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RESTORATING POWER OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRISON

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Restoring Power of Performing Arts in Prison

Maahpushanede Sahne ve Gsteri Sanatlarının Onarıcı Gc

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the restoring power of performing arts in transforming *mahpushanes* (prisons) into more bearable spaces in guidance of the notion of social theatre in Richard Schechner's approach, and Augusto Boal's *The Theatre of The Oppressed*. It is investigated what kind of space *mahpushane* is as one of the confinement spaces in the context of sovereignty from a Foucauldian perspective. What concepts have been produced from Aristotle's notion of *mimesis* (imitation) as the base of contemporary theatre to the performing arts, their transformations, and in which social system of practices and institutions they take part are investigated within the framework of Larry Shiner's discussion in *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*. In an effort to make the restoring power of performing art in *mahpushanes* clear, this thesis, also, includes the author's workshops held in *mahpushanes* and discusses the meanings of Schechner's works on the performing arts practices in *mahpushanes*.

Keywords: Performing arts, prison, restoring power, mimesis, social theatre

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, mahpushanelerin daha tahammül edilebilir mekânlara dönüştürülmesinde performans sanatlarının onarıcı gücünü, Richard Schechner'in tiyatro anlayışındaki toplumsal tiyatro kavramı ile Augusto Boal'un *Ezilenlerin Tiyatrosu* eseri rehberliğinde incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Kapatılma pratiklerinden mahpushanenin nasıl bir mekân olduğu Michel Foucault'cu bir perspektiften hükümrânlık bağlamında ele alınmıştır. Aristoteles'in günümüz tiyatrosunun temelini oluşturan *mimesis* (taklit) kavramından performans sanatları kavramına gelene kadar, hangi kavramların üretildiği ve üretilen bu kavramların dönüşümü, toplumsal olarak hangi pratikler ve kurumlar sisteminde yer aldığı Larry Shiner'ın *Sanatın İcadı/Bir Kültür Tarihi* kitabındaki tartışmalar çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. Tez; mahpushanelerde performans sanatlarının onarıcı gücünün anlaşılır olması amacıyla, yazarın mahpushanelerde düzenlediği atölye çalışmaları ve Schechner'in mahpushanelerde yapılan performans sanatları çalışmalarının ne anlama geldiğini de kapsamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Performans sanatları, mahpushane, onarıcı güç, mimesis, toplumsal tiyatro.

INTRODUCTION

In this study, it is investigated how *mahpushanes* (prisons) can be transformed into bearable spaces through the restoring power of performing arts. The factors of *mahpushane* as a confinement space, its history and aspects, and the concepts enabling the *mahpushane* to be possible are discussed from a Foucauldian perspective. This perspective requires considering confinement spaces as spaces of discipline. In this context, *mahpushanes* are discussed through their relationality with other confinement and discipline spaces such as by barracks, hospitals, factories and schools.

In parallel with these, Foucault's pieces including *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, *Dit et Écrits*, *The History of Sexuality* and the notes of his lecture entitled *Security, Territory, Population*¹ held in Collège de France between 1977 and 1978 enable us to comprehend the spaces of confinement and discipline, and serve as a ground for this study. In the light of these arguments, the penal system, in which the *mahpus* (the prisoner) is its principle factor, is comprised not only of the wardens and guards but it has, also, turned into a mechanism including an army of technicians such as psychologists, sociologists, doctors, clergymen, teachers, representatives of the judicial mechanism, NGOs, architects, city planners, drivers, the ones being in search of cheap trade and so on.²

The name given to the space of confinement and its discursive form diversely position the space and the ones kept in the place as well as the ones narrating them due to their discursive modes. Therefore, we will try to dwell on the meaning of *mahpushane* that we suggest as a correct usage in this study through briefly discussing the concepts of *cezaevi*, *hapishane*, and *mahpushane* which are the terms addressing to the prison in Turkish language.

¹Foucault, Michel, et al. *Security, Territory, Population* Lectures at the College De France, 1977-78. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

²Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995, p.11.

In this context, we will try to describe the concepts of law, crime, penalty and judiciary which enable *mahpushane* to exist. These concepts are crucial for understanding *mahpushanes*' transformation into spaces of confinement, discipline and penalty in the context of this study. The transformation of *mahpushanes*, as it is mostly overlooked that its main factor is *mahpus* (the prisoner), which are used for the preservation of the sovereignty by the sovereign into the tools of crime and penalty within the framework of sovereignty discussed by Hobbes in Leviathan.

Before laying emphasis on the Panopticon which is used as a monitoring and controlling tool, we will discuss the city structures which had been constricted and covered with walls in the 17th century and the early 18th century. Due to the industrialization, the street walls needed to be pulled down on the purposes of eliminating the air pollution, providing the distribution and security of the goods coming from and being sent to outside, and reorganizing the daily life. In the distribution of products, security and control had been provided by the supervisors. Since the reorganization of cities due to the economic concerns enables us to understand Foucaults' notion of bio-power and underlies the Panopticon invented for providing security, it is considered as a topic we need to emphasize.

In the first chapter, we will discuss the process including the shift of "torture on the body" to the confinement of the body in which the confinement appeared as a practice of penalization. In parallel with these, we will try to dwell on the transformation of "art" as one of the fundamental concepts in the second chapter.

We will try to discuss the notion of performing arts which is frequently encountered in recent years especially after 1980s. Aristotle's concepts of *techne* and *mimesis* are considered as a base for the construction of the notion of performing arts. Acting, and thus theatre, is one of the most popular performing arts. Today, it seems that almost all conservatories provide an education (with de facto consensus) considering imitation (*mimesis*) as the baseline of acting and theatre. At the beginning of the chapter, we will discuss the notions of *mimesis* and *techne* within

the framework of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and Larry Shiner's *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*.

While the city walls were pulled down and residential areas were becoming more transparent as an indicator and a result of the social/economic transformation, the new walls were being constructed within the cities. *Mahpushanes* (prisons) were one of the primarily built walls. Moreover, the conception of art which includes artisanship and is not limited with the places had broken its connection with the artisanship and been confined in halls within this process.

In the Medieval Age, the authors who are close to the court like Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson are from merchant families. We find it crucial to mention these since the ones who could serve to the court had a bourgeois background and the ones who were not a part of this class had been detached from the arts. While discussing these issues, Shiner will be our most frequent reference.

In the late 18th century, David Hume makes one of the strongest criticisms on the discussion suggesting the art to be outside of the halls. According to him, black people do not have creative characteristics: the states where arts, production and science exist with black people's inhabitation are the lesser evil due to the fact that they are colonized by white groups.³ This comment Hume made in terms of ethnicity is considered in the context that black groups were not able to be economically included in bourgeoisie rather than the context of ethnicity in this study. Towards the end of this discussion in the section entitled *The Doors of the Closed Halls Opening Inside*, the reappearance of arts in public spaces is, also, touched upon.

In the section entitled *A Few Directions on Performance*, it is investigated what performing arts is, and what kind of change process it has undergone especially after 1970s. The performing art's multidisciplinary aspect which we typically

³Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art: Cultural History*. University of Chicago Press, 2001, p.44.

encounter in recent years is dwelled on by revisiting Marvin Carlson's book *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. In the discussion we carried out within the scope of "anything or everything that occurs,"⁴ Augusto Boal's *The Theatre of The Oppressed* inspired by Aristotle's *Poetics* was our main resource to understand his approach to theatre. In order to elucidate Boal's *The Poetics of The Oppressed*, positioning the watcher audience as participating audience is discussed in the section entitled *From the Theatre of the Oppressed to Techne*.

Under the section titled *Social Theatre in Mahpushanes, as Unmarked Parts of the Society*, 'the social theatre' that Richard Schechner combines the notion of performance used in social sciences and theatre is discussed from a Foucauldian perspective. Also, it is investigated the meaning of 'to perform' in order to make clear Schechner's notion of performance. Through laying emphasis on the longest social theatre which has unwittingly occurred in *mahpushanes* (prisons) as a space of confinement, we will discuss the consequences of theatre projects carried out within these spaces.

At the end of the abovementioned chapter, the function of the art's transformation for *mahpushanes* (prisons) will be interpreted, and the thesis' author will share his experiences in the art projects he carried out in *mahpushanes* (prisons).

⁴Carlson, Marvin. *Performance: a Critical Introduction*. Routledge, 1996, p.79.

I. SECTION

MAHPUSHANE (THE PRISON)

1.1. Area of Closure: *Mahpushane* (The Prison)

In this study focusing on the restoring power of performing arts in the *mahpushanes* and its meaning for the *mahpushes*, we will try to discuss the aspects of *mahpushane*, and the concepts enabling the prison to be possible by investigating their mode of usage and how they position people who use them from a Foucauldian perspective.

The sovereign is the new political actor who guarantees his⁵ self-preservation through enacting and performing the law in order to prevent the disorder.⁶ In the light of Foucault's pieces including *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, *Dit et Écrits*, *The History of Sexuality* and the notes of his lecture entitled *Security, Territory, Population*⁷ held in Collège de France between 1977 and 1978, we will try to discuss the sovereignty constructed by the sovereign whose essential responsibility is to preserve the (social) contract portrayed by Hobbes in *Leviathan*. This discussion will be conducted through the appearance of *mahpushane* as a space of discipline, and its relationality with other spaces of confinement such as barracks, hospitals, factories and schools.

In parallel with the chapter that we will try to briefly discuss the transformation of the sovereignty before and after the 18th century called modern era by Foucault, we will, also, try to dwell on the transformation of the punishment. We will discuss the meaning, main structure and function of the 'bio-power' invented by Foucault that

⁵Since Hobbes uses "he/his/him" as the pronoun of the sovereign, we prefer to keep it within the same context even though we are aware that we assume the sovereign's gender in this way.

⁶Ergüden, Reyda-Akal, Cemal Bali. *Kimlik Bedenin Hapishanesidir*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları 2014, p.109.

⁷Foucault, Michel, et al. *Security, Territory, Population* Lectures at the College De France, 1977-78. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

we hope it to make contribution to the understanding the prison appeared in the period called modern era. In this context, we will try to dwell on Bentham's Panopticon while discussing why surveillance and monitoring are fundamental.

As a result of the abovementioned discussions, we will try to clearly investigate what kind of an institution *mahpushane* is, its apparent function and what functions it actually performs, and what results it brings about, and in which ways its inherent contradiction is embodied within the integrity of the entire topic at the end of this chapter.

While discussing the potential writable or representable arguments regarding *mahpushane*, it is crucial to investigate the factors making *mahpushane* possible or enabling it to appear as a result and how these factors have been constructed and expressed in terms of discourse. In the topic we will try to discuss, the penal system, in which the *mahpus* is its principle factor, is comprised not only of the wardens and guards but it has, also, turned into a mechanism including an army of technicians such as psychologists, sociologists, doctors, clergymen, teachers, representatives of the judicial mechanism, NGOs, architects, city planners, drivers, the ones being in search of cheap trade and so on.⁸ The place of this mechanism might be called *mahpushane*.

The name given to the place of confinement and its discursive form diversely position the place and the ones kept in the place as well as the ones narrating them due to their discursive modes. As its official usage, the concept of 'penal institution' (*ceza infaz kurumu*) or 'penitentiary' (*cezaevi*)⁹ refers to a 'penalty' (*ceza*); and the

⁸Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995, p.11.

