

Seeing, Hearing, and Gender in Anne Bradstreet's "Contemplations"

Tomoyuki Zettsu

Although such twentieth-century poets as John Berryman and Adrienne Rich have shown their active interest in Anne Bradstreet,¹ the first poet of America has thus far received little critical attention beyond the seventeenth-century contexts in which she lived and wrote. Indeed, it is hardly possible to discuss Bradstreet without giving due consideration to her intimate relationship to the age of Puritanism. It is time, however, to explore more fully the ageless appeal of Bradstreet's works, especially of "Contemplations," which has generally been acknowledged as her masterpiece.

In spite of its apparently meditative or tranquil quality, "Contemplations" is a dynamic poem. A brief comparison between the following lines shows that the poem exactly reverses itself during its discourse: the poet at the outset believes, or pretends to believe, that "More Heaven then Earth was here" (2), but in the end she finds it foolish to take "this earth ev'n for heav'ns bower" (32).² The question, then, is the process by which the poem undergoes such a total change in its judgment on true values of life. It is worth while to trace the poem's structural movement, considering what kind of values in the poem cross each other.

Criticism has already thrown some light upon the way in which "Contemplations" is structured. At least three critics, for instance, have focused on the presence of several important turning points in the poem. Interestingly, these critics, though vastly different in their thematic emphasis, conform to the same view that the poem can be divided into four smaller units.³ This paper, then, offers a new perspective in which to reexamine the poem's dynamic four-part design. My belief is that the theme and structure of the poem are defined by the poet's crucial concern

with the problem of seeing and hearing. To consider this problem, moreover, is to reveal the poem's critical process by which cultural and gender-specific values are examined by the poet in a subtle yet subversive manner.

I. The Reign of Phœbus

The poem's opening stanza presents the beauties of nature aglow both with autumnal tints and with the evening sun:

Some time now past in the Autumnal Tide,
 When *Phœbus* wanted but one hour to bed,
 The trees all richly clad, yet void of pride,
 Where gilded o're by his rich golden head.
 Their leaves and fruits seem'd painted, but was true
 of green, of red, of yellow, mixed hew,
 Rapt were my senses at this delectable view.

What is remarkable here is the extent to which the poet indulges in her visual sensation. She feasts her eyes on the picturesque view, almost indiscriminately piling up adjectives pertaining to colors. Her description of nature, one might say, is visual and vivid to the point of flamboyance. Such words as "clad," "gilded," and "painted" underscore the picturesque quality of this unusual view. There is no doubt that the poem's opening lines reveal the poet's obsession with the act of seeing, which brings us back to the original meaning of the word "contemplation"—the (physical) act of gazing.

In fact, the poet in the early stanzas makes a careful record of the movement of her eye, which is fixed on "this under world" (2) at first: "Then on a stately Oak I cast mine Eye" (3); "Then higher on the glistening Sun I gaz'd" (4). The sun, of course, is the primal source of light that makes all the things in the world visible. It is no wonder that the poet, obsessed with eyesight, cherishes a despairing admiration for "this Universes Eye" (4). The crucial point here is that the poet gives high praise to the sun in terms of its masculine power. For one thing, the poet at the outset refers to the sun as *Phœbus*, a male deity. In stanza 5, moreover, the sun is referred to as "Bridegroom" and "strong man" diving into the "darksome womb" of

the earth, which, after all, only "reflects" the sun's radiance.

This image of the sun with its masculine implication becomes highly significant when juxtaposed with the following lines from "In Honour of Du Bartas," one of Bradstreet's earlier elegies written in praise of the French poet, under whose influence she began to write poetry:

My dazled sight of late, review'd thy lines,
 Where Art, and more then Art in Nature shines;
 Reflection from their beaming altitude,
 Did thaw my frozen hearts ingratitude;
 Which Rayes, darting upon some richer ground,
 Had caused flowers, and fruits, soone to abound.⁴

Here the young poet clearly equates Du Bartas with the sun, which shines, from above, with dazzling brilliancy. According to Kenneth Requa, furthermore, the artistic influence of Du Bartas on Bradstreet is visible even in a later poem like "Contemplations."⁵ For Bradstreet, the sun, the universal source of energy, serves as a metaphor for her male precursor, whose presence has long been the exclusive source of her poetical imagination. The poet's preoccupation with the virile sun in "Contemplations" should, then, be read with her personal poetical career in mind. In stanza 8, the poet leads her "wandering feet" (which, of course, are also the metrical feet of her poetry) in "pathless paths," because Bradstreet was, indeed, a pathfinder in the history of women poets in the New World. The female poet in search of her poetic voice necessarily remains "Silent alone" (8), for she has been intent on looking upward, aspiring with an ambitious heart toward height (associated with fame and excellency) in what might be called a masculine mode.

