

İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS
PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THOUGHT MASTER DEGREE PROGRAM

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM OF FICHTE
AND GERMAN NATIONALISM**

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İSTANBUL

2019

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FICHTE'NİN FELSEFE SİSTEMİ İLE ALMAN MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİ
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Date of Thesis Approval: 27.09.2019

Total Page Amount: 126

Key Words

- 1) Fichte
- 2) Nationalism
- 3) German Idealism
- 4) Doctrine of Science
- 5) Politics

Anahtar Kelimeler

- 1) Fichte
- 2) Milliyetçilik
- 3) Alman İdealizmi
- 4) Bilim Öğretisi
- 5) Politika

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we examined the relationship between Fichte's philosophical system and German nationalism. In this direction, first of all, we focused on nationalism, which is one of the themes of our study, and aimed to determine the historical meaning of the concept by defining its boundaries. After the examination of nationalism in general, we elaborated on the conditions of emergence and the main characteristics of German nationalism. In this context, after dealing with the Reform Movement, Enlightenment, and the French Revolution, which we have identified as the main conditions that make up this nationalism, we attempted to show that nationalism as the dominant characteristic of German nationalism was a solution for the socio-economic-political crises that Germany faced. In the first part, after dealing with nationalism in general and German nationalism in particular, in the second part, we outlined Wissenschaftslehre, which is the proposal of Fichte philosophical system. We tried to put forward the philosopher's ethic-political philosophy. In the last chapter, we focused on the conditions of deduction of German nationalism from Fichte's philosophical system, and we highlighted at the points on which Wissenschaftslehre could form the basis for German nationalism. The hypothesis of our thesis is, nationalism, which created a new world model in Europe of the period, is a factor determining the character of our philosopher's philosophy. From this point of view, we endeavored to put forward the reasons for this argument when we reach the third chapter, which was the last.

Keywords: Fichte, Nationalism, German Idealism, Doctrine of Science, Politic

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, Fichte felsefi sisteminin oluşmaya başlayan dönemin Alman milliyetçiliği ile ilişkisi incelenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda öncelikle çalışmamızın temalarından olan milliyetçiliğe odaklanılmış, kavramın sınırları belirlenerek tarihsel olarak nasıl anlamlar kazandığı tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Genel olarak milliyetçilik işlendikten sonra esas olarak üzerinde duracağımız Alman milliyetçiliğinin oluşum koşulları ve temel karakteristikleri araştırılmıştır. Bu çerçevede bu milliyetçiliği oluşturan ana koşullar olarak belirlediğimiz; Reform Hareketi, Aydınlanma ve Fransız Devrimi konu bağlamında incelenmiş, Alman milliyetçiliğinin baskın karakteri olarak da; milliyetçiliğin, Almanya'nın içinde bulunduğu sosyo-ekonomik-siyasi krizler için bir çözüm önerisi olduğu gösterilmiştir. Birinci bölümümüzde genel olarak milliyetçilik ve daha özel olarak Alman milliyetçiliği işlendikten sonra ikinci bölümümüzde Fichte felsefi sistem önerisi olan Wissenschaftslehre ana hatlarıyla özetlenmiş, filozofun etik-politik felsefesi ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır. Son bölümümüzde ise; Fichte felsefi sisteminin Alman milliyetçiliğinin çıkarsanabilme koşulları üzerinde durulmuş, buna göre Wissenschaftslehre'nin Alman milliyetçiliğine hangi noktalardan zemin teşkil edebileceği araştırılmıştır. Tezimizin savı; dönemin Avrupa'sında yeni bir dünya modeli yaratan milliyetçiliğin filozofumuzun felsefesinin karakterini belirleyen bir unsur olduğu ve etkilenen bu felsefenin oluşmakta olan Alman milliyetçiliğini de etkilediği, teorik olarak onu beslediği yönündedir. Buradan hareketle son bölümümüz olan üçüncü bölüme geldiğimizde bu savımızın gerekçeleri ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fichte, Milliyetçilik, Alman İdealizmi, Bilim Öğretisi, Politika

INTRODUCTION

The nineteenth-century occupies an important place in history, especially in terms of being the birth age of new political subjectivities and supporting philosophies where significant breaks, transformations occurred in politics and philosophy. While national identity stands out as the most inclusive and determinant of this new form of subjectivity on the political level, the nationalism that makes this identity possible is indeed institutionalized with the contribution of many other disciplines and especially in the philosophies of the period. In this respect, the Wissenschaftslehre, proposed by Fichte as a new philosophical system, who was one of the first representatives of the German Idealism, which prevailed in the period is remarkable for the aim of this study. Fichte attempted to systematize *wholeness and absoluteness* in parallel with the basic quests of the Wissenschaftslehre and the German Idealists. On the other hand, this system, built on the basis of Wholeness and Absoluteness, is the system of freedom and rationality for Fichte. In this respect, Fichte, whose philosophy can be regarded as an ethical-political philosophy, has based Kant's rational-free subject on the one hand and the French Revolution, one of the most striking political events of his time on the other hand, as a source of philosophy for the embodiment of freedom - like the other German Idealists-.

Thus, the Wissenschaftslehre was established on the settlement of antagonism between dogmatism (necessity) and transcendental Idealism (freedom) in the history of philosophy on the one hand, and the socioeconomic and political problems of the Germany, which was basically stemming from the lack of national consciousness preventing Germany from establishing a nation-state that has been prevailing in Europe on the other hand. In this respect, if we remember that "wholeness" was a fundamental necessity for the the 19th century Germany which consisted more than three hundred principals, which were disparate in all respects, primarily political and intellectual; while it is not surprising that the philosophies of the period-Wissenschaftslehre aimed at wholeness, it is essential to characterize it with the freedom and rationality of the

new path enlightened by the Enlightenment in terms of expressing the historicity of the philosophical system in question. From this point, no doubt, considering philosopher-philosophy as self-transcendent beings independent of the conditions of his time does not only complicate our understanding but also increases the possibility of mistake. However, the central question of our thesis, is "Can nationalism be deduced from the Wissenschaftslehre?" will only be a valid question in this perspective, which is the main aim of our thesis.

After discussing the theoretical and political background of Wissenschaftslehre, which is the first component of our thesis, and the historicity of the system, it will be appropriate to consider the second component of our study, namely nationalism. We will present the etymological, semantic, and political aspects of the concept in the following chapters. At this point, however, we would like to draw attention to the fact that nationalism is historical just like Wissenschaftslehre and that it has been occupying our political agenda more and more every day since the 19th century, and that is why Nationalism research is entirely meaningful in our era.

In this context, when we draw a line from the 19th century, when nationalism began to spread, to nowadays, the two concepts that are definitive for this period will be identity and globalization. While demands for identity were possible in the capitalist-modern new world that has marked the last few centuries developing on the paths of the Cartesian philosophy and Enlightenment, it is remarkable that they are the main issues of this new world as well.

In this respect, it is clear that nationalism as a significant expression of identity is practical in many respects over all other religion, gender, geography, ideas, family-based identities, including these minor identities. Moreover, this identity continues to gain momentum in parallel with the strong claims of globalization that can be interpreted as antagonism at first sight. At this point, we should mention the relationship between globalization and nationalism. In this line, we can start with the judgment "Globalization diminishes nations and national consciousness". From this point of view, although we acknowledge that this judgment is partly correct, we think that it would be more accurate to consider

it as an attempt rather than an achievement. In this respect, globalization attempted to abolish material-spiritual boundaries, but every effort of this kind faces the resistance of micro-nationalisms in its purest form. To put it more clearly, the tools that made globalization possible were mobilizing the modern idea of "national consciousness" an even to the smallest communities, and this awareness could be embodied in the resistance against the threat of globalization. Another frequently expressed judgment in the context of globalization is that "Globalization is the establishment of the hegemony of American culture and ideology in particular." It is also possible to interpret this judgment as; "Globalization is the establishment of American hegemony, that is, the Americanization of all the rest." In other words, globalization is the single-nationalization of the world. In this judgment, it is clear that globalization is evaluated as not a movement that terminates nationality but rather a phenomenon that reinforces and diversifies it.

In this context, in this age of mobilization, where the information, culture, and human mobility became competent through all technological tools, the ambiguity of the material-spiritual boundaries raises globalization, which implies that the world is now a small village. In terms of Fichte's philosophical instruments, it seems that globalization as I, triggered micro-nationalisms as non-I. In Fichtean words, it postulated these nationalisms. In this respect, nationalism granted a reputation on the individual identity, and mostly it is the main difference between national identity and all other forms of identification. What makes nationalism so attractive is the globalization of this new consciousness. Therefore, contrary to the phenomenon created by globalization in our age, nationalism as a political identity emerged as the most correct type of the movements which demanded recognition and statuses; in other words, this consciousness, which was legitimized, itself has become globalized. In this respect, despite all the abundant literature available on nationalism in the central axis of today's political movements and resistance, it remains a popular and exciting topic for researchers.

We need to address nationalism's relations with democracy as well as its relationship with globalization, especially in the political universe of our century.

Nationalism, however, is the dominant form of democracy in the modern world. Because nationalism is based on the principles of popular sovereignty and general equality, and these are complementary features of modern democracy. Democracy, as it is, is therefore logically inherent in nationalism; that is, the nation, which is a sovereign community of equal members, is, by definition, a democracy. However, it should be noted that this is neither good nor bad in itself; this is a morally neutral proposition. What motivates our research is simply the growing reputation of nationalism, along with democracy, which is one of the main political goals of our century, and the need to re-understand and reassert the concept.

If we open up the subject; in the modern world, politics is formed by nationalism; because, in this world, nationalism shapes our way of thinking and feeling, the way we see and experience reality, because our consciousness is 'national.' Many things can justify this. Still, for a simple reason, this seems to be the case in an unpredictable future, as we lack the conceptual tools to envision the future beyond nationalism. In this regard, considering the enormous role it plays in our lives, doing our best to understand nationalism will help us to establish the tools for the imagination of another world beyond our little intellectual effort and to put our political assignment. In this direction, it is particularly important to remember that nationalism is a highly complicated phenomenon with dynamics that cannot be overcome with simple explanations of any kind and it is especially important to remember that the greatest interdisciplinary cooperation is needed to understand it. Therefore, this study focuses on the relationship between nationalism and philosophy. We should note that this thesis was written in the Department of Philosophy of the university, and was therefore prepared in accordance with the requirements of the department. However, the reader can also evaluate this text in order to understand nationalism in terms of philosophy (especially Fichte philosophy) or to comprehend the philosophy in question in terms of nationalism. In our opinion, both attitudes will be useful acts on our ethical-political horizon, as Fichte stated in *Wissenschaftslehre*, which is a theoretical work that he has worked on throughout his life; theory exists to serve

us to understand and explain the practice. In this respect, a reading that does not prioritize Wissenschaftslehre will not be considered unfair to Fichte.

Now, back to the main question of our thesis, this study will propose that nationalism can be deduced from Fichte's philosophical system, namely Wissenschaftslehre. To ground this argument, we will prefer to concentrate on the relationship between the philosophical system, Kant philosophy, and the French Revolution, and we will attempt to establish our discussion based on these developments. In this context, we will examine the relationship with Kant's philosophy, because the Fichte's philosophical system, which claims to be a system of freedom, gets its theoretical inspiration from the point of freedom from Kant, while its concrete-practical inspiration is to be found in the French Revolution. In other words, our study; while focusing on the relationship between two disciplines, philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) and politics (Nationalism), the method of examining Wissenschaftslehre, which is one of the main components of the thesis, will build on this duality and will focus on Kant and the French Revolution. If we remember that nationalism, which is an imagination of the political plane as a practical field, was first constructed in opinion-theory, the concept is only possible from the relationality of these two disciplines. Therefore, our method is a necessity.

SECTION 1

APPROACHES FROM NATIONALISM TO NATION

“The nationalists have no country.”¹

1.1. NATIONALISM TO NATION

This terse expression is significant in the sense it represents two critical notions regarding the nature of the idea of nationalism. First, it points out that nationalism is an intellectual-social-political fiction, which is an invention made possible by all those systems. This fact creates a rift between the claims of being a nation and the truth, which eliminates the overlap between the claim and the fact.

Secondly, in the relations of nationalisms with each other, our attention (as each nation-nationalism desires) should be directed towards commonality rather than difference. In the following chapters, we will focus on this more, with the reasons, but as this neat expression touches, nationalism is a discourse. It is a way to look, understand, and interpret the world. “The discourse of nationalism asserts that humanity is divided into distinct nations, each with its own separate past, present and destiny.”² “People can only realize themselves if they become members of a national community, of which membership is above all other forms of belonging - family, gender, class, religion, region, etc.”³

Supported by the two quotes above, we can easily say that there is a form of the idea of nationalism. Yes, there is a difference in the content; the content changes, so that different nationalities and nationalisms become possible. But the commonality in form can shed light on the theoretical nature of the concept. However, within the framework of our study, we will prefer to focus on the idea

¹Özkırımlı, U. (2005). *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement* (First Ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 1.

²Özkırımlı, U. (2005). *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement* (First Ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2.

³Suny, R. G. (2000). *History*. In A. J. Motly (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Nationalism* (Vol. 1, p. 335-58). San Diego: Academic Press.

of 'nation' as the founding element of nationalism, before ⁴nationalism itself. Because we believe that the effort to understand the nation as a concrete (compared to nationalism) indicator will enable comprehension of nationalism with all its clarity.

1.1.1. Nation: Semantic Development of the Word

One of the primary sources we will encounter when we attempt to explore the nation as a word is undoubtedly Guido Zernatto's *Nation: The History of a Word*⁵, which is frequently referred to by field research. In his famous work, Guido Zernatto describes the historical-semantic change story of the word 'nation' in a way that will inspire many subsequent investigations.

The beneficial analogy of Zernatto, that he put between the coin and the words seems to guide us in the context of our subject. According to this analogy, Zernatto says that the value of each coin has changed over time the same words. Just like those coins, words tell and give more in a certain period, and they offer much less in another one. And perhaps more importantly, as for money, there comes a time when words are removed from circulation. This framework, drawn by Zernatto seems to be quite valid for the history of the word 'nation'.

When we examine the word from the etymological perspective, keeping in mind the analogy in question, the origin of the word 'nation' is found in Latin, which means 'something born'. However, the social functioning of the word used by Romans does not seem to have much to do with this dictionary. Because when we look at the Romans' usage of the word, we see that they use the word for the other for a local "community of foreigners". In this first use of the word, the exclusivist and derogatory meaning of the word draws our attention.

⁵ Zernatto, G. (1944). Nation: The History of a Word. *The Review of Politics*, 6 (3), 351-366. doi:10.1017/S0034670500021331.

On the other hand, we know that the word gradually abandoned its previous connotations, which were quite negative in medieval uses. When we come to the Middle Ages, the word of *nation* with its meaning of 'the community of foreigners' meant the student community in universities. Zernatto stated that students, like migrants in the settlements of Rome, were once foreign, and students from geographically close regions were defined as a *nation*. These students were placed in selected neighborhoods with their professors. This movement paved the way for an eventual expansion of the meaning of the word because the students were involved in in-university discussions with their professors, thus identifying themselves with intellectual positions. At this stage, although the word still referred to 'foreigners', it is clear that the meaning imposed on 'foreigners' has changed. The word of nation has expanded to the meaning to the community with purpose and consensus rather than mere identifying the foreigners.

When we look at the Middle Ages, again, it is seen that the *nation* was used to point out that church councils were a community of opinion. It should be noted that in these councils, representatives of the princes and rulers convened to discuss *Christiana's* future. Besides, *nations* were a descriptive statement for those who agreed on the future of *Res Publica*. With these last uses, the word has started to stand out from its derogatory and exclusive meanings; to point to a title, to gain an aristocratic sense. Because, after all, the members of the council, who were carriers of the word, had cultural-political authority and had high status.

Nation, overtime during its semantic development, was transformed from the meaning of the community of elites who gained wealth and reputation into a sense identical to the word "people," which still applies today. Greenfeld⁶ found the beginning of this overlap in England in the early sixteenth century and stated that the word started the era of nationalism. This semantic transformation created quite surprising reasons and consequences for the modern world, since the word "people" which was often used in the sense of mob, and crowd was recovered

⁶Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

from its derogating and humiliating meanings. They were equalized to the elite, respectful nation, which was the carrier of sovereignty, the basis of political solidarity, and the supreme object of loyalty.

1.1.2. What is Nation in the Context of Nationalism?

Developing belongingness to a nation in today's system of political-ethical values, defining and identifying themselves with a nation, although it seems to be inherent, obligatory, eternal, and perpetual in human existence. It is clear that both this relationship and all the means that make this relationship-network possible - each phenomenon and notion - are historical, which correspond to a concise period compared to whole human history. Just as Walter Benjamin points out in the on the concept of history "In relation to the history of organic life on earth, writes a modern biologist, the paltry fifty millennia of homo sapiens constitute something like two seconds at the close of a twenty-four-hour day. On this scale, the history of civilized mankind would fill one-fifth of the last second of the last hour."⁷

In this context, it is noteworthy to look at the notion of the nation, one of the fundamental defining concepts of the political jargon for the last two centuries, while confirming this notion of historicity. From this point of view, when we attempt to explore the concept, the first thing we will face concerning the concept will be that what the concept carries under the whole phenomenon of openness and conciliation. Because of the difficulties in making a single and scientific definition, the existence of different practices and insights in different geographies, times, and cultures, even if certain analogies can be established, have led to a spectrum of definitions in the relevant literature. More directly, there are no nations, but nationalisms and thus not a definition but definitions. Although there are many reasons for this variability, which may be annoying for a

⁷Benjamin, W. (1940). *On the Concept of History, Selected Writings* (First ed. Vol. 4). (H. E. Jennings & E. J. Others, Eds. &Trans.) Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

researcher, we think that it is this inorganic concept (nation) that is created especially by the interdisciplinary (politics, history, literature, folklore, lexicography, linguistics) structure of the concept (nation) and mainly by nationalism.

On the other hand, despite all its ambiguity, and all the claims of globalization, many statistics and studies suggest that nationalism as a consciousness and a political demand is increasing day by day. Interestingly, although at first glance it seems contradictory, globalization is one of the most important factors triggering the nationalism⁸. Therefore, as the subject is enriched with different national experiences, the related discussion and literature are expanding. In parallel with the nation, the dominant expressions the national expressions inherent to it, such as the national identity and national character, are far from conciliation, controversial, and highly variable. However, at this point, it is possible to talk about a typical characteristic of these variable concepts and expressions, which undoubtedly is that the nation and the related concepts are ongoing modern constructs.

“Anderson, Hobsbawm, or David A. Bell, who interpreted nationalism as a building program for a sovereign political community; grouped nation together as people with sufficient common characteristics – language, custom, belief, or some combination of these that enable them to act as homogeneous collective individuals.”⁹ In these definitions, nationalism has the same meaning as nation-building, thus revealing only a relatively small part of the nationalism of nationalists.”¹⁰ This is also in line with Ernest Gellner's¹¹ suggestion that a political principle should be understood from nationalism and therefore political and national units should overlap. Although the perspective of building and creating nationalities and nationalisms is widespread, there are strong reasons in

⁸ (2017, 02 21). Retrieved from youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szt7f5NmE9E&t=3087s>

⁹ Bell 2001, p.20 Breuer, S. cited in (2010). *Milliyetçilikler ve Faşizmler*. (Ç. C. Dikmen, Trans.) İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 26.

¹⁰ Breuer, S. (2010). *Milliyetçilikler ve Faşizmler*. (Ç. C. Dikmen, Trans.) İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p.26

¹¹ Gellner, E. (2008). *Nations and Nationalism*. New York: Cornell University Press.

both directions as to which one precedes. Considering this character of German nationalism, which is the central axis of our thesis, in the debate of "Did nations create nationalism or vice versa?", our attitude will be that nationalism is created and this idea constitutes 'nation.' When we look at both to the nation and nationalism based on difference, it can be said that nationalism (as a requirement of every ism/ideology) exhibits a more abstract, more intellectual existence. However, the connections that the nation revolves around; include concrete elements such as culture, history, language, geography, race. At this stage, as our title promises, we will first look at various definitions of 'nation' with different approaches, and then we will attempt to define an inclusive nationalism.

Nationalism is ideal. It is precisely for this reason that the *purity of the ideal* cannot fully coincide with social reality. In this respect, the so-called nation-building process (each time) can be seen as an effort to achieve the purity of the concept at the population level.

In 1882, Ernest Renan made essential observations that are still valid today. He even formed the canon of the subject with the conference he gave at the Sorbonne University on the relatively new concept of "nation" for his time. Ernest Renan found that the basis of a nation was that all its members had something in joint and that all of them had forgotten many things. He referred to the importance of cultural, geographical, historical, commonality as well as collective forgetting. In this regard, Renan said, for example, that no French citizen knew that whether he was Burgonde, Alain, or Visigoth, while not remembering was a requirement of being a nation (at least for the French model of a nation). On the other hand, he added that every French citizen must have forgotten Saint-Berthelemy - the southern massacres of the 16th century - and that this was also a requirement in this respect. On the other hand, he underlined that one couldn't have found ten families in France that could prove that their lineage was Franc and that even if there were some people those who made this claim, there would have been many dead-ends that might shake this claim.

In this context, Renan said: "The modern nation is therefore the historical result of a number of facts that have converged in the same direction. Sometimes

unity has been achieved by a dynasty like in France, it has been the expression of the direct will of provinces like in Holland, Switzerland, and Belgium, and sometimes by a general spirit overcoming feudal caprice like in Italy and Germany.”¹² Against the assertion that the national unions are based only on interests, he stated that, although the union of interests formed a strong bond between people, it was not enough to create a nation simply because it could only bring commercial treaties. According to him, the nation should also involve the feelings, so that the nation should also have a spirit and body (with concrete cultural elements and geography).

Stating that the nation is a soul, a spiritual being, Renan said that this spirit took its share from all times –past, now, and future- and was only possible in this way. Accordingly, the spirit of the nation (We think we can read the spirit as an idea) was related to the past; inherit a shared, rich heritage of memories. 'Now' was the link to today, while consenting to live together, it is connected to the future that this consent and desire would bring, by being a stakeholder to a common destiny.

