

Anne Bradstreet

The Religious Poet as Mother

This paper examines how the axis of creativity, motherhood and religion play themselves out in the poetry of Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672), a Puritan American poet and mother of eight. Her work is so compelling for it resists her reduction, despite the attempts of critics, to either the category of pious Puritan or of early feminist. In Bradstreet's construction of motherhood, religious duty and belief on one hand, and the urge to creativity on the other, intersect and interact in interesting and often poignant ways. This paper examines examples from Bradstreet's personal poetry in order to demonstrate how this poetry exposes both piety and quiet rebellion. Interestingly, the source of this rebellion in the poems that deal with the question of motherhood was an intense devotion to her earthly roles of mother and poet. I show that Bradstreet struggled with the Puritan view of mortality chiefly in connection to her role as mother. I also show how, by use of the childbirth metaphor for creativity, Bradstreet's poetic merging of the act of writing poetry with the act of raising children allowed her create art within the restrictive and patriarchal religious context of Puritanism.

Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672) was a Puritan, poet, woman, wife, and mother. Yet critical discussions of Bradstreet's work have rarely taken these multiple markers of identity into account. Rather, critics have framed their arguments as if one has to choose whether religion or gender is the primary force in Bradstreet's poetry. Some passionately argue that Bradstreet was a pious Puritan while others paint her as an early feminist.¹ Although evidence for both positions certainly exists, to reduce Bradstreet to either one of these categories is to simplify a complex religious woman poet living in specific personal, cultural, religious, and historical circumstances. Indeed, because ample evidence for both positions exists, it seems likely that neither position is completely

accurate on its own. Therefore, I shall not make an argument for Bradstreet as a pious Puritan *or* an early feminist, but rather shall examine the way in which Bradstreet's construction of her experience of motherhood reveals sometimes conflicting facets of her roles as mother, poet, and Puritan.

Anne Dudley was born in 1612 in England where she enjoyed a privileged upbringing and a generous education. In 1630, already married, Anne Bradstreet arrived with her family on the *Arbella* in Massachusetts Bay. Here, and later in other New England colonies, the Bradstreet and Dudley families established themselves as mainstays of the Puritan community. Anne Bradstreet gave birth to and raised eight children, while writing poetry and prose. In 1650 her first book of poetry *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* was published, most likely without Bradstreet's knowledge. Bradstreet thus unwittingly became the first American poet to publish poetry.

One of the clearest ways to demonstrate Bradstreet's conception of the inextricability of her roles of mother, Puritan, and poet is by looking at Bradstreet's use of the childbirth metaphor. Ivy Schweitzer (1991) compellingly argues that metaphors of female experience such as marriage, childbirth and mothering were commonly used by Puritan *men* in sermons to describe spiritual processes, while actual women and their lived bodily experiences were marginalized (27). Childbirth as a Puritan metaphor has nothing to do with the actual bodily experience. On the contrary, says Schweitzer, "the spiritualization of feminine imagery had the effect of erasing the earthly and fleshy femaleness from it" (27). Childbirth, rebirth, or "sonship," (28) as a metaphor for the Puritan conversion narrative describes a marital process through which the spouse of Christ is adopted into the Divine family, to be nurtured by the autogenic, omnipotent father (27-28). While Christ becomes a "womb-substitute" (29) for the regenerate soul, the actual woman's womb is devalued as flesh, or as the vehicle through which one falls into original sin.

Bradstreet's use of the birth metaphor is different from that doctrinal rebirth metaphor in which the earthly mother is absent. In a confessional letter "To My Dear Children" (Baym *et al.*, 1989: 118-121) she describes the physical and spiritual pains of becoming and being a mother:

It pleased God to keep me a long time without a child, which was a great grief to me and cost me many prayers and tears before I obtained one and after him gave me many more of whom I now take the care, that as I have brought you into the world, and with great pains, weakness, cares, and fears brought you to this, I now travail in birth again of you till Christ be formed in you. (Baym *et al.* 1989: 120)

This excerpt reveals Bradstreet's intense longing for children and the awesome physical and spiritual responsibility she experienced when she did become a mother. In the above confession, Bradstreet moves from the physical experi-

ence of childbearing to a metaphorical use of the concept where the mother is the agent of her children's spiritual rebirth. Bradstreet valorizes her maternal duty to nurture, educate and instruct her children in order to facilitate their spiritual success.

