

Edward Said and Michel Foucault: Representation of the Notion of Discourse in Colonial Discourse Theory¹

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Received: 30/05/2018

Accepted: 14/04/2019

Abstract

Edward Said is regarded as the originator of colonial discourse theory. He deploys Michel Foucault's notion of *discourse* to accomplish his project in Orientalism and emphasizes Foucault's notion of discourse and its relation to power, rendering discourse a carceral system. Although Said explicitly expresses the similarity between Orientalism and Foucault's discourse theory, it seems he implicitly suggests that the carceral quality of Foucault's idea affects his formulation of Orientalism. This study examines the validity of Said's understanding of Foucault and shows that Said's construction of Orientalism is based on an imperfect image of Foucault. Argument here is to postulate that Foucault's discourse theory provides space for resistance and his theorization of power helps the idea of struggle in discursive practices. Besides, Foucault himself is trapped in a discourse produced by Said. This study casts light on Foucault's theory of discourse and modifies this misreading.

Keywords: Edward Said; Colonial Discourse Theory; Michel Foucault; Discourse; Power

The parallel between Foucault's carceral system and Orientalism is striking. For as a discourse Orientalism, like all discourses, is composed of signs, but what they [discourses] do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this 'more' that renders them irreducible to the language and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe.

(Edward Said, 1983, p. 222)

¹Please cite this paper as follows:

Moosavinia, S. R., Racevskis, K., & Talebi Sarokolaei, S. (2019). Edward Said and Michel Foucault: Representation of the notion of discourse in colonial discourse theory. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 182-197.

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1. Introduction

Edward Said is known as one of the pioneer figures of postcolonial studies, alongside Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and he is often considered as the originator of the colonial discourse theory (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2008). Said borrows the notion of *discourse* from Foucault in order to formulate his theory. To put it simply, Foucault defines “discourse” as a system of statements “by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledges, disciplines and values upon dominated groups” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, p. 37). Said deploys discourse to portray the system of statements that is created surrounding the East and to reveal the function of this discursive system. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2008) define the colonial discourse theory as a “theory which analyses the discourse of colonialism and colonization” and “demonstrates the way in which such discourse obscures the underlying political and material aims of colonization” (p. 15). Said explores the discourse via which the West fabricates and dominates the Oriental and how it paves the way for colonization.

Said, in his early writings, admires Foucault’s philosophical innovations and, then, goes beyond mere appreciation and uses Foucauldian notions in *Orientalism*. Although Said uses the concept of discourse and clearly acknowledges his indebtedness to Foucault in *Orientalism*, he distances from Foucault in his later writings. Said shows his dissatisfaction with the Foucauldian notion of discourse by maintaining that Foucault annihilates the possibility of resistance and change through the way in which Foucault connects discourse to power. Once a “Foucault champion,” Said turns into a critic of his favorite thinker for what Said regards as “political quietism” in Foucault’s thinking (Legg, 2007, p. 269). The current study is concerned with exploring the path Said takes on treating Foucault and examining the way Said criticizes Foucault based on the idea of discourse. This study aims to assess Said’s reflections on Foucauldian theory of discourse. Our analysis shows that Said’s representation of Foucault’s idea of discourse lacks enough accuracy and that the former does not take the systemic formulation of discourse into careful consideration. Thus, we survey Said’s approach towards Foucault and begin our study with his appreciation and deployment of Foucauldian ideas and, then, we consider Said’s criticism of Foucault’s discourse. We continue our study by discussing Foucault’s theory of discourse based on Saidian criticism and present our findings.

2. A “Foucault Champion”: Said’s Appreciation and Deployment

Said’s appreciation of Foucault’s ideas can be traced back to 1972. In his article “*Michel Foucault as an Intellectual Imagination*,” Said shows enthusiasm for Foucault’s theories and admires him. He refers to Foucault as “a very brilliant writer” because of his novel philosophical methodology (p. 1). This article becomes a part of

Beginnings (1975) in which Said devotes a chapter to structuralism and poststructuralism and it contains the same admirations. In *Beginnings*, Foucault is admired and acknowledged as “the founder of a new field of research” who “created a mental domain—not history, nor philosophy, but ‘archaeology’ and ‘discourse’—and a new habit of thought, a set of rules for knowledge to dominate truth” (Said, 1975, p. 291). In Said’s view, Foucault establishes a new way of exploring history of ideas and his writings contain brilliant insights and “he gives the impression nonetheless of having experienced at first-hand every one of the books he has read” (p. 294).

