

WARRING CONTRARIES IN
‘THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT’

ELIZA KITIS AND CAROL MEHLER

IN THIS PAPER WE WILL ANALYSE some points of Bradstreet's poem "The Flesh and the Spirit" (see Appendix at the end) in relation to a certain concern. We chose to examine it from the pragmalinguistic, or more aptly, from the pragmastylistic point of view, a term widely used if not coined by Leo Hickey (Hickey, 1989). Style in this case may be defined as the consequence of choices among variants, as these choices make a great deal of difference in the meaning and implications generated by the poem. However, we are not going to discuss the poem as part of literary history, seeking to estimate it from any "aesthetic" or other point of view, because according to Bradstreet's own words {SYMBOL 190 ¶ "Symbol"} "I have not studied in this yor read to show my skill, but to declare the truth-not to sett forth myself, but to declare the glory of God" {SYMBOL 190 ¶ "Symbol"} such a perspective would be "wholly irrelevant to the designs and motives" prevalent in the Puritan Weltanschauung (Miller, 1954). In other words, poetry for Bradstreet is not a secular activity.

It is on the understanding that language is inherent to and indissoluble from any literary text that we wish to offer a linguistic analysis of some aspects of the poem in this paper. However, a linguistic or pragmalinguistic or pragmastylistic analysis that stops short of enhancing our understanding of the text or the implications derived or the purported meanings is rightly regarded as gratuitous. A linguistic description of a literary piece must not be viewed as an intellectual exercise for the linguist, with no consequences for its literary appreciation. In one word, linguistic analysis and literary analysis must go hand in hand. The target of both the literary scholar and the linguist should be the ends that are achieved by the text in terms of any impact it makes on its readers, or of its communicative import, or in terms of any implications generated by it, and, of course, it is the literary scholar, and not the linguist, who is trained to perceive all this. So the linguist's contribution, as we see it, is to start from these ends and work her way through the means in an effort to enhance the apprecia-

2 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

tion and understanding of the ends. It must be noted, though, that the use of the word "ends," which admittedly has a teleological ring to it, is not to be interpreted as implying a certain approach to literature which entails a binary system, be it of form and content or norm and deviation. Our analysis would be also consonant with a "reductionistic" view of content or subject-matter (Barthes, 1971), according to which subject is a level in the hierarchy of interpretation.

What we have tried to do in this paper, therefore, is to adopt as a point of departure the ends which the poem purported to achieve; or, phrased differently, to depart from a layer of interpretation and proceed outwards. As Bradstreet is an acknowledged Puritan poet, these ends are well known. Or, again phrased differently, a well acknowledged level of interpretation of her poem would be that of a declaration of Christian hope. Another level would be to view it as a statement of doubt of the reality of the insubstantial.

The focus, therefore, will be on the impact of the poem on the reader. More specifically, what is the impact that the poem makes on the reader of its time? Bradstreet, like all Puritans, thought that she already possessed the Truth. To what extent, if at all, therefore, does the poem succeed in declaring this Truth and in convincing its reader of its proclamation. The pivotal point of our analysis, however, will be a particular interpretation of the poem in Stanford (1974) and Bercovitch (1974). Commenting on the particular poem Stanford writes that it is Bradstreet's "most definite statement of Christian hope". At the same time she contends that the poem can be characterized as "probably her strongest assertion of doubt of the reality of the insubstantial" (85). Bercovitch concludes his analysis of the poem as follows: "The poem ends conventionally: Spirit wins. Yet the poem raises more questions than it settles, and we may fairly wonder whether Spirit deserves to win the debate" (111-112). It is this contention that is going to be the focus of our investigation. Is Stanford's verdict borne out by the linguistic choices, conscious or subconscious, Bradstreet made in the poem? Or, phrased differently, are the lexical choices made in the poem consistent with or supportive of such a verdict? It is primarily this issue that the analysis will address and consider the impact of the lexical choices as constituting the co-ordinates of the text which determine the response of the reader.

The poem can be viewed as a dialectics between two contrasted views. In what follows we will consider some aspects of the language used, which bear on this logomachia between the two sisters and, hence, between the two contrasted views. The epitome of this logomachia is evidenced in the antagonistic question-answer type of interaction, which can be likened to a criticism-defence pair; but, before we turn to this issue, we would have to say something on the mode of the presentation of the two sisters in the following section.

THE MODE OF PRESENTATION

The poem begins with a short narrative part in which the two sisters are introduced by the direct intrusion of an "I", which resembles a disembodied narrative voice.

In secret place where once I stood

Close by the Banks of Lacrim flood
 I heard two sisters reason on
 Things that are past, and things to come;2

This eavesdropping persona constitutes a kind of "overhearing" or "spying" on the reader's part. The presentation of the two sisters by this persona is not mediated via the illocutionary force³ of an existential assertion, which would assert the existence of the two sisters. Instead the two sisters are presented implicitly via a descriptive statement of an activity of hearing or overhearing of the eavesdropping persona {SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol"} "I heard two sisters reason on..." More specifically, the presentation of the two sisters occurs in the form of a nounphrase which is the object of the verb describing the activity. This type of implicit presentation hardly signifies an attenuated claim of existence of the two sisters, and, hence, of the reality of their symbolic representation. In other words, in default of a bold existential statement of the form "There were two sisters...", the reader is led to locate the source of the image of the two sisters reasoning in the eavesdropping persona, and, consequently, in her imagination. It follows, therefore, that the problematic that is to evolve between the two sisters has its origo in the mind of an "I" persona, too. All this is a direct consequence of the grammatical structure of the specific sentence {SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol"} "I heard two sisters reason on..." {SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol"} and the illocutionary act it enacts.