But Bradstreet's most famous use of the mothering metaphor appears in her poem: "From the Author to Her Book" (Hensley, 1981: 221), which Bradstreet wrote in reaction to the publication of her poetry. She opens with a self-deprecating description of her poetry and her mortified reaction to the fact of its publication:

Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain
Who after birth did'st by my side remain,
Till snatched from thence by friends, less wise than true,
Who thee abroad exposed to public view,
Made thee in rags, halting to the press to trudge,
Where errors were not lessened (all may judge).
At thy return my blushing was not small,
My rambling brat (in print) should mother call.
I cast thee by as one unfit for light,
Thy Visage was so irksome in my sight.

This self-denigration can be read as revealing her awareness that writing poetry as a Puritan woman runs counter to social expectations. But her modesty is not only convention.² Her distress at the publication of her "errors" and "ill-formed" verse clothed in "rags" and "unfit for light," is evident not only throughout the poem, but also in the numerous revisions and improvements that Bradstreet made after *The Tenth Muse* was published. Paradoxically, beyond her sincerely modest disclaimer is a claim to poetic creativity. She is defining herself as nevertheless capable of producing offspring, albeit "ill-formed," from her mind, albeit "feeble," and not only her body.

In an illuminating 1989 essay on "Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor," Susan Stanford Friedman describes the difference between the male and female appropriation of the childbirth metaphor. Friedman argues that for women "the vehicle of the metaphor (procreation) acts in opposition to the tenor it serves (creation) because it inevitably reminds the reader of the historical realities that contradict the comparison being made" (75). While Friedman's essay is somewhat dated, it remains true that maternity and creativity have historically been mutually exclusive categories for women writers. Male authors using the metaphor, argues Friedman, perpetuate the separation between word/flesh, mind/body, creativity/procreativity, male/female, while women authors try to transcend this binary structure of creativity (1989: 86).

The first line of Bradstreet's poem: "Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain" seems actually to maintain the division between body and mind

especially since Bradstreet denigrates the issue of her mind. Bradstreet also draws attention to the separation between her written “offspring” and actual children in her addition of the parentheses in the line: “My rambling brat (in print) should mother call.” Here the poet seems to feel the need to remind the reader that she is referring to her poems and not to actual children.

The “ill-formed offspring” of the first line does not only modestly disclaim her poetry; it also subtly refers to the “monstrous births”—as so described by Puritan governor John Winthrop—of religious dissenters Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer (qtd. in Reid, 1998: 530). Anne Hutchinson, initiator of the antinomian controversy (1636-38), argued against the Puritan conception of the “elect,” claiming that God’s grace was given liberally and grasped personally. She was tried for heresy and eventually excommunicated. Hutchinson and her ally Dyer both gave birth to malformed children, and these “monsters” were considered the results of or punishments for their heretical opinions. Indeed the Puritan preachers connected the offspring of Hutchinson and Dyer’s mind to the offspring of their body. Winthrop proclaimed after Hutchinson’s miscarriage: “...as she had vented misshapen opinions, so she must bring forth deformed monsters” (qtd in Schweitzer, 1991: 1954).

Critics agree (Lutes, 1997; Reid, 1998; White, 1971) that Bradstreet had to have been aware of the antinomian controversy, the “monstrous births” and the reactions to them.³ Bradstreet was certainly not a dissenter and is not comparing her poems to the heretical opinions and deformed babies of the antinomians; rather she is drawing attention to the vulnerability of women to the “public view” and censure of their ill-formed children and poems. By this subtle connection between the products of the mind and actual offspring of the womb, Bradstreet actually defies the separation between creativity and procreativity. She insists that the progeny comes from her mind and calls her name “in print,” yet simultaneously connects the creative offspring to actual babies. Being a mother and a poet become coexisting and somehow allied parts of the poet’s identity. As Friedman correctly points out, this is in defiance of history and cultural prescription that places literary creativity in opposition to domesticity (1989: 75).⁴

In the next part of the poem a change in the speaker’s attitude, marked by “Yet,” becomes apparent:

Yet being mine own, at length affection would
Thy blemishes amend, if so I could.
I washed thy face, but more defects I saw,
And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw.
I stretched thy joints to make thee even feet,
Yet still thou runnest more hobbling than is meet.
In better dress to trim thee was my mind.
But nought save home-spun Cloth, in the house I find.
In this array, amongst Vulgars mayest thou roam.

