

The Song of the Other/ Public Space as a Learning Environment and Gypsy Musicians in Turkeyⁱ

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Abstract

This work focuses on both public musical practices of Gypsy musicians who live in the Thracian land lying within the northwest of Turkey, and musical learning that takes place here. I primarily highlight the historic dimensions of the relation between Gypsies and music and emphasized musicianship in the lives of Gypsies as a fundamental class tendency. I then present the relationship between learning and talent which is learnable in the public space. I discuss the determining role of public space in talent and learning by giving examples from the living practices of Gypsy musicians who live in the Thracian region of Turkey. Finally, I conclude my study with a general assessment.

Key words: *Public space, Gypsies, societal talents, musical learning*

Introduction

Academic literature is still faced with many unanswered questions about Gypsies' origin, the reasons why they migrated from India, the process and date of this migration (Marushiakova and Popov, 2006: 13). But it wouldn't be wrong to say that in the historical process one of the characteristics that make Gypsies *visible* is their *musical talent* (Malvinni, 2004: ix; Fraser, 2005: 176).

Although it is not known for sure when exactly Gypsies came to Anatolia, some experts state that Gypsies came to Anatolia from Northwestern India, their motherland, passing through Afghanistan and Iran as of the late ninth and early tenth century. Some of these Gypsies proceeded to Balkan states through Istanbul between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries (Arayıcı, 2008: 235).

Numbers of Gypsies in the Balkans were sent to Turkey as part of the “exchange of population”, which was fulfilled in the framework of the Treaty of Lausanne signed after the Turkish War of Independence in the first quarter of the twentieth century (Marishiakova ve Popov, 2006: 104; Marsh, 2008: 15).

Today Gypsy population in Turkey is said to be about 500 thousand, however, this number exceeds 3 million according to some sources (Kyuchukov, 2007: 75). It is possible to come across Gypsies in the outskirts, unhealthy neighborhoods and hastily built sheds of many cities in Turkey. The region where Gypsies are densely populated in Turkey is the northwest, which is part of Thracian lands lying within the borders of Turkey (Arayıcı, 2008: 236).

Thrace is the name of a region, which is historically very rich, in the Southeastern Europe and involves Southeastern Bulgaria (Northern Thrace), Northeastern Greece (Western Thrace) and Northwestern Turkey (Eastern Thrace). The Gypsies in the Eastern Thrace, which lies within the Turkish border, draw attention with their musical talent like many other communities of Gypsies.

The term public space defines an area which is accessible for everybody and which concretizes with the participation of people, and this participation requires that public space should be created as a space of social communication, interaction and production. (Kedik, 2011: 231). When viewed from this aspect, the Gypsy districts in the Northwestern Turkey appear as spaces of musical communication, interaction and production. These districts almost challenge *distinguished* music schools in developing and transferring musical talent. It could be said that this musical power of Gypsy districts comes from communication, interaction and production created here.

I aimed to discuss the relationship between public space, talent and musical learning with a class approach and over the musical practices of Gypsy musicians living in Thrace. I made the discussion within the frame of the titles: **“Gypsies and Musicianship as a Marginal Occupation”**, **“Societal Talents”**, **“Public Space and Learning”** and **“Concluding Remarks: Gypsies’ Exclusion from the Public Space”**. Under the first title I explained who Gypsies are and what their relationship with music is like. Under the second title I mentioned that the fact of musical talent, which Gypsies have been identified with through history, is a

social and learnable thing. Under the other title I stressed the relationship between public space and learning and the improving aspect of this relationship. Under the last title I made an assessment on the discussion and included a “class” inference considering the isolation that Gypsies are exposed to.

Gypsies and Musicianship as a *Marginal* Occupation

Before focusing on societal learning in the public space over the musical practices of Gypsy musicians living in the Thracian region of Turkey, we need to make clear who we mean by “Gypsies”. The word Gypsy defines an *ethnicity* which is thought to have spread to the whole world from India with its distinctive culture and life style. This word is the general name of a community who live in Asia, Caucasus, the Middle East, Europe, Northern Africa and America (Duygulu, 2006: 12). Gypsies who live in Western Turkey have preferred to call themselves the “Romani” for about fifty years. But this preference differs from region to region.