Renan has made many contributions to the studies of nation-nationalism that are still valid today. However, as we have already mentioned, 'nation' is a very slippery ground, which is why many different definition-description attempts are emphasized in the literature each time. In this regard, for example, Hugh Seton-Watson¹³ said that even if it is not possible to make a scientific definition of the nation, it is sufficient to accept this concept as a nation when it claims that it exists and constitutes a certain number of people in a community, or pretends to be a nation. From a similar perspective, Ernest Gellner emphasized the contingency of nations; “Two men were only of the same only if they were from the same culture. In this case, culture is a system of ideas, signs, associations, and

¹² Renan, E. (1992). *What is a Nation?* Paris: Presses-Pocket. Retrieved from http://ucparis.fr/files/9313/6549/9943/What_is_a_Nation.pdf

¹³ Seton-Watson, H. (1977). *Nations and States: An Inquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*. Boulder: Westview.

ways of communicating. Two men are of the same nation only if they recognize each other as being a part of the same nation.”¹⁴

Another point that we need to emphasize is the two-way emphasis on nation-nationalism studies. Some of these, as in the examples above, are based more on communality-communalities, while others establish their definition-description initiatives through a vision of difference. A clear example of a study based on difference is the definition of Otto Bauer. Otto Bauer¹⁵ referred to the nation as a whole of the people who are part of the nation and differentiate it from other nations. Such nationalism practices, which build their own existence over the other (as it is not), are seen at least in such nations, where there is not a deep-rooted culture and tradition, and their own resources are not sufficient to establish themselves.

1.1.3. Imagined Nations

The creation of the nation is the result of an intensive effort, the contribution of many disciplines, not only science and culture but also imagination. From this point, some other approaches describe the nationalization process of human societies and the emergence of such a consciousness through ‘imagination,’ apart from commonalities within themselves and differences from the other communities.

In this regard, one of the first works that comes to mind is the *Imagined Communities* (Benedict Anderson). Stating that the nations do not have certain birth dates and that if they have deaths, this cannot happen naturally, Anderson¹⁶ indicated that: “Nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of

¹⁴ Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism* (First Ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, p. 7.

¹⁵ Balakrishnan, G. (1996). *The Nation Mapping*. New York: Verso Books, p. 61.

¹⁶ Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (3rd Ed.). New York: Verso Books p. 6.

them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”¹⁷ He considered nations as imagined communities because he stated that even the members of the smallest nation would never recognize all the other members, that they would know nothing about most of them, but that even in the minds of each of them the sum of them would continue to live. It is possible to see another approach based on the notion of ‘dream’ in Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha stated that nations, like fairy tales, have lost their origins in the darkness of ancient times and turned into legends and existed only by imagination.¹⁸

Anthony D. Smith, the frequently mentioned name of Nation-Nationalism studies, also referred to the element of imagination. “Nationalism provides perhaps the most compelling identity myth in the modern world, but it comes in various forms”¹⁹ and he stated that even among researchers who regard the nation as a modern construct, there were significant disagreement at the point in regard to the emergence of the nation in its modern sense. In this respect, while some of the researchers favoured the eighteenth century or earlier and others emphasized the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the masses were nationalized.

When we refer to Bernd Estel, he tried to make a definition of synthesis which is almost a sum of different approaches (difference-commonality-imagination) in the literature by establishing the relationality of the concepts used in nationalism studies. According to this; “Bernd Estel revealed the differences between the concepts of ‘ethnic group’, ‘people’, ‘nation’, ‘national consciousness’ and ‘nationalism. The determinants of ethnic group were regional (but only weak and limited) relationship, unchanging cultural (language, morality, religion, etc.) communalities, belief in a common origin, historical memories conveyed within the group, a distinct consciousness of superiority that can reach ethnic centrism,

¹⁷ Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (3rd Ed.). New York: Verso Books p. 6.

¹⁸ Bhabha, H. K. (2006). *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge Press, p. 1.

¹⁹ Smith, A. D. (1991). *National Identity*. London: Penguin Books, p. 2.

and a general recognition of cultural phenomena as respectable symbols, as well as of major mythical or historical figures.”²⁰

1.1.4. Nationalism

The specificity of nationalism, that which distinguishes nationality from other types of identity, derives from the fact that nationalism locates the source of individual identity within a "people," which is seen as the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty, and the basis of collective solidarity. The "people" is the mass of a population whose boundaries and nature are defined in various ways, but which is usually perceived as larger than any concrete community and always as fundamentally homogeneous, and only superficially divided by the lines of status, class, locality, and in some cases even ethnicity. This specificity is conceptual. The only foundation of nationalism as such, the only condition, that is, without which no nationalism is possible, is an idea; nationalism is a particular perspective or a style of thought. The idea which lies at the core of nationalism is the idea of the "nation".²¹

As Greenfeld emphasized, the core of nationalism is the idea of a nation, and therefore we first tried to focus on the ‘nation.’ Now, when we reach nationalism, which is our leading issue, we must say from the beginning that it is as multi-dimensional and multi-character as much as the concept of nation. So much so that, the scope of the literature we encounter in the context of the subject; as part of this work, every attempt to speak of nationalism will (necessarily) overshadow (inevitably) many other things that will (can) not be said from the boundaries of the work. Considering this, in the literature, we will refer to the

²⁰ Breuer, S. (2010). *Milliyetçilikler ve Faşizmler*. (Ç. C. Dikmen, Trans.) İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 29.

²¹ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 3.

ones that will help us to understand German nationalism, which is one of the subject elements of our thesis.

Nationalism has undoubtedly created a new world. Still, one fact that we cannot ignore is that nationalism is also the product of a new world (created by cartesian philosophy, reform, renaissance, modernity). In this context, Gellner emphasized that there were no special, attributed statuses that would benefit or harm modern human beings, and therefore stated that modern human beings should create their own position. And thus, he said that it is possible to make a contract. And because of the existence of many contracts, it was necessary to have common values, languages, and cultural elements in order to negotiate and express the contracts.

Cultural nuance has no longer been a symbol of status, as statuses have been no longer given but achieved. Therefore, it is only an anonymous and uniformized culture which ensures that participants are proper and eligible for the active membership of the same community in this common market of specific statuses, which are open to negotiation. If so, a common super culture (for which there is national education, for example) gains considerable importance. Thus, statuses are no longer the privilege of a limited clergy or a legal layer (aristocracy); instead, it is a premise for any social participation of moral citizenship.

To this end, Gellner defined nationalism as follows: "It is this new importance of a shared culture which makes men into nationalists: the congruence between their own culture and that of the political, economic and educational bureaucracies which surround them, becomes the most important single fact of their lives. They must be concerned with that congruence, with its achievement or its protection: and this turns them into nationalists. Their first political concern must be that they are members of a political unit which identifies with their idiom, ensures its perpetuation, employment, defence. That is what nationalism is."²²

²² Gellner, E. (1994). *Encounters with Nationalism* (First Ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Press, p. 8.

Even though putting a full, clear, and complete history into the birth of nationalism is as difficult as determining the history of the 'nation', we can point to the eighteenth century as the date of its spread. In this respect, if we accept that the oldest practices of nationalism were implemented in England in the sixteenth century, when nationalism began to spread mainly in the eighteenth century, the formation of new national identities was no longer the product of an organic creation process. Instead, they had evolved into practices through the importation of an existing idea. This point is one of the decisive points to keep in mind when looking at German nationalism in our thesis.

England, which was the first core of nationalism in its modern sense, was in a dominant position in Europe in the eighteenth century, especially in terms of its political system. Besides, the fact that western dominance in the world could be said to have made nationalism a general rule. Notably, each of the western societies described itself as separate nations, and as their influence expanded, other communities had no choice but to become a nation. Therefore, the expansion of national identities was primarily an international process. But at the same time, for many reasons, each nationalism was the result of the community's own internal dynamics and internal resources. But whatever it is, there is one thing that cannot be missed out of attention regardless of the basic trigger; that is only if the assimilation of national identity was in the interest of the groups that imported it, the effective perpetrators could find actors willing to make such an effort.²³ On the other hand, as we can see in the case of the victims of the previous identities of these communities, or the case of Germany, the search for identification of a lumpy group, which has not yet been socially positioned, has been decisive in the adoption of this idea. In this sense, the nation, which was a new and very inclusive identity proposal, was particularly attractive for the groups in a crisis of social identity.

Nationalism has evolved into an identity (for other societies inside and outside Europe) imported from a fictitiously invented identity (the case of

²³ Bendix, R. (1978). *Kings or People*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

England). We should emphasize this point because there has been an identity crisis that these second kinds of nationalisms could not avoid. This crisis has manifested itself in social causes and consequences in various contexts and times, beginning from individuals to all universalities.

In this context, looking at the whatness of import that made the second kind of nationalism possible will help us to understand the ideas and practices of nationalism that have been formed on this basis. Therefore, we find (necessarily) a model and an object of imitation in the nature of import. The necessity of being a model of the imitation object establishes an asymmetric relationship between the imitator and the imitated. As a result, a vertical hierarchy arises, confirming the superiority of the model, even in the perception of the imitator. It is precisely for this reason that every society that imports nationalism feels resentment toward the model it adopts for this idea. In other words, the consciousness of nationalism created by importing the concept often carries resentment as social psychology in its bosom, and a good example is the resentment of 18th century Germany against the French-France.

It is common for imported nationalisms to embrace resentment while adopting and transferring this identity. However, it should be noted from the outset that at first glance, the resentment refers to the lack of existence, and should not be misled to create an entirely negative perception. Because resentment also has creative power and therefore, its sociological significance cannot be ignored. Thus, thanks to this creative power, values are re-evaluated from other perspectives, and they can be revised with new values that are more valid, more compatible with the object of desire. It can be said that a reasonable dose of resentment is 'constructive.'

We have stated that imported nationalisms either occurred because of dominant original nationalisms (external), or sometimes because of its own internal conflicts and dynamics (this was a crisis of social identity, for example). Now, when we examine the original nationalisms that make import nationalism possible, Greenfeld's analysis will guide. Greenfeld mentioned three stages,

namely structural, cultural, psychological, about the formation of original nationalisms with an analytical perspective. Accordingly, an identity crisis (psychological) created by changing the positions and positions of groups in society for various reasons (structural) comes up. If there is already an identity, it is attempted to identify with it. Still, when this is not possible, it will have to be invented (cultural), which is where the national identity develops. Therefore, it would not be wrong to think of all kinds of nationalism, whether original or imported, under a generalization such as Nationalism is not the process of awakening the self-consciousness of nations, but the creation of 'nationalism' by the invention of nations where they do not exist. And we should especially mention that this nation is imagined as a pure self, something that does not contain the otherness, and it's built on this basis as well.

1.2.GERMAN NATIONALISM

“The German alone can ... be a patriot; he alone can for the sake of his nation encompass the whole of mankind; contrasted with him from now on the patriotism of every other nation must be egoistic, narrow and hostile to the rest of mankind.”

FICHTE

“The concept of nation requires that all its members should form as it were only one individual.”

FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL

“National hatred is anyhow a peculiar thing. You will always find it strongest and most violent in the lowest stages of civilization.”

GOETHE

According to the general opinion, the development of German national consciousness as an idea under the title of widespread nationalism is based on the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon rule in the early 19th century. However, although the emergence of this consciousness (with all the character traits in the modern sense) has been found to have emerged in the liberation struggles against the occupation of Napoleon (1813-1814), we should note that there were many social developments, intellectual innovations that enabled this consciousness to manifest itself as nationalism began to occur long before the marked date.

“Fundamentally a response to the social situation of the educated middle class in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, it was also the result of the confluence of several independent traditions, both imported (such as the philosophy of Enlightenment) and indigenous. The two most important of the

indigenous traditions were Pietism-itself a product of the Reformation and the structural conditions of its spread in Germany-and early Romanticism, which was, among other things, an heir to both Pietism and Enlightenment."²⁴

Greenfeld argued that Enlightenment, Pietism, and Early Romanticism underlined the German nationalism. In this study, to process German nationalism from this perspective, after discussing the conditions of the formation and development of nationalism in Europe in general, we will deal with the movements that Greenfeld pointed out, adding the French Revolution as well.

1.2.1. Toward German Nationalism: Nationalism in Europe - 16th Century

As Greenfeld wrote in his extensive work, in France and Russia, before the 1800s, and in the UK much earlier than that -in the 16th century- we see that the idea of 'nation' found its place in political discourse. Although the development of German nationalism coincided with a relatively late date, it was much more rapid than in their case (it took almost a hundred years for this idea to develop and mature, except in the case of Germany). The specificity of German nationalism is that the constructors of this national identity do not come from the aristocracy and the ruling elite but from the educated sections of the ordinary people (and indeed from this lumpen class in society).

Undoubtedly, the social position of the founders of the idea was one of the main factors forming the character of the idea. In this respect, to examine this lumpen class, first, we should point that there was not a precise middle class in Germany. These people were different from the general public-lower class in the sense that they were professional intellectual, well-educated people. On the other hand, they were different from upper classes-aristocracy in terms of lack of privileges, money, and being suspended from any status.

²⁴ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 277.

Thus, when German national consciousness emerged at the beginning of the 19th century, the idea was the peak of a long and laborious intellectual accumulation-process carried out based on these social uncertainties of the carriers of the idea and the crisis (even social worthlessness) that it created in each name.

Tom Nairn said that nationalism is the pathology of the history of modern development: "*Nationalism* is the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as 'neurosis' in the individual, with much the same essential ambiguity attaching to it, a similar built-in capacity for descent into dementia, rooted in the dilemmas of helplessness thrust upon most of the world (the equivalent of infantilism for societies) and largely incurable".²⁵ When we look at Germany in particular, we think that this kind of pathology applies to every intellectual who lacks a certain status and definition and that we can find the common denominator of their sum in this keyword. In other words, the Nationalism that these intellectuals built as a reaction to their social position in the last quarter of the 18th century was the transformation of 'personal' neuroses into a social pathology.

We will discuss in more detail what we have already said about Germany in the following chapters. Still, it will be useful to draw an overview of how this idea originated in Europe. In this context, when we look at the history of Nationalism in European geography, the first step is to relate the reform movements and Nationalism. In this respect, although they are composed of different sources, we can say that Nationalism and the Reform movement are the product of common developments. In the 16th century, especially with the influence of the Renaissance, the Reform movement, which invalidated the absolute authority of the Roman Catholic Church, enabled the dissolution of the power of *Respublica Christiana* into kingdoms and nation-states eventually. In this respect, the formation of national identities and the birth of Nationalism were, in other words, the request for autonomy from the church brought both reform and

²⁵ Nairn, T. (1981). *The Break-up of Britain*. New York: Verso Books, p. 359.

national identities to the agenda in parallel times, and the interaction of these two conditions strengthened and developed each other.

Martin Luther, the most well-known representative of the reform movement, had hung his 95 *Theses* on the door of a German university, the University of Wittenberg, exposing and criticizing the corruption and degeneration of the Roman Catholic Church. Besides, the Bible began to be translated into national languages in Germany for the first time, when Luther translated the New Testament into German. However, in the 16th century, the institutionalization of national consciousness took place in England, not in Germany, where there were many developments that could lead to national identity.

Henry VIII was officially recognized by the British clergy as the Supreme Head of the Church on May 16, 1532. Thus, the authority of Pope was taken out, which was a sufficient development for Sir Thomas More, the famous Utopian writer Sir Thomas More, who defined himself as the dominant Christianity to withdraw from his position as Head of the House of Lords. Later, the thinker who defended the Christian unity unconditionally was punished with death by the new authority for refusing to exchange his identity with the newly entered national identity.

But before, he was shut down in a castle on the charge of treason, and he responded to the suggestions made to protect him from the devastating consequences of his ideas:

"Then said my Lord of Westminster to me that howsoever the matter seemed unto my own mind, I had cause to fear that mine own mind was erroneous when I see the great council of the realm determine of my mind the contrary, and that therefore I ought to change my conscience. To that I answered that if there were no mo but myself upon my side and the whole Parliament upon the other, I would be sore afraid to lean to mine own mind only against so many. But on the other side, if it so be that in some

*things for which I refuse the oath, I have (as I think I have) upon my part as great a council and a greater too, I am not then bounden to change my conscience and confirm it to the council of one realm, against the general council of Christendom.*²⁶

This letter by Thomas More sums up the conflict between a world under religion (church) and a new secular world. In this respect; the execution of Thomas More as the representative of a traditional world, in a sense that the condition of survival in Europe (as individuals and societies) is no longer compatible with this "new world" (a nation-centered world, in other words, the modern world) is a good symbol.

We see that national identity was first institutionalized in 16th century England under the domination of the Tudor dynasty, and the dynasty was very determined on this issue. But also, we know that in Florence in the same century, there were comprehensive, advanced ideas in this direction. In this respect, we cannot ignore Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), who was almost contemporary with the first British nationalists -who said he loved Florence more than his soul - and his efforts for the unity of Italy.

However, as Greenfeld pointed out, although the British received their ideas to a great extent from the Italian Renaissance (e.g., humanism), they were mainly considered to be national identity; as it was not in Germany at that time, which was inevitably influenced by the Renaissance in the Germans, it would be possible not in Italy but England. In the 16th century, nationalism was able to find itself as a political idea in England. Because both the new ideas of the Renaissance (and humanism) and the new hierarchy transformations created by social mobility in England during this century, the character of the Tudor dynasty and the Protestant Reform Movement as an extension of it, enabled the

²⁶ Thomas More, *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters* Edited by: E. F. Rogers, (New Haven and Londra: Yale University Press, 1967), 54. Letter to Margaret Roper, April 17. 1534, p. 221-222, cited in: Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, p. 29.

intellectual and factual conditions necessary for the concrete emergence of nationalism.

Within this framework, it should be repeated that the 16th century was the British century in the context of nationalism. When we look at the reasons why German nationalism did not develop in this century, we encounter the fact that the German national consciousness could not deepen and become politicized because of the weakness of central authority in Germany, which was based on more than three hundred principalities. After all, while the Reform movements have had a very fruitful effect in achieving the unity of England, the wars caused by the Reform movements caused more divided, dispersed Germany rather than a united Germany. But as a noteworthy addition, even if the social dilemmas such as the economic crisis caused by the excessively increasing taxes and the rigid hierarchies in the face of the changing social structure were not fully resolved, they were far from being dominant problems.

1.2.2. Germany in 18th Century

Baron Adolph Knigge, the first name that comes to mind, when it comes to German manners, was not able to discontinue if there was another country, where the position of nobility had such profound political and moral influence on ideas and culture like in Germany. After all, the German aristocracy was far more privileged, untouchable, and respected than other European examples (for example, 18th century Russia or France).

Friedrich Wilhelm I, known as both the Great Elector and the father of the Prussian bureaucracy, continued to preserve all kinds of social privileges of the nobility and even defended them without hesitation in the face of attacks from the middle classes. The privileges of the nobles in Germany were preserved, and they were in the priority position in the developing bureaucracy.

So much so that it became more and more rare to see laypeople in the bureaucratic cadres in the 17th century compared to the 16th century. These cadres were mostly devoted to the aristocracy, and this was not very different in the 18th century, either. Thus, not only the privileges of the nobility were strictly preserved, but also they were expanded as they (aristocracy) had the precedence in the newly formed social structures which increased and reinforced the resentment in the educated class who believed to deserve these dignities and privileges.

German aristocracy was very pleased with its position, and so it could choose not to be indifferent not only to the growing anger inside but also to the developments outside. National consciousness in great states such as France and Russia in the 18th century was an element that developed other new practices in social structuring, while the German aristocracy did not take these developments very seriously and thought that they could maintain their positions without being affected by these developments.

The nobles did not see the developing world order, and the palaces in Germany did not see the nobility as a threat to their position. But a new class which was nurtured by the ideas and ideals of this new world, a new class that the palaces and the aristocracy ignored emerged: "But another group had already emerged, humble and inoffensive on the face of it; which had since proved to be the most dangerous class of all. This group did not belong to the lower classes; the latter were not as yet believed to be threatening; neither was it the docile bourgeoisie, which seems never to have acquired this distinction. This new class was the "unattached" intellectuals. It was they who were destined to assume the leadership in urging and molding the German national consciousness."²⁷

1.2.3. Representatives of the New World: Bildungsbürgertum

²⁷Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 292-293.

From the 18th century onwards, academic education had begun to evolve into a highly prestigious field. Considering that the aristocracy was the dominant class and the respected values were the values of this class, which are generally not acquired but given, it was quite innovative that education became important. Undoubtedly, university reform in the early 18th century and the adoption of Aufklärung (Enlightenment) by the associated universities had a significant role in transforming academic education into a highly respected value.

After all, the Enlightenment philosophy defended education and the educated person. In this respect, the attention of the aristocratic children to Halle University, which was one of the main places of Enlightenment, is striking. It is noteworthy because respect and privileges were already granted to the aristocracy, so it was not expected to confirm this with education or anything else. In this respect, we can explain the German aristocracy's interest in education through the popularization of education in the two main models for Germany, namely the UK and France aristocracy. This was a dramatic change for Germany. Friedrich Paulsen explained: "At the close of the eighteenth century, the German people regarded its universities as institutions from which, particularly, it expected to receive its impulses towards progress in all the departments of life, the same institutions which only a century before had called forth the derisive laughter of polite society."²⁸

Although a specific condition of university education was required to be employed in the German bureaucracy and to find a job, many aristocrats received this education for prestige. Besides, they complemented their education at foreign universities in addition to the education they took from German universities and so they had the opportunity to meet new ideas, ideals, and feelings (such as national pride).

After academic education gained importance with the enlightenment, the establishment of universities that would later become centers of new ideals and

²⁸ Paulsen, F. (1906). *The German Universities and University Study*. (F. T. Elwang, Trans.) New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p. 48.

the interest of more people to academic education created a new class. In this respect, for example, the University of Berlin, founded in 1810, was effective in the emergence of an alternative nobility in Germany with a new world vision.

This nobility had nothing to do with the family or blood; rather, it was a culture-based nobility. Therefore, education; in the hierarchical structure, then became to be a mean of ascending and climbing the social ladder. This function of education made education very attractive, especially for middle-class people who wanted to move up the social ladder. In this respect, although the aristocracy began to show interest during the 18th century, the majority of the educated population consisted of the middle classes. In this case, the majority of educated people in the 18th century - Germany, included people who came from the public but went out of this class with education and marginalized. This was the *Bildungsbürgertum*, consisting of the "educated class," who were university-educated people and their families.

For the first generation of the educated groups coming from the people, being in the *Bildungsbürgertum* meant being in a higher status group and being more respected in society. However, in the second half of the 18th century, this educated class regenerated itself, and a significant proportion of university students came from *Bildungsbürger* families. Therefore, the marginal utility of education inevitably fell for this new generation of *Bildungsbürger*. On the other hand, unlike the first generation, the second generation turned to social sciences and theoretical fields, which did not provide opportunities for a practical profession.

