

EDWARD SAID VS MICHEL FOUCAULT: THE DIVERGENCE OF PERSPECTIVES ON KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH AND POWER*

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Abstract

Despite Edward Said's acknowledgement of the strong impact of Michel Foucault's works on his major study of *Orientalism*, Said quickly distanced himself from a Foucauldian perspective in his later writings. The aim of this article is to exhibit the divergence of Said from Foucault. I firstly show their convergent trajectories in *Orientalism* and then examine their divergent positions and dispositions in Said's writings. In particular, while Said had a tendency to reject the existence of truth and knowledge outside discourse and power dynamics in *Orientalism*, he moves toward an anti-Foucauldian perspective in order to defend universal values such as justice, freedom and equality because of the pacifying impact of Foucauldian understanding of power, knowledge and truth in the resistance against the oppressors in his later writings. He manifests himself as a dedicated intellectual to the defense of universal values against power in opposition to moral and epistemological relativism rejecting the existence of universal values, expressed strongly in the writings of Foucault.

Keywords: Said, Foucault, Power, Truth, Knowledge

Edward Said vs Michel Foucault: Bilgi, Hakikat ve İktidar Üzerine Farklı Perspektifler

Öz

Edward Said'in temel çalışması olan *Oryantalizm*'in yazımında Foucault'cu bir perspektifin güçlü bir etkisi olmasına rağmen Said'in sonraki yazılarında Foucault'nun güçlü bir etkisi görülmemektedir. Bu makaledeki amacım Said'in Foucault'nun etkisinden ayrılıp tam zıddı bir istikamete yönelişini sergilemektir. Bu nedenle öncelikle *Oryantalizm*'de Foucault'nun etkisini gösterip sonrasında Said'in ayrıştığı noktaları ele alacağım. Kısaca, Said *Oryantalizm*'de Foucault'nun yazılarında da çok belirgin olan hakikat, bilgi, söylem ve iktidar arasında bağımlı bir ilişkinin olduğunu ve bu nedenle iktidardan bağımsız bir hakikat ve bilginin olmadığını iddia ederken, sonraki yazılarında ise Foucault'cu bir yaklaşımın iktidara karşı hakikat, adalet ve eşitlik gibi evrensel değerleri savunmak için uygun olmadığını düşünerek kendini evrensel değerleri savunmaya adanmış bir entelektüel olarak göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Said, Foucault, İktidar, Hakikat, Bilgi

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Introduction

In his early studies, particularly *Beginnings* (1974) and *Orientalism* (1979a) Edward W. Said recognizes the importance of Michel Foucault's works particularly *the Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977) in the shaping of his views, and acknowledges that *Orientalism* could not have been written without Foucault's works and some key Foucauldian concepts such as discourse, genealogy, domination, and knowledge/power. Indeed, many interpretations of Said also highlight the influential role of Foucault in the writings of Said (e.g., Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 2008; Kennedy, 2013; Racevskis, 2005; Salusinszky, 1987; Selby, 2006; Turner, 1994; Marrouchi, 2012).

However, Said seriously questions his former inclination towards Foucault in his writings and interviews in the 1980s and 1990s even if he was fascinated with the writings of Foucault. Therefore, Foucault cannot be seen "as an inspiring intellectual" in his later works such as *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), *The Question of Palestine* (1979b), *The Politics of Dispossession* (1995b), *Peace and its Discontents* (1995a), *Blaming the Victims* (2001a), *Covering Islam* (1997) and his interviews (e.g., 2001c; 2004). Furthermore, Said not only takes a distanced and dissatisfied position toward Foucault, but also becomes one of the leading critics of Foucault's understanding of power, knowledge and truth in his later works.