WHY QUESTIONS?

The poem could be cast in the declarative mode comprising an enumeration and praise of the gains afforded by spiritual life. Instead, it is cast in the debate form of the catechistic discourse of its period. Richardson (1983: 104) writes that in this poem "we see clearly the conflicting claims of earth and heaven. The form suggests a foregone conclusion, but the language and general tone of each show that there is a genuine conflict which is resolved, if at all, only with difficulty." This "foregone conclusion" is couched in traditional catechistic discourse, but we will focus our attention on the elements of this type of discourse which are being exploited in the poem with the effect of leaving the conflict unresolved, or at least not resolved in the traditional, expected way.

These two parts of catechistic discourse correspond to the two parts of the prototypical adjacency pair (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974), the corner stone of interactional behaviour, question-answer, and are projected onto two sisters, presumably representing two parts of a self, the Flesh and the Spirit. So, the first choice made in the poem is that of juxtaposing two sides of a self. This choice is not inconsequential. The dichotomization of a self generates doubt and consequently discussion of the "indisputable," "revealed" Truth sets in. The first part, on the other hand, could be cast in a clearly peremptory mode. It could be an exhortation consisting of enjoining speech acts couched in the imperative structure. Instead, Flesh hurls a breathless run of ten or eleven questions at her sister, Spirit, who in her turn responds to the challenge in the second part of the poem and the adjacency pair. The question that is raised is why this particular

4 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

choice has been made. What is the effect of questions?

3.1. The surface form of questions

On the face of it, since in the question-answer process the weight falls on the addressee, Flesh is portrayed as lacking power and authority. For what is the locus of authority and power if not knowledge? It is knowledge, that is sought from the addressee, that generates power and, consequently, authority. The questioner is shown to lack knowledge in the very process of the performance of the act. The surface form of Flesh's contribution could be instrumental in assigning the feature [-knowledge] to the enunciator of the speech acts portraying this part of the dichotomized self as lacking knowledge and, hence, power and authority. However, leaving aside the issue of the content of the questions asked (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") which might reveal the questioner as already possessing knowledge of the answers (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") and concentrating on the form only, one might claim that the features [-knowledge] and [-power] of the speech act of question are annulled by the very fact that the asker of a question creates a slot for the prospective answerer in the interactional game. A question requires an answer or at least a response, which may be verbal or behavioural. In other words it initiates action on the part of the addressee. This requirement automatically places a certain onus on her. It follows, therefore, that the questioner is also controlling the behaviour of the prospective addressee, and this feature of the speech act can characterize the questioner as possessing power (Kress and Hodge, 1979). Searle (1979), classifying questions as requests for information, places them under the rubric of directives. The import of this classification is that questions direct the addressee's behaviour. Moreover, it might be noted that if the questioner is shown to be an expert in her speech act, then the question becomes catechistic or didactic and the respondent is automatically placed in a defensive situation as this type of questioning can be likened to aggressive behaviour. So, as far as the surface structure is concerned, it can be claimed that the parameters that are implicated in this question-answer interactional enterprise can be those of imposition on the part of the questioner and of acceptance on the part of the addressee. This dimension of the question-answer speech act pair bears on the respective attachment of the features [+power] and [-power]. On this view, therefore, the epistemics of the question-answer pair is interactional (Parret, 1988) in that these speech acts are seen as two poles of a dialectics of imposition [+power] and acceptance [-power]. A point that would corroborate this view would be to remember that questions have been represented in the logical form of imperatives on the hypothesis that the propositions they express are of the same semantic type as those of orders (Katz, 1968, Hintikka, 1978). Furthermore, a question, as the first part of an adjacency pair, can "compel" (Goody, 1978: 23) another party to speak, and this characteristic contributes to the powerful status of questions.

3.2. The semantics and pragmatics of questions

As far as the content of the questions is concerned, we will claim that

Flesh's questions are questions of authority, too. Questioning, it may be remembered, was the Socratic method to achieve knowledge, and ultimately virtue; Socrates posited questioning of authority; but those who were presumed to have knowledge and authority in the Polis did not countenance being asked questions of the Socratic calibre because they felt threatened. In the same vein, Spirit feels threatened by Flesh's questions, as they have a Socratic rather than a Platonic flavour about them. Flesh's questioning amounts to the positing of questions of authority and, hence, of judgement. Her questions play a major role in the dialectic of the poem; they are questions of judgement and authority rather than an occasion to awaken knowledge by causing recollection. They are questions of knowledge diminishing their answers to the status of insignificance and inconsequential rhetoric. It is this feature of Flesh's questioning that makes it resemble criticism or interrogation and which reduces Spirit's answering part to a diminished role despite its length. At the end of Spirit's defence-answering part the reader can't help thinking to herself "Methinks the lady doth protest too much."

