ANNE BRADSTREET'S CONSTRUCTION OF PREDESTINATION THROUGH POETICAL CONVENTIONS AND THE CALVINISTIC THEOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

FRAMEWORK OF NEW ENGLAND CALVINISM: ITS HISTORICAL INFLUENCE ON ANNE DUDLEY BRADSTREET

Anne Bradstreet's poetry is a testament to a believer's desire to understand her faith. Her poems affirm and debate Calvinism's most appealing element: the universe as a predestined, ordered, stable environment controlled solely by God. God exercises complete authority over the universe and regulates, restrains, and verifies its existence. Bradstreet struggles to articulate a self-dramatization of the various roles or personas the Calvinist believer experiences: those of the elated elect, secure dogmatist, tormented doubter, destitute lover, and angered sinner. The poems question and reconcile the disorder in this world and God's order of events for the Calvinist believer or pilgrim.

As a Puritan, Anne Dudley Bradstreet inherited and adhered to the historical foundation of Puritanism, but her poetry dispels the stereotype of the Puritan as it is creative, humorous, ironic, outspoken, and passionate. Her work echoes the tenets of the Calvinist belief system and uses poetical conventions which offer insight into her Puritan world, reflecting a need for

order. Her works, through the reverberation of Calvinism's five points and the implementation of figurative language and irony, illustrate the comfort, frustration, and anger she feels as she seeks to understand God's order and her role in it. Her writing also reveals a desire for balance and order which is indigenous to her world view. Shaping Anne Bradstreet's life is a set of historical events which produced the New England Puritan movement and the migration to America.

Historical Context as it Affected Anne Bradstreet

Puritanism is a broad term defined by David Underdown as a

> set of beliefs held by people who wished to emphasize more strongly the Calvinist heritage of the Church of England; to elevate preaching and scripture above sacraments and rituals, the notions of the calling, the elect, the 'saint,' the distinctive virtue of divinely predestined minority, above the equal worth of all sinful Christians. Among much else, Puritanism was indeed a response to social instability. It gave its adherents the comforting belief that they were entrusted by God with the special duty of resisting the tide of sin and disorder that surged around them. Through preaching, prayer, the study of

> scripture, and regular self-examination, it provided a strategy for cultivating the personal qualities necessary to these ends. (41)

Underdown's definition is broad enough in scope to represent the heterogeneous profile of the Puritan community. Bradstreet and her family fit that profile. Basically, the Puritans wanted to "purify" the Church of England, and hence English Protestantism, from any resemblance to the "popery" of the Roman Catholic Church and all forms of faith and worship not based in the New Testament. They felt called to evaluate, criticize, and change the church.

> Like many others in this period of religious conflict, [the Puritan] was inspired by the sense of participating in a universal moral drama, a fundamental conflict between great cosmic forces of good and evil. Every dispute--over foreign policy, Episcopal or ministerial authority, church ritual, the erection of a maypole, the licensing of an alehouse--reflected a crucial moral conflict about the whole nature of the community. (Underdown 42)

The Puritans strove to *reshape* their world through the various religious challenges they faced. The following survey is not an attempt to recount the History of the Church of England, but to sketch briefly the most influential

events affecting Bradstreet before her family's exodus to America--events that she would have been aware of from her readings, her husband, and her father, who was a "[m]agazine of history" ("His Epitaph" 5).[1] Sharpe explains the current trend in history is to "down play the differences between the Puritans and Anglicans in England over (as well as theology) questions of liturgy, ceremony and church government" (731). However, New England Puritans, such as Bradstreet, felt a distinct difference between those who worshipped with the semblance of popery and those forefathers who did not. In fact, Bradstreet and other Puritan sympathizers believed the downfall of England was the internal decay caused by the Papacy; in "Meditation 26," Bradstreet writes "A sore finger may disquiet the whole body, but an ulcer within destroys it; so an enemy without may disturb a commonwealth, but dissentions within overthrow it." The National Church and its Catholic tendencies plagued England. The details in *this* Bradstreet study focus on what seem to be driving factors in the Puritans' exodus to America in 1630 according to Bradstreet's perspective.

The term "Puritanism" emerged some twenty years after the religious reform movement of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some

eighty-two years before the birth of Anne Dudley Bradstreet. The birth of the reform movement took place in the late 1530s, with the Church of England's break from the Catholic Church occasioned not only by Henry VIII's desire for a divorce in 1534, but also by his desire to dictate to Rome. The English monarchy used its strength successfully to reject the authority of the Pope. In 1534, Parliament adopted the Statute of Supremacy which securely placed King Henry VIII over church and state in England. The King had power over the organizational, liturgical, and ecclesiastical dimensions of the National Church. After Henry's death, the Church remained under the leadership of the King during Edward VI's short reign (1547-1553). Protestantism quickly gained momentum, and English Protestants who had left England returned not only with the influence of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin but a plan determining "the basis for . . . continuing [the] English Reformation" (Delbanco 104). Bradstreet includes Edward and Jane in her long list of martyrs in "The Dialogue Between Old England and New; Concerning Their Present Troubles, Anno, 1642." In 1553, Edward died, and Mary gained the throne.

Mary's reign (1553-1558) tried to stifle the English reform movement. Bradstreet, eighty-nine years later, interpreted Mary's reign as one of

idolatry, superstition, and corruption in her poem "The Dialogue." She writes,

> The Gospel trodden down and hath no right;
>
> Church offices were sold and bought for gain,
>
> That Pope had hope to find Rome here again.
>
> For oaths and blasphemies, did ever ear
>
> From Belzebub himself such language hear? (101-05)

From Bradstreet's historical perspective, Catholic beliefs, Mary's included, epitomized evil. The poet's persona portrays the Pope as the Antichrist who protests against England's Protestantism, with the fervency of Beelzebub himself. Bradstreet disapproves of any attempt to restore Catholicism in England and to encourage ritualistic remnants of it. Fifty-nine years before "The Dialogue," Parliament, in October 1553, tried to offer the Catholic Mary a sign of good will. It agreed to retract the penalties designed by the laws of Henry VIII and Edward IV, to repeal the legislation concerning religion in Edward's reign, and to announce that Mary's illegitimacy had been annulled. She was restored to her full inheritance as Queen. But Parliament denied the returning of ecclesiastical lands, and it refused to support any form of papal restoration. However, less than a year later, by March 1554, the

Mass was restored, and Protestantism was declared illegal along with Protestant preaching and publication. Cardinal Pole tried to reorganize and reform the English Church. With Mary's assistance, he restored some monasteries and a nunnery. But the Protestants' passion for reform was aroused with new ideas, and acceptance of a reestablished creed seemed impossible. Mary's strong beliefs in religious unity as crucial to England's solidarity and security could not stop the Protestant reform. During "Bloody Mary's" period of persecution, many Protestants revolted against Catholicism, and the Reform movement, drawing courage from its martyrs, gained strength in spite of obstacles and hardships. Bradstreet sympathizes with Protestant Puritans in "The Dialogue Between Old England and New." Through the voice of Old England, she explains the unspeakable torment the Puritans fell victim to at the hands of English Catholics:

> With usury, extortion, and oppression,
>
> These be the Hydras of my stout transgression.
>
> These be the bitter fountains, heads, and roots,
>
> Whence flowed the source, the springs, the boughs and fruits
>
> Of more than thou canst hear or I relate,
>
> That with high hand I still did perpetrate,

For these were threatened the woeful day

I mocked the preachers, put it far away;

The sermons yet upon record do stand

That cried destruction to my wicked land;

I then believed not, now I feel and see,

The plague of stubborn incredulity.

Some lost their livings, some in prison pent,

Some fined, from house and friends to exile went.

Their silent tongues to heaven did vengeance cry,

Who saw their wrongs and hath judged righteously

And will repay it sevenfold in my lap:

This is forerunner of my afterclap. (124-41)

According to Bradstreet's historical perspective, England under the influence of the Catholic Church (Mary's reign) continued to endure sin. The poet's work "The Dialogue" indicates her belief that the Catholic influence would continue to cause England's destruction which she claims comes to a head in the 1640s. The Civil War was the Lord's revenge upon the island. Hence, Catholicism remained a heresy for Protestants including the settlers of the

Massachusetts Bay Colony. Bradstreet describes the Catholic Church as blameworthy of England's turmoil, depression, and eventual Civil War. It supported a belief system that defied the sanctity of the Christian faith--it was "Rome's whore" ("Dialogue" 243).

Unlike Bradstreet's harsh criticism of Mary's turbulent reign, Bradstreet interprets Elizabeth's reign (1533-1603) as a stabilizing force in the country and church as the Queen sought to provide a comprehensive church (The Church of England) that would satisfy the Protestants by doctrine and the Catholics by traditional rituals. Bradstreet, however, writes admiringly of Elizabeth only in comparison to what she perceives to be the wretched reigns of James and Charles. The Puritans were not satisfied with Elizabeth's attempt to provide a religious placebo for England.

> The church of England had a clearly prescribed liturgy. Moreover, surplices, rings in marriage, the sign of the cross in baptism and kneeling at communion were enjoined by the canons and articles of the church and required by Elizabeth I and her successors. Not to adhere to them was therefore to disobey the monarch, and to be guilty of political dissent as well as nonconformity. (Sharpe 732)

The Elizabethan Calvinist Puritans, as well as the Puritans under the reigns of James and Charles, were not tolerant of the finery of the Church and chose to face the ramifications rather than to fall prey to the trappings of popery. Calvinism, the theology of the Protestant reformer John Calvin (1509-1564), became integral to the Puritan movement as a result of foreign influences "strengthened by the returning of the ministers [during Elizabeth's reign] who had fled the persecutions of Mary" (French 237). Calvinism was the dogma brought to America by the members of the Bay Colony, of which Bradstreet was a part. The Calvinists took the Bible as the literal, infallible truth and sought to reject the episcopal powers and vestments of the Anglican Church because the governmental structure and trappings were not supported in the New Testament and therefore were not a part of God's plan. Bradstreet harshly labels the vestments, miters, and surplices of the Catholic and Anglican churches "empty trash" ("Dialogue" 240) and feels no guilt for the criticism. She feels no kinship with either denomination, and like other Puritans before her, rejected not only the church finery, but accepted no sovereign but Christ: a concept of the Church which continued to threaten England's sovereignty. Puritans thought that their elected ministers and laymen possessed the ecclesiastical power to examine scripture and draw

from it the creeds, rituals, and morals deemed necessary for the church. They wanted the government of the status quo to have no jurisdiction over spiritual matters. Those "dissatisfied with the *status quo* welcomed for social as well as religious reasons the Puritan condemnation of the episcopal hierarchy, with its wealth, its monopoly of advantages, and its alliance with the Court and the aristocracy" (Miller and Johnson 45). The Puritans threatened the monarchy, and their elections of ministers and government by presbyteries and/or congregations compounded the threat.

Thirty years into Elizabeth's reign, in 1563, she attempted to consolidate the National Church with the establishment of a new creed for the English churches. A group of theologians created the creed which, in 1566, Parliament embraced as the "Thirty-Nine Articles." These articles were for *all* the clergy in England, and in 1628, they were made law. The creation of the "Thirty-Nine Articles" signaled a compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism. The Mass was abolished, but the clergy still wore the vestments, and the Eucharist was still dispensed to those kneeling; although since the reign of Edward IV, it was no longer viewed in the context of transubstantiation. The bread and wine were seen as a memorial of Christ, "rather than his body made present through a miracle" (Heimert and

Delbanco 3). Protestant Puritans, however, were still not satisfied. They continued to challenge the Monarch's claim to rule both the state and church during Elizabeth's and James I's reign (1566-1625).[2]

> Elizabeth I, who sought above all a peaceful religious settlement, still endeavored rigorously to enforce the injunctions and Act of Uniformity. On matters of liturgy and church government, James I too, especially when faced with Puritan pressure, could take a tough line. (Sharpe 732)

With the rise of the merchant class (many were Puritan) and their increasing strength in the House of Commons, James I's privileges and protection under the Divine Right of Kings were challenged. The Commons demanded freedom of speech and wanted the King to obtain their consent on religious legislation. Against the backdrop of political hardships, the King tackled religious hardships as well. The Puritans were still opposed to the episcopal hierarchy of Anglican bishops and ritualistic worship because the Puritans believed that man did not need anyone or anything to intercede on his behalf to God. In fact, they believed in the superiority of Christ as the pastor, and therefore it was pure arrogance to assume another human was

elevated above the believer as a direct link to God. Puritan disapproval of bishops was a threat not only to the Church hierarchy, but to the King's as well. James I knew this all too well when he announced "No Bishop, No King" which "he declared with unconscious prophecy at the Hampton Court Conference" (Heimert and Delbanco 4). The respect for the King's position pivoted on the public's respect for the systematic hierarchy found in the Anglican Church. The Anglicans disapproved of the Puritans' rigidity, inability to compromise, and unwillingness to accept a system of rank. Throughout the conflict, James I continued to support the Anglican church.

With the intensification of the Puritan movement throughout the reign of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I, the Puritans continued to reject the Episcopal rule of the Anglican community altogether and set up various other forms of ruling bodies.[3] The hierarchical system within the Anglican Church created too many barriers between the believer and God. Some Puritans and their ancestors bound for New England believed that the established church would someday find the correct platform and divide itself up into "independent, covenanted congregations" (Miller 468). This correct platform did not include the Anglican theology and beliefs in vestments, sacraments,

saints, and ritualistic worship which continued to trouble the Calvinist Puritans. Arminian and Anglican theologians reacted "against Calvinism and especially against what they found to be its ethical absolutism" (Miller 367): elect or not elect, saved or damned, with grace or without grace. The differences between the Anglicans and the Puritans surprisingly did not present *violent* problems until the Anglicans forbid them to worship without, as labeled by the Puritans, the *pomposity* of ceremony. James I continued to enforce the conformity of all ministers to the Anglican form of worship with the ministerial readings of the old homilies, episcopacy's authority in government, and the sacramental and ritualistic aspect of the faith in worship. The Church of England oppressed the Puritans not on any question of morals or even theology, but "because they would not dress just so in the pulpit, would not say certain words, [and] would not perform the same ceremonies in exactly the same way" (French 238-39). Puritans thought that the rituals clouded men's minds to the truth that they grasped through the Bible and the Bay Psalm Book. The Puritans wanted sermons shaped from the minister's mind and wanted more participation by laymen in local churches. The once tolerated cleave between the Anglicans and Puritans developed into a chasm.

In 1625, with the accession of Charles I, the Puritans "had encountered

increasing pressures and disappointments" (Stanford, Anne xii), and since Charles I was committed to "traditional ways in church and state" (Sharpe 52) and had taken as his Queen, a Catholic, the Puritans felt destitute. Puritans suspected that "Charles I's Court was deeply infected with popery" (Underdown 129). Charles was distrusted, and "[s]uspicions were further encouraged by the Arminian campaign within the Church of England, for Laudian ritual and tolerance of ungodly sports could all too easily be interpreted as signs of Catholic sympathies" (Underdown 129). In fact, Charles I's rigidity and desire to be solely the head of church and state caused Parliament to revolt. Bradstreet, a supporter of Parliament, writes that only Parliament could console England and provide the healing balm the nation needed.

> 'Tis said, my [Old England] better part in Parliament
> To ease my groaning land, showed their intent,
> To crush the proud, and right to each man deal,
> To help the Church and stay the commonweal,
> So many obstacles came in their way,
> As puts me [Old England] to a stand what I should say;

Old customs, new prerogatives stood on,

Had they not held law fast, all had been gone. (169-76)

Charles I and his archbishop, William Laud, who became the most powerful person in the King's government in the early 1630s, increased the pressure upon Puritans to conform to the High Church. Laud believed it was necessary for a nation to have a unified belief in order to have a unified government. He reestablished many of the rituals of the service established during Elizabeth's reign: the decoration of the altar and pulpit, and the removal of the communion table to inside the railing. He believed Catholic ceremony and sanctity of the priesthood orthodox. During Laud's regime, he increasingly forced Puritans into submission. Bradstreet declares their distaste for the Bishop in "The Dialogue" by describing his final imprisonment as spiritually necessary.

And to their Laud be't spoke, they held i'th tower

All England's metropolitan that hour;

This done, an act they would have passed fain,

No prelate should his bishopric retain,

Here tugged they hard, indeed, for all men saw

This must be done by Gospel, not by law. (179-84)

It was not simply a matter of breaking man's law; Laud broke God's law, the very crux of the Puritan terrestrial and ethereal sense of justice. To his enemies "Laud became virtually Antichrist incarnate" (Delbanco 44) who needed to be removed if England was to thrive. Laud and Charles never gained the trust of many Puritans. One way, among many, Charles I's reign challenged the Puritans' sense of justice was in 1626 when he tried to acquire financial support by a forced loan. Charles' dictatorial actions caused a shock wave in the Bradstreet and Dudley families, and the Earl of Lincoln's refusal to contribute resulted in imprisonment and harassment of his household. As a result of such political and religious upheaval, some Puritans began to make plans to emigrate to the new world, and among those seeking their own religious freedom were the Dudleys and Bradstreets.

Religious Intolerance by the New England Puritans

Though many Puritans left England in March 1630 because of religious intolerance, they themselves surprisingly refused to practice tolerance in New England. New England Puritans such as the Bradstreets and the Dudleys rejected Separatists. Independents such as the English Antinomians, Pilgrims, Anabaptists, and Seekers, withdrew from the Church of England in order to

create "separate reformed congregations" (Emerson, Puritanism 19) and withdrew from the mainstream of Calvinist Puritanism. Separating religion and education, these groups sought leaders and ministers who proclaimed to be called only by the spirit. The congregations of both the Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Separatists grounded their ideology on a covenant made between the members of each particular congregation and God. However, the Bay Colony Calvinists saw self-appointed clergymen as hazardous because they lacked classical education and seminary ordination. Fundamental biblical knowledge was the foundation for the Independents, and education was a low priority when compared to being "spirit filled" and ruled by an "inner light." The Antinomians, for example, believed the "union of the elect with the Holy Spirit is immediate and intimate" (Miller 370). Signs to prove election to the community were unnecessary. Being able to read, study, and interpret Scripture was not deemed important for the Antinomian. However, the Calvinistic Puritans felt the need for a strong alliance between religion and theological and classical education. Even women, if in a financially stable home, were educated in the classics and Scripture. Bradstreet, for example, was educated along side her brother. In general, the Massachusetts Bay Colony placed "more emphasis on education

than people did anywhere else in the colonies." In fact, they developed "free schools wherever they could be supported" (Shucard 4). The clergy had to be educated in order to interpret the Bible, and Ziff observes that a clergyman had to "minister to the range of psychological conditions presented by his parishioners" (29). The ministers had to not only emotionally support their parishioners but had to intellectually support them. The Puritans felt their ministers were obligated to increase literacy; all members were encouraged to learn to read the Bible. The Separatists never reconciled their beliefs with the stricter Puritanism of English and New English believers such as the Bradstreets and the Dudleys.

Many Separatist congregations chose to leave the theological hotbed in England and migrate to other countries like Holland (1608). Eventually, some made the long journey to America in 1620. The Pilgrims landed in Cape Cod and anxiously awaited the beginning of the Christian millennium. Ten years later, the Pilgrims were to be followed by another group of Puritans journeying to America. The Dudleys and the Bradstreets were part of this movement and anticipated the commencement of God's plan: Christ's reign on earth. The Puritans felt America was the one place in which "the Reformation might not fall short" (Miller 469). The Puritans found the

religious turmoil and pressure to conform intolerable by the late 1620s because the National Church relentlessly embraced the Anglican Church polity and the vestments of the Episcopacy and, therefore, popery to the Puritans.

Religious Curiosity in New England

After migrating to the New World, the New England Puritans planned to set up a "model" organization which would replace the Episcopal system with congregationalism and establish the beliefs for which they faced persecution. To Old England, however, the migration and establishment of the colony were not "model actions" to be imitated. The Puritan "model" beliefs upheld the five points of Calvinism developed at the Synod of Dort.[4] Many Puritan ministers in England wanted to move their congregations to a place where they could practice their religion in a "pure church" (Emerson, Puritanism 32). Moving to America allowed them to escape from England's old and complex society and to produce the most consistent and rigorous of Puritans. Miller examines the driving force behind the migration. The Puritans believed the Protestant countries of Europe could not progress until they received guidance.

> For the moment, the first onslaught having dislodged erroneous doctrines, the Protestant ranks were in confusion and were losing their advantage; they were falling into the anarchy of Anabaptism and Antinomianism or being betrayed by Arminianism into a disguised Popery. In order that the disorganized troops of righteousness might be rallied anew and the lines reformed, there was desperate need of a plan of battle. The doctrinal positions won by Luther and Calvin had to be reinforced by the more concrete program of polity, and New England had been reserved in the divine strategy to furnish Protestantism with a model for the final offensive of the campaign. (470)

The Bradstreets played an integral role in the campaign in America. The New England Puritans "went as far as mortals could go in removing intermediaries between God and man: the church, the priest, the magical sacraments, the saints, and the Virgin" (Miller 45). The Massachusetts Bay Colony became the haven for the new church. Though the Colonists saw themselves as an important image worthy of imitation, England saw them as a

religious marvel. While there were many non-religious reasons that brought people to America, the leaders of the colonies were Puritans, and it was in the name of *religion* that most Puritans left England. In fact, according to historian Samuel Eliot Morison, "the dynamic force in settling New England was English Puritanism desiring to realize itself" (7). The Colonists sincerely viewed their migration as an integral force in purification from the intolerable Catholic Church and the Church of England. Even though the Puritans in America were physically separated from the mother country, they traveled to America as daughters and sons of England, not as rebels. For example, Bradstreet discusses Simon's long, frequent travels to London and Boston on Colony business in her poetry, and she never speaks of Massachusetts as a separate entity from England. In "A Dialogue Between Old England And New," Bradstreet's voice of England names New England "a child, a limb" (18). The colonial Puritans declared their colony in the ""savage deserts of America' would be a model, not of separatism, but of justice" (Hutchinson 1-2) for the whole world to emulate, specifically England. England, however, pictured the colonies not as a monumental movement but as curiosities. David Cressy argues that Old England viewed colonial New England as "a side show, an epiphenomenon on the outer margins, overshadowed by much

more pressing events at home" (vii). And that even "the episcopal authorities and government of Charles I, who are said to have cared about such things, paid only intermittent attention to those who went to the colonies" (vii). The colonies slowly weaned themselves from England, not by choice, but because England abruptly refused to nurture their ideology when economic, social, and political pressures increased at home. England, except for the Puritan faction, did not refer to New England by the same self-congratulatory titles as the colonists did. The American model of justice bore names such as the "City on a Hill," the "New Israel," and the "New City of God" that were indigenous to the propaganda material promoting migration. The colonies' degree of importance to England waned after short years of fascination.

Stereotypical Characteristics of the New England Puritans

Though stereotyped as rigid and unsympathetic by the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, the concept of the Colonial New England Puritan society defies such a restrictive representation. Nathaniel Hawthorne defines the New England Puritans, in the opening lines of The Scarlet Letter, as a "throng of bearded men, in sad-colored garments and gray, steeple-crowned hats...with women, some wearing hoods" (35), with a solemnity of demeanor, and the nineteenth-century novel consistently portrays them as an

anxious and sad community. In the early twentieth century not only was the Puritan seen as anxious and staunch, but also as a symbol of piety based upon an unprecedented rigidity. The Puritan was a "gaunt, lank-haired killjoy, wearing a black steeple hat and compounding for sins he was inclined to by damning those to which he had no mind," as seen commonly in the 1920s to represent the prohibitionists (Miller and Johnson 2), and he also appeared as a tall, lanky man in starched black clothes and a wide, white collar and black hat with a perpetual grimace on his face. The stereotypical illustrations of Puritans and of their community reflect a prejudice that scholars such as Perry Miller, Samuel Eliot Morison, Edmund S. Morgan, and David Cressy have tried to dispel over the past sixty years.

Characteristically, the New England Puritan society was not materialistically identifiable by their clothing of black and white or by their facial expression of frowns, nor were they identifiable by their system of justice. Lace, jewels, large homes, and bright colors appeared in moderation to reflect one's social status. They did not like pretentious behavior; if an individual was not wealthy, jewels and lace on their clothes were prohibited. If an individual was wealthy, the Puritan opted for "small edging lace, buttons of silver, gympe or silk, bonnets, caps, silk hoods, ruffs, whisks, gowns,

cloaks, gloves, muffs, fans, and veils" (Dow 63-64) and used bright, lush fabrics such as challis, flannel, lawn, linen, plush, silk, and velvet. New England Puritans interpreted wealth as a sign of good character and grace, and they felt a call for self-reliance, hard work, and thrift. Wealth and private property were signs of God's grace and ordained by His will for that individual. They served as evidence of election for the Puritan community. For example, Bradstreet, wife of the future governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, lived in a large two-story home. The New England Puritan society characteristically welcomed dimensions of the material world with disciplined restraint. They "had no sympathy for the monastic, cloistered life, which they felt to be another violation of proportion. God had given this world for use, and refusal of that gift was a perversion of His will" (Meserole xxvi). Puritan society knew they must live in the world and not be removed from it. They did not renounce the comforts of the world, but pursued them in moderation without an eye "On worldly wealth and vanity" (Bradstreet 215). The Puritans "attired themselves in all hues of the rainbow" (Miller and Johnson 2). They did approve of bright colors; hence, the black and white, plain, wide collared regalia is a mere stereotype. The Puritans' clothes reflected simplicity, not solemnity.

Clothing was not the only material goods to reflect Puritan appreciation for beauty. The Puritans approved of aesthetic beauty in their architecture. Their meeting houses, with exteriors of clapboard, shingled roofs, and window shutters, reflected simplistic beauty. Their household objects, such as pewter and furniture, are today still highly regarded for their clean lines and grace. The Puritans were warned against loving beauty for the sake of it; they sought to avoid the temptation of or preoccupation with it. Everything had its ordered place in the world, yet the order of each item or temptation such as jewels, clothes, homes, and decor needed to be understood and restrained. The New England Puritans opposed extravagance, but those in more populated towns loved bright colored paint on their ships and houses, red ochre being the most common. Not only did they indulge in finery and color, but they also indulged in spirits, such as beer and cider. The Puritan drank alcoholic beverages at celebrations and liked "good food, good drink . . . and while he laughed at mosquitoes, he found it a real hardship to drink water when the beer gave out" (Morgan 16). For example, the Arbella, bound for America in 1630, carried "ten thousand gallons of beer, but only thirty-five hundred gallons of water" (White 105). The Puritans condemned alcohol and rich food only when consumed to excess and without proper

praise of God. Jewels, ornaments in clothing, large homes, colorful decor, and spirits were rejected when God's order was disrupted by the individual's obsession with material objects.

The Puritan sense of order extended beyond their personal habits into a system of justice which was based on the Bible. Puritans created an ordered, balanced society which viewed Scripture as the rational, sole source of authority and justice, and they justified material wealth through Scripture. They based their identity on a refashioning of the original theology of Calvinism: a covenant relationship with God and a chosen people which therefore implied exclusion, for the "provable elect were a minority" (Miller and Johnson 191). These elect inherited the title "The New Israelites." This New World community submitted willingly to follow God's government, and those who chose not to follow were not tolerated. Though labeled as harsh judges of moral character because their government was based on the teachings of the Bible and Mosaic laws, the New England Puritans' "standards prove generally not to be too far above the prevailing" (Miller 197). According to Miller, both communities in Old and New England sentenced adulterers to the death penalty, and the colonial laws were comparable to those of European communities and England (197). David

Underdown attributes the lack of discipline in the family to the destruction of order. He points out the Puritan's "concern for order was not unique," and it was "a product of the widening gulf between the substantial people 'of credit and reputation' and the disorderly poor. The preoccupation with social discipline is visible in all levels of English life" (48). New England Puritans brought the love of social order based on an orderly justice system with them to the new world.

The personality of the New England Puritan community, though seen as bland, isolated, joyless, narrow minded, and weak, was outspoken and broad-minded because they were the products of the enlightened Elizabethan era and seventeenth-century England (Piercy 22). Bradstreet's poetry illustrates the outspoken nature of the Puritan. Her creative use of the tenets of Calvinism, poetic conventions, and irony addressed the difficult issues of love, separation, and death. Her public poems on the elements, seasons, humors, and ages of man reflect her generation's awareness of the sciences. The Calvinistic belief system was a way of life for Puritans and not *just* a creed; they realized the necessity of melding the sciences and arts to fit their perception of the created order. Clark concludes that the Puritans reconciled the sciences to religion without straining their perception of God's order:

Calvinism was "spiritually passionate and eager: it was none the less sincere, restrained, and sane" (264). Bradstreet consistently expresses a paradox of the believer--to be passionate yet restrained--and she battles with accepting and denying the Puritan sense of order and balance throughout her private poems.

