has to do with apologizing. Most of the people from profession and people who knew me from the past and knew the story of *Krétakör Theater* absolutely refused this discussion. And the second important thing was that but they didn't want to see the cars in the street, to see the interactive installation, and they didn't want to see the three community actions of *Artproletarz* and they didn't want to come to this festivity in the end. They just came to focus on the performance of the *LaborHotel*. Because there was the story, actors, professionals, a theater situation. So, we can see something, we can be spectators. There are tickets.

This was the first time in my life I realized something about the 'right of decision'. What you can decide in society. If you decide to change, to do something that is not usual - not because it is something very new, just because it is your story in your past, and it was not traditional. So, if you change despite the society, the reaction of society is that it is not a good way. *'We don't like it, we don't understand it, why did you change it?'* Maybe because the change is really difficult. For the people who want to change - it is an unconscious situation, psychological situation. It is hard to speak about it and reflect about it.

So, you can think of *Escapologist* as a festival, if you want, but it was a dramaturgical festival. The absolute end of this was the action on the May 1st. We, all together with audiences sang traditional song. It's a song that guys in villages to sing to try to find a woman, a partner. One half of the song was sung by a man, the other by a women, and it was like a discussion, like communication, and for me it was a spring festivity like a May 1st event, like a love parade. *Escapologist* started on March 8th of and finished on May 1st so the International Women's Day till my birthday and Labor Day in one. But the birthday for me was like a day of rebirth.

SL:     Now in the new Krétakör you are working on very different ways how to relate to each other as collaborators but also with community?

AS:     The worst thing that can happen when working in the community is when somebody does something because of the other person, because of somebody else. Because he doesn't want to hurt the other. Or because they want to help, or something like that. This is the worst thing to feel. You don't have to help me. It is like a partnership, like being a couple. You don't have to be with me because you want to help. No.

It was really strange for Lila when we started being together, because I had already made the decision about Krétakör, and had thought a lot about being in the company, and together, and in a partnership. And then we started to be together. And it was very strange for her because it was a beginning of a new love, but the first thing I told her was *'You know I love you, but freedom is really important for me'.* And it was a strange reflection, because traditionally at this point, in the beginning, somebody is supposed to say *'I don't want to live without you'.* And I told her that I am saying it because I had a lot of experience in being in a community, and it was really important for me to know that you are here because you want to be here. And if you don't want to be here, please go. And I think it is the same game with the others. There is one situation when this kind of decision is not fair, when I asked my daughter Franczi if she wanted to be with me or not, because she doesn't understand. But between with adult people it is fine.
So, I always say to collaborators if they wanted to leave they should leave. Sometimes this is strange for them as well, but it doesn't mean I don't want to be with them. If I am here, it is a statement.

SL:     Is there a way to create that same position for audience? The performance?

AS:     It is possible, but it is very, very difficult. I cannot say to you I know it can be done. Because the problem is that spectators, if they reflect on themselves, they know they are spectators in the theater. It is difficult to move them, and it is very difficult to give them this right to choose, because it has different layers and positions. For this we have to give very strict frames, and we have to understand the thing deeply. And I think we can't achieve this level.
When we talk about a happening, not so many rules and you can do whatever you want, for me it is something from the sixties, or the seventies. But in the 21$^{st}$ century, it is important to be on a higher level in my opinion. Giving people the right to do what they want: I think it's hard.

SL:     It is not so much about freedom, but it is about a responsibility? Somebody has to create a clear structure?

AS:     Yes, absolutely. But the people, the spectators, they might say: *'OK, this is like in the sixties, I can do what I want'.* But that is just one side, the other side is the responsibility. So, the structure for this 'game' should have very strict rules and very strict dramaturgy, tools, and then say to people *'OK, you can decide, but you take the responsibility'.* But for this responsibility people have to realize what for. One thing is freedom, the second is the responsibility, but we need the third theme: the aim. So, I must ask them to achieve a specific aim. And the freedom within it is that they can choose a different way than the others, and they have to take responsibility for it.

