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Analogies in the Meta-Methodology of the Humanities

But it is not by old error that new error can be combated.
B. Russell¹

The death of the society means a full life for the power.
L. Nowak²

ABSTRACT: The aim of the paper is to analyze some analogies between the analectic method by Enrique Dussel and the pragmatic methodology by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz. Furthermore, the analogical study of these two meta-methodological approaches enables the explication of some interesting and surprising similarities between them. The article contains a brief presentation of the analogical perspective in contemporary philosophical conceptions by Dussel and Mauricio Beuchot, and Ajdukiewicz's programme and the approach to analogy based on the theory of opposition.

KEY WORDS: analogy, meta-methodology, humanities, Ajdukiewicz, Beuchot, Dussel

1. Introduction

A Plea for Excuses by J. L. Austin includes some general warning against an incorrect assumption within the framework of semantic investigations on key terms, moral ones especially. He wrote:

¹ See [Russell, 1950, p. 69].

² See [Nowak, 1983, p. 145].

It seems to be too readily assumed that if we can only discover the true meanings of each of a cluster of key terms, usually historic terms, that we use in some particular field (as, for example, 'right', 'good' and the rest in morals), then it must without question transpire that each will fit into parts in some single, interlocking, consistent, conceptual scheme [Austin, 1961, p. 151].

On the margin of this premonition of the myth of such a conceptual scheme, the following query is asked by Austin:

(*) Why must there be a conceivable amalgam, the Good Life for Man?³

As a matter of fact, we proceed in our paper as indicated by J. L. Austin. By the term *foundations of humanities* we mean consequently a research on basic questions posed within the studies on human activities.⁴ But we use the term *model* instead of the word *amalgam*. Hence let us start with some other issue:

(**) Is there a conceivable model of the so-called Good Life for Man?

One may consider three methodological positions in relation to the issue (**) at least; namely – the univocal, equivocal and analogical ones. Obviously, it could be presumed that (**) is equivalent (or just reducible) to central philosophical questions as: “How to live?” and/or “Why should I live?”.⁵ Nevertheless, according to the univocal standpoint there is exactly one model of the so-called Good Life for Man. From the equivocal point of view, there is a multitude of models which are incommensurate and incomparable with each other. Following the analogical approach, we are interested in the differences and similarities between many distinct models of the Good Life for Man.

³ See [Austin, 1961, p. 151].

⁴ See [Gan-Krzywoszyńska, Leśniewski, 2015].

⁵ See [Putnam, 1996, p. 22]. The later question could be replaced by the question: *Is life worth living?* For this question and some famous answers, see [James, 1912, p. 32]. For a brief introduction to other philosophical questions, see, for example [Kotakowski, 2007].

2. The analogical hexagon by Jean-Yves Béziau

From many characteristics of analogy, we choose Jean-Yves Béziau’s hexagonal analysis of analogy, based on the theory of oppositions.⁶ The starting point is the square that presents (logical) relations between the notions of opposition, identity, difference and similarity (Fig. 1). These four standard relations are given in the following table (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1.

RELATION	TRADITIONAL NAME	GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION
contradiction	contradictio	-----
contrary	contrarietas	=====
subcontrary	subcontrarietas	- - - - -
subaltern	subalternatio>

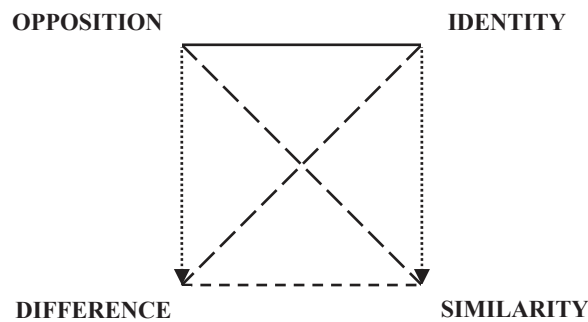


Fig. 1. Béziau’s analogical square

Opposition and similarity form a contradiction that encompasses another contradictory opposition of identity and difference. Therefore, in the

⁶ These figures come from his talk at the First World Congress on Analogy that took place in Puebla, Mexico, entitled *The Logical Hexagon of Analogy: Structuring the Relations between Difference, Identity and Similarity*. See [*Handbook of the First World Congress on Analogy*, 2015, pp. 12-13].

following square, opposition is contrary to identity, since two opposed things cannot be identical, but two things can neither be opposed, nor identical. Subsequently, difference is subcontrary to similarity, for two objects can be different and similar at the same time, yet they cannot be neither different, nor similar.