From this point on, Bradstreet's simple "Yet being mine own" becomes the pervading feeling of the poem. Despite the "defects" and "flaws" of her poems, they belong to her. She created them, she is responsible for them, and she will tend to them despite their faults. This feeling is created by the homely images of a loving mother gently washing her children's faces, cleaning their blemishes, helping them walk, and sewing their clothes. Her nurturance does not succeed: she washes the face "but more defects I saw;" she stretches the joints "to make thee even feet," but "still thou runnest more hobbling than is meet;" and she aims to "better dress" them, but finds only "home-spun cloth."

Indeed, these lines become a statement of motherly duty as well as creative effort. In combining these roles, the poem hints that the functions of mother and poet are complementary. What binds the roles is the basic conviction of the poems and the children "being mine own." Whether the womb or the brain yields the offspring, and whether the offspring is less than perfect or not, it is a part of its creator and as such cannot be disowned. The poet thus closes the poem by claiming her poems as her exclusive progeny:

In Critics' hands, beware thou dost not come,
And take thy way where yet thou art not known.
If for thy Father asked, say, thou hadst none;
And for thy Mother, she alas is poor,
Which caus'd her thus to send thee out of door.

By declaring that her poems have no father, Bradstreet makes several contrary statements at the same time. Alicia Ostriker (1986) calls this strategy—by which women poets simultaneously deny and affirm ideas that may be "forbidden to express, but impossible to repress"(41)—"duplicity." Duplicity, argues Ostriker, allows contradicting meanings to coexist in the poem since "they have equal force within the poet" (40-41).

On one hand, the fatherless poems are illegitimate. Here Bradstreet admits her precarious position: the publication of poetry by a woman was not a legitimate act in the Puritan context. By claiming sole parentage over the poems, though, Bradstreet simultaneously asserts her exclusive ownership and authorship of them. The poems were "snatched from thence by friends" to be "exposed to public view" without the author's knowledge. In reaction, Bradstreet is here reclaiming her authority over the book. However, although Bradstreet does this self-deprecatingly ("thy mother, she alas is poor"), the metaphor of motherhood re-legitimizes her in the context of Puritan society. Motherhood, after all was *the* legitimizing role for a Puritan woman. Yet paradoxically this metaphor, which connects the offspring of the womb to the offspring of the mind, also subverts the traditional separation between creativity and procreativity. In "The Author To Her Book" (Hensley, 1981: 221) the integration of the roles of mother and poet is not smooth; but—through negation and affirmation or, to adopt Ostriker's term, "duplicity"—it is achieved.

By the use of the childbirth metaphor in “The Author to Her Book,” Bradstreet links the physical and the creative aspects of herself. Similarly, in the excerpted portion of “To My Dear Children” (Baym *et al.*, 1989: 118-121), through her use of the childbirth metaphor to describe the spiritual guidance of her children, Bradstreet recognizes the connection between the physical and the spiritual. We see this connection also in her private, intensely personal poems. Although these poems can be described as “domestic” rather than “religious,” religious concerns, especially about mortality, are constantly played out.

In one of the most touching and powerful of these—“Before The Birth of One of Her Children” (Hensley, 1981: 224)—the poet addresses her beloved husband, bidding him farewell before what she feels is her imminent death. This poem primarily expresses Bradstreet’s sincere love for her husband, but also provides insights regarding Bradstreet’s conception of motherhood. For example, Bradstreet’s linkage of childbirth and death strikes the reader immediately, for although the title of the poem invites the expectation of a description of the joyous event of childbirth, the first lines quickly dispel that anticipation: “All things within this fading world hath end,/ Adversity doth still our joys attend.” She acknowledges the joys of life, but recognizes that misfortune threatens at every occasion. This was especially true of childbirth—a precarious situation for any woman at the time, but particularly so for a woman of Bradstreet’s frail health. The poet struggles with the human vulnerability to death and our impotence in the face of the “most irrevocable” “sentence past.” She accepts death, “a common thing,” as “inevitable” but, “yet oh,” clearly desires life.