II. The Music of the Insects

In terms of the dialectic tension between seeing and hearing, stanza 9 marks an important point of departure in the course of the poem. This is the first moment in the poem where the poet's auditory sensation is aroused:

I heard the merry grasshopper then sing,

The black clad Cricket, bear a second part,
 They kept one tune, and plaid on the same string,
 Seeming to glory in their little Art.
 Shall Creatures abject, thus their voices raise ?
 And in their kind resound their makers praise ?
 Whilst I as mute, can warble forth no higher layes.

Important notice should be given to the fact that the poet's ear responds to a joint tune—not a single voice—of the grasshopper and the cricket. This fact merits special emphasis if we are to recognize the mode of hearing, which will be discussed later in this essay. For the present, one might dwell on another implication of this coupling of the insects. In the first section of the poem, as has been shown, the act of seeing is linked with the masculine principle, chiefly through the image of the sun.⁶ As the poem proceeds to its second phase, however, the poet experiences a shift of her attention from sight to sound, a shift which coincides with the poem's provisional breakaway from the male-oriented universe. Naturally, the small insects on the low ground make a sharp contrast to the lofty, glorious world of trees and the sun. Still more important but usually unnoticed here is the way in which the poet subtly veils the gender of the insects. Traditionally, perhaps, these insects are likely to be gendered as male rather than female. But being paired, they are cunningly referred to with plural pronouns: "*They* kept one tune," and they "glory in *their* little Art," raising "*their* voices"; "And in *their* kind resound *their* makers praise" (9; italics mine). Thus the poet shies away from specifying the gender of the insects (in spite of her obvious rhetoric of personification), thereby suggesting a possibility that the music of the insects may be a genuine source of imagination for the female poet. This is, to put it another way, a strategy for distancing the aural faculty from the idea of maleness.

The poem's progression from its first section to its second section, signaled by the transition from a visual world to an aural world, seems to bring a shift not only in the poet's awareness of gender but also in the poem's broader cultural contexts. What is behind the entire poem is the mixture of the two traditions—classical and Christian—which lend support to the poet's frame of reference. Walter J. Ong helps to explain the contrast between these two traditions from a viewpoint of cultural and religious history, especially in terms of sensory psychology. Accord-

ing to Ong, "The Hebrews tended to think of understanding as a kind of hearing, whereas the Greeks thought of it more as a kind of seeing."⁷ In this light, the reign of Phœbus in the poem's first section may be seen as a perfect example of the eye-oriented classical tradition. On the other hand, the music of the insects seems to give an appropriate cue to the poet's exploration of the Hebreo-Christian heritage which figures in the second portion of the poem. For Christians, as Ong reminds us, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10: 17).

Thus the poet turns from "present times" to "Ages past" (10), contemplating the biblical history of humankind. Her vision comes no longer from her physical eye, but from her mind's eye. This interiorization of vision is surely something that shows the poet's progress toward her ideal universe. However, no tuneful music reaches her ears as she envisages what happened in the Garden of Eden. The whole chain of events from Adam's Fall to Cain's fratricide are reenacted here like a silent nightmare. The only sound that breaks the silence of this scene is the crying of Cain, still wet from birth, the "weeping Imp" who "Bewails his unknown hap, and fate forlorn" (12). Faintly heard, too, are his mother's sigh (12) and his father's sigh (16). What is wrong with them is that they all tried arrogantly to raise themselves to a higher position. Adam was proudly "Lord of all" (11), while Eve "lost her bliss" because of her wish "to be more wise" (12). Most emphatically, though, the poem dramatizes Cain's sinful attempt to go beyond his brother, "Upon whose blood his future good he hopes to raise" (13). What the poet finds in these pictures, then, is the ineluctable human desire to be superior to others, which is destined to court disaster. In other words, the poet underlines the danger of defining oneself in terms of his/her relative or hierarchical position to others. This is precisely the danger inherent in what I have called a masculine mode. The desire to claim superiority always brings about some form of destructive competition. The vocabulary of stanza 15 ("death," "horror," "warr," "wals," "foes") contributes in particular to the imagery of battle, and the poet's pun on Cain as "Male-factor" recapitulates its gender implication.