But without this aim, the people just behave like stupid children, or something. For responsibility, we need an aim. And this triangle – freedom, responsibility, aim is hard to achieve with the spectators. It is very difficult to find it with the professionals as well. And with the spectator it is much more difficult to find this dramaturgical type of narrative. I believe in it, but I can't say I have found it.

SL:    But it is something that you are looking for?

AS:    Yes. We made jp.do.de, the temporary community experiment in Prague. There was a problem: because it was a trap. When we wanted to play this community game with people, we thought a lot about our responsibility, from the beginning. And we thought: *'OK, we can play with the people, but they have to understand what is the aim.'* And after I told them *'OK, but if they know the aim, where can they have very strange moments? Because if they know the aim, they become our colleagues. Very simple partners. It would be an artistic thing we do together. But if we want to do achieve some accidental situations we can't tell them the aim.'*
There were many strange moments during the project and the members of the temporary community would often say: *'OK, but it is also of ethical questions, should we do it? Yes, you told us we can leave if we want, but I don't want to leave because I am very curious, but for what?'*
And after the whole project, all of them came to me and said they were absolutely involved and it was great, great, great. And I told them that maybe it was great now, after the fact, but that during it, it was a great pressure on them and great pressure on us as well. Because of the many ethical questions. But this is why I think we do not understand all of the questions and aspects of this method. If you tell everything to the people - because you are honest and you want to be very ethical - it can be very boring. But if you don't tell them, you will have a lot of ethical questions. And where are the borders?

SL:    It is very tricky combining 'fact and fiction'.

AS:    You are right, because if there are no aesthetic questions, it could be very fragile. People would think it was a pedagogical problem: and why do you think I need education from you? And the society is bad so you want to help, but I don't need your help...

SL:    But I think you yourself do not want only to help... You are not primarily a social worker.

AS:    Yes. But my original idea for *Escapologist* project was to help in a way. We tried to involve people, spectators, old people, pregnant women. And if you want to

do this, it is a social, pedagogical thing. And it is very fragile, because they are non-professionals. This was important for me, for the dramaturgy. You can be in the swimming pool and you can meet this pregnant woman and children. So, maybe you are enthusiastic about it or not, you like it or not… You find it aesthetically interesting or not... Maybe it is not so interesting to watch some old people in this culture house, because you think this is not theater: OK, no problem. But try to think what is the difference between this guy, and the guy whom you saw in the installation in the pictures, or story in the labor and others. There are different, aesthetic aspects, and ethical aspects small and big. But the whole can be really interesting if you see the different layers. What I found in *Escapologist* is that people just focus on maximum one layer and think that maybe it is not so interesting. They just focus on whether actor is good or not good on the stage. Or, it is something 'about the Roma people'. But I think we are in the middle of the question of how can we integrate different things – the social aspect, the aesthetic aspect, the forms.

And you know, the other thing is, when I think of the classical form of theatre, I think that if you want to keep it, because we believe in it, to give a chance to the people, to spectators, to be involved more into the theater – for example, opera, Shakespeare in the theater… If I want to keep it, because I believe in it. But if we want to keep this side of culture, we have to be very open to society and spectators. We have to find new languages. Without this, it is impossible to keep it. And this is what I was trying to explain to the professional theater makers: I'm trying to say that if you don't use the results of theater pedagogy, if you don't use the knowledge scientists, or theoreticians, or businessman, if you don't build the connections, if you don't try to go further, maybe in 20 or 30 years you won't be able to make Shakespeare.

SL:     You talked a little about polarization and politics. What was politics like in the mid-2000? Before you did *The Escapologist*. Because in 2006 Fidesz Hungarian Civic Alliance won the local elections, right?

