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# EMANCIPATION IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY: SOVEREIGNTY AS RENUNCIATION AND EXPENDITURE IN THE THOUGHT OF GEORGE BATAILLE

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**Abstract:** This study aims to reveal the meaning of sovereignty in the context of Georges Bataille's critique of capitalist society. In order to determine how Bataille thinks about sovereignty, it firstly touches upon the conception of the capitalist society of the thinker. It draws attention to the nature of the practices here limited to capitalist production and profit/usefulness. This limit causes people to be alienated and enslaved. Then, in the face of the limited, that is, homogeneous structure of capitalist society, this study deals with the heterogeneous structure of existence in Bataille's view. It points out that the heterogeneous structure of existence is the primary condition of sovereignty and emancipation. It then clarifies the relationship of sovereignty with renunciation by determining the content of sovereignty. From the viewpoint of Bataille, sovereignty becomes visible through non-productive activities and therefore it is in contrast with the homogeneous society that exists with only productive activities. Pure productive activities are the most important activities that enslave humans and cancel sovereignty. According to Bataille, sovereignty dies in the life where concern bows to the future and the production. The way of capturing sovereignty in capitalist society is hidden in actions that give up being productive. Thus sovereignty is defined by the notion of expenditure rather than accumulation. The expenditure means renouncing possession and accumulation. To leave behind the forms of existence which are demanded by the capitalist society is to relinquish them. Consequently, the expenditure and relinquishing appear as two overlapping activities in sovereignty.

**Key Concepts**: Homogeneity, Heterogeneity, Sovereignty, Renunciation, Expenditure

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# KAPİTALİST TOPLUMDA ÖZGÜRLEŞME: GEORGES BATAILLE DÜŞÜNCESİNDE VAZGEÇME VE HARCAMA OLARAK EGEMENLİK

**Öz:** Bu çalışma, Georges Bataille'ın kapitalist toplum eleştirisi bağlamında egemenliğin anlamını araştırır. Köle olmayan varoluşu ve egemenliği Bataille'ın nasıl düşündüğünü belirlemek için öncelikle düşünürün kapitalist toplum kavrayışına değinir. Buradaki pratiklerin kapitalist üretim ve yarar ile sınırlı yapısına dikkat çeker. Bu sınır insanların yabancılaşmasına ve köleleşmesine neden olur. Ardından kapitalist toplumun sınırlı, homojen yapısı karşısında Bataille'da varoluşun heterojen yapısını ele alır. Varoluşun heterojen yapısının özgürleşmenin ve egemenliğin öncelikli olanak koşulu olduğuna dikkat çeker. Ardından egemenliğin kapsamını belirleyerek vazgeçmeyle ilişkisini açıklığa kavuşturur. Üretici etkinliklerle var olan homojen toplum karşısında egemenlik, üretici olmayan etkinliklerle görünür olur. Saf üretici etkinlikler en önemli köleleştiren, egemenliği iptal eden etkinliklerdir. Bataille'a göre ilginin geleceğe, üretime boyun eğdiği hayatta egemenlik ölür. Sınırlardan kurtulma, özgürlük deneyimi olarak egemenliği yakalamanın yolu üretici olmaktan vazgeçen eylemlerdir. Kapitalist toplumda egemenlik, üretici olmayan eylemlilikten kurtulmadır. Bu nedenle birikimden ziyade harcama nosyonuyla tanımlanır. Harcamak, sahip olmaktan, biriktirmekten vaz geçmektir. Kapitalist toplumun talep ettiği oluş biçimlerini geride bırakmak, onlardan feragat etmektir. Harcama ve vaz geçme egemenlikte çakışan iki eylemliliktir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler**: Homojenlik, Heterojenlik, Egemenlik, Vazgeçme, Harcama

## 1. Introduction

The distinctive feature of the state, which appears as a form of political power in modern society, is sovereignty. It indicates that the state's power is "superior" power. Thanks to this superiority, the state has the opportunity to represent social unity and totality. It appears as the power which all powers accumulate in a single center. The main feature of the social formation expressed by the sovereign state is the capitalist nature of relations. In the capitalist society, which Bataille calls bourgeois society, individuals are identified by their freedom. They make various contracts with their free will. The freedom in question is considered to make the individual sovereign at the same time. For instance, based on this idea, it is assumed that the worker, who does not have a means of production, participates in working life with his free will. In the face of such assumptions in the capitalist society, from Bataille's point of view, there is no freedom and sovereignty in the bourgeois world. Because human actions here are subject to expectations from the future. Freedom and sovereignty are replaced by working unceasingly for the future. The person who is thought to be free and sovereign is actually a slave. This determination of Bataille interrupts basic assumptions of modern thought and capitalist society since both are based on the idea of human freedom which is also condition of the sovereignty, and sovereignty is based on the superiority of a wise man over everything else, including his body. But when one says that modern human is a slave in capitalist society, the concepts such as freedom and sovereignty become hollow. It is here that Bataille challenges this becoming hollow with his critique of capitalist society on the one hand and his conception of sovereignty on the other. He tries to break

the slave life cycle by interpreting the concept of sovereignty differently from ways of existence in capitalist society.