Before the poet started her meditation about the human deeds recorded in the Bible, she was not quite free from this emulative masculine mode herself. It cannot be denied that she was trying to compete with the grasshopper and the cricket, for she was deeply vexed that she could sing "no higher layes" (9). Her major premise was that she ought to take a higher and more glorious position than that of the

insects. But by the time she comes to a conclusion of the poem's second section, she has almost lost interest in that kind of vain hierarchy. In stanza 20, the poet accentuates the three comparatives ("longer," "bigger," "stronger") as she questions herself if she should adore the things in Nature that appear to be superior to her. However, she gives a strong "Nay" to her own question, as if to deny the very mode of comparison/competition. She is beginning to find that her true triumph lies, paradoxically, in her withdrawal from emulative struggles, whether they are between man and man or between man and other earthly things.

The poet's changing attitude toward life is concurrent with the poem's shifting treatment of the theme of seeing. True, a series of biblical pictures present themselves vividly even in the poet's mental vision. And yet those lurid pictures show nothing that pleases her (mind's) eye. Unlike the glorious Eye of heaven and the poet's longing eye in the first section of the poem, Cain's eye, one should note here, is repeatedly described in negative terms. In his mother's lap, the newborn Cain weeps and mournfully "looks her in the face" (12). Later in his life, Cain plots a murder "With sullen hateful looks" (13). Moreover, the poet sees in her vision "his looks now at the Barr, / His face like death" (15). All the images of Cain's tortured eyes accumulate into an impression that seeing can be a source of fear and pain. Adam, for that matter, cannot but heave a sigh "to see his Progeny, / Cloath'd all in his black sinfull Livery" (16; italics mine). Although the poet at this point does not fully realize that faith comes by hearing, she seems to sense, however vaguely, that faith does not come by seeing.

III. The Murmur of the Stream

From stanza 21, the poem moves on to yet another world open to new possibilities. The poet's choice of "the rivers" rather than "the trees" clearly signifies a switch of her mode of thinking:

Under the cooling shadow of a stately Elm
 Close sate I by a goodly Rivers side,
 Where gliding streams the Rocks did overwhelm;
 A lonely place, with pleasures dignifi'd.
 I once that lov'd the shady woods so well,

Now thought the rivers did the trees excel,
 And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell.

The poem's structural transition is always signaled by something that appeals to the ear. Although the poet emphasizes the stillness of the scene by describing the river as "gliding" (21) and "stealing" (22), the pleasant murmur of the stream must be audible, for the river is dynamic enough to "overwhelm" "the Rocks" (21) and "augment its force" all the more because there are "crooks" and "rubs" (22).

One minor detail of the poem, casual and insignificant in itself, is nevertheless suggestive in that it may relate to the poet's shifting mode of perception. She writes in stanza 22: "on the stealing stream I fixt mine eye." Before this occasion, it is interesting to note, she has always capitalized the word "eye." Her statement in stanza 3 is a good case in point: "on a stately Oak I cast mine Eye." Considering the circumstances of the birth of "Contemplations," it would be rash to assume that every detail of the poem reflects the author's intention.⁸ However, it is tempting to attach some significance to this typographic change from "Eye" to "eye." Though the poet claims that her "Eyes" are "humble" (8) and that "no Eye / Hath strength" to see the "shining Rayes" of Phœbus (7), the fact remains that her "Eyes" always try to imitate the glorious "Universes Eye" (4). The shift from "Eye" to "eye" implies, then, that the poet no longer apotheosizes the Eye of heaven, nor does she try to identify herself with it. Correspondingly, "the glistening Sun" (4) ends up as a common, de-capitalized "sun" (21).