Spiritual and Physical Journeys in Bradstreet's Old England and New

In 1630, nearly one thousand people arrived in the "modeled" New England. By 1642 "some twenty thousand people had established themselves in the New World" (Emerson, Puritanism 33). Over twelve years, the English population in America increased by nineteen thousand people. One Calvinist among many, Anne Dudley Bradstreet traveled, in 1630, to New England and became the first published American poet. Bradstreet, throughout her life, encountered Puritan principles through various avenues: her father's vocation, her education, her challenging illnesses, her parents' examples, and her own adventures in the New World. She was born in Northhampton, England, in either 1611 or 1612, and moved from the Northhamptonshire hills to the flat fen-country of Lincolnshire at the age of six or seven. She journeyed to Lincolnshire with her mother, father, nine-year-old brother Samuel, and two-year-old sister Patience. Three other sisters, Sarah, Mercy,

and Dorothy, were later born in Lincolnshire, perhaps at the Earl of Lincoln's estate at Sempringham. Her father, Thomas Dudley, was hired as chief steward to help the Earl of Lincoln and was later to become a chief figure in the formation of the Massachusetts Bay Colony serving as lieutenant governor. He saw his vocation and calling as a gentleman, provider and leader. The exact date of the Dudley family's arrival at the Earl's Castle is not certain, but the family was settled by 1620.

While life at Lincolnshire became routine, the Dudley family life was far from typical. Even though Bradstreet's brother Samuel started school while she, as expected, stayed home to help her mother with domestic duties, she was not intellectually bound by gender-specified work. Soon, Bradstreet's father taught and encouraged her to read, especially history and literature. Bradstreet benefited not only from her father's personal attention, but from his career choice. She was privy to guest speakers who educated the Earl's household on political and religious issues. Because of Dudley's position as chief steward, he and his family were privileged to attend religious services at the Earl's chapel where sometimes such nonconformist ministers as Dr. Preston of Cambridge preached (Stanford, Anne x). "Many of these men were acquainted with one another and with the clerical leaders of the

Great Migration" (Miller 374). Bradstreet was thus exposed at an early age to the reformed movement and all its social and political implications. She learned early on that she was not intellectually weaker than men, but equal in capability because of the influential male role model in her life; Dudley supported and encouraged her education.

Her father also acquired access to the Earl's library, and from that library, Bradstreet received a classical education. Her love of books continued throughout her life; in fact, by 1666 she and her husband owned over 800 volumes (Piercy 24) which were burned that same year. Some of the works she read from the estate library were Raleigh's History of the World, Camden's Annals of Queen Elizabeth, Piers Plowman, Spenser's The Faerie Queene, Sidney's poems, Joshua Sylvester's translation of Guillaume Du Bartas' La Sepmaine du Creation. Bradstreet's father encouraged her to read, and even though she was exposed to writings such as Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, Bacon's Essays and The Advancement of Learning, and John Smith's General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles, the text of the Bible, according to White, never failed her, "but through her whole life was to be above all others a constant source of guidance, comfort, and inspiration" (60). The Scriptures helped her grow "in

understanding" (Bradstreet, "To My Dear Children" 241), and they also inspired apprehension and debate which she welcomely relished as long as supplication to God was the end result. The Bible influenced her poetic reflections on her childhood and adulthood.

During her childhood, probably at the age of eleven or twelve, she became very ill. It may have been either an attack of rheumatic fever or consumption that perhaps continued to bother her throughout her life. Yet, Stanford argues the relevancy of Bradstreet's ill health. She believes Bradstreet's health was not continually poor; the journal to her children "does not report a lifetime of poor health; on the contrary, her entries could be the reaction of one who has enjoyed considerable health and is impatient under confinement" (Anne 82). Many of her later poems articulate her struggles and recoveries from recurring fevers. God always acts as the arbitrator of the fever and the savior in her works such as "For Deliverance from a Fever" and "Upon Some Distemper of Body." She also faced the dangers of childbirth eight times and continued to have "fits of weakness, pain, and fainting" (Morison 322). Her prose work, "To My Dear Children," reflects disappointment and pain from age six to adulthood. Bradstreet writes

> In my young years, about 6 or 7 as I take it, I began to

> make conscience of my ways, and what I knew was sinful, as lying, disobedience to parents, etc., I avoided it. If at any time I was overtaken with the like evils, it was as a great trouble, and I could not be at rest 'till by prayer I had confessed it unto God. . . .
>
> About 16, the Lord laid His hand sore upon me and smote me with the small pox. When I was in my affliction, I besought the Lord and confessed my pride and vanity, and He was entreated of me and again restored me. But I rendered not to Him according to the benefit received.
>
> After a short time I changed my condition and was married, and came into this country, where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it and joined to the church at Boston. (240-41)

Bradstreet's education alleviated her lingering frustration about her sicknesses and her prevailing anxiety over the predestined plan of God because it was an avenue of artistic expression.

At an early age, she discovered that her reaction to her parents was the pivotal emotional barometer by which she measured guilt and sin. Bradstreet's mother and father seemed to have brought their children up in a strict but loving household which taught them the sense of profound responsibility that accompanied election. Because of this ideology, Bradstreet learned that one's wealth and energy must be devoted to God and "the advancement of His Kingdom on the earth"(White 43). Attending to God's desires should be subordinate to accumulating wealth. This biblical and parental philosophy prevails throughout her private poetry. We see the characteristics of this philosophy reflected in her poems on her parents. Nothing really is known about Dorothy Yorke Dudley's life except what Bradstreet suggested in her epitaph for her. Dorothy Dudley was a "worthy matron of unspotted life / A loving mother and obedient wife" (7-8). There is substantially more written about her father, Thomas Dudley. Dudley's father, labeled a gentleman and a person of baronial descent, died in war according to Mather's Magnalia (Book II: 16). Dudley, orphaned at the age of ten, "served as a page in a distinguished household and as a soldier under Queen Elizabeth in her alliance with France against Spain" (Piercy 17). The Earl of Lincolnshire hired Dudley, and he stayed in the Earl's service, except for a

brief time, until 1630 when the Dudleys moved to Massachusetts Bay. He played an integral role in the social circle at Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire and helped initiate the move to America. He became the first Deputy-Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and a strong advocate for Calvinist theology. He became a nonconformist before they moved to New England after hearing such Puritan ministers as Preston, Dodd, and Hildersham (Hutchinson 2). Critics agree that Dudley's strongest convictions illustrate his unswerving devotion to the Calvinist form of worship and way of life. In fact, Winthrop in his Journal said that Dudley was a "wise and just man, and one that would not be trodden under foot by any man." He was widowed after thirteen years in America and remarried just four months after Dorothy Dudley's death in 1643. Dudley had a second family and lived ten more years.

Dorothy and Thomas Dudley witnessed the marriage of their daughter, at the age of sixteen, to Simon Bradstreet, who was twenty-five years old and her father's assistant on the Earl's estate. He was the son of a nonconformist minister and himself had an A.B. and A.M. from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, a Puritan college which produced many Puritan ministers. His career somewhat shadowed the career of her father. Both became "stewards

to the Earl of Lincoln [but Bradstreet entered the household of Countess Warwick where he served as steward], both came to America in 1630, both served as capable administrators and governors of the Massachusetts Bay Colony" (Piercy 18). Chosen in 1626 as an assistant of Massachusetts, Simon Bradstreet served four years. He was one of the youngest magistrates to serve as a commissioner of the United Colonies, and the colony reelected Bradstreet nine times as governor (95). He was the magistrate of the Bay Colony for sixty years (Morison 108). This lengthy political career reflects the determination and dedication that Bradstreet had for the Colonies; Anne writes in "Upon My Dear And Loving Husband" that he followed God's will and "nought could keep him back" (13) from serving New England. According to Anne, he dedicated himself to his family as well. The couple shared a love that was both passionate and strong enough to transcend the great distances he had to travel on business. After her death, he remarried and died twenty-five years after her at the age of ninety-four on March 27, 1697. His epitaph, according to Winthrop's History, illustrates his character to be one of "justice and brevity" (172).

Two years after her marriage to Simon in 1628, Bradstreet sailed with her husband, father, mother, brother, and three sisters almost 3000 miles to

New England to settle in Massachusetts Bay. A year before the voyage, under John Winthrop's supervision, twelve heads of families, including Bradstreet's father, banded together at Cambridge, England to agree to embark for America as the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Bradstreet left behind her childhood which had been spent among gentle people and in pleasant surroundings. Even though as a child, she had faced two serious illnesses and had faced the increasing religious and political persecution that threatened her family and friends in England, her world had been an orderly and happy one behind the sturdy, secure castle walls of Tattershall. In 1630, she journeyed to a new land where she was to struggle against hunger, disease, and horrendous climate conditions in the forest of Massachusetts, while death seized one after another member of her community. In her work, Bradstreet attempts to reconcile the disasters to God's Grace and order in the New World. The "New World" in Massachusetts served as a volatile laboratory where independence from England was asserted and radically new institutions in church and state were formed. She lived in this land that abruptly separated itself from England, not only by the obvious distance, but by religious, social, and political differences. The English Civil War and the New England Puritan response to it meant England could no longer be seen

as home. William Hooke wrote of the destructive nature of the war. "No wars so cruel, so unnatural, so desolating, as civil wars. . . . A kingdom at war with a foreign enemy may stand, but a kingdom divided against itself, can nev'er" (105). During the Civil War, Puritans in New England, felt they had to justify their decision not to return. They struggled with the pressure caused by being "disloyal." Many pieces were written to illustrate the harm caused by the lack of a unified Puritan front. Dod and Cleaver address the theoretical dangers of disjointed Christians:

> When Christians are disjoynted they lose all their heat, as when a man means to put out the fire, he layes one brand from another, a signe he means to go to bed and sleep; so when Satan would put out the life and heat of grace . . . he disjoynts Christians, and . . . all their heat is quite extinguished. (115)

Satan's strength increases when Christians lack support from each other. Another example of New England's concern appears in Bradstreet's works. Her persona in "A Dialogue Between Old England and New" declares that the colony can offer only prayers and sympathy and no financial support to the Puritan forces.

> Your humble child entreats you, show your grief,

Though arms, not purse she hath for your relief

Such is her poverty, yet shall be found

A Suppliant for your help, as she is bound (59-62)

New England's internal conflict and guilt continued to cause friction between loyalties in Old and New England throughout the Civil War and its aftermath.

The sea voyage from their home in England in 1630 was enough to discourage anyone and shake one's faith. The Dudleys and Bradstreets traveled on the unusually "grand" (Cressy 145) Arbella accompanied by three other ships.[5] There were no real injuries aboard the Arbella when it arrived in Massachusetts except that a woman had a stillborn child. On the other three ships, however, colonists arrived ill and weakened by malnutrition, and there were seventeen deaths.

On June 9, 1630, after almost three months at sea, the four ships docked at Salem in New England, and Bradstreet's encounter with the "new world and new manners" began (Bradstreet 241). Leaving the overcrowded village of Salem, the Dudleys and the Bradstreets settled in primitive Charlestown where the travelers "found a house or two and several wigwams" and other seemingly rather crude facilities (Dow 18). After battling a horrible winter, the two families again moved. This time they set

up residence in Newtowne (present day Cambridge). Later, in 1635, they moved a third time, to Ipswich which two years earlier had been merely a wilderness town site. In fact, there were no roads in 1633 to Ipswich, so the settlers had to go by ship along the coast (Dow 32). With each of the three moves, Bradstreet set up her household and tried to maintain order in a wilderness. Finally, the Dudley/Bradstreet family settled in Andover (now North Andover) around 1644 or 1645. Hensley points out that the New England Bradstreets were both an affluent and an educated family (xxviii) and thus meant to uphold a sense of decorum and strength--which had to be a burden when those around them were simply trying to survive.

Bradstreet's roles, though difficult to fulfill in any merchant, middle class seventeenth-century environment, were even more difficult in an unsettled wilderness. Besides being a mother who had to tend to her family's basic needs (such as food, clothing, and education for the children), run a multi-room home[6] and the family finances, she assumed the role of a politician's wife who had to face many months of loneliness and worry while her husband handled official business. From 1638 to the end of 1643 "he was one of those primarily responsible for the formation of the confederacy, under the title of 'The United Colonies of New England'" (White 158). Because

Bradstreet was a politician, he and his wife probably entertained educated, politically strong men and thus were privy to the most current controversies. The atmosphere of the Bradstreet home was stimulated by these domestic gatherings with discussions of theology, European trends, and the monarch's relationship with Parliament. Though well aware of her domestic duties and position as a woman, Bradstreet was taught the skills needed to educate herself astutely and capably on the current issues of interest. Because of her educational background and political status, developing skills as a prose and poetry writer was not strained or forced. Bradstreet intended to be a poet. She did not simply engage in poetics for a hobby but used her skill to examine and reflect upon her world; her "art was not an escape from life, but an expression of life" (Morison 333). Her creative skills, though mainly for the privileged few in her circle of family and friends, were to be soon exposed to a wider audience whom she readily accepted. Ann Stanford points out Bradstreet's intentions were reflected in her elegy "In Honour of Du Bartas" dated 1641, only eleven years after coming to America (Anne 34),

> But barren I my daisy here do bring,
>
> A homely flower in this my latter spring,
>
> If summer or my autumn age do yield

Flowers, fruits, in garden, orchard, or in field,

They shall be consecrated in my verse,

And prostrate offered at great Bartas' herse; (14-19)

And the next year she presented to her father a witty defense of the woman poet in "The Prologue" to the "Four Elements" and "Four Humours":

I am obnoxious to each carping tongue

Who says my hand a needle better fits,

A poet's pen all scorn I should thus wrong,

For such despite they cast on female wits. (27-29)

Without reservation, she created lines and refused to bow to the pressure of time-consuming duties in an American wilderness and the potential disapproval of a male audience. Many of her poems are prayers for the safety of her husband and love letters to him while he was on official missions. Though Morison believes that during Bradstreet's three or four years at Newtowne she produced imitative works (328), most scholars agree that her years in Ipswich (1635-1645) and Andover (1644-1672) produced the majority of her verse. She, through determination, in spite of her responsibilities, made time for creativity.

The early 1640s occasioned three events in Bradstreet's life: her mother's death in 1643, her father's second marriage four months later, and her family's move to Andover in 1645 or 1646. Andover was a new settlement and was therefore more primitive than Ipswich. Homes were isolated from their neighbors. Bradstreet acutely felt the isolation perhaps because she missed the "loving mother" who was "the true instructor" ("An Epitaph on My Dear And Ever-Honoured Mother" 7, 13). At the time of the move, the Bradstreet household consisted of Simon and Anne, who was pregnant with Mercy, her fourth and last daughter, and their five children: twelve or thirteen year old son Samuel; their three daughters Dorothy, Sarah, Hannah, ages four to eleven; and Simon, Jr., who was five or six. Two more sons were to be born, Dudley and John, during the following decade.

It was in the five or so years at Ipswich that she produced work in both prose and verse, and this compiled work appeared in The Tenth Muse. Most of the poems before 1650 are labeled the "public works" because these were the most secular of her poetry. The subject matter lacked the personal reflections we see in her later work. Eleven of the early poems reached publication in 1650. In that year, Bradstreet's brother-in-law, Mercy's husband John Woodbridge, took her poems to London unbeknownst to her.

England was introduced to the thirty-eight year old poet when the volume entitled The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America appeared in 1650. The book, measuring five and a half by three and three-quarters inches, (White 251) consisted of five poems on such topics as the elements, the Humours, the ages of man, the seasons, and monarchies. The other six shorter poems were "A Dialogue Between Old England and New," "An Elegy Upon Sir Philip Sidney," "In Honour of Du Bartas," "In Honour of Queen Elizabeth," "David's Lamentation," "The Prologue," and "The Vanity of All Worldly Things." The poems in the 1650 edition revealed an impersonal expression of historical and scientific topics written as if they were formulated poetic exercises.[7] Bradstreet, according to White, was the "first English woman who wrote verse based on the traditional scientific theories of her time" (184). Piercy observes that in this edition there was a "surprising infrequency of comment or reference to the subjects dearest to the Puritan heart: the fall of Adam, the inheritance of his sin, and the doctrine of the elect" (31). The poems lack any emphasis on the Christian dogma. In fact, Stanford observes that the characters and references found in these "public poems" come from "Greek mythology or from history, not from the Bible" (Major 36). Though these eleven poems lack the insightful

illumination into Bradstreet's sphere, they do suggest that she was educated, aware of poetic techniques such as the heroic couplet and irony, and concerned with worldly things such as medicine, politics, and the turmoil in her homeland. Bradstreet, not thrilled with the eleven poems, called the first edition her "ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain" ("The Author to Her Book" 2). Scholars seem to be less stimulated by them as well.

During the time of the publication, the Bradstreets moved to the new plantation of Andover, inland from Ipswich. Simon Bradstreet, a pioneer of the Andover settlement, "owned a mill on the Cochichawick brook" (Morison 332). It was here that she wrote the majority of her poems that scholars deem her "private poetry." These poems reflect inner feelings and conflicts with her belief system, God's predetermined order, and family's hardships and blessings. Stanford points out that there were five poems written before the move to Andover, in Ipswich, but they were not published in The Tenth Muse (Major 46).[8] Bradstreet, in 1650, began to revise her poems, and her multiple changes illustrate her dissatisfaction with her work (Piercy 76). While revising, she continued to write. She wrote her later poetry and prose just for her family and about her own experiences and responses to the Puritan systematic theology and God's plan. They were not novice imitations of

others' works, like her early poems, nor simply rote religious instruction. Her poetry and prose became entirely subjective and informal focusing on such events as family sickness, absence of a relative, childbirth, and death. The poems and journal entries, probably shared in family gatherings, reflect the importance of maternal spiritual guidance; they illustrate Bradstreet's experiences with childhood, adolescence, and adulthood focusing always on her doubt and confirmation of God's Grace. She wrote thirteen personal lyrics between 1632 and 1670 which were not found until after her death in 1672. They were printed in the Boston edition (the first American edition) of 1678 which was edited by one of her sons entitled Several Poems compiled with great variety of Wit and Learning, full of Delight, six years after her death. A reprint of the 1678 edition appeared in 1758. John Harvard Ellis reprinted the text of 1678 in 1867, some 189 years later using one copy of that edition and one of the 1650 edition; he documented most of the substantial changes between those editions (Hensley xxx). He also published in the same volume the contents of a manuscript passed down in the Bradstreet family until the nineteenth century, which was filled with twenty-six unpublished poems and prose works. In 1897, Frank E. Hopkins and a committee published in "modern type" her complete works (Hensley xxviii).

Two reprints of the Ellis edition by Peter Smith appeared in 1932 and 1962. Josephine K. Piercy, in 1965, reprinted The Works of Anne Bradstreet the 1650 edition. And in 1967, Jeannine Hensley edited the works which contains the 1687 edition and contains the manuscript works included in the 1867 edition.

Little is known about the first published American poet. The first American poet remains faceless because there is not an existing portrait of her. Her brother-in-law, John Woodbridge, described her physical features: "There needs no painting to that comely face, / That in its native beauty hath such grace" (5). In addition to the mystery of her physical appearance, the actual dates of her birth, marriage, and homesteads remain mysteries. Even Bradstreet's grave is unknown. Yet, Woodbridge provides a glimpse into the first American poet's personality: one of determination and humility.

> To look abroad; I know your modest mind,
>
> How you will blush, complain, 'tis too unkind:
>
> To force a woman's birth, provoke her pain,
>
> Expose her labours to the world's disdain. (59-61)

Her character is known only through insights from her works and her few critics. Through her words, she appears as a dutiful, faithful wife who

passionately loved her husband, an individual grateful for her election, a secure dogmatist, a devout Christian who believed in the power of prayer and who directed her prayers and vows to God, a tormented doubter, a frustrated lover, and an angered sinner. When prayers were answered she praised God, and, if ignored, she attributed that fact to His love, perceived as both just and unjust, whose wisdom knew what to allow and withhold. Through the eyes of others, such as her brother-in-law John Woodbridge, she was "honoured, and esteemed. . . for her gracious demeanor, her eminent parts, her pious conversation, her courteous disposition, her exact diligence in her place, and discrete managing of her family occasions" (Hensley 3). She wrote poetry *only* when she could not sleep. To Nathaniel Ward, she was an amazing "Du Bartas girl" (4), a curious imitator. And though John Winthrop praised Bradstreet as the "most distinguished of the early matrons of our land by her literary powers" and praised her for being well educated, he labeled her work as simply "a real curiosity" (51). Cotton Mather wrote in 1702 that her poems "have afforded . . . a monument for her memory beyond the stateliest marbles" (Magnalia Christi Americana II: 135). The nineteenth century did not believe Puritan poetry was worthy of even curiosity or memory. Everet and George Duyckinck labeled her as a minor poet restricted by her religion

and thus without an imagination. Moses Coit Tyler argued that Puritanism ruined Bradstreet's poetics. In the twentieth century, some three hundred years after her death, Bradstreet's work progressed beyond a *curiosity*. Samuel Eliot Morison, in 1930 devoted an entire chapter to Bradstreet in his Builders of the Bay Colony and said her "poetry has endured, and will endure" (335). Perry Miller, in 1939, observed that she was "deeply imbued with poetic insight" (361). Stanford calls her poetry a reflection of rebellion and "worthy to stand at the beginning of our literature" ("Anne Bradstreet" 58). Hensley says that "our first poet was a genuine, if minor, poet" (xxxvi). Harrison T. Meserole believes she wrote poetry "good in quality" (6). And Daly examines her work as theology becoming poetics.[9] Progressively over the years, Bradstreet's work continues to be examined as *more* than a curiosity.

Brought up in a Puritan setting with orthodox dogma as an inherent force in every facet of life, Bradstreet and her poetry blatantly reflect the Calvinist faith and her attempt to both emotionally and logically reconcile herself to the doctrine. Her faith was sometimes tested, for she like any other believer had, at times, grave doubts. These grave doubts and the resultant chaos formed and structured Bradstreet's existence and her best poetry.

Chaos was a very real force in her life. It was caused by being educated in a generation of uneducated women; by being the daughter of a high profile political nonconformist and wife of a high profile political leader; by heading a household of eight children, at times without spousal support, in a savage wilderness; by being a member of the elect and struggling with the privileges and responsibilities of the "chosen people"; and by being a witness to the deterioration of the *Puritan way*. Bradstreet struggles with the corruption of Puritan New England in "To My Dear Children":

> But some new troubles I have had since the world has been filled with blasphemy and sectaries, and some who have been accounted sincere Christians have been carried away with them, that sometimes I have said, 'Is there faith upon the earth?' and I have not known what to think; but then I have remembered the works of Christ that so it must be, and if it were possible, the very elect should be deceived. (244)

Bradstreet continually confronts deception and chaos. Stanford observes that Bradstreet faced "rebellion and the assertion of the self against the dogma she encountered" ("Dogmatist and Rebel" 77). Bradstreet's works insinuate that she knew it behooved believers to examine their spiritual state meticulously

and their place in God's plan. In fact, the Puritan community believed, as Robert D. Richardson observes, "a firm doubt-free conviction of salvation was a probable sign of damnation" (102) and thus must be avoided. But Bradstreet's personas are not simply rebelling against dogma nor confirming election but *playing* out the persona of a doubter. Though doubting election was an integral facet of the conversion process developed by New England Puritanism, Bradstreet creates the persona to not only make sure the proof of election is evident but more importantly to question God's sense of justice. The persona Bradstreet creates is more than an attempt to fulfill a theological requirement; she uses it to evaluate God's motives. Bradstreet's poetry pointedly bears witness to her deep personal relationship with the God who, according to White, "had chosen her as an elected Christian" (381). The very nature of the Calvinist system supported self-imposed meditation, and her poetry inscrutably addresses God and echoes the doctrines of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints to seek and define her role in God's predestined plan. She also dared to question the justice of God's decisions.

The Five Points of Calvinism adopted at the Synod of Dort are the basic foundation of the early New England Puritan beliefs and act as the

"tests of orthodoxy" for Bradstreet (Emerson, Puritanism 29). Bradstreet's works reflect her natural and unlabored awareness of the Puritan theological dogma. Not only does the poetry illustrate the doctrines, but the doctrines act as a catalyst for poetic creativity. The doctrines, themselves, become poetic elements and not merely subject matter because they appear at pivotal points in the poems to offer a reprieve from the unrest the poet feels and to provide a sense of order to the poet's world. The Puritan desire for order is based on the belief that nothing random occurs in the universe. Natural events create for the believer reflections of God's predestined plan. The five points, though not in the same community of poetic devices as figurative language and irony, act as poetic elements; they serve as poetic tools to unearth God's destiny for her and cultivate her understanding of it. They are used along with her manipulation of such devices as personification, simile, metaphor, and irony to interpret the world. The use of figurative language not only magnifies her dexterity and creativity as a poet, but also shows the rise and fall of her frustration and, at times, irreconcilable turmoil with her belief system and domestic sphere. Several of her poems, such as "To My Dear And Loving Husband," "A Letter To My Husband Absent Upon Public Employment," "Another," and "As loving hind," reflect the persona's vacillating state of

mind between a rational, orderly state and a debilitating torment. Not only does figurative language release the poet to explore her emotions, but irony offers an outlet for the poet to examine the pressure of a male-dominated audience, the lack of confidence in her skill and resultant vulnerability, the socially imposed limitations on the Puritan's woman's role, and the struggle between the flesh and the spirit: disorder and order. At times, she comes to terms with this vacillation between roles by posturing acceptance. This pose is an indigenous conclusion to life's trials for the Calvinist believer. This cycle represents New England poetics according to Pearce because Ramist poetics is a poetics "of discovery, of examining and stating, of coming upon, of laying open to view" (Pearce 33-34). Bradstreet examines, discovers, and reveals her acceptance of and anxiety over the disorder and order found in her world.

Still lacking in the critical work on Bradstreet is the examination of the dogma in her private poems, figurative language in her love poems, and her use of irony to address not just a human audience but to question the predestination in God's order. Still missing from scholarship on Bradstreet is the discussion of the five Calvinist doctrines in her poems as poetic instruments. This study of various doctrinal references, throughout twenty

poems, illustrates her world as ultimately a harmonious but fallible one. The utilization of personification, simile, and metaphor, focusing solely on the poems to her husband, has not been examined beyond various labels. For example, Stanford discusses "As loving hind" as a prime example of a metaphysical love poem and "In My Solitary Houres In My Dear Husband His Absence" as a fine example of the practice of meditation.[10] Daly examines Bradstreet's use of biblical language and her ability to reflect human love in harmony, though subordinate, to divine love of God, and Rosenmeier labels the love poems as typologically interpreting Christ's relationship with the Church.[11] Also, Laughlin discusses Bradstreet's use of three related metaphors as an example of the poet's ability to compare and contrast, and Requa examines the poet's creativity in spite of the influence of DuBartas.[12] Bradstreet's use of the poetical patterns of personification, simile, and metaphor is viewed as avenues to express her diverse emotions, to control poetic convention, and to explain her struggle with her world. The explications of four poems indicate how disorder causes emotions to polarize. And though examined in a variety of works, Bradstreet's use of irony has yet to be discussed as a *safe* avenue in which to question God's predestined order. The explication of poems reflecting an ironic voice indicates a

disharmonious world only to be reluctantly accepted as simply a part of God's plan. Her use of available literary tools, poetic formats, and Calvinist doctrines reveals significant connections among Bradstreet's strategic use of poetic devices, her staunch religious fervor, her reluctance to accept predestination, and her need for balance and order. The connections illustrate the use of the Calvinistic doctrine as poetic elements, the use of the five points as an organizing factor, and the diversity of the poetical patterns which provide a sense of comfort for the Calvinist traveler. Though Pearce believes Bradstreet does not use the "characteristic Puritan insistence on fixing once and for all the meaning of the event as that meaning is somehow bound in a communial experience" (24), her work does focus on her personal encounter with the predetermined plan. Through poetry, Bradstreet interprets her destiny and mission in the world.