For instance, those in the Aegean region call themselves *Romani* while those in Thrace prefer *Gypsy* (Duygulu, 2006: 12, 13; Yağlıdere, 2011: 20). Arayıcı (2008) state that Gypsies in Turkey believe that people use the word Gypsy is as a word of insult (s. 247). Kolukırık (2009) compares these two words in terms of social perception and concludes that the name *Gypsy* leaves worse impression on the participants of the research than *Romani* does. (s. 127, 128). However the similarity between the digital results of the data is remarkable. Ali Mezarcıoğlu, who himself is a Gypsy, also draws attention to this point. According to Mezarcıoğlu (2010) any word to be replaced with the word Gypsy will gain similar negative meanings in time (s. 30, 32). In this respect, there’s nothing wrong with the meaning words gain, but with the social perspective towards Gypsy people. For this reason the word Gypsy is intentionally used in this work.

Gypsies are considered *marginal* (Yağlıdere, 2011:19). However, being *marginal*, which is particularly underlined in some sources, could be thought to be an imposition by the societal and class conditions of Gypsies. Social reproduction of Gypsies as marginal manpower is actualized through reproduction of poverty and exclusion. In other words, the positions of Gypsies in the societal production define their occupational tendencies. In this perspective, musicianship, which is one of the “marginal” occupations of Gypsies, is not rooted in their

“genetic predispositions” or being “a fun-loving society”, but rather grew as a tendency due to historic, societal and class conditions. For the whole of their history, Gypsies have migrated towards occupations with which they gain acceptance, however limited, by society. To explain this situation over such an *extreme* example as an *executioner* will be reasonable for the sake of concretizing the situation. Executioner is one of the occupations identified with Gypsies from the Ottoman Empire till the abolition of the death sentence in Turkey (Akgül, 2009: 26; (Akgül, 2009: 26; Marushiakova and Popov, 2006: 79) but Gypsies did not tend to be executioners because they were cold-blooded butchers. In this respect, Gypsies’ societal and class conditions have transformed *occupations* such as the executioner’s job which isolate them from the society, into a necessity. Therefore, we could say that the reproduction of *marginal* occupations *needed* by the system in a class society is provided by the reproduction of the societal and class conditions, under which Gypsies also live. So, to say that Gypsies are the *unwanted others* in society won’t reflect the truth exactly. Gypsies, with all their disadvantages and exclusions, are both the cheap and *marginal* manpower for the order and also a guarantee of this manpower as a *back-up*.

Musicians that attended the interviewⁱⁱ expressed in different ways the conditions that led them to the occupation of musicianship, which is deemed marginal by some. The responses of attendees regarding why and how they tended towards music can be classified into four topics: *emulation, culture and tradition, societal reasons* and *economic reasons*.

The musical atmosphere in Gypsy districts in Thrace enables children to tend towards music at a very early age. This tendency starts initially by *emulating* musicians such as the father, brother or uncle. Transfer of musicianship to the next generations through emulation attributed an identity definition to music and musicianship and transformed them in *cultural and traditional* aspects. However, this tendency is rooted in a *societal* requirement. For Gypsies, musicianship, living and socialization are also a good tool to establish relations with society. However, one may argue that *economic reasons* lie behind the other three titles which we classified as a rationale for the tendency to music. One attendee emphasizes this by saying:

We lead our children to do our job. Because there’s no other way. If s/he studies to be a doctor, lawyer... or something else, what s/he needs? Money. And because we can’t afford this... I am a musician, my child is also a musician... If we get into trouble some day –

financially – neither of us have a job. But if s/he were a barber or a judge, a prosecutor...
Then s/he would have money.

Music is a preliminary tool for the livelihood of Gypsy musicians in this region, but this cannot explain the relation between music and economy. Living conditions and requirements cause the emulations and cultural and traditional features which are aspects of this tendency towards music. Material living conditions cannot be discussed without mentioning the economy, in other words, the *class*.

In that case, if one can argue that Gypsies' musical tendencies are literally due to class, bearing in mind the cultural, traditional and societal aspects, how can we explain the musical talents of Gypsies known as their characteristics in the historical process?

Societal Talents

Some researchers talk about musical talents as follows: Children with musical talents have always had a musical memory skill so that these children can sing and play any melody when they hear it once. Their interest in music is the typical characteristic of these children (Quoted by Liu, 2008:248). Expressing a child's tendencies through genes, Ridley (2010, 104) underlines that genes can affect the tendencies of children and a child will look for and create an environment that best suits himself/herself; for instance if he/she has a tendency for mechanics, he/she will develop skills in that particular area; if he/she is a book worm, then this child will look for and find books. It is true that children with musical talents can easily apply these talents and convert their environment with a musical awareness. However, talent is regarded as a phenomenon that is congenital—or otherwise—in this and similar explanations and the question “what is the source of a talent” is left unanswered.

