



A FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF JUDAISM IN GEORGE ELIOT'S DANIEL DERONDA

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ABSTRACT

The present article aims to offer a Foucauldian reading of George Eliot's 1876 novel, *Daniel Deronda* according to Michel Foucault's theories of power and discourse. Through analyzing Foucault's discourse of power in *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot's view on the considerable subject of Jews and their religion is discussed. In other words, the concepts are explored in *Daniel Deronda* through the Christian and Jewish characters' ideas about Jews and their religion. The present article reveals Jews' limitations in the nineteenth century and their opposition with the essential problems through Jewish characters' debate over the social issues in the novel. The article determines dominant powers operating within Jews through *Daniel Deronda*'s views on them and shows Ezra Cohen Mordecai's resistance to these ideas.

KEYWORDS : Discourse, Episteme, Power, Power/Knowledge, Power/Resistance.

1. Introduction

The article carries out an exploration of how discourse of Judaism demonstrates Jews' history and culture in the nineteenth century through George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*. To do so, the researchers bring forth three central questions: Since George Eliot was brought up in the Victorian society and suffered the social problems, how can her *Daniel Deronda* represent Foucauldian discourse of power? Are any manifestations of power salient in this novel? and how do the characters' personal conduct demonstrate Eliot's idea on the nineteenth century's discourse of religion. Michel Foucault's key terms, discourse, episteme, power, power/knowledge, and power/resistance provide an explanation for the discourse of Judaism in Eliot's society through *Daniel Deronda*. The article consists of two main sections. In the first section, entitled "Discourse Analysis of Judaism in *Daniel Deronda*," the discourse of Judaism is discussed. In this section, the nineteenth century people's conventional views on the discourse are demonstrated through analyzing Foucault's episteme. In addition, the researcher is going to clarify power relations among Jews and Europeans in the nineteenth century through the Christian and Jewish characters. In the second section, "Knowledge as Resistance to Jews' Limitations," Foucault's theory of power/resistance is analyzed. The significant subjects such as the nineteenth century people's ideas about Jews and Jews' opposition with these ideas will be described in the second section. Before analyzing the social issues, synopsis of the novel and definition of the concepts will be presented separately.

Daniel Deronda begins with the scene in which Daniel and Gwendolen Harleth meet in a casino in the city of Leubronn. Gwendolen pawns her necklace in the casino for gambling but she loses it. Daniel cannot be indifferent to her beauty and sends a person that returns the necklace to her. Meanwhile, Gwendolen leaves Leubronn for Offendence, the home in which she and her poor family live. For this reason, she decides to get riches through marriage. One of his rich suitors is Mr. Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt who is married. The girl's poverty leads to her acceptance of Grandcourt's marriage proposal. Finally, she marries Mr. Grandcourt to escape poverty. Considering Gwendolen's marriage, Sir Hugo, guardian of Daniel, advises him to run away from Gwendolen. He sends him abroad for education. Over there, Daniel is acquainted with a Jewess, Mirah. She sought for her mother and brother who are Jewish. For this reason Daniel decides to find Mirah's family. As for finding the Jewish family, Daniel is acquainted with Jewish people and Mirah's brother Ezra Cohen Mordecai. As time goes on, Daniel understands Mirah's mother is dead. In addition to finding Mirah's family, he decides to discover his own identity. Finally, Sir Hugo finds it necessary to say the truth about Daniel's real family. His mother is a Jewish princess and his father is dead. Daniel understands he is a Jew like his friends, Mordecai and Mirah. Meanwhile, he notices the presence of Gwendolen in the hotel of Genoa. Gwen tells Daniel when she and Grandcourt were

yachting, Grandcourt drowned. Gwen tells him she is not satisfied with the marriage because Grandcourt has ignored her. Dan also reveals his original race for Gwen and says that he must go to the East. At last, Daniel and Mirah marry and become ready for the departure to the East by Mordecai. Meanwhile, Mordecai dies at their side.