CHAPTER II

THE EXPLORATION OF BRADSTREET'S POETIC USE OF THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM AS TOOLS TO INTERPRET HER WORLD

By exploring the Puritan's perception of poetry, the definitions of each of the five points of Calvinism, and the reverberation of each doctrine in her poetry, it becomes clear that in certain poems Anne Bradstreet unlocks a sense of security and comfort from a world riddled with hopeless physical and spiritual hardships. She articulates the drama of the conflict between chaos and God's harmonious plan. For her, God created an ordered world, and His authority controls it. However, the world is diseased by sin and thus in a state of chaos. According to Bradstreet's works, the theology of Calvinism interprets the world in logical terms through its five points: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints. For Bradstreet, who is the Calvinist traveler, a methodical interpretation of chaos and order--man's sin, redemption, and fate after death--heals the friction caused by sin and proves God's existence. Whether she blindly submits to God's choice of order or not causes the poems to reflect acceptance and/or tension.

Bradstreet integrates the dogma in her poems, not for thematic or topical discussion, but as a poetic element that fulfills a *role* expressed in a variety of ways. The role is her attempt to seek and understand God's order in a world that seems chaotic and illogical by understanding the role of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints in her private works, much like she attempts to understand and evaluate her world through the use of personification, simile, metaphor, and irony. No single poem contains all five of the tenets, and no poem focuses on defining the doctrines. The points are used strategically as instruments to develop an image of original sin; to formulate a sense of order out of death; to prove, to question, and to bask in the assurance of election; to illustrate Christ's sacrifice; and to explore the status of the elect.

Puritan Perception of Poetry

The presence of the Calvinistic dogma in her poetic art does not devalue its importance but illustrates that the Calvinistic tenants represent the basic, integral foundation for her education and interpretation of her world. That she uses Calvinistic theology as a poetic element means the theology has qualities associated with the Puritan art of poetry--poetry is a response to

God's created, ordered world.[13] Poetry and artistic beauty fit into God's plan; they provide a framework to comprehend God's revelations. William Hubbard, in The Happiness of People (1676), illustrates the use of art to reflect divine principles:

> In a curious piece of Architecture, that which first offers it self to the view of the beholder, is the beauty of the structure, the proportion that one piece bears to another, wherein the skill of the Architect most shews it self. But that which is most Admirable in sensitive and rational beings, is that inward principle, seated in some one part, able to guid[e] whole, and influence all the rest of the parts, with an apt and regular motion, for their mutual good and safety. (249)

Architecture, art, poetry, and sermons do not reflect the talents of the artists but the genius of the Creator Himself. Poetry, according to Bradstreet's community, assumes the position of an interpretative element which pieces together the beauty and cohesiveness in God's plan. Therefore, she weaves the theological ideals throughout her poetry in order to interpret God's will. She deciphers "the justice of God's way with his Puritan flock" (Pearce 23). The doctrines in her work reveal traits of God's predetermined plan. Miller

and Johnson point out that the Puritans probably gave very little thought to poetry as art and saw it "simply as a means to an end" (547). Bradstreet observes the predestined world as a book of God's powerful will and takes the responsibility to interpret it through poetry. Her brother-in-law, John Woodbridge, rationalizes Bradstreet's artistic talents by comparing them to the birth process to illustrate that poetry is a very natural avenue of expression: "To force a woman's birth, provoke her pain, / Expose her labours to the world's disdain" (61-62). Poetry aids in interpreting experiences. The power in Puritan poetry or verse derives solely from God and not a secular creature like the Muse, as Michael Wigglesworth expresses in The Day of Doom:

> Thee, thee alone I'le invocate
> To call the Muses to mine aid:
> Which is th' Unchristian use and trade
> Of some that Christians would be thought,
> And yet they worship worse then nought. (5-10)

As reflected in Wigglesworth, the Puritans believed God inspired the poet who valued poetry for its utilitarian strengths. Poetry is instructional; "the use of poetry was to help one to live well--and die well" (Waggoner 6). The

structure of poetry maintains order for the individual and educates her on the moral code reflected in life experiences on earth. In her poems, Bradstreet uses personas to discuss emotional responses to sickness, death, absences, disappointments, and triumphs. Her work interprets art not as a mere human creation:

> man may 'invent' it but he is not the author or legislator; it is not created by the artificer, but the artificer is made by the art . . . [we] look at the truth in things, which hath it from God, then at the truth of the axiom which hath it from the thing. (Miller 166)

It is one's duty to seek out what truths God has created. Bradstreet's poetry illustrates her skill and attentiveness to her art, and Daly observes that ultimately her work is "designed neither to demonstrate that skill nor to assert her role as a maker of verse, but to respond to the glory of God immanent in the created world and seen, not made, by the poet" (55).[14] The doctrines respond to and explore God's mysterious nature and illusive predestined plan. Bradstreet's poetics deal with creating voices of personas which articulate her perception of her beliefs in an ordered world and her creativity given to her by God to interpret the world.

Total Depravity and Man's Condition

Bradstreet uses the first point of Calvinism, Total Depravity, as a poetic tool to explore the condition of man. Total Depravity provides the foundation for the Calvinist belief system. Through the echoes of this doctrine, Bradstreet's poetry expresses God's omnipotence and God's justice in dealing with mankind. Bradstreet believed man's condition began in Eden. In Eden, God gave Adam total knowledge of Him and of spiritual gifts. Man's heart, will, and affections were pure. However, after the incident in Eden, man's mental and emotional state declined. By rebelling against God, misusing his sense of free will, and disobeying the law, man forfeited "these excellent gifts, and on the contrary entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment" (Schaff 522). Most dreadful of all the perils of Total Depravity is the effect of it on man's intellect. John Calvin, in the Institutes of the Christian Religion, describes man's nature after he sinned.

> The mind of man is so completely alienated from the righteousness of God that it conceives, desires, and undertakes everything that is impious, perverse, base, impure, and flagitious.

> His heart is so thoroughly infected by the poison of sin that it cannot produce anything but what is corrupt; and if at any time men do anything apparently good, yet the mind always remains involved in hypocrisy and deceit, and the heart enslaved by its inward perversity. (9)

Fallen man is retarded by his own sin. After the fall, man, "no longer able to tell what should follow upon what, or to perceive the interconnections of things" (Miller 111), remains in a state of chaos. The fallen individual, however, is not necessarily always evil. He is not incapable of doing good nor unable to know the will of God or outwardly worship Him. In fact, this principle of a person's total depraved state emphasizes the important role of man in creation because, as Scripture and Bradstreet's poetry reflect, Adam fell from a *very* high status. Bradstreet, in "Contemplations," elevates man even more by declaring that Eve and Adam were in control of their decision to reject God and eat the fruit. Fallen man is unable to avoid sin which manipulates the whole being of man: his personality, will, logic, affections, and his future generations. Conceived in sin and incapable of aiding in his own salvation, an individual passes sin on to his children. Even though man and woman are corrupt stock, God bestows upon mankind "the art of logic so

he might not collapse under the ineptitude he [has] brought upon himself through the fall" (Miller 111). Several of Bradstreet's works explain and rationalize Total Depravity to illustrate the existence of the logic and order in the prelapsarian world and the lack of logic and order in the postlapsarian world shackled with the terror of death. She explores the doctrine in the context of an imbalanced world, one doomed to die and expresses her acceptance of death and her struggle with it.

Total Depravity is mentioned in two of her private poems, "Upon A Fit Of Sickness" and "Before The Birth Of One of Her Children," through the voice of a persona struggling to respond to God's order in her disordered world. To fully understand her perception of Total Depravity in her private poetry, this study examines the echoes of this doctrine in "Contemplations," a public poem,[15] to illustrate not only Bradstreet's indigenous need to cope with man's state but her community's need as well. This formal, inspirational poem begins with the poet's persona taking a walk in the woods during a fall afternoon. Throughout the work, the persona reconciles doubts and her position in the world with the inherent order of God's plan. In the poem, she creates five conclusions evolving from the traits of the doctrine of Total Depravity. The explanations describe the justification for man's depravity,

the cause of man's fall in Eden, the biblical drama of man's behavior in a totally depraved state, the inheritance of Total Depravity, and the current state of man's sinful nature. The instances in "Contemplations" are written in present tense and illustrate Bradstreet's power of observation: "these scenes from the past rise to her mind's eye, becoming real and present, she generalizes the experience, assuming that others like her think often 'upon the Fathers ages'" (Richardson 327). The use of the present tense not only reflects the validity of the scenes in her current world, but it also illustrates the timeless Truth in God's ordained plan; the Truths remain constant and provide examples for the Puritan community. Bradstreet methodically describes the rationale behind the belief in Total Depravity as she calls to the past amongst the singing of grasshoppers and crickets.

In Stanza 11 of "Contemplations," the poet justifies man's depravity:

> Sometimes in Eden fair he seems to be,
> Sees glorious Adam there made lord of all,
> Fancies the apple, dangle on the tree,
> That turned his sovereign to a naked thrall.
> Who like a miscreant's driven from that place,
> To get his bread with pain and sweat of face,

A penalty imposed on his backsliding race. (72-78)

Bradstreet's lines testify to her belief in God's exaltation of Adam above all creatures, and man's desecration of Paradise through his fall from the exalted position in the order of creation through his own free will. The persona examines Adam's desires for the apple of knowledge; God, for man's own good, warns him about the fruit. But Adam rebels against God, and deliberately chooses to eat the "temptation," causing man to become a slave to the harsh world where in order to eat he must do so with the pain and toil of the imposed penalty. Bradstreet's persona illustrates the justification and rationale of the punishment. God created the ordered world of Eden, and Adam perverted the order through disobedience. He, therefore, must be disciplined.

The poet's persona then illustrates the cause of Adam and Eve's fall--their unrelenting desire to sin by possessing forbidden knowledge (fruit) against God's will. The persona no longer judges Adam but focuses on Eve. In Stanza 12 of "Contemplations," Bradstreet's persona examines Eve's position in Paradise by employing graphic details of childbirth to reflect not only Eve's physical pain but emotional pain as well.

Here sits our grandame in retired place,

And in her lap her bloody Cain new-born;
The weeping imp oft looks her in the face,
Bewails his unknown hap and fate forlorn;
His mother sighs to think of Paradise,
And how she lost her bliss to be more wise,
Believing him that was, and is, father of lies. (79-85)

The persona sympathizes with the character of Eve. In both Stanzas 11 and 12, the persona explains Eve's regrettable loss of her position in Eden; she loses her home and safe haven from the harshness of the world not only for herself but for her children as well. To make the sin worse, she forfeits her position to one not worthy of her sacrifice, the snake. In this tragic scene, however, a paradoxical view arises. Even though Adam and Eve grieve over the loss, the poet's lines echo a sense of pride in the fact that their will or dignity commits the sin--she "lost *her* bliss." Adam and Eve possessed the free will or power to reject or accept the forbidden knowledge. Their inability to use their power appropriately caused man's chaos. As the persona shows, both Adam and Eve, of *their* own free will, wasted Paradise through their decision to eat of the apple and disrupt the order of God's world.

Not only is it crucial to illustrate God's justification for the punishment and the cause of man's punishment, the poet's persona also understands the importance of examining the root of man's predicament after the fall. Bradstreet alludes to Total Depravity *in action* in the biblical scenario of the first, scriptural recorded murder. Stanza 13 reads

> Here Cain and Abel come to sacrifice,
> Fruits of the earth and fatlings each do bring,
> On Abel's gift the fire descends from skies,
> But no such sign on false Cain's offering;
> With sullen hateful looks he goes his ways,
> Hath thousand thoughts to end his brother's days,
> Upon whose blood his future good he hopes to raise. (86-92)

Rejected by God without provocation, Cain assumes the mark of repudiation. Not of the chosen tribe, Cain, with anger and frustration, murders the person he sees to be his obstacle, his brother Abel. By ridding himself of Abel, Cain believes he will gain God's approval. Bradstreet's persona points out, that like Cain and Abel's sacrifices, salvation escapes man's ability to earn it. Man must wait until God reveals to him his position. Cain, through the sin of jealousy, loses perspective of his own limited power and attempts to forge

himself a path to the Almighty. The persona's retelling of the Old Testament story illustrates the corruption of man's reason and will and man's perversion of God's order.

Bradstreet's fourth observation, Stanzas 16 and 19, illustrates the inheritance of original sin and existence of an ethical awareness. The persona discusses the inescapable aspect of the sin:

> The starry observations of those sages,
> And how their precepts to their sons were law,
> How Adam sighed to see his progeny,
> Clothed all in his black sinful livery,
> Who neither guilt nor yet the punishment could fly. (109-13)

The lines present a chilling truth for the Calvinist; from birth to death, sons and daughters never escape Adam's sin. Bradstreet's persona knows the magnitude of the sin because she acknowledges the existence of guilt which indicates man's ability to judge between moral and immoral acts. If guilt exists there must be a conscience which to the Calvinist proved that there was the "retention of at least a portion of righteous knowledge" (Miller 184). The poet's persona, in Stanza 19, ironically describes original sin as a child's curse to emphasize the injustice of condemning a "noble" youth.

By birth more noble than those creatures all,

Yet seems by nature and by custom cursed,

No sooner born, but grief and care makes fall

That state obliterate he had at first;

Nor youth, nor strength, nor wisdom spring again,

Nor habitations long their names retain,

But in oblivion to the final day remain. (128-34)

Man, by birth, faces "oblivion" because Total Depravity causes the perversion of man's reason and the deterioration of man's will. The persona draws a pathetic picture of man's future; from birth, he remains in an unconscious state unable to appreciate the creation. Bradstreet knew her own eight children inherited through birth from her, generically as Eve and specifically as their mother, the inescapable penalty of Adam. The persona illustrates the hesitant acceptance of man's "obliterate" state and the knowledge that the "curse" only ends when the "final day" (death) comes. Only through translation to Heaven can the elect be restored to order. Destruction of the body by Death becomes the only path for restoration of the soul. Bradstreet believes "man was made for endless immortality" (145) but refuses to conclusively accept the state.

After explaining the justification for the fall, the personal choice that caused it, the ludicrousness of earning God's approval, and the inescapable "birth right" of original sin, the persona focuses on a nearby stream that reminds her of man's status raised above the creatures. She emphasizes the importance of man's ability to reason. After the "Sweet-tongued Philomel" (179) sings, the poem closes by examining the unstable status of man and the consistent power of God. In Stanzas 29 and 30, Bradstreet's persona describes the state of man and his tentative survival based on the special Grace of God. Without God's Grace, life becomes illogical and chaotic.

> Man at best a creature frail and vain,
> In knowledge ignorant, in strength but weak,
> Subject to sorrows, losses, sickness, pain,
> Each storm his state, his mind, his body break,
> From some of these he never finds cessation,
> But day or night, within, without, vexation,
> Troubles from foes, from friends, from dearest, near'st
> relation. (198-204)

Mankind faces the dreadful circumstances of "sorrows, losses, sickness, pain" brought on by Eve and Adam's fated decision. The persona observes

man's inability to survive without the special Grace of God because he cannot rely on any other being for security. Man encounters "troubles" from not only enemies but from those he thought he could safely trust: friends and family. Therefore, Adam's sin not only perverts the blood relationship between brothers, the parental relationship between mothers and offspring, but also the social order as well. Stanza 30 describes the physical "wretchedness" caused by man's depraved state.

> And yet this sinful creature, frail and vain,
> This lump of wretchedness, of sin and sorrow,
> This weatherbeaten vessel wracked with pain,
> Joys not in hope of an eternal morrow;
> Nor all his losses, crosses, and vexation,
> In weight, in frequency and long duration
> Can make him deeply groan for that divine translation. (205-11)

The persona points out that man's position remains desperate without God's intervention or "translation"; man resides in a state of sin. The order man so desires exists only in Heaven and not on earth where pain, "losses, crosses, and vexation" overcome any sense of joy. The seven stanzas of "Contemplations," which focus on Total Depravity, illustrate Bradstreet's

breadth of knowledge of this doctrine as an element to describe disorder and order and her acceptance of both. In chronological order, the poem traces the history of original sin from Adam and Eve to the poet's present time. Though "Contemplations" is not a private poem, it best shows her awareness of man's state and the ramifications of the original sin which disrupts God's orderly Paradise. The doctrines of Calvinism try to maintain and define order for the believer; they are a roadmap to determine God's predestined plan.

Bradstreet naturally accepts Total Depravity as man's state, as "Contemplations" reflects, and therefore naturally accepts the result of the state: death. In "Upon A Fit Of Sickness" and "Before the Birth of One of Her Children," Bradstreet's lines, based on the assumption she is convinced she is dying, echo the Doctrine of Total Depravity as a poetic element to grasp a sense of order out of the frightening concept of death. She explains God's justification for the element of death, as in the lines of "Contemplations." After struggling with a recurring illness in 1632, Bradstreet writes in "Upon A Fit Of Sickness"

Twice ten years old not fully told

since nature gave breath,

My race is run, my thread is spun,

lo, here is fatal death

All men must die, and so must I;

this cannot be revoked.

For Adam's sake this word God spake

when he so high provoked. (1-8)

Stanford argues for the poem's significance; it is "the beginning of the resentment more strongly stated nearly forty years later in the elegies on her grandchildren" (Anne 3). Bradstreet never resolves the fact that death is not prejudice against age, but she does find solace in the explanation of *why* she must die. The poet's persona explains God's condemnation of Adam; Adam disobeyed Him and must die. All men inherit Total Depravity and thus the inevitable result which is the death of the body. Bradstreet knows Calvinism provides a logical explanation--Adam's sin. In the poem, "Before The Birth Of One Of Her Children," Bradstreet, a mother in her mid-forties, "gives voice to the very real love and concern of most parents for their offspring" (Stanford, Anne 26). Again convinced she may die, the poet's persona views man's depraved state as a justified sentence, an unavoidable one, and a hard principle to accept.

All things within this fading world hath end,

Adversity doth still our joys attend;

No ties so strong, no friends so dear and sweet,

But with death's parting blow is sure to meet.

The sentence past is most irrevocable,

A common thing, yet oh, inevitable. (3-8)

The persona, in the opening lines, ironically expresses a sense of peace because the "irrevocable" and "inevitable" sentence of death cannot be evaded and is part of fallen man's judgment. Death creates a reprieve from the "fading world," adversities, and mortal friends. Though Mawer argues that the opening lines of the poem are comfortless and there is only an expression of "cunning modesty [with] no hope of eternal joy but only stoical awareness of mortality" (31), he fails to grasp that the very nature of the awareness comforts Bradstreet's persona. It is as if death is easier to understand than her existence on earth. She knows the sentence she must face and knowing *why* she must die provides security. The persona responds to the opening lines in a personal tone by directly addressing her husband throughout the rest of the poem.

How soon, my Dear, death may my steps attend,

How soon't may be thy lost to lose thy friend,

We both are ignorant, yet love bids me

These farewell lines to recommend to thee,

That when that knot's untied that made us one,

I may seem thine, who in effect am none.

. . . . . .

And If thou love thyself, or loved'st me,

These O protect from step-dame's injury.

And if chance to thine eyes shall bring this verse,

With some sad sighs honour my absent hearse;

And kiss this paper for thy love's dear sake,

Who with tears this last farewell did take. (9-14, 25-30)

Throughout the work, she illustrates the failure of humans to accept God's call. The poem ends with the prevailing sense of failure; the poet's tone reflects her ironic interpretation of her doctrinal position. She labels death as a "common thing" in the opening lines and then proceeds to illustrate how frightening death can be because it unties the knot of marriage, makes loved ones forget, and causes the reconstruction of families. Still, ironically, it is "common" because it is the inevitable closure to life. The three poems illustrate Bradstreet's acceptance and appreciation of man's fallen state and

the sense of disorder it could cause if Heaven was not the final destination. Her knowledge of the doctrine of Total Depravity as seen in her poems explains Bradstreet's rationale behind the concept of death and God's justification for it. The reverberation of the doctrine of Total Depravity in her work reflects her attempt to respond to her world and find order in it through the interpretive art form of poetry.

Unconditional Election and Family Status

Echoes of Unconditional Election appear more often in Bradstreet's poetry than do the doctrines of Total Depravity, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints. Unconditional Election creates a safe harbor for the sinner; salvation is a guarantee in a world full of doubts. God promises a place for the elect in the hereafter. Proving election for Bradstreet is crucial, not only because it proves eligibility for church membership, but also because it helps interpret the world as orderly and logical. Bradstreet's "Meditation #67" pointedly states that

> All the works and doings of God are wonderful, but none more awful than His great work of election and reprobation; when we consider how many good parents have had bad children, and again how many bad parents have had pious children, it should

> make us adore the sovereignty of God, who will not be tied to time nor place, nor yet to persons, but takes and chooses, when and where and whom He pleases; it should also teach the children of godly parents to walk with fear and trembling, lest they through unbelief fall short of a promise; it may also be a support to such as have or had wicked parents, that if they abide not in unbelief, God is able to gaff them in. The upshot of all should make us with the apostle to admire the justice and mercy of God and say how unsearchable are His ways and His footsteps past finding out. (288)

God's choice to label the elect remains a mystery to the believer. Election means selection by a divine will and a predestined salvation. Bradstreet accepts mankind's doom but carefully crafts the illusion of bona fide traits of election. Bradstreet's persona accepts the fact that, after the fall, man faces damnation and the inability to contribute in any form to his redemption. The process of redemption exists outside of man. God, also existing beyond man, chose to send salvation through Christ for those who believe in Him and promises eternal life, though perfectly justified to leave man in his fallen state.

Calvin, in the Institutes, believed only God had the right as creator to choose the elect.

> In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of Scripture, we assert that by an eternal and immutable counsel God has once for all determined both whom He would admit to salvation, and whom He would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on His gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom He devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but incomprehensible, judgment. (7)

Because God creates all life, it is up to His discretion to save or reject creation. God, at the beginning of time, determined those individuals marked *elect* and those marked *damned*. Christ, through His sacrifice, acts as the mediator for the elect. The members of this "certain number" are not better than the reprobate and therefore elected, but are simply saved by Christ and receive such gifts as grace, conversion, and perseverance to the end. The Puritans believe the nonelect are left to their own sins, and God's judgment. A reprobate may be a good man who performs the right deeds "for the wrong

reasons: he [is] obedient because of education and social restraints" (Morgan 4). Bradstreet's poems reverberate the doctrine's tightly woven premise that the elected person believes and is able to testify to his belief because of his special election. She also confirms that the elect may doubt God and still be saved. In the Puritan mind, "good social conduct [is] the result of salvation rather than the cause of it" (Morgan 3) and is merely the evidence of a faith which leads to salvation. A Puritan wants to make sure his good works are apparent; they illustrate his sanctification by the Holy Spirit. The repetitive allusion to this doctrine in Bradstreet's work emphasizes the laborious task of witnessing to one's election and one's logical place in God's ordered plan as a chosen Saint. She knows the elect obediently follow because of the Holy Spirit. However, it is difficult for the chosen few to distinguish, at times, between "the powers of natural reason and those of divine grace" (Miller 29). Because of this difference, physical proof of election is expected. In nine poems,[16] Bradstreet's persona explores and examines election by creating a catalogue of ideals or traits of election. These traits act as descriptive tools through which Bradstreet exerts a sense of urgency, whether it be an urgent cry of acceptance or an urgent cry of rejection. This urgent tone establishes a sense of security and order. Awareness of Unconditional Election forces the

poet to seek and interpret the evidence that conveniently proves her father, mother, husband, children, grandchildren and Bradstreet herself belong to the exclusive, privileged group of the elect. Bradstreet strives to comprehend God's plan by glorifying her parents as pinnacle examples of election, by struggling with the injustices faced by younger, *fresher* souls, and by trying to define her own status.

Though considered public works because they are printed in the first two editions of her poems, "To The Memory Of My Dear And Ever Honoured Father Thomas Dudley Esq." and "An Epitaph On My Dear And Ever-Honoured Mother Mrs. Dorothy Dudley" explore the poet's dedication to them, focus on Bradstreet's respect and love for her parents, reflect her unshakable confidence in their election, and illustrate the existence of stereotypical ideals of the elected community. In the poem on her father, she describes the epitome of the elected person.

> High thoughts he gave no harbour in his heart,
>
> Nor honours puffed him up when he had part;
>
> Those titles loathed, which some too much do love,
>
> For truly his ambition lay above.
>
> His humble mind so loved humility,

He left it to his race for legacy;

And oft and oft with speeches mild and wise

Gave his in charge that jewel rich to prize,

No ostentation seen in all his ways,

As in the mean ones of our foolish days,

Which all they have and more still set to view,

Their greatness may be judged by what they shew.

His thoughts were more sublime, his actions wise,

Such vanities he justly did despise. (40-53)

The powerful word choice of election proves that Dudley's faith magnifies the true characteristics of an elected soul: one which avoids pride and greed, focuses on Heaven and not earthly honors, and exhibits wisdom and justice through actions. In the final twenty-three lines, Bradstreet's persona examines Dudley's satisfaction with his role as an elected soul by explaining that he was not afraid of death. The poet, through the description of his traits, creates the tone of unshakable certainty in the power of election and the indigenous sense of God's predetermined plan.

Oft spake of death, and with a smiling cheer

He did exalt his end was drawing near;

Now fully ripe, as shock of wheat that's grown,

Death as a sickle hath him timely mown,

And in celestial barn hath housed him high,

Where storms, nor show'rs, nor ought can damnify. (58-63)

The image of wheat ready for harvest and the mowing of it to be sheltered in the barn create a sense of quiet strength and fulfilled employment. The lines reflect the ultimate scenario of life's end: to look back at life without regret, without a sense of lost youth and potential, without a sense of unfinished duty. The poem defines Dudley's death as a part of a plan ordered naturally much like the seasons which bring youth, old age, death, and resurrection each year. Puritans believed only an elected soul faces death with acceptance and without fear. Bradstreet finds order in Thomas Dudley's death by convincing the audience of her family and friends that he died and was reborn to live among the elect. His daughter creates the ideal haven of comfort for the chosen soul. She creates an equation for the elect to maintain harmony--prescribe to the ideals as Dudley did and proof of election is certain. The poem is a strong, predictable declaration of his salvation.

Bradstreet attempts to prove her mother's election, as well, in the much shorter epitaph to her. Her mother typifies a good Puritan and a good wife.

The poet keenly creates and describes the habits of her mother as the idealistic characteristics of an elected soul. The picture of her mother is created by using personality traits strikingly reminiscent of the worthy wife found in Proverbs 31: 10-31--"worthy," "loving," "obedient," "friendly," "neighbor," "pitiful to poor," wise, "true instructor," and religious in words and actions.[17] Her mother is a paradigm for the ideal Puritan woman. Bradstreet confidently believes in her mother's ability to foster these qualities which prove Dorothy's election.

> Here lies,
>
> A worthy matron of unspotted life,
>
> A loving mother and obedient wife,
>
> A friendly neighbor, pitiful to poor,
>
> Whom oft she fed and clothed with her store; (1-5)

The poem's catalog of examples dispels any doubt of Dorothy Dudley's election, and there is no hint of her inability to live a worthy life without sin under Grace. Though lacking a powerful image, as in the poem on her father, the lines on Dorothy Dudley reflect a balanced simplicity of order because the poem is controlled by short, consistent lines of descriptive rhyme. Knowing that Bradstreet lost the one woman to instruct her on maternal challenges and

the one man who continually supported her artistic endeavors, the poet does not mourn their deaths. She restores order and comfort by alluding to signs of election as poetic elements to help illustrate the character of each parent. Thomas and Dorothy live as examples of Christian travelers who grace this world with their presence and leave behind images of Christian ideals.

Bradstreet adds to her familial list of elected souls her husband, Simon, in a prayer of thanksgiving. The poems on Simon, the grandchildren, and Mercy do not sustain the confident use of the stereotypical ideals of the elect. The poems focus more on trying to define the perimeters of death's destructive nature as balanced against God's predestined plan and to articulate an urgent cry of rejection. The work "For The Restoration Of My Husband From A Burning Ague" is a five-stanza poem opening with irony and concluding by praising God for saving Simon from a fever in 1661. Bradstreet illustrates his election in the third and fourth stanzas.

> My thankful heart with pen record
>
> The goodness of thy God,
>
> Let thy obedience testify
>
> He taught thee by His rod.

And with His staff did thee support

That thou by both may'st learn,

And 'twixt the good and evil way

At last, thou migh'st discern. (12-19)

Simon awakens, after the fever, to find subtle insight into the difference between the elected path and the path of the reprobate--information only a chosen individual could discern. God grants Simon the gifts of wisdom and Grace; his sense of new-found discipline and obedience to God's will substantiates Bradstreet's claim of his election. The poem, though ending in a sense of praise and acceptance, opens with a reflection back to the emotional turmoil she feels when Simon first grew ill. The "fears," "sorrows," faint heart, and quailed spirits disappear when God gives her strength. Laughlin believes the poem is an example of the elect's ability to accept hardships "with faith, [and] yet never stop rising against them" (4). However, Bradstreet is not simply showing Simon's ability to overcome an illness nor is she simply praising God. The persona questions God's *right* to inflict harm. Even after Bradstreet closes the poem with a petition for emotional harmony, she knows there is no guarantee that illness will not strike again; this time she lucky because God heard her pleas and "granted

hath [her] suit" (23) to restore the unregenerate body. She confesses God has a precarious nature that allows illnesses to strike the elect; during the affliction, the elect face fear, rejection, and then are drawn to God. The only comfort she feels is in knowing God must use scare tactics to maintain the sinner's sense of depravity and reliance on Him. Even though the confession is laden with irony, the description of Simon's election reaffirms Bradstreet's belief.