⁹In the law no: 5237 of the Turkish Criminal Code, no: 5271 of the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code and no: 5275 of the Code of Enforcement of Punishments and Security Measures, the notions of "penal institution and detention house" (*ceza infaz kurumu ve tutukevi*) are used for *mahpushanes* (prisons). "Penal institutions" are the places in which "the sentenced persons," the ones who are sentenced with the final judgment, are kept. In these institutions, the "penalties" inflicted by the court are enforced. Also, "detention houses" are the places in which people whose arrest warrant is determined but case continues without the final judgment are kept. In the Article 765 of Turkish Criminal Code dated 1926 and the regulation inured on the 31st of July 1941(the Regulation on Prisons and Detention Houses (*Ceza ve Tevkifevleri Nizamnamesi*)), the use of "Prisons and Detention Houses" takes place. In addition, the name of the relevant institution which is dependent to the Ministry of Justice is "General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses."

concept of penalty refers to a ‘crime’ requiring to be penalized. Hence, the concept of ‘penitentiary’ (*cezaevi*) reflects a pro-governmental point of view. The concept of penitentiary considers and introduces ‘the inmates’ as ‘criminal.’ Instead of protecting the citizens as its fundamental duty, the sovereignty prefers the easier way through this discourse and leaves even the citizens, it claimed they did not fulfill their responsibilities of citizenship, holding the bag by not taking the responsibility. Passing this responsibility to the citizen is not derived from the unwillingness of the sovereign or the idea considering this responsibility not in the sovereign in himself. The power portrayed in 1651 in Thomas Hobbes’ book entitled *Leviathan* holds a sword on his one hand while holding a scepter on the other one. On the one hand, he claims that he provides the security of the obedient citizens’ lives and properties; on the other hand, he defends the idea that the ones who do not obey must be punished. “According to Hobbes, only one thing could prevent the disorder: a new political actor who will be able to hold both determining and enforcing the law, in other words, to hold the sword on one hand and the scepter on the other one.”¹⁰ We will try to dwell on the discussion of this new political actor. First, we will briefly discuss some of the concepts that we will extensively use throughout this thesis.

“The words such as ‘mahpus’, ‘mahbes’, ‘mahpushane’, ‘hapis’, ‘hapishane’ are derived from the base of ‘habs’ which means ‘to hold, to block, to lock and to separate’ in Arabic language. Among these, ‘hapishane’ is the predominantly used in Turkish language. Corresponding to its base in Arabic, the concept of ‘hapishane’ which primarily means ‘to lock somewhere and not to release’ in Turkish stands out of the subjective perspective that ‘cezaevi’ connotes. ‘Hapishane’ does reflect neither a positive nor a negative point of view for ‘inmates’”.¹¹

¹⁰Ergüden, Reyda - Akal, Cemal Bali. *Kimlik Bedenin Hapishanesidir*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları 2014, p.109.

¹¹Eren, Mustafa. *Kapatılmanın Patolojisi*. İstanbul:Kalkedon Yayınları May 2014, p.23.

Since we are aware that the base of '*habis*' might mean a place where iniquity occurs due to its connotations such as 'evil, dangerous –for illness-, vicious',¹² we find useful to take into consideration of this possibility for our discussion. Hence, we have the concern of the possibility in which '*hapishane*' might, also, mean the place where iniquity occurs and is reproduced. The concern on the occurrence and production of iniquity is due to the fact that prisoners, as the main subjects of the prison, have been made invisible being confined and excluded from the society. Since what is confined and produced is the subject (*mahpus*, the prisoner) and it is an objective usage due to not referring to a positive or negative meaning, to use the concept of '*mahpushane*' (prison) for the place itself will be more accurate from our standpoint. What we hope to explain is not the necessity of focusing completely on the subject. It derives from the perspective that formulating an idea on, discussing and addressing the issue of *mahpushane* based upon the idea of the significance of prioritizing the subject (*mahpus*) and the thought suggesting that the act might be intrinsic to the subject. In the following sections, we will try to dwell on the topic of the prioritization of the subject and the act, and the mentioned concepts in a more detailed and clear way. However, it is crucial to briefly mention that the subject and the act must be considered together due to the fact that neither the subject (the actor) nor the act cannot be possible without each other in the context of the issue we try to discuss on.

1.2. Rendering the *Mahpushane* Possible and Leviathan's Cover Image in 1651

It is required to discuss the modern state and the means/institution of domination while discussing *mahpushane* as the place of punishment in the rough and general terms. Even though we will not scrutinize this entire discussion, we will investigate the meanings of law, crime, judiciary and punishment which cause *mahpushane* to appear as a result. In addition to the factors enabling *mahpushane* to be possible,

¹²See. TDK (Turkish Language Association Dictionary)

we will try to benefit from certain fragments of state in regard to controlling and surveillance referring to the discussions on modern state as they can make significant contributions to this study. In this context, it might be said that *mahpushane* is an institution where the modern state can perform its administrative rules. We will try to describe law, crime, judiciary and punishment as some of the concepts enabling this institution to be governed.

1.2.1. Act (*Yasa*)

TDK (Turkish Language Association, February 2018) defines act through two different descriptions. The first definition refers to the law (*kanun*). Second one described act as ‘governing rule’ – this description is afforded to be clear with an example: ‘The greatest act of the world is to get enough food for self-defense and self-preservation.’¹³ As a legal term, act is described as the rule which is regulated by the legislative power of the state adapting certain forms, becomes obligatory for every one after it is enacted, and imposes certain sanctions in case it is not obeyed. As is understood from the legal description of act, it is obligatory for the state and its citizens throughout the place where it is regulated, since it is regulated by the legislative power of the state. Who faces with the certain enforcements in case of disobedience are not the ones engaged in the legislative power, rather the voters, citizens and everyone who is considered as subjecting to law who elect the ones enacting the act. The acts are not independent from the social structure and “the spirit of the time” and, therefore, they may vary from society to society over time.

1.2.2. Crime

TDK describes “crime” as “an action that law presents its penalty,” “guilt.” As these descriptions highlights, what determines the “crime” is acts. As we mentioned

¹³See TDK (Turkish Language Association Dictionary)

above, acts can change in accordance with the spirit of the time and social structures. The description of crime is regulated based upon the acts which are enacted in accordance with the current social characteristics and constructions of societies. In the Sociological Terms Dictionary, the social dimension of crime is highlighted: “1. A behavior and action which is considered as unfair, is prohibited through written-unwritten rules, and is imposed with sanctions. 2. A behavior against the rules which are determined with the law and imposed with sanctions.”¹⁴

1.2.3. Judgment

Ejder Yılmaz defines the judgment as: “Injury; discernment; (law) court, justice; a state activity for securing the legal order; an activity carried out by the state courts for determining, on the basis of an assertion, if there is an action, situation or a similar assertion affecting the legal order in front of the opponent party, imposing the required legal sanction, and enabling the right which is violated to be performed.”¹⁵

1.2.4. Penalty

The word of *ceza* (penalty) has Arabic origin, and is defined by TDK as: “A distressing, annoying and painful treatment inflicted on the subjects performing such actions for inappropriate reactions and behaviors, or this kind of actions.” As a legal term, it means a sanction which is predicted by the law against the actions it considered as damaging the society.

According to Demirbaş, penalty is “a threatening sanction which is legislatively inflicted against the practices damaging the society, as well as other purposes, by the state, and imposed in direct proportion to the responsibility degree through a

¹⁴TDK Dictionary, (February, 2018)

¹⁵Yılmaz, Ejder. *Hukuk Sözlüğü*. Ankara: Yetkin Yayınları 1996.

judicial decision especially for subjecting the criminal to certain deprivations and, thus, clarifying that the society does not approve the given behaviors.”¹⁶ Based on the definition of punishment/penalty, one might say that to impose punishment has functions including raising the legal consciousness by making the perpetrator pay the penalty for his/her wrongful act, and, thus, preventing the others to commit an illegal act by contributing to the continuity of the legal order.

These concepts we try to describe are discursive and non-discursive practices performed by the institutions created by human agency. As the needs have changed, new concepts have been invented by the virtue of them. Concepts are not explored, rather are invented. They are redefined in response to the change of the needs in the course of time. The change of the needs refers to production of new concepts or update of the produced concepts, and reproduction of them by means of updating. Being updating, these produced concepts are reproduced again and again.¹⁷ When it comes to the update of the concepts regarding the laws, the sovereign employs the scepter on his hand. Using the scepter as a basis and guard, the sovereign employs it to be able to sharpen the sword he holds on his other hand. Also, the sovereign would like his sword to be sharpened in order to have a power enabling him to make the law. The concepts updated by the virtue of the mentioned needs enable the sovereign’s reference points to be increased, and, thereby, transform into a practice in which the sovereign whose sword is sharpened extends his ground for maneuver. The sovereign uses the sword for preserving his legislative power and the law for sharpening his sword, and this does not change in the course of time. This practice might come to mean the eternity of the sovereign who holds the legislative power, and makes law for sharpening the sword on his other hand. This will be because of the social contract which will not change by time and space, and not be able to be even proposed to be changed. In the social contract¹⁸, what is essential will be to elect people who can make choices on behalf of the citizens, to

¹⁶Demirbaş, Timur. *İnfaz Hukuku*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayınları Ekim 2015, p.69.

¹⁷Keskin, Ferda. 28 Eylül 2017, from the class “Rationalities”

¹⁸See. Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları (Translated by Semih Lim) 2016, p.137-145.

be able to make laws and to produce concepts against the society (one might, also, say that ‘for the society or ‘despite the society’) they were elected by; in other words, the sovereign will put himself forward with the scepter and the sword that he holds. As Mustafa Eren states,

“It is possible to scrutinize that the laws are constituted for protecting the society’s benefits, and the presupposition that the actions considered as ‘crime’ damage the ‘society’ based upon the theories of ‘state.’ If we consider the state a Leviathan from the framework of ‘social contracts,’ it would require to regard the laws as the body of rules the ‘citizens’ must obey. From this point of view, the state plays the role of ‘referee (*hakem*)’ in case of a disagreement between the individuals in the society.”¹⁹

The sovereign called ‘referee (*hakem*)’ by Eren and ‘political actor’²⁰ by Ergüden is portrayed in the cover of the 1651 edition of *Leviathan* as follows: a body is portrayed which might be called king/sovereign considering the sword and scepter on his hands, and the crown on his head. It is not possible to see the skin of the king apart from the part between his head and neck, and his hands. The part between the king’s arms and belly is, also, dressed up with a chain mail. We can see a settlement and hills on the lower side of his body starting from his pelvic cavity. What is portrayed in the book cover seems like the state’s evoked ghost. Since the body’s parts of upper torso, arms and head are positioned above all, the sovereign portrayed on the book cover seems like a powerful portrait of the evoked ghost of the state. It is above everything else, and the visible. The rest parts of the portrait are behind the hills, and the invisible. According to Foucault, “the soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body.”²¹ In this regard, one might say that the soul represents what makes and enforces the law, and the body what the law is applied on. The body is what enables the soul to be visible. The power of

¹⁹Eren, Mustafa. *Kapatılmanın Patolojisi*. İstanbul: Kalkedon Yayınları 2014, p.30.

²⁰Ergüden, Reyda-Akal, Cemal Bali. *Kimlik Bedenin Hapishanesidir*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları 2014, p.109.

²¹As cited in Ergüden, Reyda-Akal, Cemal Bali. *Kimlik Bedenin Hapishanesidir*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları 2014, p.1.

the soul depends on the applicability of the laws, and the unity of wholeness including the body, which is visible only above the pelvic cavity as portrayed on the cover of *Leviathan*'s 1651 edition.

1.3. The Transformation of Performative Torture into the Representation of Surveillance and Control

The law system enabling the dual share between the prohibited and the allowed makes the law, and punishes the ones who violate the law. What pairs the prohibited act and the punishment is the law; and the law is the combination of crime and punishment.²² The law is both the cause and the effect of crime and punishment at the same time. Foucault calls the period between the middle of the 17th century and the end of the 18th century when the monarchy was predominant as the Classical Era.