Foucault's theories of power and discourse are concerned with sociology and social studies. Barry Smart states from Weber, the exercise of power and discourse has been conceptualized within sociology as a constitutive feature of social life (qtd. in Smart 64). Chris Baldick states that in modern cultural theory which is associated with the French historian, Michel Foucault, the term discourse has been used to denote any coherent body of statements that produces a self- confirming account of reality by defining an object of attention and generating concepts with which to analyze it e.g. medical discourse, legal discourse, aesthetic discourse (2001, 68). Edward Quinn also argues that episteme is the Greek word for knowledge. It provides a description of a conceptual framework that underlies a culture's discourse, its rules and connections, at a given point in history. Quinn says from Foucault's view, the discourses of various disciplines, such as economics and natural history; reflect a shift, opening up new forms of knowledge but at the same time foreclosing other possibilities. Thus, every episteme shows representative examples of insight and blindness (2006, 143). These concepts are associated with the term, power and its institutions, power/knowledge and power/resistance.

Paul Fry says from Foucault's point of view, power is not just the power of vested authorities, of state-sanctioned violence, or of tyranny form. In Foucault's view, power is frequently the way in which knowledge circulates in a culture: the way what we think that it is appropriate to think (qtd. in Farahbakhsh and Ahmadi 32). In addition to knowledge, Mikkel Flohr remarks that one of the central tenets of the concept of power is resistance which is immanent to power relations (2016, 4). Inna Viriasova declares that Foucault's notion of resistance and freedom is closely connected with power. According to Foucault, she asserts that his theory of power is power not violence only because its objects are able to resist, to reverse the situation, and to be free. She states that power relations are present in all kinds of human relations. They are mobile, reversible, and unstable (2016, 74).

2. Discourse Analysis of Judaism in *Daniel Deronda*

Considering the concept of episteme, the study sets out to clarify the nineteenth century people's conventional ideas on Jews' religion and identity through the main character of the novel *Daniel Deronda*. According to Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, Jews' limitations in the nineteenth century are elucidated through Daniel's relationship with Jewish characters, Mirah and Ezra Cohen Mordecai.

Foucault's concept of episteme points up conventional perspectives on an important subject in the society. In order to prove people's opinions on Jews in the nineteenth century, Chris Snodgrass has explored Jews' conditions in that time. He reveals the views which have suppressed Jews in that time. Snodgrass mentions that in 1850 only about 20,000 Jews resided in London with an even smaller number in the rest of Great Britain. They continued to be denied civil and political rights, and did not have a residential mobility. For example, they cannot hold a seat in parliament, matriculate at either Oxford or Cambridge, and serve in the military. They had only limited access to the bar (2015, 24). Likewise, Monika Richarz claims that Jews did not have the freedom of movement and could settle only in territories where they had received permission in that time. They had to stay in assigned areas called ghettos and leave the place during the day (2008, 77-78). For example, Louis Wirth applies the term, ghetto to describe the Jewish settlement in England (1969, 18). Also, Laura Vaughan states that this term is also used to describe clustering by identifiable groups such as minorities and immigrants, especially clusters of Jews. He asserts that the causes of clustering by choice of minority groups are normally assigned to exclusion caused by prejudice, and to blocks of property being retained for certain labor groups. Vaughan believes that the other factor is religion, since they cluster in order to be close to a synagogue and to other Jewish religious functions (1997, 2). The truth points out Jews' essential problem in the period. Then, the term ghetto illuminates Jews' bondage in the nineteenth century. Jews' bondage in the time shows the accepted forms of knowledge on Jews by nineteenth century people. In fact, what happened to Jewish people as a minority group in that time demonstrates Christian people's ideas about them which have been turned into power. This term proves the people's oppressions to Jews as a religious minority in the nineteenth century. Their oppressions as dominant views on Jews are suggestive of Foucault's power, because they have influenced on Jews' life. First, they are clarified through Daniel's ideas about Jews and their religion in the novel. Second, influences of the dominant views as power operating within Jews are analyzed through Mirah's relationship with her Christian father Mr. Lapidoth. In order to show them, Foucauldian power and theory of power/knowledge are discussed.

