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Opole

DISCOURSE ON THE DISCOURSE OF POWER: IN SEARCH OF A THEORY

'Discourse is not life: its time is not your time; in it you will not be reconciled to death; you may have killed God beneath the weight of all that you have said; but don't imagine that, with all that you are saying, you will make a man that will live longer than he'.

Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with state-of-mind and understanding. The intelligibility of something has always been articulated even before there is any appropriative interpretation of it. Discourse is the Articulation of intelligibility.

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*

Among much discussed concepts that constitute the rhetoric and substance of contemporary literary criticism is the concept of discourse [*discours*, *Rede*]. Like ideology and the non-referential account of signification, the notion of discourse has been imported into literary studies from non-literary disciplines. While ideology derives from Marxism, and speculations about the sign from structural and post-structural theory, the notion of discourse, closely associated with the notions of power and knowledge, has taken its beginning from what has been called "human sciences" [*sciences humaines*] comprising such disciplines as psychology, sociology, history and cultural studies, and is attributed mainly to the work of Michel Foucault (cf. Lentricchia & McLaughlin 1990, p. 53 or Freadman and Miller 1992, p. 166).

Foucault himself, however, offered different accounts of discourse at different times, from the simplest definition: "For discourse is merely representation" (Foucault 1970) to a non-definition: "The description of the events of discourse poses a quite different question: how is it that

one particular statement appeared rather than another" (Foucault 1972). Some theorists, Norris (*Discourse of Poetry*, 1993), Freadman and Miller (1992), Nead (1988), among others, formulate a thesis that Foucault, throughout his long academic career, has not worked out a clear, operational definition, or sets of definitions, of what he has meant by this fundamental term for the history (or to use a favourite word from his glossary - *archéologie*) of Western systems of thought. What is more, Nead claims that he was inconsistent in the use of the term even within a single work, his much acclaimed three-volume *The History of Sexuality* (*La Volonté de savoir*) (see Lynda Nead 1988, p. 4).

In probably the most important book for the analysis of the meaning of discourse ever written by him, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) (*L'Archéologie du savoir*, 1969), Michel Foucault put to use the notion of discourses to denote "large groups of statements" based on the unity of "various strategic possibilities that permit the activation of incompatible themes or, again, the establishment of the same theme in different groups of statement" (1972, p. 37). As Jeremy Hawthorn (1994, p. 49) aptly argues, these "strategic possibilities" are

comparable to a limited extent to one possible usage of the term REGISTER in Linguistics. Thus for Foucault at the given moment in the history of, say, France, there will be a particular discourse of medicine: a set of rules and CONVENTIONS and SYSTEMS of MEDIATION and transposition which govern the way illness and treatment are talked about, when, where, and by whom.

Thus, the definition, or we should say rather one of the usages of the term *register* as quoted above, seems to have certain parallels with what Foucault calls a *discursive formation*, a term he uses virtually interchangeably with discourse (1972, p. 38):

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*.

What is essentially at stake in a handful of ideas concerning discourse formulated at different times by Foucault is that discourse basi-

cally denotes talk. *Collins English Dictionary* (Third Edition Updated 1994, p. 449) provides us with a whole range of meanings of "discourse," the most obvious, as it seems, being "verbal communication; talk; conversation" (sense 1). Also the subsequent use (sense 2) - "a formal treatment of a subject in speech or writing, such as a sermon or dissertation" - corresponds largely to a commonsensical understanding of the term. Oddly enough, the use of the noun "discourse" to denote "(a) talk; (a) conversation" is referred to by *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (NSOED 1993, p. 668) as "now literary or archaic". However, what is worth pointing out is that NSOED also defines "discourse" as "conversational power" [my emphasis] thus suggesting an existence of some sort of an organic link between discourse and power.

Nonetheless, there is still a question remaining unanswered whether all the possibilities inherent in the term discourse have been exhausted. Is it at all possible to come up with a convincing definition of the concept of discourse? Can we "identify" discourse in terms of a system (any system) of knowledge?

In his essay "Discourse," published in *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Lentricchia & McLaughlin 1990, p. 53), Paul de Bové throws the discussion of discourse into the realm of 'non-being' by claiming that

we can no longer easily ask such questions as, What is discourse? or What does discourse mean? In other words, an essay like the present one not only does not but cannot provide definitions, nor can it answer what come down to essentializing questions about the "meaning" or "identity" of some "concept" named "discourse".

