

Samuel Bradshaw - Period 1

AP Language and Composition

Research Project – revision 10/30/06

PROPOSAL

I chose Anne Bradstreet as my topic because I enjoy her poems. The style of writing and word choice is interesting. Also, I enjoy reading about many of the values and beliefs she speaks of.

I will attempt to evaluate to what degree her religious and moral values, and her life experiences, determine the content of Anne Bradstreet's poems. I don't yet know for sure whether or not she was a very religious person, nor do I know anything about her family life, but judging by the poems I think the familial and religious values expressed were an expression of how she grew up and lived.

I plan on searching in the school and public libraries for books relating to the author, and I will also seek reliable web sources for information I can't find in the books available. I will research her life, specifically how religion and family affected her life and to what extent they influenced her writings.

WORKING THESIS

To what degree did her religious and moral values, and her life experiences, determine the content of Anne Bradstreet's poems? (i.e. prove that her circumstances did or didn't affect the content of her poems)

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Anne Bradstreet." *Anne Bradstreet*. 16 Jan. 2003. 18 Oct. 2006 <[http://www.](http://www.annebradstreet.com/)

[annebradstreet.com/](http://www.annebradstreet.com/)>.

→ *Has a biography of Bradstreet and also a little bit about the other early colonists. This will be useful for social context information.*

Applebee, Arthur N., et al. *The Language of Literature*. Dallas, Texas: McDougal Littell: 1997.

→ *This Literature textbook provides two of Bradstreet's poems, as well as some background information on the author.*

Gonzalez, Ramon. "Anne Bradstreet, 1612-1672." *Colonial America, 1607-1783*. 11 May 2000. University of North Carolina at Pembroke. 18 Oct. 2006 <<http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/16071783/lit/bradstre.htm>>.

→ *This biography integrates pieces of Anne Bradstreet's poems with a biography of Bradstreet.*

Hart, James D. "Bradstreet, Anne." *The Oxford Companion to American Literature* (5th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press: 1983.

→ *This book (at the school library) provides a brief timeline of Bradstreet's life, as well as a listing of her published works. It will be useful for background information and will facilitate the search for applicable poems.*

Kennedy, David M., Lizabeth Cohen, and Thomas A. Bailey. *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* (12th ed.). New York: Houghton Mifflin Company: 2002.

→ *This American History textbook provides some background information about the time period in which the author lived.*

Lewis, Jone Johnson. "Anne Bradstreet." *About.com: Women's History*. About, Inc. n.d.

18 Oct. 2006

<[http://womenshistory.about.com/od/bradstreetanne/a/anne_bradstreet .htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/od/bradstreetanne/a/anne_bradstreet.htm)>.

→ *This site speaks briefly of many of Bradstreet's poems, one by one.*

Magill, Frank N., ed. *Masterpieces of American Literature*. New York: HarperCollins

Publishers, Inc., 1993.

→ *This really great source (also from the school library) details major events in Bradstreet's life around the time of her poems; it also sets her apart as unique from other poets of her time.*

Woodlief, Ann. "Biography of Anne Bradstreet." *Study Texts on Anne Bradstreet's*

Poetry. n.d. Virginia Commonwealth University. 18 Oct. 2006

<<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/Bradstreet/bradbio.htm>>.

→ *This web page looks at Bradstreet's poetry in an analytical view.*

OUTLINE

Thesis: Anne Bradstreet's poems are shaped by her familial, religious, and moral beliefs and experiences, as well as several English poets she read.

I – Introduction

- 1) *Attention getter, prepare reader: “general opener”*
- 2) *Historical and social context*
 - a) Settlement of colonies
 - b) Colonial life; Bradstreet's (Puritan) beliefs
- 3) *Main points introduced*
 - a) Family in poetry
 - b) Religion in poetry
 - c) Other poets in poetry
- 4) *Thesis statement*