Said, then, is more serious in his appropriation in his next book and deploys Foucauldian notions. He borrows Foucault’s notion of discourse to accomplish his project in writing *Orientalism*. There, he confesses that he is “greatly indebted” to Foucault (Said, 1978, p. 23). Said brings three interdependent definitions for Orientalism: First, Orientalism as an academic discipline organized and produced by academic institutions (1978). Second, Orientalism as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’ which is employed by philosophers, economists, poets, and novelists as a basic distinction between East and West for their works” (p. 2). And third and finally, “Orientalism as a discourse” (p. 3). The analysis of the colonial discourse theory is mostly concerned with the third definition. Said believes that “Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule . . . colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism” (1978, p. 39). Said clearly declares his indebtedness and acknowledges Foucault’s influence in the introduction of *Orientalism* by saying that:

I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault’s notion of a discourse, as described by him in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*, to identify Orientalism. My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. (p. 3)

Said uses discourse because it enables him to “move away from a narrow and technical understanding of colonial authority and show how it functioned by producing a ‘discourse’ about the Orient” (Loomba, 2015, p. 63). He borrows this insight from Foucault to construct his own standpoint and to bring power and cultural affiliations of Orientalism into light.

3. Carceral System: Said's Orientalism or Foucault's Discourse?

Said deploys Foucault's notion of discourse to depict the structure of Orientalism. However, he believes that Orientalism:

Shares with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are because they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter. (Said, 1978, p. 70).

In Said's idea, it is not possible to penetrate and change the formulation of Orientalism. Thus, he sees it as a repressive Western structure and a closed system whereby subjects are trapped for all time.

Furthermore, in his later writings, he repeatedly states that Foucault's theory of discourse and the way he connects it to power makes Foucault's idea similar to a prison system. He comments on Foucault's theory of power on different occasions; Foucault is shown as a thinker who is obsessed with power and trapped in a carceral system (Racevskis, 2005). It can be clearly observed that he changes his position from an admirer of Foucault and a person who deploys Foucauldian thought to a critic of Foucault. Said's conception about Foucault's theory of discourse and its relation to power is the central issue of our discussion.

In "*Foucault and the Imagination of Power*," an article Said publishes in 1986, he argues that Foucault depicts "an unremitting and unstoppable expansion of power" (p. 150) that occurs everywhere. Power is a conquering, infinitely detailed, and ever-expanding force with inevitable domination. He adds:

Many of the people who admire and have learned from Foucault, including myself, have commented on the undifferentiated power he seemed to ascribe to modern society. With this profoundly pessimistic view went also a singular lack of interest in the force of effective resistance to it, in choosing particular sites of intensity, choices which, we see from the evidence on all sides, always exist and are often successful in impeding, if not actually stopping, the progress of tyrannical power. (p. 151)

Said continues his criticism by asserting that whereas Foucault is "right in showing how discourse . . . translates struggle or systems of domination" (p. 153), Foucault is not willing to give credit to counterdiscursive action. Foucault's "unmodulated minimization of resistance" provokes other "alternative consciousness allied to emergent and alternative subaltern groups within the dominant discursive society" (p. 154). Said sees Foucault as a thinker who is obsessed with the idea of

domination that imagines everything in a carceral and disciplinary system and considers resistance as something futile and impossible (Racevskis, 2005).