What are the linguistic coordinates which, however, contribute to the impact Flesh's questioning makes? We will only point out a few. As has already been noted, the content of the questions also contributes to characterizing the asker as imposing her knowledge on the addressee. This is a consequence of the type of the questions asked: they are rhetorical questions. Although the illocutionary force{SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"}the intent with which a speech act is issued{SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"}of the speech acts enacted by Flesh's interrogative sentences purports to be that of questions, in actual fact her questions function as rhetorical ones.

Sister, quoth Flesh, what liv'st thou on
 Nothing but Meditation?
 Doth Contemplation feed thee so
 Regardlessly to let earth goe?
 Can Speculation satisfy
 Notion without Reality?
 Dost dream of things beyond the Moon
 And dost thou hope to dwell there soon?
 Hast treasures there laid up in store
 That all in th' world thou count'st but poor?
 Art fancy sick, or turn'd a Sot
 To catch at shadowes which are not?

The illocutionary force with which these questions are performed is the illocutionary force of speech acts of assertion. Flesh states a certain state of affairs, makes pronouncements and declares truths. But, by encasing her propositions in the interrogative formula, and by addressing Spirit{SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"}"Sister"{SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"}as well as by involving her in her speech acts via the use of the referential cues "thou" and "thy", those assertions hurled at Spirit are transformed into scathing criticism of her conduct. In performing these questioning speech acts, Flesh actually urges Spirit to think

6 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

and act in a certain way; moreover, she also criticizes and reprimands her for not acting wisely. However, she performs all these speech acts in the guise of the speech act of questioning. So Flesh's illocutionary intent transcends that of speech acts of questions or mere assertions, and, by subordinating her speech acts into an apostrophe, places her sister emotionally vis a vis the encased propositions.

What are those ingredients that are missing from Flesh's speech acts that lead the reader to assume that they are not real questions, and, consequently, to the further assumption that Flesh possesses knowledge of the answers allegedly petitioned? Speaking is a form of a rule-governed, social activity, and, as such, it can be seen as performing acts, which, as contributions to a social activity, are determined by a web of conventions. A rhetorical question, like all questions, invokes specific conditions for its felicitous performance. Searle (1969: 66) delineated the conditions for the illocutionary act of questioning as follows:

1. Propositional content condition:

Any proposition or propositional function.

2. Preparatory condition:

The speaker does not know the answer, i.e., does not know if the proposition is true, or, in the case of the propositional function, does not know the information needed to complete the proposition truly, and it is not obvious to both the speaker and the addressee that the latter will provide the information at that time without being asked.

3. Sincerity condition:

The speaker wants this information.

4. Essential condition:

The question counts as an attempt to elicit this information from the addressee.

These conditions correspond to Kertzer's (1987) categories of consensus, authority and enigma. As he writes "there must be consensus about the duties of posing and answering questions, about the reciprocal needs of give-and-take, about the sincerity of the participants who are engaged in a common effort of communication and understanding....Rhetorical questions will play with these conditions. They will impose consensus, forcefully exclude disagreement, persuade, dissuade, entice, and cajole" (243).

Consensus is evidenced in the acceptance of the conditions pertaining to the performance of the speech act pair, the adjacency pair. When Flesh initiates this interaction, there must be consensus on the part of the other locutor that she is entitled to do so and that the interlocutor agrees to carry out her part, too{SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"}Spirit, indeed, contributes her answering part to the interactional game.

Authority is clearly connected with the second condition. A beginning, such as Flesh's, posits an authoritative bid which must be taken up by the other

party when it is delivered. Although authority is placed on the respondent who is acknowledged by the petitioner in her question as having it in the form of possessing the requisite knowledge, the balance is upset in rhetorical questions {SYMBOL 190 ¶ "Symbol"} just as it is in exam questions {SYMBOL 190 ¶ "Symbol"} by shifting the authority to the questioner. The asker of rhetorical questions is shown to possess knowledge and therefore to be the locus of authority and power.

Moreover, enigma is implicated in Searle's preparatory condition: The questioner does not know the answer to her question, but this condition, too, is violated in Flesh's questions. The third condition enjoins that the speaker sincerely want to have the knowledge; but, since Flesh is shown to possess it, this condition, too, is violated in Flesh's question speech acts. So, Flesh's questions fail on more than one of Searle's conditions, incapacitating the essential condition {SYMBOL 190 ¶ "Symbol"} the question counts as an attempt to elicit this information from the addressee {SYMBOL 190 ¶ "Symbol"} and, hence, stripping her questions of the requisite direct illocutionary force.

All these features of Flesh's questions identified here contribute to what we might call their propositionization. Questions are not propositions. Questions, unlike statements, are not amenable to truth valuation, because they lack assertoric force. They are not descriptions of states of affairs, neither are they judgements, or pronouncements, because they do not assert propositions. Flesh's questions, however, have become propositional on account of the coordinates isolated above.

Moreover, it is worthy of note that nine out of the ten questions Flesh hurls at Spirit are what Aristotle calls dialectic.

Doth Contemplation feed thee so
.....
Can Speculation satisfy
Dost dream of things beyond the Moon
And dost thou hope to dwell there soon?
Hast treasures there laid up in store
.....
Art fancy sick, or turn'd a Sot
.....
Dost honour like?
.....
For riches dost thou long full sore?
.....
Affect's thou pleasure?