Following Robert Blanché, Béziau extends this square into the logical hexagon, where analogy forms a contrary triangle of opposition with opposition and identity. In the last part of the article we will modify these figures to show the difference between Béziau's and Dussel's concepts of analogy.

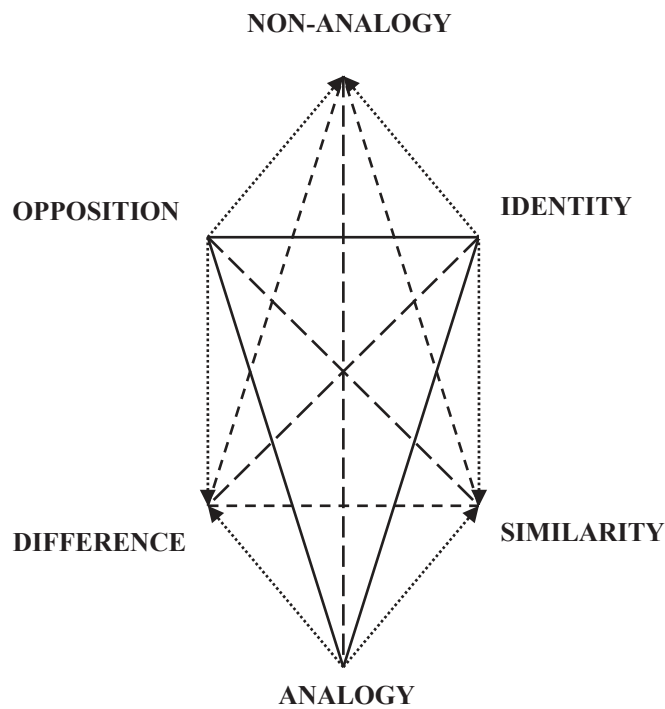


Fig. 2. Béziau's analogical hexagon

3. The analectic method by Dussel and analogical hermeneutics by Beuchot

The concept of analogy allows an optimal solution to the problem of polysemy, pervasive especially in the humanities. Of course, to say that all concepts such as *people*, *power* and *justice* are ambiguous is trivial. However, the fundamental claim that they are analogical concepts is not so widespread. Moreover, one of the most important consequences that each dialogue – and rational action in general – depends on is the acceptance of the analogy as the most relevant strategy for overcoming the problem of polysemy. Below we present a brief introduction to two approaches to analogy elaborated by Enrique Dussel and Mauricio Beuchot, respectively.

Dussel, a prominent Argentinian-Mexican philosopher, one of the “Founding Fathers” of the Philosophy of Liberation (Spanish: *Filosofía de la Liberación*), is also the author of the so-called *analectic method*. The name of the said method is intended to express a combination of the analogical and dialectic approaches. However, his approach consists in a critique of classic dialectics as an epistemological perspective that does not take into account colonized nations, whereas the analectic method is an *ana-logos*, alternative knowledge and an alternative platform for the creation of knowledge informed by the oppressed. It is a fundamental contribution to philosophy also because it explains how Latin America is situated “beyond” (*ano-*) the horizon of the occidental (western) totality. Inspired by Lévinas, analectics proper category and the starting point is the exteriority of the Other.⁷ The so-called *analectical moment* makes possible an

⁷ According to Dussel, Lévinas whom he met and knew very well personally, is a key author since he emphasized the ethical dimension of the criticism of modernity. Nevertheless, the author of *Philosophy of Liberation* claims that even Lévinas was still Eurocentric. The author of *Totality and Infinity* does not think of the Other as an African migrant, Latin American or an Asian person. This is why oppressed people cannot use colonial frameworks to fight colonialism. This is the problem that was also formulated by Elie Wiesel (*Language failed us*) and many Holocaust thinkers. To overcome or simply reflect on exterminations one cannot use the language that was used to realize the genocide. Therefore, Dussel proposes constructing new categories, new philosophy, new methods, an *ana-logos*, or *ana-lectic thinking*, to go beyond dia-lectics. See, for example [Mignolo, 2003, p. 84].

entry into the metaphysical sphere, referring to the Other. Therefore, its principle is not that of identity, but of separation and distinction. It is worth emphasizing that Dussel criticizes Eurocentrism as the dominant ethnocentric perspective upon which the myth of modernity has been constructed. We could say that is it a certain version of the supracultural rationality myth in the very sense of Richard Rorty.⁸

