

Comparative Literature and Cult

The strong points of de Toro's *De las similitudes y diferencias* are as follows: The systematic analysis of many plays by means of a structuralist model, which is probably the only way to do justice to such an ample sample of work; the inclusion of Renaissance Italian dramas which treat a similar theme; and the thoroughness with which the author reevaluates all previous research on the concept of honor. On these three grounds, this work will remain unsurpassed for many years. One indeed will be forever grateful to de Toro for having excluded nothing previously done and for having included something formerly excluded, namely, the Italian honor tradition. This last component adds to the originality of the work and justifies [...] the use of comparative literature as a way to arrive at some sort of truth, or at least to a sufficiently thorough knowledge of one's subject matter to avoid falling into clichés based on error or ignorance. De Toro's *De las similitudes y diferencias* [is a critical work] which all Hispanists must read. If anything, [the author has] demonstrated that national literatures cannot be analysed independently of each other, forgetting the historical milieu and the cultural practices that made their existence possible. Finally, no literary study is comprehensible without a sound theoretical methodology, be it polysystemic or semiotic-structuralist as demonstrated in the case of these [book]. On these three grounds, one should be most grateful to de Toro for having expanded our understanding of a great literary tradition. (R. A. L.: Comparative Literature and Culture. A Web-Journal. (March 2001) Book Review Article)