And further on (p. 53):

to ask them and to force an answer would be, in advance, hopelessly to prejudice the case against understanding the function of "discourse" either in its post-structuralist context or in its existence as an *institutionalized system for the production of knowledge in regulated language* [emphasis mine]. To be more precise, poststructuralists hold that these essentializing questions emerge from the very interpretative models of thought which the new focus on "discourse" [by Foucault] as a material practice aims to examine and trace.

This formalistic denial of any "essentializing meaning" of discourse shown above simultaneously emphasises its functional aspect. To

understand the idea of discourse correctly as it is used in contemporary literary theory and practice, we have to attempt to position it within other analytic and theoretical concepts that exist as transformations of one another. The aim of discourse viewed functionally is, as it seems, to seek a linkage between knowledge, power and institutions as they intersect in the functions of systems of thought.

In Foucauldian poststructuralism these three constitutive elements of discourse, i.e. knowledge, power and social institutions, play a fundamental role in defining what is and what is not discourse. It has been a common thing to believe, at least within a broadly understood realm of literary studies, that everything is discourse, which, consequently, has led to a false assumption that everything is fictive since everything discursive is basically fictive. Even Foucault himself has been quoted as saying: "I am fully aware that I have never written anything other than fictions" (in Morris and Patton 1979, p. 74). Therefore, it seems indispensable in this place to clarify at least two fundamental premises from which stems discourse power theory. The first one is that we do not have access to independently existing reality, which, in turn, implies that discourse is not a medium to reflect the world faithfully as it stands before us and is. The second premise is that we cannot get outside of discourse and access anything beyond it. A corollary that follows is of a methodological character: discourse is all we can talk about or know (cf. Freadman & Miller 1992, p. 162).

Thus, as we have stated before, knowledge, or what we know, is one of the key notions in Foucauldian discourse theory. By many theorists outside of Foucault's circle, however, knowledge has been held to denote what is viewed to be a commonsensical understanding of the term, namely, the state of knowing or, more precisely, the state humans attain after discovering some (objective) truths about reality. There is no doubting that there is a false thread in that commonsense assertion for the simple reason that truth (or truths) cannot be conceived objectively, and remain very much part of the domain of relativity and subjectivity. Even if we refer to a dictionary (Collins 1994, p. 860), we shall not find anything much different from our position: "the facts, feelings or experiences known by a person or group of people" (sense 1), or: "awareness, consciousness, or familiarity gained by experience or learning" (sense 3). All these definitions presuppose knowledge to be something internal to the agent (the "knower"), whereas what Foucauldian poststructural discourse theory claims is that knowledge is externally given

in a form (structured set) of "statements" or "large groups of statements" (we notice here a striking resemblance between what Foucault understands by discursive formation and knowledge in the above sense).

It must be admitted, however, that these "statements" do not need to be necessarily either true or false in an objective sense; they are considered to be perspectives characteristic of a given society, social group or institution (cf. functional aim of discourse). Consequently, no form of knowledge can be objective, and there is a definite distinction between reality (an outside world, an object) and discourse about knowledge of this reality. Thus, inevitably, we are faced with a question about the conditions for discourse to be objectively true in relationships with reality and knowledge about this reality. Freadman and Miller (1992, p. 172) state conclusively that

as soon as the discourse power theorist introduces the notion of reality at some level, and as soon as he/she distinguishes between reality and discourse about knowledge of that reality, then objective truth and falsehood necessarily enter the picture. That is, discourse will be objectively true if the world is as the discourse says it is; conversely it will be objectively false where the world is not as it is.

Obviously enough, it is not a defining condition of discourse to be objectively true; in a broadly understood discourse of poetry, for instance, it is quite natural to formulate statements that are by definition objectively false ("I, by loves limbecke, am the grave/ of all, that's nothing." - John Donne, "A Nocturnall Upon S. Lucies Day, Being the Shortest Day"). The only necessary condition of discourse is that it possess meaning:

The importance of this distinction [between meaning and truth] is that just as the notion of an objectively existing world, so the notion of meaning brings with it the notion of subject. This is because there is no such thing as meaning per se; there can only ever be meaning for some person or persons. Meaning, in other words, is inherently subjective [emphasis mine]: unlike trees and grass, it could not exist in a world without subjects. It follows, therefore, that the attempt to characterise discourse, and therefore meaning, as something wholly objective is mistaken. (Freadman and Miller, 1992, p. 173)

