

VISUAL STRUCTURES AND  
VERBAL REPRESENTATION IN THE  
COMEDIA DE CALISTO Y MELIBEA (BURGOS, 1499?)<sup>1</sup>

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Melius enim oculis quae fiunt  
deprehendimus, quam quae auditione  
colligimus.

Isidore of Seville, *Etym.* I.xli.1

The oldest printed version of the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* survives in an edition printed in the types of Fadrique de Basilea of Burgos.<sup>2</sup> The unique exemplar of this edition, now housed in the library of The Hispanic Society of America, in New York, contains seventeen illustrations specifically commissioned for this work and Fadrique's

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<sup>1</sup> I dedicate this essay to the memory of Brian Dutton who taught me to read Rojas's text and to see beyond the words.

<sup>2</sup> The precedence of the Burgos edition is still a matter of question. Norton (142-146) gives convincing arguments for accepting the Burgos edition as the earliest version of the *Comedia*. Penney (31-33) and Marciales (1:19-24) summarize issues associated with the dating of the Burgos edition.

device with the engraved date 1499.<sup>3</sup> The distribution of the seventeen illustrations coincides with the textual divisions of the *Comedia*. Although the *mise en page* of the woodcuts varies from *auto* to *auto*, the placement of the cuts in relation to the *argumentos* creates a distinctive feature in the text. In the Burgos 1499 each woodcut marks for the reader a switch point between the summary presented in the *argumento* and the story proper which is developed in the *auto*. At one level, each woodcut constructs a version of the *fabula* and is intended to enhance the readers' experience of the text. Readers in turn process these narrativizations and fit them into the chronological and causal matrix of the larger narrative text. At another level, the woodcuts encourage the readers to engage in movements from image to word and back to image, thereby producing a dynamic actualization of the accompanying text. Each image, moreover, requires its readers to fit the pictorial into the larger context of the book in order to arrive at full understanding of what is printed on the page.<sup>4</sup> The text/image relationship is a complex one. Davis has characterized that relationship as "a complex, mutual, temporally and spatially structured interaction between a spoken, written, or depicted image, produced jointly by a narrator, an author, and a reader/viewer" (*Masking the Blow* 236-37). Berndt Kelley has pointed out that "the woodcuts cannot be understood without the text" ("Mute Commentaries" 225). As a

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<sup>3</sup> This exemplar is lacking A 1 and now begins on A 2 with the argument to the first *auto*. According to Norton (57), the printer's device is a modern facsimile. Whinnom's comments (27) concerning the device are also instructive. For an overview of the illustrations and their function in the text, see Berndt Kelley's "Mute Commentaries on a Text." For more information concerning the iconography of this edition, readers should consult Joseph Snow's "La iconografía de tres *Celestinas* tempranas (Burgos, 1499; Sevilla, 1518; Valencia, 1514): unas observaciones." Marciales in the "Introducción" to his edition (1:20-21) makes interesting observations concerning Fadrique's penchant for producing illustrated texts and adds that the artist for the 1499 edition may have been the same who executed the woodcuts for *Lo carcer de amor*, Johan Rosenbach, Barcelona, 1493.

<sup>4</sup> The relationship of the pictorial to the verbal in the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance is the subject of several important studies. Whitaker provides an overview of the current state of research on the interconnectedness of visual and verbal texts during the Late Middle Ages. Kolve, Hindman, Sherman, and Camille offer a superb studies of the complex relationships between pictorial program and the accompanying verbal text. I am indebted to Mary Carruthers's rich study of the cognitive structures that helped readers to understand a text. For a theoretical discussion of the function of narrative in pictorial representation, readers should consult the studies by Davis, especially *Masking the Blow* 201-55. James Parr offers an interesting discussion of links between *Celestina* and contemporary painting. See "Works Cited".

consequence, the reader gives meaning to the printed text through a "conjoint reading" of verbal and pictorial elements.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately this interaction influences how the reader experiences the printed text.<sup>6</sup>

In the late fifteenth century, the rise of print technology brought about changes in the production and reception of books. Prior to printing, books were created manually and were often difficult to read because of inconsistencies in the script and illumination. The printing press forced redefinition of the relationship of word, image, and page. In this regard, Walter Ong has observed: "Writing moves words from the sound world to a world of visual space, but print locks words into position in this space" (121). The individual reader in the age of print is invited to focus on the words, to think about them, and to visualize what was read. Woodcuts, decorated initials, and other ornamental devices facilitated this new processing of "written signs." Woodcuts in particular provide a mimetic space which orients the reader to the verbal text.<sup>7</sup> As a result, early printed texts allowed the reader to integrate word and image in order fully to comprehend what is being read.<sup>8</sup> Michael Camille has suggested that this was possible because in the late fifteenth-century the split "between image and text" was less pronounced: "The print

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<sup>5</sup> Sandra Hindman ("The Roles of Authors" 27-32) utilizes the term "conjoint reading" to describe a text-image relationship in which the pictorial helps the reader to imagine or picture what is being read.

<sup>6</sup> With reference to the analysis of "pictorial narrative," Davis ("Narrativity and the Narmer Palette" 52) observes: "As active, experientially primary processes operating at the level of the reader's reading or the viewer's beholding of the text, the image involves what we should properly call the viewer's 'fabulation,' 'storying,' and narrative 'textualization,' his or her narrativization of the image."

<sup>7</sup> I use the terms mimetic and mimesis to describe that which is made visible to the reader. The term when used to refer to narrative can describe "supposedly direct presentations of events and conversations, the narrator seeming to disappear (as in drama) and the reader being left to draw the conclusions from what he 'sees' and 'hears'" (Rimmon-Kenan 107). I use the terms diegetic and diegesis to refer to the telling or recounting of events. Each of the *argumentos* creates a diegesis because each one relates events from the *Comedia*. The woodcuts on the other hand engage in mimesis because they provide a direct presentation of some of those events.