What is most revealing about this third section of the poem is the reason why the poet admires the river. In describing this scene, the poet clearly articulates what her ideal universe would be. One cannot say too emphatically that the river is not "alone" (23) like the poet in the earlier part of the poem who stands "Silent alone" (8). The stream, together with "hundred brooks," flows "hand in hand" into "*Thetis* house, where all imbrace and greet" (23). The river's progression to its final destination is not competitive but collaborative, an emblem of synthetic peace and harmony. What we observe here, in the words of William J. Irvin, is "the onset of a new power of integration"⁹ which, it appears, finds its strength in the poem's potential dynamics of hearing, rather than of seeing. At this point, one may pinpoint the two crucial modes that define the whole poem's theme and structure. Once again, Walter Ong provides us with an insight into the problem of sensory

psychology in our reading of the poem. Ong epitomizes the point he makes by saying that "*Sound situates man in the middle of actuality and in simultaneity, whereas vision situates man in front of things and in sequentiality.*"¹⁰ His discussion, however, deserves a fuller citation:

As a human being, I see only what is ahead, not what I know is behind. To view the world around me, I must turn my eyes, taking in one section after another, establishing a sequence. To view a friend from all sides, I must walk around him or have him turn around. There is no way to view all that is visible around me at once. As Merleau-Ponty has nicely put in his "L'Oeil et l'esprit," vision is a dissecting sense. . . .

Sound is quite different. At a given instant I hear not merely what is in front of me or behind me or at either side, but all these things simultaneously, and what is above and below as well. We have just noted that there is no way to view all that is around me at once. By contrast, I not only can but must hear all the sounds around me at once. Sound thus situates me in the midst of a world.¹¹

This argument happens to be a perfect commentary on the ways in which the poet in "Contemplations" sees and hears things. Just as Ong argues, the poet's eye moves throughout the poem and chooses one thing after another, "establishing a sequence." In seeing things, she "cast" (3) or "rear'd" (8) or "fixt" (22) her eye, because the act of seeing necessarily involves the act of selecting a certain object. And she always feels estranged from what she is watching, for vision coldly locates her "in front of things." On the other hand, the poet hears the grasshopper and the cricket "simultaneously." It is precisely in this context that the coupling of the insects reveals its significance. In the synchronous world of hearing, the voices of the small insects are beautifully and evenly in tune. The poet may not be able to join them in their song immediately, but in the course of the poem she learns to locate herself "in the midst of a world." With the sound of flowing water in her ear, the poet wishes: "O could I lead my Rivolets to rest, / So may we press to that vast mansion, ever blest" (23). Whereas sight tends to alienate the seer, sound invites the hearer's involvement and participation. If the mode of seeing is selective and differentiating, the mode of hearing is inclusive and unifying.

From what has been shown thus far, there is little doubt that the former mode

(seeing) manifests itself as masculine. However, it is imprecise to say automatically that the latter mode (hearing) is feminine in its nature, because if hearing (the inclusive mode) defines itself as feminine, it *excludes* male participation and therefore contradicts itself. "Contemplations" does not concern the exclusive sisterhood of women. Rather, the poet conceives her ideal mode as androgynous. That is why she refers to "the long'd for Ocean" (22) not only as "*Thetis*" (23) but also as "*Neptun*" (25), strategically invoking both female and male deities that represent the same ocean. She dreams of the universe where both sexes move toward unity and harmony.¹²

As a vision of the poet's ideal universe, nothing is more appropriate than the ocean, because it provides an exceptional sight to which the mode of seeing noted earlier does not really apply. Since there is no change of scene in the single and vast expanse of water, to view the ocean does not imply the act of selecting objects in sequentiality. It is a unique and supreme vision of synthesis and non-differentiation. The poet further develops her argument as she relates the life of fish "which in this liquid Region 'bide" (24). They travel in the water as they please, and finally meet their death by surrendering themselves to "great ones" (25). Equipped only with the "armour" of "scales" and the "shield" of "spreading fins" (25), they become a part of some larger scheme quite naturally. Robert D. Richardson is right in stating that "the carefree lives of the fish stand in sharp contrast to human life, even though men have, or can have far better armor and shield than those their own bodies provide."¹³ The imagery of battle here offers a remarkable contrast with (apparently) the same imagery that we have seen in stanza 15. Unlike Cain in "deep despair" (15), a dis-paired brother, the fish that "repair" (25) to the ocean suggest the possibility of re-pairing all the divided earthly entities into a dissolving whole.