The efforts of some researchers to explain the concept of talent with *a reductive approach* under inheritance, genes and neuro-physiologic processes can be viewed as studies that give legitimacy to the *spontaneity and inevitability* of a class society. According to them, a society consists of a small elite with *genetic* luck (talent) and the majority who lack it.

Again, a similar discussion can take place about the words “gift” and “gifted”. The word gift is defined as “a present or something which is given” and “a special ability to do something”.

The word “gifted”—derived from this—means “having special ability in a particular subject or activity” (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2010:604). As can be understood from these quotes, the words *gift* and *gifted* associate talent with a heavenly present (although not clearly expressed) and emphasize selectedness again.

These *idealist* approaches that associate talent with God or luck, whether directly or with a *scientific* language, do not only glorify and reproduce a class society, but these *innocent* theorems also bless the societal division of labor, and as a result the governing priority in the hands of the elites with the language of God. Besides, they commoditize talent, which is seen as a heavenly present to a measurable/appreciable concept.

However, musical talent is not a characteristic looked for in the Gypsy children in Thrace and goes beyond all “idealist” routes regarding life and talent. The words of a participant are very crucial in this perspective:

When a child reaches three or four years of age, he picks up the clarinet immediately, because it is in the house. We never think “can he play this? Are his hands suitable for this instrument?” This is because he plays.

The musical improvement of Gypsy musicians that is developed by establishing musical and societal relations can also be regarded as an individual’s orientation process to a musical environment. For instance, Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, whose two fingers on his left hand became paralyzed due to fire in a caravan at the age of 18, developed a new technique and playing style not through the musical talent bestowed by God but as a *requirement* of his own physical and societal conditions. Again, the conclusion that is reached when we approach the musical *genius* of W. A. Mozart isolated from dialectic relations is that this *superior* skill from out of nowhere is a heavenly gift. However, when we associate Mozart’s musical talent with his living conditions and the living practices, it is clear that talent can be learnt. In other words, when we comprehend the dialectical relation between societal life and talent, the talent phenomenon becomes ordinary and separates from its *class* definition. Dimitri Shostakovich (2010: 223) emphasizes this ordinariness and classlessness with the following words: “I really do not understand the term ‘ordinary person’. Who is this ordinary person? Is a charlady an ordinary person and is a manager not an ordinary person? I do not know. All people are ordinary and all are extraordinary.”

Therefore, what makes Gypsies so talented in music is this *ordinariness*. Musical practices cannot be dealt with in isolation from the daily life practices of Gypsies. Thus, playing any instrument skillfully is for Gypsies as natural and easy as speaking in one's mother tongue. From this basis, we may argue that what makes music so *hard* for some of us is the meaning we give to talent – which is basically based on classes. In other words it is the alienation from music. At this point, talent appears as a phenomenon that can be explained with the qualifications of societal conditions rather than individual properties.

Public Space and Learning

“Those that suggest ideas, concepts, opinions and consciousness” say Marx and Engels (2010, 44-45) “are the real and active people conditioned to mutual relations and this suggestion depends directly on their material activities.” Namely, consciousness that produces opinions cannot be regarded separately from the qualifications of material living conditions and the practices. The expression “the real, active people conditioned to mutual relations” focuses on the real living spaces. As with consciousness, what generates talent is the environmental conditions and the interactions therein. For this reason, the musical talents of Gypsies in Thrace cannot be dealt with in isolation from practices, public spaces and socialization.

Public spaces are not structures separated from non-public spaces with physical borders. These areas are where socialization occurs. Namely, what makes any place a public space is the societal qualifications of that particular place. Thus, public spaces differ in societies and production styles. (Doğan, 2007: 98).

The discrimination of public and private spaces is clarified when psychology and individuality problems arise in the lives of bourgeoisie; people come together less for societal purposes and thus *participation* is less (Sennett, 2010: 25). This individualistic point of view creates a public space limited to and sterilized with acquaintances in a *public space*. This space can be compared to buildings with glass on all four sides rising over thin steel frames. The windows of these buildings that visually meet individuals with its wide sceneries are in fact barriers that detach public spaces, namely streets. These buildings offer us a living area that can be defined by sentences including the words “as if.” While a vivacious life flows so close to us, we are unfortunately no freer than a fish in a can dropped into an ocean.