“According to the sense of law in this period, all crimes which are committed against the law are actually considered as if they are against the sovereign regardless of their quality and target. Since the law is identical with the sovereign’s will and the law’s power is actually the sovereign’s, any crime is seen as if it personally and physically attacks on the sovereign.”²³

The penalty of a crime was mostly death regardless of the quality of the crime in the Classical era; and, the precondition of death was the torment. There is a claim that the aim of the penal system is to discipline those who commit a crime and/or to suppress the damaged ones’ sense of revenge. However, if someone is condemned to a noteworthy penalty, in which case almost all penalties had referred to the death sentence by the 18th century, it is clear that the rehabilitation of the

²²Foucault, Michel, et al. *Security, Territory, Population* Lectures at the College De France, 1977-78. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p.20.

²³Keskin, Ferda. Foucault’da Şiddet ve İktidar. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, Cogito, Kış-Bahar 1996, p.118.

lawbreaker is not mentionable. In this context, it is possible to say that the penalty can have a corrective influence on the rest of the population by the 18th century.²⁴

In order to drive the torture, the execution of a crime was performed in large areas. Thus, the process of executions, in other words the torment itself, was formed as a feast, a ritual, a performance which could be publicly participated in. In these performances, the sovereign and the power he presents had the privilege of determining who would be audience or be tortured, in what form the performance would be held, and how long it would take.²⁵ In other words, the sovereign and the power he presents were in the producer and director position of the performance. In *Encyclopédie*, Jaucourt defines torment as “a physical punishment which is more or less impossible to resist,” and adds, “it is an inexplicable fact that humans have brought their imagination, barbarity and brutality into this level.”²⁶ As it is seen, to torment is a technique and an agonizing practice which is evaluable and comparable, and can be hierarchized. Considering its implementing procedures and design, this agonizing practice is performed as an artistic performance. It is measured and predetermined how the punishment will begin, progress and end. According to Foucault,

“Torture rests on a whole quantitative art of pain. But there is more to it: this production of pain is regulated. Torture correlates the type of corporal effect, the quality, intensity, duration of pain, with the gravity of the crime, the person of the criminal, the rank of his victims.”²⁷

In the introduction of *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault describes the performance of barbarism and brutality as follows:

“On 2 March 1757 Damiens the regicide was condemned ‘to make the *amende honorable* before the main door of the Church of Paris*, where he

²⁴Foucault, Michel, et al. *Security, Territory, Population* Lectures at the College De France, 1977-78. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.21.

²⁵Ibid., p.131-132.

²⁶Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995, p.33.

²⁷Ibid., p.34.

was to be ‘taken and conveyed in a cart, wearing nothing but a shirt, holding a torch of burning wax weighing two pounds’; then, ‘in the said cart, to the Place de Gréve, where, on a scaffold that will be erected there, the flesh will be tom from his breasts, arms, thighs and calves with red-hot pincers, his right hand, holding the knife with which he committed the said parricide, burnt with sulphur, and, on those places where the flesh will be torn away, poured molten lead, boiling oil, burning resin, wax and sulphur melted together and then his body drawn and quartered by four horses and his limbs and body consumed by fire, reduced to ashes and his ashes thrown to the winds!’²⁸

The torture in Damiens’ execution is not a randomized violence, but rather planned and performed based on the sovereign’s law; it is clear that the execution is in the form of performance consisting of introduction, body and conclusion parts and containing a message. At this point, it is crucial to mention that the sovereign, as the producer and director of the performance, is directly associated with the execution of the performance through the art of government he possesses, and indicates the existence of economy of power.

Economy, or etymologically *oikonomia* in Greek, is derived from *oikos* (home) and *nomos* (law) and means the sage and legitimate household management for the common good of the whole family. To govern a state and to affect economy at the level of state could be possible through being much more careful than a family man is about his house and properties, and inventing and implementing surveillance mechanisms.²⁹

The performance of the economy of power has been affected negatively in the course of time because of the disproportion between the crime and the punishment. The community was previously guided for promoting the torture, and this guidance means the consolidation of the economy of power. It was, also affected negatively

²⁸Ibid., p.3.

²⁹Foucault, Michel, et al. *Security, Territory, Population* Lectures at the College De France, 1977-78. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.133.

due to the fact that the community's reaction had turned into a humane sentiment for the good of the criminal. In addition to these, the torture ceremonies could cause prisoners, knowing that they will be killed, to create trouble; to mouth off due to their courage; and, even, to receive the audience's support.³⁰ In Foucault's words:

“Now it was on this point that the people, drawn to the spectacle intended to terrorize it, could express its rejection of the punitive power and sometimes revolt. Preventing an execution that was regarded as unjust, snatching a condemned man from the hands of the executioner, obtaining his pardon by force, possibly pursuing and assaulting the executioners, in any case abusing the judges and causing an uproar against the sentence- all this formed part of the popular practices that invested, traversed and often overturned the ritual of the public execution.”³¹

So, these imply the breakdown of the performance and the depotentialization of the economy of power. In such a case, what the power must do was to find another method enabling the economy to be strengthened by changing the form of execution. Thereby, the body, as the object of this transformation, will keep its presence but be no longer the exhibited body transforming into the imprisoned one.³² This change implies the transformation of method. The changed method of torturing performance was an issue the sovereign cares about. This change was enabled through the invention of a method which could provide added value for strengthening the economy of power. Hence, the method which became impasse through the invention of prison was implemented by transforming the body which was both the object and the tool in the execution of punishment into a tool. Punishment became to be inflicted restrictedly within the institutions by being no longer a performance in the form of ceremony. It might be said that the representation of surveillance and monitoring replaced the performance of torture.

³⁰Ibid., p.173.

³¹Ibid., p.93.

³²Ibid., p.65.

1.4. Spatial Problems: The Demolition of the City Walls and Surveillance

From the 17th century to the early 18th century, cities were crowded and covered by walls; separated from other spaces on the land being bounded; they had their own legal and governmental status within the boundaries. They were, also, economically and socially more heterogeneous in comparison to villages. In the 18th century, there was a need of large streets which will distribute yet control the goods coming from outside of the city in order to hygienically function and resolve the air pollution. Most importantly, walls must be pulled down due to the economic developments. This necessity caused the city gates not to be closed, ones who come from outside not to be controlled, and the group including beggars, thieves, murderers and criminals to be able to disrupt the city's heterogeneous structure.³³ This was an important problem because it was easier to supervise and control a heterogeneous society. A heterogeneous society was a society which is and could be stigmatized.

Foucault schematically describes what he means by spatial problems as follows: "...sovereignty is exercised within the borders of a territory, discipline is exercised on the bodies of individuals, and security is exercised over a whole population."³⁴ However, it is crucial to mention that nothing in this schema fits together for Foucault, and the actual situation is not like mentioned. In this context, Foucault reshapes and rearticulates the schema as follows: "...nevertheless the effective, real, daily operations of the actual exercise of sovereignty point to a certain multiplicity, but one which is treated as the multiplicity of subjects, or [as] the multiplicity of a people."³⁵

The possibility of a discipline in the aimed and projected extent is based on the presence of plurality and its extension. All of the disciplines imposed at schools, barracks, hospitals and prisons, and the ones imposed to laborers in factories. According to Foucault, "The individual is much more a particular way of dividing

³³Ibid., p.26-27.

³⁴Ibid., p.25.

³⁵Ibid., p.26.

up the multiplicity for a discipline than the raw material from which it is constructed. ... So, sovereignty and discipline, as well as security, can only be concerned with multiplicities.”³⁶

In his text entitled *La Métropolité*, Alexandre Le Maître efforts to answer if the countries must have a capital city and what kind of capital city it must be. Le Maître suggests that the state must consist of three layers including peasants, craftsmen, and the sovereign and the ones who works under the auspices of him, and describes the state like a large building:

“The peasants, of course, are the foundations of the edifice, in the ground, under the ground, unseen but ensuring the solidity of the whole. The common parts, the service quarters of the edifice, are, of course, the artisans. As for the noble quarters, the living and reception areas, these are the sovereign’s officers and the sovereign himself. On the basis of this architectural metaphor, the territory must also comprise foundations, common parts, and noble parts. The foundations will be the countryside, and it goes without saying that all the peasants, and only peasants, must live in the countryside. Second, all the artisans, and only artisans, must live in the small towns. Finally, the sovereign, his officers, and those artisans and tradesmen who are indispensable to the functioning of the court and the sovereign’s entourage, must live in the capital.”³⁷

Compulsory precautions to be taken in the case of plague were listed in the regulation issued at the end of the 17th century.³⁸ With this regulation, it is specified that lepers must be quarantined, their doors should be locked, foods should be stored up in front of their doors, ones who go out are punished with death, and other precautions in detail like the law. In other words, quarantining the ones who gets the disease was not considered enough, and, thus, they (diseased ones) were regularly controlled and supervised for the others (ones outside) not to be passed

³⁶Ibid., p.26.

³⁷Ibid., p.27-28.

³⁸Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995, p.195.

on the disease. This quarantine system invented for lepers has begun to be used for disciplining a certain group of people including ones who riot, steal, murder, commit desertion as well as the ones living in disorder and disturb the order as is the case with 'plague' and other diseases; in order to make³⁹ them obey. In the light of these, it is possible to say that people who get disease and disobey must be located in a distant and invisible part of the sovereignty. It is significant to mention that "those who are put inside" by being excluding from the society are not visible for the rest of society but known and consistently supervised by the sovereign through keeping them visible in a certain level and time determined by the sovereign.

1.5. The Important Invention of the Bio-Power Era: Panopticon

The concept of panopticon is crucial to understand how the relation between prison, and control and surveillance arisen in the 19th century. The Panopticon is remarkable in order to understand how the relation between prison, and control and surveillance arose, which techniques were used and what results participation in it brought.

Foucault uses the concept of bio-politics in his classes at Collège de France between 1975 and 1976. Through the influence of industrialization in the 18th century, it has been planned to organize the life within the bio-political system. It is possible to say that the fact that the human is considered a biological phenomenon, and the bio-politics has two different modes of power with its discipline and organization mechanisms by looking at the title of the class. The body is in the position of the object of disciplining power; and the population is of organizing power.⁴⁰ One year later, Foucault makes effort to reanalyze bio-politics as the combination of these

³⁹Ibid., p.198.

⁴⁰See. Foucault, Michel, et al. *Security, Territory, Population* Lectures at the College De France, 1977-78. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

two power mechanisms. In his “Security, Land, Population⁴¹” class held on the 11th of January 1978, Foucault tries to briefly describe the bio-power as the whole mechanisms of modern western societies which have enabled the basic biological aspects of human beings to be included in politics and a general power strategy. The reason under this description is to define what we need to understand by ‘security’ and to determine if we live in a secure society.⁴²

To construct security necessitates analyzing the abovementioned plurality because it is an important factor in making the norm. The norm is constructed based on the structure of plurality, and the law based on the norm. Laws, firstly, pay regard the continuation of the law maker, and, are, then, made in accordance with the plurality’s actions. The law determines what is prohibited and what is allowed, and positions the couple of crime-punishment against itself. The sovereignty positions the plurality (in terms of population) called ‘norm’al as the opposite of the ab’norm’al representing the minority (in terms of population). Hence, it can be easier to assimilate the minority to the plurality by disciplining it. The society can be easily controlled by transforming a heterogeneous structure through normalization. Foucault states:

“Due to the primacy of the norm in relation to the normal, to the fact that disciplinary normalization goes from the norm to the final division between the normal and the abnormal, I would rather say that what is involved in disciplinary techniques is a normation (normation) rather than normalization.”⁴³

It is significant to mention that the city walls were pulled down by necessity, and even obligation, for especially the evolvement of commercial circulation, the idea of constructing new walls for the city’s security was brought forward. *Mahpushane* (the prison) is an invention of one of the confinement spaces brought out with the

⁴¹In his class dated February 1, 1978, Foucault mentions that the title of “The History of Governmentality” is more appropriate.

⁴²Ibid., p.18.

⁴³Foucault, Michel, et al. *Security, Territory, Population* Lectures at the College De France, 1977-78. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.85.

new built walls. The invention of *mahpushane* means transformation in the representation of punishment.