Deronda carries nineteenth century people's perspectives on Jews in the novel. "Deronda, like his neighbors, had regarded Judaism as a sort of eccentric fossilized form which an accomplished man might dispense with studying, and leave to specialists" (Eliot, 2003, 197). Consequently, he conveys the opinions on Jews by following his society. Daniel is the real son of a Jewish family but he has been grown up by a Christian guardian, Sir Hugo. As a matter of fact, he did not know his Jewish identity. Also, he didn't have any information on Jews and their religion. For example, their religious creeds seemed weird for Daniel, when he was invited for a Jewish religious ceremony, Sabbath for the first time. Now he is able to challenge the ceremony and call it into question. In the ceremony, Mordecai had no Sabbath garment like the Jews. Also, Daniel did not know what dishes he ate from. The conditions enable him to ask some leading questions about the Jews (Eliot, 2003, 217). Therefore, his unawareness about Jews and their religion had led him to consider them as fossilized form. Like most of people in his society, he thinks that they are bad. His ideas on Jews were according to the knowledge which he had received from his society. For instance, when Daniel understands Mirah is Jewish, he says that, "I know many Jews are bad. So are many Christians. But I should not think it fair for you to despise me because of that" (Ibid., 107). Therefore, his views represent the ruling power operating within Jewish identities in Eliot's time. As the story goes on, Daniel becomes familiar to Jews and their religious creeds through Jewish characters such as Mirah and Mordecai. "As he turned out of the Juden-gasse, and continued to saunter in the warm evening air meaning to find his way to the synagogue, neutralized the repellent effect of certain ugly little incidents on his way" (Ibid., 199). With respect to finding Mirah's family, Daniel entered the good congregation of Jews in Juden-gasse or Jewish ghettos. Heinrich Heine claims that the time referred to was 1462, when both Kaiser Friedrich III and Pop Pius II demanded

of the Frankfurt City council that the twenty Jewish Families of the town were removed from their 300-year-old settlement between the cathedral and the river Main to a desolate strip 330 meters long and covering an area of about 15000 square meters in the Woll-graben, a former Moat bordering on the Fischerfeld on the Eastern edge of the city, far away from the Main and from trades routes and without well (qtd. in Bourke 11). Also, Rosemarie Schuder and Rudolf Hirsch assert that the Jews were given the choice to the area selected for them, which was in time to become known as New Egypt or to leave Frankfurt entirely. For this reason, timber-frame houses with the gable facing to the street were built on either side of the curving Juden gasse. They go on to say by 1500 there were fifty-three houses in the Jewish ghetto (Juden gasse), 107 houses by the year 1575, 185 by 1605, and five years later, 3000 persons in 197 houses, in what had become one of Europe's most densely populated residential areas (Ibid., 11-12). The history of Juden-gasse proved that Jews had been a minority group in their society. Their life had been under the influence of the dominant power in the society. Finally, Daniel paid attention to the Jewish creeds without prejudice and disgust. Eliot's opinion on Daniel's familiarity with Jews shows that she has supported the minority group in that time. The dominant views as power operating within Jews' race are analyzed in Mr. Lapidoth's ideas about Jewish race and religion.

Mr. Lapidoth is one of Christian characters in the novel. He has kidnapped his daughter, Mirah, from his Jewish wife. Mirah tells Mrs. Meyricks that her Christian father has often mocked the Jewish people. "I said, Father, you ought not to mimic our own people before Christians mock them: would it not be bad if I mimicked you, that they might mock you? But he only shrugged his shoulders and pinched my chin and said, you couldn't do it my dear" (Eliot, 2003, 117). As discussed above, because of Jews' religion and race, they had been turned into the minority group in the society. Therefore, the example of the novel displays the people's power operating within Jews. Mordecai said his father, Mr. Lapidoth:

We will not cast you out to the mercy of your vices. For you are our father, and though you have broken your bond, we acknowledge ours. But I will never trust you. You absconded with money, leaving your debts unpaid; you forsook my mother; you robbed her of her little child and broke her heart; you have become a gambler, and where shame and conscience were there sits an insatiable desire; you were ready to sell my sister, you had sold her, but the price denied you. The man who has done these things must never expect to be trusted any more. (Ibid., 417)

Mordecai's ideas about his Christian father, Mr. Lapidoth prove his nature. In another part of the novel, misrepresenting Christian characters are demonstrated by George Eliot. One of Daniel's friend namely Hans loved Mirah. Hans said Daniel: "you think I must be over head and ears in love with Mirah. Quite right; so I am" (Ibid., 253). Daniel convinced him not to propose Mirah because of his religion Christianity. He said Hans: "my dear fellow, you are only preparing misery for yourself, decisively. She would not marry a Christian, even if she loved him" (Ibid., 253). Misrepresenting the Christian characters against Jews shows Eliot's support from Jews' race and religion in the novel. Her support and defense are examined through Mordecai's views on their race and religion according to Foucault's theory of power and resistance.