<sup>8</sup> According to Roger Chartier ("Introduction" 5), one of the characteristics of print culture is its privileging of printed images: "The image was often a proposal or a protocol for reading, suggesting to the reader a correct comprehension and a proper meaning for a text."

medium creates less of a rift between image and text than occurs in manuscript illustration...precisely because the image has the same black and white structure as the word..." ("Reading the Printed Image" 281-83). The reader as a consequence views pictorial and linguistic elements as integral units of the printed text. The images did not neutralize the power of the word. Rather they assisted readers in their comprehension of the verbal text.

As reading progressively became more integrative, the illustrations included in early printed texts provided an internal reference network for the reader. Pictorial and verbal elements, story and images, were conceived as interrelated, dependent, and interwoven into the complex fabric of the printed book. Each woodcut in the Burgos edition reflects this cultural practice. A pictorial program, if present, was conceived as an integral part of a printed text. Other editions of the *Comedia* (Toledo 1500 and Sevilla 1501) lacked such a pictorial program, thus creating a different experience for the reader. The practice of linking pictorial and verbal elements ultimately shaped how the reader was to experience the printed text. In the Burgos edition, the pictorial program enriched the readers' experience of the narrative text.

## I. VISUALIZING THE TEXT

In *Auto 1* Fadrique de Basilea utilizes two woodcuts to illustrate selected episodes from the opening act of the *Comedia*.<sup>9</sup> The first of these, printed in a full-page-width format occupies the top half of sig. A II recto and precedes the text of the "argumento del primer auto desta comedia" (Figure 1). The cut depicts the crucial meeting of Calisto and Melibea in the garden. The second cut, also the width of the full page, appears on the verso of sig. A II (Figure 2) at the conclusion of the "argumento del primer auto desta comedia." The second cut shows the arrival of Celestina at Calisto's house and corresponds to events mentioned toward the end of the "argumento del primer auto." Taken together both cuts

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<sup>9</sup> All citations from the *Comedia* are taken from the facsimile edition published by The Hispanic Society of America (New York). The illustrations from the Burgos edition are also taken from that facsimile and are reproduced courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America. In general, I have respected the orthography of that edition and have not added accents or modern punctuation. All abbreviations have been expanded. I have used "&" to transcribe the tironian sign. In the course of this essay, when necessary, I use the edition of *Celestina* by Miguel Marciales. References to Marciales will be followed by volume number and page(s).

illustrate significant moments from the first *Auto* and give the reader the opportunity to build expectations of what will occur.

The first illustration, with its placement before the *argumento del primer auto desta comedia*, signals the beginning of the text proper and at the same time offers the reader a glimpse of events of the first *auto*. It is difficult to judge the exact relationship of the first woodcut to the whole of the printed text since the unique exemplar of the Burgos edition lacks the first folio. According to Marciales (1:24), this first folio may have contained a woodcut, a title, the *Incipit*, and *Argumento General*.<sup>10</sup> It is probable that these missing sections may have contributed to the readers' expectations concerning the *Comedia*. To all intents and purposes, the first cut marks the beginning of the text proper and fixes in the mind of the reader the garden meeting of the two protagonists, designating it as a key moment in the text.

The woodcut (Figure 1) presents four stylized trees against almost no additional background detail. Melibea and Calisto, identified by rubrics above the frame of the woodcut, stand frozen in the center. The design includes a bird perched on a tree. At the left, the artist has inserted a building as if to suggest the enclosure of the garden or Melibea's house. The relationship of the image to the accompanying text is made explicit by the rubrics which identify the protagonists and by the words which appear below the cut: "Entrando Calisto vna huerta empos de vn falcon suyo y a Melibea de cuyo amor preso començole de hablar" (sig. A II recto). The verbal text immediately below the cut serves as a gloss to the illustration. The placement of the image in close proximity to the text it visualizes forces the reader to link the diegesis of the *argumento* to the mimesis of the woodcut. In doing so, the reader is free to engage in a combinatorial process which enriches the reading experience. Mimesis and diegesis come together on this page in order to give the reader a visual context for the encounter between the two lovers.

The physical disposition of the page, in this printing of the *Comedia*, encourages the *Comedia's* readers to realize the text through a series of dynamic movements from image to word and back to image.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Faulhaber (12) accepts Marciales's description of the contents of the first folio. Norton (145-46) describes a similar scenario.

<sup>11</sup> The model I am proposing derives from Iser's observation that "the reading process always involves viewing the text through a perspective that is continually on the move, linking up the different phases, and so constructing what we have