For Bataille, who lived in a period of fascism and socialism, both experiences fail to solve the problems of capitalist society. Socialism wants to dissolve the difference of class by abolishing it, while fascism dissolves the difference with the unification of classes. In both, social phenomena take over human existence and deny sovereignty. In light of these thoughts, this study aims to reveal the meaning of sovereignty in the context of Bataille's critique of capitalist society. Thus it tries to reveal what Bataille's conception of sovereignty offers us in breaking the slave way of life in capitalist society. Therefore, it firstly touches upon the conception of the capitalist society of the thinker. It draws attention to the nature of the practices here limited to capitalist production and profit/usefulness. This limit causes people to be alienated and enslaved. Then, in the face of the limited, homogeneous structure of capitalist society, this study deals with the heterogeneous structure of existence in Bataille's view. It points out that the heterogeneous structure of existence is the primary condition of sovereignty and emancipation. It then clarifies the relationship of sovereignty with renunciation by determining the content of sovereignty. From the viewpoint of Bataille, sovereignty becomes visible through non-productive activities such as sacrificing, luxury, mourning, art, etc. and therefore it is in contrast with the homogeneous capitalist society that exists with only productive activities. Pure productive activities such as working, saving money, appropriation, etc. are the most important activities that enslave humans and cancel sovereignty. These actions think only of the future and sovereignty dies in the life where concern bows to the future and the production. The way of capturing sovereignty in capitalist society is hidden in actions that give up being productive. Thus sovereignty is defined by the notion of expenditure rather than accumulation. The expenditure means renouncing possession and accumulation. It is the existence of the self or ego that allows accumulation and appropriation in capitalist society. In this respect, sovereignty is also the victim of the self or ego. Sovereignty as leaving behind the forms of existence which are demanded by the capitalist society is to relinquish them. Consequently, the expenditure and relinquishing appear as two overlapping activities in sovereignty.

## 2. Capitalist Society and Sovereignty as Domination

The concept of society is a modern phenomenon. An important feature of modern society is the tendency of homogeneity. According to Bataille, who had seen this tendency, homogeneity is the common measurability of the elements and the consciousness of this common measurability. (Bataille, 1985, s. 137) Human relations in society as a homogeneous structure are reduced to fixed rules that establish the identity of describable persons, situations, and roles. Thanks to this reduction, human relations are suspended. Production in society is the basis of social homogeneity. The society is the totality of productive, that is, useful and operable elements. Useful activities make society a product. Every useless, inoperable element is excluded from society as it disrupts social totality and homogeneity. Usefulness is a condition for persons and everything else in order to be counted in society.

In a homogeneous society, it is the common denominator that allows measuring elements in line with their benefits. The common denominator is the foundation of social homogeneity and action that reproduces it. According to Bataille, money is one of the common grounds in society which is also the area of capitalist relations. The money is the computable equivalent of the different products of collective action. It serves to measure all works and makes human the function of measurable products. Human is the function of a collective production which is organized within measurable limits. In the collective production, human has existence for something other than himself/herself. (Bataille, 1985, s. 138)

What appears in favor of individuals in the capitalist society based on production, benefit and profit reflect actually their weakness. In the capitalist life cycle, where production is turned into accumulation, individuals accumulate. Accumulation is based on a certain production relationship. Individuals lack the power to protect their accumulation and production relations. According to Bataille, the capitalist society, which appears as a whole and power, compensates for the weakness of the people with its own power. Provided that it is primarily connected to the future, the society becomes whatever the individual fails to be. (Bataille, 2014, s. 48-9)

A homogeneous capitalist society is a space for productive activities. Working for production is a general social activity. Continuous production enhances wealth and working brings power. (Bataille, 2014, s. 47) Will to power is growth for its own sake. (Bataille, 1991b, s. 137) In the capitalist society that gets stronger by working against nature and other things, the individual gains a stable environment within the frame of relations of interest. (Bataille, 2014, s. 50) Among the individuals who gain meaning and social value with their property, those who establish the homogeneous part of the society are owners of the means of production as well. Owners of the means of production manage the use of money as they wish. According to Bataille, the owners of the means of production are the middle segment of the capitalist or bourgeois class. The human character is the reflection of the homogeneous thing that individuals possess. The reduction in capitalist society expands as much as possible in the so-called middle class. Such that the capitalist society is identified with bourgeois society. (Bataille, 1985, s. 138)

As Karl Marx pointed out long before Bataille, the capitalist society has two main classes: On the one hand, the class that owns and manages the means of production and on the other hand, the class that survives only by selling its labor. Capital is "the power to manage labor and its products", or "accumulated labor". (Marx, 2011, s. 105) The proletariat, which does not own the means of production, always participates in the production and working through its labor. In terms of Bataille who describes the capitalist society similarly, the proletariat maintains a bilateral relationship with homogeneous action focused on production and accumulation: homogeneous action excludes it from profit while involving it in work. Workers as productive agents fall into the framework of social organization. But, as a rule, homogeneous reduction only influences their wage-earning/acquisitive actions. They participate in homogeneity in terms of their behavior at work, not as a human in general terms. A worker outside the factory is a stranger in the homogeneous society. It is the person of another nature that