This concept centralizes individuals in the interpretation of public spaces and individual spaces that are over-emphasized under the concept of *private life*. The concept gained importance and detached from street life due to its definition. However, the street with its real possibilities of practice and interaction provides us with learning and developing opportunities that could make a societal transformation. Linux *open source* operating system could be an example. As known, Linux is open and free to everybody. In this respect Linux could be a public space in the virtual platform. Despite Microsoft, Linux opposes property and confidentiality of information in production phases. Every user and developer in the world can reach the core which constitutes the basis of the system and can develop this core by making amendments or additions to it. Thus, Linux core is in the center of an unconstrained development process. In other words, the core is not a completed and stable object but it constantly evolves (Sennett, 2009: 40, 41). Another example is the world's most comprehensive and up-to-date encyclopedia: Wikipedia. Although this interactive encyclopedia is far from being *unproblematic* in today's conditions, its utilization as a reference guide increases every day. Above all, Wikipedia, which has a great importance in the socialization of a collective production style and is thus becoming the target of the dominant ideology (Özalp, 2011: 126), is improved and has increased its reliability to a degree and has increased the number of *developers* participating in this production process. To briefly explain, Wikipedia makes up for its deficits through socialization and maintains its development through socialization. Here the districts and streets where Gypsy musicians in Turkey live bring together people at different ages with different experiences on their *level* structure without any borders, therefore provides them with a space of limitless learning and development just as Linux and Wikipedia do.

The close relation between socialization and development is also visible in the historical adventure of music. All progressive works that spin the wheel forward come out of societal struggles. For example, the music of J. S. Bach has regard to a struggle against aristocracy, the music of Beethoven to a bourgeois revolution under the slogan "brotherhood, equality, freedom." Thus, one can argue that a non-societal production cannot be progressive. For this reason the public attained high quality every time it produced its own music (Finkelstien, 2009: 41).

English folklore researcher Cecile J. Sharp (1907, 31) says: “(...) the individual invents while society selects.” There is actually a societal selection for musical works. Due to this selection, music that belongs to the public “is works as perfect as the most brilliant masterpieces of the art of music”, as Hungarian composer Bela Bartok put it (Quoted by Finkelstein, 1995: 31). However, the individual production defined by Sharp takes its essence from societal reality. A composer, who is a societal actor in the historical sequence he/she is living in, is a part of this societal reality in terms of perceiving life, its experiences and opinions. Musical knowledge produces and transform on behalf of/for the society. Despite the general opinion, there is no wall between those that are personal and those that are societal in art (Finkelstein, 2000: 62).

The striking relation between societal practices in the public space and learning can be seen in a study conducted in Brazil. In a study on the mathematic skills of children working on the streets in Brazil, researchers applied two different tests both *informally* and *formally* to participants aged between 9 and 15. The dialogue between a researcher applying an informal test as a customer and M. (a 12 year old seller in the third grade) who continues third class is given below:

Customer (researcher): *How much is a coconut?*

M. (seller): *Thirty five.*

Customer: *I want 10 of them. How much shall I pay?*

M.: *Three of them are 105, plus three, 210. [Waits] I need four. This... [Waits] 315... I guess it is 350.*

This problem can be stated in different ways in mathematics. For this researcher, the ‘35 x 10’ statement of this problem is a good choice. The participant followed this route: $105 + 105 + 105 + 35$. As can be seen, M. reached the solution of the problem stated as ‘35 x 10’ by the operation ‘ $(3 \times 35) + (3 \times 35) + (3 \times 35) + 35$ ’. M.’s method is not taught in the third grade, but M. already has the skill to solve the problem by adding zero to the end of the number.

Another dialogue between the researcher and M. is given below:

Customer: *I want four coconuts. How much is it*

M.: *Three of them will be 105, plus 30, it is 135; one coconut is 35... It is 140!*

The researcher asked M. the same problem as ‘35 x 4’ in the formal test section and received the response “200” (Nunes, Schliemann ve Carraher, 1993: 17-24). As can be seen in the example, M. found the right answer using his/her methods developed according to requirements and experiences on the streets rather than those learnt in school. These can be regarded as very simple. This mathematical skill of the participant is a product of practice→consciousness. In this, the qualifications, possibilities and the requirements of the street have a rather decisive impact on learning. That is, musical learning in the lives of Gypsy musicians in Thrace occurs similarly – based on practice→consciousness. Learning music in these Gypsy districts appears to be a requirement of societal and class conditions.