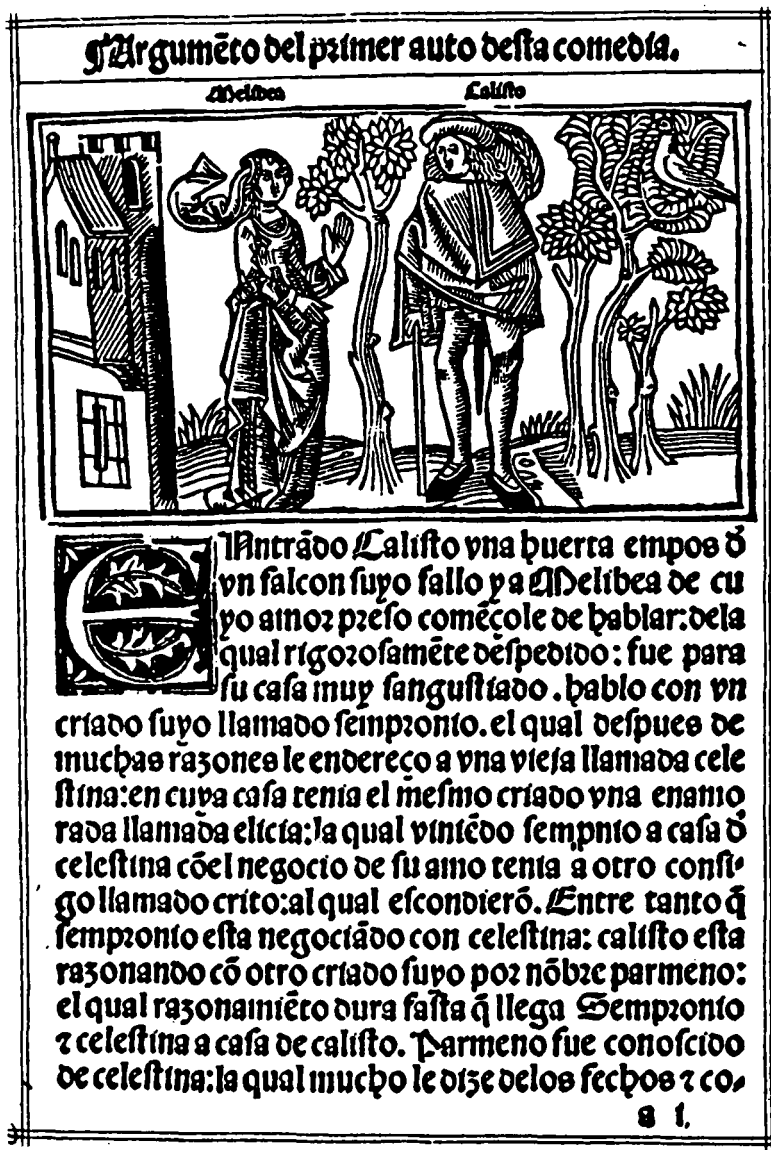


Figure 1. Calisto and Melibeia meet in the garden. *Comedia de Calisto y Melibeia*, Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1499?, New York, The Hispanic Society of America, sig. A I[I?]r, as reproduced in facsimile (New York, 1970). Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America.

nos cimiento de su madre induyendole a amor y con-  
cordia de sempromto.



Este veo Melibea la gran-  
deza de dios. Me. en que calis-  
to. Ca. en dar poder a natu-  
ra que de tã perfera hermosa  
ra te dotasse: y fazer a mi ime-  
rito tanta merced q̄ ver te al-  
cãçasse: y en tan cõueniẽte lu-  
gar q̄ mi secreto dolor man-  
ifestar te pudiesse. sin duda encõparablemente es ma-  
por tal galardõ q̄ el seruitio: sacrificio: deuotiõ y o-  
bras piãs que por este lugar alcanzar rãgo yo a dios  
ofrecido. Ni otro poder mi volũtad humana pue-  
de cõplir. quien vido en esta vida cuerpo glorificado  
de ningun hõbre como agora el mio. Por cierto los  
gloriosos sanctos q̄ se deleyã en la vision diuina no

Figure 2. Calisto and servants receiving a visit from Celestina. *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1499?, New York, The Hispanic Society of America, sig. A 1[1?]v, as reproduced in facsimile (New York, 1970). Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America.

The juxtaposition of pictorial and verbal materials establishes a system for reading dynamically. The reader in fact is given the opportunity to activate those mechanisms of reading when Calisto begins his famous address to Melibea: "En esto veo Melibea la grandeza de dios" (printed on sig. A II verso below woodcut 2). The *mise en page* offers little context for what Calisto says. The woodcut immediately above Calisto's speech (Figure 2) does not correspond to those words. This disjunction should prompt the reader to move back and recall the image of Calisto gazing at Melibea in the garden (Figure 1). The opening speech of Calisto demands that the readers contextualize what Calisto has said. The first meeting of the two lovers becomes actualized through the dynamic process of re-reading the text. The garden woodcut in the Burgos edition by virtue of its placement at the beginning establishes a protocol for engaging the text and for realizing subsequent readings of the *auto*.

The reader at the opening of the *Comedia* must pass from woodcut to *argumento* to woodcut and then to *auto*. The passage through the text is facilitated by the black and white aesthetic of the printed page which neutralizes the split between pictorial and verbal elements (Camille, "Reading the Printed Image" 281-83). The reader thus finds himself processing words and images and constructing meaning from the conjoint reading of these two codes. The synthesis of the text-image relationships enhances the meaning of what is being read. A reader's comprehension is the result of conjoint readings which change as the reader experiences the ongoing pictorial and verbal text.

Readers of the 1499 *Comedia* had to construct meaning using the image of the garden and the printed text accompanying the woodcut. This combinatorial process often goes unnoticed by modern readers who interpret the text in a linear fashion without the assistance of the original pictorial program. Modern editors rarely reproduce these woodcuts in their entirety or, if they are present in a modern edition, the woodcuts are removed from their original printed context. Early modern readers received the 1499 *Comedia* text complete with its visual stimuli. These images were used to enhance the text or to elaborate the meaning of a given passage, creating an internal network of references which readers could use to intensify their response to the text.

## II. NARRATIVE IMAGES

The woodcut which opens *auto* 4 (Figure 3) provides an example of how the processes of combining image and word are constantly at work in the Burgos 1499 printing. The woodcut, although based on the *argumento*, is placed in the middle of Celestina's monologue near the





teando me o acotado me cruelmère. Pues amargas  
cient monedas serian estas. ay cuyrada de mi en q̄ la  
zo me he metido: que por me mostrar sollicita z effor  
çada pongo mi p̄sona al tablero: q̄ h̄are cuyrada mez  
quina de mi: q̄ ni el salir a fuera es puecho ni la per  
seuerácta carece de peligro. pues yre o tornarme he:  
o dubdosa z dura perplexidad: no se qual escoja por  
mas sano: enel osar manifestto peligro: enla couar  
dia denostada perdida: a donde yra el buey q̄ no are.  
Lada camino descubre sus dañosos z hondos barrã  
cos. si conel fuerro soy tomada nũca de inuerta o en  
corocada salto a bien librar. Si no voy que dira sem  
pronio: que todas estas eran mis fuerças. saber z es  
fuerco ardid: z ofrecimiento. astucia z sollicitud. z su  
amo calisto que dira. que h̄ara. que p̄sara. sino que  
ay nueno engaño en mis pisadas. z que yo he descu  
bierto la celada: por hauer mas prouecho desta otra  
parte: como sofistica preuaricadora. o sino se le ofre

Figure 3. Celestina's visit to Alisa's house. *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1499?, New York, The Hispanic Society of America, sig. D Iv, as reproduced in facsimile (New York, 1970). Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America.

beginning of the *auto* proper. The immediate effect of this placement is to intrude on the monologue and to stop the progress of the story. As readers pause to view the full-page-width image, they are invited to contextualize the activity depicted in the woodcut. To make sense of the pictorial elements, readers will need to consider the cut as a visualization of some of the events which are to occur in the narrative text and which must be fitted into the chronology of events in the *Comedia*.