cannot be subjugated. (Bataille, 1985, s. 138). While the proletariat, who is trapped in nature, is seen as an animal and is excluded from society, the bourgeoisie, who possesses the means of production and profit, is the person who is regarded as a human being in society. Accumulation in the capitalist society is possible thanks to the proletariat, who is reduced to nature and seen as an animal in the face of the bourgeoisie. Labor produces wealth without consuming within capitalism which is the way to gain wealth by accumulating. In this respect, the proletariat and slaves are similar. The consumption of the worker as a modern slave who does not have any means of production other than labor is limited by obligations. What they necessarily consume consists of products that people cannot live or work without. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 198) The life of a worker which only consists of nutrition and work is cyclical as well as limited. Similarly, according to Sigmund Freud who speaks about society in terms of "order obsession" in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the circularity is the guarantee of social life. On the one hand, people use time and space in the best possible way, on the other hand, they do not waste their spiritual strength through social order. (Freud, 2013, s. 58) In the capitalist social order, the person who is obliged to work consumes only the products that production will be impossible when the worker does not consume them. Consumption and behavior, in general, are limited to the worker's needs. In a fashion similar to the slave, the labor-force lives around the beneficial, useful. In this situation where there is a rupture between labor and its product, labor's product dominates labor's life. This dominance of the product over labor is discussed around the alienation category by Marx. (Marx, 2011, ss. 140-41) For Bataille, who does not use the concept of alienation directly but looks from a similar perspective, the laborer who has nothing today works hard and excludes today's pleasure. Because these activities, which are only for pleasure, require spending and consumption. They are both devoid of the benefit of increasing wealth and thus inoperative. The consumption in question is excluded from capitalist society since it is not productive, it is based only on consumption. Productive activity is to invest in the future. The person, who prevents himself from consuming, has the hope of changing his future position. For Bataille, in this way, the life of an individual who sacrifices the present for the future is a slave life. Slavery is to use the present for the future. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 198) A life limited to the world of necessity indicates that the worker lives an animal life. The life of the worker, who is obliged to comply with the limits set for him, consists of obedience to the conditions and orders determined by the capitalist society. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 199) The expectations of the worker who is now the obedient being just because he thinks about his future justify his present subjection. Thus, things dominate man since he lives only for the enterprise and the future. (Bataille, 1991b, s. 133)

For Bataille, the expectation is always the inevitable calculation of mind. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 210) The individual who reasons certain conditions gets a prediction. According to this prediction, the individual manages his current conditions and tries to realize that prediction. In this case, individuals of capitalist society who participate in production and accumulation appear as smart, self-knowing, and rational beings who act according to this knowledge. The rational person, whose philosophical name is the subject, protects his freedom as he follows the conditions and orders in the light of his own mind. His obedient actions are interpreted as a sign that he is free rather than a slave. For Bataille,

however, the freedom of rational individuals of modern capitalist society is an illusion. In the world of things that are based on eternity and identity, expectations by which individuals act, the human serves capitalist purposes. Thus, the man himself becomes the thing or an object, that is, he alienates. The man who separates himself from the animal because of his mind leads a more slave life than the animal. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 214) The main desire of the slave man who lives a limited life with his goals and becomes alienated to himself and his life is to be everything. To be everything is to invert the obedient and slave life, that is, to be master.[1] Life in this way escapes from death. It benumbs, detracts from pain. (Bataille, 2015, s. 20) According to Bataille, this life is not sovereign as the future determines the present. Actions have limits and goals such as benefit, profit. This makes people forget their existence, eliminates the current existence of man. (Bataille, 2014, s. 35) The human who is into the illusion of rationality and freedom challenges his finitude while living for the future. He organizes everything in his life, draws borders; there is no place in his life for death. Body and everyday life are sterilized here. (Direk, 2012) Sterilization means decontamination and purification of life.

The main device that maintains social homogeneity in capitalist society and manages the limited economy is the sovereign state. In the modern period, social homogeneity is connected to the bourgeois class with essential bonds. The state is at the threatened homogeneity's service. (Bataille, 1985, s. 139) Social homogeneity based on a certain class is fragile and unsecured. Because it is shaped by the productive organization game. The existence of productive activities indicates that non-productive activities are also present in society. But non-productive activities are seen as a threat to social homogeneity. Therefore, the totality should be protected from elements that are not intended for social production. In other words, social integrity and homogeneity are reproduced through activities that are used to achieve these features. Reproduction depends on the categorical elements that are capable of destroying different, non-coping forces or

[1] This is a dialectical process and has been remarked for the first time by G. Wilhelm Hegel in the history of philosophy. In terms of Hegel, human being is open to development. The main element behind this development is self-consciousness. Another self-consciousness is required for a self-consciousness agent to be what it is. The development of self-consciousness is the resolution of two conflicting moments at higher moment. The way for the consciousness that encounters with another consciousness to advance into self-consciousness and to establish the certainty of its existence is to enter into a struggle for superiority with this another consciousness. In this struggle, the agent who is afraid of losing its life surrenders authority to the other side and the parties enter into a master and slavery relationship. The master's point of view determines the life of slave. But in this process, the slave reflects on his own status, understands the contingency of the master's sovereignty over himself. And also the master understands that the recognition he demands from the slave is a recognition by compulsion, therefore it is not a free recognition, and the particularity of the norms he established at the beginning. The freedom of the slave is the condition of recognition. (Hegel, 1986, s. 125-26; Pinkard, 2010, s. 200) According to Alexandre Kojève, who delivered in Paris a series of lectures on Hegel from 1933 to 1939 and influenced contemporary French philosophy includes Bataille, the freedom of the slave is only possible if the master gives up his master position. Therefore, mastership is a dilemma. The progress is made possible by the unfree slave's awareness of his freedom through working. Where there is work, there is necessarily changing, progress and history. (Kojève, 2015, s. 53) But working alone does not mean fighting for freedom against the master. It expresses that the slave is afraid of endangering its life as long as it continues to work. Kojève follows from this that what makes man a slave is his refusal to put his life in danger. (Kojève, 2015, s. 58)

gathering under the control of order. (Bataille, 1985, s. 139) Kings, heads of army/general, heads of the state, etc. are among the categorical elements in question. According to Bataille, who does not see the state among these categorical elements, the state is separate and different from the king, the head of the army, and nations: It is the result of the modifications of the homogeneous society. (Bataille, 1985, s. 139)[2]