A participant emphasized the relation between learning and life in the public space saying:

I bought an accordion last year. One day I was playing at a ceremony in the district, I just hung it onto my grandson’s neck. I said “press these keys”. “Follow me...” Then the ceremony ended before we knew it. Later on, my grandson becomes a master accordion player.

Another participant talked about the relation between learning in the public space and the production process:

We back this child. For instance, we do this when he is with us: clarinet, darbuka, drum, violin... four – five of us go to other districts for ceremonies. He sits down and listens to us. If he has some skill, we say “come here boy”. We give him a darbuka. He plays as much as he can. (...) It goes like this. He learns how to play in this way.

As can be seen in the statements above, a child gains his musical consciousness in a real production process; he improves in music according to his experiences out there.

At this point, we should mention interaction and dialogue. These notions that have public meanings have a *discussion* meaning in society. Discussion, which is regarded as a space to compete and win according to the individualist approach, is first of all a *contradiction* for an individual. For instance, children that discuss the rules of a game make decisions together about the game process. To start playing is to decide (Sennett, 2012: 27). This decision is a solution of a contradiction and the solution means improvement and transformation for a public person.

Freire (2010, 48-71) suggests “dialogue” as an act of *discussion* and creation. Dialogue is principally not a tool for dominance and constitutes both practice and opinion. Dialogue is a real learning process which is done not for *B* by *A* or by *A* over *B*, but between *A* and *B*, an objective act that impacts each party and at the same time challenges them. This point of view propounds the notion of “interaction” more than those of teaching or education.

Krupskaya (1924) mentions the interaction between an individual and a public space which is a place to learn (www.marxists.org/archive/krupskaya/works/ethics.htm):

A person shall know how to combine his/her life with the life of the society. This does not mean breaking off from material benedictions. This fact of combination, a conversion of all laborers’ targets to a personal target enriches personal life. It does not impoverish life; rather it provides deep and colorful experiences that a uniform family life cannot.

With similar characteristics, the street constitutes the center of musical interaction, production and development in the lives of the Gypsy musicians. The people living in the district and children in the streets learn music—a historic identity—by discussing, trying, producing and playing within a societal interaction.

Another interviewee discussed the relation between musical learning, children and public space:

When he eats his bread in the morning, he immediately takes up his clarinet. He walks around with his friends for about three to four hours. Then he comes home quickly. He takes up the clarinet. Then goes to lunch... He plays the clarinet mostly on the streets in the district.

Another participant emphasizes the public space as an active learning place with the following example:

The world’s best football players, like those in Brazil, grow up on the streets. You see he weighs 40 kilos but plays wonderfully. They beat the Germans. They beat everyone. How? He learns in the neighborhood.

The notions of district and street emphasized in these quotes draw attention with their interaction and transformation characteristics. The limitations on practices, interaction and transformation possibilities are defined by the relation of a child with the street. An

individual develops and at the same time helps develop while socializing, and thus transforms both his development and the public space. Another participant says:

When we were kids, we used to gather at one place. He played the clarinet, I played the clarion, he played the drums... and we played a metallic mandolin. We played altogether in the district. All of us, he played, I played. The inhabitants were fed up with us. We played a lot. He learnt something from him, he learnt something from me.

As can be seen in the quote, talent in a process of societal interaction is conveyed not vertically but horizontally through “dialogue”-based interactions. Solidarity appears, at this point, as a result of societal interaction and production. The words of another participant are crucial:

Now a man cannot play, but wants to play. If I say ‘Come, let’s play together’ he cannot follow. What should I do? I should go down to his level so that he can go up to mine.