In this article, drawing on Said's works, I aim to exhibit Said's divergence from Foucault and to understand why Said moves away from Foucault. I firstly examine the convergence of Said with Foucault on the relationship between discourse, knowledge and power in *Orientalism* and then manifest the divergence of Said from Foucault in terms of his understanding of power and truth and his dedication to universal principles such as justice, freedom and equality. Taken together, this article shows that even if a Foucauldian perspective, that is the lack of truth and justice outside discourse and power, is an apparent reference point in his early writings, particularly in *Orientalism*, to understand the construction of Orientalism in the West, Said moves toward the opposed pole of the intellectual tradition dedicating to "speaking truth to power" because of the hopelessness of Foucauldian theory in the defense of universal values such as justice and freedom against the oppressor.

1. Convergences: Orientalism as a Discourse and the Representation of Power

Drawing on Foucault's work, Said uses the concept of discourse in order to understand the construction of the Orient as a totality. For Foucault (1972), discourse is a set of "governing statements" about an issue. Discourse (e.g., legal, sexual, nationalist or religious) is not only about language, but also covers ideas, meaning, and practice; therefore, it is influential in the production of social, cultural, and political practices. It restricts the way of thinking because it forms knowledge. Indeed, for Foucault, there is no knowledge outside discourse. Similar to Foucault, Said also points out that discourse is the cultural and political configuration of "textual attitude" (Said, 2001b: 92-93), which is part of cultural definitions shaping any individual experience about a certain actuality. In *Orientalism*, Said writes:

"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" (Said, 1979a: 3).

Although some elements of orientalism can be seen in the medieval period of European history as folk beliefs, modern and professional orientalism began to develop as a response to the changing role of the Middle East in the 18th century for the West because of its political and economic importance in the colonial period. A normative orientalist discourse developed in the folk beliefs, travel writings, literature, and scholarly works for colonial practices. A wide array of agents such as scientists, scholars, missionaries, traders, and soldiers constructed the knowledge of the Orient under the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient. Then, the totality of the Orient developed to display in the museum, to construct in the colonial offices, and to enhance theoretical approaches about mankind and the universe in the academia.

Said uses literary critical methodology to exhibit how the discourse of the Orient was constructed over time in line with the development of Western imperialism. He, therefore, examines the works of prominent scholars (e.g., Ernest Renan and H. A. R. Gibb), the speeches of politicians (e.g., Balfour and Cromer), and the writings of oriental voyagers (e.g., Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Nerval, Flaubertand). He generally chooses some figures that represent the mindset of their own times. Said, for instance, explains why he examines Renan's writings as follows:

“Renan was a figure in his own right neither of total originality nor of absolute derivativeness. Therefore, as a cultural force or as an important Orientalist he cannot be reduced to his personality not to a set of schematic ideas in which he believed...Renan is a figure who must be grasped, in short, as a type of cultural and intellectual praxis, as a style for making Orientalist statements within what Michel Foucault would call the archive of his time” (Said, 1979a: 130).

Said’s ambition with the analysis of a wide array of studies, speeches and writings is to display the hegemonic construction of the Orientalist discourse in the West. His examination shows that Orientalism is not only a field in the academia, but also a hegemonic discourse that is seen in a broad and dispersed sphere from academic studies to political speeches and voyager writings in the West. Furthermore, it is extensively internalized by the masses as a basic norm about the Orient, too. Therefore, for Said, even any European or Westerner can be considered an Orientalist because of the hegemonic impact of the Orientalist discourse.

The discursive construction of the Orient as part of power relations produced the “idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said, 1979a: 7). The result is thus the creation of the dichotomy between the West and the rest of the world, and the production of certain generalizations about the Orient and the Occident through totality and stereotypes. In this discourse, the Orientals are despotic, clannish, sly, obsequious, mystical, irrational, insufficient, erotic, stagnant, and so on, whereas the West is “rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion” (Said, 1979a: 49). The orientalist discourse rendered these stereotypes a common perception and knowledge about the Orient in the West. In Said’s words, “the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West” (Said, 1979a: 5). The Orientalist discourse thus not only shaped the Orient, but also shaped the West because of the construction of the Orient as opposed to the West. As a result of this kind of discourse, it is a common way to reach the conclusion that the Orient was not capable of understanding the world and ruling itself because the cultural and political structure of the Orient was a serious obstacle in the development of systematic knowledge, a rational bureaucracy, and a democratic government. Non-Western societies thus need the authority and domination of a superior power, or the West, to meet Western standards such as freedom, rationality, and human progress.