In practice, the function of the state consists of the mutual interaction of authority and adaptation. The state shuts them up with its harsh authority against forces that cannot be assimilated. (Bataille, 1985, s. 139) Depending on the democratic or despotic tendencies of the state, the disposition of domination becomes either adaptation or authority. The state exists for individuals within the nation firstly and in this case, personal life separates itself from homogeneous existence, namely society, as a value that presents itself incomparably. (Bataille, 1985, s. 139) The sovereignty of the state as power over individuals is the sovereignty of the exception. Among the others, only one subject has the privilege of all subjects. Everything else becomes an object while the sovereign state positions itself as a subject. The general subject, which includes the subject in its existence, establishes itself against things. Exceptional sovereignty as the subject that overlies other subjects is based on the inequality of intra-community sharing. The sovereign who does not work itself benefits from the labor of others for its own account. Those under its domination give up their labor in favor of the sovereign. (Bataille, 1991a, ss. 239-40) The individual under the rule of the sovereign is the object as long as it works for the consumption of the sovereign. Sovereign power gains the opportunity to live as a result of the work of the individual. The sovereignty of the state is the ability to objectify/reify individuals. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 246) Thus the guarantee of limitations is the state's sovereignty in the capitalist-bourgeois society where everything is classified according to its productivity.

### 3. Heterogeneous Existence

From the viewpoint of Bataille, the real existence is heterogeneous in the face of limited economy and homogeneity on which the bourgeois society and the state as bourgeois society's main instrument are based. Heterogenous is related to the presence of elements that cannot be homogenized, that is, not assimilated. (Bataille, 1985, s. 141) In terms of Bataille, heterogeneity is the condition of existence. In other words, it is not possible to exist on its own.[3] For instance, the world of human being is hybrid. It consists of prohibitions and violations. This is due to the opposite drives that human existence has. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 343) There opposite impulses, named in Sigmund Freud *eros* and

[2] For Bataille, in general, society is a whole which disposes of goods dedicated to the consumption. (2011, s. 250)

[3] In this respect, it can be said that Bataille understood existence as "mitsein" (co-being) and thus gets closer to another prominent German thinker of his contemporary, that is, Martin Heidegger. But their similarity ends when Heidegger's views come to affirm fascism. While for Bataille the main thing is the multitude of being, Heidegger melts this multiplicity into a particular idea of the people. Whereas the multiplicity of existence resists reduction to a particular being. Bataille begins to think about sovereignty from this point.

*thanatos*, cause the human being to have an unstable balance.[4] The heterogeneous existence of human is accompanied by the heterogeneous structure of society. In this respect, the modern capitalist society dominated by bourgeois values does not consist only of the bourgeoisie. Indeed, the proletariat that exists as a stranger in bourgeois society embodies the heterogeneity in question. Unification is a tendency for homogeneity against heterogeneity. But according to Bataille, existence is insufficient to find the motivation that requires and motivates its existence. Life consists of two classes: one of which, with respect to the other, is characterized by absolute heterogeneity. (Bataille, 2018, s. 31) It is compulsory to resort to the external necessity for an entity which tries to be one and a whole in itself. Referring to external necessity is valued as the primary obligation. Thus, the entity that separates itself from the other, the difference becomes purified. Being pure requires being for itself, a special form of heterogeneous existence. According to Bataille, purity escaping from heterogeneity cannot fully control heterogeneous existence. Heterogeneous existence escapes from being pure and can never be subjugated to it. Being manifests itself in heterogeneity rather than purity. Homogeneous existence is possible with heterogeneous existence. (Bataille, 1985, s. 147)

The sovereign state, which is a whole, indivisible force in itself, appears to have reached existence as a homogeneous formation. However, the state is actually an abstract, corrupt form of being. (Bataille, 1985, s. 147) It is the centralization of military, economic, and political power. It is the generalization of particular power. It appears as a completed condensation. This domination into the concentrated political and economic system prevents the other and various forms of dissolution as a form of contact with the other. The sovereign speaks through law and law is a monologue. In this regard, the existence of the state sovereignty is the corruption of the conditions of existence. (Bataille, 2015, s. 163) The state's sovereignty, which guarantees productivity, is the intensification of slavery and oppression.

According to Bataille, the privatization, concentration, and homogeneity pointed out by the sovereign state are not the main principles that regulate the existence. "The being is always the sum of particles whose relative autonomy is preserved. These two principles -the composition that transcends components and the relative autonomy of compounds- regulate the existence of every being". (Bataille, 2015, s. 111) Human existence is also subject to these general principles of being. But a third principle regulates human existence right along with these two principles: Human consists of parts, but also looks for the way to manage them. Tired of fear, human tries to make the world dependent on its own autonomy. This tendency reflects the desire of man to be everything, that is, to be universe. (Bataille, 2015, s. 111) However, loneliness or being alone is impossible. Nobody can escape from the social structure of being. The desire for loneliness is the will to dominate as the desire to be at the top. As Bataille stated it, one finds fear when one investigates the peak as being absolute or being the universe. The man who feels weakness because of fear chooses to transfer its power. "What causes this is

[4] This does not mean that Bataille is in the tradition of psychoanalysis. Bataille sacrifices the ego, reason and the head in general through the headless man motif (*Acephale*). Human, who sacrifices ego, is a violator. He affirms the life by facing death through sacrifice.

embarrassment of being thrown into the void… We get rid of the deviant craving of the peak by making this craving deceptive". (Bataille, 2015, s. 112) The being on the top reaches universality. Universality is to be single. It does not fight similar ones, it destroys the competition. If similar powers contrast, one of these powers must expand to the detriment of other. To seek universal is to seek competence. In the peak, existence reaches universality. Central subordinates environmental elements to its own law. The peak is a combination of parts in this regard (Bataille, 2015, s. 115). However, according to Bataille, inadequacy as weakness is the basis of existence and human existence, life in general. "Man cannot escape from inadequacy… The desire to escape comes from the fear of being human". (Bataille, 2015, s. 120) The being is wholeness as well as lack. The principle of life is the absence of salvation and the rejection of every hope. Ignorance and disagreement are essential in life which is open to other, death and based on communication:

> Life is nothing more than a little knot. I want others to continue the experience that others started before me, like me, like others before me, to dedicate themselves to my experience… to go the very edge of possibility. (Bataille, 2000, s. 33) … The other side of my being is nothingness. It is my own absence that I feel in the unbearable sense of deficiency, in fragmentation. The presence of someone else is revealed due to this feeling. (Bataille, 2000, s. 47)

The human existence that takes its share from the heterogeneity of being is dynamic. Its ground is the world of immanence. The world of immanence is the plane of animal life. There are diverse behaviors according to diverse situations. (Bataiile, 2004, s. 36) Everything is intertwined in the plane of immanence. All creatures are together. This togetherness is the primary, original form of being. The state of immanence without distinction is the absence of orders that exist due to distinctions. Here, there is not distinctions such as animal-human, body-soul/reason, nature-culture, so on. The absence of orders is the negation of (power of) nothingness. Neither transcendence nor future, nothing dominates over me. (Bataille, 2000, s. 90)

The world of immanence or the uncertain ground of existence is regulated by two different worlds: While one of these worlds is the profane world that points to the limited economy is visible in the capitalist society, the other is the sacred world that points to the very opposite form of existence of the profane world. The arrangement of the ground of immanence is that wisdom escapes from death and turns onto the preservation of life. According to Bataille, "it is in our nature to create an entity that is superior to us (such as God, the State). Create something that surpasses us! This is the instinct of proliferation, action, and producing work". (Bataille, 2000, s. 188) The state of immanence that human tries to dominate includes "putting itself in the game completely… the game is to run after the eternity of possibility, from one promise to another". (Bataille, 2000, s. 189) It means beyond good and evil, moving away from the masters. [5]

[5] Here, it is possible to see the effect of Friedrich Nietzsche on Bataille. According to Nietzche, the life is will to power. There is only power relations in life and thus bad and good can always turn to each other. But the thought of utility prevents this turning. In the society of usefulness, death rules me. The life of such a person is a life in slavery. (Nietzsche, 2003, s. 201-203)

In our age, the holistic character of existence has disappeared, and the distance between man and the ground of immanence has been opened much. In the limited economic world, the individual of capitalist society limits itself to activities that make each moment dependent on a result. Due to these limitations, the individual loses his heterogeneous existence while becoming a particular entity, a soldier, a regular revolutionary, or a scientist. (Bataille, 2000, s. 17-8) In this fragmented state of humanity, every action brings a deficient being condition. The integrity of man depends on the rejection of the result-oriented action, the negation of the superiority of the time devoted action. (Bataille, 2000, s. 17-8) If human refuses to sacrifices itself for others, it becomes whole; if human does not care about itself, he is enslaved, remains about freedom, within feudal or bourgeois borders. (Bataille, 2000, s. 25) Within these boundaries based only on the mind, body and everything about the body is disciplined. The primary form of discipline is continuous work. The reason that pleasure is subject to work is that it is a positive form of emotional life:

> Unless we spend our resources inefficiently, we cannot feel pleasure. The pleasure is corrosive… However, there are two simultaneous requests in every person for every minute: one of them focuses on work (replication of resources) and the other on pleasure (spending of resources). While the work meets the anxiety felt for tomorrow and the pleasure meets the anxiety felt for today. Working is useful and satisfies; pleasure is useless and creates a feeling of dissatisfaction. (Bataille, 2015, s. 47)

The reason as thinking and calculating is just one aspect of human existence. The person who gives only weight to this direction loses his humanity. Indeed, in the capitalist society, for this reason, the pleasures of persons who lost their humanity are important. The pleasures give persons back their humanity. In the capitalist society, what makes an individual "human" is the existence of passion, generosity, something that is sacred and exceeds the manifestations of intelligence. One speaks justice and truth through them into the world or as Bataille said: "Speaking of justice and truth in the world of intelligent robots is nothing more than dealing absurd". (Bataille, 2014, s. 118) In the face of the limited economy in which individuals are reduced to their reasons, according to Bataille, we begin to live life by entering the region from which wisdom tells us to escape. (Bataille, 2014, s. 56) This world is the sacred world where the general economy and the plane of immanence prevail. Returning to the sacred world comes to mean rejecting loyalty to the profane world, the limited economy, and slavery. It is not about sovereignty as domination and being master, but about the violation of laws establishing slavery, that is, sovereignty as rebellion and renunciation.

**4. Sovereignty as Renunciation, Expenditure, and Dissociation**

For Bataille who does not see sovereignty into the limited economy of capitalist society as real sovereignty, real sovereignty is the displacement of domination and the end of slavery. The economy of the sacred world where sovereignty is possible is the general economy. Sovereignty as undoing the boundaries of the profane world transcends the limited economy, interrupts it, and disrupts its account. The reason for this undoing is

sovereign renunciation. Sovereignty is the cessation of investing in the future: It covers momentary consumption, wasting, and excess. (Yalım, 2015, s. 55) The general economy pointed out by the sovereign actions is that the limited economy is upside down.