Because Bradstreet is a Puritan poet confronting death, we expect some reference to God and the afterlife; but in this poem she takes no comfort in religion. It seems to me that this poem is an instance of Bradstreet’s struggle with the issue of “weaned affections.” The Puritan ideal was to wean oneself of one’s love for the world, one’s possessions and even one’s family and, in the words of Robert Daly (1978), “to convince himself finally the world he loved was subordinate to its creator” (86). The language of weaning derives from the experience of motherhood: the child, having reached a certain age must cease to sustain him/herself from the mother’s body. Weaning thus signifies a gradual break in the intense physical and emotional bond between a mother and her baby. Just as it is difficult for the baby to wean itself from its first natural source of sustenance, so is it for the Puritan to shed the affections of the world. Bradstreet describes this process, in her “Meditations Divine and Moral” (Hensley, 1981: 279) revealing her completely Orthodox attitude towards it:

Some children are hardly weaned; although the teat be rubbed with wormwood or mustard, they will either wipe it off, or else suck down sweet and bitter together. So is it with some Christians: let God embitter all the sweets of this life, so that they might feed upon more

substantial food, yet they are so childishly sottish that they are still hugging and sucking these empty breasts that God is forced to hedge up their way with thorns or lay affliction on their loins that so they might shake hands with the world, before it bid them farewell. (Hensley, 1981: 279)

Although this excerpt shows Bradstreet as wholeheartedly accepting the importance of weaned affections, many of her personal poems reveal a poignant struggle between her love of the world and her family and the higher spiritual order that requires a certain renunciation of that love. In “Before The Birth of One of Her Children” (Hensley, 1981: 224) Bradstreet seems so attached to her loved ones, so “unweaned” from her life and earthly connections—“still hugging and sucking these empty breasts”—that her emphasis lies in the search for immortality rather than in unification with God.

Bradstreet moves in the poem from general statements to the intensely personal, addressing her husband with heartfelt love.⁵ The speaker knows that her husband might remarry after her death and bearing this in mind, she considers her children:

And when thy loss shall be repaid with gains
Look to my little babes, my dear remains
And if thou love thyself, or loved'st me,
These O protect from step-dame's injury.

She refers to her “little babes” with the greatest affection, conceiving of them as her “dear remains.” On one hand “remains” refer to her corpse, but on the other, to what she has left behind, her legacy. By her use of the double meaning of the word, Bradstreet emphasizes that her children are a part of her in the most physical sense. They also become a replacement for her “oblivious grave.” Instead of remembering her by revering her dead body, she wants her husband—“if thou love thyself, or loved'st me”—to direct his love of her, and of himself (for their children are a part of him too) onto the children. She thus implores her husband to shelter them “from step-dame's injury.”

The final lines of the poem lead the reader to make a correlation between her children and her poetry:

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 salt tears this last farewell did take.

Unlike “The Author to Her Book,” (Hensley, 1981: 221) no metaphor forges the connection here; rather the reader realizes that her children are not her only remains. As her children should cause their father to remember her, so her

poems will also provoke her memory. Like “The Author to the Book,” this poem connects the products of the body and the mind, granting them similar value. The poems, like the children, stand in for her body. Because she can no longer physically “lay in thine arms,” her husband should hold the poems and “kiss this paper for thy love’s sake.” Both her poems and her children grant her immortality. Paradoxically, however, the event of birthing children brings her into a painful awareness of her mortality.

The pull of her earthly attachment to her children against the vision of a higher spiritual order causes a tension in many of her personal poems. This tension is really what frees Anne Bradstreet’s poem from the risk of didactic Puritan verse. The conflict is even more obvious in an elegy to her grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet, who died at the age of one and a half. This poem reveals the centrality of the subject of mortality for Bradstreet as a poet, a mother and a Puritan. It also shows that with respect to her children and grandchildren she was unable to resolve her concerns.