As one can notice here, following Foucault, Said illustrates that discursive formations are closely tied up with power dynamics. One cannot understand Orientalism without taking Western colonialism into account. The

Orientalist discourse was produced in the West for the West as a result of the imbalance between the Orient and Occident in terms of power. In his words:

“it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what ‘we’ do and what ‘they’ cannot do or understand as ‘we’ do)” (Said, 1979a: 12).

Said’s study is a historical genealogy, “that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc” (Foucault, 1980: 117), about the construction of the Orient in the mindset of the Western world as part of the colonization process of the region, particularly “since Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in the late eighteenth century” (Said, 1979a: XII). Said frequently refers to Foucauldian approaches to the relationship between discourse, knowledge and power. Indeed, for Said, like Foucault, (the Orientalist) discourse is the manifestation of (the Foucauldian concept of) power/knowledge in *Orientalism*. However, in this context, the important question is whether their understandings of power and knowledge are consistent with each other. In particular, what are their understandings of power and their epistemological perspectives? Here we come to the crux of the divergence of Said from Foucault.

2. Foucauldian Perspectives on Power/ Knowledge and Truth

Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), examines the place of power in the modern world by drawing attention to the shift in the system of punishment. His book begins with the illustration of the torture, dismemberment, and burning of Robert Francois Damiens in public because of his attempt to assassinate the French King in 1757. Foucault’s aim is to display that the public execution targeting human body was an established form of punishment by a centralized authority or power holders until the end of the 18th century. The source of power was not ambiguous in this kind of system; power was hold by the king. Everyone could realize where power was and who held it while watching bodily torture in public. People were then expected to comply with the rules of the king or power holders.

However, the public torture and execution was abandoned and replaced

with a prison system in the modern world. Public punishment system could lead to the emergence of resistance among the masses against the central authority because they could develop sympathy and admiration toward the convict. Moreover, the new form of punishment is more advantageous than public torture and execution in the control of the masses through systematic surveillance. In the punishment system of the modern world, the target of power is not the body but the soul, because discipline through surveillance aims to produce “docile bodies.” Punishment is predictable; everyone knows what is going to happen if one violates rules. In this system, prisoners are isolated from society, thus cannot be seen by the masses. It is also considered that crime is not against the king, but against “the whole of society” (Foucault, 1977: 90).

In the examination of power in the modern world, for Foucault, panopticon is one of the key concepts. Panopticon was developed for a perfect and effective prison system in which every prisoner completely could see a central tower, and only one watchman was enough to surveil all prisoners. However, it was not possible for prisoners to know whether a guard was watching them in the central tower. Prisoners were expected to train and self-discipline themselves because of the fear and threat of being under constant surveillance. For Foucault, panopticon is a kind of metaphor in order to understand the place of power in modern societies or disciplinary societies. It is not a form of repressive power, but a passive form of power which exercises through the surveillance, control and “normalization” of the masses. The metaphor of panopticon shows how power is exercised everywhere within modern societies through an unequal spatial gaze to protect society from a potential threat. Thus, a disciplinary society or carceral society, which enforces people to behave in accordance with socially accepted norms, is created without any repressive power.

For Foucault, the shift from physical punishment to a disciplinary society shows a fundamental social change in the Western world in the 18th and 19th centuries. The expansion of technologies and knowledge have produced new techniques of control and regulations of the world; thus, more effective ways of the exercise of power emerged. The masses watch and control each other’s actions and make themselves to conform to the rules through a “normalizing gaze.” There is no central source of power, but social institutions such as factories, hospitals, schools, workplaces, and prisons are means for surveillance and self-discipline. They control people through panoptic acts such as timecards, performance evaluations, inspections, reports, routine examinations, grades and so on. This is an effective way of normalizing people. Individuals thus discipline themselves without repression and coercion because of the internalization of surveillance and self-discipline. Disciplinary power thus creates disciplinary societies and “docile bodies,” and “normalize” individuals

through self-disciplining techniques in society. Foucault thus believes that a new mode of the exercise of power not only increases its ability to normalize people, but also generates an effective way of punishing criminals by keeping them away from normal people in penitentiaries.