Foucault argues that the power mechanisms that he labors to determine in terms of sovereignty have been shaped in a different way with the invention of prison.⁴⁴ Through the development of certain techniques including monitoring, control, regulation, classification, space segmentation and surveillance as the discipline factors of normalization process in the 17th century, the minorities in number and individuals were aligned with a certain norm arisen from the plurality. The sovereign who appears by spreading fear and fright has changed his mode of visibility through the new discipline techniques. The sovereign has not been visible anymore but in a supervising position; the subject has been transformed into a subject who is observed, and the minorities into the ones who are monitored. In the 18th century, the punishment became no longer a performance terrifying the audience, a ceremony of sovereignty or a show of violence such in the monarchical law. New mode of punishment which requires confidentiality, and is autonomous in terms of its functions, rules and techniques have gradually been adopted.⁴⁵

The Panopticon is an architectural design which allows observing without being seen invented by Bentham. There is a central tower for monitoring and an annular building around it. The building that is divided into cells receives light through two big (inner and outer) windows and, it, thus, can be observed easily. Since the observer in the tower remains unseen, the occupants of the cells are not able to tell when they are being observed.⁴⁶ Besides this invention causing an information asymmetry between the observed and the observer is architectural, it is also important in terms of causing the observed to develop self-control. The Panopticon provides an environment of laboratory or experiment by objectifying the observed. The Panopticon, where the objectified is not necessarily the prisoner, is a great invention due to its applicability on everywhere including the observer and the

⁴⁴Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995.

⁴⁵Keskin, Ferda. Foucault'da Şiddet ve İktidar. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, *Cogito*, Kış-Bahar 1996, p.118.

⁴⁶Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995. p.195.

observed such as children at schools, laborers in factories, patients in hospitals, and soldiers in barracks. According to Foucault, the Panopticon is “a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power.”⁴⁷

It is not clear if Bentham, “the master of the Panopticon,”⁴⁸ had been inspired by Le Vaux’ zoo in Versailles.⁴⁹ However, it seems that *mahpushane* is constricted and airless, and transformed into the city forms covered by walls which have a heterogeneous structure comparing to the outside, and control and monitor its entrance and exit by being modified. For Foucault, the transformation of punishment is “an important moment”:

“The old partners of the spectacle of punishment, the body and the blood, gave way. A new character came on the scene, masked. It was the end of a certain kind of tragedy; comedy began, with shadow play, faceless voices, impalpable entities. The apparatus of punitive justice must now bite into this bodiless reality.”⁵⁰

Instead of the old penal procedure which torments the anatomy by modifying, considers the executioner apparently as the main actor, and the prisoner as the victim, the new penal system in which the prisoner becomes the principal factor, is comprised not only of the wardens and guards but it has, also, transformed into a mechanism including an army of technicians such as psychologists, sociologists, doctors, clergymen, teachers, representatives of the judicial mechanism, NGOs, architects, city planners, drivers, the ones being in search of cheap trade and so on.⁵¹

⁴⁷Ibid., p.131.

⁴⁸Ibid., p.204.

⁴⁹See. Ibid., p.203.

⁵⁰Ibid., p.16-17.

⁵¹Ibid.

1.6. The Torment of *Mahpushane*: *Mahpushanes* Punish Whom In What Ways

“The public execution did not re-establish justice; it reactivated power. In the seventeenth century, and even in the early eighteenth century, it was not, therefore, with all its theatre of terror, a lingering hang-over from an earlier age. Its ruthlessness, its spectacle, its physical violence, its unbalanced play of forces, its meticulous ceremonial, its entire apparatus were inscribed in the political functioning of the penal system.”⁵²

The punishment methods of prison, which was invented and appeared as an institution, had been criticized at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. Someone commits a crime by expressing the evil inside of her/him and, thereby, disobeys the social contract. Since her/his disobedience to the social contract will serve as a model, s/he is considered as posing danger and must be separated from ones who obey the contract. However, it is, also, possible to say that the separation of the dangerous person from the rest of the society is not considered a punishment per se. Because prisoners are starved less and feel less cold than the poor and most of the laborers besides that their problems of sheltering and poverty are solved in this way.⁵³ On the assumption that the actual punishment is possible if the person is imposed extra punishment in addition to excluding her/him from the society, it might be said that the criminal person has to suffer more than the rest of society. With these penalties, the sovereign in the position of controller of social security manifests that the rest of society is “docile” and the good by separating the person who perpetuates the law. The group considered docile is not imprisoned and this is seen as the gift of the sovereign’s compassionate. People are grateful because they are not “inside;” to be grateful for anything defined as gift is one of the lessons the docile society is taught. To offer the votive and to sacrifice can be seen as some examples of the taught ways of expressing gratitude. Prisoners are shown to the docile society as the votive in order to bless its docility.

⁵²Ibid., p.49.

⁵³Ibid.

Excluding a person, as a social being, from the society means to punish her/him. It is important to discuss the confinement of a person considered dangerous in terms of the penalty. Especially in the societies in which the sovereign cannot provide the people with minimum living conditions, the confinement of a person considered dangerous goes beyond her/his punishment and harms her/his family and relatives as well. Because it can be easily understood that it is not possible to survive without money for a person, on the assumption that this person, whose main issue is to survive, is poor and unemployed. It is open to dispute that people, who do not have the minimum living conditions and go against the law determined by the sovereign with the intent of survival, are considered criminal. In parallel with our discussion, Foucault states:

“It is entirely clear that the proletariat is a victim of delinquency. Of course, the elderly has no special compassion for a young criminal who steals the last penny they accumulate to buy a Solex. But who is responsible for the fact that this young man does not have enough money to buy Solex, and secondly, who is responsible for the fact that he has such a desire to buy a Solex?”⁵⁴

In the societies lacking of the fair management as one of the tools enabling the sovereign’s responsibility of preserving the social contract, it is not clear who is considered as responsible of the problems arising from injustice. Therefore, it is crucial to mention that the discussion considering prisons, which are invented in sovereignties with (and even without) injustice, as disciplinary is useless. In Foucault’s words:

“This sentence [the main objective of punishment that deprives of freedom is to set the prisoner on the right path and reclaim it for the society], which the French judges express with great respect today, was formulated in the very same terms hundred and fifty years ago. When the prisons were

⁵⁴Foucault, Michel. *Büyük Kapatılma*. Ayrıntı Yayınları (Translated by Ergüden Işık) 2011, p.111. (These parts of the book translated from Turkish version of the book by Ferda Keskin)

established, they were meant to be means of reforming the inmates. This has failed. It was imagined that confinement, isolation from environment, solitude, reflection, mandatory work, continual supervision, moral and religious incentives would lead the prisoners to rehabilitation. After a hundred and fifty years of failure, you can't keep asking for faith in the prison system. This sentence has been repeated so many times that it has no credibility left.”⁵⁵



⁵⁵Ibid., p.124-125.

II. SECTION

PERFORMING ARTS

2.1. Performance Concept

In the first chapter, we investigated the transformation of penalizing practices within the dichotomy of crime and punishment. Within this process including the shift from “torture on body” to the confinement, and the occurrence of confinement as a penalizing practice itself, the “art,” which is the second main notion of this thesis, has been transformed as well. In this chapter, the thoughts on the art’s transformation to the performance will be discussed, and we will lay emphasis on the perspective suggesting that Aristotle’s notion of craft/art must be considered as the performance of everything and everywhere.

In this chapter entitled Performing Arts, we will try to dwell briefly on the meanings of Aristotle’s concepts *techne* and *mimesis* before the discussion of performing art. Within the frame of the discussions in Larry Shiner’s *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, we will investigate which concepts were produced instead of *techne* and *mimesis* in the 18th century, how these concepts have been transformed, and which practical and institutional system they have been socially involved in.

Following the section *Transformation of Techne to Art*, we will try to investigate in what way the concept of ‘performing arts’ is defined by narrowing the framework of ‘performance’ which is thoroughly discussed as a concept in *Performance: A Critical Introduction* by Marvin Carlson, and how the concept of performance is employed today. As Richard Schechner states in his interview to the *Mimesis Journal*, he avoids oversimplifying the ‘performance’ since it may cause a restriction.⁵⁶ We will, also, try to discuss the concept of ‘performance’ by making use of explanatory examples without delimiting the ‘performance’ with only-and-

⁵⁶*Mimesis*, Tiyatro/Çeviri-Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı 17. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi Haziran 2010, p.27.

one definition. The abovementioned discussions will be carried out focusing on the concept of performance used in performing arts rather than general discussions on the concept.

In the third section, we will discuss that performing arts must be performed not only in palaces or halls, but also on streets, squares and all public spaces as in its emergence with its importance in the light of Augusto Boal's discussions in *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

In the section entitled *Social Theatre in Mahpushanes, as Unmarked Parts of the Society*, the arguments on what functions the art's transformation can provide to *mahpushanes* will be investigated. In this context, we will try to discuss the "social theatre"⁵⁷ which is constructed through combining performance and theatre by Richard Schechner, and the meanings of social theatre practices in *mahpushanes*. Schechner, firstly, discusses the meaning of "to perform" in order to make clear the performance of 'social theatre' in prisons which are one of the social components, and mostly forgotten but recalled at certain times to a large group of the society (to the majority in terms of population). This discussion is crucial to determine what performance means.

At the end of this chapter, I will try to share my experiences on art projects that I have carried out in *mahpushanes*. In this way, I aim to make clearer what influences performing arts which are conducted in *mahpushanes* have.

2.2. Techne's Transformation to Art

"The word we often translate as "art" was *techne* which, like the Romans *ars*, included many things we would call "craft." *Techne/ars* embraces things as diverse as carpentry and poetry, shoemaking and medicine, sculpture and horse breaking."⁵⁸

⁵⁷Ibid., p.77.

⁵⁸Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art: Cultural History*. University of Chicago Press, 2001, p.19.

While describing the process of creating (*poetic*), Aristotle categorizes it in three dimensions in terms of the used *tool*, *object*, and *style*, and states that this process is enabled by imitation (*mimesis*). For him, *epos*, *tragedy*, *comedy* and *dithyrambic poetry* are imitation, namely *mimesis*, in general.⁵⁹ Aristotle mentions that the acting ones can be mimicked, and, hence, divides people, who act, in two categories in terms of their goodness and badness by necessity. In this context, he, also, states that imitations (*mimesis*) are divided as of good, realistic and bad actions.⁶⁰

According to Larry Shiner, Aristotle defines *techne* as “the ability to produce something under the guidance of rational thought and education.” However, *techne* does not have a definition referring to ‘technique’ in Ancient Greece. In Aristotle’s *techne*, there is the notion of *metis* which includes an agile mind, and addresses to the “crafty wisdom” of a haunter or Homer’s Odysseus. In Ancient Greece, people who perform shoe-making, ceramic-making, medicine, poetry and more diverse activities were neither a “craftsman” nor an “artist” in the modern sense; they were craftsmen/artists: they were talented and nuanced/rigorous performers/practitioners who have *metis* and *techne*.⁶¹

According to Larry Shiner, Aristotle’s ‘arts of imitation’ does not mean ‘fine arts’ that we use today. Even though Aristotle states that imitation is a common aspect of certain arts, this statement does not necessarily mean that the arts of imitation are not an unchangeable group in themselves. The common features of paint and tragedy, as Aristotle’s “arts of imitation,” are not distinguished from shoe-making or medicine in terms of their *procedures*. Although it might be hurtful for our post-romantic sensitivities, Aristotle argues that the craftsman/artist produce a certain product (tragedy/shoe) by taking a certain raw material (human character/leather) and using a certain group of ideas and procedures (plot/form of the shoe).⁶² Due to the fact that the production of something might be possible through designing and

⁵⁹Aristoteles. *Poetika*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi (çev. İsmail Tunalı) 2006, 1447a.