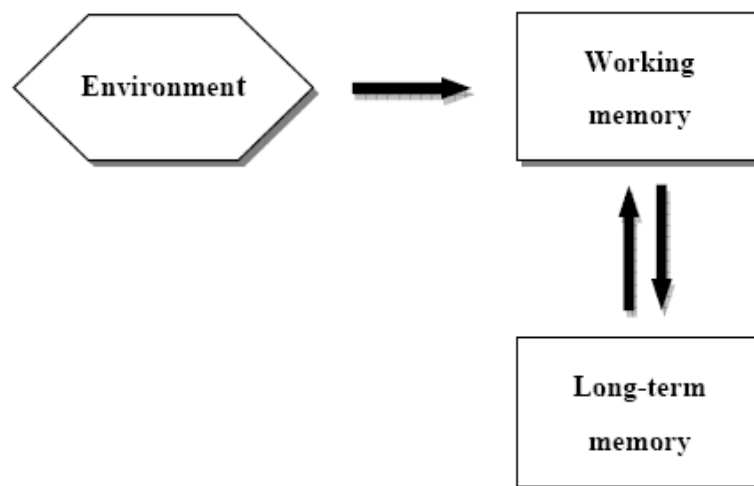
As a learning space, each Gypsy district with its opportunities of practice, interaction and development challenge today’s schools in a sense. The street gains this power of developing and transforming as a result of the social relations and interactions that take place on it. But it is possible to say that this musical development and transformation in the Gypsy districts ceases, slows down or repeats itself after a certain point. This happens due to an individual’s desire to climb the social ladder at a certain stage of his development and a detachment of an individual from the streets and public spaces for other reasons. In other words, some actors of socialization and interaction on the streets leave the streets when they reach the peak level of their development there. This comes at the time when they are most productive. Thus, one link in a societal chain that enables development on the streets breaks; the motion here is limited and the development process on the streets turns into a vicious circle.

Shinichi Suzuki relates the musical development of a child to the qualifications of stimulants that surround him. Namely, the more a child is exposed to musical stimulants, the more his musical talent improves (Quoted by Hongur, 2007: 4). Vygotsky’s opinions on the development of language skills in children also support Suzuki’s approach. According to Vygotsky, a child needs to communicate and speaks when conditions force him (Erdener, 2009: 90). Both of these approaches to talent focus on an environment that *creates a requirement in a child* as a prerequisite. In these two approaches, talent appears as a

learnable notion. In this regard, *being talented or not* in any area is in strict relation to the qualifications of the environmental conditions a person lives, grows and develops in.

For example, for African children it is easy to learn rhythm patterns which sound complicated for us, because these rhythm patterns have the characteristics of African culture. Children in daily life grow up listening to music their mother sings/performs, playing with these complicated structures and making changes to them (Primos, 2002: 2). Thus these children self-learn these rhythm patterns in games and repetitions in life practices.

According to Willingham (2011: 13-20) the process of thinking occurs when we combine the information coming from the environment and long-term memory in the memory that has new ways of working; and the solutions we produce to any problem encountered are in fact equivalences of solutions from our previous experiences:



As can be seen in the figure above, environment has a decisive importance in the quality of opinions. Constant transformation and development in public spaces create new problems, requirements, relations, discussions, interactions and solutions in the life of an individual, and enable this individual to develop. Thus, if public space is a joint production of societal relations and the actors in that relation, and if individual development is possible in the society, one can argue that the notions of learning and talent are not individualistic but socialistic. There is no talented individual, but a talented society. Here, the thesis of Marx and Engels (2009:151) gains importance one again: If conditions shape the human, we need to humanly shape these conditions.

We can summarize the musical learning process in the Gypsy districts in general with a superficial comparison. The Gypsy districts here could be compared to a pool full of data about music. The way to benefit from the information in this public pool is socialization. The wealth of the pool is defined by the experiences and interactions of individuals in different environments. In other words, the musical knowledge of musicians here comes from the streets, while street knowledge comes from musical experiences of these musicians in other environments. Here, the property of musical knowledge belongs not to individuals, but to the streets. With all of these characteristics, the streets become a learning space where individuals learn by socializing and producing. In this regard, individuals can actualize their own personal development only at societal levels. Here, we see a complete and holistic development of individuals and society. Thus, an individual should contribute to societal development for the sake of its own development. Namely, “(...) if a human is open to society by nature, he/she can only develop its real nature within a society and the power of its nature should be measured not by the abilities of a single individual but by the abilities of a society” (Marx and Engels: 2009: 151). This approach does not approach individuals and society as two opposites. Instead, this links societal development to individuals and in fact constitutes a great glorification of the individual.

