University of Mohamed Boudief

Department of Letters and English Language

Level/ Second year G 1, 2, and 3

Module: American Literature

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LESSON ONE:

Early American and Colonial Period

1607-1776

Early American literature captures a nation in its infancy. From the first interactions between Native Americans and Europeans to the stirring cries of the Revolutionary War, writers chronicled the tensions and the triumphs of the day.

The Meeting of Two Worlds

Explorers and early settlers forged a life for themselves in America that was completely foreign to what they had known in their home countries. In fact, so extraordinary were their experiences that the earliest American writers concentrated mainly on describing and trying to make sense out of their challenging new environment and the unfamiliar people with whom they shared it. In diaries, letters, and reports back home, they recorded a historical turning point: when the world of the Europeans first intersected with that of the Native Americans. Unknown to Europeans, people had been living in the Americas for at least tens of thousands of years, adapting to its diverse environments, forming communities, establishing trading networks, and building working cities. Millions of people lived in the Americas on the eve of the arrival of the Europeans—as many as lived in Europe at the time. The earliest writers chronicled how the Europeans and Native Americans viewed one another and the North American land. In 1634, for example, William Wood of Massachusetts Bay Colony noted that the Native Americans "took the first ship they saw for a walking island, the mast to be a tree, the sail white clouds." William Bradford, governor of Plymouth Plantation, in turn described North America as "a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men." The land, however, was neither desolate nor hideous, and the Native Americans were usually cooperative—at least until they began to be forced off their land by European colonists.

From Colony to Country

The first permanent colony was established at Jamestown in 1607. By 1733, English colonies stretched all along the Atlantic coast. Once rooted in North American soil, the colonies became increasingly self-reliant and practiced local self-rule. loyalty to england The first colonists thought of themselves as English subjects, even though they did not have representatives in the British parliament. They supported England economically by exporting raw materials to the homeland and importing Britain's manufactured goods. Britain, in turn, protected its territory. It sent soldiers to fight during the French and Indian War (1759–1763), when France allied with a number of Native American groups to drive the British out of North America. After many defeats, England brought in new military leaders and

made its own alliance with Native Americans—the powerful Iroquois. After a long and costly war, the victorious Great Britain claimed all of North America east of the Mississippi River.

When Great Britain tried to tax the colonists to recover some of the money spent on the war, however, it ended up losing far more than its war costs. Fired by cries of "No taxation without representation," the colonists protested British control—in both fiery words and bold actions. With each new act of British "tyranny," writers for colonial newspapers and pamphlets stirred the hearts and minds of the colonists to support independence. The colonies declared themselves to be "free and independent" in 1776 and fought and defeated one of the greatest military power on earth to turn their declaration into a reality. The remarkable minds of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and other colonial thinkers put timeless words to this experiment in the form of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. When the Constitution was approved in 1788, the United States of America was born.

Cultural Influences

Religion was the most influential cultural force on writers of this period. Puritan values and beliefs directed people's everyday lives as well as the formation of an American society.

Puritan Beliefs : Many of the settlers in the 1600s were Puritans. Puritans were a group of English Protestants who had sought to "purify" the Church of England and return to simpler ways of worshiping. Their efforts had been most unwelcome in England, however, and many left the country for America to escape persecution. Puritan settlers believed themselves chosen by God to create a new order in America. John Winthrop, for example, wrote in 1630 that "we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us." Puritans' values directed every aspect of their lives. They saw human struggle with sin as a daily mission and believed, above all else, that the Bible would help them through the torments of human weakness. Although they felt that humans were essentially sinful, they believed that some, the "elect," would be spared from eternal punishment by God's grace. Hard work, thrift, and responsibility were therefore seen as morally good, a sign that God was working within. The thriving settlements and financial success that grew from these qualities were thought to be a mark of God's approval. However, Puritanism had a dark side as well. Puritans tended to be inflexible in their religious faith and intolerant of viewpoints other than their own. In one famous case, the Salem witchcraft trials, a whole community fell victim to the hysteria of the witch-hunt, ending with more than 20 people dead by execution.