The sovereign action terminates the limited economy and the goals which are based on accumulation. It is a transition to the general economy and the purpose of this transition is not to be master. Sovereignty is to kill the king, God, and all authorities that dominate human and embody power. The purpose is not to be something; it is a failure as not becoming something. (Derrida, 2005, s. 20) The failure in bourgeois society, where productivity is essential, manifests itself when individuals go out of the capitalist society that appears as an authority. The distinctive feature of sovereign action in the face of behavior of capitalist society based on productivity and accumulation is the expenditure as giving up production. What is now consumed is wealth. Wealth as something owned, accumulated is actually the excess. Sovereignty as the consumption of wealth is different from and opposed to labor and slavery in the capitalist social formation. Because labor and slave accumulates, produces wealth without consuming. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 198)

Sovereignty as renunciation and expenditure is "to take self-conscious death to the extent that it can never discuss the problem of being taken death". (Bataille, 2000, s. 130) Sovereignty is a violation of the world scheme, the borders of the world which are constructed for us. Quaking moments that do not belong to the world are ways out of the world. Quaking is the world of immanence. (Direk, 2012) In this case, sovereignty is a transition from an impersonal ground/life to transcendent life. In sovereignty, human existence becomes a world-constructing being by stepping out of immanence. (Direk, 2012) As Bataille expressed:

> Sovereignty is not something to be searched for; it is a bestowed feature just like the grace of God… inspired melody (beauty)… Beauty's inspiration for a melody is nothing more than a violation of rules and prohibitions, that is, the essence of sovereignty. (Bataille, 2014, s. 148)

Sovereignty as indifference to death is to go beyond the rules that ensure the continuation of life. In this area where the sovereign ascends, all distinctions are invalid. Opposites intermingle and harm each other. According to Bataille, the movement caused by endamaging and articulation can only offer us the truth. (Bataille, 2014, s. 148) The sovereign, which is out of time, without the future and embodies the existence, expends profusely. It consumes the surplus of collective production, that is, the excess. The excess provides for the possibility of acting in terms of individuals. (Bataille, 1991b, s. 28) It does not work as it does not limit itself to necessities. It goes beyond its needs and takes pleasure in the products of this world. The sovereignty of the sovereign lies in taking pleasure.

A sovereign life begins with the possibility of life which opens up to infinity. It is not limited to usefulness. There is no one standard for useful to man and grand narratives fill this void. In terms of Bataille, they serve to mask the original void. (Bataille, 1985, s. 116) All efforts in social life are limited to imperatives. The necessity includes production

and protection. Anything that brings financial gain and fulfills the needs is useful. In social life, where actions are limited by benefit, there is an abyss between action and pleasure. A very special and exceptional pleasure is reduced to privilege. One who is accustomed to constantly working, producing, and acting towards production feels useless when one does nothing. For instance, when one keeps time for oneself and spends it, one feels sick. The producer individual lacks non-utilitarian justification of his own action:

> It does not occur to him that human society can have an *interes*t in considerable losses, in catastrophes that, while *confirming to well-defined needs*, provoke tumultuous depressions, crises of dread, and, in the final analysis, a certain orgiastic state… He is obliged to give people the impression that for him no *horror* can enter into consideration. In this respect, it is sad to say that *conscious humanity has remained a minor*; humanity recognizes the right to acquire, to conserve, and to consume rationally, but it excludes in principle *nonproductive expenditure*. (Bataille, 1985, s. 117)

The action style of social life, which reduces the pleasure to the needs, makes people forget their existence. Unlike the non-sovereign action that forgets and prevents the existence of human, sovereign action/life does not eliminate the existence of human. What human looks "has no other task but to give human opportunity to watch itself while seeing itself". (Bataille, 2014, s. 36)

Sovereign life is beyond usefulness, unlike the limited economy of the useful world. Civilization, as a limited economy, is the free limitation of sovereignty. (Bataille, 2014, s. 160) Sovereignty as the rejection of borders and slavery concerns the possibilities that cannot be justified by being useful. Sovereign thinks only of the present time and takes pleasure from the moment. Since it does not consider its present time subjected to the future, it does not use the moment according to the future. It uses the present for now. It is the kingdom of the instant. Here, the sovereign puts other men in the grip of dangerous acts, and also it remains there. (Bataille, 2011, s. 189) Its life is never in safety. Sovereign life, which is not limited to the needs, exceeding the world of necessity, shows that life cannot be lived only with bread. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 199) According to Bataille, the maneuvers that cause the general submission of interest to the future kill sovereignty. (1991, s. 379) Sovereignty is not an expected result of a calculated effort. It comes only from the arbitrary. There is no means of access like the useful of the limited economy. Not obedience to the useful indicates that it is a form of being. Sovereignty as a form of being fills the void of the world of useful works. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 226-27) The sovereign action has no purpose other than itself.

Any moment in its own name is sovereign and effective. In this respect, sovereignty is against the work of reason, which focuses on the future and expectation. The work of reason appears to aim to secure force as power, to protect itself in the future (the expense of other). The reason, for the sake of its purpose, reduces other to something, to object, to bare life. In the world where the value of everything is limited by its function, sovereign life is to get rid of functions, that is, the journey to the edge of life. But "there

is no perfect operation, and neither the slave nor the master is entirely reduced to the order of things". (Bataille, 1991b, s. 56) According to Bataille, real-life shows itself at the extreme: "Without the extreme, life is nothing more than a series of warless defeats, followed by weak defeat or than a long deception. This life is a collapse". (Bataille, 2015, s. 61) Going to the edge of life is to go to the limit. The limit which is the most extreme of possible arouses fear. This fearful life rising from ignorance is not less life than knowledge-filled life. (Bataille, 2015, s. 62) Ignorance reveals knowledge. It is fear as anxiety. Fear is disgust for nothing. Rational human, who builds his unity and finds strength by taking his reason as a basis, is a rotten monster devoid of the meaning of existence and life. This rottenness of human being scares him. (Bataille, 2015, s. 90) Bataille's emphasis on the limit and fragility shows that he transcends modern thought. While everything -such as object and subject, irrational and rational, body and soul- can be separated from each other by clear boundaries for modern thought, Bataille's sovereign problematizes these boundaries and thus it becomes sovereign.