In *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Said contends that Foucault does not regard the uses of power. Foucault is reluctant to explore the way authorities retain power and how and why power is gained and used (Said, 1983). Foucault theorizes a carceral power because he cannot process the changes in the course of history. Said continues:

Foucault's theory of power is a Spinozist conception, which has captivated not only Foucault himself but many of his readers The trouble is that Foucault's theory has drawn a circle around itself, constituting a unique territory in which Foucault has imprisoned himself and others with him. (p. 245)

He asserts that Foucault leaves no hope to change power structures and he portrays a carceral system in which power "imprisoned" him and his readers and this justifies Foucault's passivity and inaction in the political domain. Said feels regretful about the dominance of Foucault's theories in *Orientalism* by saying that "the parallel between Foucault's carceral system and Orientalism is striking" (p. 222). Thus, Said thinks that using Foucault's ideas overruled his project and made Orientalism a closed system.

In an interview with Neeladri Bhattacharya, Suvir Kaul, and Ania Loomba, Said briefly explains his assertions about Foucault in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* and elaborates on why he finds Foucault's power insufficient. In response to Loomba's question that why he thinks Foucauldian power is not productive for political criticism, he replies that "there's never any doubt in your mind when you pick up one of his books that power is going to win out in the end. So that the whole idea of resistance is really essentially defeated from the start" (Said, 2002, p. 9).

In the epigraph that we brought from Said's *The World, the Text, and the Critic* in the beginning of this study, he explicitly states that his formulation of Orientalism and Foucault's discourse are similar to prison systems and it seems he implicitly suggests that his deployment of Foucault's discourse theory affects Orientalism. His idea derives from a logical reasoning and its natural consequence:

- P1. Foucault's discourse theory is structured as a prison.
- P2. Said constructs Orientalism based on Foucault's discourse theory (Saidian conception of Foucauldian notion of discourse).
- P1+2. Orientalism is structured as a prison.

This reasoning can be regarded valid if we assume the first proposition right. However, the validity of the first proposition should be taken into consideration. We

may ask two questions: (1) Is it true that Foucault's discourse theory is structured as a carceral system? (2) Does this turn Orientalism to a closed system?

However, here, we attempt to examine the validity of the first proposition. It appears that Said's understanding of Foucault's theorization of discourse and its mechanisms lacks coherence: Said constructs Orientalism in the image of Foucault's discourse that he has in mind, but this image is not as accurate as what he thinks. The situation is quite opposite in two ways: Not only Foucault's discourse is not similar to a prison system, but also Foucault himself is a captive of a discourse that is produced by Said.

4. Foucault in Prison: "Postcolonial Foucault Discourse"

Nichols's (2010) study, *"Postcolonial Studies and the Discourse of Foucault: Survey of a Field of Problematization,"* surveys the deployment and interpretation of Foucault's ideas in postcolonial studies. On the one hand, he studies the practice of Foucauldian discourse analysis in the postcolonial theory and, on the other hand, he considers the way Foucault, as an intellectual figure, is presented in the writings of postcolonial theorists. Nichols traces Foucault and the deployment of his ideas within the postcolonial theory. He is neither concerned with "saving 'Foucault' from an inadequate or unfaithful set of interpreters" nor "to castigate postcolonial theorists for reading Foucault 'improperly'; rather, it is to ask, why Foucault? Or rather, which Foucault?" (pp. 118-119).

Nichols (2010) studies Foucault's influence and his importance for the postcolonial theory in terms of discourse and production of knowledge, as well as politics and ethics. But our concern is with the second part of his article in which he discusses the way Said sets much of the tone of Foucault's reception and explores Said's use of Foucauldian ideas. Nichols (2010) believes that Said's treatment of Foucault has three significant effects:

First, it secured Foucault's place as a central figure in the postcolonial theory; second, it linked Foucault's place within the field to the notion of discourse; and third, it provided an authoritative reading of Foucauldian discourse as a 'textual attitude' or a system of textual representation. (p. 120).

Nichols (2010) reviews Homi Bhabha, Aijaz Ahmad, Gayatri Spivak, Robert Young, and Said's own later reformulations to evaluate the perceptions of postcolonial theorists on Foucault.