In the 1700s, both Enlightenment ideals and Puritan values contributed to the country's thirst for independence.
The Enlightenment: In the 1700s, there was a burst of intellectual energy taking place in Europe that came to be known as the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers had begun to question previously accepted truths about who should hold the power in government. Their thinking pointed the way to a government by the people—one in which people consent to government limitations in exchange for the government's protection of their basic rights and liberties. American colonists adapted these Enlightenment ideals to their own environment. The political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson shaped the American Enlightenment and began to eclipse even the most brilliant European thought. Enlightenment ideals prompted action and gave colonists a

philosophical footing for their revolution. “I know not what course others may take,” Patrick Henry thundered to the delegates at the second Virginia Convention in 1775, “but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!”

The Great Awakening : At the same time, many people began to worry that Puritan values were being lost. Preachers such as Jonathan Edwards called for people to rededicate themselves to the original Puritan vision, and a new wave of religious enthusiasm began to rise. This movement, called the First Great Awakening, united colonists who were in other ways diverse. Across the colonies, people began to feel joined in the belief that a higher power was helping Americans set a new standard for an ethical life. While the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening emphasized opposing aspects of human experience—reason and emotionalism, respectively—they had similar consequences. Both caused people to question traditional authority, eventually leading colonists to break from Britain’s control and embrace democracy

Historical and Social Context

Because of the long, formative nature of the colonial era, many historical events are important, from the establishment of Jamestown in 1607 to the Declaration of Independence in 1776. An event with enormous repercussions occurred in Jamestown in 1619. This was the arrival of slaves from Africa. Although no contemporaneous written comment about it is known to exist, later in the century organizations and individuals began protesting the institution of slavery, not only in Virginia but throughout the colonies. The first such expression was by a group of Germantown Friends in 1688; Samuel Sewall wrote against slavery in *The Selling of Joseph, a Memorial* (1700). In time, an abolitionist movement formed (the initial abolitionist society was established in Philadelphia in 1775), the Civil War was fought, and slavery was ended in the United States.

The first major event after the establishment of Jamestown and the introduction of slavery was the landing at, establishment of, and development of Plymouth by the Pilgrims in 1620. Not only did their leader, William Bradford, write the history of the group in *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1856), but some of its details form the basis for aspects of American mythology, such as the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth and the celebration of the first Thanksgiving, though Bradford barely alludes to the latter. In *New English Canaan*(1637), Thomas Morton responds not to Bradford’s history but rather to the actions of the Pilgrims, who destroyed his Merry Mount community and forced him to return to England. Nathaniel Hawthorne used this conflict as the basis for the tale “The May-Pole of Merry Mount” (1836); it also figures in Robert Lowell’s *Endecott and the Red Cross,* a 1965 play revised in 1968, as well as in other artistic works.

The beginning of the great migration of Puritans to America in 1630 is important because in settling Massachusetts Bay these people established a society based on religious principles, ones that not only governed people’s lives but that also generated discussion and debate among the most imposing American intellects of the century. Because these intellects—mostly ministers—wrote about the issues they confronted, an impressive record of their thoughts and positions exists. John Cotton and Roger Williams

disagreed on the issue of freedom of conscience, for example. Williams embraced it, but Cotton did not. They debated this issue openly in a series of publications during the 1640s and 1650s. Winthrop explained Puritan political theory in his 1645 speech to the General Court. When numerous people wanted the Congregational church to assume a Presbyterian nature, ministers met to discuss the issue and rejected it in *A Platform of Church Discipline Gathered out of the Word of God* (1649), better known as the Cambridge Platform, written mainly by Richard Mather. No American fiction writer addressed Puritanism more effectively than Hawthorne. Not only did he compose one of the most important of all American novels, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), but he set it in Puritan times, with Puritan characters, including some actual ones. He also wrote several stories dealing with Puritan issues, such as "Young Goodman Brown" (1835). Trials of supposed witches were held in Salem in 1692. Although such trials were not unique to Salem—many had been held in Europe—those in Salem, which resulted in the execution of twenty people, left a permanent mark on what might be called the American psyche. Some of the most important people of the time supported the trials, including Cotton Mather. His *Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions* (1689) helped establish a climate in which the witchcraft frenzy could develop. When the trials began, he urged the judges' caution but recommended, in *The Return of Several Ministers* (1692), that the judges prosecute witches fully. That same year, he published a narrative of the trials in *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, which was ridiculed in 1700 by Robert Calef in *More Wonders of the Invisible World*. Cotton Mather's father, Increase, believed that the Salem trials should be held, but thought that reliance on spectral evidence alone was inadequate for convicting someone, an opinion expressed in *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits* (1692). One of the trial judges was John Hathorne, whose participation in the proceedings apparently so affected a great-great-grandson that guilt became a major theme in his fiction, such as *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851). This writer was Hawthorne, who changed the spelling of his surname. Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* (1953) is probably the most famous literary work dealing directly with the trials.