The analectic method consist of passing from the ontic perspective of the self to the ontologic study of the Other; it is the disruption of the episteme from the ethical point of view. Dussel writes:

The analectical moment of the dialectical method (ana-dialectical method) gives absolute priority to the *proyecto* of liberation of the other as new, as other, as distinct (and not only as different within the identity of the whole). In the final analysis, it can be affirmed that the analectic moment of dialectics is founded on the absolute anteriority of exteriority over totality, even to affirming the priority of the Absolute Other as creative origin over creation as a work, as a finite and therefore perfectible totality [Dussel, 1985, p. 192].

He distinguishes three basic models of approaches to the issue of polysemy: (1) the univocal (Spanish *unívoco*), (2) the equivocal (Spanish *equivoco*), and (3) the analogical one.

The first one, we characterize by two main categories: identity and difference. Within the scope of the univocal approach Dussel puts totalizing thought. In relation to the issue of polysemous expression, it is assumed that there is only one legitimate meaning and every other meaning is considered erroneous, incorrect etc. The story behind this position causes that all the dialogue is ruled out – for there are only two possibilities (“for” or “against”, “same/identical” or “different”), which are very clearly – or even radically – defined from the axiological point of view. It is worth noting that Dussel includes examples of just such a univocal position not only within the positivist thinking, but also the entire western philosophical tradition – “from Ionia to Jena” (in the sense of Franz Rosenzweig). Within the univocal thinking Dussel puts all totalizing reflection (whose aim is the

⁸ See [Rorty, 1991]. For the myth of supracultural rationality in occidental culture, see, for example [Gan-Krzywoszyńska, Leśniewski, 2014, pp. 183-184]. For the concept of interculturality as the so-called in-between sphere, see [Waldenfels, 2011, pp. 70-84].

mental reconstruction of the Whole, in other words – the metaphysical universe) and/or unifying reflection (i.e. those philosophical projects, in which the explanation of the elements of the universe consists in reducing them into one principle).

It is also worth noting that Dussel includes into the tradition of totalizing thinking the philosophy of Lévinas also. His fundamental opposition of “I/Other” would – according to Dussel – wear signs of a univocal opposition “identity/difference.” The Other is completely different, a radical exteriority, therefore through the use of these categories this project is a part of the univocal approach.

The second important remark concerns the understanding of the concept of *consensus*. The standard concept of democratic procedures has overwhelmingly positive connotations. However, Dussel emphasizes its totalizing aspect. It is quite surprising, yet it is a consequence of the fact that consensual procedures lead to the one valid meaning, for example, of the given concept. It turns out that the concept of consensus – though usually not associated with totalizing and univocal trends – can lead, for example, to a division of the set of all the definitions of the term into at least two non-empty subsets. The first of these subsets would contain exactly one element (the current/valid definition of a term), the second – all the other definitions (considered as incorrect or even prohibited by law). Therefore, the univocal position is a radical (extreme) one that entails the reduction of all meanings to just one.

At the opposite end, Dussel places the model that is called equivocal. It allows for all the possible interpretations of a given cultural object that are at the same time completely disproportionate/incommensurable/untranslatable. But – just as in the case of the univocal position – the equivocal approach also prevents dialogue/makes dialogue impossible, since there is not any common ground. We could say metaphorically that according to this equivocal approach, each person has their own “truth”, perhaps even formulated in his own untranslatable language. The extreme idiosyncrasy of some postmodern positions can serve as an illustration of this approach.

According to Dussel, we should follow the third moderate stance – the analogical one. Not without reason it is called the “golden mean”. It should

be strongly emphasized that it is based on a similarity connecting – at least two – given objects. This commonality can be accompanied by any number of distinctions (Spanish *distinción*) – and not the differences. The aforementioned similarities should not be confused with identity. Thus, precisely the same approach dialogue is possible and – following Beuchot – we can even talk about *analogical rationality*.

After all, the condition for any dialogue is the existence of any, even the minimum, common ground. Such a joint/common platform enables the optimal understanding of the every nuance of meaning.⁹ Both Beuchot and Dussel, emphasize the primacy of the category of *distinction*, in their view of analogy.¹⁰ The latter, however, makes it clear that the search for similarities should be accompanied by an awareness of the case of any distinctions between the considered objects/notions/concepts – that the analectic method assumes also the diachronic aspect of this analogy. The structure of the analogy (which includes both similarities and differences between objects) may be subjected to change and the study of such transformations constitutes an equally important subject of the analectical inquiry.