Bradstreet describes the elected status of not only her parents and her husband, but she describes her grandchildren and children's as well. Placing each family member in the position of election certainly causes the poet to apprehend death in a new way. Bradstreet struggles to create a persona who responds to the cycle of life and death as a natural process with a sense of order and not as a chaotic break in God's fluid, predetermined plan. "In Memory Of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet," "On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet," and "To The Memory Of My Dear Daughter-In-Law, Mrs. Mercy Bradstreet," she uses the doctrine of Election to illustrate the individual's elected status, to illustrate the various characteristics of Unconditional Election, and to come to terms with God's unjust sentence. Because of the poetic echo of the doctrine, Bradstreet in her poems positions

herself in the act of justifying God's ability to take lives. Though rooted in irony and bitter frustration, the persona, in the two-stanza poem on Bradstreet's grandchild Elizabeth, conclusively accepts the death of the 1 1/2 year-old child. The second stanza serves as her apology for her frustration and anger with God and furthers her attempt to prove her own trust in an omnipotent, unconditional God and His wisdom:

> By nature trees do rot when they are grown,
> And plums and apples thoroughly ripe do fall,
> And corn and grass are in their season mown,
> And time brings down what is both strong and tall,
> But plants new set to be eradicate,
> And buds new blown to have so short a date,
> Is by His hand alone that guides nature and fate. (13-19)

The lines reflect God's justification for taking a life and explain death as part of the natural course of events. The poem, however, is void of the warmth and the optimism symbolized in the natural images as in the elegy on Thomas Dudley. Bradstreet's persona accepts, as a true Calvinistic must, God's decision to take the life of an elected soul: "Is by His hand alone that guides nature and fate" (19). So, she submits to God's omnipotence and repairs the

tear her anger causes in the fabric of her Calvinistic faith with the allusion to the doctrine of Unconditional Election. Through the persona, Bradstreet proves her granddaughter's election and her own as well by placing the need for control and order in the hands of God, who created the world with outcomes already decided.

Bradstreet dedicates a poem, also laced with irony, to another grandchild, Simon. The poem reiterates the fact that the creature should not dispute or doubt the Creator.

> With dreadful awe before Him let's be mute,
> Such was His will, but why, let's not dispute,
> With humble hearts and mouths put in the dust,
> Let's say He's merciful as well as just. (9-12)

Though the poem's ironic moments dominate, unarguably, Bradstreet's persona reluctantly accepts God's decision to take Simon's life. The poet realizes man has limited understanding, and the persona concludes, in Calvinistic fashion, that she must not question the event of death. Her decision not to worry about the event creates peace and a sense of order as expressed in the poem's final lines: "Go pretty babe, go rest with 'sisters twain'; / Among the blest in endless joys remain" (15-16). Simon goes to

join his two sisters in Heaven. Even though the persona bluntly questions God's justice and the persona's irony dominates, the poem does show Bradstreet's acceptance of her grandchildren's deaths as well as her parents' and daughter-in-law's deaths. The use of Unconditional Election as a poetic component to respond to God's will offers Bradstreet the comfort of knowing that Heaven awaits all the chosen people--fortunately inclusive of her immediate family and their children.

Bradstreet handles grief and an untimely death once again in "To The Memory Of My Dear Daughter-In-Law, Mrs. Mercy Bradstreet," who died at 28. The poet's persona acknowledges the despair her son and family feel throughout the main body of the poem which begins with the powerful, central metaphor of Mercy as a tree. The tree symbolizes not only the roots of a family firmly placed in God's New England, but it symbolizes Mercy as the very giver of life. Bradstreet's persona mourns that her son has lost "both tree and fruit" (13); he can no longer contribute to the future generation. Mercy had lost four children and died in childbirth with the fifth, who died as well. Bradstreet emphasizes her grief at the sudden destruction of the tree and her shock by not "straining the metaphor" (Laughlin 7). The persona

remains constrained. She develops the sense of loss by describing her son's grief.

> To strike thee with amazing misery;
> Oh, how I sympathize with thy sad heart,
> And in thy griefs still bear a second part;
> I lost a daughter dear, but thou a wife,
> Who loved thee more (it seemed) than her own life. (17-21)

Not only does her son lose his wife and baby, but Bradstreet loses a daughter and grandchild as well. However, in the last lines, she counteracts her doubt and fear about the process of death; the persona believes God, in His infinite wisdom, acts only for the good of His plan: "In Him alone that caused all this smart; / What though thy strokes full sad and grievous be, / He knows it is the best for thee and me" (35-37). And the poem ends with a tone of satisfaction in realizing God knows best for all created beings but particularly those He elects to be Saints. As in the other five poems, the poet's persona accepts God's justification in taking a life He alone created. Mercy, as do Thomas, Dorothy, Elizabeth, and Simon, returns to Heaven to complete God's call.

Election, for Bradstreet, involves not only her parents and husband, children, and grandchildren, but herself. The deaths of parents, idealistically,

symbolized the unquestionable transformation to sainthood, but the ills and deaths of Simon, Mercy, Elizabeth, and Simon cause Bradstreet to question the existence of God's justice and the acceptance of it. The poems on her own illnesses again offer still more insight into Bradstreet's perception of God's plan. The many challenges she faces, such as painful illnesses, assures her of her election. In three of her private poems, "Upon A Fit Of Sickness," "May 13, 1657," and "In My Solitary Hours In My Dear Husband His Absence," Bradstreet not only presents herself as an elected soul but reverberates the tenants of the doctrine of Unconditional Election as justified, exclusive, and a privilege. The poem on her illness is metaphoric, examining the sentence of Total Depravity and ending with the reassurance of the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. The poet's persona observes man's position as a passive recipient of the salvation God bestows upon the elected. The persona states

> O whilst I live this grace me give,
>
> I doing good may be,
>
> Then death's arrest I shall count best,
>
> because it's Thy decree;
>
> Bestow much cost there's nothing lost,

to make salvation sure,

O great's the gain, though got with pain,

comes by profession pure (21-27)

After receiving special gifts and challenges (the ability to pray, the awareness of salvation, and tests of illness), the persona realizes the debt she owes God for these gifts. Bradstreet writes of pain, death, salvation, and her realization that God justly ordains death. Because God allows death, the poet writes of it without fear; she simply labels it a "decree" and not a terrifying conclusion to the earthly existence. Using the ideals of Election in the poem, the poet faces a comforting, predictable future for the chosen elect--Heaven.

Bradstreet, secure with the concept of death and Heaven, also appears to be secure about God's protection for the elect and the exclusive nature of this election. In "May 13, 1657," she blatantly reveals her belief in her election and God's favoritism for the elect. The poem opens with renewed hope in Spring and the celebrated return of her husband. The poet continues the optimistic tone; the persona thanks God for the recovery from ills and for her spiritual journey from doubt to reassurance. The images throughout the poem express her faith in election and the orderliness of the world because they link season to season and balance opposites such as soul and body,

storms and fair skies, and old and young age. Daly describes the images: "Sun God bridegroom husband and Christ, and spring health reunion and confidence of election--these image clusters [are] linked in the poet's perception of the created universe" (95). The fourth verse epitomizes Bradstreet's security in her election and her perception of her world.

I have a shelter from the storm,
A shadow from the fainting heat,
I have access unto His throne,
Who is a God so wonderous great. (14-17)

Unconditional Election gives the elected soul the exclusive benefit of "shelter" or comfort but not exclusion from the temptations and pain of the world. It also, according to Bradstreet, provides the elect "access" or a direct passage to God through direct prayer; the elect need neither priest nor minister to act as mediator. Her relationship with God is one of intimacy.

Bradstreet not only strategically examines the justified and exclusive nature of election in an attempt to seek order but also uses the privileges granted the elect to explore the benevolence of God's instructions and plan. The third poem, "In My Solitary Hours In My Dear Husband His Absence," supports Bradstreet's belief in her election by examining the privileges she

and her family receive (safe return of her husband and son Samuel). The first nine stanzas proclaim the benefits God grants the elect: a sympathetic ear, a stable environment, a constant companion, a reliable protector, a provider, and a rescuer. The last four stanzas illustrate Bradstreet's debt to God.

So shall I celebrate Thy praise
Ev'n while my days shall last
And talk to my beloved one
Of all Thy goodness past.

So both of us Thy kindness, Lord,
With praises shall recount
And serve Thee better than before
Whose blessings thus surmount.

But give me, Lord, a better heart,
Then better shall I be,
To pay the vows which I do owe
Forever unto Thee.

Unless Thou help, what can I do

But still my frailty show?

If Thou assist me, Lord, I shall

Return Thee what I owe. (39-54)

The elect remain indebted to God because they contribute nothing to acquire the privilege of salvation. The poem's lines are balanced and tight; therefore, Bradstreet creates a sense of comfort in the belief that God benevolently controls the cycles of life and the trials men face.

While tackling hardships, Bradstreet's personas maintain their Calvinist composure which allows them to self-dramatize the most gratifying of the roles of the sinner: being chosen. Six poems prove the election of the Dudley family and the Bradstreet family. Her poems on Thomas and Dorothy Dudley immortalize her parents as the pinnacle examples of election. The works on Simon, Mercy, and the grandchildren illustrate Bradstreet's shaken confidence in God's justification and promise of election. Three poems, on Bradstreet's election, focus on the very nature of the doctrine as a justified, exclusive privilege. Because she knows, through personal experience, the doctrine of election, the poet assumes the responsibility of the artist to interpret it and its role in God's predestined universe. Even though assured

of grace the elected person "had to do such good works as would manifest that assurance--but as an effect, not a cause" (Pearce 42). She interprets through her personas the justified, exclusive, limited nature of Unconditional Election and emphasizes the importance of culling evidence from actions in response to the communal and personal need of proof. The use of or reference to the doctrine in her works affords Bradstreet the freedom to convincingly prove election and see order in the process of election, death, and resurrection.

Limited Atonement and Man's Ineffectiveness

Anne Bradstreet strategically culls order from chaos by alluding to the doctrines of Total Depravity and Unconditional Election as interpretive tools. Unlike her allusions to Total Depravity and Unconditional Election, her reliance upon the doctrine of Limited Atonement in her poetry is scarce. Her lack of reference to the doctrine reflects its controversial nature. Theological debate results from the doctrine's limitations; it limits the power of the saving Grace of Christ to only a select number; however, the Calvinists interpret the doctrine as God's *choice* to save only a limited few. At the Synod of Dort (1619), Calvinists tried to defend and reconcile this doctrine as an innate part of God's order. Though a difficult concept to accept, the privilege of

rejecting or receiving souls is God's alone. Limited Atonement creates a sense of order for those chosen by God to believe because through Christ's crucifixion the penalty has been paid. A *chosen* person knows election means atonement for sins. "Atonement" to the early New England Puritans meant "the satisfaction made by Christ for the sins of humanity" (Brown, "Expiation" 645). Christ died on the cross to atone for man's sins, and, in keeping with the doctrine of election, this restitution remains limited. Because man remains in a state of total depravity and cannot save himself, man totally depends on God for salvation. God, out of His infinite mercy, according to the Calvinist, saves a certain number of people and draws them to salvation. However, the elect still sin and therefore need atonement. Christ redeems the elect and reconciles them to the Father. The son is the mediator "through whose atoning death the price of man's forgiveness is paid and a way of salvation made open" (Brown, "Expiation" 645). The Calvinist believes in the limits of atonement because it naturally supports the doctrines of Total Depravity and Unconditional Election by emphasizing the incapability of the fallen man to contribute to his salvation. In "July 8, 1656," "By night when others soundly slept," "Upon The Burning Of Our House," and "As Weary Pilgrim," Bradstreet explores echoes of Limited Atonement in

the confines of the poetic form to acknowledge her position as a witness of Christ and her position to be rescued by Christ's sacrifice. She seeks order in a world racked with sin and therefore pain. In each poem, she finds order through her belief and the various images her faith invokes. Bradstreet exclusively uses images to express Limited Atonement, unlike with the other doctrines. Images in her poems create visual aids to interpret a nebulous doctrine. The key to Limited Atonement is Christ, who put order back into the world by His death on the cross.

"July 8, 1656," a prose piece accompanied by a six-stanza poem written after an illness, acknowledges Bradstreet's calling to be a witness of Christ and the awesome nature of Christ's gift to her. Throughout the work, Bradstreet's persona refers to both God and Christ, and she questions those who believe in other gods. The poet's persona carefully assumes the role of the grateful, elected soul, and she creates the image of a grateful believer through her lines of praise and thanksgiving.

What God is like to Him I serve?

What Savior like to mine?

O never let me from Thee swerve,

For truly I am Thine.

My thankful mouth shall speak Thy praise,

My tongue shall talk of Thee;

On high my heart O do Thou raise

For what Thou'st done for me. (1-8)

The poet's acute awareness of the intricacies of the doctrine of Limited Atonement is evident. Her words in the poem compare heathen gods to her God and articulate His unique qualities, define the duties the elect inherit, acknowledge Christ's sacrifice, explain the elect's inability to earn the sacrifice of atonement, illustrate the elect's debt to God, and prove that the elect must be a witness to God's Grace.

Go worldings to your vanities,

And heathen to your gods;

Let them help in adversities

And sanctify their rods;

My God He is not like to yours

Yourselves shall judges be;

I find His love, I know His power--

A succorer of me

He is not man that He should lie,
Nor son of man to unsay;
His word He plighted hath on high,
And I shall live for aye.

And for His sake that faithful is,
That died but now doth live,
The first and last that lives for aye,
Me lasting life shall give. (9-24)

Though the requirements sound strict and burdensome, to the Calvinist poet they act as a balm applied to a cancerous sore, and they soothe her fears of death. She knows she will live in the everlasting life. The "chosen" sinner experiences the soothing comfort of forgiveness. After this particular illness, knowing she lacks control of her election eases Bradstreet's sense of guilt and the anxiety or panic over the issue of the afterlife. Because good works can not earn election, Calvinism offers structure for the Puritan; Bradstreet

realizes every challenge and reward, she faces and receives, directly plays a role in God's predetermined plan for her.

In the three other poems, the poet creates images to construct the circumstances Christ unselfishly created for the elect. Through illustrating God's ordered plan of atonement, Bradstreet continues to offer affirmation of order in the world at times when she confronts chaos through the hardships of illness. In the four-stanza poem, "By night when others soundly slept," the poet creates the image of both the chaotic pain caused by doubt and the cherished peace election produces. The doctrine of Limited Atonement works as a reprieve from the hazards of the world tormented by sin. It provides the elect with peace from fears but not exclusion from them; they know God controls the world. In Stanza 3, the poet uses the doctrine of Limited Atonement, and the images related to it, to explain the act of atonement and the result of the act.

> My hungry soul He filled with good,
> He in His bottle put my tears,
> My smarting wounds washed in His blood,
> And banished thence my doubt and fears. (11-14)

The soul is comforted and filled with joy because of Christ's act. The very blood generated by His wounds cures the persona's stifling fear and frustrating doubts. The lines are evidence of the awesome relief Bradstreet welcomes after doubting. Alluding to the doctrine and the images of a starving soul, healing balm of blood, and exercising fears, she creates a tangible expression of atonement and its effects on her as an elected person. The poet's persona stresses her inability to provide recompense to Christ and her ability to serve Him.

> What to my Savior shall I give,
> Who freely hath done this for me?
> I'll serve Him here whilst I shall live
> And love Him to eternity. (15-18)

She acknowledges that God freely gives Christ's ultimate sacrifice of atonement to the elect, though undeserving, and she endeavors to live up to her atonement by loving God "to eternity"--a price she gladly pays.

Bradstreet also creates a visual example of the result of Christ's death in the meditative poem "Upon The Burning Of Our House." The work illustrates her reaction to the destruction of her home on July 10, 1666, and her vacillating acceptance of the chaos the fire has physically and emotionally

caused (such as the loss of her trunks, tables, chairs, and the material objects that embody certain memories) and the supposed peace the challenges of the fire has spiritually caused. She reconstructs, throughout the poem, the drama of her inner struggle and the acceptance of the disaster when she alludes to the Heavenly home and her invitation to this home through Christ's atonement.

> Thou hast an house on high erect,
> Framed by that mighty Architect,
> With glory richly furnished,
> Stands permanent though this be fled.
> It's purchased and paid for too
> By Him who hath enough to do.
> A price so vast as is unknown
> Yet by His gift is made thine own; (47-54)

Christ's sacrifice is intense; the image of a mansion bought without a debt exemplifies God's order for Bradstreet's life. She is forced to focus on Heaven. The poem clearly illustrates the poet's struggle between human regret and yearnings and her submission to God. The persona, at times, balks at God's destructive nature; she lists among earthly vanities not only physical

objects but her husband's voice and laughter to hesitantly voice her disapproval of God's decision. Her persona's ultimate submission to Christ's awesome sacrifice surmounts her regret, for the poem ends with the tone of acceptance. The knowledge of atonement, "this gift," provides Bradstreet with contentment in the basic condition of the elect: the elect contribute nothing to their atonement and salvation. The mansion was built without their sweat, labor, and anxiety. As in "July 8, 1656," the poet escapes the burden of trying to earn God's favor. God's favor and grace are gifts unmitigated by man's sinful, corrupt nature. The poet stresses, throughout the poem, the tentative nature of earthly possessions and the insurmountable emotional attachment man has to them unless God reprimands man by drawing him back into focus on atonement and eternal election.

Unlike the struggle the destructive nature of the fire in the poem on her home causes, "As Weary Pilgrim," written some three years later, lacks the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. An internal conflict does not exist. The meditative poem is based on the metaphor of the journey, and Bradstreet stretches the journey motif to explain the challenges the traveler faces, the acceptance of life as a challenging journey, the appreciation of Christ's death,

and the poet's desire for immortality. The poem metaphorically represents Christ's death as the birth of peace and order out of chaos.

What though my flesh shall there consume,
It is the bed Christ did perfume,
And when a few years shall be gone,
This mortal shall be clothed upon.
A corrupt carcass down it lays,
A glorious body it shall rise.
In weakness and dishonour sown,
In power 'tis raised by Christ alone.
Then soul and body shall unite
And of their Maker have the sight. (31-40)

The poet submits to the loss of the flesh and professes the assurance of her resurrection as a "glorious body." In fact, hardships are visualized as consuming and decaying forces. These forces attack the physical body and cause the "corrupt carcass." Bradstreet's persona expresses freedom from the earthly bondage the elect must face and finally must rise above at death by creating the image of Christ as perfume--able to cover the foulest of smells. Christ's death opens the door to salvation for the believer. The elect

must acknowledge freedom in order to grasp the harmony in God's plan. The image of the mating of body and soul before the Creator expresses the ultimate reward for the poet and the climax for the Calvinist traveler. Bradstreet, in all four poems, alludes to the doctrine of Limited Atonement to illustrate how the doctrine rescues the elect from sin. Limited Atonement offers order to the elect for the doctrine shoulders responsibility for the rescue.

Irresistible Grace and Man's Blessing

Bradstreet's allusion to the doctrine of Irresistible Grace, like the doctrines of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, and Limited Atonement, focuses on man's inability to contribute to his election, to create order in his world, and to predict his future. She believes Irresistible Grace explains the circumstance of man; God calls man to receive the benefits of his salvation or atonement. Edmund S. Morgan observes that in the covenant of grace

> God promised salvation not for obedience, since that was now impossible, but for faith (however, a sincere attempt at obedience would necessarily always follow faith). God himself performed both parts of His new covenant: He provided not

> only salvation but also the faith for which salvation was the reward. Faith was not attainable by mere human volition. It was a belief inspired by the Almighty in those whom He wished to save. (3-4)

God sends His Holy Spirit through Christ in order to call the elect to Him. Man, by his nature, attempts to resist God's gospel but fails because God, who is superior to man and his resistance, is the caller. Man's will cannot "resist motions proceeding from an enlightened understanding, and yet men are not driven into sanctity as beasts to a pen, not plunged into salvation, as inert stones dropped into a well" (Miller 287). Even though man is spiritually impotent, and God's Grace is irresistible, Grace is *set up* as a voluntary relationship between man and God. Those who refuse the calling do so by their own volition and are not part of the elect. Bradstreet's work bears witness to the fact that the mark of election was shared by all in her family, though she doubts the appropriateness of God's timing. None of Bradstreet's poems discuss or examine in any capacity her family's or her personal rejection of Grace. The irresistibility of it is accepted as Truth and as part of the Calvinistic perspective of the order in the world. In six of her poems, Bradstreet explores God's influence on an individual's belief system by

implying the acceptability of the doctrine of Irresistible Grace as a poetic element to emphasize man's dependency on Grace. God offers security for the believer because the Christian knows he has the ability to follow God's will or plan through the gift of Grace.

In the explication of poems on her parents, Bradstreet describes two people who exhibit not only Unconditional Election, but also the acceptance of Grace. Because their lives are representations of Grace, Bradstreet remains comforted and clearly sees the balance of God's plan. With Irresistible Grace, God "produces both the will to believe and the act of believing" (Schaff 523) through the Holy Spirit. In the poem on her father, Thomas Dudley, she creates an elaborate description of the actions of an elected soul, called by the Holy Spirit to receive his salvation through Grace. Bradstreet's persona points out specific emblems of election and Grace.

> But as a pilgrim, what he had possessed
> High thoughts he gave no harbour in his heart,
> Nor honours puffed him up when he had part;
> Those titles loathed, which some too much do love,
> For truly his ambition lay above. (39-43)

The emblems include the lack of pride, the lack of concern for earthly possessions, and an inevitable sense of wisdom. "Puritanism, for all its piety, for all its hunger and thirst after salvation, never doubted that the life of the elect was the life of reason, and so could never, in its earnest struggle for regeneration, let go its intellectual heritage "(Miller 202). Bradstreet describes Dudley as "mild and wise" (44) and "his actions wise" (52) and therefore exhibiting reason. She attributes to his election the gift of wisdom and reason. Because her father has the will to believe, given to him by the Holy Spirit, he displays his belief through his actions. His good deeds include an impressive administrative record, a productive family, and a financially stable legacy. Dudley epitomizes the Puritan belief in the ideology that hard work, thrift, and industry are forms of moral virtue and that business success is evidence of God's Grace. Bradstreet knew her audience would recognize the doctrine of Irresistible Grace and her father's chosen status.

The poem on Dorothy Dudley proves her appointment as an elected soul and therefore a possessor of Grace. The poem makes clear the characteristics that Grace and election provide; the two occur simultaneously in that God gives His Holy Spirit only to the people He chooses.

A worthy matron of unspotted life,

A loving mother and obedient wife,

A friendly neighbor, pitiful to poor,

Whom oft she fed and clothed with her store;

To servants wisely awful, but yet kind,

And as they did, so they reward did find. (7-12)

Dudley's conduct exemplifies a person of Grace. To the Puritan community, good "social conduct was the result of salvation rather than the cause of it" (Morgan 3). Bradstreet's mother embodies the characteristics of a Grace-filled person with her virtue, charity, and wisdom. Through both poems, Bradstreet illustrates man's dependency on God to give Grace and her parents' inability to contribute to their salvation in any degree.

In "Upon A Fit Of Sickness," a third poem, the persona focuses on Bradstreet herself. It discusses the hastiness of the passage of life and also the poet's dependency on Grace which shields her against life's hardships. Metaphorically, she compares life to the tentative nature of a bubble.

O bubble blast, how long can'st last?

that always art a breaking,

No sooner blown, but dead and gone,

ev'n as a word that's speaking. (17-20)

The fast paced lines, caused by the clipped sound in her word choice, reflect her anxiety caused by life's frailty. In the next four lines, the anxiety eases, and she feels comforted that God's authority reigns. She believes God grants her a sense of control when she encounters challenges; the control she is able to muster is from His Irresistible Grace.

O whilst I live this grace me give,
I doing good may be,
Then death's arrest I shall count best,
because it's Thy decree; (21-24)

God not only ordains the privilege of Grace but ordains death as well; therefore, the dogma nurtures a sense of security in the arrival of death and the reward of Heaven for the believer. The predictable pattern of Grace, death, and resurrection retrieves the sinner from disorder.

Not only does admitting her dependency on Grace provide the poet with comfort and order but so does the evidence of her Grace through her ability to believe. The personas in "From Another Sore Fit" and "My soul, rejoice thou in thy God" concentrate on the act of believing caused by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. After facing another illness, Bradstreet describes, in two of the seven stanzas, her feeble attempt to believe in God and God's

provision of Grace. Grace restores a sense of comfort to her ailing body and spirit.

My heart I wholly give to Thee;
O make it fruitful, faithful Lord.
My life shall dedicated be
To praise in thought, in deed, in word.

Thou know'st no life I did require
Longer than still Thy name to praise,
Nor ought on earth worthy desire,
In drawing out these wretched days. (18-25)

The poem closes by recognizing God's ability to know what is best for His chosen elect. The poet, in the poem, consoles herself and therefore eliminates the distrust doubt causes for the sinner by alluding to the doctrine. The untitled poem, "My soul, rejoice thou in thy God," boasts of the accomplishments the persona achieves because of her belief in Irresistible Grace. Bradstreet's persona observes that the spirit remains strong even though the physical body decays. The physical body, at death, translates into a glorious vessel and

With angel's wings thy soul shall mount

To bliss unseen by eye,

And drink at unexhausted fount

Of joy unto eternity. (9-12)

Irresistible Grace permits the elected person to face life's challenges with a sense of reassurance because it inherently promises an afterlife of rewards. The chosen person knows that God predestines a better life than the earth affords. The poet's persona, in her fight against the desire for earthly possessions, remains victorious when armed with the weapons of God's Grace and wisdom.

Base world, I trample on thy face,

Thy glory I despise,

No gain I find in ought below,

For God hath made me wise. (21-24)

By illustrating the act of believing caused by Irresistible Grace, the poet again gains control of a challenging world full of pain and death. She uses strong words to describe her response: "trample," "despise." The six poems bear witness to the relevance of Irresistible Grace; it is a permanent seal. The poems on her parents reflect Bradstreet's awareness of the doctrine of

Irresistible Grace and its ability to establish their efforts to make manifest the basic nature of Grace. The poems about her own challenges reveal her dependency on her Grace and the outward sign of the seal of Grace--her faithful belief in God.

Perseverance of the Saints and Man's Reward

The doctrine of Irresistible Grace, according to the Calvinists and articulated in Bradstreet's work, naturally precedes the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints, the fifth point of Calvinism. The elect expect God to deliver them from the slavery of sin in this world; this deliverance does not exclude them from committing sins or from facing poverty, illnesses, and other hardships. As long as they live, sin remains with the elect; hence, Bradstreet constantly toils over her weaknesses and temptations. However, God preserves the elect in this life and eternal life. The Covenant of Grace is "not broken asunder by many transgressions, so long as [the elect] follow God in a way of faith and repentance" (Miller 386). The Calvinist argues that even though the elect are assured of eternal life, they avoid pride. "On the contrary, it [assurance] is the real source of humility, filial reverence, true piety, patience in every tribulation, fervent prayers, constancy in suffering and rejoicing in God" (Schaff 523). The gift of perseverance functions as an

incentive for the elect to do good works. In nine poems, Bradstreet mentions the doctrinal characteristics of the Perseverance of the Saints, and each poem provides a reason or logical explanation. Armed with the explanation, the Puritan has a secure grasp of the concept of death. Bradstreet creates four general observations about the status of Saints. She explores the Puritan's physical perspective of Heaven, God's purpose in creating man, the inescapable hardships of life for the Saints, and the expectations of eternal life for the elect by conceptualizing the Perseverance of the Saints as a poetic, interpretative tool.

Bradstreet describes Heaven by using terms common to domestic activities in order to reveal the accessibility of Heaven for mortal man. In the poem dedicated to her father, she describes Heaven as a "mansion" (55), as an environment where a "happy soul amongst saints and angels blest" (66) will live, and as a meeting ground "Where we with joy each other's face shall see, / And parted more by death shall never be" (74-75). The resurrected elect live in God's grand house with each other--a comforting perspective to ease the fear of death. In the poem "In Reference To Her Children" which is an extended metaphor of a mother bird and her young, Bradstreet continues to

describe Heaven in familiar and comforting images of age, seasons, and weather to dispel the fear her children may have of her death.