Concluding Remarks: Gypsies’ Exclusion from the Public Space

Due to centuries of exclusion and poverty, Gypsies have always tended towards occupations that enable them to establish good relations with the society. This tendency is essentially a class tendency although it depends on societal, cultural and traditional factors. In this regard, one may argue that the musical history of Gypsies is also the history of the exclusion and poverty they have experienced.

The human body, and especially the brain, is a historical product of natural development that reaches a high level of competence. Humans developed its sensations, hands and as a result its brain through establishing relations with nature and the interactions therein. This development allowed new practical advances. The development of hands is the result of labor and this labor requires a societal practice (Poltzer, 2010: 206, 207). Thus, material conditions in the lives of Gypsy musicians and the musical practices on the streets have a decisive impact on the development of musical talents. In other words, one may argue that the requirement of life and music enabled the development of musical talent among Gypsies.

What reveals this requirement is the material conditions in life. In this regard, the musical talents of Gypsies are a product of this historical continuity in their living conditions. However, when we ignore the dialectic relation between talent and societal life and requirement, this concept becomes idealized and takes on a class importance.

Societal interaction and dialogue in the production process transforms societal space into an active learning center. Learning in real life follows practice→consciousness. Thus, Gypsies in Thrace learn music through interaction and the production process in the public space. What makes Gypsy districts an active learning environment is that the streets are real *public spaces*. Musicians here increase the musical accumulation in their own living spaces in different public spaces by different interaction and experiences. One of the subjects that is neglected in learning is the societal level of learning. If we approach this subject from a historic material point of view, a societal development, and the development of all humankind can be obtained via societal transformation of public spaces.

Apart from its quality, a *societal* production process provides societal solidarity between individuals in that process. This solidarity is explained by Sennett (2012: 80) with an example of “Making a Staircase”, a famous photograph by Frances Johnston. In this photograph, six workers are engaged in serious work. Emphasizing the relation between these workers with the word solidarity, Sennett relates this to socialization in the production process. There are no raised fists, which is a sign of solidarity in the photograph. What binds these workers with different talents together while focusing on their works is the societal qualification of production; and this can only be possible as a result of societal production and practice. One may argue that there is a similar solidarity between Gypsy musicians in Thrace. This solidarity is a result of both the societal production and the isolation experienced by Gypsies among the general public. However, the evolving capitalist production model gave rise to several transformations in society, and the gap between individuals and society widened. Selfish individuals who share less information which is in fact valuable for other people are almost the summary of today’s capitalism.

We may deduce the following from the discussion above: no *human* development is possible for today’s isolated/solitary individuals who are, in Marx’s words, alienated. According to Freire (2010: 22, 25), today, development for an individual whose relation with society is

unlinked can only be towards “being non-human”. Capitalist power well-knows that a production through societal interaction in a public space would first of all create solidarity and establish the awareness that *things* can be changed at the society level. This is a societal awareness and such consciousness poses a great threat to the future of capital and its order. Thus, the bourgeoisie cuts the bond between the public space and society and dissolves it. It strangles socialization.

Our preliminary duty for a human development is to transform the *public space* to its true meaning through a societal approach. So what is needed for this transformation? We can answer this question by associating with the lives of Gypsies in Thrace. The exclusion and discrimination faced by Gypsies in Thrace resulted in the isolation of Gypsy districts. Despite all the negative results, this isolation, which causes marginalization in terms of identity, provided Gypsies a limited possibility of societal production, solidarity and public space transformation. From this point of view, we may argue that *human* development in today’s conditions requires a comprehensive marginalization. At this point, however, I need to focus on the significance of *marginalization*. The marginalization I mention is not a marginalization that references any ethnicity, religion or identity; this is a realistic and class *partiality*. This partiality is becoming more and more apparent and inevitable with the increasing exploitation done by bourgeoisie. The question that will define parties is related to the positioning of people in the production process, and this question has only one single and clear answer for those who live through *selling* labor.

ⁱⁱ This work is derived from my doctoral thesis, which is mentioned with its masthead below. *Gypsy Musicians in Thrace and Musical Learning through Experience*, an unpublished PhD Thesis by Ozer, U. (2012), Department of Music Education, Institute of Educational Sciences, Gazi University, Ankara/Turkey

ⁱⁱ Data on the thesis *Gypsy Musicians in Thrace and Musical Learning through Experience* are obtained using a *semi-structured interview technique* on a study group consisting of a total of 36 people living in a total of three cities and some districts of these cities. The study group constitutes *teleological sampling* and *snowball sampling* techniques.

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