2.1. Knowledge as Resistance to Jews' Limitations

As described above, Jews' problems show the dominant power in the nineteenth century. Resistance had been created to oppose the people's conventional ideas or in Foucault's view, episteme on Jews' religion and identity in the nineteenth century. Jews' resistance is argued according to Foucault's theory of power/resistance through the Jewish character Mordecai.

Daniel observed the resistance to Jews' limitations in Mirah and Mordecai's ideas on their race and religion. For instance, he went into a pawn shop that belonged to a Jewish family in Germany. The Jewish family lived with a strange person namely Ezra Cohen

Mordecai who was Mirah's real brother. The major character who represents the Jewish religious beliefs is Mordecai. In general, the character is agent of Jews and Judaism in the novel, because he has knowledge on Judaism and discusses it. "The deliver's footsteps must be near—the deliver that was to rescue Mordecai's spiritual travail from oblivion, and give it an abiding place in the best heritage of his people" (Eliot, 2003, 260). He often discusses and teaches the kabalistic doctrines as one component of Jews' religion during the story. Mordecai tries to develop the Jewish religious thought in the novel and describes the Kabalistic ideas to instruct Daniel that the people's views on their religion and race are not correct. The discussions prove Mordecai's resistance to the dominant power. As a matter of fact, he had freedom to discuss the Kabalistic ideas and shows his resistance to the dominant power through the spirituality of the Kabalistic ideas.

Avram Yehoshua declares that Jewish mysticism is the source and the primary expositor of the Kabalistic ideas. Kabala is an attempt on the part of some Jewish men and women, to seek the God of Israel through mystical means or spirituality (2016, 1). For instance, Mordecai considers his spiritual destiny in the novel: "Mordecai paused, and Deronda, feeling that the pause was expectant, said, do me the justice to believe that I was not inclined to call your words raving. I listen that I may know, without prejudgment. I have had experience which gives me a keen interest in the story of a spiritual destiny embraced willingly, and embraced in youth" (Eliot, 2003, 272). Here, one of the important spiritual aspects of his life has been demonstrated. As a matter of fact, he owns a spiritual status due to his more deep realization of the Jewish religion. "Mordecai was a poor Jewish work man, and that he was to be met perhaps on a sanded floor in the parlor of the-Hand and Banner- as a reason for determining beforehand that there was not some spiritual force within him that might have a determining effect on Daniel Deronda" (Ibid., 279). In addition, his determining effect on Daniel proves Mordecai's influential resistance to the dominant power in the society. Through explaining these doctrines, Mordecai proves Judaism is not eccentric religion. His explanation shows his resistance to Daniel's views on Judaism. Continuing the novel, Daniel learned the Jewish religious creeds such as Kabalistic ideas from Mordecai. Through Daniel's relationship with Mordecai as Jews' worthy agent, he finds that Jews are not devilish persons. For example, Eliot shows in one part of the novel Daniel's ideas about Jews that is coming to an end. "My mother was the daughter of an eminent Jew; my father was her cousin. Many things had caused me to think of this origin as almost a probability before I set out. I was so far prepared for the result that I was glad of it, glad to find myself a Jew" (Ibid., 421). In another part of the novel, Daniel shows his agreement with Mordecai's religious ideas. He told his real mother, "I have taken up some of Mordecai's ideas, and I mean to try and carry them out, so far as one man's efforts can go. I dare say I shall by and by travel to the East and be away for some years" (Ibid. 421). A part from the Kabalistic ideas, he is engaged to the certain Jewish religious creed such as leaving for Palestine. The movement is also suggestive of Jews' resistance to the people's views on them in the nineteenth century.