AS:     Hungary was one of the best countries in the old Soviet bloc. It was a quite rich country during these years, and people felt that things were OK. Some intellectuals were complaining that it was not good, they were against the bad government, but most of the people were in a very comfortable situation: cars, flats, everyone had a job. And after the change of system, people wanted to feel the same. They wanted to be comfortable. Here there was no revolution, no revenge against the communist party, so it was a very warm, nice change. There was no problem, no secret files of the communist era, they are still secret, they were not open for the public, everything was 'OK, we have to forget it, in order to be together'. It was a big compromise for the society. And because of this the

politicians didn't want to make any bigger changes in the society. They kept the same institutes, the same social distribution, the same measure of everything, like in the communist era. Basically, no change. So, socialist era in the middle of capitalism. And I think before 2008 and 2010 – when Fidesz won for the second time, there was a big state deficit, the debt. But still it was just 'OK, if you need money, you will get money – for culture, for this, for that', but we don't have to change anything, because people don't want anything from the state, and the state doesn't want from the people either. You know, in the beginning there was 100 parties, and ten years later, only four parties and all was safe and cool. The world was changing. But Hungary remained the same.

And when economical crises came, it was one of the states in eastern Europe which was absolutely not ready for it. There was a really big debt. If you see the parliament, for instance, it is really funny: It was built for the Austor-Hungarian monarchy for 400 representatives.  But then it was for representatives the whole empire. But now, it is still the same number for this small country. It's like this Hungarian fairy tale about a guy who just sits all the time, and has problems which he cannot solve later, later, later... So at the moment when economical crisis came in 2008-09, there was a lot of corruption and social neglect...

It was a strange moment when there was this kind of economic crisis and the moment when people were absolutely against democratic liberal social party, because of the corruption and because they had to change the system step by step because of the 20 years before and the economic crime… There was a moment which was a wake up moment for the politicians to start some reforms or something. But because of the economical crisis they had to do it much more strictly, and it was the moment when the people chose this right wing government, 2/3 of the election so the new government could do what they wanted. Because of these 20 years and when politics didn't use the time after we got everything. Corruption, right side, extreme right side, 2/3 to make a new constitution, to change a lot of laws in a very bad way …

There was this really big problem in 2006: the new prime minister who was quite an interesting person and a social democratic guy, and he promised people things for the election because this was the usual game in all the Europe, of course. But he promised and after when he won he had a big meeting in the party and he made a speech. But – and this is really funny – somebody from this party made a recording and gave this recording to the media. And one month after he won the election all people in Hungary heard: "*We lied a lot / We won because we lied /* and *Fucking country".* What he wanted to say was: 'we have to change as a party', but it was used against him. There were many different demonstrations but the radical football fans, for instance, went into the television and the police were absolutely not ready to fight them. There was a big fight in front of the television, and these guys won and went into the television building and set it on fire, and so on. And all the people said that yes, this was a bad situation, but that we were in this situation

only because of the politician, that this guy made all the problems. In the end it he did refuse prime minister position. But it was very strange because the person who recorded and published the speech was somebody from the same party. It is a stupid situation if the people from the same party are killing each other. Because of this it was impossible to save the country, to save the normal conditions, and the other side became stronger and stronger.

After the re-election. And four years later it was absolutely clear that the right side would win. It was a stupid situation because of the numerous mistakes, lot of stupidity, and lies, and so on. And after he was asked why he didn't do say the speech in front of the people, in front of the television? And he answered – and it was a really honest answer – *yes, but I was not brave enough.* So, this guy was very interesting, maybe the most interesting guy in Hungarian politics. He tried to be honest, maybe not successfully, but he tried.

He said: 'you, and all of us, have to stop this'*.* In the speech, he also said: 'I don't want a situation where my mother or my assistant can, because I am a Prime Minister, go to the hospital very easily, when all of the people should easily get into hospitals because it is their right'. It was a very beautiful sentence of this speech, but nobody used it. It was a very honest sentence, because if a politician says this in front of the people, in front of the media, it is absolutely fake … But if he said this sentence in front his party members, it means he really meant it, because it was said in a private situation.