To be more specific, alongside critiques that Nichols (2010) archives from different theorists on Said, what makes Nichols's (2010) study remarkable is that he recognizes that Said's "Foucault," or rather the Saidian misreading of Foucault, is

repeated in the works of Bhabha, Spivak, and even later writings of Said in a way that they created a “postcolonial Foucault discourse” (p. 139). It stifled these authors’ understanding of Foucauldian philosophy and, accordingly, limited their scope of research in the postcolonial theory that was solely done through discourse analysis. The problem which is posed by Nichols (2010) is that:

Foucault himself has become a discourse—at least, in the Saidian sense of the term: a tradition of representation held together by the linguistic iterations within a specified domain of study, rather than any truth-value in relation to an external referent. (p. 139).

Although a correct representation of Foucault is not the central concern of Nichols, it is the problem that we attempt to tackle here. It would be useful to bring some examples from secondary sources to understand what Nichols (2010) means by “postcolonial Foucault discourse” (p. 23) and to see that Said’s specter is still alive in postcolonial theorists. Walia’s concise book *Edward Said and the Writing of History* (1997) is a study on Said that portrays his thoughts and shows the way Said adopted the ideas of Foucault, Gramsci, Chomsky, and Fanon. Walia surveys the deployment of power/knowledge and discourse in *Orientalism* that enabled Said to mix older Marxist tradition with discourse analysis. Then, she evaluates Foucault’s impact on the construction of *Orientalism*. Walia (1997) states that:

[W]hile Foucault is keenly interested in offering a theory of domination, the ‘contestatory’ or ‘oppositional’ aspect of social forces is absent from his thinking. Struggles are conducted for evolving and producing a system of discourse, but Foucault cares little for the success of counterdiscursive practices. Insofar as resistance strategies are concerned, Said upholds the relevance of Antonio Gramsci and Raymond Williams. (p. 30)

It is evident that Walia repeats a Saidian way of thinking that Foucault does not care much about resistance. Said affects the original theorist as well as scholars of postcolonial studies.

Ashcroft and Ahluwalia’s *Edward Said* (2008) is a comprehensive study on Said’s ideas. They survey his ideas in detail and bring different views in favor of and against Said’s projects. Although they provide a good account of Said’s methodological errors and reveal his inaccurate deployment of Foucault’s concept of discourse and the idea of representation in *Orientalism*, they are in total agreement with Said’s critique of Foucault regarding resistance and declare:

The problem Said has with Foucault is a lingering sense that he is more fascinated with the way power operates than committed to

trying to change power relations in society. Foucault's conception of power, as something which operates at every level of society, leaves no room for resistance. Said characterizes it as a 'conception [which] has drawn a circle around itself, constituting a unique territory in which Foucault has imprisoned himself and others with him.' Said's intention, on the contrary, is not to be trapped but to articulate the potential to resist and recreate. (p. 65)

They reproduce the stereotyped Foucault and see him through Said's eyes. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia reflect the image that Said creates and help perpetuate a certain discourse about Foucault. On Foucault's conception of resistance, they keep company with Said without further examination of this issue. It can be seen through these examples that the idea Said establishes in his later writings on Foucault is reproduced and circulated, even in the present time.

5. Foucault: Discourse, Power, and Resistance

What does Foucault mean by discourse? Discourse has conceptual varieties that, accordingly, influence the approaches of discourse analysis; it is usually defined in contrast to other terms such as text, sentence, and ideology (Mills, 2004). Foucault defines discourse against ideology. However, it should be remembered that Foucault's theorization is not merely a reaction to ideology and that he adds his own definition. Mills (2004) argues that Foucault characterizes discourse "in dialogue with and in reaction to the definition of ideology" (p. 28). Foucault rejects the concept of ideology based on three reasons:

The notion of ideology appears to me to be difficult to use for three reasons. The first is that, whether one wants it to be or not, it is always in virtual opposition to something like the truth The second inconvenience is that it refers, necessarily I believe, to something like a subject. Thirdly, ideology is in a secondary position in relation to something which must function as the infrastructure or economic or material determinant for it. (1980a, p. 118)

Foucault reasons that ideology is a biased concept. When one refers to an idea as ideology, he or she usually regards him or herself in the position of truth. In addition, it is a solid and fixed phenomenon. Also, it is the production of an infrastructure and it is not productive and constitutive in itself. On the other hand, Foucault uses "discourse" for its lack of "any alliance to a clear political agenda" (Mills, 2004, p. 26). For Foucault, discourse is a value-free and neutral concept. It allows interaction and change through force relations. Besides, it is constitutive and

constituted at the same time; it can shape our knowledge and can be analyzed as a phenomenon, too.