Although the masses are always under surveillance in modern societies or disciplinary societies, power does not belong to any individual or group in these societies. No one is able to exercise power through brutal bodily punishments in public. Foucault therefore argues that “power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault, 1978: 93). His understanding of power is totally different from a solid understanding of power which is capable of using repressive techniques to produce obedient bodies. In his words:

“In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law that says no—power is taken, above all, as carrying the force of a prohibition. Now, I believe that this is a wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power, one that has been curiously widespread. If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006: 152-153).

One of the fundamental perspectives of Foucault is that power and knowledge are tied up with each other. Power, in a disciplinary society or carceral society, operates through knowledge to produce docile individuals. The development of knowledge, science, and technology is used by institutions in order to surveil and control the masses. The more knowledge expands, the more the application of power enhances. When knowledge expands, power covers more areas of society through the new techniques of discipline and surveillance. There is, thus, a structural relationship between knowledge and power and the impact of knowledge/power on individuals. Even if Foucault admits the existence of conscious social agents (Lemert, 1997), people are shaped by the structure of knowledge/power. He mentions: “We should admit...power produces knowledge...; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault, 1977: 27-28).

One of the ambitions of Foucault is to uncover how truth is established. He argues that the construction of truth depends on power; therefore, there is no absolute truth. Meaning is shaped through “discourse regimes,” which is “the

effects of power peculiar to the play of statements” (Foucault, 1980: 113). Discourse is constructed through institutional practices and arrangements which are structured through the regimes of power. Knowledge has its origin in discourse. Discursive regimes gain authority over time because of the development of the sense of truth and establish a regime of truth in a given period. Then, societies produce regimes of truth in accordance with their beliefs and values under the impact of power dynamics. There is, thus, no absolute truth, but the sense of truth and “the effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false” (Foucault, 1980: 118).

What I want to emphasize is that discourse, knowledge, or truth are historical and contextual and depend on power dynamics in the view of Foucault. While knowledge depends on discourse, power shapes the limit of both discourse and knowledge. In turn, discourse and knowledge help the operation of power. Discursive shifts can take place over time, but it also changes the practice of knowledge. Thus, there is no meaning and the sense of truth outside discourse. They are meaningful in a specific historical context. In his words:

“Truth isn’t outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn’t the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true” (Foucault, 1980: 131).

3. Divergences: Said’s Approach to Power, Knowledge and Truth

Although Said frequently refers to Foucauldian concepts, Said’s understanding of power is totally different from Foucault’s. While power is fluid in the view of Foucault because it is everywhere, Said has a solid understanding of power. That is, although there is no agency in the Foucauldian conceptualization of power, for Said, as it is explained in the previous pages while examining the construction of orientalist discourse, there is an agency that holds power, which is the colonial powers or the West. It operates as a

repressive power and utilizes the effects of power for its own sake. Therefore, Said frequently mentions the invasion of the Orient by referring to solid powers such as “Western powers” (Said, 1979a: 215), “European powers” (Said, 1979a: 17, 87, 178, 191, 215), “European-Atlantic powers” (Said 1979a: 6), “colonial powers” (Said 1979a: 100, 207, 322), and so on. In particular, for Said, there is a center of power- England and France until World War II and then the United States of America- even if its center shifts from one location to the next over time (Said 1979a: 4). Said’s study is, thus, the analysis of the domination of one state/civilization over another, and his solid and repressive understanding of power is absolutely different from a Foucauldian approach.