Another very important question concerns the concepts of *transparency* and *clarity*. Usually, one tends to associate these notions with a specific univocal approach, as in logical positivism for instance. Nevertheless, Dussel claims that only the analogical position guarantees the fullest and the most specific semantic characteristics of a given cultural object (for example a given linguistic expression). Moreover, only within the analogical perspective can we compare various meanings and interpretations, or can we also attribute both positive and negative values.¹¹

In this hexagon, analogy is in a contrary triangle with identity and difference. It is based on similarity and distinction, so therefore we do not need the quite ambiguous notion of opposition. Also it seems more natural to have the relation of subalternation between identity and similarity, and

⁹ Jerzy Kmita – following Ajdukiewicz’s conceptual apparatus – wrote about a common world perspective (Polish *perspektywa świata*). See, for example [Kmita, 2000, p. 6].

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Beuchot uses the term “difference” in relation to analogy.

¹¹ Within the Poznań Methodological School, Włodzimierz Ławniczak called the humanities “axiological sciences”.

difference and distinction, respectively. Also contradictory would be pairs: identity/distinction and similarity/difference, which is what we can see in Dussel's work. Moreover, identity implies similarity and difference implies distinction.

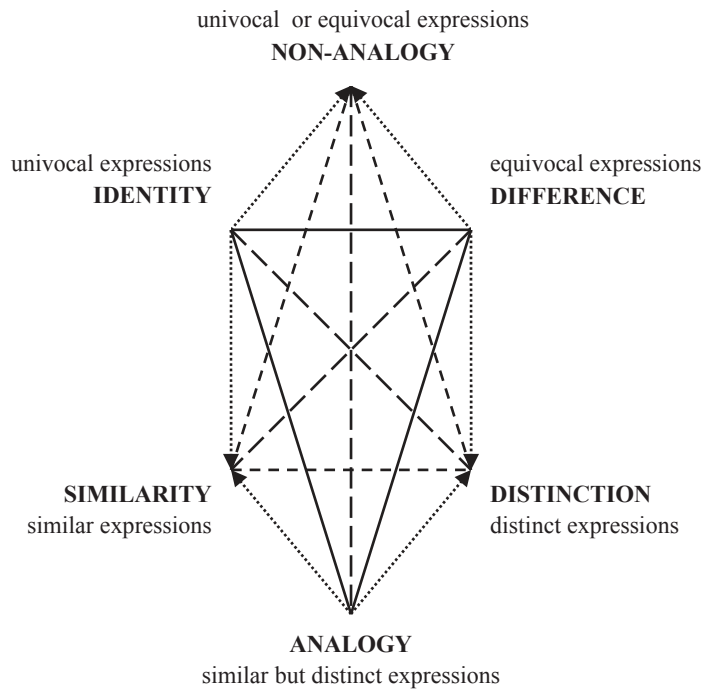


Fig. 4. Dusselian analogical hexagon

We would also like to consider here briefly the socio-political consequences of the aforementioned characteristics of these concepts. In the context of Eurocentrism, Dussel points out that the analectic method is the most accurate approach if we want to overcome the dominance of the centre to the periphery – and in every aspect of this opposition (that is, both with regard to the relationship of domination that occurs between individuals and in relation to that of the relationship between larger socio-political

groups). The crucial point is to transgress and reject the totalizing narrative (Spanish *totalidad totalizante*), which in practice gets rid of, or is used as a subordinate to, all entities that do not fit within the given vision of the metaphysical universe or which cannot be reduced to the structure organizing principle of this universe.

Likewise, Beuchot in his project of analogical hermeneutics postulates most of all the introduction of a hierarchical set of several justified interpretations. He rejects an idea of there being the exactly one right/correct interpretation as well as the radically relative (equivocal) claim that each interpretation should be considered as a valid one. Therefore, Beuchot's analogical hermeneutics is an intermediate position between the two extremes – namely the univocal approaches and the equivocal ones. On the one hand, with full methodological awareness we resign from the precision associated traditionally with a univocal interpretation, on the other hand, we also reject the certain understanding of “openness” on which equivocation is based. According to Beuchot, the main goal is to avoid the extremes to which procedures of interpretation are exposed. The above-mentioned radical approaches prevent effective dialogue and often lead to many bloody consequences. Therefore, the impact of analogy-based approaches should be considered not only from the philosophical but also from the socio-political perspective.