Foucault brings three definitions for describing discourse in *Archaeology of Knowledge*. According to Foucault, “discourse” is “the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (p. 90). By “the general domain of all statements,” Foucault means “discourse” can refer to all utterances and statements which produce meaning and have some effect. In addition, he employs the term for “individualizable groups of statements” that are utterances which create special classes or groups, such as the discourse of femininity or the discourse of racism. The discourse of Orientalism can be classified in this category. And, “regulated practices that account for a number of statements” refers to unwritten rules and structures which produce particular utterances and statements (Mills, 2005, p. 53).

He clarifies his definition by saying that discourse includes “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 2002, p. 54). Foucault means discourse should be seen as something which shapes our understanding and puts boundaries on our perception. He argues that discourse constrains one’s field of vision and excludes a wide range of phenomena from being considered as real or as worthy of attention, or as even existing (Mills, 2004). It is a common feature for all of us. Discourse is in “an active relation to reality” and does not simply reflect the outer reality, but it constructs our perception (Fairclough, 1992, p. 42). It should be remembered that Foucault’s approach to the construction of reality through discourse is not value-laden and it is different from ideology.

To understand Foucault’s theory of discourse, we should consider its relation to power because power has a critical role in its formulation. Foucault’s discourse theory cannot be separated from Foucault’s arguments on power (Blommaert, 2005). He departs from the traditional definition of power and challenges the long-standing assumptions of Western tradition about power. Foucault’s concern is “what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable, and hence capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures” (1980a, p. 112). In other words, Foucault’s project aims to analyze the structure of discourse and what controls it. He unveils the “regime of truth” and the “general politics of truth” which control, select, and organize knowledge (1980a, p. 131).

Foucault (1978) describes the relation between power and discourse by the “rule of the tactical polyvalence of discourses” (p. 110). He reasons that “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together. And for this very reason, we

must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable.” Discourses should not be divided based on the accepted/excluded binary opposition because they are always in struggle and “a multiplicity of discursive elements . . . can come into play in various strategies” (p. 110). Subjects encounter in discourses with their power relations. Discourses are those fields of “the multiplicity of force relations” which are in “ceaseless struggles and confrontations” (p. 92).

He declares history shows us that discourse is not a one-way path from the powerful to the powerless and reveals that struggle permanently exists within relations (Mills, 2004). Discourse is a battlefield of different voices that are constantly in struggle and they compete with, oppose, and resist each other. Foucault (1978) states that:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it . . . there is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations. (pp. 100-102)

Therefore, as Fairclough (1992) puts it, “power struggle” is “over the determination of discursive practices” (p. 51). Discourses are in permanent struggle with other discourses and other social practices (Mills, 2004). They are not closed systems once and for all; they can be altered and reversed by other sites of power. They are the battleground of society wherein power relations occur.

As can be understood, discourse in itself guarantees the possibility of change and resistance. Foucault’s formulation of discourse depicts that discourses are always in struggle and they challenge each other. Even without considering power and its influence on discourse, which will be discussed in the paragraphs ahead, Said’s reflections on Foucauldian discourse appears to be inaccurate and invalid. Alongside discourses that provide space for conflict and resistance for individuals, Foucault’s formulation of power and resistance widens the scope of resistive action, too.

Understanding Foucauldian theorization of power helps a better perception about the possibility of struggle in discursive practices. Power has the central role in Foucault’s philosophy and we should be aware of the difference between Foucauldian

and its classical definition in political philosophy. His theorization challenges the common and regular thinking about power and reveals new aspects ignored in Western thought.