SL:     Yes, it is very much like formalism and how you said they talk about theater. When people don't think where things are coming from, they do not think about the motivation, or what's behind it, they just see that...

AS:     So, it was a big trouble. And it was his bad decision – he didn't want to give the power to somebody else. Because he didn't' trust his party. He didn't want to give it because after this he was absolutely out, so he brought something good, but the way he did it was not very good.

## 13.    SUMMARY IN CZECH

Divadelní praxe prošla od poloviný minulého století radikálními změnami: 1) vyprávění se decentralizovalo a fragmentovalo, 2) představení vznikají v nedivadelních prostorech (přírodě nebo stavbách, jejichž účel nebyl původně zamýšlen jako divadelní), 3) v představení se využívají autentické materiály (pojetí prostoru jako „site specific"; komunitní divadlo, kde právě komunita je tematickým materiálem; nebo jiné materiály – ať už skutečné události nebo lidé – se využívají např. v dokumentárním divadle), a za 4) probíhá snaha mentálně či fyzicky zaktivovat a zapojit diváka do akce (divadlo participační, imerzní, mediální procházkové instalace, interaktivní scénografické instalace atd.). V této práci se podrobně zabývam těmito čtyřmi faktory, jež dokazují, jak se změnily divadelní metody, a to jak v procesu přípravy představení, tak i v jeho vnímání diváky. Toto nové pojetí divadla zde nazývám prostorová dramaturgie, protože má posílený prostorový aspekt.

Prostorová dramaturgie, tak jak ji ve své práci popisuji, má velmi silný politický aspekt, protože se jedná o dramaturgii, která má ambice působit prostorově, tedy z různých úhlů pohledu, a aktivovat diváka, přičemž divák je pojímán jako důležitá součást této dramaturgie.

Hlavním předmětem mé práce je představení Apologie mistra úniků (*Apology of the Escapologist*) maďarské divadelního souboru Krétakör z roku 2009, jež poslouží jako příklad metod, jež využívá prostorová dramaturgie. Zatímco v první třetině této práce nastiňují strategie prostorové dramaturgie, se právě proto ve druhé části zabývam zkoumáním politické a osobní motivace, jež stály za zrodem inscenace, neboť představují velmi důležitou součást mého výzkumu. A proto se budu nejprve věnovat i politického kontextu Maďarska od konce 90. let. V poslední části této práce shrnu hlavní strategie

prostorové dramaturgie a také zformuluji hlavní problémy, s nimiž se prostorová dramaturgie potýká.

Tato práce je psána z pozice praktikujícího dramaturga – pracuji v alternativních a divadlech v nedivadelním prostoru – a zároveň z pozice člověka, jenž pochází z politicky nestabilní země (Srbsko), ale především pak z pozice dramaturga, jenž trpí symptomy ze ztráty rodného jazyka (v důsledku opuštění mé rodné země) a jenž nalezl nový jazyk a divadelní nástroj právě v „prostoru".

Hlavním příkladem pro můj rozbor je dramaturgie představení *Apologie mistra úniků od* maďarské souboru Krétakör, jejíž vznik zaznamenal ohromnou změnou, kterou práce tohoto souboru prošla, protože se soubor do roku 2009 zabýval především inscenováním dramatických textů v divadelních prostorech.

