



Book Review: Aullón de Haro, P. (ed.) (2012). *Metodologías comparatistas y Literatura comparada*. Madrid: Dykinson.

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Received: 10-11- 2014

Accepted: 12-12- 2014

Published: 01-01- 2015

doi:10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.3n.1p.28

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.3n.1p.28>

Metodologías comparatistas y literatura comparada is the most recent work by the Research Group “Humanismo-Europa”, coordinated by Prof. Pedro Aullón de Haro, from the University of Alicante, in Spain. This body of work, following on from the line of a previous work, *Teoría del Humanismo* (2010), intends to contribute to the renewal and reconstruction of Human Sciences. With this objective in mind forty researchers have worked together to theoretically establish the comparative method, addressing the necessity of a methodology in the field of humanities and social sciences caused by the globalization process.

As the editor explains in the introductory chapter “Metodologías y Comparatismo”, the generalized process of globalization increasingly demands the diverse sciences to expand their fields and objects of study, and as such the researchers consider that the comparative method is the most appropriate method to undertake this task. But as the comparison usually implemented is a comparison derived from neo-positivism -which only compares formal aspects of the object, thus only contributing to the diversification and disunifying process of the diverse disciplines instead of contributing to a humanistic synthesis-, the objective of the researchers has been to reconstruct the comparative method from a historical, conceptual or methodological and programmatic approach, in order to lend it humanistic value. To do so, three fundamental tasks have been undertaken: a historical exposition of comparative literature, of its epistemological basis and of its contemporary reformulation, while also including suggestions for a planned approach to this subject in the future. This way, by explicitly stating the methodological cores of comparatism and by updating its program, making use of new technological possibilities, the critical and methodological system needed is recovered and reconstructed, not only to counteract the dissolution of humanistic knowledge, but to also work on its integration on a global level, and to facilitate an ethical, scientific, technological, artistic and political approach to the current humanistic crisis.

Structurally, the work is made up of forty-one chapters and is divided into two main parts, each of them headed by an introductory chapter by the editor.

The first part exposes the methodological problems specific to the comparative disciplines; reconstructing comparatism as an epistemological general theory and specifying how it is applied to different disciplines. Comparatism is understood here not as a science or a series of autonomous disciplines, but as a variety of methods that are transversally applicable to all disciplines with humanistic implications. Based on this definition, the work then goes on to describe how it can be applied, not only to the humanities and social sciences but also to those disciplines that, though generally considered to be of a scientific nature, as is the case of medicine, bioethics, eco-ethics, and even computing, also have deep humanistic implications.

The diverse researchers have made theoretical contributions that are focused on the comparative methodology in relation to humanities and social sciences in general. There are chapters focused on the definition of comparative methods from an etymological point of view, as well as analyzing how contemporary encyclopedias approach comparatism. These are followed by chapters where their applicability to different fields, such as education, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, aesthetics, law, bioethics, cultural industries, imagology, museography, etc. are studied. Different issues are analyzed, from the relationship between Literature and Law, to the problems specific to comparative religion, delving into new issues generated by the development of digital technology. The approach to comparatism in the Philippines, Japan and in Asia in general is also addressed.

The second part also begins with an introductory chapter by the editor, “Teoría de la Literatura comparada y universalidad”, where globalization is criticized in virtue of its character mainly financial and technological and the work proposes the argument of 'universalidad', understood as the development of Humanism, as an alternative to globalization. It is then, about transcending disunifying globalization with 'universalidad', leading to the overcoming of the current dualism into an integral and organic interpretation of nature, world and life.

Across this second section the operation that was undertaken in the previous section is repeated, but now the focus is on the field of Comparative Literature. After finding the first theoretical definition of the comparative method in *Epistula ad Pompeium Geminum* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1st century B.C.), the entire Hispanic-Italian comparative

tradition is reconstructed, until we get to the 18th century, when the Jesuit priest Juan Andrés wrote his capital work. In his work Juan Andrés established the first global and comparative History of Letters and Sciences, and offered a range of methods applicable to the history of universal literature, including references to Asian culture. The founding character of his writings explains precisely why the first work by the group “Humanismo-Europa” was the complete edition of Juan Andrés' work, *Origen, progresos y estado actual de toda la literatura* (1997).

Once this historical-methodological approach has been made, a series of problems specific to different fields are analyzed from a historical perspective.

In this way the fundamental problems of the philological work are studied, as well as translatology, biblical exegesis, classic tradition, comparative thematics, metrics, linguistics and cultural differences, the relationships between literature and philosophy, cinema, music and photography. The development of comparatism in diverse regions that traditionally have been barely studied is analyzed here, like for instance, in Russia, the Czech Republic, in recent Germany, in the Philippines -with a reformulation of comparatism as “intra-comparatism”-, and in Africa, specifically in the sub-Sahara region. Attention is especially paid to fundamental authors, like for example Benedetto Croce, Alexander Veselovski, Alejandro Cioranescu and Van Tieghem. Finally, the latest published theory on Comparative Literature developed using Adrian Marino's materialism as basis has also been included.

Metodologías comparatistas y Literatura comparada is, in brief, a collaborative work which, guided by a humanistic criteria of intellectual independence, elaborates a conception of the comparative methods, of its issues and focus of interest, offering the systematization of a broad range of scientific-humanistic methodologies. With this, as the Research Group Director explains, the wish has been to contribute, in a well founded and responsible way, to the methodological reconstruction of humanities and social sciences, and to offer the necessary tools to transcend the humanistically disunifying effects of the technological and financial globalization, in favor of an epistemological globalization that leads to a humanistic 'universalidad'.

References

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