What Foucault (1978) defines as “juridico-discursive” (p. 83) understanding of power is a common and long-standing mindset on power rooted in the history of the Western mind. He describes this mindset by five main characteristics: First, “the negative relation” which means power works merely through “the general form of limit and lack” (p. 83). Second, “the insistence of the rule” that suggests power operates in “the form of a rule or law” based on a binary system (Lynch, 2011, p. 17). The third one is “the cycle of prohibition” that claims “power employs nothing more than a law of prohibition” (Foucault, 1978, p. 84). Fourth, “the logic of censorship” which proposes power acts in “three forms: affirming that such a thing is not permitted, preventing it from being said, denying that it exists” (p. 84). Fifth and finally is “the uniformity of the apparatus” which means power functions in a “uniform and comprehensive manner” which refers to “mechanisms of law, taboo, and censorship” (p. 84). Foucault mentions another feature of the classic juridical theory of power in *Society Must Be Defended*, one of his courses delivered at the College de France. He calls this feature “economism” and argues that in classical definition, power is regarded as a right which can be possessed like a commodity and it can be transferred through juridical act (2003, p. 13). He maintains that all these features are common in the classic understanding of power.

On the other hand, Foucault challenges all these assumptions. In Foucault’s perspective, power is not a possession. It is not something that is “acquired, seized, or shared” (1978, p. 94). Power is not a commodity which one can exclusively possess and one cannot have it (Foucault, 2003). Power is not an entity that is acquired based on economic or legal positions. Individuals do not possess or receive power, but it is something that we perform in a particular context and it is not limited to the state or the government (Mills, 2005). As Lynch (2011) expresses, power can be found in all social interactions.

Foucault (2003) postulates that power is a “relationship of force” that is not basically economic (p. 15). It should be considered as a chain or as a net, a system of relations that spreads throughout the society and occurs between individuals and cannot be localized (Kelly, 2014). Power is that “multiplicity of force relations” that is in “ceaseless struggles and confrontations” (Foucault, 1978, p. 92). These relations are always in flux and they are not stable. The key idea is that “power is not a substance but a relation” (Kelly, 2014, p. 88).

Another feature of Foucault's definition that is different from the classic assumption is that power is not destructive, but affirmative and positive. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) asserts that:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: It "excludes," it "represses," it "censors," it "abstracts," it "masks," it "conceals." In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (p. 194)

Foucault does not consider power as essentially repressive sets of relations. As Gutting (2005) puts it, power has a "positive epistemic role" in Foucault's idea (p. 51). Power should not be seen as something evil because it does not force and prevent us by merely saying no. It is a productive network that forms truth and knowledge and runs through the social body, rather than a repressive mechanism (Foucault, 1980a, p. 119). Besides, power relations are not evil because they perpetually exist in different kinds of relations such as kinship, family, and sexuality, and they do not employ particular evil agent to be performed in social body, but the whole network is included in power relations (Simons, 2013).

Foucault (1978) adds more detail to his theorization of power by elaborating on what he does not mean by power. He did not connect power exclusively to state and government; power is not bound to any institution or a rule of law. He asserts that power should not be seen as the dominance of a group over others or sets of relations between the oppressed and the oppressor. His analytics considers power as an entity that operates within everyday relations between people and institutions.

Foucault clearly states that to be subject to power relations does not necessarily entail domination because resistance is always in conjunction with power. In his perspective, power does not mean total domination and it does not eliminate subjects' freedom of action. He asserts:

It seems to me that power is 'always already there,' that one is never 'outside' it. But this does not entail the necessity of accepting an inescapable form of domination or an absolute privilege on the side of the law. To say that one can never be 'outside' power does not mean that one is trapped and condemned to defeat no matter what. (1980b, pp. 141-142)

Foucault (1978) maintains that "where there is power there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (p. 95). Resistance also exists in our relations where power exists.

He considers resistance as a practical possibility within power and freedom as an aspect of power relations (Simons, 2013). It means that it is not possible to escape power in itself because resistance to any particular strategy is a necessary condition of power relations. Resistance is “written in” to the exercise of power (Mills, 2005, p. 40). For Foucault, the very attempt of resistance itself must be regarded as an expression of power (Feder, 2011, p. 63). To understand this point better, we should regard power and resistance both as force relations: We name the greater force *power* and the marginal ones *resistance*.