In other words, they are yes-no questions, which have been identified in the literature as leading or powerful questions. Myers Scotton and Owsley (1982: 222) write that "such questions are powerful because they normally express a complete proposition and ask only for the addressee's concurrence."⁴ And Searle (1969: 31) gives them the symbolic form of "? (p)", in which "?" signifies the illocutionary force of questioning, whereas "p" stands for the com-

8 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

plete proposition. Wh-questions, on the other hand, are given a symbolism in which only a propositional function is within the scope of the illocutionary force device. So, Flesh's rhetorical questions are taken up as complete propositions since no function element is missing as the case would be in propositional function questions (wh-questions).

Another element that seems to be significant in Flesh's questions is the total absence of any linguistic cues impinging their content on Flesh's individuality. For example, there are no personal pronouns referencing Flesh. This concomitant gives her rhetorical questions, i.e., her assertions, a law-like generality and validity.

In closing this section, we believe that it has become obvious that despite the deferential dimension of questions (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") which is to a great extent annulled by the rhetorical force of Flesh's questions (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") all the parameters identified above as characterizing Flesh's questions render them powerful and indeed persuasive statements, which are not easy to defy, deny or thwart. Indeed, as Kertzer would put it, Flesh's speech acts "impose consensus, forcefully exclude disagreement, persuade, dissuade, entice, and cajole" (243). However, by choosing the interrogative mode for her speech acts, and by encasing them in an apostrophe (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") "Sister" (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") Flesh avoids direct assertion and, indeed, predication of any kind, a feature that renders her speech less coercive and, consequently, more persuasive and more deferential. In the next section we will make a note on the imperative structures which basically follow the interrogative mode.

4. Commands

Apart from the speech acts of questions, Flesh performs five speech acts cast in the imperative mode, in which she gently commands Spirit to act wisely (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") that is, on her recommendation. "Come, come," she enjoins, "I'll show unto thy sense, / Industry hath its recompense." It is significant that these speech acts follow the main corpus of her questions and are all directly performed, i.e., they are direct speech acts performed by invoking the propositional content condition (Searle 1975).

Come, come,.....
acquire the same,

 Behold enough.....
take thy fill,
 Then let not goe,.....

Why, if at all, is Flesh the appropriate person to issue such an explicit exhortation? What is the privileged position one should be in to be able to perform such a speech act? What is the convention that allows Flesh to assume this role? Austin's (1962) felicity condition enjoins in this respect:

The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked (15).

The most decisive factor for a person to be appropriate for issuing speech acts of command is quite clearly to be in a position of authority. What is Flesh's right to assume authority over Spirit whom she will "show unto [her]sense"? To be able to order someone one must have the authority to do so. Knowledge, as has been said, is the source of power and power gives you the authority to enjoin. So, Flesh's speech act at this line, couched in the imperative mode, implicitly if not explicitly, ascertains the claim that the preceding questions are all proclamations. How fit Flesh is for the act of ordering, or even advising, depends on the credit she has amassed in the course of her series of questions, or, phrased differently, on the credit her proclamations have amassed as reflecting an assumed, well comprehended, well proclaimed, established status quo, or *modus vivendi*.

In the next section we will take up another dimension of the logomachia between the two sisters, that manifested in lexical opposition.

5. Lexical opposition

The poem is fraught with lexemes signifying oppositeness of sense. Whether it is a universal human characteristic to categorize experience and sense data in terms of binary oppositions, or whether it is language that enforces or reinforces experiential dichotomization, is not the concern of this paper. What concerns us here is that the universe of the discourse of the poem is divided by lexical opposites into two complementary subsets in the form of two types of perceptual space, the proximal and the distal. These lexical opposites are not always both pronounced. As is often acknowledged, every word that is pronounced, or every predicate that is predicated of a lexical item, calls forth its opposite. It follows, therefore, that each predication of one member of an antonymic pair implies or presupposes the negation of the predication of the other member, and vice versa, i.e., every predication of the negation of the one member implies the predication of the other. For example, the locative term "there" occurs twice in Flesh's speech,

Dost dream of things beyond the Moon (1.15)
And dost thou hope to dwell there soon?
Hast treasures there laid up in store...

and seven times in Spirit's reply. In Flesh's speech it functions endophorically (Halliday and Hasan, 1976){SYMBOL 190 ¶ "Symbol"}as is the case with writing (Fleischman, 1991){SYMBOL 190 ¶ "Symbol"}and anaphorically, referencing the preceding "beyond the moon". However, the total absence of its directional opposite "here" does not attenuate the contrast. Indeed, the spatial conceptualization of "here" is assimilated to and identified with the sense of such words as "earth" (ll.12, 31, 34, 86) and "world" (1.18). Another lexical contrast is evidenced in the use of the one member of the antonymic pair

"high": "low". It is worthy of note, however, that "low", the negatively marked member of the binomial, although not pronounced by either Flesh or Spirit, is intelligibly perceived as identifying our physical space. "High" occurs at lines 8, 73 and 87 and is contrasted again with "worldly wealth", which is perceived as located "low", i.e. in our world (l. 6), or substitutes for "shadows" and "fancies" in Spirit's speech (l. 73), a substitute as shadowy and fanciful as Flesh's original terms.

