



**ESPACIO
ABIERTO**

Cuaderno Venezolano de Sociología

Volumen 34 No. 4 (Octubre-Diciembre) 2025, pp. 139-157
ISSN 1315-0006. Depósito legal pp 199202zu44
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16950405>

Concept of Analysis in The Context of Critical Thinking

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Abstract

In this study, the effect of the concept of analysis in Michel Foucault understands of knowledge on his general way of thinking and the type of critical thinking he wanted to create will be investigated. Although analysis is directly related to the analytical way of thinking in terms of Aristotelian logic, it is characterized separately from this context in Foucault's thought. While Foucault positions analysis at the center of change in the context of the archaeological method, analysis in the Aristotelian sense is analytically focused. These ways of thinking, which are different from each other and often contradict each other, attribute different qualities to a common concept. In this study, the points where the meaning attributed to analysis in Foucault differs from the analytical way of thinking in the context of its relationship with other basic concepts will be included

Keywords: Logic; Analysis; Aristotle; Foucault; Criticism; Archeology

El concepto de análisis en el contexto del pensamiento crítico

Resumen

En este estudio, se aborda el efecto del concepto de análisis en la concepción del conocimiento de Michel Foucault sobre su forma general de pensar y el tipo de pensamiento crítico que pretendía crear. Si bien el análisis está directamente relacionado con el pensamiento analítico en términos de la lógica aristotélica, se caracteriza de forma independiente de este contexto en el pensamiento de Foucault. Mientras que Foucault sitúa el análisis en el centro del cambio en el contexto del método arqueológico, el análisis en el sentido aristotélico se centra en el análisis. Estas formas de pensar, que difieren entre sí y a menudo se contradicen, atribuyen cualidades diferentes a un concepto común. En este estudio, se incluirán los puntos en los que el significado atribuido al análisis en Foucault difiere del pensamiento analítico en el contexto de su relación con otros conceptos básicos.

Palabras clave: Lógica; Análisis; Aristóteles; Foucault; Crítica; Arqueología

Introduction

As Analysis, which is considered synonymous with the word analysis in the dictionary, is the separate examination of each part of the problem. This examination is used to refer to the process carried out to investigate the relationship with a whole. Analysis in the philosophical sense involves making a belief or theory more understandable by examining its components, presuppositions and implications, and identifying possible implicit meanings it carries/may carry (Cevizci, 2013). This concept, which has Greek origins, has basic meanings such as simplifying, minimizing, and solving, as well as the characteristics of determining the components of the building blocks that form/create the concept and revealing the relationships between them (Rızatepe, 2003). Analysis is the process that aims to examine a thought, concept or argument by breaking it down into simpler and more understandable parts. The analysis of the logical and linguistic structure of a concept or argument allows its accuracy, consistency and meaning to be questioned. The questioning process in question discusses the basic assumptions that constitute the problem as well as its linguistic, logical and epistemological contexts (Audi, 2020). Thus, the meaning of the concept is determined through linguistic analysis, the validity of the arguments is determined through structural correctness of the arguments through logical analysis, and the control of knowledge is ensured through determination of the nature of true knowledge through epistemological analysis.

The definitions and qualifications of analysis, which are considered in line with Aristotelian logic based on analytical thinking, can be considered as a determined and static element that prioritizes linguistic, logical and epistemological contexts. Thus, analysis in Aristotelian logic also finds a place in the issue of checking the findings by serving the search for definitive knowledge. On the other hand, although the concept of analysis serves the purposes expressed in the definitional sense in Foucault's system of thought to a certain extent, he rather considers analysis in relation to the basic concepts that constitute

his system. Because, according to Foucault, a philosophical analysis is possible to the extent that it enables the production of alternative meanings/interpretations by examining the other conceptual networks that constitute it and with which it is related (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983).

All concepts such as archaeology, genealogy, historicity, knowledge, and power that constitute Foucault's system of thought have a structure in which they are either examples of analysis or used as an intermediary method of analysis (Foucault, 2013). In other words, according to Foucault's philosophical analysis approach that can be a source of critical thought, the concepts in question are considered beyond their known dictionary meanings. These concepts are reconstructed with an analysis that prioritizes the alternative meanings they contain, as well as the essential qualities that constitute them. Or these constructions are considered together with other contexts within them. Of these, archaeology, especially as an example of continuous transformation, can be evaluated in the context of critical thought in terms of both being a source for other concepts and being characterized as a type of analysis method.

Critical thinking corresponds to a process that includes steps such as analysis, evaluation, interpretation and argument development. Following these steps is research that goes beyond the basic and simple meaning of scientific knowledge and questions the validity of argumentative logic, evidence that has the quality of proof and the findings obtained. Critical thinking, which is/is expected to be one of the basic characteristics of learning and research, is the main motivation of the tradition he wanted to create, especially for Foucault. In this process, knowledge is divided into its parts. Thus, the elements that reveal knowledge, its structure and the assumptions contained in the arguments are revealed (Audi, 2010). At this stage, the arguments of the information can be re-examined in terms of both reliability and validity. During the inspection, especially the knowledge that is purified from prejudices gains a new form. In this way, the knowledge or data is subjected to a new analysis and reaches a quality that allows interpretation. As a result of the interpretation, a new argument is presented as the product of an alternative way of thinking that sometimes changes by being added to the previous one and sometimes carries an independent knowledge and interpretation.

The rapid flow of knowledge, especially the effect of the digital age, has weakened the decision-making, problem-solving and scientific research skills of individuals to a certain extent. Thus, the importance of processes such as developing critical thinking skills, checking and reinterpreting information becomes apparent. This process, which is the subject of the study and includes the steps and goals of Foucault's critical thinking tradition, cannot be considered independently of his understanding of analysis. Understanding Foucault's understanding of analysis is possible by determining the position of analysis in the sense of analytical thinking.