The woodcut of *auto* 4 consists of a two panel illustration which provides the readers with a visualization of two scenes from the narrative text. The left panel depicts Alisa departing the house. The right panel illustrates the meeting between Melibea and Celestina. In the center of the cut, the reader sees the figure of Lucrecia standing behind a column. This compositional scheme allows the artist to bring together a series of interrelated episodes in order visually to enhance the story. This technique was quite common in the art of this period. With reference to the ordering of space in pictorial narrative art, Lew Andrews has observed: "Episodes greatly separated from one another in space, and remote in time, come together on the surface of the image: they coexist in the picture plane and establish formal connections which become an important means of enriching the narrative" (85). In order fully to contextualize the events and their relationship to the images, the reader must draw on the information provided by the verbal text. The *argumento* provides the details necessary for understanding the context of the woodcut: "Viene vn mensajero a llamar a Alisa. Vase. Queda Celestina en casa con Melibea & le descubre la causa de su venida" (sig. D I recto). The words "Paje Alisa Lucrecia Celestina Melibea" above the woodcut identify the actors in the panels and invite the reader to establish links with the events narrated in the diegesis of the *argumento*.

This woodcut is striking in other ways. The scene illustrated by the left panel of the cut foreshadows action which will begin only on sig. D II verso of the *auto* proper. The cut creates a series of expectations which readers can utilize in their visualization of the rest of the *auto*. On sig. D III verso, for example, Alisa's statements concerning the arrival of the messenger ("& tambien que viene su paje a llamar me que se le arrezio desde vn rato aca el mal") would prompt an attentive reader to recall the woodcut, thus actualizing a re-reading of the pictorial text and the *auto*.

If the woodcut is read from left to right, it becomes clear that the designer has organized the image so that the readers see the action in stages roughly equivalent to the chronology in the diegesis. The progression unfolds laterally in two phases. The left panel illustrates the



a mi: q̄ no venir por fuerza a descobrir mi llaga: quãdo no me sea agradecido: quãdo ya desconfiando d̄ mi buena respuesta aya puesto sus olos en amor de otra. quanta mas v̄taja toulera mi prometimiento rogado q̄ mi ofrecimiento forzoso. ¶ mi fiel criada lucrecia: q̄ diras de mi. que pensaras de mi seso: quãdo me veas publicar lo q̄ a ti samas he querido descobrir. como te espantaras del r̄pimiento de mi honestidad ⁊ verguēca: que siēpre como encerrada donze lla acostūbre tener. no se si aurás barrūtado de dōde procede mi dolor. ¶ si ya venieses con aq̄lla medicina de mi salud. ¶ soberano dios: a ti q̄ todos los atribulados llamã. los apassionados piden remedio. los llagados medicina. a ti q̄ los cielos mar ⁊ tierra: cō los ifernales cētros obedecē. a ti el qual todas las cosas a los hōbres sojuzgaste: humildemente suplico: des a mi herido coraçō sofrimiento ⁊ paciēcia: cō que

Figure 4. Celestina's departs from Melibea's house. Alisa approaches. *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1499?, New York, The Hispanic Society of America, sig. H VIIr, as reproduced in facsimile (New York, 1970). Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America.

departure of Alisa. The right panel depicts a second event in the *auto*. The readers in this case view the interior of the house where Melibea stands before Celestina. As the readers' gaze moves laterally from the left panel to the right one, these readers experience temporal and spatial shifts which mirror the chronology presented in the diegesis of the *argumento*.

In the right panel, however, the artist utilizes another device for moving from one position to another. The readers find themselves sharing Lucrecia's perspective of the room. Her placement in the woodcut is instrumental in controlling the readers' movement from the center toward the extreme right where Melibea stands up against a wall. The scene between Melibea and Celestina thus becomes the focus of attention (the readers' as well as Lucrecia's). Although the illustrator appears to be following the information from the *argumento*: "queda celestina en casa con melibea & le descubre la causa de su venida" (sig. D I recto), the scene is in fact drawn from the *auto* proper. The asides (sig. E I recto and verso) near the end of the *auto* suggest that Lucrecia is standing nearby, overhearing the conversation of the two women and witnessing the events within the house. Lucrecia focalizes that meeting of Melibea and Celestina, giving prominence to what transpires between them. This arrangement ultimately produces an effective visual narration which enhances the audience's experience of the narrative text.<sup>12</sup>

The movement across the picture plane assists the readers in visualizing the events of the *auto*. The linear arrangement of the woodcut organizes the events into a series of movements which culminate in the confrontation between Celestina and Melibea in the house. The layout of the woodcut invites the reader to "see" the story, what Davis defines as "the particular arrangement of chronological successions and causal links in the narrative" (*Masking the Blow* 239). Reading entails a working out of mimetic codes in order to construct a story. Only when the reader returns to the verbal text (the *argumento* and *auto*, later on sig. D III verso) is the reader able to comprehend the events depicted in the cut. The printed text stimulates cumulative re-processings and encourages the

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<sup>12</sup> Snow (262-63) has characterized the woodcut artisan's interpretation of the narrative text as a "doble lectura": "Su conocimiento del texto es obvio y su colaboración representa, por lo tanto, una doble lectura, una al absorber la acción a la medida que va evolucionando (en pruebas preparadas para la imprenta o a base de una edición anterior sin ilustraciones, y otra al recordarla y fijarla para siempre sobre madera. Es una gran aportación a la comprensión del texto que todos le debemos."

reader to formulate a narrative, to adjust or modify events, and, in this case, to anticipate events. The interaction with the *récit* becomes dynamic, rather than passive. The woodcut provides a mimetic surface which complements the accompanying verbal text and enriches the reading experience.