In the decade or so before the middle of the eighteenth century, religion underwent a transformational change, initially in Massachusetts but ultimately almost everywhere in America. This phenomenon was based on the serious, philosophical writings of Jonathan Edwards, including the terrifying sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741), writings that promoted an emotional approach to religion. Encouraging such an approach in compositions is one thing; disseminating it is another. Popularizing his ideas fell not to Edwards but primarily to George Whitefield, an English evangelist who, upon arriving in America in 1739, propagated them. His magnetism and oratorical skills, combined with his message of opening oneself to religious affections, resulted in a great awakening of religious awareness and conversion. This ecstatic response concerned Edwards, who pondered the genuineness of some people's religious affections. He expressed his thoughts about this and other issues, including the revivals themselves, in *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746). Major figure though Edwards was as a religious thinker, his ideas—and their popularization—did not go unchallenged. His most formidable

opponent was Charles Chauncy, who, as a result of believing in a reasoned, rational approach to religion, thought that people stirred by Whitefield were largely delusional. He presented his positions in such works as *An Unbridled Tongue a Sure Evidence, That Our Religion is Hypocritical and Vain* (1741), *The New Creature Describ'd, and Consider'd as the Sure Characteristick of a Man's Being in Christ* (1741), *Enthusiasm Described and Caution'd Against* (1742), and *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New-England* (1743), his most significant work.

In the mid 1740s, the intensity of **the Great Awakening** began to diminish. Soon after the lessening of religious fervor, religious concerns continued but became secondary to many people as political realities intruded on their lives. Specifically, in the mid 1760s, Parliament began passing a series of acts intended to generate revenue. These included the Sugar Act (1764), the Currency Act (1764), the Quartering Act (1765), the Stamp Act (1765), the Declaratory Act (1766), the Townshend Acts (1767), the Tea Act (1773), the Coercive Acts (1774), and the New England Restraining Act (1775). Many Americans objected to these acts ("no taxation without representation"), increasingly so as time passed. Event led to event, and in 1675 the Revolution began; the Declaration of Independence was written the next year, thereby concluding the colonial era in American history.

The politics of the time generated an outpouring of writing, which helped drive events. One of the earliest protesters against England was James Otis, who, though he did not actually call for revolution, presented his views on natural rights in four publications, including *A Vindication of the House of Representatives* (1762) and *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved* (1764). Stephen Hopkins wrote in favour of the American cause in *The Rights of Colonies Examined* (1765), a pamphlet answered by the Tory Martin Howard in *A Letter from a Gentleman in Halifax, to His Friend in Rhode Island* (1765). In *A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law* (1765), future president John Adams places the dispute between America and England in the context of realities of classical Greece and Rome. Mercy Otis Warren, sister of James Otis, wrote several anti-British plays beginning in 1773. Benjamin Franklin satirized the English attitude toward America in "An Edict by the King of Prussia" and "Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One" (both 1773), as did Francis Hopkinson in *A Pretty Story* (1774). At the beginning of his literary career, Philip Freneau satirized the English in several poems, including "General Gage's Soliloquy," "General Gage's Confession," and "A Political Litany" (all 1775). Few works were as effective in influencing opinion against the British as John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies* (1768), though one did exceed its impact: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776), which, in its call for political independence, helped generate broad support for the American Revolution, already in progress.