The first three lines of the poem demonstrate the poet’s difficulty in saying goodbye:

Farewell dear babe, my hearts too much content,
Farewell sweet babe, the pleasure of my eye,
Farewell fair flower that for a space was lent

This repetition slows the poem down, making the farewell prolonged and painful. The pathos is compounded by the simple descriptions of affection—“dear babe,” “sweet babe,” “fair flower”—employed by the poet. The repetition of “my” in the first two lines also forges the connection that the poet felt to her grandchild. The fourth line of the poem abruptly announces her death: “Then taken away into Eternity.” Because this line is shorter than the three lines preceding it, and because “eternity” does not quite rhyme as it should with “eye,” the pain that the meaning of the line conveys is compounded by its form.

The poem then returns to three longer, slower, rhyming lines. But as line 4, the middle line of the stanza serves as an abrupt break with lines 1-3, it also undermines the resolution of lines 5-7, since eternity clearly denotes not only the eternal heavenly state, but also the child’s eternal absence from the world:

Blest babe why should I once bewail thy fate,
Or sigh thy days so soon were terminate;
Since thou are settled in an Everlasting state.

Bradstreet makes her questioning explicit by asking why she should mourn Elizabeth’s fate if she knows that the child is in heaven. Yet although this question is meant to dispel her doubts by convincing herself that the heavenly life is “everlasting,” it also calls attention to the fact that, despite her acceptance of the doctrine, she does indeed “bewail thy fate.”

The second and last stanza of the poem draws a parallel between the fate of “buds new blown” and that of the child, the “fair flower” of the previous stanza. It seems that Bradstreet can reach the partial reconciliation of the end of the poem only by distancing herself from the direct discussion of her grandchild’s death. She opens this stanza by demonstrating that “by nature,” everything dies in its time:

By nature Trees do rot when they are grown
And Plumbs and Apples thoroughly ripe do fall
And Corn and grass are in their season mown,
And time brings down what is strong and tall.

Bradstreet is not troubled by nature running its normal course, yet for “plants new set to be eradicate,/ And buds new blown, to have so short a date,” is, by contrast, unnatural. Thus the only conclusion at which Bradstreet can arrive regarding the buds and her baby grandchild is that it is “his hand alone that guides nature and fate.” In the end the poet surrenders all her questioning to this belief that God has His reasons for sometimes overturning the rules of nature. There are events in this world, such as the death of a baby, which are beyond human logic and understanding. Only the acceptance of this can provide comfort. The final line—“his hand alone that guides nature and fate”—is a deep expression of faith and surrender of logic, and thus somewhat mitigates the doubts that Bradstreet expresses in the poem. Yet the poet’s pain is not eradicated and the doubts, once expressed, remain vivid and real.

The poems written about her children and grandchildren encourage the conclusion that Bradstreet, when writing directly about her loved ones, could not completely surrender to Puritan doctrine, especially in matters of mortality.⁶ She loved her family far too much to be sufficiently “weaned” from them into a complete dependence on God. All the poems examined in this paper reveal her love, her sacrificial devotion and her heartfelt concern for the physical and spiritual welfare of her children. Yet her faith and her piety remain, even in these personal domestic poems, a central axis in her life. Another axis was her poetry. In fact, she viewed her poems also as kinds of children—“offspring”—that she cared for, and that would provide her with the immortality that she sought. Thus I conclude by avoiding a reduction of Bradstreet to pious puritan or rebellious woman. Her poetry exposes both piety and quiet rebellion. But the source of this rebellion, at least in the poems that deal with the question of motherhood, was an intense devotion to her earthly roles of mother (and wife).

¹Among those that argue that Bradstreet was a pious Puritan are Robert Daly (1978), Jeffrey Hammond (1991), Paula Kopacz (1988), while the feminist camp of critics consists, among others, of Wendy Martin (1984), Anne Stanford (1983), Pattie Cowell (1983) and Ivy Schweitzer (1988).

²In her 1988 essay “Bradstreet and the Renaissance,” Ivy Schweitzer discusses Bradstreet’s use of the “*topos* of affected humility” in her public poetry (292). She agrees with Eileen Margerum (1982) that the apologies should not be mistaken for Bradstreet’s true feelings since “affected modesty” was a common poetic device employed by Renaissance poets. Schweitzer complicates Margerum’s argument, however, by commenting that as a woman, Bradstreet “was defined by injunctions not merely to affect modesty, but to be ‘truly’ humble and self-effacing in everything she did”(293). In “The Author to the Book,” a poem about her poetry, these arguments need to be considered together with the evidence that she dedicated much effort at attempting to improve her work by making corrections to her earlier poems.