The second constitutive element in the Foucauldian model of discourse is power. Because of space limitation, however, we shall restrict

ourselves only to a few introductory remarks and definitions here. There have been a lot of controversies in regard to the notion of power in literary theory, especially among those who somehow misunderstood or misinterpreted Foucault's classic statement: "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault 1978, p. 93). Some discourse power theorists (e.g. Said 1983) went to extremes by claiming that everything is power or that everything arises from power. In one of his major publications, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983), Edward W. Said, the most profound follower of Foucault in the U.S.A., emphasises the pressures (the "power") of reality which constrain the possibility of knowledge. Exploring the problematic of texts' "worldliness," he ultimately reaches a conclusion that all texts are "worldly" (referential) and they result from and are reflected by "ownership, authority, power and the imposition of force". By the same token, Said argues that, although the power of the critic does not assume the form of an authority over the text, his/her role is to produce "powerful discourse". Notwithstanding Foucault's (and Said's) claim of the "omnipresence of power" (Foucault 1978), our use of this master term in the "discourse of power" we are putting forward will decidedly be more restrictive. Says Foucault (1978, p. 92):

It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system.

Our definition, however, will have much to do with the power of positive production, with the ability to open up possibilities of creative action, with a Nietzschean feeling of power which is achieved by tracing back something *unknown* to something *known*, something from the realm of disquiet, anxiety and fear to something that can be accessed, tackled, got hold of, explained. In the light of the above, our discourse of power is entering the stage where it is becoming a discourse of power to access power. Thus, the power we are talking about is the power to raise and put forth questions, the most fundamental questions of human existence, and, at the same time, it is the power enabling us to formulate answers (although we are aware, following Heidegger's words contained

in *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (1935), that the ability to construct questions is far more important than the ability to actually answer them). As Bové (p. 54) has it:

the power of positive production: that is, a kind of power that generates certain kinds of questions, placed within systems that legitimate, support, and answer these questions; a kind of power that, in the process, includes within its systems all those it produces as agents capable of acting within them.

In our discourse of(f)/on power (or with power on/off, to make use of an inevitable pun), we are dealing with this notion extensively not only in highly abstract contexts (such as the one above), but also, to a lesser extent, in the ones that would suggest denotations such as force (physical, mental or other), domination, aggression, repression or violence. It should be noted, however, that the notion of, for instance, aggression will basically be referred to as man's (the poet's/poets') ability to perform powerful (and also violent) gestures leading to perforation of the shell of inauthentic existence. Thus, aggression will be transgression, trespassing of someone else's territory, someone else's cell(f) in which he/she is confined. It will also be an ability to break free from a prisonhouse of language, a legacy of two and half millennia of logocentricism, and to endeavour a return to pre-Socratic, *pre-ogical* discourse.

However, what needs emphasis at this point is that force, like power in Foucault, constitutes in Martin Heidegger's ontology a positive, constructive rather than destructive, element. In the process of thinking things through, the "through" assumes a force of *penetration* (one cannot fail to notice some underlying sexual overtones), and in effect every inanimate and animate presence becomes a clearing in which Being (*Sein*) manifests itself. The discourse of power, or violence, as one may have it, will then be generated by gestures like these: the movement of pen(cil/is) on the body of paper/on the paper of body, a coming out of an unconcealment into the light, clearing (*Lichtung*), a (mad)man's cry or tight-rope dance.

The last element in the functional definition of discourse modelled on Foucauldian poststructuralism as we have provided earlier are institutions as they intersect along with knowledge and power in the systems of thought. However, what is at stake in our discussion is not so much discourses of the institutions that produce them, as sociologists

claim. Rather, and we agree here with what literary theorists assert, it is the discourses that produce institutions, and therefore those discourses will come into the focus of our attention. As argued by Foucault (see his *Histoire de la Folie*, 1961, translated into English as *Madness and Civilization. A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, 1967), those institutions only sustain and distribute discourses by and thanks to which they have been generated. Thus, we are not talking about institutions that have power in a very ordinary sense: in the sense that they are able to exert and exercise it over others, sometimes by coercion, sometimes by physical repression, persecution and psychological oppression (governments, prisons, schools, etc.). Rather, we are talking about discourses that make such forms of power possible; we mean here, among other things, the discourses that produced, created, and generated a new man - Nietzsche's *Übermensch* or *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* or Aristotle's "magnanimous" man of *Nicomachean Ethics* - the man of excess, of surplus of power. We are again referring to Paul A. Bové (in Lentricchia & McLaughlin 1990, p. 58) who pointedly remarks that:

Power must not be thought of as negative, as repression, domination, or inhibition. On the contrary, it must always be seen as "a making possible," as an opening up of fields in which certain kinds of action and production are brought about. As power disperses itself, it opens up specific fields of possibility; it constitutes entire domains of action, knowledge, and social being by shaping the institutions and disciplines in which, for the most part, we largely make ourselves.