Anne Bradstreet

To My Dear and Loving Husband and Upon the Burning of Our House, July 10th, 1666

Anne Bradstreet was essentially the first notable American poet, man or woman. Considering that Puritan women were not encouraged to improve their minds—let alone express their ideas—this achievement is

remarkable. Coming to America Anne Dudley Bradstreet was born in England and raised on an estate, which her father managed for the Earl of Lincoln. With access to the earl's library, she received a good education. In 1628, 16-year-old Anne married Simon Bradstreet. Two years later, the young couple sailed for Massachusetts. After her privileged upbringing, Anne Bradstreet was not prepared for the harsh living conditions of colonial America. Her religious faith helped her endure these hardships—as did writing poetry. Personal Poetry Bradstreet focused primarily on the realities of her life—her husband, her eight children, and her house. In 1650, without her knowledge, Bradstreet's brother-in-law had some of her verses published in London in a volume titled The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America. It was the first book of poetry ever published by an American colonist.

To My Dear and Loving Husband

Anne Bradstreet

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee, give recompense.
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.

Analysis:

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Anne Bradstreet was born in England in the early 17th century, but she and her husband, Simon Bradstreet, migrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, where the Bradstreets became an important political family. Both Bradstreet's husband and her father became governors of the colony. The Bradstreets emigrated to America because of their religious beliefs: both Anne and her husband were devout Puritans, a radical Protestant sect that was persecuted in England in the first half of the 17th century. They thus sought in America the freedom to practice their religion. While they may have found religious freedom in colonial Massachusetts, the colony remained subject to the prejudices of its time. The religious life of the colony was structured and controlled by male political and religious figures; women who challenged their positions, such as Anne Hutchinson, were exiled from it. Bradstreet thus found herself in a difficult, complicated position as a poet. Her writing was potentially threatening to her male relatives' political standing in a society that actively suppressed women's voices. Throughout her writing, Bradstreet suppresses much of this historical context. She never, for instance, describes an American landscape or the political machinations of colonial society. Her work refuses to engage with the circumstances of her life, turning instead to classical and European models. However, she does consistently address the paradoxes and dangers of writing as a woman in her society. She is consistently apologetic about her writing. In a verse letter to her father, "To Her Most Honoured Father Thomas Dudley Esq. These Humbly Presented," she notes, "My goods are true (though poor)." Bradstreet is humble about her work—and with good reason. A poet of considerable skill and ambition, Bradstreet surely did not consider her work "poor," but she had to pretend otherwise to avoid being seen as an overly ambitious woman writer.

Summary

If two people ever became one through marriage, then we have definitely become one. If a husband was ever loved by his wife, then surely you are loved. If ever a wife was happy with her husband, then surely I am happy. Compare your marriages against mine, women, if you can. I value your love more than a gold mine or all the riches that are in the East. My love is like a thirst so strong that not even rivers could satisfy it. Nothing but love from you can satisfy me. And I cannot in any way hope to repay your love. I hope that God will richly reward you for your love. So, while we're alive, let's stay so true to each other so that when we die, we will live forever.

Themes

LOVE : In poetry of this era—particularly poetry written by Puritans like Bradstreet—love and sexuality are often portrayed as sinful. In "To My Dear and Loving Husband," Bradstreet takes a different approach, describing her relationship with her husband as unifying and eternal, powerful enough to even outlive death. The poem thus presents earthly love as something deeply good and even redemptive. The poem begins by considering the physical, personal relationship between the speaker and her husband. The speaker notes that the two have become "one," and she stresses their personal happiness—it's so great that she would refuse all the riches in the world for it. The scope of the poem at this point is narrow: the speaker thinks about her marriage in relation to earthly happiness. She does not yet mention broader matters, like religion or the relationship between love and the afterlife. However, as the poem progresses, the speaker begins to consider the relationship between her love for her husband and her religious faith. This shift begins in line 7, where the speaker alludes to the biblical Song of Solomon, which says: "Many waters cannot quench love." Through that allusion, the speaker connects her own love with the Bible's presentation of love. And, as she notes that "rivers cannot quench" her desire for her husband, she subtly suggests that her love is undying—it will live on even past her own short time on earth. The speaker builds on this suggestion in the poem's final four lines, where she describes the love she shares with her husband as eternal: it will "persevere" even after "we live no more." Moreover, she suggests that her husband's love will be to his credit when his soul is judged after death. In this sense, the speaker not only argues that her love is everlasting, but that it is redemptive in a religious sense. Far from being sinful, then, this love helps her husband (if not necessarily her) to enter heaven. Do note that the poem celebrates only a very specific kind of love: marital. It's clear, then, that some kinds of love are pure and redemptive, but Bradstreet doesn't say whether her claims apply to all love or only to love within marriage.