³Firstly, Bradstreet’s own father and husband presided at Hutchinson’s trial; secondly, Bradstreet’s sister, Sarah Keayne was involved in the controversy; lastly, the births of Hutchinson and Dyer occurred at the same time as Bradstreet was childbearing, and would have been of interest to her. (Lutes, 1997: 29)

⁴An example of the Puritan attitude to woman poets can be found in John Winthrop’s description of the fate of Anne Yale Hopkins, a Puritan woman who wrote poetry but subsequently went insane: “For if she had attended her household affairs, and such things as belong to women, and not gone out of her way and calling to meddle in such things as are proper to men, whose minds are stronger, etc., she had kept her wits, and might have improved them usefully and honorably in the place God had set her” (qtd. in White, 1971: 172-173). Another example can be found in a letter of Thomas Parker written in 1650 to his sister, who had just published a book: “Your printing of a book beyond the custom of your sex doth rankly smell” (qtd. in Martin, 1984: 58)

⁵This is only one of many poems in which the poet’s love for her husband is obvious. Other such poems include “To my Dear and Loving Husband” (Hensley, 1967: 225), “A Letter to her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment” (Hensley, 1967: 226), “In My Solitary Hours in My Dear Husband’s Absence” (Hensley, 1967: 267), and “In Thankful Remembrance for My Dear Husband’s Safe Arrival Sept 3, 1662” (Hensley, 1967: 270).

⁶Poems in which Bradstreet did not discuss her husband or children, such as “A Weary Pilgrim” (Hensley, 1967: 294) and “Meditation” (Hensley, 1967: 253), do come to full terms with mortality and long for the higher spiritual order of heaven.

References

- Baym, Nina et al. Eds. 1989. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature Vol. 1*. New York: Norton.
- Bradstreet, Anne. 1650. *The Tenth Muse*. London: Stephen Bowtell.
- Cowell, Pattie. 1983. “Anne Bradstreet: ‘In Criticks Hands.’” in Pattie Cowell and Anne Stanford, eds. *Critical Essays on Anne Bradstreet*. Boston: G. K.

- Hall. 270-279.
- Daly, Robert. 1978. *God's Altar: The World and the Flesh in Puritan Poetry*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. 1989. "Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor: Gender Difference in Literary Discourse." In Elaine Showalter, ed. *Speaking of Gender*. New York: Routledge. 73-100.
- Hammond, Jeffrey. 1991. "The Puritan Elegaic Ritual: From Sinful Silence to Apostolic Voice." *Studies in Puritan American Spirituality* 2: 77-106.
- Hensley, Jeannine. 1981. Ed. *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kopacz, Paula. 1988. "'To Finish What's Begun': Anne Bradstreet's Last Words." *Early American Literature* 23 (2): 175-187.
- Lutes, Jean Marie. 1997. "Negotiating Theology and Gynecology: Anne Bradstreet's Representation of the Female Body." *Signs* 22 (2): 302-334.
- Margerum, Eileen. 1982. "Anne Bradstreet's Public Poetry and the Tradition of Humility." *Early American Literature* 17 (2): 152-160.
- Martin, Wendy. 1984. *An American Triptych: Anne Bradstreet, Emily Dickinson, Adrienne Rich*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Ostriker, Alicia Suskin. 1986. *Stealing the Language; The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Reid, Bethany. 1998. "'Unfit for Light': Anne Bradstreet's Monstrous Birth." *New England Quarterly* 71 (4): 517-42.
- Schweitzer, Ivy. 1988. "Anne Bradstreet Wrestles with the Renaissance." *Early American Literature* 23(3): 291-312.
- Schweitzer, Ivy. 1991. *The Work of Self-Representation: Lyric Poetry in Colonial New England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Stanford, Anne. 1983. "Anne Bradstreet: Dogmatist and Rebel." in Pattie Cowell and Anne Standford, eds. *Critical Essays on Anne Bradstreet*. Boston: G. K. Hall. 76-88.
- White, Elizabeth. 1971. *Anne Bradstreet, The Tenth Muse*. New York: Oxford University Press.