To repeat the main point again: discourse produces knowledge about humans and their society and it is basically power, among other things, that makes possible certain kinds of questions and statements (or groups of statements). Discourse or discourses - if we consider different kinds of them characteristic for/of the institution[s] that [have been] produced [by] them - are discontinuous by nature, that is to say, they do not have either a specific, decisive beginning nor end. Their discontinuity so defined presupposes, in turn, their centrelessness, lack of origin, anonymity. In *L'Ordre du discours*, Foucault asserts categorically that "[d]iscourses must be treated as discontinuous practices which intersect and are sometimes juxtaposed, but which also know nothing of one another or exclude one another". Thus, we can conclusively state that discourse and the "realities" it constructs (hence the constructivism of a

postmodernist approach) remain inherently anonymous, i.e. no given perspective depends upon the viewpoint of any actually existing person or group of people ("practices which ... know nothing of one another"). That, of course, also excludes an ideological interpretation of discourse: discourse is not the product of a particular class (or class conflicts as Marxism may have it); it is rather skeptical and relativistic as are the 'truths' it constructs within the frames of disciplinary structures.

In Althusserian Marxism, however, discourse is viewed as a linguistic manifestation of ideology serving the interests of particular social classes or groups of people (a community - not unrelated individuals or any individual person). Based on the premise that ideology is that force which strategically obscures access to real states of affairs (or "realities" discourse constructs), which results in incapability of ideological texts of offering authentic representation of reality, Freadman and Miller (1992, p. 3) assert that literary texts

like any linguistic object, [...] can and do possess another kind of power: the power to construct or replicate accounts of the world that serve the interests of ascendant social classes or groups. This amounts to a kind of linguistic power in the service of political power, and the language which operates in this socially reproductive fashion (some claim that *all* language operates thus) is termed 'discourse'.

On this account, "literature," as an ideological category, ceases to be an object of literary theory and criticism and becomes its adversary. What is worth noting in Marxist notion of discourse, however, is the contention that language is (re)productive and as such is referred to as discourse. And now we are arriving at a significant and consequential point in our considerations on discourse: since, as poststructuralists claim, it works to produce knowledge in language, and is, according to (Althusserian) Marxists, the language which operates in socially reproductive fashion, language therefore is what has essentially been understood by discourse in contemporary literary theory (theories). Although in numerous texts (Bové 1990, Freadman and Miller 1992 or Norris 1993

¹ Michel Foucault, *L'Ordre du discours*. Paris: Gallimard, 1971, pp. 54-55. Translated by R. Swyers as "Orders of Discourse," in *Social Sciences Information*, Vol. 10, No. 2, April 1971, republished as "The Discourse on Language," appendix to the U.S. Edition of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 215-237, and as "Order of Discourse," in M. Shapiro (ed.), *Language and Politics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1984.

in Greenfield, ed.) these two notions are treated as identical, Easthope (1983), in his analysis of a model of poetic discourse, postulates to bring out a difference between the two. He argues (1983, p. 8) that

[I]inguistics, the science which takes language as its object, can show how an utterance takes its place in the system of language at levels up to and including the sentence. It cannot show how and why one sentence connects with another into a cohesive whole: this is a matter of discourse.

In his conclusive statement we read (1983, p. 8):

Discourse, then, is a term which specifies the way the sentences form a consecutive order, take part in a whole which is homogeneous as well as heterogeneous. And just as sentences join together in discourse to make up an individual text, so texts themselves join others in a larger discourse.