Parallel to this, they were still not brought to critical social positions, many still lacking the social respect and reputation they hoped for from their talents and culture. However, it is clear that the situation is very different for educated people in France and Russia in the same period: "While the intellectuals in France and Russia alike proudly referred to themselves as the aristocracy of the spirit, the alternative aristocracy, in Germany they were called the educated bourgeoisie, the alternative middle class. The *Bildungsbürger* identified with the aristocracy,

which would not merge with them, and despised the bourgeoisie, to which they were inseparably tied. Elevated above the common lot they remained a lower class nevertheless, and were vexed and made unhappy by their position in society. They, too, became the victims of status inconsistency."²⁹

The educated unemployment, which became widespread in the late 18th century, deepened the disappointment and hopelessness that intellectuals had fallen. The chances of finding a job in the judicial and administrative fields, such as public services, church, and university faculty, which they aspired for because of their education, were meager because of the priority of the nobility. In 1788, the magazine called *Berlinische Monatsschrift* magazine made the following evaluation: "The number of young men applying for posts in civil service is so great that all the administrative services are overwhelmed. If you compare their number with the number of posts which, even if there were to be an epidemic of deaths, are likely to fall vacant, you can see that there is now no hope whatever of placing all, or even most, of them in any ways that bears the slightest relation to the many sacrifices which their training has required of them."³⁰

The evaluation of the magazine is very striking and gives us insight into understanding the economic atmosphere of the period. Unemployment was a widespread problem among intellectuals, and some intellectuals tried to solve it by working as a freelance writer. Still, it was evident that this was not a real solution under the conditions of the period. On the other hand, the palaces and nobility that could support them preferred the French ones rather than the German intellectuals to a large extent.

Along with great financial impossibilities, it should be noted that these are the central depression and unhappiness of the German intellectuals stemmed from their being held in contempt because of their poverty. The dignity they demand and think they deserved was not given by society, and this caused great dilemmas

²⁹ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 297.

³⁰ Brunswick, H. (1974). *Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth-Century Prussia*. (F. Jellinek, Trans.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.125.

and crises in their selves. We should remember here that the statuses and hierarchies in Germany were very dull, and the permeability was very low.

There were a severe break and a status inconsistency between the social value of low living conditions and the self-esteem they acquired through education and reinforced by new philosophical approaches. So much so that the social class of their bodies and the class of their thoughts and feelings were very different. This suspended group was falling into deep crises. As Greenfeld pointed out, these intellectuals would create all kinds of artistic, political, social ideas, and practices that they would later develop with inspiration from all these dilemmas and crises.

1.2.4. Basic Factors of German National Consciousness

1.2.4.1. Aufklärung (Enlightenment)

D. Harvey described the enlightenment, which rise on the basis of the 15th Century Renaissance, 16th Century Reform movements, as well as Newton's Scientific Revolution in the 17th Century and Descartes's Cartesian Philosophy that places revelation, tradition and authority at the center of fundamental criticism as follows: "The development of rational forms of social organization and rational modes of thought promised liberation from the irrationalities of myth, religion, superstition, release from the arbitrary use of power as well as from the dark side of our own human natures."³¹

Those suspended intellectuals who could not escape their situation found the remedy to change the image of their selves and ultimately create the 'national

³¹ Harvey, D. (1990). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Blackwell Press, p. 12.

identity.' In this respect, the idea of the nation came up as the product of the enlightenment which paved the way for a new era for German intellectuals.

Kant, in the text of the answer to the famous "What is Enlightenment?" question, said that one should dare to use his mind and that he could only come out of immaturity, revealing the main character of enlightenment. In Kant's own words: "Enlightenment is man's leaving his self-caused immaturity. Immaturity is the incapacity to use one's intelligence without the guidance of another. Such immaturity is self-caused if it is not caused by lack of intelligence, but by lack of determination and courage to use one's intelligence without being guided by another."³²

The Enlightenment, in Germany as in other places, signified the prominence and advance of the rationality. This was a very new thing at all points, and in this respect, enlightenment meant a change of mind in a very comprehensive way.

According to the scale of values in the second half of the 18th century, being educated was the synonym with embracing the principles of Enlightenment. In this context, the values of enlightenment seemed quite attractive to the German intellectuals because this approach would take "human dignity and freedom"³³ as the basis. On the other hand, since the German rationalism specifically referred to the cultured mind and the educated mind, this intellectual group could easily demonstrate the desire to identify with enlightenment.

Aufklärung was positioned both as the ground on which the German consciousness of the future was built and as one of the determining factors of this consciousness. However, Aufklärung could not give the intellectuals what they hoped for in Germany. In the last quarter of the 18th century, Aufklärung was

³² Kant, I. (1784). What Is Enlightenment?. Retrieved from <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>.

³³ Kant, I. (1784). What Is Enlightenment?. Retrieved from <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>.

unable to demonstrate the development of its ideas in politics and social relations, and it could not make a significant impact or change in these areas.³⁴

With a similar emphasis, Kant stated in his text that enlightenment has not yet been completed (in practical life): “If we are asked, ‘Do we now live in an enlightened age?’ the answer is, ‘No’, but we do live in an age of enlightenment. As things now stand, much is lacking which prevents men from being, or easily becoming, capable of correctly using their own reason in religious matters with assurance and free from outside direction.”³⁵

“But the manner of thinking of the head of a state who favors religious enlightenment goes further, and he sees that there is no danger to his lawgiving in allowing his subjects to make public use of their reason and to publish their thoughts on a better formulation of his legislation and even their open-minded criticisms of the laws already made.”³⁶

In this respect, Kant saw the Prussian King of the Great Friedrich as a head of state who gives priority to freedom in the arts and sciences and did not see them as a threat to his own position. In this respect, according to Kant, the Age of Enlightenment was the same as the century of Frederick.

In fact, the Age of Enlightenment should have started when Friedrich took the Prussian throne in Germany. But this freedom was confined by Frederick: “Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, but obey!”³⁷ This approach limited freedom to science and art, which confined freedom to theoretical fields. The political-ethical field, which was a practical ground, was closed to freedom by saying “obey!” And thus, with the claim of free use of the mind, the

³⁴ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 466.

³⁵ Kant, I. (1784). What Is Enlightenment?. Retrieved from <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>.

³⁶ Kant, I. (1784). What Is Enlightenment?. Retrieved from <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>.

³⁷ Kant, I. (1784). What Is Enlightenment?. Retrieved from <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>.

Enlightenment could not correspond to the social change and hierarchies that were desired by intellectuals at this stage.

On the other hand, it is tough to say that the political consciousness of *Aufklärung* was apparent, neither uniting on a common political ground nor establishing a determined position. In fact, they were divided among themselves. So much so that cosmopolitanism and national patriotism, which seemed contradictory from today, could be defended at the same time.

While it was understood from the cosmopolitanism to identify with the values of the model countries of England, France, and America, as well as being considered as foreign ideas, patriotism and nationalism were defended, albeit with an embarrassing voice. Greenfeld stated that cosmopolitanism concealed any political, emotional deprivation. In fact, we think that this is also an analytical approach for Germany in the period.

As we have already mentioned, it was only possible in the early 19th century that the idea of national identity played an active role in the awareness and practice of *Bildungsbürger*. *Bildungsbürger* embraced national identity during this period because they were able to find hope to realize their dreams that they dreamt and failed to realize during Enlightenment (As one of the three claims of French nationalism, 'equality' attracted them). Thus, this identity had already achieved what Enlightenment had failed in practice. But it was also a product of the Enlightenment, an approach adopted by the countries whose national identity and model were taken. Accordingly, the principles of the Enlightenment continued to be observed.

1.2.4.2. Pietism

The Thirty Years' War, which took place between 1618-1648 as a result of the revolt of a religious group, namely Bohemian Brothers (*Unitas Frartrum*) against the Austrian King Ferdinand engraved the religiously fragmented history of Europe. After the war, the Peace Treaty of Westphalia was signed on 24

November 1648, between the Catholics and Protestants in favor of the Protestants. Thanks to this treaty, the Protestants were granted unprecedented religious freedom. Thus, in this atmosphere of peace, Protestants also had the opportunity to reflect on religious issues and express themselves more easily.³⁸

Pietism emerged as a glimmer of hope in a climate of depression caused by religious wars in Europe. In this respect, a small group of people who wanted to explore the depths of Christian faith and put them into practice wanted to teach their individual religious experiences.³⁹ After the wars of religion, the Pietists called upon people to return to individual religious devotion and morality in response to the decay in German life and to the unfruitful and inefficient intellectualism that dominated Protestant scholasticism.⁴⁰

On the other hand, although interpreted as a product of Europe's 17th-century wars of religion, we must say that it is complicated for Pietism to determine a chronologically precise date. However, the general view, focusing on the relationship between Pietism and Lutherianism, merges upon the idea that it (Pietism) sprouted in the Lutheran Church in 17th century-Germany.

In the light of this general framework, when we turn to Max Weber to take a closer look at Pietism, we see that Weber made an analysis that will facilitate our understanding of Protestantism and the character of the movements recruited from it, and especially its difference from Catholicism. In this respect, Weber, in the beginning chapters of his work, namely *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* scrutinized the issues of magic, religious forces, and the sense of moral duty that emerges from belief in them which he claimed to be determining the former lifestyles to reveal the spirit of capitalism. Accordingly, in the context of our subject, he gave us the following guiding conclusion: "The Catholic is quieter, having less of the acquisitive impulse; he prefers a life of the greatest possible security, even with a smaller income, to a life of risk and excitement,

³⁸ Barker, G. (1985). *O'nun İzinde, Hıristiyanlık ve Laiklik Tarihi*. (B. Baş, Trans.) İstanbul: Zafer Matbaası, p. 169-170.

³⁹ Latourette, K. S. (1948). *The Christian Outlook*. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, p.59.

⁴⁰ Hoffman, J. C. (1981). *Pietism*. In E. J. Heroty (Ed.) *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Washington: Robert Appleton Company, p. 355.

even though it may bring the chance of gaining honour and riches. The proverb says jokingly, 'either eat well or sleep well'. In the present case the Protestant prefers to eat well, the Catholic to sleep undisturbed. In fact, this desire to eat well may be a correct though incomplete characterization of the motives of many nominal Protestants in Germany at the present time."⁴¹

Weber's touch to this point is essential for us to pay attention to the connection between Protestantism and the movements coming from Protestantism and worldliness. In fact, Pietism, as a product of this sect, directed to the worldliness to practical life, in other words, targeting an arrangement in this sphere. This was a decisive step on the road to nationalism. This understanding was not only essential but also a necessary step for the transition from *the ummah/religious community to the nation*.

Weber interpreted Pietism as one of the religious foundations of worldly asceticism, and in this respect also touched on its counterparts in other countries. First of all, we should mention the movements which Pietism had in common. In this respect, Weber classified the religious foundations of worldly asceticism as follows: "(1) Calvinism in the form which it assumed in the main area of its influence in Western Europe, especially in the seventeenth century; (2) Pietism; (3) Methodism; (4) the sects growing out of the Baptist movement. None of these movements was completely separated from the others, and even the distinction from the nonascetic Churches of the Reformation is never perfectly clear."⁴²

Having drawn these boundaries, Weber considered Pietism as follows: "From our special point of view, at any rate, Pietism meant simply the penetration of methodically controlled and supervised, thus of ascetic, conduct into the non-Calvinistic denominations. But Lutheranism necessarily felt this rational asceticism to be a foreign element, and the lack of consistency in German Pietistic doctrines was the result of the difficulties growing out of that fact. As a dogmatic

⁴¹ Weber, M. (2019, 07 18). *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (T. Parsons, Trans.) London, England: Taylor & Francis e-Library, p. 8.

⁴² Weber, M. (2019, 07 18). *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (T. Parsons, Trans.) London, England: Taylor & Francis e-Library, p. 53.

basis of systematic religious conduct Spener combines Lutheran ideas with the specifically Calvinistic doctrine of good works as such which are undertaken with the “intention of doing honour to God.”⁴³

Therefore, as we know, Pietism, which flourished in the 17th century, had grown its masses towards the end of the 18th century. In this respect, we think that we can better understand the role of Pietism in the formation of German nationalism through considering the vast number of intellectuals –the inventors of German national consciousness- who either were direct Pietists or students in the Pietist education institutions during their lives. In this respect, like the British Protestantism in the 16th century, Pietism prepared the legitimacy on the religious ground for German nationalism. “It is not that Pietism⁴⁴ ‘planted the seeds’ out of which nationalism developed: nationalism was not a descendant of Pietism. But it provided the soil in which the seeds-brought from outside-could grow. And-here the biological analogy has to end-the soil, in a rather Lamarckian manner, changed the nature of the plant to live on in the fruit it bore.”⁴⁵

Greenfeld, particularly, drew attention to the connection of Pietism with British Puritanism. According to Greenfeld, Pietism, in its most general form, was the equivalent of British Puritanism in Germany, and it was a religious movement that attracted the attention of people of all classes. Pietism, just like Puritanism, was the result of the Protestant Reformation movement and was fundamentally opposed to established orthodoxy. Although their emergence is based on the same foundations, we must mention in particular that the social conditions, aspirations, and problems of the Pietist Germans were very different from those of the British Puritans, which highly distinguished Pietism from Puritanism. After all, unlike the British Puritans, the German Pietists had emerged in a society in which there were frozen hierarchies and worldly failures. Precisely for this reason, as Pieter

⁴³ Weber, M. (2019, 07 18). *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (T. Parsons, Trans.) London, England: Taylor & Francis e-Library, p. 83.

⁴⁴ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 481.

⁴⁵ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, P. 322.

Greenfeld pointed out, "humility" was not based on "renunciation," but on "struggle."

Pietism abandoned the doctrine and was thus able to maintain faith. After all, under the influence of *Aufklärung*, religion was always under attack in the classical sense. In this respect, Pietism's disregard for any teaching, personalization of faith (detachment from the institutional structure of the church), leaving many religious rituals and worship, and limiting faith to practicality, namely to sincerity and to morality, prevented it to be harmed because being side by side with *Aufklärung*.

After all, "morality" evolved into something that is determined not by the institutions (the church) but by the people's own reasons, which coincided with the idea that the enlightenment itself was responsible for the use of one's mind and what he did.

Pietism was the secularization of religion and aimed at making everything that belongs to faith and religion belong to this world through secularizing and embodying religion. In this respect, the "state" was an important issue. In a secularized religion, the state was an important issue because, as in many other religions, in Christianity; there were goals such as spreading, growing, expanding, and this obliged every Christian to full his duty - in accordance with his position - to establish the Kingdom of God. In this context, the notion of holiness in this new world was in question for states and kings. So much so that, in the 17th and 18th-century rationalism, an ideal character was attributed to the state, far beyond mere functionality, and it is regarded as an area in which God's commands are systematized and practiced.

Pietism did not abandon the use of certain symbols in Christianity, although it excluded many rituals and worship while secularizing religion. In this respect, it continued some religious forms with new content from its own perspective. A good example is the physical suffering of Jesus. The fact that the cult of crucifixion was revised with the worldly themes was an essential point in the easy acceptance and long life of this tradition. The pain of the Savior on the crucifix was an element that made it easier to identify with and adopt the

principles. "In turn, blood, wounds, and physical suffering added value to everything they were associated with: war, the profession of a soldier, death. Whether experienced or inflicted on others, they were sanctified, became the sublime signs of spiritual purity and strength and of moral righteousness, and paved the road to glory."⁴⁶

Pietism foresaw the secularization and individualization of religion because Pietists felt that the reform was incomplete in regulating the religious life of individuals, and it aimed to complete this deficiency with this movement. Practices realized around this goal influenced the character of German nationalism. As we have already mentioned, nationalism was an idea to be imported into Germany, so although the Pietists did not have the real goal of this idea, their perception of religion was a productive basis for this idea. On the other hand, in the context of our subject, we must also consider Romanticism, which is fed from the land of Pietism.

1.2.4.3. Early Romanticism

We can define *Frühromantics*, Jena Romantics, or, in other words, Early German Romantics as a group of thinkers that can be observed within the context of German idealist thought after Kant. In this respect, there are three main areas where German Romantics were concentrated; poetry (Novalis), philosophy (Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher), and literary criticism (A. W. Schlegel, F. Schlegel).

In general terms, the products that these philosophers made between 1798-1804 constituted this movement, and according to *Literary Absolute*,⁴⁷ romanticism became theoretic with the works of these philosophers leading the emergence of theoretical romanticism.

⁴⁶ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 321.

⁴⁷ Nancy, J. L. & Lacoue-Labarthe, P. (1988). *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German*. New York: State University of New York Press, p. 2.

In both, the lives and works of the romantics, intellectuality, adventure, distance from social norms, introversion came into prominence, and at the same time, an absolute idealism appeared. The contradiction is the word that defines this group best. In this case, the common ground was the subject of curiosity that it would not be wrong to say that criticism and self-criticism.

Many experts underline the historical importance of romanticism as an influential movement, albeit being the result of the products produced by these names gathered around a magazine called Athenäum during as little as six years. In this respect, Isaiah Berlin argued that the Romanticism was "the greatest transformation of Western consciousness".⁴⁸ Similarly Henri Brunschwig stated that "Romantism was one of the most profound movements ever to affect Germany"⁴⁹, while Ernest Troeltsch pointed out that "German thought, whether in politics or in history or in ethics, is based on the Ideas of the Romantic counter-revolution"⁵⁰. Friedrich Meinecke as well, indicated that romanticism was "possibly the greatest conceptual revolution that the West has yet experienced."⁵¹ supporting the other different philosophers' ideas on the importance of Romanticism.

On the other hand, although it is agreed that this romanticism is particularly important for the history of Germany, the difficulty of defining the exact limits of this movement is common idea as well. In this respect, Copleston expressed this aspect well:

The romantic spirit is notoriously difficult to define. Nor indeed should one expect to be able to define it. But one can, of course, mention some of its

⁴⁸ Berlin, I. (2013). *The Roots of Romanticism* (Second Ed.). New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 25.

⁴⁹ Brunschwig, H. (1974). *Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth-Century Prussia*. (F. Jellinek, Trans.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 245.

⁵⁰ Troeltsch, E. (1934). *The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity in World Politics*. In O. Gerke (Ed.) *Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge Press, p. 203.

⁵¹ Friedrich Meinecke (1925), *Die Idee der Staatsrason in der neueren Gesckichte*. Münih and Berlin: Oldenbourg, p. 451, Greenfeld, cited in (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 322.

*characteristic traits. For example, as against the Enlightenment's concentration on the critical, analytic and scientific understanding the romantics exalted the power of the creative imagination and the role of feeling and intuition. The artistic genius took the place of the philosopher. But the emphasis which was laid on the creative imagination and on artistic genius formed part of a general emphasis on the free and full development of the human personality, on man's creative powers and on enjoyment of the wealth of possible human experience. In other words, stress was laid on the originality of each human person rather than on what is common to all men.*⁵²

With all its ambiguities and contradictions, we see that Romanticism has emerged as an aesthetic movement and has expanded to become a worldview (Lebenseinstellung) and a way of life in Germany. We should note that all 18th century romantics set out as rationalist-enlighteners. Still, Aufklärung's failure to fulfill its promises made them more critical of Enlightenment rather than enlightener. In this respect, in its most general form, we can say that Romanticism was an objection to the "uninspired" spirit of the Enlightenment (perhaps it would be more accurate to say it was soulless). While they brought the poetic imagination and aesthetic atmosphere against this slowness, they were as crucial as the Enlightenment in their search for a different principle from religion. "Romanticism is the aesthetization of religion and the deification of art."⁵³

It is often said that modern philosophy, which advanced on the way that Kant gave, cannot be done without settling with Kant. As an extension of this perspective, the Early German Romantics are also considered to be the first to come to settle with Kant. Allan Megill, "Rather, we are concerned with the more general problem of the relationship of the two theories to each other - a problem

⁵² Copleston, F. (1994). *A History of Philosophy - Modern Philosophy: From the Post-Kantian Idealists to Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche* (Vol. VII). Melbourne: Image Books. p. 14.

⁵³ Dellaloğlu, B. F. (2002). *Romantik Muamma*. İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, p. 19.

(admittedly, not the only problem to come out of Kant) deeply felt by the Romantics and their successors. The problem can be posed in the following way. Natural science attributes a determinism to the objects of its concern. If things were free rather than determined, they could not be the objects of science. Newton was able to explain the workings of the physical universe in terms of the theory of universal gravitation because the objects within that universe operate according to the pre-given laws of nature. Central to the whole project of Enlightenment thought was the ambition to do for the human world what Newton had done for the natural world. In other words, enlightened philosophers aspired to construct a science of society analogous to Newton's science of nature. At the same time, the philosophers of the Enlightenment also believed in the legitimacy of moral codes. But the existence of a moral code presupposes that people are free to govern their own actions, since entities incapable of governing their own actions obviously cannot be judged in moral terms. There was thus a radical contradiction between the Enlightenment project for a science of society on the one hand and its continuing belief in morality and freedom on the other. "To state the problem in another way, science can be seen as dealing with a realm of unfree objects, and morality as dealing with a realm of free subjects."⁵⁴

Today, according to the general opinion, Kant attempted to compensate for the dilemma of the first and second critiques in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. Accordingly, through aesthetics, he created a relationality between two areas, namely between nature and freedom. When we look at the romantics, we see that they have taken the very criticisms of Kant. However, they took aesthetics as a basis, not as a secondary position.

On the other hand, another point that determined the view of Romantics was the idea that the world was not ready-made, which was borrowed from Kant. After all, Kant interpreted the knowledge of the world as a result of the activity of the knowing subject. This encouraged romantics in terms of "establishing the

⁵⁴ Megill, A. (1985). *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*. London: University of California Press, p. 10.

world.” But this act of “establishment” did not politically manifest itself but as an aesthetic way. In other words, romantics dreamed of another world, but they did not take any severe and effective action to realize it. The romantics sought or found freedom in the aesthetic perception of life and the aestheticization of life.

Thus, the effect of Fichte’s philosophy is mentioned in the prominence of aesthetics by romantics. “Although he did not write directly on aesthetics, Fichte is one of the starting points of German Romanticism. Fichte’s strengthening of Kant’s tendency to concentrate on the subject is, in a sense, the key to romanticism. Fichte assumes the world almost as a product of the subject and completely breaks self consciousness away from the objective world. In this sense, the aesthetization of the world, before it is named, takes Fichte's appeal.”⁵⁵

On the other hand, Romanticism has ties to enlightenment as well as Protestantism and more specifically to Pietism. Romanticism, called as “a kind of artistic and intellectual Pietism”⁵⁶, brought the Pietist principles into the secular field, where it selected, separated, enlarged and systematized them. As we stated before, Romanticism as a thought movement was a reaction to the fear and frustration caused by Bildungsbürger and Aufklärung.

While romantics insisted on “enlightened” dogmatism-opposition, they valued the emotional side of religious belief and viewed it as useful and even necessary for a definitive life. In this respect, if we remember that Protestantism-Pietism individualized religion and excluded the institutions and authorities between God and the believers, this tendency itself was a kind of mysticism. The romantics had such mysticism as well, and these two reinforce each other in this context.

The romantic line deemed Luther as one of the representatives of a new era. The main reason for this was that Luther had developed new theology that led to some kind of public enlightenment since it was a useful basis for Bildung, where romantics often emphasized. In this way, a cultural revolution has been

⁵⁵ Dellaloğlu, B. F. (2002). *Romantik Muamma*. İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, p. 33.

⁵⁶ Bossenbrook, W. J. (2011). *The German Mind. Literary Licensing*, p. 249.

initiated, which has led to serious innovations in the content of education. In the German tradition this was called Kulturprotestantismus (cultural protestantism)⁵⁷.