Sovereignty which man bows to fear and weakness appears in moments of seizing the moment, that is, in a moment of rupture or disengagement. Seizing the moment can happen in the rhythm of a poem as well as in music, love, or dance. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 203) In all these moments, the self that enchains human is lost, bending towards the free spirit occurs. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 395) The loss of the self is a kind of dissolution.[6] It is the renunciation of being as it was until then. Breaking out of the limits of expectation is decisive in disengagement or renunciation. The expectation that is the inevitable calculation of reason is dissolved in the sovereign moment. The dissociated expectation is disappointing. This situation forces the person to suddenly reverse the course of life. "The disappointed anticipation heralds the reign of the moment… In this way, sovereignty celebrates its marriage with death". (Bataille, 1991a, s. 211) Death enters the immortal world that one has built through the benefit. Unlike the harmonious and consensus-based life of the self, the person who performs sovereign life is a dying being. To die is to abandon harmony. Death as disharmony is the realization of sovereignty. (Bataille, 2015, s. 97) Life progresses with death. The pain accompanies death.

Pain is the place where reason is not sovereign. The suffering being has been shattered. In this regard, pain is a sign of a weak being. (Bataille, 2015, s. 105) The sovereign life that undertakes pain is weak, powerless life. In the moment of sovereignty, human being is drunk, as he accepts the weakness and gives up everything that establishes power. As Bataille said, at this moment, "I want to become a monster, a storm, everything that is proper to human is foreign to me, I break all the laws that people made, I trample all the values, nothing can identify, restrict me, but I am and I will take a freezing breath that will destroy all kinds of life". (Bataille, 2014, s. 143-44). In the sovereign moment when

[6] Here, there is a tension between the idea of sovereignty and Marxism. For Bataille, the proletarian reason structure excludes sovereignty. For example, it sacrifices luxury for necessity. The Communist Party replacing individuals determines a particular system of values for all. This system is a function of productivity in Marxism. (Bataille, 1991, s. 298) However, Bataille's sovereign, who has no goal of producing better, denies its needs. It exists by violating its border which includes the Communist Party and its values as well.

human ceases to want to be everything, everything is a matter of debate. The sovereign, who doubts everything, faces up to pain and death. Breaking away from pain is not to be sovereign. Anyone who wants to steal out of pain merges into the whole universe, evaluates everything as he imagines, this actually means never dying. Pain is what a person who is free from poison admits. (Bataille, 2015, s. 20) Sovereignty is that person, who avoids pain, reduces everything to the position of the object and escapes from death, encounters with unbearable emptiness: "If we cannot find drugs, un unbearable emptiness emerges. I wanted to be everything. Instead of running out in this space, I was screwing up my courage and saying to myself: I am ashamed to ask for it because now I see that this desire (is about to be everything) means sleeping". (Bataille, 2015, s. 20) Sovereignty, in which human wakes from sleep, is a special experiment.

The experience of problematizing existence is sovereignty as revolt. The sovereign person violates the prohibitions of society. It does not serve the economy of meaning, the limited economy, and problematizes the present services. The rebellion begins when human undertakes to break them in favor of his own relatives, fellows. Riot as a refusal to submit to subjugation is a negation. (Bataille, 2015, s. 252) The rebellious is someone who has taken his share of sovereign glory and pushed the rebellion to its extreme limit. He freely reaches the world by self-conducting so as not to be a fool or a slave. The rebellion is the limit of what is possible. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 253) According to Bataille, sovereignty as going to the extreme/end is only possible with ignorance or unknowledge as the denial of another authority and his own becoming an authority. Rebellious reveals itself exactly by going towards the unknown, without deceiving. For Bataille, it is the unknown parts that reinforce slavery, provide great authority to God, or the experiment of poetry. But eventually, it requires an unknown, indivisible power. (Bataille, 2015, s. 27) The sovereignty that interrupts the given because it goes to the limit of what is possible is positioned on the outside of knowledge. Because knowing is always to try hard and to work. It is a slave-spirited action. Information is never sovereign, as it always moves again and starts all over again. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 202) However, we do not have the information on the sovereign moment. As soon as we know anything about it, the movement comes to a stopping point. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 202) Existential problems fall under the field of ignorance in the face of information that responds to the material needs of human life. Human being exists where knowledge ends. (Bataille, 2015, s. 8) The area of ignorance is the domain of sovereignty. Someone who knows before cannot go beyond a known horizon. (Bataille, 2015, s. 9) Thus, sovereignty as contacting with ignorance is to go beyond what is given. Sovereign has a world that extends the given world. One has this different world by pushing intellectual limits. (Bataille, 2011, s. 114)

The sovereignty that does not serve for knowledge, science, and dogma is an inner experience. Human encounters an extreme phenomenon in his ordinary daily life and gets clues about what his existence is. (Bataille, 2015, s. 7) In the inner experience, where all authorities are rejected, the experience itself is the authority. The experience is the problematization of given authority, the destruction of structures. The destruction of the structure is the emergence of non-perfect, the becoming visible of deficiency in human

life. The assumed unity or fusion is what is destroyed at first. The experience in which unity is dissolved is only to exist, to get rid of deception and ties. (Bataille, 2015, s. 34)