> And from the top bough take my flight
> Into a country beyond sight,
> Where old ones instantly grow young,
> And there with seraphims set song;
> No seasons cold, nor storms they see;
> But spring lasts to eternity. (77-82)

Once in Heaven, the elect finds freedom from the hardships of the earthly existence; such hardships include old age, cold weather, and storms. Bradstreet further explores the Puritan perspective of Heaven in the poem "As Weary Pilgrim." It presents Heaven not only as an escape from the challenges of earth such as grief, sleeplessness, pain, and fear, but also a place where the "corrupt carcass " (35) of the human body translates into "a glorious body" (36). The elected soul revels in the prospect of death and a new body. Death symbolically becomes a passage from corruption to glory. In these three poems, Bradstreet employs the doctrine of the Perseverance of Saints as a poetic instrument to inform the reader that the doctrine inherently provides the believer with the reassurance of a better life.

The poet also observes that the elect are purposely made by God for participating in this new life. God creates the elect with the innate desire to want to return to Heaven and to please Him. "In Thankful Remembrance For My Dear Husband's Safe Arrival," Bradstreet's persona explains that it is man's purpose in life to go before God with the utmost discipline.

> O help Thy saints that sought Thy face
> T' return unto Thee praise
> And walk before Thee as they ought,
> In strict and upright ways. (24-27)

The "saints" worship God through their ordered, disciplined actions. The lines explain that if man manages to be righteous and orderly, according to God's will, he receives immortality and finds a place in God's ordered plan.

Even though created and chosen by God, the Christian still encounters chaos. Bradstreet's third observation illustrates the believer's unpredictable trials and confrontation with the hardships of life. Three examples surface in three poems "To The Memory Of Thomas Dudley," "Upon Some Distemper Of Body," and "As Weary Pilgrim." Bradstreet recognizes that her father, "who after all his toil is now at rest" (67), endures as all must, the hardships of life. Through this poem, Bradstreet reiterates the Calvinistic beliefs of the

elect who are removed from the slavery of sin in this life but not its adversities. She confirms this in "Upon Some Distemper Of Body" which describes the anguish of being ill and then the comfort God provides: "He eased my soul of woe, my flesh of pain" (12). For Bradstreet, suffering sicknesses and recovering from them indicates one belongs to God's elect. "As Weary Pilgrim" again illustrates the elect's or pilgrim's sorrows and the relief the pilgrim receives only after death.

Oh, how I long to be at rest
And soar on high among the blest.
This body shall in silence sleep,
Mine eyes no more shall ever weep,
No fainting fits shall me assail,
Nor grinding pains my body frail.
With cares and fears ne'er cumb'red be
Nor losses know, nor sorrows see. (23-30)

For Calvinists, facing the hardships of life simply enhances the perfection Heaven offers Saints. Life's challenges provide external evidence for the soul's election and therefore should be appreciated by the Puritan as a part of God's plan.

The hardships Calvinists face reaffirm their election; God challenges those He elects. An individual's trials prove election. Bradstreet observes that for the elect the gift of everlasting life is not a *promise* by God but a *covenant* between God and His chosen; it is a contract. Her fourth observation reveals the elect's expectations of eternal life. Bradstreet explains in "July 8, 1656," her confidence in her inheritance of eternal life. She believes God blesses her with that "inheritance [He] hast promised to bestow upon [her]" (251). The poet further shows the sense of order knowledge of Sainthood provides for the elect; the last two stanzas illustrate her trust in God and His will.

> He is not man that He should lie,
> Nor son of man to unsay;
> His word He plighted hath on high,
> And I shall live for aye.
>
> And for His sake that faithful is,
> That died but now doth live,
> The first and last that lives for aye,
> Me lasting life shall give. (17-24)

Bradstreet inequitably trusts God and expects eternal life. The observations illustrate that Heaven is tangible, that God purposely creates man, that hardships prove election, that the elect overcome challenges, and that the chosen expect eternal life. The poet alludes to the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints as a poetic convention to help her explore, through four observations, God's plan.

Exploring the various allusions to the five points of Calvinism in Bradstreet's poetry reveals the poet's adherence to and struggle with the Calvinistic belief system and its ability to provide a logical interpretation of the world. In the poems on her parents and herself, Bradstreet accepts God's decision. However, Bradstreet shows another side of her persona, as the faithful Calvinist, in the poems on her husband, Mercy, and her grandchildren. The poet struggles to reconcile her grief with the doctrinally-dictated response: one of acceptance. These poems reflect an anemic acceptance of God's plan because the persona voices a weak admission of praise. The five points are used as poetic elements, much like personification, simile, metaphor, and irony. They, figurative language and irony, aid in uncovering her response to God's predetermined world and the events that occur such as death, dangerous journeys, painful illnesses, and

rejection. Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints act as keys to unlock Bradstreet's perception of life's hardships and God's will. Bradstreet's work never examines the doctrines as simply topics of discussion; theological debates concerning the doctrines do not exist in her poems. The five points function as attempts to understand and evaluate her world, purge emotional unrest, and provide a sense of comfort, peace, and security. The process of exploration and the references to the doctrines illustrate that the poet Bradstreet finds resolution. Bradstreet probes the events of her world to reveal various logical conclusions: death is not something to fear; death is a justified punishment; evidence of election is obvious; atonement is the ultimate sacrifice for the elect and cannot be rejected; God is in control; and all elected souls receive entrance to Heaven. God remains the same; He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever; we are the same that stand in need of Him, today as well as yesterday, and so shall forever" ("Meditation 56"). God's plan is one of consistency that does not change with the ebb and flow of political and social controversies. Bradstreet's prose piece, "Meditation 50," testifies to the consistency of the five points.

> Sometimes the sun is only shadowed by a cloud that we cannot see his luster although we may walk by his light, but when he is set, we are in darkness till he arise again. So God doth sometime veil His face but for a moment that we cannot behold the light of His countenance as at some other time, yet He affords so much light as may direct our way, that we may go forwards to the city of habitation, but when He seems to set and be quite gone out of sight, then must we needs walk in darkness and see no light; yet then must we trust in the Lord and stay upon our God, and when the morning (which is the appointed time) is come, the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in His wings.

God undeniably controls the universe and does not rely on man's belief to exist. God exists regardless of whether man feels His presence or not. Bradstreet's doctrinal, poetic elements explore the chaos or darkness found in this world and propose a resolution that God's plan is predestined and man's role in it is determined. Unlike her use of figurative language and irony, Bradstreet's use of the five points of Calvinism focuses mainly on her own

and her family's intimate relationship with God and not her anger, frustration, or political and social responsibilities.

CHAPTER III

BRADSTREET'S UTILIZATION OF PERSONIFICATION, SIMILE, AND METAPHOR IN HER POEMS TO SIMON: TECHNIQUES TO QUESTION AND MAINTAIN ORDER

Unlike in the harmonious use of the five points of Calvinism, Bradstreet, in her use of figurative language, seeks harmony with a shaken confidence. She no longer examines life's hardships through doctrine but through raw emotions. She battles with the belief in a predestined, ordered, stable universe, and her desire to be unified with her husband. She tries to grasp her role in God's drama through various personas: as a bereaved wife, distraught lover, or confirmed believer. As a Puritan poet, her strategic use of figurative language in her four private poems to her husband, "To My Dear And Loving Husband," "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," "Another," and "As loving hind," attempts to find order in a chaotic world of political and social responsibilities, to express intense emotions, and to work through frustrations. Though figurative language is used elsewhere in her poetry, the marriage poems present the diverse use of personification, simile, and metaphor and illustrate her most creative use of

these devices--reflecting the rise and fall of emotional turmoil in a tender, intimate relationship.

Figurative language, such as personification, simile, and metaphor, links a familiar thing to an unknown thing, and then, the figurative device acts as a clue to unlock the essence of that linkage or some part of that linkage. Bradstreet's awareness of this distinct relationship provides insightful moments into her relationship with her husband and her God in three poems: "To My Dear And Loving Husband," "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," and "Another." Her use of figurative language unlocks the issues of displacement, passion, and anger and provides Bradstreet with an outlet for these polarized emotions. In her poetry, each figure of speech assumes the role of a key, to varying degrees, which unlocks emotions and attempts to seek a semblance of order against a backdrop of chaos. By examining the figurative language Bradstreet employs, the Puritans' acceptance of its use, and her control of the poetic figures in her private love poetry, her poems become a battleground of emotional turmoil, anger, and, at times, acceptance.

Characteristics of Figurative Language

The characteristics of personification, simile, and metaphor offer structure and freedom for a poet. The device of personification, a figure related to metaphor, enlivens an inanimate object, an element in nature, or a concept with human qualities or feelings and makes it more tangible as in "To My Dear And Loving Husband," "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," and "Another." In the use of personification, there is not a transference of meaning to another object; the item being personified never experiences a metamorphosis into another object, element, or concept beyond the equation appearing physically on the page. Personification creates a one to one ratio: it creates one human characteristic at a time. The sun, for example, never actually becomes a counselor to the poet, but it listens to Bradstreet's pleas as in "Another." Personification is a poetic device that does not require explicit, balanced equals in a figurative equation or ratio like in a simile or a less explicit equation as in a metaphor. It holds up or highlights an idea, place, or thing by using human qualities such as Bradstreet's use of body parts to indicate geographical distance, or the use of the sun as a counselor, or the use of the sun's warmth as a kiss or an

embrace. In personification, there is no absence of an idea, place, or thing that is represented by another thing. Personification appears on the page at face value, and therefore in Bradstreet's spousal poems, it creates less intensity than does the use of simile and metaphor which forces a poem to generate visions beyond the text.

Usually stronger in effect than personification in Bradstreet's poems to her husband, simile explicitly compares two dissimilar things using the word *like* or *as*. Simile refers to one quality that two things have in common. In order for simile to function, the two items cannot be from the same genus; otherwise, merely a comparison exists. Stephen Brown explains the difference:

> When the two objects so likened to each other belong to the same order of being we have merely a comparison; when they belong to different orders of being we have the figure known as simile. It is the likeness or analogy perceived amid essential unlikeness that makes the figure. (118)

In the poem "To My Dear And Loving Husband," Bradstreet not only uses comparison when she challenges other women to find the love she possesses, but she also progresses beyond a simplistic comparison to create a simile of

her own prosperous love and the riches and wealth of the East. As in personification, there is not a transference of object for another in the simile. The words *like* or *as* work as devices to move an idea into analogy. Different from personification, simile is a device that requires a balanced, explicit equation of equals, and Bradstreet's use of the simile provides order for her poetry and the world she interprets. McCall explains that the simile requires

> equal development of subject and comparative parts, which generally takes the form of 'just as'. . . 'so'. . . or develops only the subjects or the comparative part and generally takes either the form 'subject,' 'verb,' 'like/as' comparative part developed or 'subject part developed,' 'like/as,' a 'single noun.' (viii)

Bradstreet predominately uses the ""subject,' 'verb,' 'like/as,' comparative part" pattern. The very use of the words *like* or *as* causes a natural pause in the text and therefore forces the reader to stop and review the two parts in the analogy. Unlike in personification or metaphor, the separateness is emphasized in simile because both of the ratios are required to be on the page in order to develop the required appeal. For Bradstreet, the simile offers poetic control over the intensity of her revealed passions as expressed in the

poems to her husband. Simile, in Bradstreet's works, expresses a higher poetic quality than does personification because personification is used in the openings of poems with intensity mounting as the poems move through simile and metaphor. Yet, similes are more controlling, but less intense, than metaphors because similes require the pattern to be present on the page. Bradstreet creates a sense of clear relationships between two things with her similes and concisely controls the intensity of her passion.

Unlike the device of simile, Bradstreet's metaphors offer more poetic freedom and therefore express her more abstract concepts: spousal loneliness, sexual passion, and anger. Metaphor links unlike ideas or things together, and it inspires or creates new ideas, thoughts, or images. The metaphor does not require an explicit, balanced equation of equals like the simile because the formula of tenor and vehicle creates a new relationship or new identity unlike the simile, which by its very syntactical structure, requires a balance of explicit ratios.[18] By using metaphor, Bradstreet has more agility to identify intangible or hidden characteristics of her relationships with her husband and the order or disorder she experiences during his absence. Unlike the doctrines, which interpreted her role in God's plan, the figures of speech interpret her husband's role, God's position and the predetermined outcome,

and her role in life. Metaphor best examines the complex relationship between husband and wife and predestination. Unlike in personification and simile, the use of metaphor requires a transference. The transference results in an image, that is not expressible, coming into focus through the creation of the second object. For example, Bradstreet uses the sun's warmth as a metaphor for the sexual passion she and her husband share in "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment." Unlike the restricted equation of the simile, which indigenously requires a balance, the metaphor generates an image beyond the two-part equation. It can divide and divide again to structure a metaphor with multiple layers (producing metaphor upon metaphor), or a metaphor that is linear (growing in intensity), or a cyclical metaphor (cycling the first metaphor to the end). Bradstreet uses metaphor in the poems to her husband only at the most intense moments and with the most intense expressions of love and anger; they are linear metaphors because the zeal of emotion, be it passion or anger, increases as the poet moves from personification to simile to metaphor. Metaphor, simile, and personification create a natural avenue for Bradstreet, as a Puritan, to respond to the emotional disorder she encounters.

Bradstreet and the Puritan Acceptance of Figurative Language

Figurative language appealed to the Calvinist Bradstreet and to her Puritan society for several reasons: it imitated the Old Testament and therefore God; it imposed order on nature and therefore discovered nature; and it clarified Truth or God's will. Kenneth Silverman, in the introduction to Colonial American Poetry, maintains that "[t]he Puritan thought of poetry as a superior form of discourse mainly because of its importance in the Old Testament" (32). Bradstreet, being a Puritan, believed both the Old and New Testaments, with their historical accounts, love stories, poetry, and doctrine, were directly from God and simply penned by man. Because the Bible was the revealed word of God, to imitate its style was beyond reproach.[19]

Figurative language was not only approved because it was used in the Bible but also because it adhered to the Puritan's Ramist logic system.[20] The very essence of the Ramist system was the very essence of figurative language; "logic simply distinguished entities and then joined them together; the function of thinking is to discern and dispose because the equation was evident and waiting to be understood and detected" (Miller 134). For the New England Puritan, the Ramus' system was the intellectual framework of

interpreting God's will. "What Ramus had called 'invention'--process of beginning with a concept and then looking for evidence in Scripture and in everyday events--was, for their purposes, the formidable intellectual weapon of the Puritan" (Shucard 5). Bradstreet's poems indigenously reflect the logic God had created in the balanced universe. Her use of natural images, such as the sun, earth, and sea, illustrates her awareness of nature's order. She uses these images in seeking a personal order to her chaotic emotions. Puritans believed that figurative language helped humans discover the order of God's world. For example, simile and metaphor give order to the world because indigenously simile and metaphor illustrate coherence or ordering. The Puritans observed the world as an equation; every being, place, and idea in the world logically conformed to God's ordered plan. For Bradstreet, the metaphor links objects into relations and links relations to one another reflecting God's mysterious creation and its power, as in "Another" where the metaphor of the Sun knows Simon's actions because the orb compasses the world. Because the Sun sees Simon, it symbolizes God's omniscience and testifies that the knowledge of the past, present, and future is simply a natural phenomenon for God, who has created the whole universe.

Not only does figurative language imitate God's manner and impose order, it also imposes on the poet a sense of duty to discover the Truth or God's will. For example, metaphors, based upon observations of the world, for the Puritans were established upon accepted principles or Truths that God had created and man simply discovered. The metaphor as well as other devices of figurative language worked into texts as keys to discover God's desire.[21] So much like the use of doctrines, for Bradstreet, the use of figurative language was instinctive and not in opposition to her religious background.

Bradstreet's Poetic Figures

Bradstreet's use of personification, simile, and metaphor in her private poems about her husband illustrates the complex and deep relationship that existed between Anne and Simon and Anne and her God. The explication of "To My Dear And Loving Husband," "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," "Another," and "Another" or "As loving hind" illustrates the depth of Bradstreet's love for her husband and her frustration with God's predetermined plan: it took Simon away on colonial business. For Bradstreet, the Puritan concept of loving one's spouse and loving God was made dramatically clear; doctrinally, Bradstreet's love for her family

should be less intense than her love for God. However, the wife was supposed to show intense love for her spouse because, as Daly observes, "during her life that love was . . . part of the evidence of her election" (104). So to outwardly illustrate one's love for one's spouse was one more avenue to prove one's position as elect. Edmund S. Morgan also points out that

> the Puritan ministers saw spousal love not as only a sign of election but a sign of obedience to God's law. Love was a duty imposed by God on all married couples. It was a solemn obligation that resulted directly from the marriage contract. If husband and wife failed to love each other above all the world, they not only wronged each other, they disobeyed God. (47)

Yet, Bradstreet's poems create a spousal relationship that exceeds the required doctrinal love to prove election; Bradstreet's use of figurative language creates a climate of not only controlled passion and admiration for a spouse but of subservience, raw sexuality, uncontrolled anger, frustration, unwilling apologies, and tender passion. Through the use of the poetic devices of personification, simile, and metaphor, Bradstreet reveals, in her poems to her husband, varying degrees of passion and frustration.

Of the four poems addressed to her husband, commonly labeled "Marriage Poems" by Bradstreet scholars, Bradstreet's declarative love poem, "To My Dear And Loving Husband," lacks any use of personification and metaphor. The poet uses the equation of the simile. It is not a *true* simile because the key words *like* or *as* are not used, but the allusion is not simply a comparison because the images of riches in the East and the river are not of the same genus. Perhaps the poem lacks the stronger more complex figurative devices because the poet in "To My Dear And Loving Husband" simply defines the state of love between Bradstreet and her husband, defines God's will, and illustrates her submissive nature to the situation she cannot control. The poem is not calling for reconciliation between husband and wife or desiring a sense of order. There is not a reference to the distance or disharmony that appears in the other marriage poems. Also, Bradstreet addresses the doctrinal issue of the Perseverance of the Saints in the last lines, and, throughout her private poems, doctrinal issues are never masked by figurative speech; this poem is not an exception. At the end of the poem, she describes her relationship with her God. She is one of His chosen people. The poem reflects controlled affections, and the use of simile illustrates this sense of control.

The poem opens with the poet's confident assertion in Simon's love and the use of a simile to illustrate the intensity of that love. In the first two lines, Bradstreet's persona addresses Simon directly with these strong words: "If ever two were one, then surely we. / If ever man were loved by wife, then thee" (1-2). She expresses her passion through the biblical scenario reflecting the words "flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone." Then the poet's persona challenges women to examine their own emotional status with their husbands and compare them to her love and happiness. Bradstreet focuses attention on marital relationships with a simile. The poem's simile represents a key that unlocks for the poet the full wealth of her love and devotion for Simon and creates a pause in the poem that forces the reader to focus on the passion. The simile begins in lines 5-8, "I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold / Or all the riches that the East doth hold." Bradstreet cherishes her husband's love not only above all earthly treasure ("mines of gold") but all the social, cultural, and intellectual riches of the East. By following the doctrinally accepted love for the Puritan, Bradstreet elevates her spouse above earthly possessions. The poet then intensifies the claim of her love by proclaiming the power of their marital relationship, "My love is such that rivers cannot quench, / Nor ought but love from thee, give recompense" (6-7).

The only satisfaction she finds is through love's ability to provide "recompense" or provide payment for the damage or loss she suffers when Simon travels. The poem's figurative devices are expressed in a faster tempo than the opening and closing lines, and even though they are grandiose comparisons with gold mines and Eastern riches, Bradstreet controls the simile by following the romantic ones with the earthy, natural image of a river and the simple reward her husband's love gives her. From line 1 to 9, Bradstreet writes of human love and directly addresses Simon, directly challenges other women, and directly compares her love to riches.

Abruptly in line 10, the tone of confidence subsides and the poet, without figurative language, discloses her persona's subservience to God.

> Thy love is such I can no way repay,
> The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
> Then while we live, in love let's so persevere
> That when we live no more, we may live ever. (10-13)

In lines 10 and 11, Bradstreet's humble tone indicates that she addresses God and not just Simon. She writes of the futility of even imagining she could pay God back in return for the love she and Simon share. She prays that the heavens bestow upon Simon recompense in a variety of forms such as

political wisdom, financial security, spousal devotion, and safety in travel. After the direct request to God, Brädstreet's persona reasons that she and Simon must persist or remain constant to the purpose of their love regardless of obstacles. If their love remains intact on earth, when they die they will "live ever." Because of the love they shared in obedience to God's law, they will be elected to live for all times in Heaven with the Saints. "Then while we live, in love let's so persevere / That when we live no more, we may live ever" (12-13). Daly observes that the last two lines "clearly express the hope that, by persevering in their love in [a] characteristically Puritan way, by loving each other as God has commanded them but not letting an immoderate love of the creature idolatrously supersede their love of God, they will live forever in heaven" (105-06). The poet drops the garnished language when addressing God. So, not only does Bradstreet's use of figurative language indicate her passion and in this poem, the lack of it indicates a shift in audience from man to God. In this declarative poem, Bradstreet creates two controlled, orderly similes to address her husband and define her love for him.

Unlike "To My Dear And Loving Husband," Bradstreet's poem "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment" begins and ends in a tone of intense unrest. It desperately and passionately cries for the

unification of husband and wife, for the expression of sexuality, uncontrolled anger, and of frustration. Encased between the four-line introduction and four-line conclusion of the poem is the appearance of personification, simile, and metaphor. These devices appear not merely to show the poet's dexterity with poetic conventions, but to operate as keys to reflect the growing intensity of the tension she expresses in the racy declaration of her passion and her feeling of chaos and disorder. White argues that the lines reflect Bradstreet's affection "without a hint of bitterness or reproach" (203); White does not recognize the poet's intense passion and anger. The lines reflect both bitterness and anger with her husband. Unlike the less fervent poem "To My Dear And Loving Husband," Bradstreet's move in the poem from the obvious device of personification to the explicit forms of simile to the complex form of metaphor reflects the growing zeal of her desire for her husband. The poet's use of personification, simile, and metaphor in the poem illustrates the persona's growth from rational behavior to tormented passion in an attempt to solicit harmony from her chaotic emotions.

In the opening and closure of the poem, her persona speaks directly to her husband as a spouse and lover. She defines him as not only her "head," "heart," "eyes," and "life," but more; he is even her "joy," and all her

pleasure and happiness derive from him. He embodies her "magazine of earthly store" (2). The poet defines their relationship, as in line one of "To My Dear and Loving Husband," as "If two be one, as surely thou and I" and ponders helplessly *why* if they be "one" Simon can still remain in London or Boston while she resides hundreds of miles away in Ipswich. This remains the insurmountable question throughout the poem.

She concludes the poem in the same tone of doubt but with a hint of impatient anger and without the sense of resolution as found in "To My Dear And Loving Husband" and "As loving hind." Bradstreet states, with finality, that once Simon arrives home he will not leave again "Till nature's sad decree shall call [him] hence" (25). The only force that will motivate Simon to leave Anne again is "death" itself. This dogmatic tone also appears in the last two lines of the poem which do not offer closure to the intense passion Bradstreet feels, but instead, they reflect the intensification of her desire by paraphrasing the familiar line from the Bible: "Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone" (25). Bradstreet accentuates the importance and necessity of Simon's physical presence in New England because the line represents the importance of the unified family as in the relationship of Laban and Jacob, Israel and King David, and Christ and his disciples. She not only wants Simon to recall her

warmth and love mentally on his travels away from home but to remember her physically (touch, kiss, and embrace) and yearn for the day he returns to his wife and home. The poem urgently cries for union. She emphasizes the logic behind their natural closeness and the irrationality behind their separation. The poet points out the unnaturalness of the circumstantial distance by restating that she lies in Ipswich or Andover while he resides in London or Boston. The concluding four words ("yet both but one") reflect the persona's last effort to convince herself and her husband that even though separated they still are joined as "one."

Interposed between these two declarations of oneness and the exclamation of the perverseness of their separation is the persona's use of figurative language to create the rapid growth of Bradstreet's intense passion for her husband. The use of personification, simile, and metaphor represents the genesis of this tension within the poem and the chaotic emotion of unrest and disorder. In lines 5-6, Bradstreet explains the vast distance between London or Boston and Ipswich or Andover by personifying the distance through the use of the severed body parts of the head and the heart. The head and the heart are the first two nouns she uses in the first line of the poem; the repetitive use of the anatomical terms reflects the importance and intensity of

their love; their love is perceived by both the intellect and the emotions, hence the head and the heart. "So many steps, head from the heart to sever, / If but a neck, soon should we be together." If the separation of this couple's intense love is merely marked or measured by the steps between the head and the heart (a neck length), then Anne and Simon should soon be joined. Unfortunately, the physical distance between them appears much greater and cannot be so easily surmounted. The tone of grief in these lines suggests the passionate undertone that progressively gains momentum in the next two lines.

After using personification in describing the great distance between London or Boston and Ipswich or Andover, Bradstreet uses a simile. She writes "I, like the Earth this season, mourn in black" (7). She compares her qualities with those of the Earth and its relationship to the sun; with the simile, she manages to keep the sun's quality and her own quality separate. Her husband, however, is not merely compared to the Sun but, through the use of a metaphor, actually becomes the sun--"My Sun is gone so far in's zodiac" (8) because he is not simply likened to the orb by the equation of *like* or *as*.

The difference between the use of a simile and a metaphor affords Bradstreet the ability to develop tension abruptly within these two lines, to emphasize her husband and de-emphasize herself, and to control the poem. Bradstreet's personality maintains a remoteness from the qualities of the Earth because she compares herself to it and does not become it by using a simile which distinguishes itself by using *like* or *as* and by its explicit level of significance. The simile joins two images or ideas but does not compose or create a new facet of meaning; therefore, the poet maintains the distinction between herself and the Earth. Unlike the simile, Bradstreet knew a metaphor forms a new association or meaning when it joins two images or ideas. As a metaphor, the Sun develops into a synonym for Simon. By using both a simile and a metaphor within two lines in close proximity, Bradstreet creates a type of tension in the poem which reflects the heightened sense of emotional tension in the text. In line 7, Bradstreet associates herself with the Earth by the key word "like," but in line 8, the syntactical cues disappear, and the poet abruptly transcends the poetic context to formulate Simon and the Sun into a new association. The new association provides a variety of metaphorical connections. Simon, metaphorically, warms the Earth, makes

things grow, and gives life but, more importantly, kindles the flame of passion in Bradstreet.

The poet, by comparing herself to the mournful Earth and transposing Simon's characteristics to those of the Sun,[22] de-emphasizes herself. She elevates and emphasizes her husband's role in their union by focusing on him as synonymous with the sun and its qualities. He and the orb share the same abilities and become a new concept beyond a comparison, and, therefore, he plays a more complex role within the poem. Her husband no longer merely manifests himself as her "eyes," "head," and "heart," but as a manifestation of the Sun, he develops into a crucial element to the cosmos. He provides the very basis for her survival. Simon's journey does not simply take him to London or Boston, but takes him to the far reaches of the other side of the world ("zodiac") in a cosmic cycle beyond his or Bradstreet's influence. Bradstreet's persona realizes that she must endure the weak and subservient role because she (like the Earth's inability to control the Sun) physically lacks the power to control the political world in which Simon must participate.

Even though Simon figuratively dominates the poem, Bradstreet's persona maintains control of the poem because she explains how the Sun

personally affects her not only as a representative of the Earth, but as a woman as well.

> Whom whilst I 'joyed, nor storms, nor frost I felt,
> His warmth such frigid colds did cause to melt.
> My chilled limbs now numbed lie forlorn;
> Return, return, sweet Sol, from Capricorn; (9-12)

Comparing herself to the Earth through a simile and not transferring herself metaphorically into the Earth enables her to vacillate freely between the image of the Earth and the image of a lonesome wife without losing the direction of the poem. When the Sun warms her, she escapes the hazards of "storms," "frost," and "frigid" cold (9-10). In the adjacent lines 11-12, she directly refers to her body as "chilled limbs now numbed lie forlorn" because her Sun disappears. The persona cries out as a wife and lover, and yet she maintains her connection with the Earth by begging the Sun to return from the tropic of Capricorn.

Bradstreet follows the use of the simile with another metaphor. In lines 13-16, the intensity of the tone increases because she no longer merely compares herself to the Earth, but she then becomes the Earth in the form of a metaphor.

In this dead time, alas, what can I more

Than view those fruits which through thy heat I bore?