The Romantics also agreed with the Pietists to regard the issues of society and politics as worldly and therefore not to deal directly with them. F. Schlegel stated that "Don't waste your faith and love on the political world, but in the divine world of science and art, offer up your inmost being in a fiery stream of eternal creation".⁵⁸ However, even if they did not have such a goal, a clear trace of their ideas was clearly seen in the emerging new political-ethical systems.

Romantics, as many experts have stated, were the first to criticize modernity. Even if they did not do so directly with political consciousness, the criticism itself was quite political. A good example of this is Herder. In *Essay on Knowledge and Perception in the Human Soul* he wrote that "men could be everything, poets, philosophers, surveyors, legislators, musicians, warriors" but the division of labor created "half-thinkers and half-feelers; moralists who are not doers, epic poets who are not heroes, orators who are not administrators, artistic legislators who are not artists."⁵⁹

Herder expressed how human beings become alienated in modern society, bringing criticism to it and also criticizing the set of artists and writers in which he was involved. As we have already mentioned, criticism and self-criticism were the general tendencies of romantics.

Thus, in this context, the criticism of the romantics towards the "enlightened," "modern" society was a generalization of their personal experiences in such a society. Socially, they see Aufklärung as responsible for "their belonging to nowhere," and their statusless and pending situations, because Aufklärung has deceived them through its empty promises. Thus they have found

⁵⁷ Ökten, K. H. (2000). *Hristiyanlıkta İnançın Yenilenmesi*. İstanbul: Mavi Ada, p. 142.

⁵⁸ Schlegel, F. (1971). *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments*. (P. Firchow, Trans.) New York: University of Minnesota Press, p.163.

⁵⁹ Herder, "Übers Erkennen und Empfinden in der Menschlichen Seele". *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. VIII, p. 261, Greenfeld, L. cited in (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Edition). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 345.

themselves detached from the human community. After all, a society that prioritized the mind led human beings into real existence, insulating them, and thus making them lonely and unhappy.

For this very reason, they imagined a totalitarian society, because they were the outlier and unhappy in this alienating, unnatural society. They were left out, so the society in their ideal was a society that encompassed everything and everyone; they were alienated, so this ideal society was conceived with biological concepts; as an organic society; they were unhappy, so their ideal society absorbed all their individuality so that personal unhappiness would be resolved. After all, in a larger-general individuality (in the state), each member-part of this general individuality would be encompassed by more significant principles, and that itself was enough to be happy. In this context, we see that romantics identify society, social reality, civic life, and social life with the state. The totality of these approaches would inevitably lead to a totalitarian society.

Adam Müller expressed what we have mentioned above in more political terms and more precisely. In parallel with the other Romantics, Müller pointed out that man was a social being, but that living in society was the nature of man, so it was impossible for man to live outside society. From this point of view, he saw the state with regard to human nature and claimed that it could not be a stateless human history.⁶⁰ According to him, if human beings were not connected with the ties of the society and the state, then they were deprived of everything... So that the state was the concrete status of all the needs of heart, soul, and the body. Thus, said Müller, there was no such thing as a human being outside the state.

Such views could be an inspiration for extreme tendencies on political and ethical grounds. Because the individuality of the human being could not be handled independently from the integration with the state, and the state itself was evaluated as a superior individual. All other individuals and subjectivities were absorbed in this excellent individual. Therefore, the state was not instrumental (to

⁶⁰ Adam Müller, "Elements of Politics", Lecture 2, H. S. Reiss cited in. *The Political Thought of the German Romantics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), p. 155 (G-520).

ensure freedom, security, rights, happiness), but it was teleological in every aspect that was transformed into an asset for itself.

From this point of view, what was good for the state itself (because the state included all individuals and subjectivities) was unconditionally considered as suitable for all and everything. Again, Müller made it clear that people who perceived the state with all their organicity would not have the desire to change it, and that such a desire could only arise from the lack of awareness of the person(s).

Venerable professors of philosophy (and not only Fichte and Schelling, personally involved with the Romantic coterie) who never openly renounced reason, but only redefined it out of existence, backed the collectivistic totalitarian view of the state with their formidable authority and fortified it with the iron, though somewhat idiosyncratic, logic that was the just foundation of their fame.⁶¹

The romantics did not have individual freedom perspectives. Freedom –for them- meant the unconditional commitment of the individual to the collective authority and the actual dissolution of any individual personality within the state. W. Schlegel's words on freedom supported this view. W. Schlegel said that “The subjects of several countries (England-France) boast of having a great many freedoms, which would become wholly superfluous through the possession of freedom.”⁶²

An important point to be mentioned here is that the equality that was associated with freedom in Anglo-American and French political thought, was embraced by German Romantics on the one hand, and totally excluded on the

⁶¹ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Edition). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 348.

⁶² W. Schlegel, Lucinde, “*Athenaeum Fragments*”, p. 168-169; Greenfeld, L. cited in (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Edition). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 349.

other hand. In this respect, we see here that the general contradictory states of romantics create a distinct duality in their understanding of individuality. On the one hand, they interpreted individuality (with the influence of Pietism), the original nature of the individual, as a unique carrier of God in every human being.

When they interpreted individuality in this way, they considered it unacceptable to demand to be de “equal” with others, whatever and in whatever position, to accept it in that way, as opposed to rebellion against God and his creation. But since then, there have also been shifting individualities (with the effect of enlightenment), especially with education and individualities in this situation could demand “equality” with those who were better off.

As we can see from all of this, the social ideal of the Romantics clearly reflected the dissatisfaction of these intellectuals with their own personal circumstances. At this stage, we cannot talk about the concrete examples they showed for their social ideals. Their terminology was not sufficiently transparent and consistent. They used both the ideas of enlightenment and the words of the reformed Christian religion. After all: “Romantic spirit always prefers sincerity to consistency; it is never ashamed of its contradictions, even of its inconsistencies.”⁶³

However, in the context of our subject, we should state that all these contradictions and inconsistencies that romantics showed were absorbed in the idea of Nationalism and were imported and settled in a system. Nationalism was a gravitational force for all these flying-clashing ideas.

1.2.4.4. The Influence of French Revolution

The Absolute Monarchy and the French Revolution were in deepening social differentiation and contradictions. A small minority, enriched by the large masses of people through finance, manufacturing industry and trade,

⁶³ Dellaloğlu, B. F. (2002). *Romantik Muamma*. İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, p. 8.

but lacking political power, was now in a position to challenge the domination of the aristocracy. However, this happy minority would never have made a "revolution", if it had not been based on a broad base of poor masses. If the French Revolution, as Jean Jaurès put it, was not a "narrow and conservative bourgeois revolution" like the British Revolution of 1688, but a "broadly bourgeois and democratic revolution"⁶⁴, it was because of the struggle of the poor peasants against the feudal remnants and heavy taxes.⁶⁵

The social philosophy of the Romantics, like the Romantic mentality in general, developed as a reaction to the depressed state of the *Bildungsbürger* (enlighteners). Because the intellectuals could not see any realistic way out of the tight corner, they got. They were well educated and raised to be important people in society.

On the one hand, what they found in practice was mere humiliation and lack of social identity. On the other hand, the imagination, one of the reasons for the dilemma they had fallen into, also made them soothe themselves. They imagined the end of all these humiliations, and they believed that the neglect and alienation from what they could not escape themselves were signs of being chosen and being a member of true nobility and that they had freely chosen it.

In this respect, the Kingdom of Totalitarian God became one of the current issues as instruments (one of the means of legitimizing their own inertia). After all, for them, the Enlightened society was so bad that the criterion of normality on such a plane could only be alienation. Besides, the Kingdom of God was a tough ideal to realize. In this case, it seemed to them that the possibility of attempting to realize it on a practical basis would result in a disappointment. So they limited serving this idea within the limits of generating thoughts about it. On the other hand, this approach was not interested in national consciousness itself. "But, with the rest of Romanticism, and Pietism before and alongside it, this social

⁶⁴ Jean Jaurès, *Histoire socialiste de la Révolution Française*, c. V; Paris, 1923, p. 274-276. Timur, T. cited in. (2016). *Mutlak Monarşi ve Fransız Devrimi*. İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, p. 24.

⁶⁵ Timur, T. (2016). *Mutlak Monarşi ve Fransız Devrimi*. İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, p. 24.

philosophy prepared the mold, the very skin, bones, and muscle, for the migrant spirit of the national idea, and added essential finishing touches to the character nationalism was to acquire in Germany at the moment of its arrival.”⁶⁶

Therefore, because of the internal dynamics, contradictions, and quests of the country within the current system, Germany could not make his way with the political and conceptual materials at hand and could not reach a solution. In this respect, while the French Revolution provided them with the concepts they needed (such as national, nationalism), the French occupation (1806) required political action (which lacked) and a new and comprehensive collective structure.

Although the approach of the German-educated class to the French Revolution was first known as an extreme admiration, this excessive admiration was replaced by intense hatred and anger, especially after Napoleon entered Germany. When we look at the remarkable reasons for such excitement at the beginning, as one of the most important, we can say that they could see the world-society model they dreamed of in the ideas and slogans of the revolution, which gave them hope.

G. J. D. Von Scharnhorst, the Prussian general in wars against France, explained this well in his book, *French Revolutionary War*: “When the French Revolution began, those who loved to read (educated class) immediately grasped the idea of a better constitution, which has long been enthralled in novels and poems; and ideas of freedom, equality and independence had already been circulated by the American war.”⁶⁷

In other words, this revolution made them very excited because they regarded it as the realization of the promise of *Aufklärung*. For this unhappy intellectual class, the fulfillment of these ideals was undoubted of practical importance. After all, the revolution had brought “equality” in France, which could have led to the dismantling of undeserved privileges already in Germany for intellectuals, opening the door for merit, especially for intellectuals.

⁶⁶ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Edition). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 353.

⁶⁷ Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (First Edition). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 531.

On the other hand, for the reasons and circumstances we have already mentioned, the “hatred of nobility” was one of the dominant emotions in these intellectuals, which made the revolution attractive for both this class and the other lower classes in German society.

I believe that my system belongs to this [the French] nation. It is the first system of freedom. Just as that nation has torn away the external chains of man, my system tears away the chains of the thing-in-itself, or external causes, that still shackle him more or less in other systems, even the Kantian. My first principle establishes man as an independent being. My system arose through an inner struggle with myself and against rooted prejudices in those years that the French struggled with outer force for their political freedom. It was their valeur that spurred me to conceive it. When I wrote on the Revolution there came the first hints and inklings of my system.⁶⁸

The intellectuals, who had nothing but the hope of the revolution, maintained this hope and excitement for a longer time. As one of them, F. Schlegel wrote in a letter to his brother in 1796: “I am tired of criticism, now I will write with great enthusiasm. I don’t want to hide from you that there is more republicanism in my heart than divine critique or divine poetry.”⁶⁹

Among the romantics, Napoleon admiration was widespread and general, and therefore the interest in the French Revolution as well. But we know that all the admiration was replaced by hatred, anger, and resentment. With the victorious march of the French army, this resentment paved the way for new opportunities to create a new world for these intellectuals, and the era of nationalism for Germany began.

⁶⁸ Beiser, F. (2017, January). *Fichte and the French Revolution*. Retrieved from The Cambridge Companion: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-companion-to-fichte/fichte-and-the-french-revolution/5244BB7CDE3BB041A9C82C5EE1557142/core-reader>

⁶⁹ Gooch, G. P. (1920). *Germany and the French Revolution*. New York: University of California Libraries, p. 46-52.

1.2.5. Birth of German Nationalism

The birth of German Nationalism was caused by the defeat of Prussia during the French Revolutionary Wars. We can say that for non-aligned intellectuals, Nationalism was a miraculous way of ending their vortex. It was a miracle for them because they met with Nationalism as the bearer idea of a concrete, realizable society design that could solve its problems from an ideal that could not be realized like the Kingdom of God.

Nationalism led the atmosphere created by Pietism and Romanticism and added (exactly needed) action to this atmosphere. Undoubtedly, the idea of the nation was a well-known idea for Germany during the 18th century. However, until the dissolution of Prussia and the dissolution of the empire, this idea was not considered as a political tool itself. After all, a common force that could put this idea into effect was only possible through the occupation of Napoleon and in fact through a common "enemy". Therefore, the personal neuroses of the intellectuals we talked about were then transformed into a crisis of universalism through Germanness, so that individual identity and dilemma became the problem of a cluster (as others against the French).

As a result, German Nationalism; In the 16th century, especially on the ground provided by the Reform Movements; it cannot be considered independent of the Enlightenment in which the human mind, academic education is exalted, the Pietism that secularizes religion, the Early Romantics in search of identity with all its contradictions and the French Revolution which proposes a universal identity valid for a new world. In this respect, the occupation of Napoleon; served to unite Germany, which was scattered in geography, ideas, religion, and economy, within the framework of the mentioned movements in the principle of Nationalism.

SECTION 2

ON THE CONCEPT OF WISSENSCHAFTSLEHRE (1794)

Fichte, who saw his system as an analysis of the concept of freedom, said that as the French Revolution saved humanity from material chains, his system saved humankind from the thing in itself. Fichte, who explicitly referred to Kant here, stated that he had been living in a new world since reading the *Critique of Practical Reason*. He pointed out that he was aware that he would never be able to say anything that has not been expressed by Kant - either directly or indirectly, more or less clearly. Therefore, Fichte's system, prioritizing ethics-practice, cannot be evaluated independently of Kant's philosophy, and even Fichte made his own system proposal obligatory to complement Kant's philosophical system. In this respect, a particular starting point of this attempt to complete is the fact that the Kant philosophical system accepted the principles of the human mind purely, while Fichte attempted to prove them in the Wissenschaftslehre.

The Wissenschaftslehre, which he proposed as the first system of freedom, is a system that Fichte has been working on throughout his life. Fichte, in this work mainly, wanted to systematize freedom in action through necessity, which he deemed lacking in idealism and dogmatism. While Fichte associated freedom with obligation, he did so through the "Absolute Ego". In other words, freedom could only establish its relationship with necessity in the "Absolute Ego". After all, I reached its own awareness with its first activity; that was, it emerged as a consciousness. Thus, I turned to itself, creating a concept of self. This concept was also the consciousness of I as the absolute structure that could not be derived from any experience. Therefore, by saying "I," one identifies himself as both subject and object, and thus subject and object become identical structures. This identity, which expresses reflection on itself, was referred to as "ego". In this context, Fichte's Absolute I was referred to the concept, which was the unity of consciousness, that we could not objectify whatever we did, and surpassed every effort after every attempt of objectification. Fichte stated that it (I) could only be

achieved through intellectual intuition and that this intellectual appearance was included in every moment of consciousness.

As a result, a whole Wissenschaftslehre aimed to show that the proposition of "I am" was an activity and being was precisely the same thing with putting itself. To illustrate this, Fichte first established and found the first compulsory principles in consciousness, and then worked them in the field of freedom (practical-act). In this context, Fichte said that all the structures to be established in consciousness (theory) had been developed to provide a basis for the practical field (the field of freedom) to make this field more comprehensible. Therefore these structures should be evaluated within this framework.

In the preface to the second edition (Jena, 1798), Fichte made the following statements for Wissenschaftslehre: "This system is still far from being described. So far the foundations have been hardly laid. The structure barely began to rise; I want all of what I have written so far to be regarded only as preparatory work"⁷⁰. And again in this preface, he stated that he would not go further in the systematic functioning of the system, but tried to fully process what has already been discovered and make it brighter.

This general framework proposed that; the Wissenschaftslehre was an incomplete project of the system of freedom and that the whole system was built on establishing the act of freedom. In this respect, it would be appropriate to examine the concept with these two notions in mind.

2.1. ON GENERAL CONCEPTION OF WISSENSCHAFTSLEHRE

Hypothetical Conception of Wissenschaftslehre

Fichte, who stated that the best way to unite divided parties was to proceed from the point wherein they agreed, added that all descriptions of philosophy decided on the fact that philosophy was a science, while they were divided in determining the object of this science. He thought that this division arouses

⁷⁰ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

because the conception of that science, which they unanimously agreed on philosophy, had not yet been fully developed. On the other hand, he pointed out that the determination of this character, wherein they all agreed on might be sufficient.

Fichte pointed out science had to have a systematic form, and he added that all propositions in it were connected in one single fundamental principle to form a whole science. He emphasized that this not sufficient to fully explain science, although this approach was unanimously agreed upon.

In this regard, Fichte emphasized the concept of science and made the following evaluations: "The characteristic of science, seems to consist in the quality of its content and the relation thereof to the consciousness of the person of whom a knowledge is asserted; and the systematic form appears to be only accidental to the science, it's not the object of the science, but merely a means to attain that object"⁷¹. Fichte proposed that science had to be one and a whole. He elaborated on his proposition with the example of geometry. Accordingly, the proposition that a single column erected to the horizontal plane was vertical to the plane was a whole, and so far a science for a person who lacked any systematic knowledge of geometry. However, Fichte argued that, although geometry included many propositions in addition to this proposition, we also think that it is a single science as a whole. According to him, at this point we need to ask: "How then and by what means do a multitude of very different propositions unite into one science, into and one and the same whole?"⁷²

Fichte answered this question by saying that the separate propositions were not the science, but formed a science only in the whole. He added that, But by a composition of parts, you could not put something into the whole, which was not to be found in one of the parts. And thus, if none of the connected propositions had certainty, there would also be no certainty in the whole formed system. Fichte

⁷¹ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 13.

⁷² Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 14.

concluded his reasoning with the following judgment: At least one of the propositions must be certain, and this one, transferred its certainty to the others in the manner that if one was to be true, then the second must be true, etc. Thus multiple propositions would have only one certainty and result in one certainty, for the very reason that they all have certainty and the same certainty.

Fichte had stated that the relationship between different propositions regarding the criterion 'certainty', in other words, confirming each other, made them a whole, a science. At this point, however, he spoke of a 'first principle' (ein Grundsatz) that cannot be deduced from this 'relationality.' This first principle differed from the other propositions because this proposition (the first principle) must be certain prior to its relationship with others since something that was not found in any of the parts could not emerge from the unity of these parts. So that all the other propositions must be able to derive their certainty from this (first principle). To emphasize once again; no proposition other than this first proposition (principle) must necessarily be definitive in advance, and for the first time, they became definite through their relationship to this first proposition and were determined.

Such a proposition, that is, the proposition that was certain before and independently of its relationship with others, was called the first principle, and every science required the first principle. Fichte went on to say that essentially if we think of the most in-depth character of science, a science could contain only one proposition that was certain in itself (which would not be the first principle when based on more than one proposition). If a science, on the other hand, had more than a first principle, it would be not one, but several separate sciences.

As we have stated otherwise, Fichte; established the relationship between propositions as follows: If the proposition A was true, then the proposition B was also true; and if B was true, then must C be true, etc. This connection was called the systematic form of the whole, which resulted from several parts. Here, Fichte asked, what was the purpose of associating propositions in this way and answered as follows: With this relationship, certainties were given to propositions which did

not have certainty in themselves. After all, the systematic form was not the object of science, but an accident, a means, and on the condition that the science was to have a manifold of propositions. It was not the essence of science, but an accidental quality thereof because Fichte set the goal of science as *consistency* that could be achieved through this system.

Fichte then continued to answer the following question:

“How shall the absolute certainty of the fundamental principle, and how shall the authority to draw from it conclusions as to the certainty of other propositions, be demonstrated?”⁷³

Fichte called the characteristic of the first principle that which the fundamental principle was to have itself and to communicate to all other propositions as the *inner content*. And he called the manner in which inner content communicated this certainty to other propositions as form of science. Within these boundaries, he focused on the following question:

*How are form and content of a science is possible? Or how is science itself possible?*⁷⁴

Fichte, in response to questions; pointed that a higher science, a science of science in general, was needed to answer these questions. According to him, the possibility of this required science could only be proved by its actual realization. Therefore, he remarked that, it was impossible to know if such a science existed and say whether our knowledge had a basis or not, without investigation.

At this point, Fichte stated that we could find out whether there was a science that could be the science of sciences only through actual realization and pointed that we could confirm the existence of such a science in the open, named sciences (such as philosophy) –again- through actual realization. On the other hand, according to Fichte, if this science is to be discovered for the first time, the

⁷³ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 17.

⁷⁴ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 17.

nation who discovered it deserved to give it a name in its own language. From there, Fichte called this kind of first science the "Wissenschaftslehre". And in relation to this, what was previously called 'philosophy' was named "science of science in general" in accordance with Fichte's suggestion.

The Development of the Concept of Wissenschaftslehre

Fichte indicated that the question of whether we could actually produce this science could become definite by the question of whether we actually produced it and that the essential was related to the nature of what we really wanted to produce. In this respect, he made the following determinations for Wissenschaftslehre.

He argued that this science had to be ground of all sciences. In this respect, Wissenschaftslehre had a two fold object: Firstly, to show the possibility of fundamental principles generally. In this sense, it had to show how, to what extent, and under what conditions, in what degree something could be certain, and to show what it really meant to be *certain*. Secondly, to prove particularly the fundamental principles of all possible sciences, which could not be proven in those sciences themselves. On the other hand, every science that included many propositions that formed a whole together had a systematic form, and we have already mentioned that this form is a condition governing the relationship between derived propositions and the first principle. After drawing this framework, Fichte indicated that Wissenschaftslehre, must provide the ground for the systematic form of all possible sciences.

Looking directly at the Wissenschaftslehre, Fichte described the concept: Wissenschaftslehre must be certain *in itself, through itself, and for the sake of itself*. He argued that Wissenschaftslehre was itself a science, and hence it had to have one fundamental principle like other sciences. But unlike all other sciences, this fundamental principle could not be proven in another higher science. In this sense, its fundamental principle was certain in itself. According to Fichte; this

fundamental principle was absolutely certain; in other words; it was certain, because it was certain.

At the same time, Wissenschaftslehre was also a science that must have a systematic form, as long as it was a science that must contain not only its own first principle but many propositions (since establishing fundamental principles of other sciences meant having many contents). Wissenschaftslehre, as a self-contained science, had to establish the first principles of all other sciences, as well as their forms.

In this context, Fichte concluded his reasoning by indicating that Wissenschaftslehre must contain this form within itself and must have ground for this form through itself.

There can only be three fundamental principles!

“There can only be three fundamental principles: one absolutely in and through itself determined both in form and content [1], a second one determined through itself [2] and third one determined through itself in content [3].”⁷⁵

While developing the concept, Fichte focused on content, form, and their coexistence. Accordingly, he stated that no propositions were possible without content and form. He described the form as anything that was known, and content as which was known about the form. In this respect, the first principle of Wissenschaftslehre must both have content and form while the content and the form determining each other through itself directly and reciprocally. Hence, the content and form are considered as two first principles in terms of being unconditional, absolute, and certain in themselves, while the fact that it is determined in and through itself was regarded as the third principle.