Nor fancies vain at which I snatch,
But reach at things that are so high,
Beyond thy dull Capacity;

So, Flesh's abstract terms in her criticism of her sister remain equally abstract in Spirit's reply.

Some other "abstract" (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") in the sense of spatial remoteness and consequent loss of concreteness (SYMBOL 190 \f "Symbol") lexemes are "beyond" at line 15 in the expression "beyond the moon", and at line 74, and "above" in the expressions "my arise is from above" (l. 47) and "my ambition lies above" (l. 60). As these words are collocated in the poem with other abstract terms as in the phrases "beyond the moon", "higher sphere", or modifying nouns such as "arise" coming from "above" or "ambition" lying "above", they incur further loss of their meaning to the abstract sphere. In the next section we will try to explain why this is so. But before doing so, we would also point out a few more contrasts.

A pronounced contrast is evident in the verb tense system used in Flesh's and Spirit's speech acts, which is mapped on to the dichotomization of the temporal space into past and future introduced by the eavesdropping persona:

I heard two sisters reason on (l.3)
Things that are past, and things to come;

From what follows, present and past compound the one set, while future comprises the other. Flesh's speech acts are all articulated in the present form, in the here and now of the situation, placing her and her pronouncements in the comprehensible "lower sphere". Spirit, on the other hand, encases the majority of her speech acts in modes of futurity. Modality is also prevalent in Spirit's speech while it is almost totally absent from Flesh's enunciation.

[Sp.] And combate with thee will and must, (l.41)
...Thy flatt'ring shews Ile trust no more. (l.50)
...Ile stop mine ears at these thy charms, (l.55)
...Thine honours doe, nor will I love; (l.59)
...My greatest honour it shall be (l.61)
When I am victor over thee,
And triumph shall, with laurel head,
When thou my Captive shalt be led,
...Eternal substance I do see, (l.75)

With which enriched I would be:
 ...But Royal Robes I shall have on, (L81)
 etc.

Leaving aside other aspects of contrast, it is significant to underline that Flesh is identified with and located in the "lower sphere", in our world, in the here and now, i.e., in the present and past, in reality as we perceive and understand it. Spirit, on the other hand, strives to be located in the higher sphere, above, beyond and in the abstract. All this naturally bears on the impact of the declarations made in the poem and determines our response to it.

There is also stark contrast between the use of sui-referential cues, which are totally absent from Flesh's speech (SYMBOL 190 vs "Symbol") except at line 21, "He shew unto thy sense" (SYMBOL 190 vs "Symbol") whereas Spirit's Énoncés are laden with them. But this point could be the subject of another study, in which the logomachia between the two sisters could be viewed from the Lacanian Psychoanalytic angle and examined through the subject positions generated by the use of deictic, self-referential pronouns. Such a consideration again would lend support to the contention that this poem can be seen as an implicit statement of doubt of the reality of the insubstantial. We leave this for another occasion.

Deictics of space

Now that we have identified some aspects of lexical opposition, the question that emerges is what their relevance is to the concerns of the paper. As is well known, our view of the world is not only anthropocentric but also egocentric. In the same vein, our language is not only anchored to this egocentric centre, but also organized in an egocentric way. The speaker stands right at this deictic centre, and this is reflected in her language. Levinson (1983: 64) writes that "radiating out from the speaker are a number of concentric circles distinguishing different zones of spatial proximity." The perceptual space that is involved serves as the reference field for concrete imagery. Human intellection takes up the central position, whereas "abstract experience (BEING) is presented in a perimetrical position, 'beyond' the universe and encompassing all" (Haley, 1980: 148). Between these two extremes we posit a category which can be termed "gravitational" (ibid.) since it divides the perceptual space into two types of categories, those which are "earthbound," and are so lexicalized in our linguistic acts, and those which are abstract. This is directly reflected in language.

If we, therefore, envisage a topography of semantic categories or a psycholexical or perceptual space, then we seem to also impose a hierarchical structure on it which can be diagrammatically perceived in terms of concentric circles which organize this logical space. Haley (1980) writes in this respect that "it is a curious fact that most of the subjects who have served in psycholinguistic experiments with this model tend to think of abstract ideas as somehow 'spatially remote' from their own point of view, perhaps because of the abiding influence of Platonic thought in our culture...Why, in the slang of our day, do

we often call philosophers or dreamers 'spacy' 'way out' 'far out' or 'in orbit'? Why should we so often speak of abstruse theories as 'beyond' our understanding? Is it because of the persistent metaphorical habit of Western thought, built right into our language, of representing the concrete and particular as 'down to earth' but the abstract and universal as 'lofty' or 'distant'?"

We claim that the thesis of the poem is written from Flesh's subjective point of view which is identified with the egocentric centre of the poet. We also claim that Spirit's point of view is mapped onto it and, indeed, assimilated by Flesh's origo. It is mainly this feature that renders Spirit non-existent, non-descript, non-distinct, and, hence, her arguments non-persuasive. This claim is borne out by the lexical choices made in the poem.

