LITERATURE, 1490–1700
(DRAMA)

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(This survey covers the years 1995 and 1996)

1. Celestina

J. T. Snow and R. Garza, ‘Celestina’ de Fernando de Rojas: documento bibliográfico (décimonono suplemento), Celestinesca, 19:125–43, continue to supply the literary world with the most complete Celestina bibliographic tool, which here encompasses entries 723–802. I. J. Rivera, ‘Visual structures and verbal representation in the Comedia de Calisto y Melibea (Burgos, 1499?)’, ib., 3–30, details, in a solid and well-constructed essay, the interaction of the verbal and pictorial text and woodcuts of the Burgos edition — which forces the reader to link diegesis of the argumento to the mimesis of the woodcuts to produce mutually enriching readings. F. Cantalapiedra, ‘El refranero celestinesco’, ib., 31–56, replies to critics of his earlier article on refranes and their relation to the question of Celestina’s authorship; C.’s partial conclusion indicates fewer and poorer refranes in the last four acts than in the first act and ensuing development. F. Maurizi, ‘El auto IX y la destronización de Melibea’, ib., 57–69, employs Bakhtinian semiotics of carnival to explain why Elicia and Areús draw a repellent picture of Melibea’s beauty precisely in Auto IX; the topos of the ugly woman and the focus on breasts and stomach occur in the banquet scene, an ideal Bakhtinian context for parodic commentary on the grotesque body. In an elegant and provocative essay, P. Cocozella, ‘From lyricism to drama: the evolution of Fernando de Rojas’ egocentric subtext’, ib., 71–92, takes the reader from Rojas to Rodrigo Cota and Juan de Mena, to Ausiás March, to describe the ‘egocentric subtext’ of 15th-c. Hispanic letters that develops from the lyrical to the dramatic to a theatrical phenomenon; the psychological illumination of the Celestina’s monologues are a ‘dialogue of self to self’. L. M. Brocate, ‘Cutting commentary: Celestina, spectacular discourse, and the treacherous gloss’, ib., 20:103–28, focuses on overheard dialogues and asides, readers and reading to make the asides a metaphorical index and gloss of the text itself for the benefit of spectators within and without the text. F. J. Sánchez, ‘Negocio y contemplación: el discurso erótico como capital simbólico en La Celestina’, pp. 19–27 of Brave New Words: Studies in Spanish Golden Age Literature, ed. E. H. Friedman and C. Larson, U.P. of the South, xvii + 279 pp. (hereinafter referred to as Friedman,
contextualizes Calisto and Melibea’s love within fiscal and personal negotiations, especially Celestina’s. Social relationships as well as the metaphorical world of courtly love are placed within an emerging class consciousness. *M. T. Narváez, ‘El Mercader de Arévalo, lector morisco de La Celestina’, BHS(L), 72, 1995:255–72. E. M. Gerli, ‘Complicitous laughter: hilarity and seduction in Celestina’, HR, 63:1995, 19–38, reasserts the adage that comedy is serious business by defining the various registers of laughter as an important component of dialogue and how it functions ‘as the counterdiscourse of virtue’. One case in point, according to G., is Alisa whose laughter may very well signal a more complex character than heretofore has been ascribed to her.

2. General

M. D. Stroud, The Play in the Mirror: Lacanian Perspectives on Spanish Baroque Theater, Bucknell U.P., 242 pp., draws from his previous Lacanian studies of the comedia and expands them considerably in order to apply one kind of psychoanalytic criticism to the comedia ‘in a more direct and comprehensive way’ than has been carried out to date. Five of his seven chapters present concise and informative introductions to important aspects of often difficult and elusive Lacanian thought (subject, desire, ethics, phallic signification, and the like) with concomitant analyses of specific comedias: La vida es sueño, La dama boba, El caballero de Olmedo, El castigo sin venganza, A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, El burlador de Sevilla, La dama duende, Don Gil de las calzas verdes, El príncipe constante, and La Santa Juana. While one may take issue with a Lacanian approach to literature and therefore question S.’s theoretical stance, the book is well-researched and well-written, though greater attention could have been paid to Anglo-American feminist readings of several of these plays. Nonetheless, S. rightly concludes that both psychoanalysis and literary criticism seek ‘to deal as directly as possible with the otherness, the gaps, the loose ends, the problematic of desire’. Though these terms function within both a Lacanian and, for example, an Iserian system, S.’s summarizing remark is accurate and helps to formulate the context of the author’s (literary) analyses. W. Egginton, ‘An epistemology of the stage: theatricality and subjectivity in Early Modern Spain’, NLH, 27:391–413, supports Maravall’s contention that comedia worked as an ideological tool of the monarchy, by positing that theatre formed a new mode of subjectivity in which subjects enter into ‘an inherently conflictual relation with the social order’. J. M. Regueiro, ‘Textual discontinuities and the problems of closure in the Spanish drama of the Golden Age’, Brownlee, Cultural Authority, 28–50, reinforces the