Which sweet contentment yield me for a space,

True living pictures of their father's face. (13-16)

Without the life-sustaining glow of the Sun, she no longer simply faces a minor degree of physical discomfort but physical and psychological death. She lives in a "dead time" (13). The poet cannot produce life (children) without the warmth of the Sun to nurture her soil. Her sexuality and passion remain dormant without her husband. The poet reflects upon the interaction between the Earth and the Sun and the end result of their union which bears fruit. The persona consoles herself and looks to "those fruits which through [the Sun's] heat [she] bore" (14), and as Bradstreet gazes at her children, she sees "their father's face" (16).

The next five lines complete the developing tension because of the use of a climatic structural metaphor:

Oh strange effect! now thou art southward gone,

I weary grow the tedious day so long;

But when thou northward to me shalt return,

I wish my Sun may never set, but burn

Within the Cancer of my glowing breast,

The welcome house of him my dearest guest. (17-22)

The metaphorical images of Bradstreet as the Earth and Simon as the Sun work simultaneously to create a structural metaphor. The poem no longer emphasizes the utilitarian relationship between the Sun and Earth which results in warmth and growth (their children), but emphasizes the cosmic dependency between the Sun and the Earth as symbolically illustrating the passionate relationship of Anne and Simon. The Earth depends on the Sun for life, and the Sun depends on the Earth to reflect and nurture its warmth. The persona cries, "O strange effect! now thou art southward gone" (17), and fears, for the first time, the end result of his southward journey--the "tedious" days and their length. Yet when the Sun comes "northward" and back to her side of the Earth, all will be warm and reconciled. Bradstreet's persona passionately claims, "I wish my Sun may never set, but burn / Within the Cancer of my glowing breast" (20-21). The explosive use of the structural metaphor incorporating the relationship of the Earth and Sun (Anne and Simon) comes to a climatic proclamation in these two lines. The Sun not only returns to the Earth to warm it but to burn in the Earth's hemisphere and "glowing breast" (21). The Earth passionately welcomes the Sun, her

"dearest guest" (22). Even though the Earth invites the Sun into its rightful realm, their relationship cannot be consummated. The structural metaphor hangs suspended at the end of the poem because the resolution or consummation of the relationship cannot be apprehended, but it can only be explored by the tormented, frustrated poet. Bradstreet's heightened ecstasy can be released only when Simon returns to New England and restores her to a sense of order: her rightful place in God's predestined plan.

Bradstreet illustrates, not just a definition of the love between husband and wife as in "To My Dear And Loving Husband," but the growing intensity of her passionate unrest, her chaotic world, her anger, and her frustration through the use of personification, simile, and metaphor in "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment." By explaining the physical distance between her and her husband in personified terms (the head and the heart), the poet develops an underlying current of unfulfilled sexual desire. She creates a more explicit level of passion when she compares herself to the Earth in the form of simile. By merely comparing herself to the Earth and defining Simon as the majestic Sun, she strategically elevates the importance of Simon. The intensity increases when she metaphorically becomes equal to Simon (Sun) as the Earth. Once both of them are represented in metaphors,

the union of the Earth and Sun's relationship in the form of a structural metaphor symbolizes the passion Anne and Simon have for each other and the desire to be united. Only when they are physically united can they hope for harmony. Bradstreet creatively and skillfully magnifies her and Simon's love by using the devices of personification, simile, and metaphor.

Like in "To My Dear And Loving Husband" and "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," in "Another" Bradstreet uses figurative language to examine those intense emotions shared in intimacy and to emphasize the horrific disharmony emotions cause for the individual. In order to reconcile herself to the torment of separation, she risks elevating Simon to the status of God. Realizing her impertinence, the poem abruptly drops the analogy and apologizes. Her use of personification and metaphor reflects her unwillingness to apologize for her desire for Simon and the tender expression of their mutual passion. The image of the Sun, as in "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," is used again. In "Another," it is clear when the image of the Sun and the pronoun "He" refer to the actual Sun, Simon, or God, but Rosenmeier argues that "the reader is not sure at all points to whom the pronoun 'he' refers, to her husband, to Christ, or to Phoebus" (125). Even though Bradstreet's control is not as tight

in this poem as in "The Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," the useful pattern Bradstreet follows in it with the use of personification and metaphor, creates a clearer interpretation of "He" and provides a sense of order for her.

Unlike in "To Her Dear And Loving Husband," "Another" portrays a wife's grief at the absence of her husband and a believer's need to address her God. As in "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," Bradstreet and Simon, separated by miles, have not seen each other for months. Bradstreet writes both "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment" and "Another" with an intensity that increases with each verse to reflect the growing frustration, anxiety, and disorder that physical separation in a marriage causes.

Bradstreet, in the poem, embodies the Sun with the human qualities of a listener and courier. The poem opens in the voice of a desperate and confused persona directly addressing the Sun.

> Phoebus make haste, the day's too long, be gone,
> The silent night's the fittest time for moan;
> But stay this once, unto my suit give ear,
> And tell my griefs in either hemisphere.

(And if the whirling of thy wheels don't drown'd)
The woeful accents of my doleful sound,
If in thy swift carrier thou canst make stay,
I crave this boon, this errand by the way,
Commend me to the man more loved than life,
Show him the sorrows of his widowed wife;
My dumpish thoughts, my groans, my brakish tears
My sobs, my longing hopes, my doubting fears,
And if he love, how can he there abide?
My interest's more than all the world beside. (1-14)

Bradstreet personifies the Sun as a sympathetic listener and messenger by indicating, through lines 1-14, that she wants Phoebus to set in its hemisphere because the darkness of night is more befitting the atmosphere to grieve. And yet she also wants an exception made. The persona employs Phoebus to stay to hear her entreaty and be the messenger of her tale. She wants her plea heard in Old and New England. The poet labels the Sun's errand for her a "blessing" if the Sun would deliver her letter. The Sun is personified because the poet empowers it with the will to control day and night, the sensitivity to sympathize with her grief, insightful listening skills to hear her pleas, and

verbal skills to announce her moans and complaints to her husband. The message grows from a request to an anxious plea:

> Commend me to the man more loved than life,
> Show Him the sorrows of his widowed wife;
> My dumpish thoughts, my groans, my brakish tears
> My sobs, my longing hopes, my doubting fears." (9-12)

As in "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," after a grief-stricken entreaty, Bradstreet directly questions her husband's motives in remaining away from her if he loves her (13). She concludes her plea to the Sun with the statement explaining she loves her husband above the world. An orthodox Puritan would recognize the poet's description as one generated from an elected soul. The Puritan elevated the spouse above all the *things* in the world.

The personification of the Sun ends, and in lines 15-20, Bradstreet ceases to use figurative language. She drops the poetic conventions, as consistent in the marriage poems, when she addresses the other "He." God, throughout Bradstreet's poetry, is never personified because giving God human qualities and therefore human weaknesses would be blasphemous to a Puritan. God is only personified through His own established traits as

reflected in Scripture. Bradstreet discontinues the personification of the Sun, and she turns to phrasing reminiscent of Scripture when speaking of the omniscient God, to plea for Simon's return. Because the phrasing sharply parallels Scripture, Bradstreet's "He" refers to God and not Simon or the Sun.

> He that can tell the stars or ocean sand,
> Or all the grass that in the meads do stand,
> The leaves in th' woods, the hail, or drops of rain,
> Or in a corn-field number every grain,
> Or every mote that in the sunshine hops,
> May count my sighs, and number all my drops.

The lines illustrate God's innate power to know the most minuscule events of creation, and therefore the lines reflect Bradstreet's security in God's sympathetic ear to hear her groans.[23]

After the biblical reprieve, Bradstreet personifies the Sun again not only as a messenger but as a lover who delivers passionate kisses and embraces.

> Tell him the countless steps that thou dost trace,
> That once a day thy spouse thou may'st embrace;
> And when thou canst not treat by loving mouth,

The rays afar salute her from the south. (21-24)

The poet intensifies her entreaty by employing personification again and by introducing the metaphor of her husband as God. As if to say simply personifying the Sun as a messenger is not enough, the poet transforms her husband into the Sun and then the Almighty Himself in lines 25-36.

But for one month I see no day (poor soul)
Like those far situate under the pole,
Which day by day long wait for thy arise,
O how they joy when thou dost light the skies.
O Phoebus, hadst thou but thus long from thine
Restrained the beams of thy beloved shine,
At thy return, if so thou could'st or durst,
Behold a Chaos blacker then the first.
Tell him here's worse than a confused matter,
His little world's a fathom under water.
Nought but the fervor of his ardent beams
Hath power to dry the torrent of these streams.

Metaphorically, her husband no longer plays the passive role of a listener; he no longer hears the Sun's urgent plea, as a personified messenger. The

husband assumes the active role of a creator involved in creating the poet's world. Bradstreet's passionate argument intensifies as the metaphor transfers Simon into the Old Testament God. Her husband evolves and comes into focus as the Creator who brought light out of Chaos, who dried up the water after the "torrent" flood, and who acts as savior of her world. In no other private poem does Bradstreet allow a human to presume the role of God, even metaphorically. Abruptly, as if the poet knows she has overstepped the boundaries of a Puritan's love for a spouse, she offers an apology. The apology is *so* familiar in her poems, when she senses she has pursued a point or emotion too far for social acceptance and has strained the limits of figurative language.

> Tell him I would say more, but cannot well,
> Oppressed minds abruptest tales do tell.
> Now post with double speed, mark what I say,
> By all our loves conjure him not to stay. (37-40)

She realizes that even though she feels the emotional urge to continue the analogy, theologically she knows she must stop. The poem's closure focuses back on the Sun and invites it to make haste as the personified messenger. In "Another" the use of figurative language releases the poet to examine the sun,

God, and her husband in different roles. Bradstreet uses personification and metaphor to explore the various routes or possibilities of expressing her frustration with the world and its predestined order, her emotions, her frustrations with her husband's work, and her limited domestic sphere that comprised for the Puritan wife the inactivity of simply waiting.

In "Another" or "As loving hind,"[24] Bradstreet again illustrates her attempt to find order and express emotions through the use of figurative language. Labeled by Stanford as "a skillful metaphysical love poem" (Emerson, Major 47), "As loving hind" is a prime example of the poet's creative use of simile and metaphor. Bradstreet scholars define differently the three main images used in the poem as "images," "metaphors," and "similes."[25] In actuality, the images of the hind, dove, and mullet begin as similes and then evolve into metaphors which have the agility to express concrete and abstract concepts in fresh relationships. Unlike the three previous poems, this one is consistently controlled throughout by three images and a sustained pattern of simile and metaphor. Each image is examined in a simile, then converted to a metaphor, then concluded with a comforting resolution. Personification is not used nor is there a reference or apology to God. Because there is not an address to God, the flow of the

poem is never interrupted as in "Another," so the simile and metaphor naturally dominate the poem in a controlled pattern which magnifies the controlled resolution at the poem's end.

The first four lines describe the actual animal and its own reactions, and the following four lines transfer the animal into the persona's personal reaction, thus creating a simile and metaphor pattern. For example, the hind acts as a simile for the poet's distressed persona. The poet assumes that the listener knows the first part of the simile's ratio because she uses "As" in the opening line.

> As loving hind that (hartless) wants her deer,
> Scuds through the woods and fern with hark'ning ear,
> Perplext, in every bush and nook doth pry,
> Her dearest deer, might answer ear or eye; (1-4)

The hind, with its characteristic speed, agility, acute hearing and eyesight, becomes a metaphor for Bradstreet's "anxious soul." The deer in its natural state, as described in lines 1-4, appears anxious, scared, lost, and forsaken. The poet creates a new mental association between the deer and her soul, by not simply an equation of the simile, but by extracting from the characteristics of the deer the very essence of its energy which defines the abstract concept

of the vulnerable, tormented soul. The soul waits "with doubts, and hopes, and failing eye," (6) for Simon's return.

Swiftly, the poet moves into the second simile of the analogy of the forlorn dove, and the poet again assumes the reader knows the first part of the equation. The poet equates herself with a "pensive dove," who cannot coo but groans in agony because of the "absence of her love and loving mate" (10). The simile equation converts into a metaphor when the image of the dove becomes the abstract concept of Bradstreet's own painful attempt to beckon Simon back home. The lines themselves sound pitiful and painful, yet unlike the dove, she knows Simon will eventually return safely.

> Ev'n thus do I, with many a deep sad groan,
> Bewail my turtle true, who now is gone,
> His presence and his safe return still woos,
> With thousand doleful sighs and mournful coos. (13-16)

The metaphor creates, out of the simile, a new image of a desperate, sickened woman of grief who has but one hope for survival--the safe return of her husband.

The third simile begins with "Or" and creates an analogy between the mullet and Bradstreet. The intensity increases from the simile of the deer as

soul, to the dove as grief, and then to the mullet as sacrifice. Stanford explains the myth behind the mullet: "according to legend, the mullet, when her mate is lost, casts herself on the shore" (Emerson, Major 46). Once on the shore, she slowly dies: a fate more acceptable than living without her mate. In the poem, the poet sacrifices herself and chooses death rather than life without her mate; Bradstreet also points out that the "captive husband" witnesses the unselfish sacrifice of his mate. The simile becomes a metaphor when the image of the fish transforms into the image of the wayward soul without guidance and without hope of ever seeing its mate. They are kept apart by an insurmountable force.

> Mine being gone, I lead a joyless life,
> I have a loving peer, yet seem no wife;
> But worst of all, to him can't steer my course,
> I here, he there, alas, both kept by force. (21-24)

The soul loses all sense of direction and cannot navigate the course of life without the mate.

Abruptly, the simile and metaphor eight-line pattern is dropped and the poet, not just her soul, grief, or sacrificing image, dramatically becomes the metaphor herself. She becomes the metaphoric possibility of all three animals

who yearn for the very substance of life which, in each case, is the return of the mate. "Unto thy hind, thy mullet, and thy dove, / Who neither joys in pasture, house, nor streams, / The substance gone, O me, these are but dreams" (25-28). Bradstreet now sees the return of Simon as a mere fantasy or dream. The mounting intensity and climatic plea suddenly soften with a closing simile. And unlike the two most intense poems to her husband, "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment" and "Another" which end with pleas of return, "As loving hind" closes with a salutation from the poet that announces her love.

> And like two turtles roost within one house,
>
> And like the mullets in one river glide,
>
> Let's still remain but one, till death divide.
>
> Thy loving love and dearest dear,
>
> At home, abroad, and everywhere.

The poet's persona and the love for her husband are no longer a metaphor but become comparisons to the animals. She deflates the pressure built up in the pattern of simile and metaphor--she is resolved. The animals return to nature's cycle, for each animal, like Bradstreet, returns to her mate's side, and they begin anew. Bradstreet's use of figurative language not only shows

her dexterity but her sense of control of the poetic word in "As loving hind." In this case, the poet accepts their separation according to God's predetermined plan.

In "To My Dear And Loving Husband," "To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," "Another," and "As loving hind," Bradstreet's ability to use the poetical patterns of personification, simile, and metaphor illustrate her diverse emotions, control of poetic conventions, and her struggle with her world and God's predestined plan for her--at times resolved and at times unresolved. Bradstreet was aware of the relationship of figurative language to link known things with unknown things. She chooses to use personification, simile, and metaphor to discuss the intangible subjects of love, passion, anger, and loneliness in the poems on her husband because they provide a resemblance of order or a forum of structure in which to discuss uncontrollable feelings. Bradstreet's relies heavily on her husband as reflected in "Meditation 25": "An aching head requires a soft pillow, and a drooping heart a strong support." He is her guide, friend, and lover. The uncontrollable feelings created by Simon's absence cause the poet's world to be chaotic and elusive; figurative language, much like the Calvinist doctrines

and irony, allows her to evaluate her world and seek peace or understanding from the exploration.

CHAPTER IV

BRADSTREET'S APPLICATION OF SOCRATIC AND CIRCUITOUS IRONY: PROTECTION FROM "BRIARS AND THORNS" AND THERAPY AND ORDER FOR THE FLESH

Bradstreet not only uses her theological belief system and figurative language creatively as poetic devices to understand and evaluate her world; she also uses the rhetorical strategy of irony to relieve the burdensome perplexities of her environment. When Bradstreet faces a sinful world of both physical and spiritual adversities, her Calvinistic dogma unlocks a sense of security and comfort in God's plan. The figurative language in her marriage poems on Simon focuses on exploring her passion, anger, and futile acceptance of God's plan. Her irony provides insight into the inner workings of her style and rescues her emotionally from a male-dominated society and the hardships she feels God condemns her to struggle through in order to understand His plan: a plan that is adherent in the predestined, stable environment God controls. Unlike the use of dogma and figurative language, which seeks to *find* the order in God's created universe, irony allows Bradstreet's persona to *question* not only her community's order but God's predestined order and her role in it.

Bradstreet's Awareness of Irony

Bradstreet's work, based on her classical education under her father's guidance, reveals her awareness of the basis of irony. Irony derives from the Greek character in comedy called the "eiron" who acts as a "dissembler." He "characteristically spoke in understatement and deliberately pretended to be less intelligent than he was," yet inevitably was victorious over the "alazon" or the "self-deceiving braggart" (Abrams 89). The roots of irony lie in the teachings of Socrates. His personality and influence are basically synonymous with Greek irony.[26] By the seventeenth century, the strategy of irony, referred to as Socratic irony, was defined as a type of disguise to feign the true nature of a thing or to express the opposite of the intended, the implication being either condemnation, contempt or both (irony of indirection). The seventeenth-century reading public's awareness of the rhetorical technique of irony increased, with the term being adopted in the late sixteenth century. Its use at this time was exclusive to the more educated and was by no "means a part of popular speech or even of general literary discourse" (Knox 24). The fact that Bradstreet uses this relatively new technique reflects not only her ingenuity, but also her diverse reading

background. Her writings suggest the influence of such vastly diverse authors as Raleigh, Sidney, Du Bartas, Spenser, Crooke, Speed, Homer, Aristotle, Xenophon, Virgil, and Plutarch.[27] Though not all of these authors employed irony, their awareness of Socrates and the potential influence of the classical writers on their work could have indirectly enlightened Bradstreet to the use of the strategy. The poetic Puritan pioneer employs irony, in both of its forms, throughout the inner structure of her works ("The Prologue," the elegy on Sidney, the elegies on her grandchildren, the salvation of her husband from a fever, her son Samuel's departure and return from England, the destruction of her home, and her last poem "As Weary Pilgrim"). The Puritan poet's poems reflect her attraction to this particular mode of expression because of four basic factors. Through the explication of nine poems, Bradstreet's use of irony evolves from addressing a human audience to a divine one. Four factors contribute to her discrete expressions of irony: the pressure of a male-dominated audience; the lack of confidence in her skill and resultant vulnerability; the socially-imposed limitations on the Puritan woman's role; and the struggle between the flesh (disorder) and the spirit (order).

Bradstreet's Response to the Male Audience, the Resultant Vulnerability, and the Gender Role

According to Wendy Martin, the first edition of Bradstreet's work shows that she felt under pressure to write in a "formulaic" style, "divorced from her personal observations and feelings" (American 15). Bradstreet's need to prove her ability to write in the same style as her male predecessors and contemporaries was the accepted tradition. Because of this pressure to conform or imitate male writers' styles and subject matter, her form appears stilted and artificial in the public poems. In order to establish her talent and give it credence, she had not only to prove her ability but had to persuade her critics of it. In her works, she convinces them by adequately imitating their style. She, nonetheless, maintains her own voice by employing irony in two of the public poems ("The Prologue" and "An Elegy Upon Sir Philip Sidney") addressed to men. Bradstreet, once accepted through the publication of The Tenth Muse, increases her use of irony throughout her private poems.

Bradstreet also uses irony in the public poems because as an amateurish author, her confidence was in a state of infancy. Her society did not approve of "individual autonomy and . . . valued poetry to the extent that

it praised God" (Martin, Shakespeare 31). Bradstreet knew her society's stigma against idle verse, for she was not only a wife and daughter of a Puritan but a professing Puritan herself. She understood the safest and most lucrative way to reveal her artistic ability was to conform to the pattern of the status quo. But as she gained experience, she depended less on established poets and critics and relied more on her perceptions. The publication of The Tenth Muse helped establish Bradstreet's confidence, and her effective use of irony in her personal poems, especially in the elegy on her grandchild Simon and the poem on Samuel's journey, reflects this matured confidence. Irony is more dominant in the private poems than in the public because of her liberation from the confines of imitating tradition. However, within this new state of freedom from the confines of imitation into the use of her own thoughts and feelings, her poems still reveal the sense of struggle she expresses in "The Prologue" between the superiority of her society and her inferiority within its structure. Irony seems to help her eliminate the vulnerability she perhaps felt from living in the shadows of both a male-dominated society and a patriarchal-structured religion. Irony opens an avenue to freedom, and she speaks out against both patriarchies. By using irony, Bradstreet builds in a safety mechanism or protection from her critics

because irony, by its very nature, instructs the audience to "recognize that the point of view is false and that the author is not accepting but attacking" (Knox 146-47). In fact, Bradstreet's poetry does not create an artistic escape from life and the pressures of the Puritan society and environment, but a comforting invitation to evaluate productively and respond accurately to life's trials and the chaos hardships create. When she uses irony, her poetic expressions reveal animated and memorable conflicts associated with both her male and divine audience.

The limited field of poetic material that was available to Bradstreet, beyond the imitation of male models, includes the realm of domestic and the religious. Poetry allows her to expand her limited world, and she gains strength by her ability to express doubt and apprehension in response to domestic challenges. By using irony, her works express the frustrations she feels in dealing with the chaos of this earthly existence, and her attempts to come to some resolution and understanding of God's predestined plan. For example, in "As Weary Pilgrim" she discovers that relief from life's burdens comes only after death and not a moment before the "creed." God controls the universe, even the exact time of an individual's death. She skillfully maintains her proper role as a woman within the confines of the Puritan

structure, while examining the structure of God's predestined design through the use of irony in her verse. Her faith strengthens her spirit, but her poetic expressions of doubt, concern, and joy about this structure strengthen her flesh.

Bradstreet's Confrontation With Chaos and Order

Irony as a rhetorical strategy allows her to achieve a balance within the Puritan structure which is based on the tension between the earth and the predetermined plan of the heavenly kingdom. Like all Puritans, Bradstreet deals with the paradoxical nature of the Puritan belief system. Miller and Johnson observe that the Puritans were aware of the "fallibility of the spiritual, the necessity for living in a world of time and space according to the laws of that time and that place, with never once forgetting that the world will pass, be resolved back into nothingness" (287). The Puritan has to balance both living in the world and remaining a faithful follower of the predestined plan for the elect. The debate in "The Flesh and the Spirit" epitomizes her conflict between the "worldly wealth and vanity" (7) and the "higher sphere" (9). Harmony can only be attained through the spirit. The spirit's description of Heaven creates a perfect picture of order.

The city where I hope to dwell,

There's none on earth can parallel;

The stately walls both high and strong,

Are made of precious jasper stone;

The gates of pearl, both rich and clear,

And angels are for porters there;

. . . . . .

No candle there, nor yet torchlight,

For there shall be no darksome night.

From sickness and infirmity

For evermore they shall be free;

Nor withering age shall e'er come there,

But beauty shall be bright and clear; (86-91, 100-05)

There is no poverty and illness; everything is clean, orderly, and beautiful. The lines reflect a place far removed from the chaos of Bradstreet's earthly existence challenged by illness, fear, and the inevitable sentence of death. To exaggerate the differences between the two, Bradstreet employs irony to debate the issue of the depraved flesh and the disorder it causes and the heavenly spirit and the order it creates. "The central problem of the poetic debate in 'The Flesh and the Spirit' is that of unity" (Laughlin 16). It is this

pattern of tension to find unity that represents itself in Bradstreet's poetry and makes her work forcefully energetic: the struggle between chaos and order. The practice of irony affords Bradstreet the opportunity to explore the struggle and the resultant tension in her work much like figurative language and the doctrines do. However, in the ironic poems, no resolutions are successfully found, unlike the poems discussed in Chapter II and Chapter III of this study. In fact, the whole inevitably tense situation between flesh and spirit produces irony because the predicament of Bradstreet and mankind "is that in [her] present condition [she] is not released from natural necessities, and yet [she] is incapable of satisfying them without adding to the enormity of [her] sin" (Miller 42). She must live in a fallible world with a fallible sense of sin and yet avoid sin. In her use of irony, Bradstreet reveals her ability to maintain her own voice, to foster a construct of confidence, and to control her frustration between the polarized views of the flesh and the spirit. Because of her struggle with the flesh and spirit, the limits to the Puritan female's role, her vulnerability because of her insecurity, and her male-dominated audience, Bradstreet uses the rhetorical strategy of irony. She skillfully implements the rhetorical strategy in both her private and public poems.

Within the public poems, Socratic irony[28] implicitly appears. With all Socratic irony the audience anticipates a conflict or tension when the ironist expresses "self-depreciation" (Knox 100). Whether this self-depreciation is self-inflicted or not is debatable. The sexual discrimination[29] to which Bradstreet protests may be feigned; however, her response to it reflects her violent impatience with such a view. One poem which discusses the subject of discrimination is "The Prologue" which preceded her work on the history of the world. Though Stanford, in "The Prologue," sees Bradstreet's use of wit (Emerson, Major 57), it is not just wit at work but irony. The poem is in the form of a debate and ultimately illustrates the position she believes she has in God's orderly plan. The work is an argument which attempts "to articulate and reconcile opposition by emphasizing discrepancies while hinting at unity" (Eberwein 20). It begins with an apology (stanzas 1-4), followed by an attack (stanzas 5-6), and concludes with another apology. The first stanzas point out her inadequacies. Writing of "wars, of captains, and of kings" and such (3) should be left up to men and not for her "mean pen" (5). She reassures the male poets that she will not "dim their worth" (8). In the first verse, Bradstreet develops her thesis in the mode of Socratic irony; she postures and feigns the desire to learn from her male predecessors.

She seems to agree with the absurd conclusion that women cannot write, yet as the poem progresses she, as a woman and a poet, proves capable of writing effectively and persuasively. Bradstreet points out her inadequacies in the second stanza by comparing her lines to "Great Bartas' sugared lines" (10). She contends that she did not have the benefit of the Muses unlike Du Bartas, "But simple [she] according to [her] skill" (14). The intensity of the irony builds within stanza 3; she metaphorically represents her inadequate talents and the presupposition that women cannot write to a "schoolboy's tongue" (15) from whom we expect only elementary expressions. She blames her incompetence on her "foolish, broken, blemished Muse" (18), which nature gave her. In stanza 4, she explains that unlike Homer, who could purge himself through his art, she cannot alleviate her pain from "a weak or wounded brain" (26) because her poetic art is of insufficient strength.

With these four stanzas, she strongly effaces herself and her talents as weak, pathetic, and to be pitied by men; she apologizes in order to sway the audience to accept her lines favorably. However, in stanza 5, the level of Socratic irony turns into an attack strategically buried between apologies. Bradstreet's desire for acknowledgment conflicts with her anxiety over patriarchal disapproval; both forces collide in the fifth stanza:

I am obnoxious to each carping tongue

Who says my hand a needle better fits,

A poet's pen all scorn I should thus wrong,

For such despite they cast on female wits:

If what I do prove well, it won't advance,

They'll say it stol'n, or else it was by chance. (27-32)

After these terse lines of passionate protest, she shifts to the Greeks to soften the blow of criticism to her male audience. She explains that the Greeks gave credit to woman by embodying the creative power in the nine muses, but she concludes that eventually the Greeks' weakness for the female sex and "arts divine" (36) "will soon untie" (37). The misguided Greeks define divine inspiration from a paganistic view without the benefit of Puritan dogma; the male Puritan audience assumes the Greeks were but "fools and lie" (38) because the Puritans know that the divinity of the creative arts did not come from the Muses, of course, but from God.

She quickly dismisses the conflict between the Greeks and the Puritans by writing "Let Greeks be Greeks, and women what they are" (39) because men prevail, and it is futile to "wage war" against such a superior group. Yet, by employing irony, Bradstreet wages war. In the last stanzas, she asks not

for "bays," symbolizing praise or glory, but "thyme or parsley wreath" (48), which, according to Elizabeth Wade White, insinuates Bradstreet's desire for vitality and courage (40).[30] Bradstreet requests and needs the courage to present her lines to her potential critics. She assures her audience that her work will only emphasize the superiority of men's poems. In "The Prologue," as a Socratic ironist, she effectively eradicates the myth that women cannot write poetry. She feigns ignorance and ineptitude which simultaneously elevates the opposition to a superior position. Bradstreet realizes, once she appeases her critics, that she can attack the true weakness of the opposition--their blindness to women's abilities beyond "the needle."[31] She confidently knows her position in God's plan--a female poet called to write poems. She quickly follows the attack with again a posturing of ignorance within an apology. Bradstreet skillfully practices Socratic irony to avoid a potential "thorny" situation of criticism and disapproval from her male audience.