Unmistakably, Easthope's understanding of theory is strongly grounded in what may be referred to as mainstream structuralist literary criticism. His definition of discourse relies heavily on the theoretical assumptions worked out by T. S. Eliot and articulated in "Tradition and the individual talent" (1966), where he describes the relation between tradition and the individual poem. Despite his claims to poststructuralism, Easthope's approach remains predominantly structuralist in constructing theoretical models of discourse based on the principle of its presupposed *order*, along with an assumption of a structural, vertical hierarchy, from a sentence, through an individual text, then texts to finally a larger discourse. However structuralist his approach may seem, we have to agree with Easthope's general assertion (after Mukařovsky 1933) that, like language, "poetry is not to be treated as a discourse which refers to a reality" (1983, p. 17). Our conviction is that all texts, however defined, be they "poetic", "prosaic" or other (there is no fundamental difference between genres as texts, even authors are texts - to repeat Derrida's origin of catechism), do not have a referential character, at least as claimed by (de)constructivist anti-humanist theory, nor can be defined in terms of any kind of reflectability. What they do have, however, is the ability to construct - but not to reflect or describe - reality, or to be more precise, many "realities". Therefore, naturally, language, likewise texts and discourse, are denied representational power. We follow Freadman and Miller (1992, pp. 2-3) in arguing that

language does not reflect or refer to some independently existing reality; rather, it somehow 'constructs' that reality. Since they are made of language, literary texts may participate in this construction of reality, but given that there is no reality independent of the activity of construction, they cannot, once again, possess authentic *representational power* [my emphasis].

We cannot thus simply claim that, as we have mentioned at the outset of this paper, "discourse is mere representation" or that it possesses "representational power". The kind of power it does possess is basically the power deeply rooted in social relations, since, as many theorists before and after Foucault argued, the largest form of power is civil society and the state (see for instance Smart 1983, pp. 119-120). If we look at language not from the perspective of "linguistics, the science that takes language as its object" as suggested above by Easthope, but from the wider perspective of what is called "human sciences", we shall undoubtedly come to a conclusion that language has become in recent decades a model for all understanding, having taken the place of all-encompassing reason. To a considerable extent this has been due to a failure of Kantian and post-Kantian idealism which took for granted man as the transcendental subject of knowledge and thus as both source and judge of his cognitive powers. The collapse and rejection of rationalism and later on of "subjective" and "objective" idealism as self-deceiving and self-deluding practices - since it is impossible to escape the relativity of knowledge by appealing to absolute, "disinterested" reason - gave rise to a renewed interest in language as a cognitive tool - we think here of Martin Heidegger's etymology on which he founded his phenomenology and ontology, Charles Peirce's semiology, or Jacques Derrida's grammatology.

Michel Foucault in *Les Mots et les Choses. Une archeologie des sciences humaines* (1966), translated into English as *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1970), formulated a general contention that language constitutes the very condition and ultimate horizon - the limit-point or condition of possibility of human knowledge. This contention, which remained for quite a long time a kind of motto or generally upheld view (to say the least) among poststructuralists, was fervently attacked by deconstructivists and postmodernists, Christopher Norris (1993 in Greenfield, ed.) among others. Commenting upon the adherents of this view, among whom were also Symbolist poets, and the effects of *mise-en-abyme* (literally, to throw

into the abyss, denoting recurring internal duplication of images, the technique often used by experimental writers), Norris concludes:

If indeed it is the case that all truth-claims and subject-positions are inscribed within a pre-existent discourse [he identifies here, after poststructuralists, discourse with language, R.W.], then clearly one cannot "step back" from that discourse in order to criticise its "meaning, its conditions, and its goals".²

It is noteworthy that in one of his last interviews with Paul Rabinow before his premature death, Foucault gave convincing evidence of a departure from the stronghold of his view that the dissolution of anthropocentric discourse has been manifested by the advent of language as the ultimate limit-point for thought by conceding the irreducibility of "thought" to "language": "The work of philosophical and historical reflection is put back into the field of the work of thought only on condition that one clearly grasps problematization not as an arrangement of representations but as a work of thought" (Interview 390, quoted in Greenfield ed. 1993, p. 275). His latest doctrine, owing much to Nietzsche, referred to language as "the site of unending - if endlessly *ædecentred* - struggles for power".

As regards discourse, Heidegger confirms in *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*, translated into English in 1962) our preliminary thesis that discourse denotes talk and is an existential foundation of language: "The existential-ontological foundation of language is discourse or talk. [...] *Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with state of mind or understanding.* [...] It underlines both interpretation and assertion" (p. 161). Discourse, as specifically human phenomenon ("*existentially equiprimordial with state of mind and understanding*"), has been granted a significantly high status in Heidegger's ontology (we remember that it is in and through language that Being reveals itself in disclosedness, and the existential-ontological foundation of language is discourse, as stated above). As mentioned in one of this paper's epigraphs, "discourse is the Articulation of intelligibility," and thus it is the basis for interpretation and assertion, two most cardinal intellectual activities of humans. Characteristic of his style of writing and reasoning, he repeats in the same paragraph his argument on the connection between