⁶⁰Ibid., 1448a.

⁶¹Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art: Cultural History*. University of Chicago Press, 2001, p.20-21.

⁶²Ibid.

bringing the existing things together or separating them, we prefer to use the term “production” at this point. As might be understood from Aristotle’s statement derived from Larry Shiner, craftsmen/artists are people who are able to produce the existing things rather than who create something out of nothing.

The (Ancient) Greeks’ approach to the visual arts before the Hellenistic Era (the death of the Great Alexander is considered as the start of this period – BC. 323) is portrayed by John Boardman as follows: “‘Art for Art’s sake’ was virtually an unknown concept; there was neither a real Art Market nor Collectors; all art had a function and artists were suppliers of a commodity on a par with shoemakers.”⁶³

2.3. Confinement of Performance from Public Spaces to the Halls

Most of the intellectuals in the medieval period remark that their knowledge about the realm of the existence is based on the views of Aristotle. However, while Aristotle inquires what existence is, the philosophers of the medieval period questioned how the existing things are created -by God-. From this perspective, it could be said that the difference between Aristotle and the philosophers of the medieval period is significant. We could explain the importance of this difference as follows: Whereas in Aristotle, considering the object of knowledge is determinative to conclude if a notion about existence is right or wrong, for the Mediaeval philosophers the question of how is the existence created by God entails God as the imperative source of the knowledge, and so the knowledge cannot be wrong, due to its source.⁶⁴

It could be said that philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, Blaise Pascal, who are very different in their thinking, were in the desire of having close relationships with ruling elite, or they already had a closeness to them. According to these philosophers, imagination should function in order to keep daily, ‘normal’

⁶³Ibid., p.26.

⁶⁴Güzel, Cemal. Aristoteles’te Bilgi, Bilim, Bilgide Kesinlik. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 2003, Cilt: 20, Sayı: 1, p.126-139.

images in the mind. Orientating the mind towards inventions or phantasies would be overstepping its limits, which means opening the mind to the possibility of madness or illusions. “Although there was a theosophical and mystical tradition with a more positive view of the imagination, it played only a marginal role in seventeenth-century writing on the arts.”⁶⁵ It could be said that a consideration of the limitations on imagination also indicates the limitations of products. In this regard, Diderot argues that imagination cannot create anything, but it can only bring existing things together, it can organize, exaggerate, imitate, widen or narrow them.⁶⁶ Although the product can be made by different crafter/artist, it could only be produced in certain limits. According to John Dryden, “imagination in a poet is a faculty so wild and lawless, that like a high-ranging spaniel, it must have clogs tied to it, lest it outrun the judgement”⁶⁷

Considering Dryden’s statement, it would not be very likely to comment if the crafter/artist, who produces different/distinctive things than the already existing ones, has an imagination or not (without discussing the issue about the imagination of people who are not crafter/artist). However, since drawing a limit not only means taking something in but also keeping something out, limiting poet’s imagination would mean that the poet will create by way of a recipe, a template or an order. Contrary to what Dryden imagined, drawing borders originates the distinction between crafter and artist and so, it could be seen as one of the reasons for separation of the areas like painting, poetry, music, medicine or horse training. In the same period, the theosophical and mystic tradition that imagined “good” was also present. The reason for this tradition to fall to be marginal is, as in the statement, that both the imagination and the “good” that was linked with the imagination were personal.

It could be argued that the factor that determines the hierarchy of the structure, which was called “bourgeoisie” in Continental Europe and “middle class” in Great Britain is possession of wealth. In this hierarchical structure, imitating was also in

⁶⁵Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art: Cultural History*. University of Chicago Press, 2001, p.312.

⁶⁶Ibid., p.114.

⁶⁷See: Ibid., p.66.

a hierarchical order. People who were richer were imitated. Larry Shiner explains that:

“...ranging from rich merchants or financiers at the top down through layer after layer of decreasing wealth to the law clerk, shopkeeper, and self-employed artisan or independent farmer. Whenever one stood in this hierarchy, there was a tendency to ape those in the ranks above, whether by attending a concert or exhibition or, in the case of the more affluent, by acquiring a harpsichord or hiring a portrait painter.”⁶⁸

In the renaissance period, the concept of fine arts had not been as in today's usage. In the middle ages, uniformed poets who stay in the palace together with servants appeared, instead of traveler performers who would tour different palaces and give performances for people's entertainment. Only in 1501, the distinction between composer and performer was drawn, after the printing of notes of musical pieces. Musicians like Adrian Willaert and Josquindes Prez, who were respected and famous with their compositions, were not bound to the palace; they had the freedom to perform in different palaces. Especially, after music turned into being in written text, in the renaissance period, the term “work” is found to be used - even rarely, but it was still not possible to use the concepts like modern independent "artwork" or independent “artist”. It was because a lot of musicians had still been composers/performers who serve according to the employers' requests of form and timing and they were still playing melodies of other musicians.⁶⁹

According to Shiner, “in the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture there was an even greater advance in the status and image of the artisan/artist.”⁷⁰ Painters, sculptors, and architects had a higher status than other crafters/artists since they were assigned by the sovereign. They were being separated from palace barbers and tailors with a rank called “*valet de chambre*” [male servant] and some of them earned peerage. However, holding such ranks also brought critics towards the

⁶⁸Ibid., p.66.

⁶⁹Ibid., p.39.

⁷⁰Ibid., p.39.

craftsman/artist. Shiner argues that Michelangelo, who prided himself to not to run a workshop place, is much closer to the modern artist than other artists in his time, as he valued self-expression and originality more than ability and service.⁷¹ Likewise, “When Michelangelo mentioned in a letter of 1523 that Pope Julius II let him “do what I wished” in the Sistine Chapel, it did not mean ‘that he could paint whatever he wanted, rather... that he could treat his theme in whatever manner he chose,’ a theme in all likelihood agreed to in advance by his notoriously strong-willed patron.”⁷²

In the Elizabethan era, the art of poetry was learned through multiple repetitions of some exercise methods that consist of lessons, instruction, and homework. There was a distinction between amateur and professional for people who write poetry. The amateur group was the majority, who were mostly upper-class men, who wrote poems for the sake of pleasure and shared it only with their close circles, believing that their publication would mean an exposure that would not be suitable for their social status. Writers who were called professionals were often making their living with writing or forced to earn money from writing, supported by sponsors. Under sponsorship or not, professionals were criticized because of their obsequious dedications to get small amounts of money. The amateur groups belong to upper class also couldn't escape the critics as they used poems in order to find a job or to reach a position.⁷³ In the Elizabethan era, most of the play writers' fathers were craftsmen or merchants. One of the professional writers, “Gabriel Spencer's father was a clothmaker, Christopher Marlowe's a cobbler, William Shakespeare's a glover, Ben Jonson's stepfather a bricklayer.”⁷⁴

In the Middle Ages, for both art and craft, the conceptualization of art was neither as it was like in Aristotle period, nor as it is today. One could discuss that the most important reason behind that was Elizabethan period's “professional writers”, who were close to the palace since their fathers were craftsmen or merchants. One of the

⁷¹Ibid., p.81.

⁷²Ibid., p.46.

⁷³Ibid., p.82.

⁷⁴Ibid., p.52.

Elizabethan period poet, “Shakespeare, as an actor-shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, was not at complete liberty but clearly tailored his plays to the number of actors and variety of abilities in the company. And when the Lord’s Chamberlain’s Men became the King’s Men on the accession of James I, Shakespeare chose themes that would please the royal court.”⁷⁵

Traveler actors from I. Elizabeth period could perform in squares, marketplaces, inns where people could come together. However, I. Elizabeth passed a law, “Vagrancy Law”, which equalizes jugglers and bards with vagrant thieves, beggars, and Gypsies.⁷⁶ It could be said that “Vagrancy Law” was enacted with the aim of taking artworks away from the streets and bringing them into a different position, which public cannot reach because of economic and hierarchical reasons. At the beginning of the 18th century, the dominant term was still “invention” and crafter/artists activity had still seen as a construction. For Batteux and many others, the difference between creation and invention was explained as follows: “The human spirit cannot properly create... To invent in the arts isn’t to give being to an object, but to recognize where and how it is... [that] the men of genius who dig deepest, discover only what existed before.”⁷⁷ As it is seen, from Aristotle to the beginning of 18th century, craft/art or fine arts, as it is used today, were not only areas like painting, sculpture, music, but it was a bigger set including also areas like horse training, medicine or architecture.

2.4. The Doors of the Closed Halls Opening Inside

In the 18th century, the discussions about who can understand the art began, which was already taken away from public spaces to the halls. The best example for this discussion about art, of which space and definition were transforming, is the annual magazine, Salon, of French Academy. With an idealist approach, Louis de

⁷⁵Ibid., p.49.

⁷⁶Ibid., p.162.

⁷⁷Ibid., p.114.

Carmontelle stated that “all classes of citizens come to pack the Salon ...[and] the public, natural judge of the fine arts, ... renders its verdict.”⁷⁸ It was claimed that even though the "art" that was restrained from streets and squares into palaces and halls, people from different classes could be taken into the halls. However, on the other edge of the discussion, David Hume considered the possibility of opening the halls to people from all class and outside of the bourgeoisie, which consists of only white people, and argued that:

“I am apt to suspect the negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion... no ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences... Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over EUROPE, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity”⁷⁹

It is known that such statement based on a claim that white people brought civilization to colonized places through a creativity only white people had have, with means of science, art and creative production. Therefore, it could be said that according to Hume's knowledge the places Black people were living were only the countries that are colonized by white people. Furthermore, according to Hume, we gain sentiment towards elegant and beautiful desires by virtue of taste we take from “elegant arts”. So, we would be moved away from vulgar, aggressive and ugly feelings.⁸⁰ In this context, when one considers Hume’s argument, his expression about ‘NEGRO’ people who were not related in any areas of “elegant arts” is on the one side, he mentions only white people who are moved away from vulgar, aggressive and ugly feelings by means of "elegant arts". Vulgar, aggressive and ugly feelings and behaviors are not factors that can be determined by distinctions like people's color or sex. However, this problem is not limited only to the Middle Ages. Even after hundreds of years passed after the middle ages, in the 1980s Eleanor Antin was criticized due to her productions reminding of black ballerina.”⁸¹

⁷⁸Ibid., p.137.

⁷⁹Ibid., p.139.

⁸⁰Ibid., p.196.

⁸¹Carlson, Marvin. *Performance/a critical introduction*, New York: Routledge 1996, p.236.

Even in 1970s-1980s, almost all the performance artists were well-educated, white people from bourgeois class, but fortunately, after 1980s performers coming from different ethnicities have been increasing.⁸² The performance disciplines that meet with the audience in spectacles such as circus, sport, and dance are mainly related to acting, and so with theatre. One could say that these performances seem to be a form of physical abilities in the first glance, though, in fact, they form completeness with jointing of light, setting, costume, direction, and music. Although fundamentally it is the performer's talent becomes prominent, the performance occurs through a completeness of the elements such as music and light, as mentioned above. Therefore, "Hence the importance of physical presence: the technical skill and achievement of the performer, the visual display of dazzling costumes, or scenic effects are dependent for a certain part of their power upon the fact that they are actually generated in our presence."⁸³ According to Schiller,

"In the genuine work of fine art there is already a harmony of freedom and necessity, duty and inclination, the 'spiritual drive' and the 'sensuous drive', a union that Schiller called 'play'. The artist-genius embodies the transcendent truth about life in the work of art as play, yet this truth is not a specific content but resides only in the *form* of the work. In a truly successful work of the content should effect nothing, the form everything, for only through form is the whole man affected ... only from form is there true aesthetic freedom."⁸⁴

Schiller argues that fine arts do not incline to a better morality, they are not for teaching a belief, an idea or for wakening feelings, but becoming impartial can only be through an artwork's internalization of 'real aesthetics that is free in its form', and so 'the first step to become a real human' could be taken.⁸⁵ The fine arts could be constructed as a set, which consists of regular disciplines and private institutions

⁸²Ibid., p.236.