II – Family in poetry

→ *(paragraph transition)*

- 1) Content of poems; her parents
 - a) “An Epitaph on my dear and ever honoured mother, Mrs. Dorothy Dudley, Who deceased December 27, 1643, and of her age, 61”
 - b) “To Her Father with Some Verses”
 - c) “To her most Honoured Father Thomas Dudley Esq; these humbly presented”
 - d) “To the Memory of my dear and ever honoured Father Thomas Dudley Esq; Who deceased, July 31. 1653. and of his Age, 77”
- 2) Content of poems; her husband
 - a) “A Letter to her Husband, absent upon Publick employment”
 - b) “For the restoration of my dear Husband from a burning Ague, June, 1661”
 - c) “In my Solitary houres in my dear husband his Absence”
 - d) “In thankfull acknowledgment for the letters I received from my husband ovt of England”
 - e) “In thankfull Remembrance for my dear husbands safe Arrivall Sept. 3, 1662”
 - f) “To my Dear and loving Husband”
 - g) “Upon my dear and loving husband his goeing into England, Jan. 16, 1661”
- 3) Content of poems; her children
 - a) “Before the Birth of One of Her Children”
 - b) “In Reference to her Children, 23 June 1659”
- 4) Content of poems; her grandchildren
 - a) “In Memory Of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet, Who Deceased August, 1665, Being A Year And Half Old”

- b) "In Memory of my Dear Grandchild Anne Bradstreet, who deceased June 20, 1699, being Three Years and Seven Months Old"

III – *Religion in poetry*

→ *(paragraph transition)*

- 1) Content of poems; Biblical beliefs
 - a) "Upon the Burning of Our House"
 - b) "By Night When Others Soundly Slept"
 - c) "Deliverance from a Fit of Fainting"
 - d) "From Another Sore Fit"
 - e) "Meditations When My Soul hath been Refreshed with the Consolations which the World Knows Not"
 - f) "Meditation July 8th., 1656"
 - g) "Meditation"
 - h) "Meditation May 13, 1657"
 - i) "Meditation May 11, 1661"

IV – *Other poets in poetry*

→ *(paragraph transition)*

- 1) Isolation from other poets in England
 - a) Sir Walter Raleigh, came to America
- 2) Poets in the family
 - a) Her father, too busy in colonial affairs
 - b) Philip and Mary Sidney – aristocrats in England
- 3) Other poets
 - a) Content of poems; Sir Philip Sidney
 - b) Content of poems; Sir Edmund Spenser
 - c) Content of poems; Queen Elizabeth
 - d) Content of poems; Guillaume de Salluste

V – *Conclusion*

→ *(paragraph transition)*

- 1) *Thesis statement, restated*
- 2) *End discussion: "general closure"*

(this outline does not necessarily reflect the final organization of the essay)

SELF-EVALUATION

In my paper, I like the large number of quotes I was able to integrate to prove my point: the quotes explain my points for the most part themselves. I was also glad to be able to find some poems that I'd seen references to, but couldn't find, such as the one for Sir Philip Sidney.

I don't feel like I proved my points well enough, but I'm at a loss for what to add. Maybe I just didn't look hard enough for more good sources...

LOG ENTRIES

- *Entry 1: What I already know about my subject, and myself*

Anne Bradstreet was an American poet who wrote about her religion and family. She lived in the 17th century. She was a member of the Puritan church. I think she must have been a religious woman who loved her family. She was a well-educated individual. She wrote in lyric poetry: most of her poems were short, having only one speaker, expressing her own thoughts and feelings, and written in emotional language. She also sometimes utilized the writing technique of parallelism, which is the repetition of words or phrases to create emphasis.

From History I know that the Puritans belonged to a strict religion called the Congregational Church. They established a “Bible commonwealth” in the Massachusetts Bay Colonies – where the laws of the colony were the laws in the Bible – they came to the Americas to seek religious freedom and they wanted to start a Utopian society. A few of their beliefs were as follows: that humans are inherently evil, that salvation depended solely on the grace of God, and that the Bible was the supreme authority for all things on Earth.

I am generally an organized person, but I tend to find little to say and write about. Sometimes I put off writing assignments until the week before it’s done, but I usually finish a day or two before I turn it in. I seem to have trouble writing enough; I tend to write the minimum, even if it doesn’t completely answer the question. Even when I think I answered the question right, I always forget some detail or another that would improve my writing assignment.