WOMEN, DESIRE, AND TRADITION : "To My Dear and Loving Husband" is an elegant and, in many ways, traditional love poem. Echoing language from the Bible, the speaker describes her marriage as a union of two separate persons who become one. She emphasizes the force and extent of her love, noting: "My love is such that rivers cannot quench." These are traditional tropes that by Bradstreet's time had been widely used in European love poetry, but with an important difference: until Bradstreet's time, these tropes were almost exclusively used by male poets to describe women—women who didn't have the chance to respond to the poems about them. Bradstreet reclaims these traditions for her own use. She asserts that women are capable not only of writing poetry, but of expressing love and desire in the same terms that men use. What's more, she uses those very terms to fight against the misogynistic undercurrents that they often have in poetry written by men. In writing about her love for her husband, Bradstreet draws on sources like poet Edmund Spenser and the Bible, adapting their modes of writing for her own purposes. The evidence of her deep reading of European love poetry is clear in the poem: she casually and skillfully uses the tropes of that tradition. But the difference is that she writes from the perspective of a married woman. This is quite different from the situation of, say, Petrarch's sonnets, where the poet writes about a distant and unreceptive woman. Bradstreet thus adapts the tropes of the tradition of love poetry to her own situation as a married woman. And, in doing so, she asserts her capacity to articulate desire and passion—much as a male poet like Petrarch would. The poem argues, implicitly, for the capacity of women to use poetry to express their feelings and desires. This was a controversial argument at the time Bradstreet wrote. But Bradstreet does not simply recycle the tropes of traditional love poetry: she also speaks back to them. For instance, she compares her love to a thirst so great that "rivers cannot quench [it]." This plays on widespread ideas about the female body in Renaissance medicine, namely that it is overly fluid. Rather than trying to dry her body out, to attain a male ideal, Bradstreet proposes ingesting an enormous quantity of liquid—that is, making her body even more fluid. And she proposes to

take this subversive step within the traditional context of marriage. Bradstreet seems to be saying that women don't have to repress themselves in order to experience love and passion; she argues that it's possible to reject masculine ideas about what women should be and experience love on her own terms. Bradstreet's poem thus poses problems and challenges as it uses the tropes of traditional love poetry. She is not content to merely claim these traditions; she also uses them to challenge oppressive and misogynistic forces in her culture

MARRIAGE, WEALTH, AND DESIRE : As its title suggests, "To My Dear and Loving Husband," is a poem about married love between a man and wife. It proposes that such love has a powerful effect on the two people involved: as the speaker announces in the first line, they become "one." This suggests that their love is pure and unified. The speaker thus rejects a common view of marriage in Bradstreet's time: that it is a financial transaction, not a partnership. She stresses the value and pleasure of her love for her husband apart from any financial matters: the speaker, at least, would rather have her husband's love than "all the riches that the East doth hold." Love, for the speaker, is compensation in and of itself—she doesn't need any other wealth. For her husband, however, there does still seem to be a transactional aspect to their relationship. The poem contains a surprising amount of financial language. The speaker refers to her marriage as a "prize" and compares it to "riches" and "gold." These are material riches, the kind of wealth that one uses during life. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the period in which Bradstreet wrote the poem: at this point in history, the ideal of marriage as a partnership had not yet fully emerged and many people treated marriage as a simple financial transaction. But the speaker rebels against this model of marriage. She stresses its non-financial rewards, even as she uses comparisons to material wealth to show how much she loves her husband. However, she also describes her relationship with her husband in financial terms, noting that she cannot "repay" him for his love. Love is still somewhat transactional here. Then, the speaker prays that "the heavens" will "reward" her husband for his dedication to her, since she can't. In other words, she hopes that his love for her will get him into heaven when his soul is judged at the end of his life. She thus imagines that he will receive a kind of compensation for loving his wife. Tellingly, though, she does not imagine an equivalent form of compensation for herself—she does not ask, for instance, that her own dedication to her husband will help her get into heaven. It seems, then, that the poem reveals some inequality within the speaker's marriage, and perhaps within all marriages at this time. For the speaker, love is an end in itself—she doesn't need material wealth as long as she has her husband. The husband, however, can expect some kind of compensation--in his next life, if not this one. The poem ultimately suggests that marriage is always a kind of transaction, at least for men--even a marriage as loving and passionate as this one.