As we said earlier, the discourse of the poem is lexically divided into the proximal and the distal subsets. The initial introduction of Spirit into the discourse of the poem by the eavesdropping persona is effected by the use of the distal deictic unit "the other", which automatically locates Spirit in the distant space way out of the persona's egocentric deictic centre and in the distal discursive subset.

One flesh was call'd, who had her eye
On worldly wealth and vanity;
The other Spirit, who did rear...

Flesh, on the other hand, who is located within the persona's physical concrete space, soon takes over the deictic centre in the 9th line and keeps it to the end of the poem, because, as has been said, Spirit's origo is identical with Flesh's in her speech, as is the case in a canonical situation of utterance.

The deictic adverbs "here:there" contrast on the proximal/distal dimension, stretching away from the speaker's location, and, as the use of "there" in Flesh's speech can not only mean "distal from speaker's location at coding time" but also "proximal to addressee at receiving time" (Levinson, 1983: 80), when Spirit's turn comes the expectations are that she will use its contrasted "here". Yet, these expectations are frustrated by Spirit's use of "there", i.e., of the same deictic item as the one used by Flesh, which is moreover used in Spirit's speech no less than seven times.

And angels are for Porters there; (.90)
...A Chrystal River there doth run,
.....there are the waters sure,
...No Candle there,(1.99)
...Nor withering age shall e're come there, (1.103)
etc.

The case is similar with all other deictic items and it becomes apparent that Spirit, firmly located in Flesh's space and sharing the same origo with her, strives to construct a new identity through self-effacement and self-renunciation.⁵

7. Deictics of time

Spirit does not locate herself in the distal subset of the discourse, but only tries to construct it. This is most prevalent in her use of no less than nineteen future and modal constructions. Tense, as is well known, is a deictic category and there is “an obvious parallel between spatial and temporal deixis.” Lyons (1977: 718) writes “as ‘here’ and ‘there’ can be analysed as meaning ‘at this place’ and ‘at that place’, respectively, so ‘now’ and ‘then’ can be analysed as meaning ‘at this time’ and ‘at that time’”. Moreover, by virtue of the interdependence of time and distance there is a direct correlation between temporal and spatial remoteness from the deictic zero-point of the here-and-now.” Futurity and modality are interconnected in that futurity expresses non-factivity, temporal remoteness and prediction, and modality underlines an expression of greater uncertainty and remoteness, and signals a subjective orientation toward what is said.

Flesh’s utterances, on the other hand, are constructed in the present tense, the tense that is used to express “timeless truths” and general laws. Lyons (680) notes that “timeless and omnitemporal propositions are expressed characteristically by sentences in the so-called present tense: cf. ‘God is just’, ‘The sun rises everyday.’” The present tense is often selected across languages for sentence types which deny temporality by asserting the validity of a proposition at all times (Fleischman, 1990, 1991).

Moreover, coding time and content time coincide in Flesh’s utterances, a feature that emphasizes the reality basis of the content of her utterances. On the other hand, content time of Spirit’s utterances is both temporally and mentally distanced from her coding time, which, however, coincides with Flesh’s coding time, the here and now of the canonical situation of utterance. This feature of Spirit’s utterances underpins the unreality of the content of what she says, since futurity is a distal index element, whereas the present tense of Flesh’s utterances is closer to the origo of both Flesh and Spirit.

Furthermore, this remoteness in time and space is brought to a climax in Spirit’s *ÈnoncÈs*, toward the end of the poem, where no less than seven future constructions and four occurrences of the distal deictic term “there” are huddled into the final eight lines.

No Candle there, nor yet Torch light,
 For there shall be no darksome night.
 From sickness and infirmity,
 For evermore they shall be free,
 Nor withering age shall e’re come there,
 But beauty shall be bright and clear;
 This City pure is not for thee,
 For things unclean there shall not be;
 If I of Heaven may have my fill,
 Take thou the world, and all that will.

8. Conclusion

From what has been argued, we believe that it is quite clear that "The Flesh and the Spirit," indeed, constitutes a statement of doubt of the reality of the insubstantial. As Rosenfeld (1983: 128) writes, many critics have called attention to "the clash of feeling and dogma" in Bradstreet's poetry, to the struggle between "how she really feels instead of how she should feel," and this poem can be analysed as an instance of this struggle. Her poetry, as Rosenfeld (128) adds, does not resolve these tensions but instead "gains much of its vitality and interest from the existence of what Blake called the warring contraries."

As readers of the poem we construct a context from the deixis of the text. This context consists of two complementary subsets, the proximal, in which Flesh is firmly located, and the distal, which is constructed mainly in Spirit's utterances and in which she aspires to locate herself in the future, thus attaining an identity. This opposition between the proximal and the distal subsets is achieved by the use of deictic, referential cues, which function in spatial, temporal and subjective terms. The deictic terms and elements clearly organize the discourse of the poem, in that they organize the poem's reference structure. As Green (1992: 130) writes "the deictic elements and terms are constantly helping us to sort from possible contexts, helping us to move from symbolic meaning to some kind of reconstructed indexical meaning."

However, the symbolic meaning of the deictic terms used in the poem clearly orients us towards constructing two contexts reflecting two worlds; one context, i.e., one set of indexical meanings, constructs the real world, and is comprised of the proximal subset of the discourse, and the other constructs a remote, possible world, comprised of the distal deictics used in the poem and constituting the distal subset of the discourse.