Představení *Apologie mistra úniků* provedlo diváky osmi různými prostory, jež měly původně různé funkce (ulice, garáže, industriální prostor, nemocnice, domov důchodců, bazén, kanceláře, náměstí), ale žádné z nich nebylo zamýšleno pro divadelní produkci. Celá akce proběhla v několika vlnách během osmi týdnů od 8. března do 1. května, 2009, v městské části 9 v Budapešti. Představení mělo pět částí, z nichž každá obsahovala další částí. Proběhlo na osmi různých místech během devíti týdnů a každá část byla divákům předvedena na jiném místě a v jiný den. Představení bylo koncipováno tak, aby divákům poskytlo velice specifický zážitek. Diváci si sami museli složit příběh dohromady z uvedených fragmentů a zároveň byli nuceni fyzicky následovat příběh – akci. Představení věnovali nejen svoji pozornost a energii, ale také čas, který přesahoval jeden večer obvyklého představní. Diváci měli možnost vstupovat do prostoru inscenace. Všechny

tyto aspekty jsou zcela jasně opakem klasického vnímání dramaturgie, ve které divák sleduje jeden příběh v divadelním prostoru během jednoho večera. Představení *Apologie mistra úniků* obsahovalo mnoho nových divadelních forem a postupů: site specific, instalaci, komunitní divadlo, divadlo ve veřejném prostoru apod. – které nabízejí různé způsoby jak sledovat a vnímat představení.

Materiál pro fragmentovaný příběh (příběh v širším slova smyslu) *Apologie mistra úniků* byl založen na autentických materiálech: osobních zkušenostech režiséra Árpáda Schillinga a obyvatel městské části 9 v Budapešti, kde se představení konalo.

Dramaturgické systémy, vnímané z pohledu současné teorie, obsahují nejen elementy vyprávění - příběhu, ale také jednotlivé jevištní elementy (hlas, zvuk, pohyb, světla atd.) a kulturní (historický, geografický, a architektonický atd.) kontext. Všechny tyto elementy jsou součástí složitého dramaturgického systému významů a zážitků. V dramaturgii prostoru, kterou se zde zabývám, tvoří diváci poslední a velmi podstatný element této komplexní konfigurace.

V mém rozboru dramaturgie představení *Apologie mistra úniků* se soustřeďuji na tři hlavní aspekty zmíněného systému: vyprávění, prostorovost a aktivace diváků.

Dramaturgie představení je sekvence, kompozice, jakési postupné rozkrývání systému významů a zážitků během představení v určitém prostoru a čase. V současné dramaturgii je však důležité, že toto rozkrývání je často fragmentované a decentralizované.

Vyprávěný příběh v *Apologii mistra úniků* byl roztříštěný, jednotlivé části na sebe navazovaly velmi volně, netvořily jeden lineární příběh. *Apologie* začínala u režiséra: první část pojednávala o Árpádovi Schillingovi samotném a osamoceném. V další části se příběh pomalu decentralizoval tím, že začínal pojednávat o Árpádovi a jeho ženě, přičemž zobrazoval výjevy z jejich života. Později se příběh zaměřil na jejich dítě a na závěr, v poslední části, se představení stalo „příběhem" celé komunity (městské části Budapešť 9). Nicméně všechny scény na sebe navazovaly volně, chyběla lineární jednotná linka příběhu. Roztříštěná dramaturgie přiměla diváky, aby si smysl domýšleli sami, místo aby jim bylo předkládáno, jak mu mají rozumět.

Zatímco fragmentace je běžná praxe a v literatuře se užívala už v období literární moderny a ve filozofii je jedním z elementů postmoderní filozofie, v divadle se tato strategie začala používat později, intenzivně až od 80. let 20. století, a dodnes pro běžného divadelního diváka představuje jakousi „překážku". Abych mohla popsat techniky fragmentace v současné dramaturgii posledních dekád – fragmentace, která se poměrně liší od původní fragmentace literární moderny, a to především v tom, že v jejím pozadí už vůbec není příběh, ale téma –, použiji příkladů představení britského souboru *Forced Entertainment*, francouzsko-rakouského souboru *Superamas*, belgického souboru *Needcompany* a italských souborů *Motus* a *Fanny and Alexander*.