It is clear that, in Foucault's thought, concepts are not scattered, disconnected elements; rather, they are a complex of concepts systematically developed across his various works. This conceptual system is constructed not only by the definitions of individual terms but also by the functional relationships between them. Indeed, in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, he develops the concept of "episteme" and analyzes the deep structures that determine knowledge production, forms of classification, and modes of thought in each historical period. Here, the episteme is an order of knowledge that operates independently of individuals' subjective preferences

and defines the intellectual horizon of a period (Foucault, 1970). This approach is further grounded in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* with the concept of “discursive formation” Here, Foucault uncovers the historical and structural dimensions of knowledge systems by analyzing the rules, relationships, and mechanisms of exclusion that govern the formation of discourses (Foucault, 2013).

This conceptual framework takes on a new dimension with the concept of the “author function,” developed in his article *Authorship: What is An Author?*. According to Foucault, the author is not the absolute source of meaning in a text, but rather the crux of certain discursive functions (Foucault, 1979). This concept points to an ideological mechanism that functions to fix, limit, and control meaning. Thus, the figure of the author is embedded within the conceptual system as a component of knowledge-power relations. This structure is further expanded with the concepts of “disciplinary society” and “panopticon,” developed in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Here, it reveals how individuals are shaped through surveillance, discipline, and normation; it demonstrates that discipline is a technology of power that operates not only in penal institutions but also in all social spheres, from schools to hospitals (Foucault, 1977).

In Foucault’s thought, concepts are not merely descriptive tools but analytical categories that form the basis of critical thought. His concepts, such as epistemes, discursive formations, the authorial function, disciplinary society, and biopolitics, although developed in different works, are part of the same theoretical logic: to analyze the relationships between knowledge, power, and the subject within a historical context. As Gilles Deleuze notes, this triad constructs a coherent problematic that lies at the heart of Foucault’s thought (Deleuze, 1988). In this respect, these concepts cease to be singular descriptions and become a unified theoretical system for critical thought. At the core of critical thought lies the ability to reveal structures beyond the visible and to question established assumptions. Foucault’s conceptual system serves precisely this function, making visible the dependence of thought on its own historical and social conditions.

Analysis in Foucault’s system of thought requires the rejection of fixity, as it is constantly produced and cannot be consumed. In addition, it directly criticizes the dogmatization of knowledge by being incomplete. Therefore, analysis directly contains this quality in addition to Foucault’s general critical attitude. As a natural consequence of the meaning attributed to the concept of analysis, the fact that each analysis is the source of another also reveals its continuity. Thus, analysis reveals the structure of knowledge that can be built upon each other if it is not falsified. In addition, it excludes the purely cumulative understanding of knowledge by allowing the development of an alternative that is completely independent of or contrary to it (Black, 1954).

In summary, the cumulative understanding of knowledge refers to a structure formed by adding new information to information. However, the analysis method goes beyond this type of approach and provides a more in-depth examination aimed at understanding the dynamic and variable nature of scientific knowledge. In addition, analysis approaches existing information and ideas from a critical perspective. In this way, it is also investigated in which contexts information is formed, how it is constructed, and how it is affected by social or historical dynamics. For Foucault, this research can only be possible if it is considered in the context of its relationship with some basic concepts that reflect his way of thinking.

From classical logic to discursive formations: a genealogy of analysis

Archaeology, which has a central importance in Foucault's system of thought, is derived from the concept of arche, which is used in Greek philosophy to mean 'the first thing'. Archaeology, derived from the word arche (Aristotle, 1984), meaning 'basic' or 'essential', is characterized as a type of analysis in Foucault's texts. The analysis process in question is a continuously generated and non-static nature (Foucault, 2013). This state of continuous production brings with it the questioning of the dogmatic and definitive understanding of knowledge and the acceptance of analytical methods. The main reason for this is the requirements of the archaeological analysis that Foucault wants to realize. According to him, the possibility of scientific progress can be revealed by mastering the problems of one's own history, that is, if the periodic and variable qualities are not ignored. The comprehension of these current historical problems is achieved by being aware of the ruptures, limits and transformations that do not directly coincide with the analytical way of thinking. Therefore, determining the points, gaps and limits where the new historical perspective differs from the previous one naturally requires a transformation. Archaeological analysis for the period in question is carried out with these steps (Foucault, 2013). Thus, in Foucault's way of thinking, archaeological analysis can be positioned against a definitive and universal way of thinking, and next to critical thought where historicity and its influence are not ignored, and change is taken as a basis.

In the Aristotelian logic that is the source of the analytical way of thinking and method, the importance of an understanding in which definite knowledge is sought and the determination of the method as the product of this understanding is indisputable for analysis. The analysis process here, unlike in Foucault, is often in the sense of a definite determination or the strongest possibility. The analytical view shaped by Aristotle's understanding of concept, existence and thought becomes functional by using methods such as definition, classification, logical analysis and epistemological analysis (Irwin, 1988). Thus, the essence of the concept and existence is tried to be understood through analytical thinking. In clearer terms, in Aristotle's way of thinking, the structure of existence, the definition and classification of concepts, logical analysis and the analysis of knowledge are only possible with analysis as the product of the analytical perspective.

Under the influence of Aristotle's understanding of analysis and the criticisms brought against him, the problem was addressed more linguistically in the 20th century. Thus, the way was opened for different philosophers to present different analysis qualifications. For example, logical positivists argue that meaning should be limited to facts that can only be observed and verified with experimental data (Ayer, 1952). Their logical analysis views, which aim to leave metaphysics in the background, often only aim to reduce a complex discourse to elementary propositions.