The other religious doctrine that Mordecai is so much obsessed with is Zionist movement. John Womack states that Jews created the Zionist movement to have a separate nation from other Europeans. As a matter of fact, it was the political movement and created to foster the establishment of the Jewish state. It is based on the idea that Jews wherever they live, constitute a single people. It developed in Europe in the late nineteenth century with the purpose of going to Palestine. To many early Zionists, the location of the future Jewish state was of no importance among the areas contemplated were Argentina and Uganda. But the first world Zionist congress sets its sights on Palestine in order to draw upon the religious tradition which holds that with the coming of the Messiah, Jews will be reunited there and the kingdom of God will be accomplished for the whole of humankind (1999, 240). Therefore, the movement was created for relieving the minority groups' problems which had been created because of tyranny and

oppressive forces for the group in the nineteenth century. The remarkable purposes of the movement are argued by Mordecai in the novel. For instance, he always objects to Jews' dispersion in the society. "If a literature is called rich in the possession of a few classic tragedies, what shall we say to a National Tragedy lasting for fifteen hundred years, in which the poets and the actors were also the heroes?" (Eliot, 2003, 281). Likewise, the representative of Jews in the novel, Mordecai has discussed leaving for Palestine which is the goal of the Zionist movement. He tells Daniel as to the connection of their race with Palestine, it has been perverted by superstition till it's as demoralizing as the old poor-law. Mordecai also points to rationality (Ibid., 291). Yakov M. Rabkin asserts that in the wake of their formal emancipation, some of Jews aspired to a high society (2012, 78). Eliot points out the movement and its remarkable purpose, aspiring to a high society, in the end of the novel. "The preparation for the departure of three Jewish characters of the novel, Mordecai, Mirah, and Daniel to Palestine began at once; Deronda could not deny Ezra's wish that they should set out on the voyage forthwith, so that he might go with them, instead of detaining them to watch over him" (Eliot, 2003, 436). Mordecai's debate over the movement displays his resistance to the dominant power operating within his nation in the nineteenth century. He defends his Jewish fellows that had dealt with the serious problems in the society because of their race and religion. His defense also proves the author's support from the Jews as the minority group in the nineteenth century.

3. Conclusion

As observed, Jews' beliefs such as the Kabalistic ideas and the question of Zionist movement as the religious matters in the nineteenth century have been explored according to the characters' ideas about Jews and as well as their opposition with the ideas. Mordecai's information on the Jewish religious doctrines proves his more knowledge on the Jewish religious creeds rather than other characters in the novel. In order to elucidate Jews' problems in the nineteenth century, Eliot considers the character like Mordecai who has encountered Christian thoughts on his race and religion. In fact, his information on the movement and its religious goal displays Europeans' oppressions to Jews in the nineteenth century. Therefore, Daniel Deronda is a field of knowledge in which the doctrines of Judaism manifest one part of history in the nineteenth century. Likewise, Raymond Williams challenges the historical methodology based upon the assumption that the bases of society such as its political, economic, and social arrangements form the central core of facts of the society. As a whole, literary works can be adduced for demonstrating the facts and a literary methodology which privileged its own formal laws of composition while relegating this central core of facts to the status of background (1961, 62-63). Therefore, the studies of the Jewish religious identity and the repressive power operating within Jews are suggestive of one part of history and culture in the nineteenth century which has been described in Daniel Deronda.

The dominant power has been clarified through the Christian characters' opinions on Jews. With respect to the religious issues, power/knowledge and power/resistance have been discussed in more detail through Daniel, Mr. Lapidoth, Mirah, and Mordecai's personal conducts. As mentioned above, Mordecai was a mystical and spiritual agent of Jews and depicted Jewish religious creeds thoroughly. His religious guides lead to Daniel's acceptance of Jews and Judaism. Daniel's acceptance proves that Eliot's views on Jews in her time. Considering the events of the novel and the characters' beliefs, it can be concluded that Eliot has held a positive view on Jews in the nineteenth century. Likewise, Gertrude Himmelfarb declares that Eliot, unlike most of her contemporaries understood the Jewish question as a question of the relation of Jews to themselves, to their own people and their own world (2009, 148). Suzanne Smith asserts that Eliot's discussion of the highly favorable Jewish response to Daniel Deronda reminds us the Jewish community of her own time, far from rejecting accounts of Jewish community, generally embraced it (2010, 254).

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