Symbols

EAST : When the speaker talks about the "East," she is not referring to a direction, but rather to a culture (or a set of cultures) distant from her own. For people living in colonial America in the 17th century, the East was an exotic and opulent place, full of sensual and material riches. It symbolizes, for the speaker, all of the pleasures and wealth available in this world. It is thus also implicitly a sinful place full of earthly delights—just the opposite of the simplicity and piousness that Puritans like Bradstreet prized. By choosing her husband's love over these worldly riches, the speaker asserts her own piousness and her commitment to the spiritual over the material. Of course, her view of Eastern cultures is, at best, highly stereotyped and largely inaccurate. Bradstreet uses the East as a simple symbol of earthly pleasure, rather than making reference to any real facts about Eastern cultures.

HEAVENS: Literally, the "heavens" include everything that hangs over the earth: stars, moon, sun, clouds, atmosphere, etc. But the speaker of "To My Dear and Loving Husband" is not asking the stars or the clouds to reward her husband for his love. (Indeed, she would probably consider such a request to be blasphemous, since it would be giving them powers that, in a Christian context, belong exclusively to God himself). Instead, she uses the "heavens" as a symbol for God himself, who, in Christian theology, resides in the heavens and judges human life. In this sense, she is hoping that her husband's devotion to her will help him earn salvation in this life and a place in heaven in the next.

Poetic Devices

HYPERBOLE

As she praises her husband and her marriage, the speaker of "To My Dear and Loving Husband" often uses elaborate, exaggerated language. For instance, the speaker announces: I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold, Or all the riches that the East doth hold. There's no reason to doubt the sincerity of the speaker's proclamation, but readers may feel that the language here is over-the-top, hyperbolic. However beautiful and moving this language may be, it is doubtless distant from the mundane daily reality of their marriage. Hyperbole is widely used in Renaissance love poetry, particularly in the Petrarchan tradition. Male poets often describe the women they love in highly idealized terms. In "To My Dear and Loving Husband," Bradstreet reclaims hyperbole as a technique. The poem argues, implicitly, that a female poet is just as capable as a male poet of describing love in highly idealized, hyperbolic terms. Further, in the Petrarchan tradition, the poet generally praises a distant and inaccessible woman—someone with whom he'll never have a real relationship. But Bradstreet transforms the device: instead of describing an inaccessible object of desire, it describes a real relationship, making that relationship as dramatic and exalted as any Petrarchan obsession.

END-STOPPED LINE

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" is a heavily end-stopped poem. This device contributes to the poem's sense of selfassurance and control. Most, if not all, of the speaker's thoughts fit neatly into one line; there is rarely a discrepancy between the poem's meter and its grammar. Though it describes a passionate marriage—and makes a strong argument for the holiness of marriage itself—the speaker has not lost herself in a burst of erotic passion. Rather, she remains calm and collected. In this sense, the end-stops underscore the speaker's control and strengthen the poem's argument. From a Christian standpoint, erotic love is sinful because it deprives people of their capacity to make reasonable decisions. (Shakespeare makes just this argument in Sonnet 129). But, with her heavy end-stops, the speaker emphasizes that, within marriage, it is possible to experience erotic passion while remaining reasonable and focused. However, not all of the poem's end-stops are equally strong—and readers may experience several of the poem's lines as enjambments. For instance, line 11 is arguably enjambed. It depends on how one reads the grammar of the sentence. One might read line 11 as a complete sentence. In this case, it would read something like: "While we're still alive, let's persevere in love just as we are now." Line 12 would also be a complete sentence, reading something like, "So that when we die, we may live forever." However, one might also read the two lines together in a single sentence: "While we're still alive, let's persevere in love just as we are now, so that when we die, we may live forever." If these lines are just one complete thought, they introduce a kind of wobble or stutter at the end of the poem: just when the speaker announces her grandest ambitions for marriage, she loses the control (shown by firm end-stops) that had marked the poem so far—perhaps because she is reluctant to impose upon God and tell him what to do.