This reductionist symbolic logical analysis method adopted by logical positivism can be criticized on the grounds that it does not allow for the in-depth examination of complex thoughts and concepts. For example, when a thought or concept is intended to be understood by reducing it to simple symbolic propositions, the cultural, social and historical dynamics in the background of the thought must be ignored. The aim of this method is to obtain an analytical result. As a natural result of this, the proposition has a simpler but more definite meaning. The result of the comparison established with the propositions is abstracted from the details that correspond to probability. Thus, the proposition mediates the accession to a fixed inference.

The method Foucault calls “archaeology” can be considered not only a modern analytical technique but also an intellectual stance whose historical roots can be traced to the Aristotelian tradition. While classifying types of knowledge in his *Metaphysics* and *Organon* collections, Aristotle, although not directly examining the historical development of knowledge, revealed the building blocks of thought by conducting a logical analysis of concepts and categories (Aristotle, 1984). This approach shares a formal kinship with Foucault’s concept of “archaeology”: In both, the aim is to uncover the deep structures that determine the formation of discourses, rather than surface discourses. As Foucault describes in *Archaeology of Knowledge*, the archaeological method reveals the historical logic of knowledge itself by analyzing the historical conditions, relationships, and rules of transformation of discursive formations. In this context, the discipline of conceptual analysis inherited from Aristotle was reproduced in a historicized form by Foucault (Foucault, 2013).

However, to claim that Foucault’s archaeology is based solely on the Aristotelian logical tradition would be to narrow down his method. For the rupture in Foucault’s view of knowledge is fundamentally informed by Nietzsche’s understanding of history and knowledge. In his works *The Genealogy of Morals* and *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche argues that knowledge does not follow an absolute and universal trajectory of progress, but rather is shaped by power relations, value judgments, and cultural contexts. This provides a direct epistemic framework to Foucault’s archaeology: knowledge is not a linear “history of reason,” but rather a phenomenon shaped by historical ruptures, discontinuities, and power relations (Nietzsche, 2017; Nietzsche, 1974; Foucault, 2013). Therefore, Foucault’s method has a hybrid structure that combines the legacy of conceptual analysis and classification from Aristotle with Nietzsche’s radical critiques of the discontinuities and power relations of history.

In the context of critical thought, this synthesis serves a twofold function. The Aristotelian discipline ensures analytical clarity of thought by ensuring the meticulous definition and demarcation of concepts. The Nietzschean perspective, on the other hand, prevents the dogmatization of thought by reminding us that these conceptual structures are historic and not independent of power relations. By combining these two legacies, Foucault’s method offers both conceptual rigor and critical flexibility. Thus, archaeology becomes not only a method that excavates discourses of the past but also a critical epistemology that questions the historical and political construction of knowledge itself.

The reduction activity expressed is an attitude of the analytic philosophy tradition starting with Aristotle with its validity and consistency checks. This attitude means that the analysis of a concept or proposition can only be realized with another concept or proposition group that is equivalent to it. However, for the inference in question to have a quality that has reached the requested certainty, the other abstracted parameters must necessarily be left out. Although this inference is not wrong, it is possible for it to turn into a generalization that is incomplete or does not carry the feature of being comprehensive.

In Aristotle’s work called *Analytics*, which is translated into Turkish as ‘analysis’ in some translations, it is noteworthy that the necessary inferences and the search for certainty aimed at knowing the universal are handled. The purpose of determining and ending the boundaries by analysing the concept emerges (Aristotle, 2011). The work in question systematically examines and investigates the effort to reach knowledge and determine its limits. Therefore, the work reflects the search for certainty and stability in the essentialist

tradition of philosophical thought and reveals the method developed for this purpose (Altunya & Acarer, 2023). For Aristotle, analysis means a completely analytical process based on rational and logical inferences to understand the nature and relationships of beings. In this context, Aristotle's analytical approach is built on the search for what is certain and fixed even in metaphysical knowledge. This forms the basic building blocks of his philosophical thought. Thus, two different or sometimes opposing meanings that Aristotle and Foucault attribute to the concept of analysis emerge.

Aristotle's analytical perspective seems consistent in terms of the essentialist tradition. This perspective was not only criticized by Foucault, but also attempted to be refuted by attempting to produce an alternative method such as an archaeological analysis that is not independent of historicity. Therefore, for Foucault, the concept in question means continuity and transformation, which are qualities that can also be shown as examples of critical thought (McHoul & Grace, 1993). This perspective is related to the search for what is definite and fixed in Aristotle's thought.

More clearly, Foucault's concept of analysis can be seen as a criticism of Aristotle's analytical perspective. On the other hand, Foucault does not only criticize a certain structure in the system of thought. At the same time, he developed an archaeological analysis proposal by emphasizing that this structure is not independent of the historical and social context. According to Foucault, the relations between knowledge and power shape the subjectivation processes of individuals (Foucault, 1980). The dynamics of these processes exist in a constant transformation and change. Therefore, for Foucault, analysis adopts a continuous transformation in the historical and cultural context rather than a search for a fixed reality. In addition, it can be expressed as a method that encourages critical thinking.

Archaeology, a kind of method for Foucault, aims to reveal the products of different discourse areas from a pluralistic perspective rather than to determine a fixed result. This variability has led Foucault to describe archaeology as an analysis method specific to local discourses (Foucault, 2003). Foucault's archaeological analysis method aims not only to reach a certain result, but also to ensure the continuity of the knowledge production process and to reveal the dynamics of these processes. It can be said that archaeological analysis, which allows for continuous interpretation because each of them is a source for the other, develops a multidimensional discourse and understanding of truth or emerges as a product of this understanding.