² Christopher Norris, "Foucault and Philosophy," in: *Southern Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2. July 1993. Adelaide: University of Adelaide.

discourse and Being, paraphrasing it only slightly by designating discourse as "worldly": "If discourse, as the Articulation of the intelligibility of the "there," is a primordial *existentiale* of disclosedness, and if disclosedness is primarily constituted by Being-in-the-world [Dasein, defined in the other place as, for instance, the inquirers into Being, in other words - us, R. W.], then discourse too must have essentially a kind of Being which is specifically *worldly*" (p. 161). What is basically at stake here is that discourse is "worldly" (possesses a "worldly" kind of Being) because it is an essential part of man's *Being-in-the-world*. "Worldly," therefore, denotes a state of belonging to the world, the world of Dasein [Being-there], which is patently and fundamentally *Being-there-in-the-world*. Thus, "worldly" is the worldly of the world into which Being has been thrown and is part of it. Discourse is worldly means that it is characteristic of Dasein's *Being-in-the-world*, or in other words, (essential) part of man's life (in the world) is discourse, his ability to talk, which is as important a faculty, and specific for his Being, as reason (state-of-mind) and understanding.

Heidegger finishes off his argument by reiterating that "[t]he intelligibility of Being-in-the-world - an intelligibility which goes with a state-of-mind - *expresses itself as discourse*" (p. 161). The phrase "expresses itself" [*spricht sich...aus*] is an intricate one, especially as far as its translation is concerned. Bearing in mind Heidegger's classic axiom "Die Sprache spricht" - language speaks - we would rather understand it as "speaks itself out" or at least as "expresses itself" (which, on the other hand, would signal some kind of inner force or *pressure* on part of "the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world" in its disclosedness, in its coming-out-of-concealment). This remark is of particular significance especially in the context of Heidegger's insistence on Being's movement from within to without, emergence *from*, coming *out*, etc. Very frequently what in Heidegger is "being spoken out" is taken (or rather *mistaken*) for a pure verbalism, a rhetoric figure, an *expression* of something that is commonly, and erroneously, associated with words as "wrappings for things". Obviously, this is not only due to some kind of conscious misinterpretation of Heidegger's thought or unavoidable misreading (in Derrida's *expression*, "reading is misreading"), the difficulty lies here also, or perhaps first of all, in the impossibility of rendering Heidegger's highly abstract notions in (good) English. Consider this: "Die Hinausgesprochenheit der Rede ist die Sprache" (p. 161), which has been translated (by Macquarrie and Robinson, *Being and Time*, 1962) as

"[t]he way in which discourse gets expressed is language," which, on the one hand, does not sound particularly well for someone who is not familiar with Heidegger's thought, but, on the other hand, is decidedly better than "the state of getting-spoken-out-of discourse is language," which is closer to (Heidegger's) truth.

In conclusion, we argue that discourse denotes basically and fundamentally talk expressed in language, which serves as a model for all understanding and intelligibility, and the power it possesses is deeply rooted in social relations.

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DYSKURS NA TEMAT DYSKURSU WŁADZY/MOCY

Streszczenie

Celem powyższego artykułu jest próba prezentacji pojęcia dyskursu [*discourse, discours, Rede*] od foucaultiańskich formacji dyskursywnych i heideggerowskiego stanu umysłu i rozumienia, po krytykę marksowskiego - w ujęciu althusseriańskim - pojmowania dyskursu jako minifestacji określonej ideologii.

Autor stawia tezę, że dyskurs to zasadniczo i fundamentalnie mówienie i, biorąc swój początek z nauk humanistycznych [*sciences humaines*], jest głęboko zakotwiczony w pojęciach takich jak władza/moc [*power, pouvoir*] i wiedza [*knowledge, savoir*]. Wychodząc z przesłanki, iż bezpośredni dostęp do niezależnie istniejącej rzeczywistości jest niemożliwy - co powoduje, że dyskurs nie jest medium, które odzwierciedlało by świat wiernie takim jaki jest, oraz że nie jest możliwe wyjście poza dyskurs - dyskurs jest wobec tego wszystkim, o czym możemy mówić czy wiedzieć, autor dochodzi do wniosku, że dyskurs nie ma - w równym stopniu jak język i tekst - charakteru referencyjnego, ma natomiast zdolność do konstruowania rzeczywistości, a moc jaką posiada jest głęboko zakorzeniona w relacjach społecznych.