ANAPHORA

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" opens with a run of anaphoric lines: the speaker repeats the phrase "If ever" at the start of each of the poem's first three lines. In each of these lines, the speaker compares her marriage against the ideal images of marriage—and finds that her marriage measures up. In other words, it is as good as the

best marriages ever. By repeating the initial phrase, "If ever" across each of these comparisons, the speaker generates a sense of accumulation. Although each of these lines is end-stopped, and therefore cut off from the others grammatically, the anaphora nonetheless allows them to build on one another. Each line strengthens the force of the previous line—and gives the reader a sense of the speaker's confidence and conviction in the value of her marriage. What's more, these lines create an impression of single entities coming together with a shared purpose. The anaphora allows the lines to form one coherent point while still remaining separate from each other. This structure--separate, but unified--mirrors the way that the speaker talks about her husband. Like these lines, they are individuals, but just as the lines work together seamlessly, so too do the speaker and her husband become a unified team ("two were one").

ASYNDETON

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" is heavily end-stopped, including in lines 9 and 10. As a result, the speaker has an opportunity here to use a coordinating conjunction to connect her thoughts—but she doesn't. Instead of explicitly spelling out the connections between her thoughts, the speaker asks the reader to supply those connections for themselves, using asyndeton:

Thy love is such I can no way repay;
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.

There is a clear logical connection between the two lines: the speaker wants "the heavens" to "reward" her husband because she cannot "repay" him. But the speaker does not make this connection explicit—though the lines could easily read: "Thy love is such I can in no way repay, therefore I pray the heavens reward thee manifold" (or some more metrical alternative). Here, the speaker makes the reader responsible for building the precise connection between these two lines. This demand on the reader serves as a kind of preparation for the grand statement to come in the poem's final couplet. That is, the asyndeton here puts the reader in the mindset of having to be creative and bold--just as the speaker herself is creative and bold when making her final claim about the nature of love.

CAESURA

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" contains a number of caesurae. The most thematically important of these occur in lines 1, 2, 10, and 12. In each of these lines, caesura is used in a similar way. In the first part of the line, the speaker makes a hypothetical statement: "If ever two were one..." "When we live no more..." In the second half of the line, the speaker explores the consequences of that hypothetical statement: "then surely we [are];" "we may live ever." In each case the caesura separates the two parts of the line, cleanly dividing cause and effect, hypothesis and conclusion. Because each of these lines are end-stopped, they are complete units in themselves, and the caesura marks the internal parts of that unit. (Depending on one's reading, something similar may be happening in line 11: if one reads it as an end-stopped line, it again divides a cause from an effect). In line 4, the caesura functions differently: it separates an instance of apostrophe directed to "ye women" from the rest of the line. This is a less significant instance of the device; the line would not be impaired or changed if it were taken out.

APOSTROPHE

The speaker of "To My Dear and Loving Husband" uses apostrophe throughout the poem, in two different ways. First, the poem is directly addressed to her husband: she is speaking to him, articulating the value and beauty of their marriage. This is a specific form of apostrophe: she is speaking to a real person, someone she knows well. Although the poem is very formal and controlled, the apostrophe directed at the speaker's husband nonetheless gives the poem a sense of intimacy—the reader feels almost as though they are overhearing a conversation between husband and wife. By contrast, in line 4, the speaker addresses a broad, generic group: "ye women." The speaker is not addressing a particular group of women, but rather all women at all times. The intimacy of the speaker's address to her husband is replaced here by a more general form of apostrophe. The poem is thus simultaneously intimate and public, specific and general: it concerns the precise dynamics of the speaker's marriage while also making claims about all marriages in all times. By addressing "women" in particular, the speaker also suggests that this poem contains a message for her female contemporaries--perhaps part of what she wants them to pay attention to is the very fact that women can and should experience this kind of all-consuming passion.