The thorns of criticism are again evaded through Bradstreet's exercise of Socratic irony in the elegy on Sir Philip Sidney. The purpose of this elegy is not so much to praise or honor Sidney's death, but to praise his talents and practice her own. Bradstreet depicts herself as incapable of praising the

famous poet. She writes that she will only "stain" his glory, and that his "fame and praise" (49) are beyond her artistry. In the next verse, she invalidates the apology by showing her capability of adequately praising him through verse, so her admittance of ignorance reveals Socratic irony in that she proves her own assertion wrong by the end of the poem. She appears meek to fend off objectors because she knows there is an inherent social aversion to a woman's natural poetic genius. Society does not object to an imitative mode of expression by women as long as the patriarchal pattern is followed. Like in "The Prologue" when the muses help Du Bartas and not her, she must again rely on her own skill even though she "craved" their aid (76) because Sidney "had exhausted all their store" (79). This implies that Sidney's poetic genius did not originate in natural talents but from the genius of the Muses and that Bradstreet's talents are distinctly hers--a God-given talent. The poem's conclusion focuses on Bradstreet and her inadequacies, not on Sidney, and shows that the struggle that she goes through to write the poem is ultimately a main theme:

> I, pensive for my fault, sat down, and then
> Errata though their leave threw me my pen;
> My poem to conclude, two lines they deign,

Which writ, she bade return't to them again;

So Sidney's fame I leave to England's rolls,

His bones do lie interred in stately Paul's. (86-91)

The poet concludes by examining her state of mind; the description of her self-critique leaves the dominant impression even though the last line refers to Sidney's burial site. Though announced in the title as the focus, Sidney simply serves as a backdrop for Bradstreet's struggle with poetic expressions. The fact that Bradstreet assumes the role of self-deprecation and ignorance in both "The Prologue" and "An Elegy Upon the Honorable Sir Philip Sidney" illustrates that she feels there is a need to use Socratic irony; she presents herself as the ignorant student facing the superior masters in the all-male audience. Irony eases the disorder she feels inherently breeds in her restrictive society. By the end of each poem, she proves that she can adequately write poetry even without the Muse's help. By using irony, Bradstreet also invites the reader to join her side of the issue; the reader feels exclusively "in the know" because he or she sees the absurdity of the pressure and ignorance which compels a male-dominated society to disapprove of a female poet.

Bradstreet's personal poetry lacks the use of Socratic irony, with its presupposed position of ignorance and instead uses indirect irony; the premise in these poems states one point but means another without any sense of defacement. She does not present a self-effacing pose when she discusses matters of her family (death, illness, travel) with God. As a Puritan, she expresses her obligation to God through her poetry; as Roy Harvey Pearce argues, Bradstreet searches out His nature and discovers her fate as one of the elect (19). The actual writing of poetry allows for the examining of the meanings of God's messages and order in her domestic life. When she faces God, she does not play ignorant, for doing so would not serve any purpose because within her relationship with Him it is understood that she is inferior. It is not an issue of gender but of the depraved inferior and the omniscient superior. With men, however, she comfortably debates this issue of inferiority.

Unlike "The Prologue" or the elegy on Sidney, the elegies on Bradstreet's three grandchildren address not a human audience of potential critics but God himself. She tries to deal with the tension between this world and the spiritual world and attempts to understand God's ordained order by using irony as a tool for relief, a way to express her tie to the flesh. In "In

Memory of My Grandchild Elizabeth," Bradstreet confronts the difficult task of responding to death in the appropriate manner. Though the poem is praised by White and Piercy as a pure expression of emotion, valued by Daly and Eberwein as an acceptance of God's will, and examined by Stanford as an example of an unconvinced believer, Mawer accurately argues that the poem reflects Bradstreet's ability to create a sensitive and *ironic* poem. The poet knows, as a Puritan, Elizabeth is one of God's creations and therefore owes obedience to Him, but Bradstreet cannot accept the death of a baby. In the first stanza, Bradstreet uses irony to explain her emotional state.

> Farewell dear babe, my heart's too much content,
> Farewell sweet babe, the pleasure of mine eye,
> Farewell fair flower, that for a space was lent,
> Then ta'en away unto eternity.
> Blest babe, why should I once bewail thy fate,
> Or sigh thy days so soon were terminate,
> Sith thou art settled in an everlasting state. (1-12)

In actuality, her heart abhors contentment; great confusion and sorrow about her granddaughter's absence lead Bradstreet to exaggerate the "proper attitude" or acceptance by lamely posturing her gracious contentment. She

states "Farewell" three times to emphasize the difficulty she experiences in saying good-bye. With each enunciation of "farewell," the poet's reaction to their relationship is emphasized; the grandchild was for Bradstreet a sense of comfort, contentment, beauty, and fairness. She was a delicate flower yet not meant to survive, for her place on earth was simply tentative or "lent." Though irony is used, the tone here is still one of grief and anger. The poet concludes the stanza with a question: why should she bereave the death of her grandchild who is "settled in an everlasting state" (12)? After the question, the poet's grief escalates to anger. She answers the question by explaining *how* she feels instead of how *duty* would have her feel.

> By nature trees do rot when they are grown,
> And plums and apples thoroughly ripe do fall,
> And corn and grass are in their season mown,
> And time brings down what is both strong and tall.
> But plants new set to be eradicate,
> And buds new blown to have so short a date,
> Is by His hand alone that guides nature and fate. (13-19)

The powerful words such as "rot" and "ripe" express the perversion of nature's order by the death of one so young. At this climactic point in the

poem, Bradstreet interprets the death of one so young as an injustice. God's act of removing Elizabeth is unconscionable, unpardonable. God allows trees, "plums and apples," and even "corn and grass" to have their natural seasons and cycles, but, yet, Elizabeth received no such chance or consideration. She is not simply taken from this earthly realm, but "eradicate[d]" (17) from this world without a trace. By using such a powerful comparison with nature's cycles and the violent word "eradicate," Bradstreet encases her praise to God in irony. The poet describes the "unnatural act of God" (Mawer 37). She doubts His justification in taking a child.[32] She hurts because of this sudden, violent end of a young life, and therefore, she is unable to obtain the pose of Puritan subservience. She tries to do so in the last line: "Is by His hand alone that guides nature and fate" (19). The insincerity reflected in the line results from its delayed appearance in the poem. Through irony, she expresses her disapproval of God's ordered plan. The pious posturing acts as a facade to illustrate how unjust the situation concludes, yet, because of her own upbringing and acceptance of the doctrines of the Puritan belief, she believes God and His plan must be praised.

In the second elegy, the one on Anne at age three years and seven months, the tone is quite different. In fact it seems complacently traditional; it mourns but accepts the grandchild's death. Bradstreet expects Anne's death more than Elizabeth or Simon's because she refers to Anne's sickly state as "a withering flower" (14), and she uses "Farewell" but once. It seems less of an effort to acknowledge her death than the other two. Bradstreet refers to the grandchildren as "things," and it seems ironic that persons she values so greatly are reduced to inanimate objects:

> How oft with disappointment have I met,
> When I on fading things my hopes have set.
> Experience might 'fore this have made me wise,
> To value things according to their price. (8-11)

She appears to be purposely devaluing her grandchildren, her own flesh and blood, by calling them "things" which she has just a line before called "my delight" (7) in order to point out how cruelly God has taken away their lives. One great gift in life is for a parent to have grandchildren and see them grow to adulthood because they insure the continuation of his or her legacy. Children are beyond price, yet God asks Bradstreet to put a price on them because they are but flesh. Through her ironic submission to God, she

accepts the fact they must return to dust, that from which God created them. This poem reveals more of a sense of resolution than in the one on Elizabeth with her one line focused on God's goodness. In this case, she focuses the last four lines on God.

> Farewell dear child, thou ne'er shall come to me,
> But yet a while, and I shall go to thee;
> Mean time my throbbing heart's cheered up with this:
> Thou with Thy Saviour art in endless bliss. (20-23)

Because Bradstreet herself was a sickly child, she could more readily accept the end of a lingering illness as part of God's predetermined plan than the end of a healthy life.

In the third elegy, on Simon, who died at one month and a day in the same year as Anne, she shows clearly her harsh criticism of God. The lines reiterate her disgust and disappointment with God's predestined structure.

> No sooner came, but gone, and fall'n asleep,
> Acquaintance short, yet parting caused us weep;
> Three flowers, two scarcely blown, the last I' th' bud,
> Cropt by th' Almighty's hand; yet is He good.
> With dreadful awe before Him let's be mute,

Such was His will, but why, let's not dispute,

With humble hearts and mouths put in the dust,

Let's say He's merciful as well as just. (5-12)

Similar to the elegy on Elizabeth with the use of the powerful word "eradicate," Bradstreet uses "Cropt by th' Almighty's hand" (8) to explain what God has done to her three "flowers" (7). He does not merely take their lives, but He violently cuts them off at the beginning. The phrase "yet is He good" (8) follows the image of the cut flower. How can a God who takes children's lives be good; it is as if Bradstreet questions the very basis of God's nature, His predestined plan, and His judgment. She opposes God in a specifically ironic, blasphemous tone. She succeeds her boldness with an illusion to God's unquestionable greatness as if to assure herself He knows best: "With dreadful awe before Him let's be mute, / Such was His will, but why, let's not dispute" (9-10). Another ironic statement follows these lines illustrating the possibility of God's injustice--"Let's say He's merciful as well as just" (12). In other words, no matter how God persecutes her, she knows, she *should* say He is merciful. Mawer compares the relationship of Bradstreet and God to the convict and the warden: "let's pretend, like convicts, to accept the omnipotent warden's rule, since even a life sentence

comes to an end" (33). Bradstreet's only comfort is knowing the suffering will end after her "life sentence" is spent. After her own death, she escapes the emotional turmoil she feels. After these lines she writes an innocuous testimony as if to camouflage the irony:

> He will return and make up all our losses
> And smile again after our bitter crosses
> Go pretty babe, go rest with sisters twain;
> Among the blest in endless joys remain. (13-16)

Within her elegy on Simon,[33] as well as on Elizabeth and Anne, Bradstreet tries to reconcile the flesh with the spirit. The use of irony permits her to voice her protest against God and His sense of order. With Him she does not have to efface herself or act ignorant of her predicament like she did when she faced her male audience. She can propose her opposition as long as she follows it by an acceptance, feigned or not. The private poems, focusing on dilemmas of spirit, inherently call for a posturing of acceptance. With both patriarchal audiences, Bradstreet must ultimately be subservient; whether she fabricates her weakness or not appears to be left to the audience's interpretation. Her irony gives her the freedom of ambivalence.

The tension between Bradstreet's feigned "decorous attitude" and the flesh manifests itself in the subtle irony in "For the Restoration of My Dear Husband From a Burning Ague, June 1, 1661." Bradstreet writes it in the typical form of a thanksgiving poem or prayer.[34] The first two stanzas discuss the God-granted favors she has received and her relationship with God. She encounters "fears and sorrows" (4), and God frees her from them. She faces a fainting heart and lost courage, and God comforts her. Her mental anguish in this poem does not come from the world or God, as in her own illnesses[35] but from her own apprehension and fear over her husband's sickness. There is a profound intensity in her worried thoughts. God delivers her husband from the depths of a fever. Bradstreet addresses the third and fourth stanzas to her husband to guide him in his praise of God who has salvaged him and returned him to His order.

My thankful heart with pen record
The goodness of thy God,
Let thy obedience testify
He taught thee by His rod. (12-15)

She manifests the cure for the physical illness into the cure of the spiritual ailment as well; her husband has learned "twixt the good and evil way" (18) because God strikes him ill and retrieves him back again.

At the end of the poem, she petitions God for His goodness. She thanks Him for not leaving her "soul as Destitute" (21), implying that a harsher punishment than simply striking her husband with a *deathly* fever was expected. By thanking God for His unexpected mercy and recognizing His indulgence, she then qualifies her praise. By qualifying her praise to God by using the adverb "as," she ironically judges, in some degree, the justice of the infliction she faces. Not only must she continually deal with her own and her helpmate's illnesses, but she must face the unpredictable nature of her Creator. Nothing is certain in this earthly world, not even the benefit of God's ear; she feels compelled to thank Him for hearing her prayers this time, insinuating that He does not always. She realizes He did not leave her "as destitute" as He could have but destitute enough to still fear His uncertain judgment and her tentative place in His order. For Bradstreet, the threat of God is ultimately inescapable.

The irony, as manifested in her struggle with the flesh, makes its boldest appearance in the petition poem[36] "Upon My Son Samuel His Going

For England, Nov. 6, 1657." Beth Doriani believes Bradstreet expresses peaceful confidence in God's return of her son (65); however, when read through the guise of irony, Bradstreet expresses not comfort but anger heightened to the point of blasphemy. She begins the tightly-controlled poem by describing the relationship between mother and son.

> Thou mighty God of sea and land,
> I here resign into Thy hand
> The son of prayers, of vows, of tears,
> The child I stayed for many years.
> Thou heard'st me then and gav'st him me;
> Hear me again, I give him Thee.
> He's mine, but more, O Lord, Thine own,
> For sure Thy grace on him is shown.
> No friend I have like Thee to trust,
> For mortal helps are brittle dust. (1-12)

She "resigns" (4) him to God even though she has been the one to raise him through "prayers, of vows, of tears" (5). She struggles through the childhood mishaps, and he survives because she "stayed [him] for many years" (6). Bradstreet then describes, in much less detail, emotion, and intensity, the

relationship between God and Samuel which reflects a nondescript note that God's "grace on him is shown" (10). The relationship between mother and son, of course, emotionalizes itself; therefore, the reader invests importance in its existence. She blatantly asserts her confidence in God, who is about to take her son away, as someone she can trust above all humans who are but "brittle dust" (12). Bradstreet petitions God, who assumes the role of a trustful friend, to save Samuel from storms and safely take him to England and back again. From line 15 to the end of the poem, her attitude changes from this submissive obedience to anger which reflects the struggle between her human emotions and the disorder they cause and her faith in God's plan:

> And if Thou shalt spare me a space
> That I again may see his face,
> Then shall I celebrate Thy praise
> And bless Thee for't even all my days.
> If otherwise I go to rest,
> Thy will be done, for that is best.
> Persuade my heart I shall him see
> Forever happified with Thee. (15-22)

The poet breaks with the traditional petition poem ending with "promises of thanksgiving"; and instead, Bradstreet creates a request compelling God to accept her ultimatum. Only if her son safely returns from England will she "Then celebrate" God's name; if God fails and Samuel does not arrive, God must then "persuade" or convince her that it is acceptable that he resides with Him. Bradstreet, a strong Puritan and a determined woman, demands God's promise for the restoration of her son in exchange for praise. She bargains with the Almighty. The "tone of the poem reveals that the poet's devotion to God is actually conditional on Samuel's well-being" (Martin, American 34). Her anger at having her son torn from his homeland intensifies in these last lines. She tells God that if He does not answer her prayer He will have to *make* her understand. She is not simply asking for God's help in order to comprehend His predestined plan but demanding that He prove Himself and His decision to her.

Irony, as in all her private poems, magnifies the intensity of her struggle with the flesh or the people and things of this world. In fact, she realizes how far she pushes in the poem on Samuel's journey when she writes "On My Son's Return," because in this prayer of thanksgiving she makes a point to discuss what God has done for her son in great detail in verse

narrative reflecting, point by point, what she had asked for in the first poem. Bradstreet states her obedience to God in the first four lines without any reservation:

> All praise to Him who hath now turned
> My fears to joys, my sighs to song,
> My tears to smiles, my sad to glad;
> He's come for whom I waited long. (3-6)

She humbly petitions God to help her praise Him adequately and feels that God deserves extraordinary expressions of thanksgiving. Bradstreet even adds a prose piece at the end as if to plea to God to forgive her criticism of Him in the first poem and to set an example for her family, the audience for her private poetry; "O Lord, grant that I may never forget Thy loving kindness in this particular and how graciously Thou hast answered my desires." The fact that she emphasizes her obedience and petitions God for help to praise Him intensifies the blasphemous tone of the poem on Samuel's departure. She uses irony to express her desire for the flesh and the restoration of her sense of God's order and then counteracts with a poem that is in no way ironic on the same subject of her son.

In the emblematic and meditative poem "Upon the Burning of Our House," Bradstreet uses subtle irony to represent, again, the tension between the flesh and the spirit and to seek order out of the chaos of destruction. It is not simply a poem that "becomes just another arid debate between the spirit and flesh" as Mawer argues (30). But, it is in this poem that Bradstreet exercises the full advantages of the ambiguous nature of irony. The poem develops a picture of a pious woman in her fifties who has lost all her possessions and memories to ashes. She struggles with the irretrievable losses and promised rewards of the spirit. Rosemary Laughin's observation that "the poet is explicitly speaking as Bradstreet" (12) is correct; the poem reveals how crucial it is for her to maintain a proper attitude but how futile it is to fight the disappointment of seeing all of her home reduced to ashes. The struggle between the flesh and spirit is implicated in the lines which vacillate between Puritan dogma and the memories of her home.

The poem begins with the description of the fire; within the first sixteen lines, Bradstreet's entire life has been taken away.

In silent night when rest I took
For sorrow near I did not look
I awakened was with thund'ring noise

And piteous shrieks of dreadful voice.

That fearful sound of "Fire!" and "Fire!"

Let no man know is my desire.

I, starting up, the light did spy,

And to my God my heart did cry

To strengthen me in my distress

And not to leave me succorless.

Then, coming out, beheld a space

The flame consume my dwelling place. (1-16)

She hears a "thund'ring noise" (7), "piteous shrieks," and the "fearful sound of 'Fire! and 'Fire!'" (9). The short description of the disaster intensifies the fire's raging power because it reflects the brief time it took for the flames to destroy what had taken her family so long to build. The lines create an atmosphere of chaos, fear, and loss, and they emphasize Bradstreet's sense of hopelessness as she desperately pleads to God for the safety of others whom she prays never have to experience the horror and destruction of fire. The poem's fast pace reflects the intensification of Bradstreet's fear as she realizes she only has time to jump out of bed, see the fire, and pray to God to give her strength. As she escapes, the "flame [then] consume[s] [her]

dwelling place." After the house burns, she turns to God and innocuously blesses Him. The poet attempts to reconcile herself to the fact He did give her the home, so it was His to take away as part of His plan. Yet, she writes, "I blest His name that gave and took, / That laid my goods now in the dust"; the use of the conspicuously descriptive word "dust" hardly sounds like willing submissiveness or acceptance. What follows is a posturing of the proper Puritan attitude:

> Yea, so it was, and so 'twas just
> It was his own, it was not mine,
> Far be it that I should repine;
> He might of all justly bereft
> But yet sufficient for us left. (20-24)

Bradstreet follows this bold and confident description of God as the Almighty caretaker with ironic lines calling her home "ruins" and "ashes" (25, 31). She seems to regret the destruction of her house and does not perceive it as a blessing which she implies in the above five lines. Although Bradstreet implicitly says she accepts God's authority, the poet still mourns over the loss and shows that she does not understand God's actions. She keeps returning to her destroyed home to look over the ashes and to see where she once "sat

and long did lie" (28). The Puritan misses not just her material goods like the "trunk" or "chest" (29) but her memories of domestic happiness:

> Under thy roof no guest shall sit,
>
> Nor at thy table eat a bit.
>
> No pleasant tale shall e'er be told,
>
> Nor things recounted done of old.
>
> No candle e'er shall shine in thee,
>
> Nor bridegroom's voice e'er heard shall be.
>
> In silence ever shall thou lie,
>
> Adieu, Adieu, all's vanity. (33-40)

These last two lines are an attempt to resume that Puritan "proper attitude," yet these lines are half-heartedly delivered. The lines express anger through irony and are not simply a "biblical cliché" as Mawer argues (30). She ironically labels her memories of her house "vanities." The poet seems to question the very essence of God's plan; the ironic comparison of her memory of her husband's voice as a mere vanity unlocks Bradstreet's ability to express her anger.[37] The irony in reducing a *human* to a *thing* (like in the elegy on Anne) represents her flesh's voice and her dissatisfaction with God's ordained plan. The persona balks at God's destructive nature, and she

attempts to ridicule herself for thinking on earthly things. She convinces herself that she must focus on heaven and explore the lesson learned from the destruction of her home. The lesson redirects the persona's attention to the only significant house which is the one "Framed by that mighty Architect" (48). The house represents the deterioration to ashes of the earthly home or life and the new creation of the pious, heavenly home. The remaining lines move her, or *should* move her, as far as the meditation formula of the poem is concerned, to devout thoughts and prayers. There seems instead of lighthearted acceptance and relief from earthly trappings, a sense of heavy heartache. Bradstreet's loss is not fully explained away by the treasure in store for her in heaven. Her wound is not healed by the balm of a future position in Heaven. Still, an inner struggle exists between the flesh and the spirit even in the last lines--"Farewell, my pelf, farewell my store. / The world no longer let me love, / My hope and treasure lie above" (56-58). Robert Richardson astutely argues that "the vacillation in the poem [between the flesh and the spirit] suggests that the sense of loss outweighs, at least at times, the potential comfort promised by Puritan theology" (322). Bradstreet uses irony twice in the poem to emphasize the loss she feels in the destruction of her home. Instead of accepting, like she asserts she does, that God amply

provides for them, she focuses on what He destroys and leaves in ruins. She carries this distress into the next incident of irony when she labels her vivid memories of the sharing what went on in her home from dinner to the personal experience of hearing her husband's voice as vanities.

"As Weary Pilgrim" does not show Bradstreet's use of irony to represent the struggle between the flesh (chaos) and the spirit (order), but it does show the ironic circumstance of the elected pilgrim in God's order. All New England Puritans waited anxiously for the day of God's judgment. The "Weary Pilgrim" realizes the waiting process can be agonizing. Regardless of how ready, she still must wait for relief from God. It does not matter that she rejects her attachment to this world; she still must live in it until God so chooses. This emblematic and meditative verse was composed in 1669 in the same summer as the poem on the death of Anne, her second grandchild, whom she knew to be a "withering flower." The events in her life have educated her and ripened her for admission into God's Heaven. Like the emblematic use of the house in "Upon the Burning," the restful, peaceful pilgrim is the emblem throughout the poem. The pilgrim eagerly awaits God's calling. At first, the emblem indicates an anonymous pilgrim, but by the end of the poem, the traveler transforms into Bradstreet. The journey

metaphor and the emblematic pilgrim structurally hold the work together. The first half of the poem describes the "weary" pilgrim's past travels through "dangers," "burning sun," "stormy rains," "briars and thorns," "hungry wolves," and "hunger and thirst"; he will never have to face these again because "[he is] in safety now to dwell" (18). The second half of the verse parallels her own condition in the journey of life. As a frustrated pilgrim who remains on earth, she must still deal with issues of the flesh, and the temptations of the flesh cause the pilgrim to question her function in God's plan. Is she here on earth to simply decay?

A pilgrim I, on earth perplexed
With sins, with cares and sorrows vext,
By age and pains brought to decay,
And my clay house mold'ring away.
Oh, how I long to be at rest
And soar on high among the blest. (19-24)

Her body is merely a crumbling structure. The earthly pilgrim longs to be translated to heaven where she escapes from physical or emotional pain.

This body shall in silence sleep,
Mine eyes no more shall ever weep,

No fainting fits shall me assail,

Nor grinding pains my body frail,

With cares and fears ne'er cumb'red be

Nor losses know, nor sorrows see. (25-30)

Unlike in the poem on her home, the pilgrim has already resigned her flesh to the spiritual world; she has no more ties to the world and therefore no more inner struggle. She passively and joyfully submits to the spirit, yet ironically she still must wait until the "Bridegroom come away" (44). Though in this poem she is the closest to coming to terms with the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, there still is no closure because the pilgrim or "redeemed soul" must wait for the "revelation to the elect" (Saltman 233). She must wait in limbo for Christ to come. Even after sacrificing this fleshly world, ironically, she remains tied to it until God randomly decides to retrieve her to His order.

In both her private and public poems, Bradstreet persistently and capably uses the rhetorical strategy of irony. She effectively employs Socratic irony in the public poems in order to both appease her male audience and face her own sense of unrest with her position in the predestined plan of God. She expresses her disgust with the potential prejudice against her skills through the pose of ignorance and feigned compliments in order to beguile

her critics. Yet in the same poems she relieves, by using irony, some of her own tension between the vulnerability and limitations she feels. In her private poems, she uses irony not in the disguise of ignorance because her audience now is of an infallible nature--God. She employs indirect irony to pose her voice within lines that could be read with two meanings. She is careful to always use some type of proper attitude with the use of irony. The irony is used, not to efface herself or God, but to express the tension between the flesh and the spirit and the chaos of disorder and comfort of order. It reflects her desire for therapeutic consolation and her attempt to unlock the secrets to God's order. In "Meditation #21," she writes that the pilgrim who "walks among briars and thorns will be very careful where he sets his foot, and he that passes through the wilderness of this world had need ponder all his steps" (276). This perhaps illustrates best *how* and *why* Bradstreet uses irony. She, like the pilgrim, needs to be careful how she phrases her criticism of those opposed to her expression through poetry, or she might find herself down in the "briars and thorns" of disapproval. She uses irony to analyze or "ponder" the world and her steps within this environment of vanities. The employment of irony is therapeutically used to express her ongoing battle with the flesh of this world and the lack of order in it.

CONCLUSION

BRADSTREET'S SENSE OF ORDER AND CLOSURE TO ANNE BRADSTREET'S CONSTRUCTION OF PREDESTINATION THROUGH POETICAL CONVENTIONS AND THE CALVINISTIC THEOLOGY

Bradstreet self-dramatizes the roles of the Calvinist believer who struggles to comprehend God's predestined plan. She explores her perception of God's world through the use of dogma, figurative language, and irony. They serve not only as poetic instruments for creating lines of expression but interpretative tools which explore, hypothesize about, and create perceptions of God's plan. Poetry, for the Puritan and therefore Bradstreet as well, was a device used to explore the Truths in God's world. Bradstreet's poetry reflects her desire for order and her struggle with forces that disrupt that order: death, frustration, doubt, anger, and loneliness. Bradstreet's poetry is rich with observations of her New English world. As an observant student of her environment, she was aware of the tensions between the new world and the old, democracy and monarchy, Protestantism and Catholicism, the discipline of dogma and the disorder of "inner light" beliefs. She struggles with being an educated, refined woman in a world that

is uncivilized and brutal. The challenges of illness, childbirth, death of parents, political pressures, travel, loneliness, and heartache forced Bradstreet to reconcile the existence of God's grace and order with the chaos of the New World. Her attempts at reconciliation are at the root of her work. "The Tenth Muse" wrote over fifty-six pieces of poetry and prose which examine her universe.

Twenty-nine of Bradstreet's works are discussed in this study in order to extract from them her testament to God's ordered plan for her, a Calvinist believer. The doctrines of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints, become poetic tools and not merely topics of discussion. They[38] create pivotal points that offer a reprieve from the doubt or fear the poet encounters and establish a sense of security in knowing God has an ordered plan. Bradstreet's use of personification, simile, and metaphor in the marriage poems[39] not only illustrates her poetic creativity but explores the complicated relationship between husband, wife, and God. Figurative Language is a safe facade for Bradstreet; she freely expresses passion without reservation and attempts to articulate pain and happiness and the disorder they cause through the devices of personification, simile, and metaphor. Irony also provides an outlet for the

poet's need for order.[40] She examines her feelings of socially-imposed subservience, vulnerability, and unrest as a struggle between disorder and order.

Adhering to the theology of Calvinism, Bradstreet uses five doctrinal points as tools to define the role of the seeker and sinner in God's ordered plan. As shown in Chapter II, each doctrine interprets a particular aspect of the believer's relationship with God. While there is not one poem that encompasses all five points of Calvinism and Bradstreet does not attempt to dissect or debate the theology, she uses doctrine as a tool to dissect and debate life's predicaments. By examining twenty poems, her use of the tenets becomes clear; they develop an image of original sin, formulate an explanation and order out of death, offer assurance of election, examine Christ's sacrifice, and explore the elect's status.