In relation to a pluralistic discourse and understanding of truth, every data presented by archaeological analysis is naturally historical. Here, historicity is the guarantor of both change and continuity. Because historicity contains within itself all kinds of building blocks related to the period in which knowledge emerged. It also prevents any of these from being attributed a universal quality. In this case, knowledge is meaningful and valid only as long as its own historical qualities are sustainable and the parameters that create and control it continue to exist. Therefore, the understanding of analysis in question is not constructed by Foucault as a kind of introduction to science and a main method, but as a field of application in the context of its own historicity (Foucault, 2013).

In Aristotle's analytical way of thinking, historicity is mostly associated with concepts such as time, change and causality. He considers time, which he describes as the measure of movement, as a unit of measurement for the change and movement of beings. Thus, historicity only takes place in time. And it points to the pattern of movement (Aristotle,

1994). In addition, Aristotle, who evaluates historicity in the context of understanding the phenomenon and event, explains this process with the doctrine of four causes (Aristotle, 1984), which he classifies as matter, form, final and moving causes. Because, according to him, the events and facts to be discussed in the historical context emerge in line with the result or telos (Aristotle, 2009) through the connection of these four causes, primarily the final cause. In this context, historicity is characterized by being associated with the universal in Aristotle. Because historical events, as a manifestation of his analytical way of thinking, are meaningful when they can be expressed objectively. This view of historicity, which can be linked to Aristotle's views on natural philosophy, is used as a tool in his effort to determine the order that is appropriate to nature and universal.

Unlike Foucault, historicity has no direct place as a terminological concept in Aristotle's epistemology. Because he examines the concepts of knowledge (episteme) and wisdom (Sophia) with universal principles, observation and experiment. Aristotle basically classifies knowledge as general (episteme) and specific (techne) with a dual classification. According to Aristotle, what is essential are the findings regarding universal principles that point to general knowledge (Ross, 1955). In his way of thinking, knowledge changes and evolves with the influence of time, historical contexts and historical processes. Knowledge is not the subject of epistemology because it contains subjective qualities. Because, according to him, universal knowledge, which is the subject of epistemology, is timeless and does not change in nature.

Historicity is only one of the external factors that affect subjective knowledge. However, even in this case, change occurs in accordance with universal truths, natural laws and principles. The principles that are the basic criteria for obtaining knowledge (for example, observation, logic, causality) are independent of time. Therefore, even if scientific knowledge changes and transforms in a historical context, it is not possible for a universal law or principle to change. Because they are not subject to historicity.

In addition to historicity, archaeology is considered as a method used in understanding local discourses in Foucault's system of thought (Foucault, 2013). The purpose of this is to comprehend the present. Similarly, the analysis of the local but discontinuous aspect, that is, the aspect that affects the present based on past data, is possible with genealogy. In this context, genealogy, which is also related to historicity, covers more local research. For this reason, it is far from universal certainty and therefore from obtaining an analytical result. The following is understood from the claims of this method, which emerges as the product of a kind of search for truth that includes continuity and change. The analysis used in genealogy is entirely aimed at understanding (Foucault, 1984). Only the element that makes understanding possible can be the source of new meanings with all kinds of new parameters. This attitude, unlike the analytical view, is changing. In addition, it is not fixed due to being constructed on a pluralistic understanding of truth.

At this point, a connection can be established between Aristotle, who characterizes analytics as analysis, not a science, and Foucault, who considers analysis as a method in which local discourses are the subject. However, this relationship, which can be established on a common concept, is different in the way of thinking that creates the meaning attributed to the concept. Due to this difference, the meaning attributed to the concept of analysis is not overlapping, but rather diverging. More clearly, Aristotle secures his goal with the analysis contained in the practical structure of analytical thinking developed for the determination of the premises that constitute the syllogism (Aristotle, 2011) and the

premises that form it, which are operated on formal rules and from which definite data are expected to be obtained. The aim in Foucault's way of thinking is to obtain functional data that is determined by historical understanding, which is uncertain, changing and is desired to change based on its own conditions, with an archaeological and genealogical analysis method. In other words, in Foucault's way of thinking based on change, the aim is to determine what is functional. In Aristotle, the aim is to reveal what is definite in the search for the universal.

Aristotle uses analysis as a tool for definite and determined categories in line with his analytical way of thinking. Foucault, on the other hand, adopts a much more layered and transforming understanding of analysis. Aristotle aims to investigate existence in its essence. Foucault tries to understand the individual with his social context together with power relations. In Aristotle's epistemology, the essence of knowledge is the determination of objective and unchanging qualities. In Foucault, knowledge can be evaluated independently of neither power and its relations nor social and societal structures (Foucault, 2013). For these reasons, scientific knowledge is investigated through the universal in Aristotle. In Foucault, the changing nature of knowledge is essential. The method that allows the application of both searches is realized by operating the analysis together with the meaning it is given in the context of its own ways of thinking. Therefore, the same concept serves different purposes within the scope of different ways of thinking. It is normal for the concept to have an opposite meaning in both ways of thinking, yet it is used as a basic method.

For Foucault's way of thinking, where conceptual patterns and relationships are accepted as the basis, historicity should be considered together with analysis, like archaeology and genealogy. The difference here is that, unlike the other two concepts, which directly include analysis as a method, analysis is used as an indirect or intermediary method in determining historicity. In archaeology and genealogy, analysis methods are directly adopted, and the aim is to reveal historical data (Foucault, 1980). In historicity, analysis is used as an indirect tool and the effort to understand the social contexts of the past and time is brought to the fore. This difference allows the understanding of the role played by each approach in comprehending the dynamic structure of historical facts.