Here Fichte considered the certainty of the first principle of the Wissenschaftslehre (that is, its form only fit to its content and its content only to its form, and this relationship was certain). All possible additional propositions were determined by this absolute first principle, either directly or indirectly, in the

⁷⁵ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 25.

context of their forms or contents. Therefore, he thought that what applied to the first principle should also apply to others. On the other hand, he emphasized that what is valid for each proposition was valid for all propositions.

One question that will come to mind here will be about whatness of 'knowing precisely'. In this respect, Fichte argued that we must assume that 'knowing precisely' was nothing more than an insight into the inseparability of particular content and particular form. According to him, this meant nothing but a hypothetical definition, because a true definition of knowledge was absolutely impossible. In this respect, Fichte remarked that this approach to knowledge proved that *Wissenschaftslehre* and its first principle were hypothetical. However, he added, if there was such a system (whatever it was called), there must be an absolute first principle as mentioned. An absolute first principle was essential to him.

On the other hand, if there is no such system (including grounding), there were two possibilities. In the first case, there was nothing absolutely certain and that our knowledge contained one or more infinite chains. In this framework, each proposition in this chain was based on a higher proposition, and so on forever. In the second case, each could contain several finite sequences, ending only in a first principle based on it. In this latter case, however, there would be many first principles that were completely isolated and unrelated to one another, without which a system could not be mentioned.

Fichte wanted to leave out these two possibilities. Because instead of one or more system parts (the first probability) or many different systems (the second probability), he argued that if the human mind was obliged to contain a single complete and unified system, then such a high and absolute first principle must be. According to him, our knowledge; although it could be divided into many branches from the first principle, and from these branches to many branches again, all of these must still be consistent in a single cycle that did not attach itself to anything but supported itself through the whole system of knowledge. As we have already pointed out, Fichte set the goal of science as consistency, and in this respect, these two possibilities could not provide this. However, in the system, he

wanted to establish, in his own words, not a single particle of dust could be removed because everything was connected with *necessity, certainty, and consistency*. In Fichte's own words: "In this link, we shall possess a globe [whose name is Wissenschaftslehre] holding itself firm by virtue of its own gravitation, the central point whereof attracts with almighty force whatsoever we have erected upon its surface and perpendicularly, and not in the air or obliquely, and which allows no grain of dust to be torn away from its sphere of power."

At this point, Fichte once again emphasized that we could not decide whether such a system (or its possibility) or such a first principle existed before investigation. On the other hand, not only the first principle but also the proposition that it was the first principle of all knowledge could not be proven. In this context, Fichte indicated that, if we discovered a proposition that possesses all of the internal conditions necessary for the first principle of all human knowledge, then we could also investigate whether this proposition also had external conditions, that was, whether we could take it back to everything we knew or believed to be knowing. Hence, he argued that, if they succeeded in actual realization, they should have proven by the realization of the science of knowledge that it was possible, and that there was a system of human knowledge, of which it was the representation. If they did not succeed in this, there either was no such system or they have merely failed in discovering it, he indicated.

Explanation of the Concept of Wissenschaftslehre

Before attempting to explain the concept, Fichte emphasized that; to explain a concept scientifically was to determine a place for it in the whole system of human sciences, in other words, to show which concept determined its position and which other concept was determined by it. However, Fichte added that, in general, the concept of Wissenschaftslehre itself was the place of all scientific concepts, and all of these concepts were determined by itself and through itself. Therefore, he said that the explanation we would talk about here was only hypothetical. He described the question in another way:

If we assume that, there are sciences, and that there is truth in them, (which can not be known in advance of the Wissenschaftslehre), how is the Wissenschaftslehre related to these sciences?

Fichte focused heavily on this question, and the first thing he said about it; the answer to the question was also Wissenschaftslehre's pure concept. In this respect, these sciences did not assign a place to Wissenschaftslehre, but they were placed in and through the system of knowledge that Wissenschaftslehre was obliged to depict. To improve this response, Fichte expressed:

- Wissenschaftslehre is to be a science of all sciences.
- As the science of all sciences, Wissenschaftslehre, is to furnish to all sciences their fundamental principles.
- As mentioned before, Wissenschaftslehre, is to determine the form of all sciences. Here, attention should be paid to the difference in logic, which has the same claim.
- Like all science, Wissenschaftslehre has a subject.

"In how far can Wissenschaftslehre be sure of having exhausted human knowledge generally?"

Fichte in response to the question, indicated that; in order to address the human knowledge in its entirety in a manner that could accurately explain, one had to unconditionally and absolutely knew that he was capable of knowing not only what man was capable of knowing at the present level of existence, but also at any possible and comprehensible level of existence. He noted that human knowledge was infinite (in terms of field of activity-possibility), but could be fully defined as its nature was fully determined through its own laws.

On the other hand, Fichte argued that such a comprehensive-detailed determination of human knowledge could not be limited to; that the first proposed principle could be fully explained and that no other first principle was possible other than the proposed proposition.

Exhaustion of fundamental principle:

He stated that, "Fundamental principle is exhausted when a complete system has been erected upon it, that is when that fundamental principle necessarily leads to all the propositions deduced from it, and when again, all deduced propositions necessarily lead back to it." ⁷⁶

Fichte emphasized that there were no propositions that would be true though the first principle was false or false though the first principle was right, as a negative proof that the system did not contain any unnecessary propositions. On the other hand, if the first principle was given, all the other propositions must be given. Therefore, each individual proposition was given in the first principle and through the first principle. The sum of these meant that science, in general, was *systematic* and that all of its components were united in a single first principle. Except for those, this science was a system when no additional propositions were derived from the first principle. According to Fichte, this gave positive proof that the system did not contain fewer propositions than it should.

Wissenschaftslehre was the only science that could be completed:

Wissenschaftslehre had an absolute unity that every single thing in it caused everything, and everything caused every single thing. This was how the Wissenschaftslehre distinguished itself from the singular sciences, which was wholeness. In this case, Fichte, as a positive proof of this, said that the principle we have begun from was also our final result. Fichte: "We could not proceed without describing the same circle we should have already drawn. When the time comes to represent this science, it will be shown, also that it really describes this circle, leaving the student precisely at the point from which it started, and thus furnishing also the second positive proof in and through itself."

Why could not one or more other systems coexist in human mind with the first one?

First of all, we should point out that Fichte approached this question with high tolerance. However, although this question may be raised at any time, it does

⁷⁶ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 34.

not appear to be directed to the system he has established. He explained this: "Since the proposition that all human knowledge results only in one in itself connected knowledge –is itself to be a component of human knowledge- it can not be grounded upon any other principle than the one assumed as the fundamental principle of all human knowledge, and can only be proven by it. By this we have gained, at least for the present, so much that we see how such a future proposition as we supposed might possibly arise in consciousness would not be another one, different from the fundamental principle of our system, but would also be contradictory of the latter in form."⁷⁷ As we have mentioned, the first proposed principle was assumed to be including the proposition that there was a single system in human knowledge.

More precisely: In the proposed system, the new first principle would contradict each proposition of this system, and in particular, the first principle of this system since all propositions in the proposed system was absolutely connected (necessarily true if any of them were true or vice versa). On the other hand, there would be a formal contradiction here. Because the system to which this other proposition belonged would materially contradict the previous complete system, and therefore would have to lean directly against the principle of the first system. In this case, in response to the first principle of the first system, "I am I" the first principle of the second system would have to be "I am not I".

Fichte, as we have mentioned before, was quite ordinary and tolerant of the question. The answer effort was mainly not that such a question would never be questioned in general, rather than within the framework of its proposed system. Moreover, Fichte, while describing his system, was based mainly on 'assumption', and developed a system through notions of *absoluteness*, *necessity*, *certainty*, *consistency*. Considering that these notions would end up with identity (I am I) and any kind of difference or diversity would be absorbed in this context, it was clear that this system could not be refuted from the outside.

⁷⁷ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 37.

What is the Limit Which Separates Wissenschaftslehre from the Particular Sciences?

When Fichte distinguished Wissenschaftslehre from the particular sciences, he set out: In the system he proposed, Wissenschaftslehre could determine what human actions were as long as the human mind did not act freely, but as long as it acted from necessity. Wissenschaftslehre formed the ground of necessity and established laws, while singular sciences; acted freely on this ground. In addition, the necessity regarding Wissenschaftslehre required 'limitedness,' and in this respect, it distinguished from the individual sciences. Since the point in question was not a necessity but freedom for individual sciences, their feature will be infinity, rather than limitedness.

In other words, we can say the exact boundary between Wissenschaftslehre and particular sciences; as soon as a specific direction is given to the free act in itself, we move from the general Wissenschaftslehre to the field of particular sciences. Fichte gave an example of geometry to explain this. In this example, Fichte stated that Wissenschaftslehre provided us with space as a necessary thing and pointed as the absolute boundary, but gave the imagination complete freedom to put that point wherever he wanted. As soon as the imagination uses this freedom in a special way, for example by moving the point towards the boundary of unlimited space and thus forming a line, we thereafter find ourselves in the field of a particular science called 'geometry' rather than Wissenschaftslehre. The entire task of the first principle of geometry was to limit the space according to a rule or to establish space. In this way, the geometry was clearly distinguished from the Wissenschaftslehre.

Thus, Fichte assumed that Wissenschaftslehre contained those determined acts of the human mind which it - be it conditioned or unconditioned - enacted necessarily and under compulsion; but that it posited at the same time, as the highest explanatory ground of those necessary acts, a power to determine itself to act generally. Hence Wissenschaftslehre was able to determine the acts of the human mind as long as it was necessary, rather than free acts.

How is Wissenschaftslehre Related to Logic?

As we have already mentioned, Wissenschaftslehre was obliged to provide for form for all possible sciences at the same time. It is seen that Logic had a parallel role in providing for the form of sciences. Fichte needed to separate them because of this commonality between the two sciences. As a significant difference here, Wissenschaftslehre was obliged to provide content as well as a form while Logic providing the mere form. On the other hand, he argued that in Wissenschaftslehre, the form and content were not separated from each other, and Logic's separation of the sciences by giving them pure forms indicated that it was a free act and therefore Logic was a particular science. Fichte clearly stated that all science of Logic was neither a Wissenschaftslehre itself nor a part of this theory, but a purely particular science.

Logic is a science formed by abstracting forms from contents. This resulted that logic propositions have nothing but the form which Fichte argued to be impossible in line with the first principle - a proposition must have content with its form- possible and added that the content of the Logic must be a mere form in Wissenschaftslehre. This content, even though this form was designated as the form of a logical proposition, still had to take the universal form of Wissenschaftslehre. This second free act, through which the form had its own content and returned to itself, was called reflection. Without reflection, abstraction was not possible, and vice versa.

For this reason, there was a special relationship between Logic and Wissenschaftslehre, and it was important to show the difference clearly. In other words, in this respect, Logic did not provide the basis for Wissenschaftslehre; on the contrary, Wissenschaftslehre provided the basis for Logic. On the other hand, Fichte said that: "Wissenschaftslehre is necessary; not necessary exactly in so far as it is a clearly conceived and systematically arranged science, but at least necessary as a natural gift; while logic is an artificial product of human mind in its freedom. Without the former, no knowledge and no science would be possible; without the latter, all sciences would have been much later developed. The former

is the exclusive condition of all science; the latter is a very beneficial invention to secure and facilitate the progress of sciences.”⁷⁸

How is the Wissenschaftslehre, as Science Related to its Object?

Every proposition of Wissenschaftslehre had form and content, so we knew something, and there was something we knew about. Fichte added this to his judgment in the context of the subject: Wissenschaftslehre itself was the science of something, not something itself. Therefore, Wissenschaftslehre, together with all its propositions, would be the form of a certain content that existed before this theory. The question then arose: How did Wissenschaftslehre relate to this content, and what were the consequences of this relationship?

The object of the concept was, above all, the system of human knowledge. However, although this knowledge was established in a systematic form only through this science, Fichte argued that it exists independently of science. So how did it differ from this object of science in general?

While answering the question, Fichte first assumed that content and form existed primarily in the human mind before our knowledge and that they were inextricably linked together. Accordingly, in the human mind, what was independent of this general science was what he called ‘acts of the mind.’ According to him, these acts constituted the whatness of the pre-existing, and they were in certain forms that formed the howness of the existing in mind, which made it possible to distinguish one act from another. On the other hand, each act was determined by a specific law, that was to say, by a certain law. In this case, Fichte noted that if all the actions of the mind were interconnected, and if there was a relationship between them, a system could only be seen in such a plane. Although the acts of the human mind contained all the contents of a possible Wissenschaftslehre, these acts did not contain this science itself, and there must be an additional act in the human mind to create it, as Fichte added. The

⁷⁸ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 47.

characteristic of such an additional act was that it was aware of its own mode of action. On the other hand, this act differed from all other existing and compulsory acts in terms of being a free act. As a result, Wissenschaftslehre was revealed by this free act as a systematic science. Returning to our question in this respect, what distinguished Wissenschaftslehre from other sciences was that the object of these other sciences was itself a free act, and the object of Wissenschaftslehre consisted of a set of necessary acts.

Fichte proposed that the accuracy of the proposed system in this framework could be confirmed by reconciliation through presuppositions and those discovered later. However, he also indicated that this would be a purely negative proof, and if the reflections revealed did not agree with the presuppositions, the system was to be called certainly false. But if they did, the truth of the compromise would be possible, not certain. Fichte, as an explanation, noted that, if there was a single system in human knowledge, there is always the possibility of such a compromise by chance, through two or more false inferences that cooperated to produce such a compromise, although there was only one way in which such a compromise could be correctly derived.

Furthermore, Fichte stated that even if a universally valid Wissenschaftslehre was established, the philosophical judiciary would still have a job to do in this field because the Wissenschaftslehre would need continuous improvement. After all, there would always be gaps to be filled, evidence to be developed, and concepts that have to be clearly defined.

*"The collective modes of acting of the intelligence, which is Wissenschaftslehre is to exhaust, can be received in consciousness only in the form of representation; that is to say, only in so far as they are represented."*⁷⁹

The reflection which governed the whole Wissenschaftslehre, as a science, was a representing, emphasized Fichte. However, he added that it didn't have to follow that every thing about which it reflected must also be merely a representing. Accordingly, in Wissenschaftslehre, the Ego was represented; but it

⁷⁹ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 60.

didn't mean that the Ego was represented as merely representing; for other determinations of the Ego might be discovered in it. The Ego as philosophizing subject was undoubtedly merely representing, but the Ego as subject of the philosophizing might be something more. Representation was the highest and absolute first act of the philosopher, according to Fichte. But here, he noted that it might be something different as well. He concluded that a science, which was erected on the conception of representation, might well be a very useful introduction to the science, but could not be the *Wissenschaftslehre* itself.

Hypothetical Division of *Wissenschaftslehre*

“The absolute first principle must be shared by all parts of the *Wissenschaftslehre*; because *Wissenschaftslehre* is not obliged to provide not only a part of human knowledge but also a basis for knowledge in its entirety. Division assumes a contrast that both of its terms should be equal to a third term.”⁸⁰

In this context, Fichte began by assuming that the highest concept was I and that the non-I was opposed to this I. From here; he noted that if the non-I did not and if I did not, I could not be placed as opposed to I, so that I must be dealt with in two different directions. First, he expressed it as something in which the non-I was placed, and secondly as opposed to the non-I, and ultimately as something that was put in the absolute I. In this sense, that both of these were put forward in the absolute I, this latter I must be equal to the non-I and must be parallel in opposition. However, Fichte pointed out that, this could only be understood if there was a third element. In this respect, he said that the third element was the concept of *quantity*. Both I and non-I had a concept of the quantity determined by their opposition to each other. In this context, the first possibility; was the determination of I by the non-I (in terms of the quantity of the non-I). At this point, I WAS dependent and was mainly ‘instantaneous’. This

⁸⁰ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 61.

dependent I was based on the concept of representations derived from the first principle (and of course, evidenced by it).

In addition, I must be absolute and purely and simply determined. If it was determined by the non-I, then it was not self-determined, which would contradict the highest and absolute first principle. In order to avoid this contradiction, Fichte proposed that we must assume that the non-I, who must determine the moment, was determined by the I. However, this approach might raise problems such as; I would be taken not as the representer of I, but rather as an I with absolute causality, and such a causality could also cancel out the opposing non-I and the relationships with it as a whole. So since such a causal assumption would contradict the second and third first principles, we have to design this absolute causality as something that contradicts representation, as something that cannot be represented and as causation that is not causal. At this stage of reasoning, Fichte referred to *striving* as a concept of causation that was not causality. In this context, Fichte saw this concept as a basis for the transition from the first part of the Wissenschaftslehre, the theoretical part, to the second part, the practical part.

Fichte attached importance to this second part (practical part). He stated that he established the first part as the basis of this second part and that it was processed only for a clearer understanding of the second part. On the other hand, the precise boundaries of the theoretical chapter was established in this second chapter and given a solid basis. In this respect, Fichte referred to the second chapter, as the practical chapter.

“In this second chapter, theories on the subtle, beautiful, sublime, free submission to nature's own laws, the so-called common sense or natural sensation of god, and finally, the new and new theories of natural law and morality, whose principles are both formal and material carefully laid foundations from beginning to end.”⁸¹

Fichte emphasized that all of this was the result of the establishment of three absolutes. According to this;

⁸¹ Fichte, J. G. (1982). *The Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introductions*. (P. H. Lachs, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 62.

1. Absolute: Absolute I, which was governed by its own laws and could be represented only through the influence of non-I.

2. Absolute: Absolute Non-I, which could be represented independently of all our laws and only by indicating these laws (positive or negative, but not necessarily to a finite level).

3. Absolute: Absoluteness (Absolute capacity), which was the absolute capacity to determine ourselves in absolute terms according to the effects of both the non-I and I in ourselves. In another saying, an absolute capacity that could only be defined as long as it distinguished an effect of the non-I from an effect of I or from the law.

Fichte said that no philosophy could go beyond these three absolute principles.

2.2. ON ABSOLUTE IDENTITY

Fichte stated that the proposition of "I am I" had a completely different meaning than "A is A". He explained the difference as such:

A proposition that we called "A is A" had content only on a certain condition. So if A was posited, it was posited, which naturally had predicated A. However, Fichte said that this proposition still told us nothing about whether it had been posited actually and through a predicate.

On the other hand, the proposition of "I am I" was unconditionally and absolutely valid, as it was equal to the X proposition. And this applied not only in form but also in content. In this second type of proposition, I, not conditionally, predicate, which was equal to itself, was absolutely posited; so it was indeed posited (in the sense of existence). In this case, Fichte indicated, the judgment "I exist" could be drawn from this kind of proposition.

In the light of these determinations, Fichte pointed, we could find out what we meant by using 'I' in this context and that we could find a definitive

explanation of Ego as the absolute subject. Accordingly, it was the Ego as the absolute subject, which contained the existence and the simple fact that the essence of putting itself in accordance with its existence. It existed when it posited itself and through positing itself, and thus when it existed, it posited itself; and thus, the Ego was Absolute and Necessary for the Ego. As a result, the basic inference was that something that did not exist for itself could not be Ego.

Fichte positioned Ego as a necessary identity of the subject and object and said that the Ego was a subject-object, and thus it was absolutely present without further mediation. Fichte, who also mentioned Kant and Descartes in the context of this judgment, especially touched on the points of his own proposition that differed from the philosophies of these philosophers. In this respect, he stated that his proposition was the absolute basic principle of all knowledge and that it was the same thing that Kant pointed out that when categories were deduced; however, he added that Kant had never revealed this in particular as a principle of representation.

He also stated that Descartes suggested a similar proposition before Kant through “Cogito ergo, sum”. But Fichte objected to this by indicating that we do not necessarily consider when we exist; whenever we think about it, we necessarily exist. The thinking was by no means essence, it was merely a specific determination of existence, and our existence also had many other determinations.

2.3. FICHTE AS A PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

As one of the main characteristics of German Idealism, the philosophers (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel), who were evaluated in this context, set out their philosophical systems starting from Kant, and attempting to transcend him. As it is often said, the 19th century is a “century of history” and German Idealists were philosophers of history, so that their attempts to transcend were performed the most in the field of philosophy of history. After all, German Idealists who wanted

to establish a holistic philosophical system placed the philosophy of history on the basis of their system.

In this context, Fichte, as we have already mentioned, was based on Kant's particular practical philosophy in establishing his philosophical system. Because, according to him, Kant said that the real essence of a human being was a moral being before being a knowing being, thus breaking the human from determinism in nature and saying that he was an entity with moral freedom, that he could determine his own life and that he must realize that he was a person. This was an important point for Fichte because as an ethical-political philosopher, he attempted to ground it throughout his system.

Fichte argued that as a moral being, human's free act preceded everything. He proposed that a person who comprehended this necessarily would see himself in "Absolute I". A human who became aware of this would surely make philosophy for Fichte, starting from the subject, I because it was essential for a philosophy based on freedom. However, it should be noted that such a philosophy was not a subjectivist philosophy. Because I or Consciousness, which was the basis of such a philosophy, was not an individual but rather Consciousness in general – I. In other words, the Absolute I was "Universal Consciousness".

Finally, according to Fichte, The Absolute I, I, or Consciousness must be seen as the highest principle of practical reason before the theoretical mind. So much so that human beings are the ones who act before "think". Consciousness therefore appeared as an act against the outside world. So, an activity of philosophy was an activity that prioritized praxis before theoria. So that theoria and knowing was the product of an act, a praxis. Because Consciousness or I first confronted an object and comprehended it (a is a). Then it separated it from other objects (a is not non-a). Finally, it united a and non-a in a concept that encompassed both. This showed that the activity of Consciousness was nothing but the action of I.

During this consciousness activity, I conceived of the non-I as "nature" and detected determinism in it. Because I knows that its essence was freedom, nature appears to be something against it. For this reason, I wanted to overcome this opposition and find the property of being the realization of his freedom. However, this would again occur through the action of I. For this very reason, freedom was not a given thing, not a granted, but a task that required human action. In order to be truly free, one had to make himself a target and realized himself according to his own law. This also helped people to know themselves.

The histories for the singular are the product of the historia event. The general history of the human species, namely the "world history", is "the history of humanity" as a single history. According to Fichte, "world history also has a priori and a posteriori sections. The a priori of this history, as in Kant, is obtained by seeing all human history as "a process of progressing towards freedom". Because, according to Fichte, "The only thing that makes the content of history meaningful is freedom" and only the philosophy can apprehend this content. Man tries to realize himself and his freedom in his at "being thrown into the nature" and philosophy is in fact a tool he uses to achieve this goal in this activity. In this respect, the history of philosophical thought is the history of human emancipation process.⁸²

As in Kant, an ethic of duty stood out in Fichte, and in this respect, history was meaningful only if it could be handled under a moral obligation and responsibility, that was, under a moral of freedom. Therefore, from an empirical point of view, freedom could be attributed to history as a group of randomities, singularities only through moralizing it. Because only in this condition, it could be argued that the essence of history was reason and freedom.