This woodcut provides insight into the ways in which the illustrator of the 1499 *Comedia* is able to utilize pictorial elements in order to enhance the reader's comprehension of the story. It is instructive to see how the illustrator utilizes with some variation the same motifs and pictorial scheme later in the *Comedia*. In *auto* 10, the text turns once again to the coming and going of the same five characters from *auto* 4. In the full-page-width woodcut accompanying the *argumento* (sig. H VII recto), the artist utilizes the familiar two panel structure to retell selected events from *auto* 10 (Figure 4). In the left panel Melibea stands with Celestina. The right panel shows Alisa and the Paje approaching the house. Lucrecia, straddling both panels, occupies the central space of the woodcut. The pictorial organization of the woodcut effectively moves the reader from the interior of the house into the street. Celestina's and Melibea's gestures reinforce this movement toward the street while the placement of Alisa and the Paje functions as a counterpoint to that movement. As a result, the readers redirect their gaze toward the house and bring closure to the pictorial sequence.

As in other woodcuts from the Burgos 1499, part of the *argumento* provides the basis for the pictorial narrativization: "Veen venir a alisa madre de melibea. despiden se den vno" (sig. H VI verso). At one level, the cut seems to follow the indications from the *argumento*. A closer inspection of the cut reveals that the illustrator has taken some liberties with the diegesis of the *argumento* and the *auto* proper. The *argumento* makes no specific reference to the "Paje" nor to Lucrecia standing by the doorway. In the *auto* proper it is Celestina who alerts Melibea to Alisa's approach: "a dios que viene hazia aca tu madre" (sig. I iii recto). The *auto*, moreover, does not refer to the Paje. Yet the decision to show Lucrecia at the door and the Paje accompanying Alisa should not thwart the readers' experience of the *Comedia*. The disjunction encourages the readers to interact with the pictorial text. Given the protocols of conjoint reading which this essay has outlined, an attentive reader engaged in the reading of the 1499 *Comedia* would constantly make adjustments in his comprehension of the narrative text. The realization that the woodcut did not depict faithfully the diegesis would encourage readers to adjust and correct any discrepancies. Although the illustrator has effectively conveyed the story material through carefully crafted images, the readers must ultimately construct the narrative text in their minds through a

dynamic process of conjoint reading. A reader, accustomed to moving from *argumento* to image to *auto*, would find the visualization helpful in understanding the sequence of events within the *auto* proper. The pictorial program in this instance generates its own version of the *fabula* in order to facilitate the readers' comprehension of the narrative text. In the woodcut the reader witnesses these events spatially. This dimensionality becomes an important means of enriching the diegesis of the *argumento*.

III. "Oculos magis habenda fides, quam auribus."  
Erasmus, *Adagia* I, i, 100

In addition to help they provide in the construction of narrative, the woodcuts allow readers to experience and comprehend emotional aspects from selected moments of the *fabula*. An instance of this occurs in the woodcut near the beginning of *Auto* 13 (Figure 5). The reader views the image of Calisto in his room while Tristán and Sosia stand outside. The rubric above the woodcut clearly identifies the characters depicted, thus connecting the image with the *argumento*: "Deespertado [sic] Calisto de dormir esta hablando consigo mismo. Dende vn poco esta llamando a Tristan & a otros sus criados. Torna dormir Calisto. Pone se Tristan ala puerta..." (sig. K VIII recto) The cut effectively translates "written codes" into visual signs, helping the readers in their construction of meaning. At another level, the woodcut creates an emotionally charged scene. The image of Calisto in his room — alone, isolated, and in darkness — captures the insecurity and alienation constantly afflicting Calisto.<sup>13</sup> The tormented Calisto as envisioned by the illustrator is markedly different from the Calisto in the garden. In the woodcut from *auto* 13, the artist has made palpable the suffering and alienation which beset Calisto.

A striking example of the affective power of the woodcuts occurs in *Auto* 14 (Figure 6). This woodcut occupies the full width of the center of sig. L II verso and depicts the death of Calisto. Part of the *argumento* once more provides the necessary context for understanding the scene:

Acabado su negocio quiere salir Calisto: el qual por la escuridad dela noche erro la escala. cae & muere. Melibea por las voces & lamientos de sus criados sabe la desastrada muerte de su amado. amortesce. Lucrecia la consuela. (sig. L II verso).

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<sup>13</sup> Deborah Ellis's comments on this topic (9-10) are instructive.

## Argumento del .xliij. auto

**D**espertado calisto de dormir esta hablando consigo mismo. Bende vn poco esta llamando a tristan z a otros sus criados. Torna dormir calisto. Pone se tristan ala puerta. Viene sofias llorando. Preguntado de tristan sofias cuenta le la muerte d sempronio z parmeneo. van a dezir las nuevas a calisto. el qual sabiendo la verdad haze grãde lamentaçiõ.

Sofia

Tristan

Calisto



**C**omo he dormido tan a mi placer: despues de aq̃l acucarado rato. despues de aq̃l angelico razonamiẽto. Gran reposo he tenido. el sosiego z descãso procede d̃ mi alegria. o causo el trabajo coporal mi mucho dormir. o la glia zplazer d̃l animo: z no me marauillo q̃ lo vno z lo otro se juntassen a cerrar los cãdados d̃ mis ojos: pues trabase cõel cuerpo z persona: z bõlque conel espritu z sentido la passada

Figure 5. Servants talk while Calisto sleeps in his room. *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, Burgos, Fadrigue de Basilea, 1499?, New York, The Hispanic Society of America, sig. K VIIIr, as reproduced in facsimile (New York, 1970). Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America.