Resistance occurs because relations are mobile and changing and they do not “solidify into states of domination” and subjects may develop different types of relations based on their freedom (Simons, 2013, p. 309). Power relations are always fragmented and not unified, and competing with each other. Furthermore, the limits of power relations themselves make resistance always possible. All the structures of power reach their limit when people prefer to revolt and accept the risk of death, rather than obeying the system. In this situation, power relations are at their limits and authorities can no longer do anything.

Foucault sees power, resistance, and freedom alongside each other. Regarding freedom, he states that “in the relations of power, there is necessarily the possibility of resistance, for if there were no possibility of resistance, there would be no relations of power”; “there cannot be relations of power unless the subjects are free . . . [I]f there are relations of power throughout every social field it is because there is freedom everywhere” (as cited in Lynch, 2011, pp. 24-25). Freedom is not only the opposite of being under a dominant power or to be in power relation, but also it should be understood as a characteristic of a human subject who can deploy a strategy for or against others. Thus, Foucault not only formulates power and resistance in conjunction with each other, but he also places freedom as a necessary element of power relations.

6. Said’s Methodological Error

It would be helpful to briefly touch upon the methodological basis of Said’s view that leads him to mistakenly conclude that Foucault does not regard resistance in discursive formations. It can be said that two overlapping issues probably have led to Said’s methodological error: (1) different perspectives of Said and Foucault on power and (2) Said’s combination of Gramsci and Foucault.

Racevskis (2005) argues that Said and Foucault approach the question of power from two different perspectives: On the one hand, Said regards power as a possession which has a hidden and malicious intention or will behind it; on the other hand, Foucault regards power as a network and relation that cannot be possessed or

located. Said (1983) criticizes Foucault for ignoring “motive forces in history as profit, ambition, ideas, the sheer love of power” in his analytics (p. 222). He misunderstands or maybe ignores the mechanisms of power in Foucault’s formulation. Said combines his perspective to a flawed conception of hegemony.

Porter (1993) discusses that the employment of discourse led to methodological problems in the way whereby Said deals with truth and ideology. On the one hand, Said employs the notion of hegemony from Gramsci and, on the other hand, he adopts Foucault’s ideas which lead to the theorization of “hegemonic Western discourse” (p. 150). Porter (1993) argues that the hegemonic rendition of Orientalism and presenting hegemony not as a process prevents Said to consider the counterhegemonic voices that exist in Western creative and scholarly writings within colonial discourse. Porter (1993) suggests that putting Gramsci’s hegemony and Foucault’s discourse together led to the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism.

Furthermore, Porter (1993) contends that the Orientalism that Said portrays silences counterhegemonic voices and cannot represent them. Said himself silences the Orientals by hegemonic portrayal of power. The possibility of resistance within discourse is annihilated and hegemony is portrayed uniform, solid, and monolithic. Thus, it gives the impression that Said’s analysis itself presents the Orientals as passive objects. Whereas he suggests that the Oriental’s own representation should be regarded, Said makes himself in charge of representing Orientals and prevents the Oriental self-representation.

7. Conclusion

Throughout this analysis, we surveyed Said’s treatment of Foucault’s theory of discourse and explored Foucault’s original ideas. The validity of Said’s idea of Foucault’s theory of discourse was examined and we considered that his understanding of Foucault’s theorization of discourse and its relation to power lacks enough accuracy. Moreover, as far as the secondary literature informs us, Said’s position on Foucault did not receive rigorous attention and examination and Said’s ideas are repeated by many postcolonial scholars after him.

We can assert that Said constructs *Orientalism* according to a false image of Foucault’s concept of discourse. Thus, Foucault’s discourse is not similar to a prison system; there is room for resistance and counterdiscursive actions. Discourses are in constant conflict and they are open to change. Moreover, Foucault’s theorization of power helps the possibility of struggle in discursive practices. On the other hand, Foucault himself is trapped in a discourse which Said produces and spreads in the colonial discourse theory through his misreading. Our analysis sheds light on

Foucault's theory of discourse and attempts to modify the mindset that Saidian postcolonial Foucault discourse creates and establishes in postcolonial studies.

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