Fichte stated that we could know the past, but that our action belonged to the present, and that our moral goals were about the future. Because, according to him in the history of humanity, which was divided into five by him, we were not at the point where we should have been. And within the framework of the

⁸² Özlem, D. (2012). *Tarih Felsefesi*. İstanbul: Notos Kitap, p. 112-113.

consciousness of duty, each nation was obliged to establish its own freedom, and then, as an organized member of the 'humanity', every nation was obliged to perform a function that the historical heritage imposed on it and must fulfill.

According to Fichte, when we look at the "general history" as "the history of the development of reason and freedom", there were indications that human history was in progress (this was the French Revolution for the German Idealists), and as we have already pointed out, Fichte divided history into five stages:

1. **The State of Innocence:** Fichte described this period as a period in which the mind lacked consciousness and freedom and acted as mere instinct. According to him, this period in which natural tendencies prevailed was the happiness period of humanity.
2. **The State of Progressive Sin:** Fichte said that in this stage, the reason began to manifest itself, but the reason here appeared in a commandment that subordinated the individual. In other words, the reason obeyed to an external authority, so that here, the external authoritarian coercion began to clash with individual consciousness.
3. **The State of Completed Sinfulness:** Although it was found to be important as a period in which humans began to rebel against the external authority, this period was also said to be a period in which the reason was not effective since this rebellion was carried out entirely with selfishness.
4. **The State of Progressive Justification:** Fichte thought that in the stage of sinful human selfish rebellion could not free him. After understanding, he tried to purge his selfishness, and reason prevailed. At this stage, reason came into prominence, and science based on reason began to dominate.
5. **The State of Completed Justification and Sanctification:** This was the age of complete freedom in which the practical function of reason dominated the whole human life, and Fichte stated that establishing this age was the fundamental moral duty of nations.

Fichte argued that that the age of these processes of "realization of reason and freedom" was now in the third stage, that was, in the stage of completed

sinfulness. According to him, as soon as people opposed irrational authorities, not through selfishness, but also through reason, this stage would be overcome, and thus, the era of science would start. But of course, this was a moment for the transition to completed liberation. On the other hand, it should be noted that what Fichte referred to as irrational authorities in this classification, in particular in recent texts, was not of the kind of divine powers. On the contrary, Fichte stated that the human species would move to a stage driven by reason and freedom, while, in fact, he had the belief that a divine force entirely governed history. We can even look at this trend towards freedom in the history of humankind as an “imminent imperative in which the divine being manifested itself clearly”. Because the divine reveals itself to us in history as reason and freedom. At the end of this process, there would be an absolute state based on reason and freedom. In this “absolute state”, the individual goals and the goals of universal humanity would be identical. And in fact, this identity could be mentioned in a period of completed freedom when this overlap occurred. In the text of *Closed Commercial State*, Fichte emphasized precisely the conditions of this identity. As we will mention later, the state was obliged to provide individuals with the means of realizing themselves and, therefore, could be identified with particularity universally. In this respect, the state was one of the essential tools in establishing and achieving the age of reason and freedom.

2.4. FICHTE’S PHILOSOPHY OF LAW AND ETHICS

Whereas Kantian ethics represents a strikingly original resolution of eighteenth century issues about duty, reason, interest, virtue and moral feeling, Fichte's ethical theory focuses attention more strongly on the relation of moral personality to its embodiment and individual identity, and on the place of the individual moral agent in a living community with others -that is, on just those issues which were to determine ethics and social thought in the nineteenth century and beyond. The underappreciation of Fichte's moral and political thought thus has serious

*consequences for our understanding of where our own ideas and problems originated.*⁸³

In this respect, Fichte, who proposed *Wissenschaftslehre* as the basic science, provided with content and form for all the specific sciences, covering both the theoretical and practical sciences. In this respect, Fichte also established the philosophy of ethics and law with the tools of this ground, so our effort to understand his philosophy in this direction must be considered by keeping this in mind.

Recognition will undoubtedly be one of the first concepts we should resort to when it comes to ethics and law. Accordingly, in Fichte:

2.4.1. Recognition

Fichte explained the concept of *Recognition* in his work *Fundamentals of Natural Law*. Accordingly, he stated that I acted on the non-I, and on the other hand, was limited by the same non-I. Therefore, Fichte concluded that I must confine itself to its own act, which was based on an external limitation. Fichte called this concept of 'demand' (*Aufforderung*). But the external source of a *concept* of action can only be thought of as another I, who demands. Therefore, the I was possible only on the condition that it conceived of another I, which demanded that it limit its action in certain ways. Fichte stated that it was to understand another person as a rational entity making such an invitation and to show such an understanding while taking action to recognize/accept the other.

Fichte's system; said that as a free being, in principle, man necessarily-naturally would want to take this potential into action, and therefore would

⁸³ Wood, A. W. (2016). *Fichte's Philosophy of Right and Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 169.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139027557.008>.

necessarily inquire from other free beings to limit his actions to a space in which he could benefit I's freedom. Fichte, therefore, said that I had to assume that others would recognize it; but he added that it could not expect others to behave in this way unless it treated others as rational beings. On the other hand, according to Fichte, I was obliged to recognize and treat all others, before any moral condition, simply by the necessity of logical consistency (rationality required this). Recognition, therefore, emerged as the primary condition of all relations between all free beings and was the first step to make a mutual relationship possible, which Fichte called the 'relation of right', which was a necessary relationship to move into the universal field.

As we have noted, Recognition was a situation that made the legal basis possible, and we see a clear example when it came to rights. Recognition in this respect was undoubtedly the basis of the 'right principle.' Accordingly, Fichte pointed out that; I, in all cases, had to recognize and accept free beings outside of me as they were. So I could limit my freedom through the concept of the freedom of another.

In this context, Fichte emphasized that there were two fundamental rights. These were, according to him, the inviolability of the body and the right to act freely in the external world. Based on the philosophy of freedom and action, Fichte prioritized the inviolability of the body as the concrete manifestation of the realization of freedom and action on the political ground. On the other hand, he argued that, along with these fundamental rights, other rights could only be shared by rational persons because the relation of right could only be established among rational beings. At the same time, Fichte added that recognizing/accepting the others, including our behaviors towards them in accordance with their fundamental rights did not necessarily require a moral principle, but only required logical coherence or inferential thinking, and that itself was sufficient.

Fichte emphasized the necessity of such a relationship for rational beings as well as the right of people to act irrationally. In this case, he said that becoming a rational community within the relation of rights depended on an external force capable of coercing them to observe the law, and that was the state. Besides,

Fichte argued that entities rather than the state had the 'right to oppress' and that, after all, forcing others towards the principle of rights they violate was not unlawful. But Fichte made it clear that it was not possible to establish a satisfactory community in this way, but through the unconditional subordination of everyone to the administration of another party, delegating their powers to it.

2.4.2. The Form of Government

For Fichte, we must first say that, in an ideal form of government, there was no distinction between legislative, executive, and judicial powers. In addition, we see that he specifically excluded two forms of government: 'despotic governments', in which the monarch was outdated and was not subject to the law (because the law was the basis), as in absolute monarchies and the 'democracies' in which the people as a whole directly administered the law instead of delegating its power to representatives (because there might appear irrational behaviors of people). Although Fichte has been vague about calling his philosophy as the proper form of governance, he was clear about how this form of government should serve, and as we said before; these were, to establish reason and freedom and to allow each individual to realize himself/herself as a part of it.

In this context, Fichte's defense of the legitimacy of the people's right to rebellion in response to the pressure of the administration stood out as a progressive attitude. With his own words:

But -and this should be noted well- the people is never a rebel, and the expression Rebellion used of it is the highest absurdity that can ever be said; for the people is in fact and in right the highest power, to which none is superior, the source of all other power, responsible only to God... Only against a higher power can there be rebellion. But what on earth is higher than the people? It could rebel only against itself, which is absurd. Only

*God is superior to the people; hence if it should be said that a people has rebelled against its prince, then it has to be assumed that the prince is a god, which might be hard to establish.*⁸⁴

For his time, Fichte argued that the most effective and lasting political improvement would come not from rebellions but through gradual, principled reforms from above. In other words, illegitimate (nonideal-irrational) regimes had to legitimate themselves through enlightened self-transformation from within gradually. This meant that the real legitimacy of a political order depends mainly on its tendency to change itself. With Fichte's words: "Any constitution of the state is in accord with right which does not make it impossible to progress toward something better."⁸⁵

On the other hand, Fichte, while appearing to be quite liberal about individual rights such as personal freedom and inviolability, it is noteworthy that Fichte was clearly anti-liberal⁸⁶, especially in the area of economic behavior. The overall aim of the state was to protect the fundamental rights of free individuals in accordance with the civil-political convention. In this respect, it meant that the external realm of freedom that began with one's body was inviolable, and that the state's right to intervene in personal freedom could only expand as far as the rights of others were to be enlarged which would pave the way for "limitations" regarding the rights of others. Fichte, however, stated that this would not be a problem for people equipped with rational and freedom consciousness, but that

⁸⁴ J. G. Fichte (1962) *Gesamtausgabe*. Edit. by Reinhard Lauth ve Hans Gliwitzky. Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann, p. 456-457. Allen W. Wood. In cited *Fichte's Philosophy of Right and Ethics*, David James & Günter Zöllner (eds.). The Cambridge Companion to Fichte. New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁸⁵ J. G. Fichte (1962) *Gesamtausgabe*. Edit. by Reinhard Lauth ve Hans Gliwitzky. Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann, p. 313-314. Allen W. Wood. Incited *Fichte's Philosophy of Right and Ethics*, David James & Günter Zöllner (eds.). The Cambridge Companion to Fichte. New York: Cambridge University Press. (GA I/5:313-314).

⁸⁶ See: Fichte, J. G. (2012). *The Closed Commercial State*. (A. C. Adler, Trans.) New York: Suny Press.

people would be happy to do so, because the level of Ego's happiness, which found itself identical to the whole, was determined not by selfishness but by integration.

2.4.3. Political Requirements of Social Justice

In Fichte's political theory, it was shown that the primary responsibility of the state was to ensure the welfare of every individual, which was the fundamental demand of law. As far as the welfare of the individual and society were concerned, economic arrangements and property relations associated with them would come into play inevitably. According to Fichte, all types of property were based on the contract on the property through which people shared the external space necessary for each of their free actions. The purpose of this contract was to ensure that a person had an external space sufficient to meet his or her needs for free acts, which could be maintained in the future. Therefore, property (for example, the body was also in this category) formed the external basis for individuals to exist in action as free beings. And for Fichte, as a condition for not being threatened at any given time, the social contract came to the fore. In this context, Fichte argued that those who did not want to be included in the contract should have had the right to establish a different kind of community outside and that it was necessary for a welfare society to protect this contract under the guarantee of the state.

On the other hand, Fichte also provided the state with authority to redistribute rights, responsibilities, and resources on the condition of observing social welfare. Fichte believed that the state also had a right to regulate market and trade strictly, and even he believed them to be the duties of the state. In this respect, for example, it was a duty of the state to fix the prices of necessary supplies so that everyone could supply them, and at the same time it must guarantee that there were sufficient but never excessive numbers of people in each economic branch of society, so that every citizen was required to work and

guaranteed a decent living from that work. In other words, every citizen must have a profession recognized by the state and guaranteed by the state as a basic means of subsistence.

Therefore, the state's primary responsibility for protecting the private property of every citizen was making it obligatory to distribute property in a way that did not inflict any individual on poverty. In this context, Fichte's main objectives as the political requirements of social justice seemed to point to a rational state with the aim of social welfare and a social contract to which this rational state was subject, and the right to property was observed by that contract.

2.4.4. The I as Practical Principle

In the transcendental use of Fichte, the term 'I' referred not to anything but to an activity that was clearly the basis of all philosophy from the standpoint of transcendental idealism. The concept of thing (object) was based on the non-I, which has to be counterposited in an order in which I could think of itself and form a concept of itself. After reminding this point, when we look at I as a practical principle, that is, while saying that I is an activity, we mean that it is not only a doing that we observe but also a doing that we are obliged to do. In other words, it is not only an action, but an action that is or should be done. Therefore, 'I' is not only what I am, but rather a conception of what I should be, and for Fichte, who preceded act-practice, this latter point was essential. In this respect, Fichte, evaluating I as an activity-act, produced new terms such as willing, causality, which is not causality, and striving. In this context:

Willing, causality which is not causality, striving:

In every awareness of the 'I' I find myself active in the objective world counterposited to the I., In other words, I finds itself as 'willing'. If reflection was "a centripetal" activity, in which the I "returned into itself," willing, by contrast, was a centrifugal activity, which sought to posit the I, to expand its domain in the

not-I. When taken by itself, I would abolish the non-I. However, since this would abolish the condition that made it possible, this activity must be regarded as a "causality which is not a causality" or, in other words, did not have a specific end or satisfaction point. Still, on the other hand, Fichte described it as an endless 'striving' which was the condition of the possibility of a particular demand.

Fichte placed this insatiable striving into the organic body, as a condition of I's possibility in the mutual relationship with the external world. The consciousness of this vague striving was 'longing' [Sehnen]. However, any particular state that was assumed to exist was called 'desire' and the direct sensory experience of such a desire was called 'drive'. In general, the desire was directed outside objects, seeking to abolish their independence, but without destroying them, by aligning themselves with the I or the 'practical concepts' of what they had to be, and attributing each object its 'final end.'

According to Fichte, there were two forms of desire: The particular one involved feelings produced by a sensuous encounter with specific objects and aiming at determinate ends. The other ideal aimed for the absolute freedom or self-sufficiency of I: This is a "tendency to its activity for the sake of self-activity" or an absolute tendency to the "absolute". In his sense, as a result, for Fichte, the striving for absolute self-activity was the condition for there to be an I. He emphasized that I could only accept myself as an I to the extent that I understood it in terms of the task of absolute activity. He described the self-realization and trying to be what it was through its own activity as the main drive of the I.

"Who am I, then, authentically? That is, what sort of individual? And what is the ground of my being this?" asked Fichte.

Fichte answered the question as such: From the moment I become conscious of myself, I am the one who makes myself through freedom, and because I make myself this one, I exist as one. Fichte, at this point, seemed to have preceded 20th century existentialists: I exist before it has an essence. Fichte, by saying that "To be free is to be before it is determinate" emphasized that *what* it was, was the task of giving itself determinacy, or positing its own essence. The principle of morality was always to determine [Bestimmung] in its system.

2.4.5. The Social Unity of Reason

Fichte believed that real human society could only be achieved when people act freely on the same principles. Because they have reached a rational compromise on these principles in a communication process. Therefore, a society based on authority or coercion was not only imperfect but also inhuman, for Fichte. However, as it will make much more sense considering the internal dynamics of his period, Fichte argued that the state, which was founded on coercion, was “a means for establishing the perfect society”. But he added that since the state was a mean in any case and thus like all human institutions which were mere means, the state aimed at abolishing itself. After all, *all governments aimed to make themselves unnecessary*. In the end, therefore, the state should be abolished, as a *legislative and coercive power*.

On the other hand, Fichte, who described the final and most important end of society as the unity and solidarity of all its members, argued that the search for an individual identity meant seeking rational norms for living. Fichte believed that these norms could only be known through communication with others. And he stated that this communication consisted of mutual effectiveness and passivity, affecting others and being affected by them. Therefore, since the real determination of people in society was, therefore, an infinite approach to unity or solidarity and equality, free communication was vital as a process of achieving this determination. After all, the unity of reason itself was social, and this sociality could be built by the free and common investigation of rational beings by the truth.

2.4.6. The Origins of Evil: Cowardice, Inertia, Despair

For Fichte, idealism was a revolutionary philosophy; because it grounded everything on the I's consciousness of its freedom, its ability to think for itself, of being contented with nothing as it was, but striving continuously and tirelessly to

make it what it had to be. Fichte, therefore considered all forms of materialism, particularly those that emphasized determinism and reduced people to the gear of a universal mechanism, associated with socially and politically oppressive old regimes. After all, I had the freedom to act as an entity, and thus there existed, and the horizon of this act was posited to act as whatever it should be, regardless of the consequences.

In this respect, Fichte once again united the concepts of habit and inertia, which he saw as the origin of evil, the greatest obstacles to self-realization and freedom, with a definite social message. Because evil was rooted in the fact that people were satisfied or indifferent to existing social arrangements and cultural traditions. In other words, not doing your moral duty was evil, and the basic situations that led to this were inertia, cowardice and despair.

Inertia restrains us from the action and makes our existence possible. If we remember that act was the basis of the proof of existence in Fichte, that is the vilest of one's self. Cowardice; is to prevent the action itself, evaluating the results, and what was necessary for Fichte was not having "good or successful" results but acting according to the law. In this regard, cowardice would lead to non-fulfillment of moral duties, and thus to social evil.

On the other hand, the remedy for despair, as for all moral evil, has always been free social interaction. No one has a right to compel another to be virtuous or to make another good (or wise, or happy) against the other's will. However, the despairer could be freed of despair if others showed that they did not despair of him, and provide him with a good example. Thus, having something he could respect would awaken his respect for himself.

In this regard, Fichte argued that the moral improvement of the human being could occur only insofar as all came to regard themselves as members of a single great community, all drawing strength from the whole and influencing one another for good through free and mutual give and get for which there were some social duties as well as personal duties to fulfill.

2.5. THE ADDRESSES TO THE GERMAN NATION

The Adresses to the German Nation which was given by Fichte in the winter of 1807-1808 coincided with the period when the French army invaded Germany. "The German princes signed a severe peace agreement with France, the King of Prussia fled to Berlin and took refuge in Königsberg, while Napoleon entered through Berlin gates and passed through Brandenburger Tor and parade Unter den Linden, and Germany's political presence almost disappeared. So much so that, when Fichte gave the *Addresses*, the voices of French military drummers were ringing outside. Fichte, who could not inculcate an obvious uprising against the French occupation army, had to express the resistant patriotic spirit in philosophical discourse."⁸⁷ It is known that when Fichte gave the *Addresses*, the voices of French military drummers were heard outside.

In such an atmosphere, *Addresses*, the first edition of which was held in Berlin in 1808 and the second edition in Leipzig in 1824, consisted of a total of fourteen speeches at the University of Berlin during the winter of 1807-1808.

Within the framework of these speeches, Fichte interpreted the occupation of 1806 as a struggle for the essential, autonomous self of the German culture and state. After all, according to him, what the invading forces were attempting to do was to try to detach the Germans from their essence. In this respect, the revelation of the revolution, which was enthusiastically embraced at the beginning and believed to bring more freedom for all, was changed by the occupation of Germany by Napoleon armies and the occupation abolished the dreams of political freedom in relation to the revolution. Thus, freedom had to be found-created within the country.

For this reason, Fichte thought that Germany had to make a new beginning to attain its original self, autonomy, and freedom. He expressed this idea through two main elements in his *Addresses* and developed his thought in this context:

⁸⁷ Ökten, K. H. (2006). "Siyasal Tarih İle Kesişim Noktası: Fichte'nin Alman Ulusuna Söylevler'i". E. K. Güçlü Ateşoğlu (Edits.) in, *Alman İdealizmi: Fichte* (p. 414). Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları.

National education and the return to Germanic roots as the primary source of this. Throughout his *Addresses*, Fichte highlighted the issue of national education, and this new and pure national education, which would be possible with the restoration of the homeland, envisioned the organization of patriotism in such a way as to ensure the spontaneous revelation of the German self.

In *Addresses*, which could also be seen as a nation-building plan for the Germans, Fichte developed a very systematic training project going from the bottom up. In fact, this kind of national education would be a kind of religious cult, and would have the authority and the ability to change the state and the legal system radically. This new state envisaged in this framework would be the owner of the country, the land demanded by the citizens could be used for life-long lease, every German citizen would be considered a soldier, while a senate could elect the state administrators. However, this new nation-state of Fichte was not the final end, as it was in Plato. According to Fichte, the state should serve as a means to glorify the self, as we have already mentioned. In this respect, we see that Fichte's *Addresses* advocated and grounded national consciousness and related national education as the main components of the structure of the modern state. Even in the context of our subject, we can say that these *Addresses* should be regarded as texts in which German nationalism was clearly constructed. In fact, those who regards Fichte as one of the founders of German nationalism refers to these texts firstly.⁸⁸

In this chapter, in which we attempted to open up Fichte philosophy in the context of our subject, firstly summarized Wissenschaftslehre, which is the proposal of philosophical system of the philosopher, that our thesis is mainly based on. Then we aimed to show his ideas on law, state, recognition, history within the framework of ethical-political philosophy. At the end of the chapter, we deemed it sufficient to give a summary of the scope of the *Addresses to the German Nation*, which is supportive in the context of our topic, because the

⁸⁸ See: Fichte, J. G. (2008). *Addresses to the German Nation*. (G. Moore, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

central question of our thesis is "whether nationalism can be deduced from Wissenschaftslehre." Therefore, it is essential to note that in the second half of our chapter, all topics, including the Addresses to the German Nation, which we dealt with under the title of Fichte's ethic-political philosophy, were addressed to support our thesis. In other words, we tried to put forward the philosopher's ethical-political philosophy to facilitate the understanding of the system to provide an idea of what kind of worldview, mind, structure originates from our main subject, Wissenschaftslehre. In this respect, keeping this context in mind will be more informative for our last chapter.

SECTION 3
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM OF
FICHTE AND GERMAN NATIONALISM

"It's easier to build the temple than to make the deity appear in it."⁸⁹

SAMUEL BECKETT, *The Unnamable*

In order to examine the relationship between Fichte's philosophical system and German nationalism, which is the subject of our study, we attempted to investigate reform, enlightenment, early romanticism, and the French Revolution, which we evaluate as the essential elements of the nationalism. In the second part of the study, we attempted to summarize Wissenschaftslehre, which is the primary system proposal of the Fichte philosophy, and to address the philosopher's ethical-political philosophy in the context of our subject. It should be noted that this thesis claims that the philosophical system of the philosopher (Fichte) constituted the form and theory of nationalism. In this respect, in this last part, while trying to justify this claim, we will prefer to concentrate mainly on the relationship between the philosophical system and the Kant philosophy and the French Revolution, and we will attempt to establish our argument starting from these points. In this context, we will look at the relationship between Kant's philosophy, because Fichte's philosophical system, which claimed to be a system of freedom, got its theoretical inspiration regarding the freedom from Kant and found its concrete-practical inspiration in the French Revolution.

⁸⁹ Adorno, T. W. (2012). *Sahicilik Jargonu-Alman İdeolojisi Üzerine (1962-1964)*. (Ş. Öztürk, Trans.) İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, p. 9.

3.1. OVERVIEW OF PHILOSOPHER

When we look at Fichte as a philosopher, it would be useful to bear in mind the following points: in the short foreword of essay of F. K. Forberg, published in the journal *Philosophisches Journal* in 1798, which he was responsible for, he was accused of being atheist because of defending that the God was not a "person" but the moral order of the universe itself. Together with this development, as we know from his letters, his open support for the French Revolution intensified the debates against Fichte and resulted in the dismissal of the philosopher's professorship.