On the other hand, it seems that Said’s approach is consistent with a Foucauldian approach in terms of his understanding of knowledge and its relationship with power in *Orientalism*. Said frequently points out there that knowledge about the Orient is contextual and depends on power dynamics, in particular the colonial process; therefore, there is no pure knowledge and scholarship. There is a dialectical relationship between knowledge and the political and cultural world. Power dynamics play determinant roles in the construction of knowledge about the Orient. As a result, Western imperialism shapes “the regime of truths” of apolitical institutions and individuals. For Said, in *Orientalism*, nonpolitical and nonpartisan knowledge is not possible because a scholar cannot be detached from his/her experiences as a member of a society. Said believes that “fields of learning, as much as the works of even the most eccentric artist, are constrained and acted upon by society, by cultural traditions, by worldly circumstance, and by stabilizing influences like schools, libraries, and governments” (Said, 1979a: 201).

For Said, as for Foucault, “it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not ‘truth’ but representations” (Said, 1979a: 21). He continues that “representations have purposes, they are effective much of the time, they accomplish one or many tasks. Representations are formations, or as Roland Barthes has said of all the operations of language, they are deformations. The Orient as a representation in Europe is formed—or deformed—out of a more and more specific sensitivity towards a geographical region called ‘the East’” (Said, 1979a: 273). Thus, Said suggests that there is no truth, but just representations; and all representations are shaped by discourse and power structures as one can see the construction of knowledge about the Orient under the impact of the social, political and economic interest of the West. In other words, “political imperialism governs an entire field of study, imagination, and scholarly institutions” (Said, 1979a: 14). The truths about the Orient were developed “according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments and projections”

(Said, 1979a: 8). In order to support his ideas, Said not only stands on the shoulders of Foucault, but also refers to Nietzsche, another giant of moral and epistemological relativism and quotes from him: “truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are” (Said, 1979a: 203). For Said (1979a: 204), “Orientalism was such a system of truths, truths in Nietzsche's sense of the word.”

Indeed, Said's approach to the relationship between knowledge and power in *Orientalism* seems consistent with a Foucauldian approach even if their understanding of power is very different. Under the impact of Foucault, Said argues that “knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control” (Said, 1979a: 36) and that there is no “real Orient,” but the discourse and representation of the Orient that were shaped under the impact of the colonization process.

Nevertheless, a careful reader of *Orientalism* can recognize that, in contrast to rigid relativism which rejects the existence of an objective reality, for Said, there is inherently considerable opposition to epistemological relativism defending the lack of absolute truth. He suggests that the construction of the Orient is not “objectively true,” but Orientalism is just a myth and false representation constructed under the impact of Western Orientalism. He mentions:

“One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. I myself believe that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridic discourse about the Orient (which is what, in its academic or scholarly form, it claims to be). Nevertheless, what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted-together strength of Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubt-able durability” (Said, 1979a: 6).

“Advances made by a ‘science’ like Orientalism in its academic form are less objectively true than we often like to think” (Said, 1979a: 202).

Even though Said's understanding of truth seems controversial in *Orientalism*, it becomes evident in his later writings that Said has an epistemological stance on the opposite side of a Foucauldian approach. Unlike Foucault, Nietzsche and other poststructuralist intellectuals such as Lyotard, Derrida, and Deleuze, Said manifests himself as a dedicated intellectual to the defense of truth and universal values such as freedom and justice. Here is the crux of the divergence of Said from Foucault. Said believes that poststructuralist/postmodern philosophical stances degrade struggles for

universal values such as freedom, equality and justice. For example, he points out:

“Jean-Francois Lyotard and Michel Foucault describe a striking new lack of faith in what Lyotard calls the great legitimizing narratives of emancipation and enlightenment... Foucault also turned his attention away from the oppositional forces in modern society which he had studied for their undeterred resistance to exclusion and confinement - delinquents, poets, outcasts, and the like - and decided that since power was everywhere it was probably better to concentrate on the local micro-physics of power that surround the individual... In both Lyotard and Foucault we find precisely the same trope employed to explain the disappointment in the politics of liberation: narrative, which posits an enabling beginning point and a vindicating goal, is no longer adequate for plotting the human trajectory in society. There is nothing to look forward to: we are stuck within our circle. And now the line is enclosed by a circle. After years of support for anti-colonial struggles in Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, Palestine, Iran, which came to represent for many Western intellectuals their deepest engagement in the politics and philosophy of anti-imperialist decolonization, a moment of exhaustion and disappointment was reached” (Said, 1994: 26-27).