Dále budu analyzovat *Apologii mistra úniků* jako inscenaci, jejíž součástí je cesta od centralizovaného příběhu (osobní situace Árpáda Schillinga) přes decentralizovaný systém, kde se kauzální příběh vytrácí do decentralizovaného dramaturgického systému, kterému budu říkat „rhizomatický". V rhizomatickém dramaturgickém systému jsou dramaturgické elementy decentralizované a je zde možnost mnoha

vzájemných konstelací. Tato rhizomatická dramaturgie také vyžaduje jinou prostorovost, ve které se tyto komplexní vztahy mezi dramaturgickými elementy odehrávají.

Abychom lépe porozuměli novému proudu v dramaturgii, nestačí nám pouze analyzovat narativní část kompozice. Musíme porozumět divácké zkušenosti s prostorem, čili místem, kde se představení odehrává, a jakým způsobem si diváci nacházejí svoje místo v prostoru a tím pádem i v představení fyzicky i kontextuálně.

Abychom mohli podrobně rozebrat prostorový aspekt představení *Apologie mistra úniků*, zaměřím se na zkoumání tří různých výkladů prostoru: a) sdílený prostor, b) nalezený (autentický) prostor, a c) roztříštěný prostor.

Novou formu dramaturgie, kterou se v této práci zabývám, tedy, prostorovou dramaturgii, podle mého názoru dokládá právě zmíněné maďarské představení, neboť ruší základní dvojrozměrné vnímání vztahu představení-publikum a vytváří nové trojrozměrné pojímání tohoto vztahu, ve kterém je divákovi umožněno vstoupit do hracího pole, čili se může stát součástí dramaturgie – což pochopitelně dramaturgii ovlivňuje přímo.

*Apologie mistra úniků* se odehrávalo v nalezených prostorech původně nemajících funkci divadelní: ulice, garáže *Gödör Club* (podnik v centru Budapešti, kde mělo původně stát Národní divadlo), v samotném klubu *Gödör Club*, v ústředí *Krétakör,* ve veřejných lázních, v bývalé nemocnici, v domově důchodců (a v autobuse, který tam jezdí), na náměstí před Corvinus University. Všechna tato místa a budovy se nacházely v budapešťské městské části číslo 9, kde měl *Krétakör* svoji základnu, v ´sousedství´ *Krétakör.* Tato místa nejen sloužila jednak jako scény pro

představení, dále poskytla možnost pro novou prostorovost představení (vytvářeni dramaturgicko-prostorových vztahů) ale také byla i součástí obsahu tématu představení (prostory městské časti Budapešť 9 a její komunita).

Nejdůležitějším znakem představení však byla jedinečná roztříštěnost: samotné představení bylo fragmentováno v prostoru i čase: představení se odehrávalo na různých místech v různých dnech. Absolutní roztříštěnost, kterou tady popisuji je znakem decentralizace prostoru a času události, což vede k ´probuzení´ diváka. Publikum je tímto způsobem pobízeno k aktivní účasti na představení, musí příběh následovat fyzicky a navíc v různém čase. Tato absolutní fragmentace nabízí divákovi možnost vybrat si určité, a odlišné, sekvence scén, diváci si navíc mohou vybrat ´úhel pohledu´ místo/postoj, ze kterého scénu sledují. V tomto ohledu se divák stává spoluautorem představení a té určité scény, neboť si vybírá úhel pohledu, který má přímý dopad na celkový výklad významu představení.

V představení *Apologie mistra úniků* divák nejen že byl aktivovaný, ale pravidla hry byli nastavený tak že divák musel převzít spoluzodpovědnost za svůj zážitek vědomě, a bylo mu umožněno mít vědomý o své spoluúčasti. A právě tento specifický aspekt je pro mě v této práci důležitý.

Z velké části je toto představení výsledkem přímé reakce Árpáda Schillinga na sociopolitickou situaci Maďarska vyvíjející se od počátku 90. let. Politické klima této doby a druh vlády vedené stranou FIDESZ (Maďarská občanská unie, hlavní národní konzervativní politická strana), jež je nyní u moci, jsou vnímané jako autoritářské. Podle definice autoritářské vlády španělského politologa Juana Linze (1964), můžeme definovat maďarskou vládu jako (a)

centralizovaný politický systém, (b) bez jasné ideologie, která (c) demobilizuje občany.