Moreover, if close attention is paid to Flesh's questions, we see that, apart from the first question which starts as a propositional function one{SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"} "what liv'st thou on" (L9){SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"} soon to be converted into an elliptical propositional question at the next line {SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"} "(Do you live on) Nothing but meditation?" {SYMBOL 190 √ "Symbol"} all her questions are meant to be answered in the affirmative mode by Spirit, thus constructing a meagre spiritual world, where life is sustained by meditation, food consists in contemplation, and satisfaction is to be sought in speculation and notion without reality. Verbals signifying activities sustaining our physical existence are consistently predicated of abstract nominals signifying along a spiritual dimension, and this perverse, forced collocation inverts the affirmative answers, supposedly given by Spirit to the questions asked, with a culmination at lines 19 and 20:

Art fancy sick, or turn'd a Sot
To catch at shadowes which are not?,

where Spirit would need to deny or rephrase the propositional content rather than answer in the affirmative. This technique practised by Flesh in her questions, not only inverts the propositional content of her questions, but it, in effect, subverts Spirit's possible world.



The powerful questioning is conducted by Flesh from the present, which

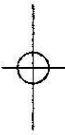
Title 15

includes the past, too, i.e., the known, the experienced, the shared, which is signposted as the low, but also the tangible and therefore the intelligible, comprehensible and terrestrial. All this "earthliness," shared experience, tangibility and concreteness alludes to knowledge and knowledge implies control and power. Moreover, one question reinforces the other increasing the pressure to conform to her judgements. So Flesh is in a powerful situation in which Spirit has no share. Spirit, who is apologetic about her alleged digressions in her response, tries to achieve transcendent experience. But she tries to transcend nature in cosmic terms (Richardson, 1983: 105). When her statements assume law-like generality and are no longer pinned down to her individuality, their generality and validity evanesce in distal deictics, modals and future tense, all terms and constructions that do not occur in general law-like statements that can be assigned truth-functionality. Spirit's poignant doubt of "Who am I?" is encapsulated in her answers, which are targeted at attaining the "I am" through the "I will be" and which end up full circle in the "Who am I?" of the present.

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY
THESSALONIKI
KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

Appendix

The Flesh and the Spirit



In secret place where once I stood
Close by the Banks of Lacrim flood
I heard two sisters reason on
Things that are past, and things to come;
One flesh was call'd, who had her eye
On worldly wealth and vanity;
The other spirit, who did rear
Her thoughts unto a higher sphere:
Sister, quoth Flesh, what liv'st thou on
Nothing but Meditation?¹⁰
Doth Contemplation feed thee so
Regardlessly to let earth goe?
Can speculation satisfy
Notion without Reality?
Dost dream of things beyond the Moon¹⁵
And dost thou hope to dwell there soon?
Hast treasures there laid up in store
That all in th' world thou count'st but poor?
Art fancy sick, or turn'd a Sot
To catch at shadowes which are not?²⁰
Come, come, Ile shew unto thy sence,
Industry hath its recompence,
What canst desire, but thou maist see
True substance in variety?

16 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Dost honour like? acquire the same,25
As some to their immortal fame:
And trophyes to thy name erect
Which wearing time shall ne're deject.
For riches dost thou long full sore?
Behold enough of precious store.30
Earth hath more silver, pearls and gold,
Than eyes can see, or hands can hold.
Affect's thou pleasure? take thy fill,
Earth hath enough of what you will.
Then let not goe, what thou maist find,35
For things unknown, only in mind.
Spir. Be still thou unregenerate part,
Disturb no more my setled heart,
For I have vow'd, (and so will doe)
Thee as a foe, still to pursue.40
And combate with thee will and must,
Untill I see thee laid in th' dust.
Sisters we are, ye twins we be,
Yet deadly feud 'twixt thee and me;
For from one father are we not,45
Thou by old Adam wast begot.
But my arise is from aabove,
Whence my dear father I do love.
Thou speak'st me fair, but hat'st me sore,
Thy flatt'ring shews Ie trust no more.50
How oft thy slave, hast thou me made,
when I believ'd, what thou hast said,
And never had more cause of woe
Than when I did what thou bad'st doe.
Ile stop mine ears at these thy charms,55
And count them for my deadly harms.
Thy sinfull pleasures I doe hate,
Thy riches are to me no bait,
Thine honours doe, nor will I love;
For my ambition lyes above.60
My greatest honour it shall be
When I am victor over thee,
And triumph shall, with laurel head,
When thou my Captive shalt be led,
How I do live, thou need'st not scoff,65
For I have meat thou know'st not off;
The hidden Manna I doe eat,
The word of life it is my meat.
My thoughts do yield me more content
Than can thy hours in pleasure spent.70
Nor are they shadows which I catch,