However, in contrast to Foucault and other postmodern intellectuals, Said zealously defends that the imperative of the intellectual is to stand up for human freedom, emancipation and truth against repressive powers. For him, one of the essential principles of being an intellectual is “speaking truth to power” (Said, 1996). He continues: “the intellectual represents emancipation and enlightenment,” (Said, 1996: 113) and “the purpose of the intellectual’s activity is to advance human freedom and knowledge” (Said, 1996: 17). He points out that “there is no question in my mind that the intellectual belongs on the same side with the weak and unrepresented. Robin Hood, some are likely to say” (Said, 1996: 22). In contrast to a Foucauldian perspective depicting a consistency between knowledge and power, Said thus positions himself that there is (or should be) a conflict between power and knowledge. True intellectuals are not the servants of power and interest. Intellectuals need to alienate themselves from power and to speak in the name of truth.

Moreover, according to Said, the responsibility of the intellectual is not to defend the interest of his/her identity, culture, nation, religion, civilization and so on, but to struggle for universal values such as human rights, justice, fairness, and equality. Said adds “that if you wish to uphold basic human justice you must do so for everyone, not just selectively for the people that your side, your culture, your nation designates as okay” (Said, 1996: 93). He also emphasizes that “one of the shabbiest of all intellectual gambits is to pontificate

about abuses in someone else's society and to excuse exactly the same practices in one's own" (Said, 1996: 92).

"Speaking truth to power" as an essential norm in Said's life which could be observed in his social and political activism, particularly in the defense of the rights of the Palestinians, which is "one of the greatest injustices in modern history" (Said, 1996: 101), against the Israeli and US administrations. However, even if it is commonly ignored, Said is also an outspoken critic of Muslim societies and Arab governments in terms of the absence of democracy, dictatorship, torture, the abrogation of individual freedoms, and so on. Therefore, his struggle for the defense of Palestinian rights should not be recognized as the defense of Islam and Muslims, but the defense of truth, justice and human rights. For example, Said eagerly struggled for the defense of Salman Rushdie's freedom of expression. He mentions as follows:

"Uncompromising freedom of opinion and expression is the secular intellectual's main bastion: to abandon its defense or to tolerate tamperings with any of its foundations is in effect to betray the intellectual's calling. That is why the defense of Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses has been so absolutely central an issue, both for its own sake and for the sake of every other infringement against the right to expression of journalists, novelists, essayists, poets, historians" (Said, 1996: 89).

Said's dedication to universal values such as justice, equality and freedom is an important indication of why he moves toward an anti-Foucauldian perspective. But more importantly, one needs to focus on Said's critiques of Foucauldian theory of power to understand Said's shift. Said denounces Foucault's understanding of power because of its pacifying impact in a struggle against the oppressors. He points out in one of his later pieces that "Foucault's imagination of power is largely with rather than against it... His interest in domination was critical but not finally as contestatory or as oppositional as on the surface it seems to be" (Said, 2000a: 242-243). In another context, he continues that "Foucault's work moves further and further away from serious consideration of social wholes, focusing instead upon the individual as dissolved in an ineluctably advancing 'microphysics of power' that it is hopeless to resist. He seems to justify an equally irresistible colonialism; he avoids using against authoritarianism the heterodox intellectual heritage he shares with Fanon" (Said, 1994: 278). He also says that "Foucault always seems to align himself with Power. He is like a scribe of a kind of irresistible, ineluctable power. And I was writing in order to oppose that power, so it was written out of a political position" (Said, 2001c: 170).