The artist's interpretation of this part of the *argumento* is carefully orchestrated to match the chronological and causal logic of the narrated events. The action unfolds laterally from right to left and intensifies the spectacle of Calisto's death. In the lower right of the frame, Calisto, his corpse slumped on a sword, lies at the foot of a ladder. In the background the reader sees part of a garden wall with a crenellated, tower-like structure adjacent to the walls. The placement of Calisto near the ladder marks for the reader the start of the sequence. Immediately behind Calisto, Tristán raises his hands in a gesture of lamentation. Farther to the left Melibea, with arms gesturing toward the body, appears overcome by the scene. Both Lucrecia and Sosia provide comfort to their respective companions. As the events flow from right to left, each of the standing characters directs his or her attention toward the right so as to intensify the realization that Calisto has died. By shifting between left and right in the woodcut, the reader experiences a pictorial version of Calisto's death scene. The artist is exploiting this mimetic space in order to convey to the reader a story full of emotions.

The selective placement of props — ladder, garden, and walls — organizes the pictorial narrative and provides an appropriate backdrop for the emotional reality of Calisto's death. These props at one level confirm information provided by the *argumento* and give the reader a mimetic context with which to reconstruct the events narrated in the diegesis. By bringing these elements together, the artist encourages the reader/spectator to "see" a representation of the death of Calisto. Once the image is processed, the reader is capable of realizing an important hermeneutic principle: seeing is understanding, ultimately remembering.<sup>14</sup> The cut in this instance invites the reader to visualize Calisto's death and to remember the emotions and human suffering associated with it.

By negotiating the diegetic and mimetic elements of the Burgos 1499, the reader arrives at a fuller comprehension of the narrative text. This is certainly the case when Tristán recounts the death of his master: "Lloro mi gran mal. lloro mis muchos dolores. Cayo mi señor calisto del escala & es muerto: su cabeça esta en tres partes: sin confesion perocio" (sig. L IV verso). Because the printed text has already provided a visualization of that episode, the reader is able to link Tristán's statements with some of the mimetic cues provided by the woodcut. By the same token, Tristán's statements concerning the trauma to Calisto's

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<sup>14</sup> For discussion of this topic, see the comments in Kolve 9-11 and in Solterer 131.



sino pagare mi inocencia con mi fingida ausencia.

**A**rgumento del quatorzeno auto.



**E**sperado melibea la venida d calisto en la puerta habla cō lucrecia. viene calisto cō dos criados suyos cristan z sofia. ponen le el escalera. sube por ella z mete se en la puerta onde halla a melibea. Zipta se lucrecia. quedã los dos solos. acabado su negocio qere salir calisto: el qual por la escurtad dela noche erro la escala. cae z muere. melibea por las voces z la mientos de sus criados sabe la defastrada muerte de su amado. amortece. lucrecia la consuela.

Lucrecia Melibea Sofia Cristan Calisto



**O**cho se tarda aq̄l cauallero que espera mos: q̄ crees tu o sospechas de su estada lucrecia. Tu señora q̄ tiene susto impedi mi t̄ro: z q̄ no es en su mano venir mas p̄ sto. De. los angeles sean en su guarda.

Figure 6. Death of Calisto and lamentation scene. *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1499?, New York, The Hispanic Society of America, sig. LIIv, as reproduced in facsimile (New York, 1970). Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America.

head and his death without confession alert the reader to information not depicted in the woodcut. Tristán's words have the effect of provoking the reader to modify his memories of this emotional episode. The attentive reader would most likely process those details and add them to his repertoire of information. In the 1499 Burgos, the interplay of pictorial and verbal elements allows the reader to arrive at a richer appreciation of the narrative text. The word-image relationship ultimately increases the reader's experience of the text.

The spectacle of death which the reader witnesses in word and image is also emblematic of the larger theme of death which is pervasive in the final five *autos* of the *Comedia*.<sup>15</sup> Dorothy Severin recently has argued that all the characters in *Celestina* reveal a "consciousness of mortality" (84). This woodcut becomes a visual confirmation of the preoccupation with mortality. The woodcut echoes the verbal text's referencing of death and creates a powerful image for the reader to hold in memory.<sup>16</sup>

The thematics of death return some twelve pages later in the last *auto* of the *Comedia* (Figure 7). The woodcut positioned in the center of sig. L VIII recto depicts the parents standing near Melibea. The woodcut appears to combine two moments from the *Comedia*: Melibea's fall in *auto* 15 and Pleberio's showing to Alisa Melibea's broken body in *auto* 16. The artist in this cut utilizes a dynamic compositional scheme to render both events. The action of the woodcut unfolds laterally from right to left. In the lower right of the cut, Melibea is seen gliding downward toward the ground. This image corresponds to the last moments of *auto* 15 when Melibea shouts "pon tu en cobro este cuerpo que alla baxa" (sig. L VIII recto) as she leaps from the tower. On the left side of the woodcut, the reader sees Alisa and Pleberio standing with hands gesturing toward Melibea. The *argumento* preceding the cut to *auto* 16 is instrumental in providing a context for this scene: "Pleberio tornado a su camara con grandissimo llanto: pregunta le Alisa su muger la causa de tan supito

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that in the *Tragicomedia*, Pleberio observes in *auto* 16: "La muerte nos sigue y rodea, de la cual somos vezinos, y hazia su vadera nos acostamos, según natura" (Marciales 2:240). I am indebted to Sarah Misemer for bringing this passage to my attention. The classic study of this theme remains Erna Ruth Berndt's book *Amor, muerte y fortuna en "La Celestina"*.

<sup>16</sup> This topic was a commonplace in the literature and art of fifteenth-century Europe. For an overview, see Huizinga. Additional images associated with death can be found in Levin.

scribe alla tu amada hysa. Bran dolor lleuo de mí: ma-  
yoz de tí: muy mayor de mi vieja madre. Btos quede  
contigo z conella: a el ofrezco mi alma: pon tu en co-  
bro este cuerpo que alla bara.

Argumento del diez z seys z vltimo auto.