Thus, the function of analysis in historical studies in relation to the concepts of archaeology and genealogy is to prepare the ground for a multidimensional understanding in which different methods and perspectives come together. According to Foucault, for historicity to be understood and to be put to work in archaeology and genealogy, the inherent conflict that exists in it must be detectable only through analysis. The continuity of historicity means the continuity and even sustainability of the analysis (Foucault, 1997). Because even though it may seem static at times, both historicity and the conflict it contains, as well as the analysis that includes all kinds of problems related to it, are uninterrupted. Therefore, understanding the historical pattern and the events that form it is possible with an analysis that is not static.

Knowledge, which is another concept used as an intermediary method that points to analysis itself, should be considered in direct relation to power for Foucault. The plurality of balances that create or contain power and its relations also shows the plurality of knowledge (Foucault, 1980). Therefore, understanding it also requires both continuity and plurality of analysis in the contexts in question. At this point, it does not seem possible to carry out analysis from an analytical perspective. Because in this way of thinking, subjective

knowledge is accepted as the main thing and continuity is considered meaningful. Thus, a formal understanding of analysis is not only unacceptable but also not functional due to the multiplicity and variability of data that can be material for it. In Foucault's way of thinking, the determination of the partial equivalent of every type of knowledge and its functionality is essential.

For example, church norms, which can be described as a manifestation of power and authority relations in the Foucauldian sense, indicate the strategy of the period. Foucault examines how the institutionalized forms of Christianity shape the ways of thinking, identities and behaviours of individuals. He examines the effects of the church and religion on social structures. One of Foucault's most important concepts, "discipline" and "surveillance" is related to the historical role of the church. Foucault examines the ways in which societies control individuals. In this context, he states that the church plays an important role. In the Middle Ages and the early modern period, the church is a center of power that regulates the daily lives of individuals, forces them to comply with moral norms and controls their inner worlds. Foucault analyses the ways in which modern societies constantly monitor and control individuals, especially through the metaphor of the "panopticon". He reveals that the church also has a power that controls the intellectual and moral lives of individuals, and therefore its power (Foucault, 1977).

The church's effort to cleanse believers from their sins and keep them on the right path is like a kind of surveillance practice for the inner worlds of individuals. In this sense, the church is a form of power that shapes not only social rules but also the spiritual worlds of individuals. Foucault argues that power is not only about oppression and coercion, but also operates as a mechanism through which the identities and essences of individuals are shaped. The church is an important institution that determines how the identities and self-identities of individuals are constructed, both on a spiritual and social level. For example, the practices of confession (penitential) in the Middle Ages required individuals to question their inner worlds and actions in accordance with the moral rules determined by the church (Foucault, 1977). This process can be seen as a power relationship that shapes the formation of the individual subject according to the norms determined by the church. The pattern expressed here corresponds to the analysis of Foucault's concepts in practical life.

This is where Foucault's "power/subject" relationship comes into play. The church not only controls individuals from the outside, but also influences their inner worlds, shaping them with certain norms and values. According to Foucault's analysis of power, power is not something that only belongs to the state; it also exists within social structures such as religious institutions (Foucault, 1997). The church has historically had great social power and has had a profound effect on the way it controls individuals' lives. The spiritual authority of the church shapes not only the moral behaviour of individuals, but also how they perceive their place in society.

Foucault also draws attention to the practical equivalent of Christianity's understanding of crime and punishment. In Christianity, sins committed against God and the ways in which they are punished affect how individuals perceive their ethical responsibilities. By guiding individuals with this understanding, the Church regulates both the social structure and individual behaviour. Foucault's studies on sexuality also have an important perspective that includes the moral control of the Church. In his work "Histoire de la Sexualité", (1978) in particular, Foucault discusses and analyses the moral norms that

Western societies have established on sexuality and how these norms were shaped by the influence of the Church. Since the Middle Ages, the Church has established great control over sexual behaviour and has generally labelled sexuality as something sinful in practice.

Foucault argues that Christianity's understanding of sexual morality plays a decisive role in the formation of sexual identities in the West and how sexuality is discussed and expressed in society. In this context, the relationship between the church and sexual morality has had a significant impact not only on the bodies of individuals, but also on societies' general understanding of sexuality. Foucault's concept of biopolitics examines the ways in which people manage their lives, health, reproductive rights, and bodies. Historically, the church has had not only a moral but also a biopolitical influence on people's lives. In matters such as sexuality, birth, death, and family structures, the church is an important source of power in managing the biological lives of individuals and societies. These analyses are based entirely on practical functionality, unlike Aristotle's analytical understanding (Foucault & Carrette, 2013).

While biopolitics refers to a society's control over the bodies and lives of individuals, the church's interventions and controls in this area are analysed within the framework of Foucault's power relations (Foucault & Carrette, 2013). More clearly, when it is accepted that the church is a power structure, all kinds of norms belonging to it also emerge as a kind of form of discourse. Here, just like in Foucault's way of thinking, what produces discourse is power and authority. The power that the church has by nature can be evaluated in terms of its connection with genealogy. Because the power obtained due to the power in question is obtained by the church through its own genealogical transmission. Due to the genealogy that is independent of the period, the church directly contains the power and authority that exist. While this power obtained through genealogy directly creates power, its practical counterpart is in the effort to analyse the belief dynamics that the church reveals by producing discourse and to place them on a consistent basis. Foucault's analyses on this subject help us understand how power operates not only in the form of punishment and coercion, but also through norms and values.