IV. The Song of Philomel

The poem's dynamic expression of seeing and hearing has its climax in the dramatic advent of Philomel in stanza 26. It is not going too far to say that this is the greatest moment of epiphany in the entire poem. In the penultimate line of this stanza, the poet gives her definite answer to the problem of the two modes she has explored so far:

While musing thus with contemplation fed,
 And thousand fancies buzzing in my brain,
 The sweet-tongu'd Philomel percht ore my head,
 And chanted forth a most melodious strain
 Which rapt me so with wonder and delight,
 I judg'd my hearing better then my sight,
 And wisht me wings with her a while to take my flight.

Now that the poet clearly elevates "hearing" over "sight," she ceases to describe the world around her in visual terms. Of course, the physical shape or color of Philomel does not matter to her. She does not even take a look at the bird, because it is out of her sight, being "percht ore [her] head." The poet knows the presence of the bird only through its "most melodious strain" which captivates her ears. The poet's response to the song of Philomel fully shows the distinctive features of the mode of hearing that we have defined earlier. Here again, sound calls forth the poet's desire to take an active part in the world that surrounds her: she expresses her wish to "take [her] flight" in company with the bird. Vital, moreover, is the fact that the bird, as the poet imagines it, is no more alone than the insects or the rivers are. The songster leads "hundred notes" of its "feathered crew"; "And thus they pass their youth in summer season" (28). Indeed Philomel is a female bird, but the "feathered crew" is not a company of female birds alone, for the poet has no hesitation in observing that each bird "tunes *his* pretty instrument" (28; italics mine). To repeat the point, the mode of hearing is always inclusive and unifying.

It seems clear by now that "Contemplations" goes through a subversive process by which the mode of seeing is replaced by the mode of hearing. As a result, the physical act of looking or "contemplation" becomes transformed into "contemplation" in the sense of spiritual musing. Significantly, the poem's rhyme scheme seems to mirror this modal subversion. In the first place, it is surprising to see how many lines in the poem rhyme in the sound of *ai*. Some of these lines have the so-called eye rhyme such as Eye/Infancy (3) and magnifie/liberally/imbecility (8). However, the rhyme of *ai* almost disappears from the poem as soon as Philomel makes her appearance and the poet relinquishes the use of her eyesight. The asterisked numbers below indicate those stanzas which do *not* contain the end

rhyme of *ai*:

Section I : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Section II : 9*, 10*, 11*, 12, 13, 14, 15*, 16, 17, 18, 19*, 20

Section III: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25

Section IV: 26, 27*, 28*, 29*, 30*, 31, 32*, 33*

Here are some patterns which seem too beautiful to be merely accidental. Though nothing is more striking than the almost complete disappearance of *ai* after Philomel's advent in the poem's final section, another prominent pattern emerges in the three consecutive stanzas beginning with stanza 9. To understand this, we have only to quote Rosamond Rosenmeier's suggestion that "the presence of the cricket and the grasshopper at that crucial point in the poem prefigures the nightingale in stanza 27."¹⁴ The prefiguration, then, is not only thematic but also formal or structural. Also, special attention should be given to the fact that the first shift in the poem occurs in stanza 9, since 9 is no accidental number in that it is the number of the Muses.¹⁵ (The poem's numerological design, however, culminates in the fact that the whole poem consists of 33 stanzas, which, together with some other symbolic indications, subtly evokes the image of the Crucifixion.¹⁶) At any rate, the poet's manipulation of the rhyme scheme proves extremely significant, especially because it shows her commitment to the world of hearing. She values the poem as an audible entity rather than its visible marks on paper.

In this way the poet liberates herself from the position to which she was tied down at the beginning of the poem. Ultimately, though, the disappearance of *ai/eye* points to the disappearance of the "I." It is only through "that divine Translation" (30), or death, that all human beings achieve their final liberation. True to her Puritan belief, the poet denies herself "this world of pleasure," and declares: "Here's neither honour, wealth, nor safety; / Only above is found all with security" (32).

However, this is not to suggest that the poet annihilates her earthly self.¹⁷ What she disclaims is her vain, emulative ego, which acts in the selective and differentiating masculine mode, and even tries in vain to challenge "Time the fatal wrack of mortal things" (33). The poet now knows full well that the nearest possible approach to eternity as a mortal being is to live in the unifying, androgynous plenitude of the present to which the ear has the closest access. The mode of hearing is

in accord with the mode of heaven, though the mode of seeing merely represents the way of the world. "Although sound itself is fleeting," Ong correctly notes, "what it conveys at any instant of its duration is not dissected but caught in the actuality of the present, which is rich, manifold, full of diverse action, the only moment when everything is really going on at once."¹⁸ It is exactly for this power of sound that the singing bird "Reminds not what is past, nor whats to come dost fear" (27). This is the very condition toward which "Contemplations" seems to aspire. Thus the poet, while bestowing her highest praise on heaven, justly celebrates her own poem, that is, her own music of musing.