Reberto tornado a su camara con gran-  
dissimo llanto: pregunta le alisa su mu-  
ger la causa de tá supito mal. Cuenta le  
la muerte de su hysa inelibea: mostrádo  
le el cuerpo della todo hecho pedaços:  
z haziendo su planto concluye.

Alisa

Pleberto

Melibeas



**Q**ue es esto señor pleberto. porq̄ son tus  
fuerres alaridos. sin seso estauas adormi-  
da del pesar q̄ oue quãdo oy dezir q̄ sen-  
tia dolor nra hysa. Agora oyêdo tus ge-  
midos. tus vozes tan altas. tus çras no  
acostũbradas. tu llanto z cõgoxa de tâto sentimiento  
en tal manera penetraron iute entrañas. en tal ma-

Figure 7. Parents grieving at the sight of dead daughter. *Comedia de Calisto y Melibeas*, Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1499?, New York, The Hispanic Society of America, sig. L VIIIr, as reproduced in facsimile (New York, 1970). Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America.

mal. Cuenta le la muerte de su hija Melibea: mostrando le el cuerpo della todo hecho pedaços & haziendo su planto concluye" (sig. L VIII recto). The *argumento*, focusing attention on the parents' response to the discovery of their daughter's shattered body, invites the reader to move forward in the narrative and to infer events associated with Melibea's death.

The ordering of the events and the placement of the characters in the woodcut transform the story material into a much richer narrative. The reader must interpret both scenes, contextualize a sequence of events, and unravel the outcome. The compositional scheme brings together these two crucial moments so as to assist the reader in the processing of a series of episodes causally related, but separated in time from one another. While the pictorial text is generating its own arrangement of the story, the *argumento* of *auto* 16 offers a complementing perspective which enhances the underlying pictorial narrative. The *argumento* provides information concerning the psychological states of the various characters. The references to "grandissimo llanto, supito mal, planto" create an affective register which suggests to the reader that the scenes depicted in the woodcut should be understood as an intense, emotional moment triggered by the death of Melibea. The conjunction of pictorial and verbal materials at the beginning of the *auto* invites the reader to anticipate cries of grieving and lamentation. Alisa's remarks in the *auto* proper reinforce this:

Que es esto señor pleberio. porque son tus fuertes alaridos. sin seso estaua adormida del pesar que oue quando oy dezir que sentia dolor nuestra hija. Agora oyendo tus gemidos. tus vozes tan altas. tus queexas no acostumbradas. tu llanto & de tanto sentimiento en tal manera penetraron mis entrañas. (sig. L VIII recto)

The Burgos edition intensifies the experience of these emotions by fashioning a mimetic space which complements the readers' experience of the verbal text and which underscores the pathos of the scene.

The artist's interpretation of Melibea's death scene reveals the importance of reading text and image together. This reading protocol constantly shapes the readers' experience in the 1499 *Comedia*. The woodcut cannot possibly show every single element of the story. The illustration of the last *auto* attests to the artist's ability to select important moments from the story material in order to underscore key thematic concerns of the text. In composing the images for *auto* 16, the artist has taken liberties with the story in order to control the readers' experience

of the events. Disregarding the *argumento's* indication that Pleberio has returned to the *cámara*, the artist places Alisa and Pleberio outside the walls of the house. This manipulation is consistent with the way in which the Burgos artist is frequently suggesting to the reader a protocol for comprehending the text. In this particular case, the artist chooses to depict Pleberio and Alisa gesturing toward the body — "mostrando le el cuerpo della todo hecho pedaços." The artist has crafted an image which avoids a graphic depiction of Melibea's injuries. This deviation from literal accuracy is intriguing since the careful reader, having processed the *argumento's* "todo hecho pedaços," is able to infer that Melibea's fall is fatal. The lack of accurate depiction of Melibea's fall should not pose an obstacle for perceptive readers since their comprehension of the pictorial text would be adjusted according to the indications of the accompanying verbal text. As in previous *autos*, the synthesis of the various textual codes ultimately allows the readers to reconstruct the narrative and to adjust the repertoire of information. In this instance, the interplay of words and images intensifies the pathos of this episode. For the reader the text of the 1499 Burgos edition of the *Comedia* is constituted by means of a complex interaction between verbal codes and pictorial elements.

**IV. "The work, which was addressed to the ear as much as to the eye, plays with forms and procedures that subject writing to demands more appropriate to oral 'performance.'"**

(Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books* 9)

Marian Rothstein has suggested that illustrated books of the Renaissance served a dual function: "the reader of the text and the viewer of the picture may not have been the same person at the same time. 'Readers' may in fact have enjoyed separately the pleasures of the text they heard from those of the pictures" (115). It seems reasonable to assume that this was true of Spain. There existed a variety of readers, some incapable of reading a printed text.<sup>17</sup> Readers able to negotiate words and images on their own processed the text far differently than those who were unable to read. The only recourse for the less skilled in

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<sup>17</sup> For an overview of the issue of literacy in Early Modern Spain, see the superb articles by Lawrance and Nall. With reference to literacy, Chartier has observed: "All who can read texts do not read them in the same fashion, and there is an enormous gap between the virtuosi among readers and the least skilled at reading, who have to oralize what they are reading in order to comprehend it and who are at ease only with limited range of textual or typographical forms" (*The Order of Books* 4).

reading was to have someone else read the text aloud. Evidence from the early editions of the *Comedia* and the *Tragicomedia* suggests that the printed texts of *Celestina* were meant to be read aloud in small group settings, and not in silence and alone. Certain verses by Proaza, which first appear in print in the *Comedia* of Toledo 1500, describe how the vocalized reading of the text should proceed:

Si amas y quieres a mucha atención,  
 Leyendo a *Calisto* mover los oyentes,  
 cumple que sepas hablar entre dientes,  
 a vezes con gozo, esperança y pasión,  
 a vezes airado con gran turbación.  
 Finge leyendo mil artes y modos,  
 pregunta y responde por boca de todos,  
 llorando y riendo en tiempo y sazón.

