VISUAL STRUCTURES AND VERBAL REPRESENTATION IN THE COMEDIA DE CALISTO Y MELIBEA (BURGOS, 1499?)

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

2 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. 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. 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

3 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 iconografia 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.

4 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. Ultimately this interaction influences how the reader experiences the printed text.

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. As a result, early printed texts allowed the reader to integrate word and image in order fully to comprehend what is being read. 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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5 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.

6 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."

7 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.

8 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.9 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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9 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. 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 comenqole 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. Faulhaber (12) accepts Marciales's description of the contents of the first folio. Norton (145-46) describes a similar scenario.

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

called the virtual dimension” (*The Implied Reader* 280).
nacimiento de su madre indusiendo a amor con corda de simpsonio.

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 cruelmente. Pues amargas
cien monedas serian estas. Ay espada de mi en el
azo me he metido: que poz me mostrar solícita z esto
caza pongo mi psona al tablero: z hare custada mez
quina de mi; z ni el salir a fuera es puechoso ni la per
feueräcta carece de peligro. pues yre o tomar me be:
0 dudosa z dura perplexidad: no se quai escoba poz
más fano: en el ofar manifestó peligro: en la couar-
dia denostada perdida: a donde pra el huyer z no are.
Cada camino descubre sus dañosos z hondos barras
con el suerto soy tomada niica de muerta o en-
cozada falta a bien librar. Si no voy que dira sem
prontio: que todas estas eran mis fuerzas. Saber z es-
fuerço ardido: z ofrecimiento, afligta z soliciud. z su
amo calisto que dira, que hara. que pesara. sino que
ay nuevo engañe en mis pídase z que yo he descu-
bierio la celada: poz haver mas provecho desta otra
parte: como sofística prevaricadora. o sino se le ofrez-

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
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.¹²

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

¹² 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 evolucionado (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. 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 cual por la escurridad dela noche erro la escala. cae & muere. Melibea por las vozes & lamientos de sus criados sabe la desastrada muerte de su amado. amoretse. Lucrecia la consuela. (sig. L II verso).

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13 Deborah Ellis's comments on this topic (9-10) are instructive.
Argumento del prólogo

Dejado dormido Calisto de domir esta hablando consigo mismo. Desde un punto esta llamando a Tristán a otros sus criados. Lo que dormir Calisto. Pone se Tristán ala puerta. Tiene fósiles llorando.

Preguntado de Tristán fósiles cuenta le la muerte de sem pronto e parmeno. Van a dezir las nuevas a Calisto, el cual sabiendo la verdad faze grāve lamentación.

The artist's interpretation of this part of the argument 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 argument 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. 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 cabeza esta en tres partes: sin confesion perecio" (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

14 For discussion of this topic, see the comments in Kolve 9-11 and in Solterer 131.
fino pagare mi inocencia con mi singida absencia.

Argumento del quarto zenzo auto.

Sperado melibea la venida de calisto en la puerta habia có lucrecia. viene calisto có dos criados susos tristán y sofia. po

nen le el escalera. sube por ella y mete se en la puerta onde halla a melibea. Apta se lucrecia, queda los dos solos, acabado su negocio qere salir calisto: el qual poz la escurdita dela noche erro la escala, caez muere melibea poz las vozes y la mientos de sus criados sabe la desafirada muerte de su amado, amor tese, lucrecia la confuela.

Lucrecia     Melibea     Sofía     Tristán     Calisto

Elcho se tarda ail cavallero que espera mos: y crees tu o sospechas de su estada lucrecia. Lu. señora y tiene jutio impedi mieto: y no es en su mano venir mas y no M. los angeles sean en su guarda.

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. 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.

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

15 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 vandera 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".

16 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.
Seibe alla tu amada hija. Gran dolor llevo de mi, mayor de ti: muy mayor de mi vieja madre. Dios quede contigo y conéllea el ofresco mi alma: pon tu en cobro este cuerpo que alla barra.

Ilargumento del diez y seis y último auto.

Zebertio tornado a su camarín con gran desfímulo llanto: pregunta su alma su mujer la causa de tal supito mal. Entendre le la muerte de su hija melibea: mostrando le el cuerpo della todo hecho pedazos: haziendo su planto concluye.

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 estaú 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 câmara, 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.17 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

17 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 atencih,
Leyendo a Calisto mover los oyentes,
cumple que sepas hablar entre dientes,
a veces con gozo, esperança y passión,
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 "Assi 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).
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": "¿Qué aun los impresores han dado sus punturas, poniendo rúbricas o sumarios al principio de cada auto, narrando en breve lo que dentro contenía" (Marciales 2:12).18 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.19 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.

18 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.

19 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 incunable period contained picture-rich texts which enhanced the readers’ capacity to see and understand the text before them.20

Literary scholarship, however, tends to overlook the printer’s contributions to the success of a work of fiction.21 The reception of the

20 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).

21 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.22
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