NOTES

1. See John Berryman's long poem, *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1956); Adrienne Rich's foreword ("Anne Bradstreet and Her Poetry") to *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Jeannine Hensley (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967).
2. All quotations from Bradstreet's "Contemplations" are from *The Complete Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., and Allan P. Robb (Boston: Twayne, 1981) 167-74, with stanza numbers indicated in parentheses.
3. See Anne Hildebrand, "Anne Bradstreet's Quaternions and 'Contemplations,'" *Early American Literature* 8 (1973): 117-125; William J. Scheick, "The Theme, Structure, and Symbolism of Anne Bradstreet's 'Contemplations,'" *América* 4 (1989): 147-56; Rosamond Rosenmeier, *Anne Bradstreet Revisited* (Boston: Twayne, 1991) 145-52. Hildebrand sees that the main body of the poem comprises four groups of stanzas which correspond to the ideas of the four elements (stanzas 1-7, 8-20, 21-25, 26-31). Scheick demonstrates the poem's four movements, emphasizing the dynamic tension between the "Book of Nature" and the "Book of Scripture" (stanzas 1-9, 10-20, 21-28, 29-33). For Scheick's further insight, see note 16. In her feminist approach, Rosenmeier partly addresses the concerns of my paper (see note 14). She divides the poem in much the same way as Scheick does (stanzas 1-8, 9-20, 21-28, 29-33).
4. *The Complete Works* 153.
5. Kenneth Requa, "Anne Bradstreet's Use of DuBartas in 'Contemplations,'" *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 110 (1974): 64-69. Requa maintains, interestingly, that Bradstreet's apostrophe to the sun is "her most obviously borrowed section" (67).
6. One may note in this connection that Carolyn G. Heilbrun calls attention to the fact that "eyes and seeing generally are Olympian and 'masculine,'" at least according to the Greek way of thinking. See *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (New York: Knopf, 1973) 12.
7. Walter J. Ong, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious*

History (New Haven: Yale UP, 1967) 3.

8. See the editor's introduction to *The Complete Works* xxxiv: "In a poem such as 'CONTEMPLATIONS' we have the consequences of what was in effect a collaborative production by Bradstreet, editor John Rogers, publisher John Foster, and perhaps others having access to Bradstreet's literary remains."
9. William J. Irvin, "Allegory and Typology 'Imbrace and Greet': Anne Bradstreet's 'Contemplations,'" *Early American Literature* 10 (1975): 39.
10. Ong 128.
11. Ong 128-29.
12. Instead of contributing to women's solidarity, Bradstreet even challenges other women as she celebrates the androgynous union between man and wife in "To My Dear and Loving Husband": "If ever two were one, then surly we. / If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee; / If ever wife was happy in a man, / Compare with me ye women if you can" (*The Complete Works* 180).
13. Robert D. Richardson, Jr., "The Puritan Poetry of Anne Bradstreet," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 9 (1967): 328.
14. Rosenmeier 147. Highlighting the importance of Philomel in the poem, Rosenmeier's analysis calls attention to the problem of sight and sound. Her emphasis, however, is on the opposition between the visible and the invisible: "The seen, the manifest, has been replaced by the unseen" (150).
15. One should bear in mind here that Bradstreet's first collection of poems published in 1650 was titled *The Tenth Muse*.
16. For the emblem of the Christian cross in the poem, see Scheick. His article elucidates the poem's symbolic structure which indicates vertical as well as horizontal axes, with further discussion of the poem's cross-imagery deriving from such phrases as "cruciating cares," "losses, crosses, and vexation," and "the fatal wrack."
17. On Bradstreet's implicit belief in the continuity from the earthly (sexuality) to the divine (spirituality), see Walter Hughes, "'Meat Out of the Eater': Panic and Desire in American Puritan Poetry," in *Engendering Men: The Question of Male Feminist Criticism*, ed. Joseph A. Boone and Michael Cadden (New York: Routledge, 1990) 104-07.
18. Ong 129.