Although Foucault's concept of "disciplinary society" and Deleuze's concept of "control society" can be considered different manifestations of the same logic of power, they fundamentally represent two distinct technologies of power that emerged in distinct historical contexts and operate on different objects. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault defines disciplinary society as a form of power that developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, shaping individuals through their bodies and based on spatially closed institutions (schools, barracks, prisons, factories). In this context, discipline uses constant surveillance, detailed spatial and temporal regulations, and normative rules to transform individuals into "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977). Disciplinary society centers on power's strategies of confinement and shaping through education.

In contrast, the control society, as described by Deleuze in his *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, emerged in the late 20th century, when disciplinary institutions began to disintegrate. Rather than shaping individuals within closed spaces, the control society shapes them through constant and pervasive surveillance, digital coding, data collection, and networks. While the disciplinary society educates individuals within specific spaces, the control society monitors individuals' movements, consumption habits, digital traces, and social network connections without any boundaries of time or space (Deleuze, 2017). Therefore, the control society focuses on the regulation of "all processes of life" (bios) through databases and flows, rather than the direct management of the body.

This distinction is decisive for critical thinking. Ignoring the difference between disciplinary and control societies leads to conceptual ambiguity in understanding contemporary forms of power. The essence of critical thinking lies in clarifying the historical contexts, functional differences, and social impacts of concepts. While the analysis of disciplinary society emphasizes the normalization of individuals within closed spaces, the critique of control society sees the disappearance of boundaries, the perpetuation of surveillance, and the exercise of power in “flexible” forms. Conceptually clarifying this distinction allows us to analyze not only the inherited forms of today’s power relations, but also their transforming and technologically reinforced new forms.

Another example of the practical aspect of Foucault’s way of thinking can be created in the context of the evolution of moral theological norms. Moral theology can be summarized as a sub-discipline of theology that determines the ethical dimension of theological elements. Moral theology is a field that examines God’s will and religious principles regarding the moral teachings of religion and human ethical behaviour. This discipline questions how moral values, righteousness, evil and virtue should be understood based on God’s teachings (Hare, 1993). The fundamental question of moral theology is: What kind of behaviour is right and what kind of behaviour is wrong in line with God’s commands and religious texts? A fundamental question of moral theology is whether God is the source of moral values. If so, are God’s commands the determinants of ethical values? For example, is something “right” right because God commands it, or does God see what is right and give orders accordingly? Moral theology also investigates the moral rules and virtues that are necessary for individuals to live a virtuous life. These rules are usually shaped by holy books, religious teachings and the will of God. The effect of worship on moral life, the devotion of a believer to God and how this devotion is reflected in his daily life are also subjects of moral theology. It discusses how ethical problems encountered in the modern world, such as justice, equality, environmentalism, animal rights, should be approached in line with religious teachings and the will of God (McCormick, 1989).

There is a strong relationship between moral theological discourse and Michel Foucault’s thoughts. Because both deeply analyse the issues of power, authority, norms and ethics in the formation of individuals’ intellectual and behavioural worlds. However, Foucault’s approach differs from the traditional understanding of moral theology. Foucault examines religious and moral discourses in terms of how individuals’ freedoms and self-identities are shaped and how they interact with social norms and power relations.

Foucault’s relationship with moral theological discourse is more concerned with understanding how these discourses affect the processes of confession, control and subjectification on individuals. While moral theological discourses shape the behaviour of individuals with norms and rules determined in accordance with God’s will, Foucault’s analyses of power and authority reveal how these norms control the inner worlds of individuals and construct their identities. In this context, Foucault’s works provide an important tool for understanding religious and moral discourses not only in terms of moral values, but also in terms of the subjectification of individuals and power relations. In addition, the inference that changes in power and authority can also affect moral discourse is an analysis that is compatible with the general idea in terms of Foucault’s way of thinking (Foucault & Carrette, 2013).

Although theological elements and the norms created through them are expected to be fixed, when they are analysed, some evolutions can be detected within their own

historicity. Beliefs have different norms due to the different religious acceptances they contain. In addition, the moral theology of all major religions generally provides common recommendations that include truth and goodness. However, some problems related to the historically current may not be answered in the sacred texts of these theologies. In this case, moral theology comes into play and seeks answers regarding the current. In this process, it is reasoning with a kind of analysis without denying both historicity and its own moral theological norms. The reasoning here is not intended as a static comparison based on regular premises in the Aristotelian sense and yielding obligatory conclusions. On the contrary, unlike the method that mediates the obligatory inference that Foucault objects to, it is more flexible and sometimes in accordance with changeable conditions in which historical validity is prioritized. Therefore, the knowledge acquired through such moral theological norms may have changed or evolved, albeit to a limited extent.

The multiplicity and variability of subjective knowledge often do not serve the logical consistency of the analytical way of thinking and the search for definitive knowledge. In this context, the analysis process does not have a functional quality within a formal structure, since it is not based solely on fixed and distinct data. This situation reveals that analysis is a process that requires a dynamic and variable understanding. Therefore, the limitations of analyses made from an analytical perspective, as supported in Foucault's thought system, should be taken into consideration. Because there is a need for alternative approaches that are more holistic and can evaluate in a historical context. Such alternative approaches consider the continuity, variability and multidimensionality of knowledge and experiences. Thus, it is possible to obtain more meaningful and functional results. The analysis of the power of the age that produces discursive practices as the subject of knowledge should include the qualities of being increasing, multifaceted and transforming (Foucault, 2001). For this reason, the knowledge that emerges as a product of power is functional and obtained through subjective effort, because the tool of power is the individual (Foucault, 2000).