4. Ajdukiewicz's pragmatic methodology – towards “analogical clarity”

As we mentioned above, the use of analogy both in Dussel's analectic method as well as in Beuchot's analogical hermeneutics favours the most detailed/nuanced and fullest characteristic of the given concept (or for instance cultural artifact) as well as a philosophical pluralism and openness, that embraces many distinct world visions and/or world perspectives (in the very sense of Ajdukiewicz), yet without leading to the idiosyncrasy or relativism that paralyzes theoretical meta-reflection.

Precision and clarity constitute also the main goals of Ajdukiewicz's late project of pragmatic methodology. It may seem that he – as an analytical philosopher – was concentrated on elaborating univocal, specific meaning, but this great project of the author of *Pragmatic Logic* is very much oriented towards scientific practice and formal methods must be adapted to the real scientific practice. Especially, we could consider him as a representative of the univocal approach when we take into account for example his concept of *closed and connected languages*.¹² However, Ajdukiewicz rejected this idea already in 1936 and criticized it bluntly as a *fictitious and superfluous* one, and it is worth to emphasize that his philosophical trajectory evolved from radical conventionalism into radical empiricism.¹³

His sudden death took everyone by surprise and ended the work on his latest conceptions, and the posthumously published book *Pragmatic Logic*. This excellent work provides an example of his always innovative, profound and independent thinking, and is simply a highly original logic textbook.¹⁴ Following Ajdukiewicz, pragmatic methodology should always aim at understanding clearly and fully what science is, by means of discovering and describing why certain attempts of scientists turn out to be successful (and valid), whereas others are considered as unsuccessful (and invalid). His article which deals with the procedures of defining is, in his own words, an example of an "insight-oriented" study. The book consists of 460 pages and it should be emphasized that only 43 are devoted to the deductive sciences and nine pages to formal logic and consequence relations. Ajdukiewicz can therefore be regarded as a precursor of the contemporary revolution in logic, namely, the so-called *practical turn*. He wrote:

(...) pupils should be trained to make statements that are matter-of-fact, unambiguous, and precise. The knowledge of formulating one's statements so is indispensable not only in school, but in everyday life as well. Nonobservance of these three requirements may be tolerated in those cases where speech serves to express emotions or to arouse them, e.g., in poetry and in unscrupulous agitation, but never in those cases where cognition and/or rational (i.e., a cognition-based) action are at

¹² See for example [Ajdukiewicz, 1978, pp. 50-57].

¹³ See [Ajdukiewicz, 1995, p. 23].

¹⁴ *Pragmatic Logic* was edited by Halina Mortimer and Klemens Szaniawski.

stake. Hence it is evident that developing in pupils the ability and the urge to make statements which are matter-of-fact, unambiguous and precise is one of the principal tasks of school education.

And also:

The main core of elementary logic, i.e., logic in the narrower sense of the term as the discipline which lists and systematizes all the schemata of deductive inference (and the underlying logical tautologies), seems to be less important for the teacher. This is so because in everyday thinking he encounters only those cases of inference which follow very simple schemata of deduction, and then wealth of other schemata, listed in formal logic, finds application but rarely. Hence it does not seem worthwhile to burden the teacher's memory with them [Ajdukiewicz 1974, pp. 3-4].

It should be noted here that Ajdukiewicz as an outstanding organizer of scientific life in Poland, held the view that properly organized education in logic would help implement a wide social reform. This idea is based on a conviction, convergent with Dussel's opinion, that the way we express our thoughts affects our social/political/cultural life. He was the author of many popular textbooks in the field of logic and methodology intended not only for students and professional researchers, but also for public administration employees. He even wanted to introduce an obligatory course in logic for all workers in public administration. Ajdukiewicz was one of the authors of a wide-ranging and quite unique reform of the system of administration by the means of education in logic, and always emphasized the role of an education in logic in the proper functioning of a society.

Józef M. Bocheński – undoubtedly inspired by Ajdukiewicz, and whom he considered to be one of the most important analytic philosophers of the 20th century – wrote in 1954 that knowledge and reason are today at risk, and with them, all that is human is threatened, perhaps even the very existence of humankind. On the other hand, Klemens Szaniawski bluntly said during martial law in December 1982: “Supporters of rationality do not have an easy life today. First of all, because the reality around us – I mean what we can have an influence on, i.e. social [reality] – defies the requirements of rationality.”

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