⁸³Ibid., p.82.

⁸⁴Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art: Cultural History*. University of Chicago Press, 2001, p.148-149.

⁸⁵Ibid., p.205.

that are reified as independent spaces. This is a result of conceptualization of the relationship between the social and art, whereby the question of the function of art for society could be asked.⁸⁶

2.5. A Few Directions on Performance

In one of his interviews, Richard Schechner states, in *Mimesis* magazine, that a description would bring along its own limitations. So, he avoids giving one definition of what is a performance.⁸⁷ We would also like to discuss the concept of 'performance' by bringing explanatory examples rather than confining it to a definition. These discussions will be carried through focusing on the concept of performance in performance arts, rather than bringing general discussions on performance.

The concept of performance comes forward firstly in a theoretical form in the social science field in the 1970s. Besides that, performance works were being related more with traditional theatre, as it was seen as a mean of physical activity via physical skills, rather than a representation of a written text. It became possible to talk about performance arts, within such a context. Performance arts as an area has the feature of including all disciplines that are separated; literature, music, dance, theatre, film, painting, sculpture, architecture. Performance arts could find its expression as both of 'everything's and of 'nothing's performance. In this way, performance arts that are transformed to space not confined within a determined place and time became a new working material and a critical tool.⁸⁸

All the human activities –even when we do not account daily habitual activities– that we give a thought about before performing, can be seen as a performance. According to Marvin Carlson, what we perform on the stage, even if it is similar to

⁸⁶Ibid., p.297.

⁸⁷*Mimesis*, Tiyatro/Çeviri-Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı 17. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi Haziran 2010, p.27.

⁸⁸Carlson, Marvin. *Performance/a critical introduction*, New York: Routledge 1996, p.121.

our activities in daily life, would be called as a performance since we think about it previous to the performance, but the one in the daily life would be acted or done. In this context, Carlson explains that an activity becomes a performance, as follows: “The difference between doing and performing, according to this way of thinking, would seem to lie not in the frame of theatre versus real life but in an attitude—we may do actions unthinkingly, but when we think about them, this introduces an consciousness that gives them the quality of performance.”⁸⁹

It is possible to encounter the concept of performance in many fields such as art, literature, anthropology, and sociology. Defining the concept of performance has been a problematic issue due to its extensive usage. One of the most important problems about its definition is about the responsibility of its tradition. Carlson discusses that researches on performance are questionable, and he questions if performance should hold on to the conventional, and so it should consider how it might possibly function in that society by strengthening its cultural assumptions, or if it is a space that would provide processing of opening new areas. Furthermore, it could be said that there is a dominant view on performance amongst performance theoreticians that it is set up with a readily given text or an action chart. In this context, John MacAllon states that “there is no performance without pre-performance.”⁹⁰

According to Carlson, theatre theorist Richard Schechner gives more space for discussion to social sciences in researches for performance theory. So, he became the most influential figure who inquiries the relationship between theory and practice in social sciences. Richard Schechner’s term ‘restored behavior’ simply means ‘behaving like someone else’. However, the person who performs this behavior should be consciously positioning herself as an observer. Schechner does not refer the exhibition of performance or talents, but by bringing the term “restored behavior”, he rather puts emphasis on the distance between “self” and behavior that is similar to the relationship between actor’s role and their self on the stage. Even

⁸⁹Ibid., p.4.

⁹⁰Ibid., p.15.

though the action on the stage is very similar to the one in daily life, when it happens on the stage it becomes a performance, whereas outside of the stage it is only behaved/done.⁹¹ In other words, restored behavior, from the point of the performer, means that someone behaves like someone else, or someone behaves like herself in a different situation, feeling or being. According to Schechner, a director using a filmstrip and a culture using 'restored behavior' resemble each other. A raw filmstrip enables images to be saved and to undergo some process.⁹²

Dell Hymes tries to limit the field named under "performance", which has gradually extended, with two activity space: behavior and conduct. While the former refers to "anything and everything that happens", the latter refers to "behaviors under the protection of interpretable common principles, social norms and cultural rules". Certainly, conduct is a subset of behaviors. Hymes considers performance as a subset of conduct and he describes it as "taking a responsibility for audience and tradition as it is understood [by one or more than one person]."⁹³ According to Carlson, the descriptions of performance that take the audience to the center also brought the discussions about the performer's 'responsibility' for the audience. It could be said that Hymes made a relatively distinctive definition, but one should also indicate that 'taking responsibilities' is too much of a vague statement that unfolded new discussions.⁹⁴

According to Bauman, "According to Bauman, all performance involve a consciousness of doubleness, through which the actual execution of an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential, an ideal, or a remembered original model of that action."⁹⁵ The observer of the action would do this mental comparison. Doctors in the hospital, teachers in schools, commanders in barracks, a bunch of technicians in prisons, audience in the theatre could be seen as examples of observers. Performance always would require an observer. So, would it be

⁹¹Ibid., p.24.

⁹²Ibid., p.77.

⁹³Ibid., p.35.

⁹⁴Ibid., p.5.

⁹⁵Ibid., p.5.

possible to talk about performance on one's own? Performance is always a performance for somebody. However, it doesn't mean that this somebody must be somebody else than the performer. The existence of at least two people is not obligatory for a performance. Like a runner who observes the length of time she runs, each action that a person observes herself while doing qualifies as a performance.

The theatre, which is seen as a sub-discipline, that is covered by performance arts, takes *mimesis* as its basis and it can be defined as an imitation/representation of beginning/introduction, middle/evolution or end/resolution of action/actions. According to Richard Schechner, in the theatre theory that based on Aristotle, *mimesis* "is the subculture of a behavior which is performed twice: The figure presented on the stage represents something else."⁹⁶ In this context, performance – especially theatre- draws negative opinions as it is seen as the representation of represented. According to Nietzsche, "If someone wants to *seem* to be something, stubbornly and for a long time, he eventually finds it hard to *be* anything else. The profession of almost every man, even the artist, begins with hypocrisy, as he imitates from the outside, copies what is effective. The man who always wears the mask of a friendly countenance eventually has to gain power over benevolent moods which the expression of friendliness cannot be forced-and eventually then these moods gain power of him and he is benevolent."⁹⁷ As in Nietzsche's analogy, performance carries a potential of the source for refusal of social roles' 'true' selves. According to Sartre, who is another intellectual with negative opinions about performance, one of the most dangerous things for human spirit is the performance. Because we become a representation, we can exist only as a representation – considering that performance is possible in solitude.⁹⁸

Diderot suggested the idea of the imaginary fourth wall, which separates performers and performance and works for the performer as if there is no audience, discussing

⁹⁶*Mimesis*, Tiyatro/Çeviri-Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı 17. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi Haziran 2010, p.52.

⁹⁷Carlson, Marvin. *Performance/a critical introduction*, New York: Routledge 1996, p.42.

⁹⁸Ibid., p.67-68.

that performing classical tragedy in public spaces, which is filled with excitement and disorder, has a negative effect on the stage. According to Arnold Hausser, this situation “This marks the beginning of the reign of total illusion in the theatre—the displacement of the play...”⁹⁹ Bourgeois class perceives their theatre as a part and function of their own environment as they perceive human being as the center and the self as in the center of the human. Bourgeois theatre, as in classical tragedy, is melted through controlling the tangible reality within represented reality, instead of controlling the tangible reality itself.¹⁰⁰

2.6. From the Theatre of the Oppressed to *Techne*

Augusto Boal indicates that *mimesis* as in Aristotle’s ‘art imitates nature’, is not a word to signify an imitation of an exterior model, and he argues that this interpretation of texts should be due to a translation mistake. He interprets *mimesis* as ‘art re-creates the creative principle of created things’ instead of ‘art imitates the nature’. So, Boal explains *mimesis* as ‘re-creation’ in order to get closer to its original meaning.¹⁰¹ Augusto Boal, who found the *Theatre of the Oppressed*, was influenced by Aristotle and his *Poetika*. Boal discusses the issues we tried to discuss and express until now under the title of Performance Arts through a perspective of theatre/tragedy. Boal defines tragedy to Nicomachos, considering it together with Ethics, as follows: “Tragedy imitates the actions of man's rational soul, his passions turned into habits, in his search for happiness, which consists in virtuous behavior, remote from the extremes, whose supreme good is justice and whose maximum expression is the Constitution.”¹⁰² In this context, the tragic hero is in need of the notions of ‘*ethos*’ and ‘*dianoia*’ in order to make the actions. These two notions cannot be separated. According to Boal, *dianoia* is the thought that determines the

⁹⁹Hauser, Arnold. *The Social History of Art*. Volume III, Rococo, Classicism and Romanticism. Routledge, 1999, p.80.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, p.80.

¹⁰¹Boal, Augusto, and Charles A. MacBride. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Theatre Communications Group, 1993, p.23-24.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, p.23-24.

act; it means proving the act and even if it is limited, the action cannot be directed to its aim without this notion. On the other hand, *ethos* is actually the action itself. Another notion in tragedy is *hamartia*, which is known as the tragic mistake, is the ‘evilness’ that can be in the character and should be destroyed. According to Boal, the *ethos* of a character, like the one not being accepted and creating conflicts, is built in order to comply with social *ethos*.¹⁰³

Mediaeval theatre was first undermined by the church and aristocracy, but then it was used for their propaganda of their ideas and decisions. According to Hauser,

“...drama implied from the very outset was in itself an advertisement for bourgeois morality and the middle-class claim to equality of rights. Its whole history was determined by its origins in bourgeois class-consciousness... The theatre had always propagated the ideology of the classes by which it had been financed, but class differences had never before formed more than the latent, never the manifest and explicit content of its productions.”¹⁰⁴

When bourgeois left its position of oppressed, strongly rising, the idea that bourgeois is competent of everything started to settle. Therefore, in an artistic manner, bourgeois positioned human, as so, the self, in the center of life.¹⁰⁵

Bourgeois’s achievement to class awareness causes to a deviation in the art history. Theatre comes as the primary art area this deviation is experienced since it is most suitable art discipline to use as a propaganda tool. In Lord Kames’s work, *Elements of Criticism*, he says that:

“The Fine Arts have ever been encouraged by wise Princes not simply for private amusement, but for their beneficial influence in society. By uniting

¹⁰³Ibid., p.40-41.

¹⁰⁴Hauser, Arnold. *The Social History of Art. Volume III, Rococo, Classicism and Romanticism.* Routledge, 1999, p.75.

¹⁰⁵Boal, Augusto, and Charles A. MacBride. *Theatre of the Oppressed.* Theatre Communications Group, 1993, p.53,54 and 60.

different ranks in the same elegant pleasures, they promote benevolence; by cherishing love of order, they enforce submission the government.”¹⁰⁶

The statement is that fine arts are ‘for influencing society in the way that it is demanded’, instead of ‘for influencing society positively’, is explanatory to understand that fine arts were not taken granted for society’s sake. What is understood from this statement is that fine arts were in the service of the bourgeois class and they became a tool used by the bourgeoisie. In this context, Boal describes the Mediaeval artist as: “...represented a concession made by clergy to the ignorant masses, incapable of reading and following abstract reasoning, and who could be reached only through the senses.”¹⁰⁷ According to Boal, Shakespeare is the first bourgeois play writer who wrote his plays according to the definition of tragedy and to the rules in the last act, describing the way to be happy in this line. According to Boal, another reason to consider Shakespeare as a bourgeois writer is that in his plays, people from the public would talk rhymeless, whereas people from elite would talk rhymed.¹⁰⁸

Accepting that art and science are interconnected and some fields include human actions much more than others, one could say that politics influence all parts of human relations. Boal argues that if the aim of tragedy is to imitate people with good will, then its highest aim is to imitate the act of political good will that influences all parts of human relations. In this sense, according to Boal, “the highest good is the political one, and the political good is justice!”¹⁰⁹ Here, it is a must to explain what justice is. Also, judgment is compulsory in order to establish justice. It is inevitable that inequality emerges throughout judgement since to make a judgment is only possible through laws. In this point, with regard to Aristotle, Augusto Boal argues that:

¹⁰⁶See: Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art/A Cultural History*. United States of America: The University of Chicago Press 2001, p.96.