Fichte then moved from Berlin to Jena, where he had the opportunity to meet some of the leading thinkers of romanticism, such as Schlegel and Schleiermacher, and where he had a significant influence on romantics as well as the romantics influenced him. In fact, the years of Berlin, which began with this "acquaintance," constituted what is called the second period of Fichte philosophy. In 1805, Fichte acquired a professorship at Erlangen University in Berlin. After Napoleon's armies invaded Germany, he gave the famous speeches of The Addresses to the German Nation, which consisted of 14 lectures in 1807-1808, and he shifted from the cosmopolitanism of Enlightenment to nationalism. In his speeches, he proposed a national education program that would serve to create feelings of patriotism in the Germans and at the same time, would ensure moral revival. Even though these speeches, where the emphasis on national education was intense, are important concrete indicators in terms of linking Fichte with German nationalism, it's important to underline that we will concentrate more on the possibility of a nationalist element from *Wissenschaftslehre*.

Fichte was appointed first as a professor (1809) and then as a rector at the newly founded University of Berlin, where he completed his career.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ See: Breazeale, D. (2001, 08 30). *Johann Gottlieb Fichte*. Retrieved from *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Ed.): <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/johann-fichte/>

3.2. BASIC CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PERIOD GERMANY

It is often said that in Germany, despite all the socio-political crises that we have mentioned at the beginning of our study, and precisely because of them, there realized a revolution in ideas, unlike France where there achieved a political revolution. We share this finding in our thesis. It would appear to be a more compelling argument considering that the post-Kant German Idealists (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) are still decisive for the present century. Badiou and Nancy made this point in their *Dialogue on German Philosophy*:

“It has often been said of the great German Idealism -and, incidentally, of early German Romanticism- that it marked a contrast with France, because in France there was a revolution while in Germany there wasn't. In Germany there were no grounds for one, just because Germany wasn't yet Germany. From Kant to Hölderlin to at least Hegel, the German philosophers understood themselves, in their own striking ways, to be operating in the absence of a revolution or in the expectation of another revolution, or to be in the process of ushering in a revolution that would be speculative rather than political... Germany developed in its thinking -with Fichte, Hegel, and so on- what it had not yet realized as a state.”⁹¹

There realized no revolution in Germany because Germany was not yet politically present. The absence of a political unity can be said to have triggered the search for totality and absoluteness in the philosophies of the period; thus during the nineteenth century, German imagination was studied as the mainland of philosophy on the central axis of the question of history, which was dominated by speculative philosophies. Now this question of the historically significant act -yes, you're right, that's the big question, up to and including Marx- this question of the philosopher's engagement, of the destiny of peoples, clearly also raises another big question, namely “What is Germany?” And the various responses to it more or

⁹¹Badiou, A. & Nancy, J.-L. (2018). *German Philosophy: A Dialogue*. (R. Lambert, Trans.) Cambridge: MIT Press p. 14.

less all amount to saying that Germany is the new Greece, that Germany is the homeland of thinking, that Germany is the site of philosophy -all of these nationalistic and megalomaniacal declarations. But at the same time they are indeed new, and they serve to introduce the question of history into philosophy.”⁹²

Marx said that philosophers do not spring from the grounds like mushrooms. In this respect, both Fichte in particular and Germany, in general, are quite clearly the product of their time, and it would not be wrong to say that they are in the determination of the new idea-political order of the period. Philosophers, are products of their time; but they also have the task of reflecting on their own time, in which context it would be meaningful to recall Hegel's statement that “philosophy comes when a way of life is completed”. Therefore, in our opinion, the need for innovation in philosophy and politics in the determination and influence of enlightenment, romanticism, reform, and the French Revolution was the main character of the philosophy of the philosopher. Therefore, we will attempt to evaluate Wissenschaftslehre and try to understand the relationship between the system and nationalism from these points.

3.3. THE RELATIONSHIP OF FICHTE PHILOSOPHY WITH KANT

It seems that Fichte's philosophy, in general, not merely in the context of our thesis, cannot be subjected to an appropriate assessment regardless of its relationship with Kant. In this context, within the framework of our thesis, we will examine this relationship, especially within the framework of freedom. On this basis, we will try to evaluate the Fichte's interpretation of Kant's *thing itself*.

Influenced by the ideas of Lessing, Rousseau and Spinoza in his early years, Fichte became acquainted with Kant's philosophy in 1790 and became Kantian. As mentioned before, Fichte's philosophy is between two basic philosophical systems; It is situated between critical philosophy and dogmatism. It

⁹²Badiou, A. & Nancy, J.-L. (2018). *German Philosophy: A Dialogue*. (R. Lambert, Trans.) Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 19.

borrowed the notion of freedom from Kant and on the notion of necessity from Spinoza. These two systems, which can be interpreted as contradictions in the history of philosophy, were taken together by German idealists and by Fichte in particular. In this respect, we see that Fichte attributed finiteness and necessity to the Wissenschaftslehre while attributing eternity and, therefore, the freedom to the particular sciences that derive from it. Thus, Fichte reconciled freedom and necessity in his system, in which it is inevitable to include everything - even contradictions - in a system that claims integrity and absoluteness.

Returning to the basis of freedom here, in the context of our subject, we must first mention that Fichte established his system with the motive of realizing the freedom created by Kant's Critique of Practical Reason. Fichte has seen himself as a loyal Kantian all his life. But to him, Kant's philosophy is not sufficiently stringent: his theoretical and practical philosophy remains separate; cannot adequately explain the relationship between sensations and concepts... Fichte thought that attraction of Kant's philosophy or his general doctrine lied in his "practical philosophy" and, in this respect he adopted Kant's foundation of human freedom outside the nature with the subjectivity as a starting point of his own philosophy (subjective idealism). These clearly demonstrate the necessity to look at the relationship between Fichte's philosophy and Kant in the context of our study.

In this context, Fichte primarily emphasized the duty of philosophy and stated that transcendental explanation of the normal consciousness and everyday experience was the duty of philosophy. Therefore, philosophy must be abstract. In this case, it was revealed that such an explanation should begin either from pure objectivity (thing in itself) or from free subjectivity (I). According to Fichte, starting from the subject and the field of freedom; was the principle of idealism, while starting from the object and the necessity were the principles of either dogmatism or transcendental realism. At this stage, according to Fichte, these were irreconcilable points and could not be proven through experiences. And so Fichte argues that the principle of freedom has the superiority of being practical

and morally precise. According to him, transcendent idealism, which derives the conditions of objectivity and the possibility of a self from the free subjectivity, can fulfill the duty of philosophy (to give a transcendental explanation of normal consciousness and everyday experience).

The Absolute, where all the existent in Fichte and German Romantics can be gathered together, is an impulse that dominates all their thoughts and doings. In this respect, although their ideas were influenced by Kant, they tended to establish the Absolute that they cannot find in Kant through exceeding Kant. And something called *the thing in itself* (Ding an sich) appeared as the first concept they had to challenge. As such, Kant's unknowable, incomprehensible, and unthinkable *thing in itself* (Ding an sich) was rejected by Fichte because it was an obstacle to freedom and wholeness. However, it was accepted that the principle of integrity was achieved only through such refusal.

In this context, Žižek provides a good overview of Fichte's connection with Freedom on the ethical-political ground of his effort to get rid of the thing in itself:

And, thereby, we can also see how Fichte's urgency to get rid of the Thing-in-itself is linked to his focus on the ethico-practical engagement of the subject as grounded in its freedom: if the subject's phenomenal (self) experience is just the appearance of an unknown noumenal substance, then our freedom is just an illusory appearance and we are really like puppets whose acts are controlled by an unknown mechanism. Kant was fully aware of this radical consequence—and, perhaps, all of Fichte can be read as an attempt to avoid this Kantian deadlock. But, one may ask, does this assertion of the subject's capacity to get to know itself fully not contradict Fichte's focus on the subject as practically engaged, struggling with objects/obstacles that frustrate its endeavors, and thereby as finite? So can only an infinite being fully know itself? The answer is that the Fichtean subject is precisely the paradoxical conjunction of these two features, finitude and freedom, since the subject's infinity (theinfinite

*striving of its ethical engagement) is itself an aspect of its finite condition.*⁹³

Returning to Kant again, it might be said that Kant set out from the fact that man was a wise being, and sought to show that this opportunity provided both general and mandatory law and an obligation on people. According to him, the person who exists as a goal must protect the purpose of his actions against himself and others. This can be accomplished when one acts according to the practical command.

This practical command was described by Kant as acting every time as ends, not as mere means. With his own words: "Act so that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as end and never merely as means."⁹⁴

In this context, it will be useful to look at the point of rendering human beings as rational entities in a more detailed way through the determination of the moral law. Accordingly, Kant, who thought that the principles of ethics were not known with the necessary clarity, pointed that a moral code, which was not a mean for an end, but a mean itself, should be determined with an unconditional command. Kant said that conditional command, which was a mean to an end, could be the principles of will, whereas that the unconditional command, which cannot be derived from anything else, but from itself was more than that. In other words, it was a moral law that formed the basis of all moral principles. It was also stated that this moral law emerged at the point of generalization and universalization of personal maxim. At this stage, Kant argued that if there was a moral law or an unconditional command, there must be a value that was unconditional-absolute (purpose in itself). Kant concluded that rational nature existed as a purpose in itself. The equivalent of this rational nature was human, and in this case, the criterion of the morality of action was to be determined as the

⁹³ Slavoj Zizek (2012). *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (First Ed.). London: Verso, p. 129.

⁹⁴ Kant, I. (2002). *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. (A. W. Wood, Trans.) New Haven and London: Yale University Press, G 4:429; cf. G 4:436.

actor's view of humanity as the purpose in performing the action. Therefore, morality was the only condition that could make rational being a purpose in itself; because only with, this entity could be the legislative member of the kingdom of purposes. Thus, morality and humanity were to be determined as the supreme value since they could achieve the same thing.

Fichte is in line with Kant in terms of prioritizing ethic-act and emphasizing the goals and responsibilities of duty. He made it clear that his philosophy did not contain anything that was not in Kant. Fichte also thought that the thing itself that was established by Kant was also an obstacle to Kant's freedom. Therefore, if we say very roughly; it would not be wrong to consider Fichte's ethical-political philosophy as an attempt to remove an existing obstacle on this path, rather than adding something new to Kant's path to freedom.

If we open up our argument a little more in another way, Fichte argued that the world could only be understood by grasping that it was a concrete act of concepts whose real place was the mind. Although this connects Fichte to Kant, he attempted to go beyond Kant by explaining why those categories were as they were, and why there was a collective unity of experience for seemingly different minds. Ultimately, according to Fichte, the ultimate goal for man was not to know but to act. Therefore, it was not the self-knowledge, but the real end of realizing the free self. As for Kant, freedom for Fichte, and thus morality, was possible in the field of subjectivity. And according to Fichte, freedom was not a given situation; rather, it was a duty that should be fulfilled by the human being. As one fulfills this duty, one becomes free. According to Fichte, the criterion that an action is right or wrong is 'conscience', which is the most convincing evidence that one carries the law of freedom in himself/herself. He/she changes the unconditional command of Kant ("Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law") as "Act as your conscience". (And in this direction) nature is merely a mean to make person to fulfill his/her true duty, for Fichte.

When we talk about the duty of the person, we have touch on purpose and will which were the determinant concepts of Fichte philosophy, because the introduction of these concepts paved the way for transcending thing in itself (and causality). Accordingly, in *On the Nature of the Scholar* he expressed the purposefulness as follows: “What bears the distinguishing features of purposefulness may have a rational author, whereas that to which the concept of purposefulness is entirely inapplicable surely has no rational author.”⁹⁵

When we examine the will in Fichte: “Will produces products in a kingdom of invisible souls, while the act is the initiator of the establishment of a material cause and effect chain. Human being is at the midpoint of these two opposing worlds. It is in the sensory world, but it is more than a sense object, in the world of reason, but it is also finite”.⁹⁶ To this point, as Albayrak has pointed out, Fichte remains within the framework of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*. However, Fichte, was able to transcend this world of sensation and establish another imagination of world through the will, thus leaving Kant. In this context, it is important to note that this other world is now and here: “The trans-sensory world is not a future world, it is now.”⁹⁷ Similarly, in his article *On the Basis of Our Belief in a Divine Governance of the World*, he supported his ideas: “This living and efficaciously acting moral order is itself God. We require no other God, nor can we grasp any other.”⁹⁸

At this stage, it would be useful to re-examine the issue of causality, because freedom cannot be possible without causality, and in this sense, the thing in itself constitutes causality. In this respect, the existence of a human body is inevitably linked to causality in the universe. However, human being does not

⁹⁵ Fichte. (1988). *Early Philosophical Writings*. (D. Breazeale, Trans.) Cornell Univ. Press. 144-184, 155, Albayrak, Ö. B. cited in (2018). “Fichte'nin Monadolojisi'nden Schelling'in Töz'üne Sonluluk ve Tarih”. *Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi), p. 52.

⁹⁶ Albayrak, Ö. B. (2018). “Fichte'nin Monadolojisi'nden Schelling'in Töz'üne Sonluluk ve Tarih”. *Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi), p. 52.

⁹⁷ Fichte, SW Vol: II, 289 cited in Albayrak, Ö. B. (2018). “Fichte'nin Monadolojisi'nden Schelling'in Töz'üne Sonluluk ve Tarih”. *Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi), p. 52.

⁹⁸ Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre*, Vol: II, p.151. Albayrak, Ö. B. cited in (2018). “Fichte'nin Monadolojisi'nden Schelling'in Töz'üne Sonluluk ve Tarih”. *Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi), p. 53.

consist of a mere body, he also has another aspect of willpower, and in this aspect he transcends nature. In addition to this will, consciousness (reflection) allows man to establish his experience as I and not I. "What is important here is not the recognition of this distinction, but that this distinction itself is the founding element for experience. I don't learn the distinction from objects, I put the distinction unconditionally myself, and I put the absolute I in the beginning and unconditionally in this movement."⁹⁹ Thus, it turns out that human beings have two different nature. The first is the empirical world of things and the second (purely human) world is made possible by will. It is here that Fichte established the existence of the first world in the second world (in the I), which means that the first world is not in itself, but in the self, eliminating causality. Because "For Fichte, the world is a world that I have created, beyond the search for a thing in itself is a contradiction."¹⁰⁰

Above, we have tried to explain Fichte's claim to transcend the thing in itself, that is, causality, in line with the will of the political-ethical subject that he established in his system (in particular with the aim of rationality and freedom). It should be noted, however, that this claim is not valid for Kant because the subject in question is metaphysical. We think that this criticism is beyond the limits of our thesis, and for this reason, we are content with briefly touching on this point. In this context, why the absolute subject is metaphysical by Kant can be explained as follows.

As he mentioned in *The Critique of Pure Reason* "General logic, as we have seen, makes abstraction of all content of cognition, that is, of all relation of cognition to its object, and regards only the logical form in the relation of cognitions to each other, that is, the form of thought in general."¹⁰¹ Therefore, when it comes to the foundation of cognition/knowledge, since both the content of

⁹⁹ Albayrak, Ö. B. (2018). "Fichte'nin Monadolojisi'nden Schelling'in Töz'üne Sonluluk ve Tarih". *Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi), p. 50.

¹⁰⁰ Albayrak, Ö. B. (2018). "Fichte'nin Monadolojisi'nden Schelling'in Töz'üne Sonluluk ve Tarih". *Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi), p. 50

¹⁰¹ Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, A 55 / B 79. Albayrak, Ö. B. cited in (2018). "Fichte'nin Monadolojisi'nden Schelling'in Töz'üne Sonluluk ve Tarih". *Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi), p. 44.

*cognition and the object dimension of the relations of cognition, these laws must be dealt with in a priori relations to objects which can be achieved by transcendental logic. From this point of view, Fichte is not able to relate concepts to visions, that is, to the objects of experience, but to make philosophy by using only the relationships between concepts. This, according to Kant, is strictly metaphysical.*¹⁰²

In this section, we examined Fichte's relationship with Kant. We aimed to show that Fichte had moved from Kant's theoretical path of freedom but attempted to separate his philosophy (which he described as the first system of freedom) from Kant, which he saw as an obstacle to the actualization of freedom. On the other hand, although we mentioned that this initiative is interpreted as Kantian metaphysics, we should point out once again that the argument of our study is not based on this interpretation, but a contrary line.

3.4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND FICHTE PHILOSOPHY

Concerning the relationship between the French Revolution and Fichte's philosophy, Armaner concluded: For Fichte, the mind has opened itself to the physical world with the French Revolution: The physical world has adopted the laws of mind functioning. Fichte did not view the French Revolution mere as a historical fact; but what he saw was a rational state that took place in the physical world, that broke the essential causal chain of that world. [...] Fichte brought an actor to the ontology scene: Rational entity (Vernunfftige Wesen). Its role is to play the moral subject, while the necessary scenario is the 'moral law (Sittengesetz).¹⁰³ In this context, as we said before, Fichte, who established the system of rational-freedom, drew his theoretical inspiration from Kant's practical

¹⁰² Albayrak, Ö. B. (2018). "Fichte'nin Monadolojisi'nden Schelling'in Töz'üne Sonluluk ve Tarih" *Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi), p. 44.

¹⁰³ Armaner, T. (2014). *Tarih ve Temsil*. Ankara: Dost Yayınları, p. 22.

philosophy and, as he clearly expressed, the concrete source of his inspiration was French Revolution.

Starting from this point, when we consider the French Revolution from the perspective of freedom, it will be meaningful to examine the relationship of the Revolution with the Enlightenment: Enlightenment thought had a new vision of man, society, and nature. In this respect, the French Revolution came to the fore as one of the decisive historical events in which the idea of Enlightenment was embodied. After all, Enlightenment rationalism expressed an understanding of a universal human being based on an abstract conception of the individual, which proposed the equality of people, that was one of the fundamental ideas of the French Revolution. Such an abstract notion of equality precisely corresponded to the demands of the newly formed bourgeois class. This demand included an end to the legal privileges of the privileged classes of feudalism against any idea of inequality stemming from history, culture, or belief. Therefore, "Equality, liberty, fraternity," which were the main slogans of the French Revolution, were also the main determinants of the desired-built new world. It was the destruction of freedom. In this respect, with Fichte's analogy with the French Revolution while establishing his philosophical system and describing his system as a system of freedom, the enthusiasm, and admiration of the period until the occupation of Napoleon by the German intellectuals became more understandable.

On the other hand, Fichte defends the natural rights brought by the French Revolution. He rejects that the law was born out of a contract. People have inviolable rights right from the outset, and these rights are found in the community of intellectuals. According to him, I never exist alone, live in a community of other *Is* or *yous*. There are desires of other selves against the desires of the self. Freedom must therefore be mutually recognized. A self can be free only by respecting the freedom of others. The reason for the existence of the state is to protect everyone's freedom. At this point, it is appropriate to remember that Fichte assumed two elements, the (Absolute) I and the (Absolute) Non-I when establishing the Absolute Identity. Because when we evaluate

Wissenschaftslehre through German nationalism, it would not be wrong to claim that the non-I was French from the perspective of our thesis. In this respect, it can only be said that after the German occupation of Napoleon in 1806, Germanism, which was mainly in itself, evolved to be for itself, that is, the formation of German consciousness. Therefore, Fichte, who thought freedom possible through mutual recognition, advised resistance to the French-invaders (as non-I) in his discourses.

At this point, it would be appropriate to mention the concept of *Anstoss* in Fichte. First of all, we should state there is no consensus on the meaning occupied by Fichte's philosophy, which is the driving force, motive, kick-off, obstacle, impulse; thus, the concept is quite controversial. As the prominent use after these debates, it can be said that *Anstoss*, to be used in the meaning of "obstacle", limits Fichte's Absolute –self-postulated- I, thus, disrupting the first principle of the Fichte's system. However, when we concentrate on the concepts such as "impulse, driving force" in the context of our thesis, we can identify the *Anstoss* of non-I as an element in the foundation of the Absolute I as the French military force. Here, at first glance, it can be thought that I is in the direction of non-I (because of *Anstoss*), in other words, conditional and limited. Still, we must remember that in Fichte everything is imminent and based on I. Therefore, the establishment and very existence of the non-I (which may be an indicator of externality) is in the I. However, Non-I is an aspect of consciousness of I. If we go back to *Anstoss*; in this context, the impulse - *Anstoss* to lead to Germanism, can be positioned as a French military force, and we should again draw attention to the political functioning of the philosophical system in this particular concept.

As a result, although the German intellectuals and Fichte, who interpreted the French Revolution as a significant step towards the realization of freedom, took an opposite attitude shortly after the Revolution, the Revolution undoubtedly affected them in many areas and especially in their political thinking. However, as mentioned before, this effect has not evolved into a concrete political project; instead, the idea of freedom inspired by the Revolution was used by the romantics

in literature and art, while it was used by the philosophers (Fichte) for establishing their theory-systems. Thus, as often said, the Germans have realized the Revolution in the idea (in the world of ideas).

3.4.1. How Wissenschaftslehre Served / Could Serve Ideals of the Kind of Political Purposes in France?

Frederick Beiser pointed out the guiding determinations in his study,¹⁰⁴ which is also very functional in the context of our thesis, in which he questioned how Wissenschaftslehre could serve ideals of the kind of political purposes in France. In this context, it is reminiscent of the analogy established between the Wissenschaftslehre and the French Revolution, and the first one corresponded to the metaphysical and the other to political freedom. Accordingly, while the French in practice saved humanity from feudalism and despotism, Wissenschaftslehre made it possible in theory to free humanity by freeing itself from the ghost of the *thing in itself*. Therefore, Beiser said that the absolute ego of the Wissenschaftslehre, which constituted the whole truth as the “self-imposition” activity, represented the ambition of the French radicals to recreate the whole society within the principles of reason. If we recall that Fichte's system was the first system of freedom and that it was inspired by the French Revolution in establishing this rational system, Beiser's coherence of Fichte's absolute ego with the aims of French radicals seems to be consistent.