According to Said, Foucault as a eurocentric intellectual attempts to

understand history from the perspective of European experience (Said, 2000a: 196-197) and reaches general theoretical conclusions through “local observations.” Thus, for Said, Foucault “didn't understand the colonial dynamic at all” (Said, 2004: 130) and the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. Once Said got hold of an idea that Foucault ignores authoritarianism, colonialism, and a “massive system of domination,” he detached himself from Foucault. He explains as follows:

“Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*... I thought the observations were very interesting – the local observations. But the moment he began to generalize into a larger theory- potentially a theory that no resistance was possible, that we were moving towards a disciplinary society, that there was almost a kind of “clockwork” quality to it- I just felt that it was completely wrong. It was not true to his own studies, and also it wasn't true to history and it wasn't true to the way society worked.

It was at that time also that I read Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*- there's always something going on in this book and it's not just the smooth working out of a massive system of domination. I separated Foucault from that point” (Said, 2004: 101).

Is Said right in thinking that Foucault's theory renders speaking truth against power impossible? Although Foucault defends that speaking truth strengthens the exercise of power because of his understanding of a contingent relationship between knowledge, truth and power in his major studies of *Discipline and Punishment* (1977) and *the History of Sexuality* (1978), he attempts to conceptualize the concept of “parrhesia,” which is to speak fearlessly to both oneself and others from one's ethical perspective, in his late studies of *Fearless Speech* (2001) and *the Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2005). Hence, in contrast to Foucault's early studies, it seems there a possibility of resistance against authority through the concept of parrhesia, which makes possible resistance against authority from one's moral perspective in his late studies. Indeed, Said ignores the late works of Foucault and the concept of parrhesia. Therefore, he does not take into account the possibility of resistance against power to defend universal values through a Foucauldian perspective.

For the sake of a better understanding of Said's views on Foucault and of Said's separation from Foucault, it is crucial to examine the relationships between Foucault, Said and the Palestinian question. Indeed, Said's struggle for the defense of Palestinian rights is a crucial point to realize Said's alienation from Foucault. We must not forget that the Palestinian question ignited an intellectual war within the Western academia in the second half of the 20th century, with positions ranging from zealous defense of Israel to fervent support for the rights of the Palestinians. Said and Foucault certainly occupied

opposed positions toward the Palestinian issue. In one of his writings in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Said narrates his meeting with Foucault. Said was invited to a seminar in Paris about peace in the Middle East in the January of 1979. The meeting was held at Foucault's apartment even if Foucault was not a participant of the seminar. He continues as follows:

“Foucault was there, but he very quickly made it clear to me that he had nothing to say about the seminar's subject, and would be leaving directly for his daily bout of research at the Bibliotheque Nationale. I was pleased that my book *Beginnings* was readily visible on one of his bookshelves, all of which were brimming with a neatly arranged mass of books, papers, journals. Although we chatted together amiably it wasn't until much later (in fact almost a decade after his death in 1984) that I got some idea why Foucault had been so unwilling to say anything to me about Middle Eastern politics. In their biographies of him, both Didier Eribon and James Miller reveal that in 1967 he had been teaching in Tunisia and had hastily gotten out in unusual circumstances shortly after the June War. Foucault had said then that the reason he left voluntarily had been his horror at the 'anti-Semitic' anti-Israel riots of the time, common in every Arab city after the great Arab defeat... Finally, in the late 80s, I was told by Gilles Deleuze that he and Foucault, once the closest of friends, had clashed finally because of their differences over Palestine, Foucault expressing support for Israel, Deleuze for the Palestinians. No wonder, then, he hadn't wanted to discuss the Middle East with me or anyone else there!” (Said, 2000b).