¹⁰⁷Boal, Augusto, and Charles A. MacBride. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Theatre Communications Group, 1993, p.55.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p.60 and 71.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p.21.

“Thus we come to the conclusion that justice is not equality: justice is proportionality. And the criteria of proportionality are given by the political system actually in force in a particular city. Justice will always be proportionality, but the criteria which determine the latter will vary depending upon whether the system is a democracy, an oligarchy, a dictatorship, a republic, or other.”¹¹⁰

In order to understand Augusto Boal’s the Theatre of the Oppressed, it is crucial to turn passive audiences into actors who change the theatre action as transformers of dramatic action. The most significant point of the Theatre of the Oppressed is that, instead of an audience who transfers their power to dramatic character, the audience focuses on direct action, they think and act. The removal of the walls, including the imaginary fourth wall Diderot found, is important for the audience to join in the performance and the performance to join in the audience. According to Boal,

“...changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change — in short, trains himself for real action. In this case, perhaps the theater is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that action!”¹¹¹ In conclusion, it is not important if the act is fictional or not since the aim is the occurrence of the action.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p.23.

¹¹¹Ibid., p.122.

2.7. Social Theatre in *Mahpushanes*, as Unmarked Parts of the Society

Theatre theorist Richard Schechner, argues that definitions are pointless since they refuse, limit and constrict the perceptual nature of things.¹¹² However, Richard Schechner brings the discussion about the meaning of performance in order to express performance. For him, to perform might be considered in relation to “being, doing, showing doing, explaining, showing doing.”¹¹³ According to Schechner’s understanding of performance works, performance occurs in this way: 'To be' is not used by meaning to be something or someone else, 'to be' should be understood as to be in itself and 'to do' should be understood as everything that ever thing does. Although it is not necessary to have someone else to show what is done, “to show what you do is to underline and to emphasize what is done. Also, to explain showing what is done is to work on how thing which is done is shown by creating a reflexive distance; in other words, it is what performing arts do.”¹¹⁴ Also, here the focus is not the performer but what is performed.

Schechner prefers to use a new term, ‘social theatre’, which combines ‘theatre’ and ‘performance’ as it is used in social sciences, rather than using only the word theatre. Schechner does not use “social theatre” and “theatre” in the same way. For him, “Social theatre is generally realized in spaces and under circumstances which do not take place in the scope of the theatre’s usual conditions: it transforms ‘the non-performers’ into performers.”¹¹⁵

Prisons, hospitals, residential homes, orphanages and detention camps –places of confinement- are the places social theatre is actualized; prisoners, patients, disabled or elderly people, orphans and excluded people are the performers, who are also not

¹¹²*Mimesis*, Tiyatro/Çeviri-Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı 17. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi Haziran 2010, p.52.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, p.18.

¹¹⁴Gümüş, Pınar-Gündoğan Sezin. “Richard Schechner ve Performans Kuramı”. *Mimesis*, Tiyatro/Çeviri-Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı 17. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi Haziran 2010, p.18-19.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 75-77.

performers, of this theatre. The places that theatre is actualized within Schechner's understanding are the places of confinement that Foucault argues. In the context of *Mimesis* (to imitate), it is possible to say that the longest duration of performing activity occurs in these places of confinement, which are not in usual conditions of theatre. Performances such as punishment, stigmatization, separation, shame are seen in the places of confinement in which social theatre presents vital and grand effects.¹¹⁶

According to Richard Schechner, performance becomes an important paradigm for social sciences since it enables to form a model for an experimental style. We can observe, and so analyze our actions by means of the possibilities performance enables us. In this context, "The difference between scientific research and performing arts stems from the attitude we take on what happens in reality rather than what is really happening."¹¹⁷ The attitude we take on what happens in reality is in accordance with comprehending what is really happening. According to Schechner, "Social theatre commercializes itself through claiming that it builds trust, provides anger management, brings new approaches to learning, and has a constructive influence against any kind of traumatic experience."¹¹⁸ As we mentioned above, looking into the theatre from the perspective of the concept of performance, which Schechner argues by discussing performing, the most influential theatre is: deconstructing, changing and improving the existing by reducing, by completing, by objecting.

Mostly the activists of social theatre are artists, though they are not required to be. According to Schechner, these activists are aware that their projects are confirmed and supported by the institutions of the state and non-governmental organizations. "Neither *mahpushane* is a space which does not host theatre nor the theatrical is

¹¹⁶Ibid., p.75.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p.53.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p.75.

experienced only when a theatre project is exhibited. The information and practical regimes operated in these spaces are performed at any moment.”¹¹⁹

Lastly, we will try to explain what does making a theatre project means in prisons, where small or big, public or discreet performances are experienced, with the help of Schechner. The sentences in inverted commas belong to Schechner.¹²⁰

- 1- “You work with people who are casted as ‘the criminal,’ and forced to wear costumes and to live up to the strict rules. The criminals are in prisons to be disincensive for others: the punishment imposed on them are for a wider social group of audience.” Of course, the audience of this social category will be determined by founders of the space and determiners of the law, under their decision of time and amount, and it would serve to what they demand for.
- 2- “You work in a space which is separated from the daily life, is kept behind closed doors, and has strict boundaries.”
- 3- “You work within a rehabilitation project which is rehearsed for releasing prisoners to the ‘real’ world.” Performance arts, in the first place, is moved into the prison from daily life, for the place to become a "relatively bearable" space. Performance arts, as an element that is moved from outside to inside, enables the prisoners to be prepared for “the real” world.

2.8. Experiences of the Author With Regard to the Prison and Implications on the Restorating Power of Performing Arts

Author’s own and authentic experiences which would be expected to be referred in the appendix section of the thesis in the nature of writing process of a thesis are to be included in this particular chapter. The reason why this part is included in the main text body of the thesis instead of the appendix section is that the implications as to the main theme will be discussed at the end of this chapter in connection with

¹¹⁹Ibid., p.75.

¹²⁰See. Ibid., p.77-78.

the experiences. The workshop activities performed by the author for total of 18 months in two separate prisons; one being inside the country and the other abroad paved the way for reification of the idea of “restoring by arts” which is the main assertion of the thesis as a consequence of reflections observed within the selected two prisons. By virtue of these experiences, it had been possible to observe both the deforming and transforming effects of the performing arts on the penitentiary system and thus approach the subject in terms of an academic study.

I find it useful to share the experiences I have gained during approximately 18 months I have spent in high security prisons located in Tekirdağ province of Turkey and Oudenaarde/Belgium for the purpose of our study to make sense and reach significance. Despite the fact that this sharing may present itself as a memoir, it is fundamentally intended to provide specific information about what is happening in the prisons in reality and to reveal the impacts of the art workshops organized and performed in the prisons.

Due to the fact that preliminary procedure for the workshop designed for political detainees in No.1 Tekirdağ F-Type High Security Prison dragged on and we have confronted with problems each time we have visited the prison (there were painting, sculpture and philosophy workshops implemented in addition to the theatre workshop I have been carrying out), we have nearly lost our motivation. Our patient attitude had contributed to overcome the problems and I have worked with the “political detainees” as they call themselves who are codified as “detained and sentenced for terrorism offences” by the state during the workshop activities.

Our motivation had to be kept high due to our responsibilities considering the fact that 10 *mahpuses* at most were allowed to come together and convene once a week. The prisoners and detainees were let to stay in “wards (*oda*)”¹²¹ for 1 and 3 by

¹²¹We have written “ward” in quotation marks because although The Ministry of Justice insist on specifying the compartments as wards, the detainees and prisoners prefer to identify the compartments as “cells” instead. They justify their preference by saying that “a ward facilitates entrance and passing to other units and allows opportunity to stay with other people yet as we do not have such opportunities here we call the places cells instead”.

nature of the physical conditions of the prison premises.¹²² The *mahpuses* who participated in theatre, arts, sculpture and philosophy workshop activities were not allowed to come together aside from the designated workshop sessions. The participants of the workshops only had the opportunity to work alone by themselves or with the other *mahpuses* in the same ward. However, the participants of my workshop activity were staying alone in their wards. Presence of a correction officer was obligatory by the *mahpuses*. Under these circumstances, it was not possible for me to stage a play at the end of the workshop activities.

The performing participants had to work together for the workshops and activities I have been involved in outside of the prison. The necessity of *mahpuses* to stay in wards for one and three only according to the structure of F-type high security prisons disabled us to practice a theatre play to be staged. We had to realize and stage a performance at the end of the theatre workshop I have implemented. I have got the idea that it would be impossible to stage a final performance under the above-mentioned circumstances. Moreover, my perception of theatre at that time did not provide insight as an alternative to written theatre plays. Thus it was obligatory for the player to convene for memorization of the theatre script.

Once I have begun to give thought to production process of the performance to be staged at the end of the workshop implementation, I have realized that the *mahpuses* suffered from trust and confidence issues. For this reason we primarily needed to build trust among us and the *mahpuses* in order to continue on with the activity. The *mahpuses* told me that I had been most probably commissioned as an insider by the management of the prison during the second month of the workshop implementation. I could only begin rehearsals with the *mahpuses* who were eventually convinced that my presence there had to do with theatre solely and not bound to the penitentiary system. At this point, I would like to express that I have

¹²²The F-Type Penal Institution where the workshop had been implemented is specified and referred as “high security” by the Ministry of Justice. The prison wards are comprised of units for 1 and 3 people and the prisoners are allowed to stay together for up to 3 people at most.

felt as a part of “the whole army of technicians”¹²³ as referred by Foucault along with the workshop activities.

Certain exercises were of utmost importance in terms of ensuring the *mahpuses* to get rid of lack of self-confidence, timidity and embarrassment and providing them opportunity to express themselves comfortably in front of an audience. Only after realization and completion of these exercises we would be able to commence rehearsing and working for acting. We could began working on acting by mid-of workshop process and given that the whole duration allowed was two months long, there were only nine days left for us to prepare a performance play to be staged. I would like to express that the *mahpuses* impatiently looked forward to Thursday as it was designated for the workshop activity; they felt good and were happy to perform something together.

To reiterate the prominence of the conditions, we needed to figure out a method for the participants of the workshop (*mahpuses*) to work and practice by themselves as they were not allowed to come together outside the workshop sessions. As a consequence of the rehearsals by reciting poems we have commenced with the participants, we have decided to perform Nazım Hikmet’s poem titled *On Death (Ölüme Dair)*. I might sincerely say that the performance staged for the prison personnel and the limited number of audience permitted to get in the penal institution upon written permission taken fifteen days in advance of the performance date had been appreciated both by the audience and by the performing participants themselves.

By completion of the arts-focused workshops we have realized through the medium of Turkey’s Center for Prison Studies (CİSST/TCPS)¹²⁴, we have received quite a number of letters and thus I may state that the relations in between the *mahpuses* and correction officers, social services workers, psychologists and trainers (teachers) who had the opportunity to watch the performance were influenced in a

¹²³Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995, p.11.

¹²⁴For further information with respect to the association founded in 2006 please visit the website: tcps.org.tr

positive manner. Besides, my perception of theatre before the workshop activity had also been changed slightly and my interest in performing arts as a whole including theatre had been revived on my part. As a result, I might sincerely indicate based on the feedbacks collected from the *mahpuses* and the personnel of the penal institution that the workshop activity we have implemented contributed in diversification of perspectives of the *mahpuses*, penal institution personnel and me along with a learning process devoted to patience and self-confidence. Moreover, the workshop activities contributed in development of relationship between the penal institution personnel and the *mahpuses* and it paved the way for us to generate new ideas regarding how a performance shall be staged under the current circumstances of a prison. In consideration of all these aspects and by dint of the workshop implementation, the circumstances present at the beginning of the process could have been changed, transformed and restored.