The doctrines work as organizing devices in that they create a structure to interpret the challenges and blessings in a believer's life. Bradstreet's use of Total Depravity in her work reflects the Calvinist's belief in the ability of sins to manipulate man and his future generations. The sins cause chaos. Unconditional Election answers the questions produced by the tentative, unpredictable nature of chaos. God promises a place for the elect, and

almost half of her poems discussed in Chapter II focus on proving her family and her own election. Bradstreet restores order and comfort after she faces the deaths of family members by implementing in poetic form the familiar Puritan ideals of those elect. The doctrine of election is justified, exclusive, and a privilege and therefore comforts the sinner. Limited Atonement, though used in her work less frequently, forces the believer to accept his limitations as a depraved sinner and yet at the same time grants the sinner security in the fact that he is part of this limited number of chosen. Limited Atonement creates order for those God has ordained to be elected. Bradstreet, in four poems, uses this tenet of doctrine to create visual examples of Christ's healing salvation. The starving soul, the healing balm of Christ's blood, the destruction of a home and memories, and the metaphor of life as a journey all produce vivid images easy to grasp and remember. Bradstreet examines the elect's predicament and disorder by implementing the doctrine of Limited Atonement through concrete visual images. Bradstreet also considers the doctrine of Irresistible Grace in her works to explain the power of God and His influence on an individual's belief system; Grace is never debated nor is it examined as a belief one could accept or reject. In five poems, Bradstreet creates a sense of harmony and security: through death's door lies the path to

Heaven. The harmony continues in her use of the doctrine of the Perseverance of Saints. God delivers His elect from the slavery of sin but not from the sins themselves such as poverty, sickness, and death. By using the doctrine of the Saints, she creates four general observations about the status of the chosen. She examines the Puritan's physical perspective of Heaven, God's purpose in creating man, the inescapable hardships of life for the Saints, and the expectations of eternal life for the elect. Exploring Bradstreet's use of the five points of Calvinism reveals her adherence to the Calvinistic belief system and its ability to provide a logical interpretation of the world. Bradstreet's work, as examined in Chapter II, reveals logical conclusions about man's position: death is not to be feared; death is a justified penalty; evidence of election is obvious; atonement is God's act of ultimate sacrifice and therefore cannot be rejected; God controls the universe; and only those elected receive entrance into Heaven. The doctrines support the poet who believes in a balanced world and God's orderly plan. She writes as one convinced of the justice and order of the doctrines of Calvinism in "Meditations 17," "Meditation 18," and "Meditation 19." The short Meditations define her dogma-based world view. Man's abilities, dreams, health, passions, and hopes are derived from God, the ordained giver of life.

17

> Few men are so humble as not to be proud of their abilities, and nothing will abase them more than this: what hast thou, but what thou hast received? Come, give an account of thy stewardship.

18

> He that will undertake to climb up a steep mountain with a great burden on his back will find it a wearisome if not an impossible task; so he that thinks to mount to heaven clogged with the cares and riches of this life, 'tis no wonder if he faint by the way.

19

> Corn, till it have past through the mill and been ground to powder, is not fit for bread. God so deals with his servants: he grinds them with grief and pain till they turn to dust, and then are they fit manchet for his mansion.

The believer is simply a traveler journeying through the earthly existence: life is an exercise in education and perceiving God's purified plan.

Throughout Chapter II Bradstreet's work, as discussed through the five doctrinal points, exhibits overall harmony--a sense that God is just. Chapter III reveals a persona of Bradstreet who again seeks order but with a shaken confidence. In the four private poems to her husband, she attempts to find order in a chaotic world of political and social responsibilities. Intense emotions and frustrations cause her poetic discourse to range from such polarized emotions as love and hate, security and fear, acceptance and rejection, and harmony and anger. Each figure of speech unlocks emotions and then attempts to develop or create a resemblance of order. Bradstreet strategically uses personification, simile, and metaphor to create a self-dramatization of her mounting emotions, be they anger, disappointment, or passion. She is not charting a new course in her use of figurative language. In fact, the Puritans accepted logical equations to be part of God's plan. For Bradstreet, figurative language links objects into relations and links relations to one another reflecting God's mysterious creation and its power. Even though personification, simile, and metaphor are aids in expressing Bradstreet's awe of God's creation of matrimonial bonds, theological issues are never masked nor interpreted by figurative language. The explications of "To My Dear And Loving Husband," "A Letter To Her Husband,"

"Another," and "As loving hind," reveal the passionate nature of a Puritan wife. The poet uses personification to control and introduce a barometer for passion. Personification acts as the first reading of a gauge of intensity. As a poem moves from personification to simile, its tone intensifies. When metaphor is used, a poem reaches a climatic point. Bradstreet uses poetical patterns and figurative language to illustrate her emotions, control of poetic conventions, and her struggle with the chaos of this world (travels, loneliness, desire, passion) and the order of God's world.

Another device Bradstreet uses to relieve the burdensome perplexities of her environment is irony. Unlike dogma and figurative language which Bradstreet employs to seek and find the order in God's universe, irony allows Bradstreet to question not only her community's order but God's predestined order. Bradstreet's use of irony, which in the seventeenth century was a relatively new technique, reveals her ingenuity and her diverse background in reading. Four factors contribute to the poet's creation of discrete expressions of irony: the pressure of a male-dominated audience; the lack of confidence in her skill and resultant vulnerability; the socially-imposed limitations of the Puritan woman's role; and the struggle between the disorder found in the world and the order sought after in God's predestined plan. In her use of

irony, Bradstreet reveals her creativity in maintaining her own voice, constructing a form of confidence, and controlling frustrations in the debate with the chaotic world of the flesh and the orderly world of the spirit. She uses both Socratic irony and indirect irony. Socratic irony in "The Prologue" and the elegy on Sidney illustrates her need to present herself as the ignorant student facing the masters in the all-male audience. Using irony eases the disorder she feels inherently breeds in her restrictive society. Bradstreet does not use Socratic irony in her personal poetry but uses indirect irony where the premise states one point but means another without any sense of defacement. There is no need to present a self-effacing pose when intimate topics about her family are discussed. Irony, as does figurative language, magnifies the intensity of her struggle with the flesh and the disorder it causes. In her private poems, she does not use irony to feign ignorance. She carefully creates lines laden with double meaning because her audience is infallible--God. As explained in Chapter IV, the irony expresses the tension between the flesh and the spirit and the chaos of disorder and comfort of order. Focusing on literary techniques, poetic formats, and Calvinist doctrines reveals significant connections among Bradstreet's staunch religious fervor, poetic elements, and her need for balance and order. Her understanding of

God's plan and her role in it is best summarized in "Meditation 53," which epitomizes the main role of the Calvinist believer--a traveler in a foreign land guided by a preordained plan that must be discovered.

53

> He that is to sail into a far country, although the ship, cabin, and provision be all convenient and comfortable for him, yet he hath no desire to make that his place of residence, but longs to put in at that port where his business lies. A Christian is sailing through this world unto his heavenly country, and here he hath many conveniences and comforts, but he must beware of desiring to make this the place of his abode, lest he meet with such tossings that may cause him to long for shore before he sees land. We must, therefore, be here as strangers and pilgrims, that we may plainly declare that we seek a city above and wait all the days of our appointed time till our change shall come.

Anne Bradstreet's poetry is a testament of a believer's need to comprehend her faith through various personas and discover her role in God's predetermined plan.

ENDNOTES

[1] Bradstreet was an observant student of the past as well as present worlds--politically, socially, economically, religiously. Stanford writes though "isolated in space, [Bradstreet] was never isolated in time" (Emerson, Major 33). She was fully aware of the tensions between the new world and the old world, democracy and the established order in England, Parliament and the Monarchy, Protestantism and its aversion to Catholicism, and the rigors of dogma compared to the inner light spirit. Her education was also broad as evident in her many references

> to history, the classics, the old sciences of alchemy and medicine, to contemporary events like the untimely death of Prince Henry of Wales, the Gunpowder Plot, and the regicide of Charles, and to figures like Queen Elizabeth, Sidney, Spenser, Philip II, and Sir Walter Raleigh. (Laughlin 13)

In the poem "A Dialogue Between Old England And New; Concerning Their Present Troubles, Anno, 1642," she writes of the first outbreak of violence in the English Civil War. The poem "may even be thought of as one of the early pieces of editorial journalism in New England, for no doubt it circulated in

manuscript among the people of Ipswich and perhaps other towns as well" as argued by Stanford (Anne 54). Bradstreet reports the root of the conflict as deeply imbedded in history and the corruption of the Catholic Church. New England is the voice of the daughter, and England is the mother persona. The maternal figure is upset as the daughter recognizes.

> Alas, dear Mother, fairest queen and best,
> With honour, wealth, and peace, happy and blest;
> What ails thee hang thy head and cross thine arms?
> And sit I' th' dust, to sigh these sad alarms?
> What deluge of new woes thus overwhelm
> The glories of thy ever famous realm?
> What means this wailing tone, this mournful guise?
> Ah, tell thy daughter, she may sympathize. (5-12)

A review of England's history chronicles the proud line of Protestant Monarchs, the violence of, and the current removal of Charles to York (in line 187). England's religious sins range from idolatry to murder.

> Before I tell th' effect, I'll show the cause
> Which are my sins, the breach of sacred laws.
> Idolatry, supplanter of a nation,

With foolish superstitious adoration,
Are liked and countenanced by men of might,
The Gospel trodden down and hath no right;
Church offices were sold and bought for gain,
That Pope had hope to find Rome here again.
For oaths and blasphemies, did ever ear
From Belzebub himself such language hear?
What scorning of the saints of the Most High?
What injuries did daily on them lie?
What false reports, what nick-names did they take
Not for their own, but for their master's sake?
And thou, poor soul, wert jeered among the rest,
Thy flying for the truth was made a jest.
For Sabbath-breaking and for drunkenness,
Did ever land profaneness more express?
From crying blood yet cleansed am not I,
Martyrs and others, dying causelessly. (95-115)

In Bradstreet's poem, the sins and England's grief culminate in the pinnacle conflict: the debate between Parliament and the King to determine the head

of state. Bradstreet sides with Parliament. She, as well as many New England Puritans, did not fault Charles I but " those ardent Catholics among his advisers who sought to usurp all the powers of Parliament, in the King's name, for their own ends" (White 364). In the "Dialogue Between Old England and New," Bradstreet writes of her scorn for the Catholic Church.

> These are the days the Church's foes to crush,
> To root out Popelings head, tail, branch, and rush;
> Let's bring Baal's vestments forth to make a fire,
> Their miters, surplices, and all their tire,
> Copes, rochets crosiers, and such empty trash,
> And let their names consume, but let the flash
> Light Christendom, and all the world to see
> We hate Rome's whore with all her trumpery. (236-43)

In the closing lines of the poem, she calls for the conversion of the whole Western World to unite in God in what Stanford labels "the Puritan way" (Emerson, Major 43). "The Dialogue Between Old England and New" expresses Bradstreet's awareness of and concern over the influence of Old England's past on her personal present situation and New England's present and future challenges.

[2] Bradstreet writes a glowing review of the Protestant Queen's accomplishments in "In Honor Of That High And Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth Of Happy Memory" to prove her belief in the power of Elizabeth as a ruler and the intellectual capabilities of women. Praising Elizabeth also provides for her the perfect shield; she readily compares and critiques the turbulent reign of the Stuarts with the peaceful one of Elizabeth.

She hath wiped off th' aspersion of her sex,
That women wisdom lack to play the rex.
Spain's monarch, says not so, nor yet his host;
She taught them better manners, to their cost.
The Salic law, in force now had not been,
If France had ever hoped for such a queen.
But can you, doctors, now this point dispute,
She's argument enough to make you mute.
Since first the Sun did run his ne'er run race,
And earth had, once a year, a new old face,
Since time was time, and man unmanly man,
come show me such a Phoenix if you can.
Was ever people better ruled than hers?

Was ever land more happy freed from stirs?

Did ever wealth in England more abound?

Her victories in foreign coasts resound;

. . . . . .

The states united now her fame do sing.

She their protectrix was; they well do know

Unto our dread virago, what they owe.

Her nobles sacrificed their noble blood,

Nor men nor coin she spared to do them good.

The rude untamed Irish, she did quell,

Before her picture the proud Tyrone fell.

Had ever prince such counsellors as she?

Herself Minerva caused them so to be.

Such captains and such soldiers never seen,

As were the subjects of our Pallas queen. (34-65)

Elizabeth even influenced her own counselors to conduct themselves honorably in light of her own example. She was a strong, powerful, active Queen who was not regulated, according to Bradstreet, by men. Bradstreet praises the Queen's reign in contrast to her commentary on James I and

Charles I. For example, in the lines describing the Queen as a "Phoenix Queen," Bradstreet insults James by illustrating that the dead Elizabeth has more respect and power as a corpse than James does as the living King. The Queen "remains more of a Phoenix dead than if her ashes are revived in the form of James I" (Stanford, Anne 11). In both the poem on Queen Elizabeth and "The Dialogue," the reigns of the Stuarts are either criticized or ignored to reflect their ineffectual nature.

[3] In the late 1500s, the word "Puritan" basically was applied to persons within the Church of England, but by 1630, the term had expanded to "include separatists like the Pilgrims who obtained purity outside the Anglican communion and even the Scot Presbyterians who had a different organization" (Morison 55). The Puritans disagreed with the Separatist's basic belief of the individual's revelation of "inner light" and rejected those who sought refuge in America. Even though Puritans agreed with the Presbyterian theology, they disagreed with the presbyteries because they saw the governing body as a form of Episcopal authority. Most Puritans, by 1630, believed in each congregation's autonomy and ability to set up its own ruling bodies based on Scripture. Bradstreet and her family were Congregationalists and labeled themselves Puritans.

[4] The Synod of Dort faced a challenging task and produced history-making results for the Reformed Church. A Dutch Protestant theologian, Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), though a Calvinist at first, through an attempt to refute those believing in tolerance and freedom of worship, discovered his opposition to predestination and salvation through faith alone. The theology of Arminianism supported the belief that man can reject God's grace and still be saved by good works and faith. He put forth views opposed to those of Calvin. The Puritans dogmatically rejected his theological concepts and clung to the doctrines of Calvinism's predestination. In 1619, during the reign of James I, Calvinists challenged and condemned the Arminian dogma at the Synod of Dort and redefined the reformed faith. The debate between the Arminians and the Calvinists was, and continues to be, the most important controversy in the Reformed Church.

The meeting, held at Dordrecht in 1618, lasted until 1619. The synod settled the dispute between the Arminians, supported by the Lutheran Church, and the Calvinists, supported by the Reformed churches in France, Switzerland, Germany, England, and Scotland. As a result of the synod, the Arminians, like the Catholics in the Netherlands, could not congregate for services. Many Arminians left for England where the established church

tolerated them. Arminianism influenced the doctrines of the Laudian party in England though the Anglicans "did not necessarily import it from across the channel" (Miller 367).

The Arminians presented five points in the form of a protest that established their theological views, and the Calvinists responded with five counter-points. Each foreign Reformed Church was allowed to send three or four clergyman, and each one had the right to vote during the synod of 84 members and 18 "secular commissioners" (Schaff 512). The synod had 154 sessions and was the only synod of a "quasi-ecumenical" (Schaff 514) nature in the history of the Reformed Church. The result of the Synod of Dort was the unanimous rejection of the five articles of the Arminians and the unanimous acceptance of the five points of Calvinism. The two ideologies agreed on one doctrine: that man's state is depraved and therefore requires the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit. Man, in his depraved or fallen state, is unable to do anything good, so he must be born again through the Holy Spirit. However, the similarities between the two theologies abruptly ends when the issues of election, atonement, grace, and perseverance are discussed. The Arminians disagreed with Calvin's view of election; they believed in conditional predestination--that God will save those men under

the condition that they believe in Jesus through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Arminians trusted that Christ's atonement was universal and not limited; his death was, in itself, sufficient for the redemption of the entire world. They believed that Christ's Grace may be rejected and that Grace, once given, may be lost. Arminian doctrines were immeasurably different from the dogma of Calvinism and were fundamentally a heresy to Puritans, like the Dudleys and the Bradstreets. Puritans thought Arminianism made God "too rational and too human, altogether too amenable to what man thinks is just and equitable" (Miller 373). The adoption of the five Calvinistic canons (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints) was an affirmation that Calvinism reflected an accurate world view. The five points "had a special place in Puritan thought," for they were the "tests of orthodoxy" (Emerson, Puritanism 29). Adopted along with these doctrines were the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. The Belgic Confession, prepared in 1561 and adopted six times, and the Heidelberg Catechism, which was written in 1563 and served the "double purpose of a guide for the religious instruction of the youth and a confession for the church" (Schaff 504), are both the pinnacle doctrines of the Reformed Church even today.

[5] Though the average ship was two hundred and fifty tons and rarely measured more than one hundred feet in length, the Arbella weighed three hundred and fifty tons. It was a hundred tons heavier than the norm and thus probably more seaworthy and more comfortable.

[6] George Francis Dow points out that the "settlers in the New England Colonies, unless persons of wealth and possessed of large families, during the early years lived generally in houses [with] but one room and an entry way on the ground floor" (39). Bradstreet's multi-room house reflects their wealth and the room needed for their large family.

[7] Ann Stanford, in Emerson's collection on Major Writers of Early American Literature, examines the first published works of Bradstreet. She discusses the various influences on Bradstreet such as Du Bartas and claims that the influence of the French poet is not as prominent as scholars have previously claimed. According to Stanford, the strongest influence of the French poet on Bradstreet "occurred around 1642 when she was writing 'The Four Elements' and 'The Four Humours'" (37). Stanford also observes that Dr. Helkiah Crooke's Microcomographia may have been a source for Bradstreet because not only does the poet mention him but some passages are "versification of portions of that work" (37).

[8] Stanford thoroughly studies these five poems in her chapter in Emerson's work (320-36).

[9] Robert Daly, in God's Altar, argues that Bradstreet's work reflects theology as poetics. Though Daly deals with the Puritan's attitude toward the world and how it celebrates the Creator and places Bradstreet within the "tradition of orthodox Puritans who loved the sensible world but knew that it could not compare with its Maker," he does not discuss the five doctrines of Calvinism nor explore their use in Bradstreet's poetry as tools to examine the predestined plan of the elect.

[10] Stanford discusses two of Bradstreet's love poems to the poet's husband for her chapter on Bradstreet in Emerson's Major Writers of Early American Literature.

[11] Daly in God's Altar ("A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment" and "To My Dear and Loving Husband") and Rosenmeier, in her article "'Divine Translation': A Contribution to the Study of Anne Bradstreet's Method in the Marriage Poems," examine Bradstreet's use of biblical references and the contrasting characteristics of human love versus divine love. She also focuses extensively on the metaphor of the "Sun" as Christ as the head of the church and the bridegroom.

[12] Laughlin in "Anne Bradstreet: Poet in Search of Form" ("As loving hind") and Requa in "Anne Bradstreet's Poetic Voices" ("As loving hind") explore the poet's ability to create a strong formula of comparison and contrast to illustrate her creativity in spite of Du Bartas's influence.

[13] Contrary to the early 1900s, scholars today agree the Puritans did not reject the art of poetry but used it to respond to God's world. Moses Coit Tyler argued that the Puritans warred against the beautiful and interpreted it as sinful. The Puritan himself "believed that there was an unappeasable feud between religion and art; and hence the duty of suppressing art was bound up in his soul with the master purpose of promoting religion. He cultivated the grim and ugly" (227-28). However, modern Puritan scholars, such as Pearce, Daly, Miller, and Johnson agree that the Puritans saw the art of verse as powerful, and at times beautiful, because it derived from God. Avoiding art only produced ignorance. Art helped interpret the world--God's world. On the whole the Puritans viewed poetry as a means to an end: an attempt to discern the Truths in God's world.

[14] Pearce agrees with Miller and Daly and observes that Puritan poetry was "'logical' and was concerned with an immanent but nonetheless assured principle of meaning in human experience" (33).

[15] The public poems are those works published in the first two editions of Bradstreet's poetry. The private works are those published in the 1678 edition and the Andover Manuscripts, first published in 1867.

[16] The study focuses on the following nine poems in light of the doctrine of Unconditional Election: "To The Memory Of My Dear And Ever Honoured Father Thomas Dudley Esq.," "An Epitaph On My Dear And Ever-Honoured Mother Mrs. Dorothy Dudley," "For The Restoration Of My Husband From A Burning Ague," "In Memory Of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet," "On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet," "To The Memory Of My Dear Daughter-In-Law, Mrs. Mercy Bradstreet," "Upon A Fit Of Sickness," "May 13, 1657," and "In My Solitary Hours In My Dear Husband His Absence."

[17] The following is a description, from the American Revised Standard Bible, of the worthy woman as recorded in Proverbs 31: 10-31:

An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. She looks for wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight. She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar. She rises also while it is still night, and

gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. She senses that her gain is good; her lamp does not go out at night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hands grasp the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor; and she stretches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies belts to the tradesmen. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future. She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying: "Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

[18] Most handbooks on poetry point out the *tenor/vehicle* structure under the term metaphor. The term metaphor functions by way of a *tenor* and *vehicle*. The *tenor* is the subject or idea by which the metaphoric word is attributed, and the *vehicle* is the actual metaphoric word. Or as Hepburn explains, in Poetic Designs, the *tenor* is the thing described or identified, and the *vehicle* is the means by which it is described or identified (81).

[19] Perry Miller, in The New England Mind: Seventeenth Century, observes that the ancient text of the Old Testament was laden with metaphor, so the use of metaphor "imitated God's manner" and was therefore accepted in Puritan histories, biographies, sermons, and poetry (328).

[20] The Puritans based their system of logic on the philosophy of Peter Ramus. According to Harvey Pearce, "Ramus was the official logician theocratic, in insular New England, as he could never have been in Old England. Ramist poetics--a poetics of discovery, of examining and stating, of coming upon, or laying open to view--was in effect New England poetics" (34). Pearce also explains that metaphors were arguments to the Ramists. Arguments gave order to God's universe and therefore to the Puritan universe because argument is a course of reasoning aimed at demonstrating the truth or falsehood of something and therefore seeking a foundation for order.

[21] Daly points out that "for the Puritan, figures and symbolic correspondences were created by God and found in the world by the poet" (55).

[22] Rosenmeier examines Bradstreet's use of the Sun in an unique way. She studies the use of the images of the husband and sun as reflections of Christ typologically interpreted in the poems addressed to Bradstreet's husband.

[23] The words, used in lines 15-19 in "Another,"--"sand," "stars," "grass," "grain," "rain," and "mote"--sound recognizably scriptural. Predominately appearing throughout the Old Testament, these words reflect God's power, omniscience, sympathy, and action. Listed are some of the passages where the key words appear: Job 29: 18, Proverbs 27: 3, Deuteronomy 33: 19, Psalms 147: 4, Isaiah 40: 6, Proverbs 27: 25, Daniel 5: 21, Genesis 41: 5, Leviticus 2: 14, Jeremiah 23: 28, Job 24:8, Song 2: 11, Leviticus 26: 4, Genesis 3: 14, Psalms 18: 42, and Daniel 12: 2.

[24] Bradstreet wrote two poems labeled "Another." In order to avoid confusion, the second poem by this title will be referred to by part of its first line--"As loving hind."

[25] Labeling the images of the hind, dove, and mullet varies among scholars. Ann Stanford, in Emerson's Major Writers of American Literature, observes that the three "images" control the poem. Rosemary Laughlin labels them "metaphors," and Kenneth A. Requa, in his article "Anne Bradstreet's Poetic Voices," calls them "similes."

[26] Knox points out that "neither Socrates nor his contemporaries ever used the word [irony] in a serious way to describe the Socratic method" (31). However, under Plato, the link was made between the word and this type of rhetorical debate method.

[27] Elizabeth Wade White examines Bradstreet's work and comes to the conclusion that the poet read the following materials and authors in some form: the Geneva version of the Bible; Raleigh's History of the World; Sidney's Arcadia and Astrophel and Stella; Du Bartas's Divine Weekes and Workes; Spenser's Faerie Queene; Dr. Helkiah Cooke's Microcosmographia; John Speed's History of Great Britain from Julius Caesar to Our Most Gracious of the Turks; Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy; Francis Bacon's Essays and The Advancement of Learning; John Smith's General History of Virginia, New England, and Summer Isles; Michael Drayton; Samuel Daniel; George Wither; John Foxes's Acts and Monuments;

Shakespeare; Homer; Aristotle; Hesiod; Xenophon; Pliny; Virgil; Seneca; Ovid; Thucydides; and Plutarch.

[28] According to M. H. Abrams, Socratic irony takes the position of ignorance or feigned "eagerness to be instructed, and a modest readiness to entertain points of view which upon continued questioning, invariably turns out to be ill-grounded or to lead to absurd consequences" (91). Thus, it offers a safety net for the user.

[29] In the dedicatory poems, the skeptical attitude Bradstreet confronts as a woman writing in the Seventeenth Century becomes clear. Her work was used as propaganda to illustrate to England that in the wilds of America a woman *could even* produce poetry; it showed a civilizing element. The writers of the dedicatory poems praise her because she was a *woman* writing poetry and not because she was a poet writing poetry. She and her work are seen as an oddity; her brother-in-law obviously feels he must explain (in his letter to The Tenth Muse) to the reader that the poems are *really* written by a woman--"it is possible" (3). He emphasizes the orthodoxy of her ability; the poetry was written by a woman, and more importantly, a woman who maintained her rightful position in the home and domestic duties. The authors of the dedicatory works do not only praise Bradstreet's adherence to her

domestic responsibility but also praise her efforts at imitation, though not her poetic talents. Nathaniel Ward condescendingly calls Bradstreet, at age 38, a "Du Bartas girl" (12), and John Woodbridge praises her for attempting to express herself but does not give her any real credit. Bradstreet is still restrictively compared to her gender and kept in the category of "woman" or muse.

[30] In the Greek tradition the herbs of thyme and parsley symbolized the qualities of vitality and courage. Wendy Martin points out the meaning of Bradstreet's request. The request "for domestic herbs rather than the time-honored crown indicates Bradstreet's effort to stay within boundaries allotted to women" (American 32).

[31] This male-dominated society does not, more than likely, include her father, who educated her, and his group of friends and family because it seems she received only encouragement and support from them. "The society" represents the vague "others" as critics and other authors.

[32] Edmund S. Morgan observes that the Puritan society of New England fostered close natural ties between parents and children. In fact, the Puritans believed they had come to New England "to perpetrate pure religion among their children" (168). Children, though not pampered and always

disciplined, were seen as gifts from God to be nurtured--grandchildren even more so.

[33] Mawer provides other interpretations which emphasize the irony used in the elegy on Simon.

[34] Kenneth Requa discusses the two types of formulas of the thanksgiving prayer. The first form is composed of favors God bestows upon the writer and the writer's offer of thanks. The second form is composed of three parts--favors granted, thankfulness, and a petition to God.

[35] For example, the poem, "For Deliverance From A Fever," reveals Bradstreet's acute awareness of her precarious personal situations from which God retrieves her.

[36] According to Requa, the petition poems include "requests, reasons why the requests should be granted, and promises of thanksgiving" (4).

[37] Richardson points out that the poem moves between "the human level to the divine level" (322). For example, she remembers her house in Massachusetts and then focuses on the mansion in Heaven.

[38] The twenty-one poems used to examine Bradstreet's use of the five doctrines of Calvinism in Chapter II are listed below in the order in which they appear in the study: "Contemplations," "Upon A Fit Of Sickness,"

"Before The Birth Of One Of Her Children," "To The Memory Of My Dear And Ever Honoured Father Thomas Dudley Esq.," "An Epitaph On My Dear And Ever-Honoured Mother Mrs. Dorothy Dudley," "For The Restoration Of My Dear Husband From A Burning Ague," "In Memory Of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet," On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet," "To The Memory Of My Dear Daughter-In-Law, Mrs. Mercy Bradstreet," "May 13, 1657," "In My Solitary Hours," "July 8, 1656," "By Night When Others Soundly Slept," "Upon The Burning Of Our House," "As Weary Pilgrim," "From Another Sore Fit," "In Reference To Her Children," "In Thankful Remembrance For My Dear Husband's Safe Arrival," "Upon Some Distemper Of Body," and "My Soul, Rejoice Thou In Thy God."

[39] Four marriage poems are discussed in Chapter III; they are "To My Dear And Loving Husband," "A Letter To Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment," "Another," and "As loving hind."

[40] The twelve poems examined in the Chapter IV are as follows: "The Prologue," "An Elegy Upon Sir Philip Sidney," "As Weary Pilgrim," "The Flesh and The Spirit," "In Memory Of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet," "On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet," "In Memory Of My Dear Grandchild Anne Bradstreet," "For The Restoration Of My Dear

Husband From A Burning Ague," "Upon My Son Samuel His Going For England," "On My Son's Return," "Upon The Burning Of Our House," and "As Weary Pilgrim."

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