Dramaturgie představení Apologie mistra úniků, jak se snažím v této práci dokázat, se snaží o pravý opak: jedná se o decentralizovaný příběh a představení s jasnou ideologií, které se snaží aktivovat diváky – „Decentralizovaný" (roztříštěný příběh a představení), „ideologické" (jasné otázky a názory) a „mobilizující" (vyzívající diváky k účasti). Tyto pojmy ve své práci označuji jako dramaturgické, nikoli politické, nebo přesněji, dramaturgické s politickými ambicemi.

V poslední části se zabývam jednotlivými strategiemi prostorové dramaturgie se zaměřením na vytváření pozic a vytváření vztahů vztahovaní v prostoru. Vytváření pozic a vztahovaní v prostoru mají dramaturgický účel, ale také politický aspekt. Jednotlivé dramaturgické prvky elementy (včetně diváka jako dramaturgického elementu) mají svoje pozice, svoji konkrétní „perspektivu", z níž vstupují do komplexního systému vztahování, kde se „pozice" a vztahování stává neoddělitelnou součástí elementu.

Dále popisují příklady z vlastní dramaturgické práce, kde se zaměřují na další strategie prostorové dramaturgie. Umísťování (v angličtině ´situating´) je důležitá strategie, kde má prostor/prostředí velký vliv na vnímání vztahů mezi dramaturgickými elementy. „Čtení z materiálů" je další strategie, která je v mé vlastní práci důležitá. Je to práce s tím, co už existuje, s potenciálem existujícím v prostoru, v divácích a v ostatních aspektech elementu inscenace, a hledání vztahu mezi tím, co je (autenticita) a co by mohlo být (potenciál) důležité pro tvorbu inscenace.
Hlavním cílem mé práce však bude definovat nový vztah mezi skutečným (autentický prostor, komunita, autentické „příběhy") a představovaným (ať

už diváky nebo tvůrci) v současné prostorové dramaturgii. Tento křehký vztah imaginárního a autentického, jenž se rodí v rámci inscenace a který je pro inscenaci *Apologie mistra úniků* příznačný, představuje něco, co americký sociální geograf Edward W. Soja (1996) popisuje jako „třetí prostor" – místo, kde se mísí představované se skutečným. Ve své práci popísují, jak je právě prostorová dramaturgie specifická tímto novým vztahem mezi skutečným a představovaným a jak umožňuje vznik tohoto „třetího prostoru", kde je mnoho úhlů pohledu a více možností: to, co bylo, co je, co může být, co mohlo být atd. Tato nová strategie je nejen podstatou divadelní strategie všeobecně (neboť divadlo je především aktem proměny), ale také vrcholnou politickou strategií – místem, kde jsou skutečnost i možnost změny viditelné.

*Shrnutí*: V této práci rozebírám dramaturgii představení *Apology of Escapologist* od divadelní skupiny *Krétakör* a uvažuji o ní jako o přímé reakci na vysoce hierarchickou, centralizovanou politickou situaci v Maďarsku. Tato inscenace představuje příklad antiautoritářského divadla, v němž jsou diváci vyzýváni, aby se na představení aktivně podíleli a aby si tento aktivní přístup uvědomili. Dle mého názoru se jedná o zcela nový přístup v dramaturgii, jenž nazývám prostorová dramaturgie. Tuto novou strategii pojímám jako politickou dramaturgii: antiautoritářská, decentralizovaná, nehierarchická, nejednotná, roztříštěná dramaturgie, kde vztah mezi „skutečným" (autentický prostor, komunita a její příběhy) a představovaným (vytvořeným diváky i umělci) poskytuje možnost pro změnu.