For the inner experience, the discourse that represents knowledge must stop and silence is based on ignorance must begin. (Bataille, 2015, s. 12) The moment of sovereignty as an inner experience can only be achieved from the most internal motions. Sovereignty as an objection is the emancipation of the power of words. The life that does not go to the extreme and escapes from the end is a life without freedom. It is frozen, stable, and tidy. In this respect, religious, ascetic, or capitalist life is lacking in freedom. They are not a sovereign life. However, freedom is the possibility to reach the very end and the introduction of complementary or profitless action. Freedom for Bataille is not "the freedom of one class over the others, but the freedom of human life against the moral slavery". (Bataille, 2000, s. 207) It is to go above and beyond the call of duty, that is, social slavery. The human that overcomes social slavery is different from the current human being. The daily human being becomes the same with only one part of human possibility. The human that overcomes the current human being is the whole person who has been freed from his slavery. (Bataille, 2000, s. 208)

Freedom requires a sudden and unpredictable break that cannot be accomplished by premeditation. (Bataille, 2014, s. 43) The *amor fati* which does not go to the border and submits to destiny is the enemy of freedom. Those who have the potential to go to the very end are the others that are reduced to the body excluded by the soul. The other fragments, distorts. It does not contemplate, it forces fate and goes to pieces. (Bataille, 2015, s. 63) Others, which are not visible from the plane of knowledge and soul, do not exist in this plane. But in reality, they are children, mad, etc. and exist within that plane. Those who are visible are adults, elders, etc. However, those who embody sovereignty are not adults but children, mad persons, and others in general. Because, for example, being a child is to go into extreme, holding the crazy tragedy, not the reality. (Bataille, 2015, s. 65) Sovereignty as going into the extreme becomes the limit experience. The limit is the edge of the world that human knows as human. The possibility of sovereignty is hidden at this point. Here, all knowledge and given bases collapse. The limit experience is deterioration and destruction of benefit, interest, domination and slavery relations between people. (Yalım, 2015, s. 55) In this respect, the limit experience is the experience of immanence. It does not cause satisfaction and does not turn into any information.

For Bataille, the sovereignty in which the human being is free from harmony and exceeds subjugation to things is the only alternative to the traditional sovereignty as domination. (Bataille, 1991a, s. 368) According to Bataille, who does not limit traditional sovereignty to bourgeois society in terms of domination and slavery, communism and fascism that are two distinct extremes similar to bourgeois society. Both are based on slavery and the suppression of sovereignty. Neither fascism nor communism can be an alternative to bourgeois society from this point. What determines the alternative is the thought that includes Bataille's idea of sovereignty. Bataille finds this idea in Nietzsche. Therefore, the idea of Nietzsche is put forward by Bataille as an alternative. For Bataille, Nietzsche is an expression of the free play of passions. (Giaimo, 2016, s. 18) The unconditional, most extreme aspiration of human is voiced for the first time by Nietzsche, regardless of

a moral purpose and service to God. (Bataille, 2000, s. 10) Bataille, basing on Nietzsche, evaluates morality as slavery, that is, the rejection of sovereignty. However, in the essence of human being, there is a violent motion that demands the autonomy and freedom of being. (Bataille, 2000, s. 12) The morality that interrupts the dynamic existence and the movements of human, makes him a slave. For this reason, Bataille states that he prefers to live and die crippled rather than becoming a slave. (Bataille, 2000, s. 12)

**5. Conclusion**

This study aimed to reveal the meaning of sovereignty in the context of Georges Bataille's critique of capitalist society. The main reason for the study to focus on the concept of sovereignty was that this concept was used by Bataille in a different way than the sovereignty which is the basic characteristic of the modern state and the "free" individual who founded that state. In other words, the concept of sovereignty appears as a specific concept that takes on a new meaning in Bataille's philosophy. For this reason, this study, which tries to reveal the scope of the concept of sovereignty in Bataille, primarily touched on the functioning mechanism of capitalist society in order to determine its difference from modern conception. It draws attention to the nature of the practices here limited to capitalist production and profit/usefulness. This limit which is remarked by Bataille causes people to be alienated and enslaved. Based on Bataille's ideas of alienation and enslavement, this study suggested that sovereignty in capitalist society is experienced in the form of domination. The domination in question operates not only between man and nature but also between people. Everything is a machine in the capitalist society and the main purpose of this machine is accumulation. A capitalist man, who separates himself from other people and nature, wants to appropriate everything. Since he imagines the world by centering his existence, everything including his body becomes the object of domination. Under this condition, liberation seems impossible. Because everyone does not mind other while just wanting to appropriate.

According to this study, with the idea of sovereignty as something different from domination, Bataille intervenes in the life cycle of the modern human. He makes us think about the possibility of a free life by making sense of sovereignty as giving up possession, appropriation, capture, and exploitation. Therefore, after mentioning Bataille's understanding of capitalist society and domination, this study discussed in detail the conception of sovereignty. It pointed out that emancipation requires a sudden and unpredictable break and that this requirement lies in the idea of sovereignty as renunciation or consuming. Sovereignty as a possibility of emancipation assumes that human life cannot be limited to closed systems based on logical insights. It is communication rather than isolation. (Bataille, 1986, s. 66) Thoughtlessness, flooding, excretion, sudden and major changes that are excluded by the intelligent and self-sufficient bourgeois individual are also parts of life. Sovereignty is the way of taking the surplus from wealth. (Bataille, 1991b, s. 59) According to Bataille, what is given to us on the path of order and need, the organized and protected/reserved powers are meaningful from the moment that liberate themselves for the purposes that cannot be

subjugated to anything. Only with such an uprising as sovereignty, human can stop being trapped in the unconditional splendor of material things. The human can become sovereign truly by experiencing freedom. To be free is to be sovereign as the limit experience. In the capitalist society, accumulation is the limit, and sovereignty as a limit experience lies in giving up accumulation as appropriation and exploitation. For this reason, it gains the meaning of sharing wealth rather than ruling it by domination.

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