Foucault's criticism on the subject in question is as follows: "What has long been the fundamental category of knowledge - both its form and its content - has been dissolved in an analysis made in terms of similarity, identity and difference" (Foucault, 2001). It is understood from the quote that analysis, which does not dissolve knowledge but produces it, is possible by revealing its similar or different aspects in relation to another knowledge or view. In addition, analysis does not mean that it is obtained as a product of the same form of discourse, but that it is developed from a completely independent and subjective form of thought.

The relationship between analysis and interpretation can also be considered as a guarantor of the productivity in question. That is, the determination of the context that constitutes the discourse must be in a structure that expects productivity from it in terms of being the subject of analysis. The productivity of the discourse is only possible by continuing it with interpretation. However, from the perspective of Foucault's critical thought tradition, the interpretation activity in question cannot be expected to be independent of archaeological, genealogical and historical qualities. In short, there is no question of separating the analysis from the meaning, consistency and functionality criteria attributed to the signs (Foucault, 1971). Otherwise, it is not possible to talk about the existence of the parameters necessary for the determination of the consistency of the interpretation.

The fact that knowledge is addressed by limiting it to the categories of similarity, identity and difference are the basic elements that determine both its form and content.

These elements are an indication that knowledge is structured from an epistemological perspective. In fact, in analysis, there is usually an effort to understand a complex object or situation by separating it into simpler components. In this case, shaping knowledge around these basic categories should constitute the essence of the analysis process. However, this approach can be seen as the reason why knowledge is presented as a static and unchanging structure from an analytical perspective. In Foucault's thought, knowledge is not independent of historical and social context. Therefore, it should be accepted that concepts such as similarity, identity and difference are in a constant transformation and change. Therefore, it is a necessity for Foucault to go beyond the consideration of scientific knowledge only within an analytical framework and evaluate the concept of analysis from a more dynamic perspective. Thus, the knowledge obtained through analysis becomes the product of a continuous construction process.

Foucault, who distinguishes himself from historians of ideas and qualifies himself as a historian of thought, determines the fundamental reason for this distinction through the issues that are the subject of analysis in terms of both fields of study. According to him, historians of ideas, while working on a certain concept, make more static analyses on at what moment, for what reasons, in what contexts it was created. Historians of thought, to which he himself is a part, identify problems for certain periods and practices. Historians of thought, especially in the history of thought, identify problematic parts that are essentially present but ignored in areas of experience that are only analysed and accepted without question, and analyse the nature of the crises they cause (Foucault, 2014).

According to Foucault, historians of ideas tend to make a more static and historical analysis of when, for what reasons, and in what contexts a certain concept or idea emerged (Foucault, 2013). This approach is often limited to examining the origins and development processes of certain concepts in a theoretical sense and evaluating them as mere knowledge. Historians of ideas, including Foucault, identify problems in the context of historical periods and practices. And they particularly examine areas of experience that are analysed only with an analytical understanding of knowledge in the history of ideas and that are accepted without question. In addition, historians of ideas determine the problematic parts that exist within existing knowledge and thought systems but are often overlooked in the light of their own historicity. Thus, they try to understand the nature of the crises caused by the problematic parts, that is, the social reflections and the background that necessitates them. This perspective naturally distances their views from all forms of analytical thinking and their results.

This perspective of Foucault emphasizes the dynamic nature of knowledge and thought and ensures that previously accepted norms and thought systems are questioned again. Thus, it does not ignore and encourages future knowledge understandings that they will be the source of. This approach described by Foucault regarding the history of thought combines both a historical perspective and a critical perspective (Gutting, 2014). It provides a deep understanding of how scientific knowledge is constructed and under what conditions it can be sustainable. This perspective not only provides an effort to understand the past, but also enables the questioning of current thought and knowledge systems. It also prepares a ground for new knowledge and theories to be produced by articulating them. This attitude, which is extremely meaningful in terms of the critical thinking tradition that Foucault wants to create, distinguishes him from the analytical understanding of knowledge. In addition, it functionally reveals the effort to search for alternative meanings that are simply attributed to a concept. This is a product and goal of the search for practical

functionality, from the concept as the simplest building block in Foucault's philosophy - the concept of analysis is an example of this attitude – to the method.

The findings and contrasts obtained in the study can be briefly summarized as follows: Although analysis is directly related to the analytical way of thinking in terms of Aristotelian logic, it is characterized separately from this context in Foucault's thought. Along with the archaeological method, Foucault positions analysis at the center of change in the context of genealogy, historicity, knowledge, power, discourse and truth, which are other basic concepts of the critical thinking tradition he established. Analysis in the Aristotelian sense is analytically focused (Taylor, 2014). Within the analytical understanding in question, analysis is handled in accordance with the definitive, fixed and determined methodological structure of traditional logic. The same concept functions in Foucault's way of thinking in terms of being the subject of an intermediary method that produces knowledge by freeing it from fixity and thus becomes the source of interpretation and transformation. According to this perspective, the basic quality that the concept of analysis has in the context of a method is its functionality. This understanding requires avoiding fixity and the constant reshaping of knowledge. At the same time, by being incomplete, it functions as a critique that prevents it from becoming dogmatic.

As a natural consequence of this meaning attributed to the concept of analysis, the fact that each analysis feeds the other and continues it also reveals its continuity. In this way, analysis exhibits the structure of knowledge that can be constructed cumulatively if it is not falsified. At the same time, it allows for the development of an alternative inference that is completely independent of it. Thus, the concept of purely cumulative knowledge is excluded. In analytical thinking, analysis is interpreted in a way that reinforces and controls the immutability of the method rather than its functionality. Aristotle's definitive and Foucault's interpretation-oriented ways of thinking, which are different and often opposing each other, attribute different qualities to a common concept. The concept of analysis is placed at the center of the tradition that Aristotle and Foucault aim to construct. The distinction may be found problematic for the search for an analytical-based methodology. In addition, it is possible to accept it as richness from an interpretation-centred perspective.