Nor fancies vain at which I snatch,
But reach at things that are so high,
Beyond thy dull capacity;
Eternal substance I do see,⁷⁵
With which enriched I would be:
Mine Eye doth pierce the heavens, and see
What is Invisible to thee.
My garments are not silk nor gold,
Nor such like trash which Earth doth hold,⁸⁰
But Royal Robes I shall have on,
More glorious than the glistening Sun;
My Crown not Diamonds, Pearls, and gold,
But such as Angels heads infold.
The City where I hope to dwell,⁸⁵
There's none on Earth can paralel;
The stately Walls both high and strong,
are made of pretious Jasper stone;
The Gates of Pearl, both rich and clear,
And Angels are for Porters there;⁹⁰
The Streets thereof transparent gold,
Such as no Eye did e're behold,
A Chrystal River there doth run,
Which shall remain for ever pure,
Nor Sun, nor Moon, they have no need,⁹⁵
For glory doth from God proceed:
No Candle there, nor yet Torch light,
For there shall be no darksome night.¹⁰⁰
From sickness and infirmity,
For evermore they shall be free,
For withering age shall e're come there,
But beauty shall be bright and clear;
This City pure is not for thee,¹⁰⁵
For things unclean there shall not be:
If I of Heaven may have my fill,
Take thou the world, and all that will.

References

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things With Words*. Ed. J. O. Urmson, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
Barthes, R. (1971). "Style and Its Image". In Chatman (ed.), 3-10.
Bercovitch, S. (ed.) (1974). *The American Puritan Imagination. Essays in reevaluation*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
Chatman, S. (ed.) (1971). *Literary style. A Symposium*. London, Oxford University Press.
Ching, M. K. L., M. C. Haley and R. F. Lunsford (eds.) (1980). *Linguistic Perspectives on Literature*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
Cole, P. and J. Morgan (eds.) (1975). *Syntax and Semantics. Speech Acts. V3*. New York, Academic Press.
Cowell, P. and A. Stanford (eds.) (1983). *Critical Essays on Anne Bradstreet*. Boston, G. K. Hall &

18 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

- Co.
- Fleischman, S. (1990). *Tense and Narrativity. From Medieval Performance to Modern Fiction*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press/London: Routledge.
- Fleischman, S. (1991) "Discourse as space/Discourse as time: Reflections on the metalanguage of spoken and written discourse". In *Journal of Pragmatics*, V.16, No.4, 291-306.
- Goody, E. (1978). "Towards a theory of Questions". In E.Goody (ed.) *Questions and Politeness. Strategies in Social Interaction*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 17-43.
- Green, K. (1992). "Deixis and the poetic persona". In *Language and Literature*, V.1, No.2, 121-34.
- Haley, M. C. (1980). "Concrete abstraction: the linguistic universe of metaphor". In Ching et al., 139-54.
- Halliday, M.A.K. and R. Hasan (1976). *Cohesion in English*. Gr. Britain, Longman.
- Hintikka, J. (1973). *Logic, Language games and Information*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hintikka, J. (1978). "Answers to Questions". In Hiz (ed.), 279-300.
- Hiz, H. (ed.) (1978). *Questions*. Dordrecht, Reidel.
- Hutchinson, R. (ed.) (1969). *Poems of Anne Bradstreet*. N.Y. Dover Publications, Inc.
- Katz, J. J. (1968). "The Logic of Questions". In Staal and Rootselaar (eds.) *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*, V. III. Amsterdam, North Holland, 464-93.
- Kertzer, J.M. (1987). "Rhetorical questions: Consensus, Authority, Enigma". In *Language and Style*, V.20, No.1, 242-56.
- Kress, G. and R. Hodge (1979). *Language as Ideology*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Levinson, S. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Meyer, M. (ed.) (1988). *Questions and Questioning*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter.
- Myers Scotton, C. and H. Owsley (1982). "What about Powerful Questions?" In Schneider et al., 219-27.
- Miller, P. (1954). *The New England Mind, The Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, Mass. , Harvard University Press.
- Parret, H. (1988). "The Epistemics of the Question-Answer Sequence and Its Psycho-Pragmatic Limitations". In M. Meyer (ed.) (1988), 280-300.
- Richardson, R. D. Jr. (1983). "The Puritan Poetry of Anne Bradstreet". In Cowell and Stanford (eds.), 101-15.
- Rosenfeld, A. H. (1983). "Anne Bradstreet's 'Contemplations': Patterns of Form and Meaning". In Cowell and Stanford (eds.), 123-36.
- Sacks, H., E. A. Schegloff and G. Jefferson (1974). "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-taking for Conversation". In *Language*, 50,4,696-735.
- Schneider, R., K. Tuite and R. Chametzky (eds.) (1982). *Papers from the Parasession on Nondeclaratives*. Chicago Linguistic Society. Chicago, Illinois.
- Searle, J. (1969). *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, J. (1975). "Indirect Speech Acts". In Cole and Morgan (eds.).
- Searle, J. (1979). "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts". In Searle, *Meaning and Expression*. London, Cambridge University Press.
- Stanford, A. (1974). *Anne Bradstreet: The Wordly Puritan*. New York, Burt Franklin & Co.

1 I would like to thank my colleague Smatie Yemenetzi for help with the bibliography and for discussion of worrying points. I would also like to thank John Serio for reading and commenting on the paper. (Cf. Kitis).

2 All quotations are from *Poems of Anne Bradstreet* ed. Hutchinson (1969).

3 Familiarity with Speech-Act theory is here assumed.

4 Hintikka (1973, 1978) calls them propositional.

5 This point bears heavily on negation and presuppositional elements used in Spirit's speech, but we have no space to go into these issues here.