• *Entry 2: Imaginative story: the best that could happen*

“A Quick Trip Through the Mind of Samuel Bradshaw on Three Related Occasions”

10:28 PM, the Saturday before the paper is due. All is well. [sigh of relief] I have just reviewed my final draft. I’ve put it through my three spell-check programs; by name they are “Microsoft Spelling and Grammar”, “Mom”, and “Dad”. I am confident that every letter, every word, every idea is in its proper place. What could ever keep me from my 100%? An atrocious brain cell at the back of my head seems to know the answer; but it is nothing. It can be ignored. It *will* be ignored. I will not be suppressed by pessimistic thoughts. And yet there’s a fact I can’t escape. The brain cell is right. The reality is now known throughout my mind: the paper cannot be perfect. It never is. I always forget something. One point. One example. Why should this paper be any different? Success loomed just around the corner, but it appeared to have fallen into an open manhole. I was doomed!

7:28 AM, Monday morning: exactly 33 hours later. In a few more minutes, the teacher will collect my paper. I look around at my classmates’ papers. What?! Ryan has twelve pages! I glance to my right. No! Jake has eight! How do these people write so much? I’m gonna fail, I’m gonna fail, my paper’s too short! I should have added a title page – maybe that would count as another page... Others are placing their papers on the teacher’s desk. With a sigh, I get up and slowly walk towards the desk. My folder plummets onto the already two-foot high stack with a subdued clap. Well, this is it. Why do I take AP?

Several days later. I had almost forgotten about the paper, lost as I was in more recent assignments. The teacher has just begun handing out our graded essays. Each

person, one by one, receives his folder. I hear groans, and shouts, ‘yes’s and ‘argh’s. ... Everyone got their papers back. Except me. “Where is my paper?” I inquire. The teacher explains that some professor at Harvard is using it as a source for one of those thick, incomprehensible scholar-books, the kind that line shelves in those old mansions that you can take tours of. This book was evidently about Anne Bradstreet. People always comment on how incomprehensible my handwriting is. Then I thought about it. My paper was typed! What’s going on?

As it turned out, my essay had proven a point, I never did understand what it was, that shattered all historical theories and shaped a new interpretation of history! I was famous! The next week I received my paper, folded inside an envelope, with a check for a million dollars inside. Attached to the essay was one of those little yellow sticky notes, which said, quite simply, “Thanks!”, followed by an unintelligible signature. I also found inside a coupon, advertising half-off for the 2 million-dollar book at Barnes and Noble. To this day I have not redeemed that coupon. I have great hopes, however, for the one million dollars. It may come in handy next time I don’t want to write an essay.

- *Entry 3: Changing ideas and feelings about my subject*

My attitude and feelings towards my subject haven’t really changed that much. I have, however, learned several new facts. I learned more about the exact time period in which Bradstreet lived, and that she traveled to the Massachusetts Bay colonies as a teenager; I also learned about her family, and that her father was a poet.

I learned more about the style of poetry she wrote: I only knew of two poems before I started my research: the two in the Literature textbook, “To My Dear and Loving Husband” and “Upon the Burning of Our House, July 10th, 1666”, both of which are good

poems, but they don't give a full picture of Bradstreet's works. I learned that she was the only American poet of her time, and that she had to learn from poets in England. There are several other things I've learned about the subject as well.

- *Entry 4: Comments about my research process, in retrospect*

Throughout the course of this project, I have learned many things. I never knew how to take notes very well without unintentional plagiarism. I feel that I have now mastered the skill somewhat. I have also learned more about the process of writing well; having been encouraged to write an outline, an annotated bibliography, a proposal, and other parts, I have taught myself to analyze my research and writing skills towards the improvement thereof. Such improved skills in these areas will be useful to me in my future: at school, and later for a more successful career or job. Aside from taking notes and writing miniature pre-reports, mid-reports, and post-reports, I have learned how to manage my time to get the project done on time.

In short, my overall research and writing skills have improved considerably by means of this project's requirements. There are a couple of areas I wish I could learn how to do better, though: finding more valid examples, and analyzing better the examples that I have.