I have gained my second phase of experience with respect to penal institutions in Belgium's Oudenaarde high security prison in the sequel of 6-month-long workshop activities carried on during 2007-2008 in No.1 Tekirdağ F-Type High Security Prison. Within the scope of European Voluntary Service (EVS) and through medium of CAW¹²⁵, my duty was ascribed as to organize activities with the *mahpuses*, their families and children inside the premises of the *mahpushane* during November 2013 and November 2014.

Unlike No.1 Tekirdağ F-Type High Security Prison, all of the prisoners in Oudenaarde High Security Prison were "ordinary" prisoners.¹²⁶ This prison was structured based on "ward system" as well and comprised of ward units for 1 and 2 people. However unlike the implementation practiced in Turkey, the *mahpuses* were given the opportunity to go outside to the open-air facility and to practice sports along with the prisoners sharing the same floor for one hour each in morning

¹²⁵For further information with respect to the association founded in 2006 please visit the website: <https://www.caw.be/locaties/onthaal-oudenaarde/>

¹²⁶According to the literature on prisons in Turkey, the differentiation of "ordinary prisoner" and "political prisoner" is generally accepted and all the other prisoners aside from political prisoners are deemed to be "ordinary prisoners". Some prefer to say "petty prisoner" rather than "ordinary prisoner".

and in evening. Apart from that, the doors of their wards may be opened for 5 hours maximum with respect to the security rating. In addition to these, the *mahpuses* were allowed to participate in livelihood workshops where they could do packaging sewing (textile), small house appliances manufacturing. The free hours during which the ward doors stay open on the same floor, 2 hours a day of permission for the *mahpuses* to go outside to the open-air facility with the other prisoners and permission to participate in livelihood workshops with the other prisoners invalidates the criticism of the prisoners held in F-type prisons in Turkey expressing that the accommodation of the prison is based on “cells” rather than “wards” to a certain extent. In addition to all said above, workshops focused on social activities and vocational purposes such as music, theatre, reading-writing, body building, plumbing, etc. were implemented there which I had also get involved in.

During the first weeks I have started going to the *mahpushane*, I recalled that I have to build trust with the *mahpuses* and gain their confidence in the first place upon one them question asking me whether I were a secret agent. I have decided to participate in the vocational workshop for plumbing and reading-writing workshop sessions with them. We began playing table tennis and volleyball together. I used to help the *mahpus* working in the library on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The *mahpuses* were coming to the library provided that they inform in advance and borrow books, magazines, games and DVDs on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

After a short while, I have decided to organize a short film watching workshop. Fulfillment of the required procedures and getting the feedbacks from the prisoners in response to my invitation took some time before commencement of the workshop. When only one person applied for the workshop, I have gone to discuss with the warden in despair. The warden of the prison who was a sculptor in the meantime told me that “it is far much better that one person applied than nobody” and thanks to the warden’s encouragement I felt motivated to start the workshop. Newcomers started to participate in the workshop activities in time as I could manage to keep my motivation high.

I would like to state that I have prepared meals with the *mahpuses* in the kitchen ward, cooked Turkish dishes and prepared presentations regarding the historical and cultural background of Turkey and about tourism in Turkey. The presentations provided opportunity for the *mahpuses* to get to know new places and to taste different food and dishes and let me highlight that they have expressed they found the opportunity for the first time “to participate in a presentation organized in a cocktail atmosphere”.

I have organized activities with the *mahpuses*' children who frequently visited them in the facility. The wives/husbands and children of the *mahpuses* were allowed to visit on Wednesdays in the afternoon. I used to organize game focused activities with the children in the canteen ward of the *mahpushane* where a small playground was installed with a slide, ball pool and a play shed. Thanks to this implementation in contrast to the family visits in Turkey, the children were provided with the opportunity to elude from “penal institution” atmosphere during the visits. Not to mention benefit availed with respect to the children, the circumstances of the visit and meeting is facilitated on part of the *mahpus* and the visitor and most important of all the presence of the playground made it possible to connote the visited premises with any other place “outside”.¹²⁷

During this process, I have had the chance to establish interactive relations with the *mahpuses*, their wives/husbands and children, the correction officers and the personnel of the *mahpushane*. One of the most important reasons that this process and phase had been challenging for me is that my knowledge of English was not so good, my language skills were not adequate and I did not know the local language (Flemish). Due to this challenge stemming from the language barrier, I was not able to organize and implement a theatre workshop similar to the one in Turkey experience.

¹²⁷Despite this positive impact resulting practice, the obligation of wearing uniforms during family visits can be evaluated as a negativity in itself in light of criticisms based on “stigmatisation” and “criminalization”. Trying to sustain the relations and connotation with “outside” and accommodating the premises in line with this perspective on one hand and uniform practice which may result in an exact opposite result on the other hand manifests itself as a substantial contradiction.

I have been able to deduce the following based on the experiences as a consequence of the workshop activities and studies implemented in the *mahpushanes* of Turkey and Belgium:

The impacts of performing arts can be expressed as follows upon my observations during the beginning and the end of the project:

1. The establishment of the prison (penal institution) structure divides the people in two separate spheres and creates a social polarization in between the “ruling power” (prison administration and the personnel) and the “ruled” (*mahpus*). Performing arts establish a novice platform which reminds the *mahpuses* that they are not solely “ruled” but “living objects”. The “restorating power” of performing arts is precisely originated from this new platform.
2. The performing arts deform the dichotomy and dual structure of the *mahpushane* (penal) structure by the help of this newly established platform and ground. Besides the new platform and basis give insight to significant presumptions and potentials which may be alternative to imprisonment.
3. One of the direct consequences of performing arts deforming the dual structure is letting the relationship established between the *mahpushane* personnel and the *mahpuses* loose from “ruling power – ruled” dichotomy.
4. In addition to the fundamental impacts as mentioned above, the routine of the prison (penal institution) is broken once an outsider enters into the premises, and thus it will be possible for the prisoners to remember that the life is not just confined in the prison.
5. It is of utmost importance that a common language is established for communication purposes among the workshop implementor, *mahpuses* and the personnel even though they do not share the same native tongue and cultural background because only then each participant would be able to express themselves and try to understand each other.
6. Performing arts allows for creativity due to its richness in terms of methods and open-ended content. Just like the Belgium example (in line with the *mahpuses* and the personnel getting acquainted with Turkish food and Turkey’s background), the

performing arts may pave the way for “participative experience” by creating a cocktail-presentation atmosphere.

7. It is possible to make reference to transformative impact of performing arts implemented and practiced within the premises of the *mahpushane* on the implementors besides the prisoners and the prison personnel. The transformative impact is realized and achieved a) by the implementor as she/he acquires experience as to implementation of the workshop activities within the boundaries and limitation of the prisons which are confined venues *sui generis* and b) yet again by the implementor as she/he is obliged to develop new methods and tools to overcome the limitations.

As a consequence, the restoring power of the performing arts activities within the premises of the *mahpushanes* could transform the prison into a bearable and a tolerable living space by dint of the aspects mentioned above and had positive impact on everyone involved in this study.

CONCLUSION

The question of transforming the *mahpushane* which is *sui generis* a confined space into a tolerable living space by means of the restoring power of performing arts was elaborated in this study. Discussions had been held with respect to what kind of a space *mahpushane* is in reality, *mahpushane*'s categorization within the scope of confinement practices and how the *mahpushanes* are used as a dominance tool. The concepts of law, crime, punishment and jurisdiction were discussed as aspects of judicial system which establish the *mahpushane* embodiment with reference to the idea that we may form an opinion regarding the birth of the prison in the first place. The prison was addressed in the context of power relations as the prison is used as a tool for the dominant power's own survival. It is of significant importance in terms of the integrity of our study that the *mahpushane* is elaborated from the perspective of Michel Foucault's power relations.

The judiciary system ensuring the dichotomy between the prohibited and the permitted (allowed) enacts the law(s) and punishes who infringes the law(s). Due to the fact that punishment is proportioning of the punishment with respect to the committed crime, we may say that justice could be illegitimate and erroneous as a consequence of proportioning. Although it is claimed that the laws are enacted for the entire society, this claim is far from reality as a group of people establish the laws by virtue of legislation. Parliamentary immunity of the legislators (law-makers) is the indicator of this reality. It is claimed that the objective of the judicial system is to "discipline" the perpetrator and/or to appease and settle the feelings of vengeance on part of the aggrieved party. However exemplarily severe punishments for immaterial acts –almost all of these punishments were death sentences (capital punishment) until the 18th century- may only be counted for discipline for the rest of the population rather than discipline for the perpetrator.

Substitution of death sentence (capital punishment) with imprisonment is far from disciplinary purposes as well. As we can understand from the increasing number

of the *mahpuses*, it is not possible to mention that *mahpuses* serve disciplinary purposes.

Arts may be comprehended as a component of the penal system in this century during which the penal system methods have tended from oppression and torment towards imprisonment of the body and confinement had practically constituted the backbone of the penal systems. This particular case situation may be addressed along with phenomenon with reference to Foucault telling that imprisonment and confinement per se is an operative mechanism through medium of whole army of technicians. It is a question of debate to determine whether the claim of the practices organized within the premises of the *mahpushanes* and penal institutions on behalf of performing arts that “the activities help to restored and decarcerate” stands on the right point of view in the period as of 19th century during which the laws likewise claim that “the fundamental objective of imprisonment is rehabilitation and decarceration of the *mahpuses*”. Thus elaboration on the performing art activities within the premises of *mahpuses* and penal institutions must be taken seriously. At this crucial point, the question is whether the artists or the implementors of the performing arts within the premises of the *mahpushane* are one of the gears of the penal system mechanism so a part of the “whole army of the technicians”, or is it possible to approach and address the matter from a different perspective? This thesis is trying to find an answer to this question and follows the path in pursuit of the ultimate answer.

By making doors which could be opened inwards, people who did not belong to bourgeoisie were given the opportunity to make an impact on the arts which used to be confined in privileged halls and saloons. The performing arts staged in privileged halls and saloons in advance met with larger audience as the number of the halls and saloons increased in time. Hereby due to the restoring power and force of the arts, the number of people who got rid of and overcame vulgar feelings and offensive attitudes have steadily increased in the course of time.

The transformation of the appalling and fearful penal system coincides with liberation of arts from the privileged saloons where it was literally imprisoned in the 18th century. Punishment which used to be a sort of theatrical practice was covered and concealed behind thick walls whereas arts had been liberated and opened to audience in public realm. Interpretation of the relation of penal system behind the walls and arts beyond the walls may be addressed from different perspectives.

Especially after 1970s, “performing arts “that we have come across more frequently had been able to express itself in both performance of “everything” and of “anything”. The performing arts had been transformed into a field which may not be limited and confined with a specific space or a designated duration appear before us as a brand new working material which had been converted into a tool of criticism in the course of time.¹²⁸ The performing arts has a potential to transform and deform the penal system with respect to richness in terms of methods and open-ended content which allows for creativity to manifest itself. Through medium of restoring aspect and power of the performing arts, the basis for salvation from the dichotomy of the “ruling power – ruled” in the *mahpushanes* and penal institutions which are confinement spaces per se can be established and the notorious, routine architecture and practices may be deformed.

As a consequence, I wish that this piece of study leads the way to transform the highly and justifiably criticized penal system and pave the way for new studies in this field making a contribution to the discussion in this realm.

¹²⁸Carlson, Marvin. *Performance/a critical introduction*, New York: Routledge 1996, p.79.

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