Conclusion

Foucault's way of thinking is not limited to simply rearranging historical data or philosophical arguments; his aim is to reveal how thought is produced, within which power relations it is shaped, and through which social practices it is sustained. This approach, contrary to the tendency of traditional philosophical methods to accept truth claims as absolute truths, is based on the idea that truth is constituted within a historical and social context. In this context, Foucault positions critical thought not to decipher the internal logic of a system, but rather to question the conditions that ensure its legitimacy and to demonstrate that these conditions are contingent, changeable, and reconstructable.

His way of thinking inherits the legacy of Kant's understanding of critique, yet radically transforms it. While Kant conceives of critique as an effort to define the limits of reason, Foucault emphasizes that these limits are historically produced and therefore changeable. At this point, critique becomes not merely a theoretical activity but a practice of resistance and liberation against the knowledge-power networks that constitute the social order.

For Foucault, critical thought is possible through the analysis of the mechanisms he calls “regimes of truth”, which determine which discourses are considered true and which are false in a given period. These regimes function not only in academic knowledge production but also in legal, medical, moral, and political spheres; critique requires exposing the assumptions embedded within these invisible limits.

Foucault’s way of thinking is characterized by his refusal to construct a dogmatic system and his constant engagement with questioning. Rather than fixing concepts, he displaces them, revealing their functions and their roles within power relations. Thus, critical thought, rather than falsifying or confirming existing discourses, aims to problematize the conditions that make them possible. This approach requires a process of self-criticism that encompasses the subject’s own way of thinking; for, according to Foucault, being critical is not merely questioning the thought systems of others, but also revealing the limits and foundations of the systems of knowledge in which we participate.

Therefore, the connection between Foucault’s thinking and critical thought operates not as a closed and completed theory, but as an open-ended and constantly renewed practice of inquiry. For him, critical thought is not an outcome but a form of action; it aims to open up a space of liberation for thought itself by dismantling the power structures behind truth claims. Thus, Foucault redefines critique as a tool that enables individuals to reflect on themselves and transform their own position, both theoretically and politically. The concept of analysis is also an example of the critical thinking act in question.

Understanding the nature of the concept of ‘analysis’, which is addressed in Foucault’s critical thought tradition, can be addressed in the context of its relationship with archaeology, genealogy, historicity, knowledge, power, discourse and truth, as with other concepts. In fact, it is often necessary to understand the meaning attributed to these concepts in order to understand analysis. According to him, analysis is a method aimed at understanding how certain historical knowledge and power relations are shaped and in what position individuals occupy within these relations and produce knowledge.

The archaeological method examines the historical development of knowledge and discourse. Thus, while the archaeological method aims to reveal the way of thinking and social norms of a certain period, genealogy questions the processes of subjectivation of individuals and the effects of these processes on social structures. Understanding the concept of historicity plays a critical role in determining the effects of time and space on individuals in Foucault’s system of thought. In this context, the concept of analysis serves as a tool. In addition, it reveals the dynamics of the interactions between power and knowledge and questions the positions of individuals in social reality.

Along with analysis, Foucault also redefines the concepts of discourse and truth. In this context, he reveals how a discourse is constructed and within which power relations it is accepted as ‘truth’. This acceptance is related to all other concepts that constitute Foucault’s critical thinking tradition. Furthermore, this entire activity of meaning-making is not independent of historicity. Therefore, analysis, contrary to its acceptance in the form of analytical thinking, is not merely the examination of a phenomenon. At the same time, it is a detailed analysis method aimed at understanding the power dynamics of the individual who becomes a subject within the social and historical context, and even the norms of the church and effective moral theology. Therefore, the nature of Foucault’s concept of analysis can be understood within this interrelated complex conceptual structure.

In this context, analysis cannot be understood within the framework of an analytical-focused way of thinking, as a manifestation of the definitive understanding attributed to it in Ancient Greece. On the contrary, it needs to be discussed in terms of being a source of critical thinking and containing the potential to constantly change and transform. Although the same concept has been used for completely different purposes and with different meanings in these two different ways of thinking, theoretically they intersect at the point of producing ideas and knowledge. Therefore, historically, reinterpreting any concept is a method used by thinkers, especially when it contributes to its use in a functional sense. Apart from this, Foucault's use of the concept of analysis as an intermediary method in its constantly changing, transforming and producing meanings, independent of analytics, is a concrete example of interpretation. In addition, the activity in question can also be seen as a kind of mental activity. The goal of this activity, on the other hand, provides an infrastructure for Foucault's way of thinking. And it can be seen as a protest the continuous static knowledge that can be a source of critical thinking.

As a result, there is a clear distinction between the meanings that Aristotle and Foucault attribute to the concept of analysis. While Aristotle emphasizes the fixed and unchanging nature of knowledge and reality, Foucault questions this understanding of fixity and draws attention to how historical processes and social power dynamics shape knowledge. Thus, Foucault's analysis includes the continuous transformation understanding of critical thought. And it reveals Foucault's effort to re-evaluate knowledge in a historical context. The difference between these two thinkers regarding the concept or method of analysis allows for a discussion on the nature of philosophical thought and the understanding of knowledge. Thus, it emerges as a natural result of the different meanings obtained through interpretation of two different ways of thinking.

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