3.5. WISSENSCHAFTSLEHRE – NATIONALISM

In the first part of our thesis, we attempted to put forward how multidimensional the issue of nationalism that we are trying to deal with so that there is a wide variety of nationalism practices and hence, the theory, leading the

¹⁰⁴Beiser, F. (2017, January). *Fichte and the French Revolution*. Retrieved from The Cambridge Companion: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-companion-to-fichte/fichte-and-the-french-revolution/5244BB7CDE3BB041A9C82C5EE1557142/core-reader>. (12.09.2019)

difficulty to create a single definition of nationalism. In this direction, in joint work of Wallerstein and Balibar, namely *Race, Class, and Nation*, it has been mentioned why it was so difficult to define nationalism and it has been shown that this concept never functioned on its own and it was always included in a chain where it was both the most critical and weakest link. "This chain is constantly being enriched (the detailed modes of that enrichment varying from one language to another) with new intermediate or extreme terms: civic spirit, patriotism, populism, ethnicism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, chauvinism, imperialism, jingoism . . ." ¹⁰⁵ In this study, it was argued that it was not possible to fix each of these different concepts precisely in terms of their different uses, but their general forms could be interpreted in a very simple way. This general form emerged in the relationship between nationalism and nation: "Where the nationalism-nation relation is concerned, the core of meaning opposes a 'reality', the nation, to an 'ideology', nationalism. This relation is, however, perceived very differently by different people, since several obscure questions underlie it: Is nationalist ideology the (necessary or circumstantial) reflection of the existence of nations? Or do nations constitute themselves out of nationalist ideologies (though it may mean that these latter, having attained their 'goal', are subsequently transformed)?" ¹⁰⁶

When it comes to German nationalism in the period, we are in favor of nationalist ideology forming the nation, and we find the basis of our claim in Fichte's philosophical system within the framework of our thesis. In this respect, Fichte's system, which put the main task of the philosopher as representing reality, seems to be interpreted as a representation of the idea of nationalism as a historically constructed-imagined structure. This representation functioned as a response to the needs of German intellectuals who lacked any social status in Germany, excluded in the existing strict hierarchies, but were seeking a new identity with a desire to become a subject. In this respect, Fichte and his

¹⁰⁵ Wallerstein, I. & Balibar, E. (1991). *Race, Class, Nation*. London: Verso, p. 46.

¹⁰⁶ Wallerstein, I. & Balibar, E. (1991). *Race, Class, Nation*. London: Verso, p. 46.

philosophical system were considered as one of the main pillars of such ideologies (although not always justified), which was one of the philosophers who have adopted both nationalist ideology and later applied by advocates of other extremist ideologies in German history.

3.5.1. Wissenschaftslehre as the Philosophical Basis of the Ideology of

Nationalism

“In other words, to use the terminology proposed by Fichte in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation (Addresses to the German Nation)* of 1808, the 'external frontiers' of the state have to become 'internal frontiers' or - which amounts to the same thing - external frontiers have to be imagined constantly as a projection and protection of an internal collective personality, which each of us carries within ourselves and enables us to inhabit the space of the state as a place where we have always been - and always will be - 'at home'.”¹⁰⁷ As the ideological counterpart of this determination, the study in question emphasized that, according to the circumstances, sometimes nationalism and sometimes patriotism might come to the agenda, and the events that facilitate the construction of these ideologies or reveal their power would be listed. The origins of these ideologies will be given to the state employing political methods, namely (as Machiavelli and Gramsci pointed), “coercion” and “education”. In this respect, it would be appropriate to remember that Fichte often referred to a compulsory national education project in his *Addresses*. However, it is clear that the historical events, narratives and national training which are fictionalized within the framework of ideologies and in the ideology of nationalism, in particular, will not be enough to establish the consciousness that is intended to be built and therefore the philosophical-theoretical material will be the basis for this consciousness. In this regard, before

¹⁰⁷ Wallerstein, I. & Balibar, E. (1991). *Race, Class, Nation*. London: Verso, p. 95.

we emphasize to the reasons, we should notice that the *Wissenschaftslehre* was precisely this philosophical ground of the consciousness of nationalism.

Zizek summarized what Fichte did in the *Wissenschaftslehre* as: “[...] The absolute I designates the coincidence of being and acting (*Tat-Handlung*), it is what it does.”¹⁰⁸ This evaluation is one of the points that we aim to ground in our thesis. Fichte, in his work on the *Wissenschaftslehre*, which he proposed as a system of freedom, stated that all this theoretical work was essentially a means of trying to understand-establish what was practical-operative with a free-rational character. In this respect, the Absolute I was not merely a theoretical structure, but also was a dominant act because of self-postulation. In this respect, in our view, the Absolute I was proposed as Germanness, and Fichte frequently emphasized the establishment of national education in his *Addresses* to ensure the development of such consciousness, while on the other hand encouraging the resistance in line with the actualization of this consciousness. With the act of resistance, the Absolute I had been established, just as Germanism had postulated itself. Therefore, it would not be wrong to consider *Wissenschaftslehre* /Absolute I as a theoretical work as a basis for nationalism to be built (even if this was not the dominant motivation of Fichte when setting up the system) and to say Germanness as a structure on this ground.

Armaner argued that Fichte determined the question of “What kind of ‘I’ is the basis of our experience of the physical world functioning by the laws of causality?” as the starting point when he began to write *Wissenschaftslehre*, and Armaner established the conditions that formed this question as follows: “The philosophical line that led J.G. Fichte to ask this question was as much the result of the influence of the many historical and political elements that determined Continental Europe such as The French Revolution, the debate on university reform, Spinoza's system, German Romanticism, Sturm und Drang Movement, Kant's Critical Philosophy, Enlightenment, the weight of Leibniz-Wolff

¹⁰⁸ Slavoj Zizek, (2012). *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (First Ed.). London: Verso, p. 108.

philosophy, the process of industrialization, the position of the church and theology as his personal road.”¹⁰⁹ Armaner's answer pointed out that the conditions that made up the question were multidimensional and that the socio-political position of the period was very effective in this question.

In this context, it will be useful to draw attention to the point of causality once again (as we have discussed extensively in the context of Kant above). In this respect, Fichte put his system as a system of freedom. As Fichte explicitly pointed out, freedom could only be possible by surpassing causality-determinism, and thus subjectivity became possible. And therefore, Fichte's Absolute Subject was to be established on the condition that it settled with determinism. This settlement from the perspective of Fichte; manifested itself as to whether we should derive history and tradition from the principles we derive from causality or should we derive history and tradition in accordance with our principles (in accordance with our aims). Here, Fichte took a position in favor of rationality and said that we should evaluate these principles according to moral principles rather than deriving them from history. Because the Absolute I was the perpetrator, so much so that we should not claim that we could not do what we need to do in politics and morality, because: “Man can do what he should do; and if he says “I cannot” he really means “I do not want to”.”¹¹⁰

Fichte saw that the world was transforming; therefore, consciousness, representations, body, forms of action, political unity, theories of rights, morality, commandments, beliefs, nature, property, works of art should be positioned in a new way before the transformed world (or within it), and so “I” would transform as the world transformed. So that the world could not be experienced in the 'same' way with the metamorphosis of the 'I'. Being the first ring of a cause-effect process and placing in causal relationship would also transform the will of the person paving the way for

¹⁰⁹ Armaner, T. (Ekim 2018). *Sunuş*. Felsefi Düşün (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi) (11). p. 1.

¹¹⁰ (GA I / 1: 230). Beiser, F. cited in (2017, January). *Fichte and the French Revolution*. Retrieved from The Cambridge Companion: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-companion-to-fichte/fichte-and-the-french-revolution/5244BB7CDE3BB041A9C82C5EE1557142/core-reader>. (12.09.2019)

him to take decisions on his own in his own time. This required a new I¹¹¹.

This new I; was an absolute, constructive, and transforming agent. In other words, this new I was foreseen as a political-ethical subject, and in fact for Fichte; it coincided with a necessary situation, the reality itself; more than more than a philosophical representation. After all, the freedom of the singular was only possible through self-realization, and self-realization meant acting on the ethical-political ground. In this respect, Armaner stated that Fichte has transformed Consciousness (Bewusstsein) into a so-called archaeological site and, as he digged, he thought that he would find the political order there, that was, the order he already assumed. But ego, in this approach, was not an active entity, but provided itself as the activity itself (Ich) [Absolute I]; while provided its negation restrain itself in the physical world (Nicht-Ich) [Absolute Non-I] and both become synthesized in the self (Ich-heit). This synthesis already existed for Fichte, so the Land of Consciousness was a political region, waiting to be identified, unearthed.¹¹²

As a result, if we start from Armaner's evaluation; In Fichte's "consciousness", political order, in other words, freedom already existed principally (which had found the basis of this principle in Kant). It was not, however, complete as it was, it needed non-I (French-Frenchness) to complete it (to enable freedom) to be completed. So when the non-I (the French) emerged as limiting it in the physical world (along with the Napoleonic Occupation), freedom in principle had the opportunity to be realized in practice; in other words, Absolute (Germanness) had been put-realized which was the self-postulation-realization.

After looking at the relationship between Fichte's philosophy and the French Revolution, which was expressed as the concrete-practical example of freedom, it would be useful to return to Kant. Because it can be seen more clearly

¹¹¹ Armaner, T. (Ekim 2018). *Sunuş. Felsefi Düşün* (Akademik Felsefe Dergisi) (11). p.1

¹¹² Armaner, T. (2014). *Tarih ve Temsil*. Ankara: Dost Yayınları, p.23

how the moral ideal in Kant evolved gradually into a political ideal in Fichte after the mentioned connections were processed. In this respect, we must first say that Kant and Fichte's approaches are common in terms of "priority of end, duty, and act". In this respect, it is one of the main determinants of the systems of both philosophers to fulfill their duties as intended for a particular end. But the difference between the two systems in the context of our thesis is more striking for us. According to this, Kant spoke of the moral ideal, as mentioned above, and stated that this ideal did not fully correspond to the objective reality. However, it was stated that the will was the condition for the ideal to fully correspond to objective reality, which could be the case for the rational being, and therefore it was emphasized that being a purely rational being was not enough and that the will had to play a role. But the human will was not the perfect will of God; rather, it was incomplete compared to the will of God. There was no distinction between the actual and the ideal in God. In contrast, there was a moral duty that manifested itself in a continuous "ought" (*sollen*) style in humans, and humans had to act by attempting to attain the perfection of God's will. All these are clear indications that Kant was on an ethical level. In other words, the moral ideal of the Kantian practical field, which was simply out of mind, imposed duties and responsibilities on individuals, but these ideals did not coincide with the concrete reality and were said to be the reason individuals did not behave as willed as they should behave. It is at this stage that Fichte demonstrated the uniqueness of his philosophy in an attempt to bring this moral ideal to a political ideal. As we have already stated, he deemed it appropriate not only to compare the principles and historical, social reality (as Kant did) but to design and construct historical-objective reality in a proper way. Hence, Kant's free-character but morally limited subject evolved into the perpetrator who intervened in history with objective reality, determining and establishing it personally, which paved the way for Kant's moral ideal to transform into a political ideal. By all means, these two systems were based on the imagination of the free and rational world. However, the conclusion that this imagination has turned into objective reality was that the system of Fichte was closer to the political one.

CONCLUSION

In our study, we aimed at examining the relationship between Wissenschaftslehre, which was proposed by Fichte, and the German nationalism of that period. To realize this aim, we attempted to elaborate on how nationalism was established historically, what it meant, and on this basis, what the internal and external dynamics of German nationalism might be. At this point, we investigated both the philosophical foundations of the philosophy of the 19th century - the birth age of German nationalism- philosopher Fichte's proposal of system both in terms of its basis through idealism (Kant-freedom) and dogmatism-necessity debate and the social-historical conditions (especially the French Revolution) in which this philosophy was born. Within this philosophical and political background, we have concluded that Wissenschaftslehre could have served as the basis for nationalism.

In establishing his system, Fichte identified rationality and freedom as the fundamental notions of this system. In this respect, we find it meaningful to mention Fichte's concept of freedom; to emphasize his relations with Sartre, Ernst Bloch and Machiavelli regarding his approach to this notion, to point out some of the commonalities we have observed here, and to emphasize other questions that would result from contemplating these philosophers together.

Fichte considered the essence of the individual as the process of self-construction, which preceded 20th-century existentialists. According to this view, the self-realizing individual could only take place within the state because the state could only organize the physical conditions of this. Here Fichte expressed the importance of economic organization and the political perspective that would enable it to meet the needs of everyone without favoring interests of any group in his *Closed Commercial State*. Therefore, it is clear that the new political-economic structuring and a new subjectivity (the nation) to construct this subjectivity would require a new idea (nationalism) to construct this subjectivity, which was not possible in the then feudal-despotist order.

From this point of view, we would like to draw attention to *construction and representation* as the key features of Fichte's philosophy through Sartre. Just

as in Fichte, Sartre's history was a history in which wars, social disintegration, more clearly a profound political crisis prevailed, and the philosophies on this ground were generally based on such a basis; it brought the issue to an ontological framework, rather than an ethical-political basis, which brought the problem of freedom to a problem of being. Therefore, the meaning of freedom that needed to be built coincided with the restoration of the human being (fragmented-threatened), and the discussion of freedom corresponded to the ontological re-establishment of a kind of human category.

In this context, Sartre's stating that existence precedes essence within the framework of the existence-essence relationship and arguing that the basis of this existence in freedom is the points that we want to emphasize in connection with Fichte philosophy. Within this framework, freedom for Sartre was only possible under the condition of the existence preceding essence. After all, the man was an entity that builds his own essence by his own free actions. While being born with essence, and being in a determination and algebra are opposed to its freedom, (human) existence is an opportunity for the formation of the essence on the other hand. Here it is clear that the definition of human (ontology) is necessary, inherent, conditional on freedom (which is a political concept). While establishing human existence with politics is something we have known since Aristotle (*zoon politikon*), some fractures in the history of civilization-philosophy (such as modernism) have made this constitutive relationship ambiguous and even forgotten. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the philosopher from the 19th century, Fichte to the 20th century philosopher, Sartre had in common with establishing human ontology through political act from two different positions, which represented almost two opposite points in the history of philosophy, namely Idealism and Existentialism.

When we examine the Fichte-Sartre relationship based on difference, human, who is in a state of self-realization, was expected to do so by continually acting in his life. Still, this freedom, unlike Sartre, also envisaged a universal principle in Fichte. In this respect, when we think from Fichte's point of view, this self-build/self-realization carried a two-dimensional character. Because here,

the *self* ("positing self"- self in self-realization) referred to both universality and particularity at the same time, and accordingly, there was no conflict and contradictory good between these two and freedom. Identity was the complete identification of universal and particular in good, in end, and in freedom. In this respect, the fact that we do not observe such a universal principle in Sartre also points to the primary distinction of these two philosophies (idealism-existentialism). Sartre, on the other hand, based his conception of freedom on the principle of priority of existence on the essence and at the same time, on the idea of the absence of God. Using God in a broader sense would mean that human was left alone; neither support within which it could get, nor it had anybody to turn to; there would be no apology and support anymore. For Fichte, however, there was a basis on which an essence took place. This was referred to as a "principle" (Absolute I), and this principle was to fulfill its responsibility-duty in the universal. For particular, this meant; establishing freedom through actualization of potential- self-realization.

According to Sartre, on the other hand, we, the people, have chosen not for ourselves but also for all humanity while making choices. According to him, the choice of humans meant choosing all humanity. That's why when we create anyone we want to be, we also determine how everyone should be. Because according to him, all acts of humans do affect humanity. The fact that the person who chooses himself also chooses all humanity has increased his responsibility as much. Thus, people's choices, since all humanity is concerned, carry responsibility for both himself and all humanity. Because according to Sartre, individual acts bound all humanity, which meant that I was responsible not only for myself but also for everyone. When I was responsible for myself, I was responsible for everyone. I was setting up a specific human project that I've chosen, so I was choosing humans when I chose myself.

At this point, we see Sartre associating particular with a universal category (human) through "responsibility". In this respect, it should be noted that responsibility was the tool for the relation of the particular to the universal in

Fichte though, it stood as a relation that started from the "principle," rather than a relationship based on this particular, just as in Sartre.

As we can see from the points mentioned above, there are significant commonalities between Fichte and Sartre. If we remember that these two figures had witnessed great wars in their periods, it is not surprising that they determined freedom in times of war, political assignment, responsibility, self-thought, and ontology as a sum of these points as the central theme of their philosophy. However, it is striking that how one of these two philosophers, who had many common points in terms of self-realization and positing freedom as a basic motive, could be made a tool on the road to totalitarianism. In this context, the subject of this deviation is an important research subject.

Another philosopher we would like to mention in the context of Fichte is Ernst Bloch because we think it would be useful to consider the concept of "Ontology of Not-Yet Being" which constituted the base of his work *The Principle of Hope*. This ontology; was the ontology of the probable possibility that could be realized within the historical experience through action, which could be derived from the intention. In this regard, Bloch, who considered Hope as a political theme-principle, stated that a revolutionary political act was conditional on daydreams, a conscious-systematic Hope, and a principle in this notion consisted of a new category called "not-yet-being". This category of Bloch corresponded to the proposition of Fichte that we ought not to claim we cannot do what we need to do in politics and morality, in fact, Human can do what he ought to do, which was the duty of perpetrator Absolute I. In this respect, Bloch, like Fichte, did not establish a political life with the existing conditions, necessities-conditions of the present, but emphasized the necessity of positing a life that was not (yet) existing but being dreamt (Bloch) and represented (Fichte), or the "duty" with Fichte's word.

On the other hand, we must emphasize that Hope in Bloch was not a source of reassurance but a venture, and in this sense, only Human was capable of Hope. In this respect, it is remarkable that Bloch seems to have fused ontology and politics to base his human existence-ontology on Hope, which he put as a

political-determining element. Fichte, similarly- with different conceptual means-based in his system that the self-positing- self-realizing I was also free, and therefore that freedom and existence (political and ontology) were inseparable elements.

So far, we have attempted to think of Fichte together with Sartre and Bloch, but in the history of philosophy, of course, Fichte's name was most often associated with Machiavelli. The effect of the lack of political unity of the 16th-century Italy and the 19th-century Germany, and the similarities in the socio-economic problems of the two states, which can be seen as extensions of it, and the formation of these two philosophies under close circumstances, cannot be ignored in this association. In this respect, the views of Fichte and Machiavelli, who have lived under similar social conditions, based on common concerns, were often compared. In this context, this is an appropriate approach. Here we would like to draw attention to the proximity between these two philosophies, the similar tendencies in these philosophies, and the parallels between the *Wissenschaftslehre* and the *Prince*.

According to Machiavelli, free choice and fate behaved like two vectors that resisted each other, and resistance to the mechanical imperative of fate or nature could only be achieved by political action. Here, Machiavelli's putting forward the mechanical necessity of nature, in other words, causality and creating the possibility of freedom through political virtue, and Fichte's attempt to overcome the causality created by Kant's *thing in itself* and to overcome it with political-ethical act resemble each other. In this respect, political virtue emerged as a regulatory principle that only a person who was an element of a political whole could open space within nature with this principle, and only with this virtue could he establish his own free time against the necessary flow of time. Therefore, the Prince, who could take measures for the obstacles produced by fate and take the basis of his political will from this ability, would be able to do so. In act, the Prince can be interpreted as a regulatory and executive "principle", which determines the virtue of the nation and members of the nation. In our opinion,

precisely what Fichte attempted to do with Wissenschaftslehre corresponds to such motivation.

Moreover, in the *Prince's*¹¹³ XXV. chapter, Machiavelli while speculating on how human activity could resist against 'fate' stated that fate showed its power where there was no virtue regulated to resist him. Undoubtedly, what Machiavelli mentioned here; was a mundane, untranscended, secular fate. In other words, this modern subjectivity, referred to the "nation" at the political level. On the other hand; "Machiavelli derived an anthropology of indeterminacy from the variable character of human. Policy ought to establish freedom on this basis. Freedom did not send to an inner layer like free will in Machiavelli. As Arendt pointed in the 'Crisis of Culture', freedom (virtu) for Machiavelli is the ability of human virtuos to respond to the opportunities that the world opens to him in the form of Fortuna. Virtu is not a moral but a political concept."¹¹⁴ Thus, as we have found in Fichte as well, Machiavelli replaced the ethical agent with the political agent, and perhaps, in fact, made the distinction between ethics and politics invalid in the context of actuality, will, and freedom. In this context, the nestedness of ethics and politics in Fichte and Machiavelli made such a distinction questionable, and the necessity of processing the ethic-political distinction that they had ambiguated in their philosophies in contrast to the dominant opinion of the two philosophers' philosophies has been revealed. We would also like to emphasize that we find this point entirely meaningful.

In our study, while focusing on the relationship between Fichte's philosophical system which was designed as a system of freedom and nationalism which was one of the the carrier-founding idea of modern-capitalist system, we also attempted to underline the philosophy and the historicity of thought, especially in the context of relationship between Fichte, Sartre, Bloch, and Machiavelli who had similar motives. These philosophies are the product of an atmosphere in which war and political crisis prevailed so that the "re-establishing" or "establishing" imposed itself as a basic needs everywhere since the existing

¹¹³ See: Machiavelli, N. (2019). *Prens*. (K. Atakay, Trans.). İstanbul: Can Yayınları.

¹¹⁴ Bumin, T. (2014). "Machiavelli Okumaları". Collective, & C. B. Akal (Edit.) in, *Machiavelli, Makyavelizm ve Modernite*. Ankara: Dost yayınları, p. 86.

was solved and/or no longer functioning. In the field of life, where all kinds of material boundaries were destroyed (not only the bodies), the limits became ambiguous in thought also, and this could open up a more free space for questioning and re-thinking of these "stables". In this respect, such historicities do destroy not only the geography, states, bodies but also make the existing dogmas, "causality" and the indicators of legitimacy interrogable.

In this context, both in the subject-nature relationship and the descriptive and qualitative indicators in the inter-subjective relations find themselves in ambiguity, uncertainty, ontological turbidity-insecurity. Therefore, new subjectivities will only be possible with a new ontology or a with a re-ontology. Because ontology established through a stable subject-object dilemma is solved precisely from these elements in war and deep political crises. Therefore, the attempt to develop a new subjectivity - in other words, the need for a new policy also coincides with the establishment of the lost ontology. In a way, it is necessary. From this point of view, we can interpret the concept of ontology and politics as a "collective category" instead of two separate categories. On the other hand, the unity ontology-politics, in other words, undissociatedness, stands out in the politics and ethics relationship as well. However, in times of war and political crisis in which all kinds of particularity, particular act, and ethics as a category are erased, in a sense, it is possible to establish ethics at the same time as political duty, so that almost no ethical concepts can be posited independent of politics while these two concepts can be merged in a way that they can be used interchangeably.

We have attempted to express that the "independent-stable" situations of ethics and ontology are suspicious in the face of politics, and we have pointed out that the philosophies that we refer to reinforce this suspicion in terms of the conditions in which they are formed. In support of this, Marx stated that on the basis of the existence of class societies, the determinations of the existing could no longer be considered independent from the political. In the context of our thesis, we can say that this is a decisive point to be dealt with and is a subject worth studying.

In our opinion, proper evaluation of philosophies of Communist Bloch, Fichte - Machiavelli, who were positioned as paving the way for Totalitarianism, and Sartre, who based his philosophy on particular freedom-existence, is quite critical. It is remarkable how some of these philosophies based on freedom, contained extremes in the opposite direction on the practical field, and what were the reasons for it. In this respect, although we think that these philosophies together would be a good way to determine the sources of historical results-totalitarianism with which we do not wish to mention, we believe that the works to be carried out within this framework will be valuable not only on the intellectual basis but also on the political level.

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