In another context, Said gives more details about the same meeting and its impact on his interest in Foucault. After giving some details about the seminar, he continues as follows:

“I tried to talk to him- I saw a couple of my books in his library, so he knew who I was- and at the time I could tell he was withdrawing from politics, he had lost his interest in politics. He had just been a year earlier in Iran, he had reported on the Iranian revolution but had decided he didn't really want to do that, he wanted to pursue his own thing. I realized there was a fundamental difference in our attitudes: I was still interested in politics and mass movements, because, of course, our movement was still going on. But he was into something else- the cultivation of the self- in the last book of his on sexuality. I thought this showed a tremendous falling off, so I completely lost interest in him... at roughly the time he became a huge industry in this country. Yet I was virtually the first person to write about him in the early seventies” (Said, 2004: 101-102).

As Foucault's works are the result of his own personal concerns such as madness, sexuality, surveillance and discipline, Said's worldview is also shaped

by his own personal concerns, commitment and zeal. The defense of Palestinian rights (or the oppressed) is at the very centre of his political activism and theory. However, for Said, not only was Foucault as an intellectual personally unconcerned with the oppressed groups, but also his theory is incapable of defending the rights of the oppressed against the oppressor. But, Said believes that the intellectual like Robin Hood is to help the liberation of the oppressed groups/classes/people from their oppressors.

In the later writings of Said, on the other hand, radical intellectuals, particularly Fanon and Chomsky, who fervently speak the truth against power in the defense of the liberation of the oppressed groups/classes/people from their oppressors become his favorite reference points. He also frequently compares these intellectuals with Foucault and takes a favorable position toward the formers. For example, in an interview in which he makes a comparison between Foucault and Chomsky, he says:

“One has to choose between them, but I’ve always felt that one in fact could incorporate both of them. In the end, I think that Chomsky’s is the more consistently honorable and admirable position, though it may not be the most emulatable position. It’s certainly a less cynical position than Foucault’s. By the end of his life, I think, Foucault was simply uninterested in any direct political involvement of any sort” (Said, 2001c: 77).

In another context, he talks about Fanon, Chomsky and Foucault, and says:

“It is important that Fanon’s book was the result of a collective struggle, as opposed to Foucault’s work, which evolved out of a different tradition, that of the individual scholar-researcher acquiring a reputation for learning, brilliance, and so on... But, I still think that it’s important to note that Fanon’s book is the more powerful because it is rooted in, you might say, the dialectics of struggle. Yes, precisely, but more importantly, what is present in Fanon’s work and absent in the early Foucault is the sense of active commitment... While Chomsky spoke about his own libertarian ideals, notions about justice, and so forth, Foucault backed away and essentially admitted that he believed in no positive truths, ideas, or ideals. And this was not true of Fanon, whose commitments to revolutionary change, solidarity, and liberation were very powerful and appealing to such as myself” (Said, 2001c: 39).

Thus, after losing his interest in Foucault, Said consolidates his position on the opposite side of the Foucauldian stance by making approving references to such radical intellectuals as Fanon and Chomsky, and manifests himself as an intellectual dedicated to the defense of the rights of the oppressed and universal ideals such as justice, equality and freedom.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that so many of Foucauldian ideas find an echo in the early writings of Said, particularly in *Orientalism*, Said quickly distanced himself from a Foucauldian approach to an opposite side of social and political theory. In his early writings, Said's engagement with the work of Foucault was particularly relevant to the construction of the Orient in the West because of its usefulness to make a comprehensive critique of the construction of Orientalism and its relationship with power/knowledge in the Western context. Notwithstanding their convergent trajectories in *Orientalism* to some degree, given their divergent positions and dispositions, I exhibit that Said moves toward an anti-Foucauldian perspective in order to defend universal values such as justice, freedom and equality because of the pacifying impact of Foucauldian understanding of power, knowledge and truth in the resistance against the oppressors. Thus, the core of the difference between Foucault and Said is situated that Foucault is one of the brilliant representatives of a relativist and contextualist tradition whereas Said is a dedicated intellectual to the defense of universal humanistic values and truth against power.

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