(Marciales 2: 271)

As evidenced by the verses attributed to Proaza, reading not only entailed oral delivery, but also expressive portrayal of each character. This type of reading is in accordance with Isidorian notions of theatrical performance (Jones 43-44). Lawrance has suggested that vocalized performances of this type were part of academic practices in Salamanca during the period of the genesis of the *Comedia* (84-85). Roger Chartier also deduces the same from Proaza's verses: "Like the Latin humanist comedies, the *Celestina* was written for a vocalized and dramatized reading, but nonetheless a reading for solo voice intended for a small and select audience" ("Leisure" 104). Printing may have changed the production and distribution of books, but it did not immediately transform reading into a silent experience.

A second important reference to group read-aloud situations appears in the "Prólogo" accompanying the early editions of the *Tragicomedia*, (Toledo 1510-14, Sevilla 1511, and Valencia 1514). Rojas observes that "Assí que quando diez personas se juntaren a oír esta comedia, en quien quepa esta diferencia de condiciones, como suele acaecer, ¿quién negará que aya contienda en cosa que de tantas maneras se entienda?" (Marciales 2:12). This passage alludes to the practice of gathering in small groups around a reader in order to listen to a text being read aloud. More important, Rojas stresses the active involvement of the group in the discussion of the text. This experience produced an environment of "sociability" which fostered a sharing of insights into the possible interpretations of the text (Chartier, "Texts" 158-59). This communitarian reading would also encourage what Susan Noakes labels "a more active approach to books" (27). In group read-aloud situations,

each member of the audience could have the opportunity to elaborate or comment upon the text: "In such circumstances the interpretation of the text developed by any single reader or listener was the product not of her or his understanding of the text alone but of a combination of questions and insights supplied by others" (Noakes 27). The community experience of reading results in the production of multiple interpretations which ultimately enhance each reader's understanding of a given text.

While no documentary evidence exists for the group reading of the 1499 *Comedia*, it is not, of course, beyond the realm of possibility that Fadrique de Basilea, the publisher of the Burgos edition, was aware of the practices of group reading associated with humanist comedies. His printing of Rojas's text possibly sought to meet the requirements of this potential audience. With reference to the practices of booksellers/publishers, Chartier has pointed out: "Thus, the very structure of their books was governed by the way that book publishers thought that their target clientele read" (*The Order of Book* 13). Two physical features of the Burgos edition target the needs of its readership. First, the *argumentos* provide convenient summaries of each *auto*, assisting the reading public in its comprehension of events in the story. Rojas points to the printers' addition of that feature in the "Prólogo": "Que aun los impressores han dado sus punturas, poniendo rúbricas o sumarios al principio de cada auto, narrando en breve lo que dentro contenía" (Marciales 2:12).<sup>18</sup> Second, the Burgos edition, because it has a rich pictorial program, offers its readership a mechanism for visualizing, recapitulating, or anticipating the narrative. Specifically, the illustrations create a series of mimetic structures which allow the audience to image what is occurring, to situate the pictorial narrative within time and space, and to assign meaning to the narrative text.<sup>19</sup> The conjunction of verbal and pictorial materials assists the readers in their experience of the text. As a result, the readers, whether alone or in a group situation, would receive visible signs which provided reinforcement of the read discourse.

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Gilman has observed that the *argumentos* provoke the question "how was *La Celestina* read in 1499?" (212). Gilman also suggests that in the Burgos 1499 Fadrique may be following printing practices learned during his apprenticeship in Germany (212-13). Gilman's perceptive discussion of this passage is instructive.

<sup>19</sup> Hindman has suggested that illustrations increase the reader's understanding of a text (*Pen to Press* 160).

Within the context of group situations, a pictorial program would function as a complement to the verbal text. As this essay has tried to show, readers of the 1499 *Comedia* were invited to move from *argumento* to woodcut to *auto*. At each point of transition, readers were required to construct the narrative text, to engage in speculation concerning the story, and to adjust their expectations accordingly. In group situations, the pictorial and verbal components of the 1499 Burgos would induce a community of readers to interact with the text in various ways. The comprehension of the text rested on the confluence of "readings" and insights supplied by participants in the reading group. The text would continue to challenge the readers. What changes in such a group read-aloud situation is the number of participants reading and processing the text at the same time. Instead of a solitary reader, it is possible to conceive of a group assembled around a copy of the *Comedia*. This group could negotiate the mimetic and diegetic aspects of the narrative and give meaning to the whole text through a process of shared reading of pictorial and verbal texts.

The pictorial components of the 1499 *Comedia* transformed Rojas's text into a book to be easily enjoyed by readers, spectators, and listeners. The illustrations assisted in the actualization of the text by the readers. It must be noted that these illustrations exist because they were designed and executed by artisans who were possibly familiar with the needs of their readership. Fadrique de Basilea's role in this enterprise is significant. Clive Griffin has remarked that the output of Fadrique de Basilea's press was "remarkable for its illustrated editions of popular literary works in the vernacular" (7). Many readers were accustomed to interacting with illustrated texts and may have expected printed books to contain images which accompanied the story. Courtly romances, books of exemplary fables, and translations of imaginative literature circulating in Spain during the incunabular period contained picture-rich texts which enhanced the readers' capacity to see and understand the text before them.<sup>20</sup>

Literary scholarship, however, tends to overlook the printer's contributions to the success of a work of fiction.<sup>21</sup> The reception of the

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<sup>20</sup> Lyell in fact has suggested that the percentage of illustrated printed books in early modern Spain was higher than the rest of Europe (3). Griffin adds a note of caution to Lyell's claims (184).

<sup>21</sup> For insight into the printing practices at Basel during Fadrique's formative years, see Gilly's study.



*Comedia* by its audience was in part determined by Fadrique's expertise in bringing together skilled artisans in order to produce a marketable version of Rojas's imaginative fiction. Fadrique's unique program of words and images ultimately created a *Celestina* which still remains vibrant, alive, and meaningful to its readership.<sup>22</sup>

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