ALLUSION "To My Dear and Loving Husband" contains two kinds of allusion, specific and general. In line 7, the speaker makes an explicit allusion to the Song of Solomon: "many waters cannot quench love," the Bible says. For the speaker and her early readers, living in a Puritan religious settlement in colonial America, the allusion would've been obvious and notable. Through it, the speaker subtly legitimizes her own love. She is saying that it is as forceful—and as pure—as the love described in a biblical passage famous for its passionate description of erotic love. More generally, the poem also makes repeated allusion to the usual rhetorical techniques and tropes of Petrarchan love poetry—for instance, in its use of hyperbole. In this case, the poem's use of allusion is somewhat different. In its allusion to the Bible, the poem draws on the Bible's authority to support its own discussion of love. In its implicit allusions to the Petrarchan tradition, however, it contests the terms and limits of that tradition. By using the tools of this poetic tradition, it highlights the differences between this poem and more traditional ones—namely, that this one is being written by a woman instead of a man, and that it talks about love in the context of a close relationship rather than a removed admiration.

ALLITERATION

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" is not a strongly alliterative poem. Though the poem does contain some alliteration, much of it is incidental. For example, there is an alliteration on a /th/ sound throughout the second half of the poem, but much of that repeated sound comes from words like "that," "the," and "thee"—words that are not particularly thematically significant. The lack of alliteration gives the poem a plain-spoken feel: instead of sounding like a grand, ambitious poetic statement, it feels intimate, direct, and unpretentious. But "To My Dear and Loving Husband" actually is an ambitious poem; it does make grand claims about the speaker's marriage. Those claims sneak up on the reader, and it is only in the final lines that the poem showcases its full ambition. Unsurprisingly, as the poem reveals that ambition, its use of alliteration also intensifies: the final two lines include flashy, loud alliterations on /w/ and /l/ sounds. As the speaker's tone and ambition rise, the literary sophistication of her writing rises as well, delivering a set of ostentatious and grand lines supported by alliteration.

ASSONANCE

In contrast to its relatively sparing use of alliteration, "To My Dear and Loving Husband" uses assonance throughout—sometimes with considerable intensity. The use of assonance often works with and supports the poem's other devices. For instance, the first three lines contain a strong chain of assonance, using /e/ and /ee/ sounds. That pattern of repeated sound emphasizes (and emerges from) the poem's use of anaphora in those same lines. Like the anaphora, the assonance in these lines helps bind together and emphasize the way they build on each other without enjambment or grammatical connections. The poem thus uses assonance as a way of working against the effects of its heavy reliance on end-stopped lines. Though the end-stopped lines suggest that each of the poem's lines are complete, self-contained, assonance subtly dissolves the borders between them. It's worth noting that these fading boundaries seem to mirror the speaker's connection with her husband. That is, the two of them are distinct individuals, just as the poem's lines are distinct from each other, but they're also completely unified as a couple—just as the poem is unified through devices like assonance.

- Line 1: “e,” “e,” “o,” “e,” “o,” “e,” “e,” “e”
- Line 2: “e,” “e,” “e,” “e,” “e,” “ee”
- Line 3: “e,” “e,” “a,” “a,” “a,” “a

CONSONANCE

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" uses consonance in much the same way it uses assonance. Though the poem is relatively sparing in its use of alliteration, it uses other plays of sound to bind together its otherwise highly distinct, even disjointed lines. Of particular interest, then, are moments when consonance stretches across several lines, as in the heavy use of /n/ and /v/ sounds in the final two lines:

> Then while we live, in love let’s so persever,
> That when we live no more, we may live ever.

Though there is some ambiguity about how to read these lines—some readers may see them as two separate grammatical units, while others might see one, enjambed sentence—the two lines are bound together by sound in either case. There is a strong pattern of alliteration on the /l/ sound and, alongside it, the /n/ sound. This /n/ sound appears in some of the key words in the passage, words like "then" and "when," which establish a causal relationship between the couple's happy marriage and their future salvation. In a poem that is often reluctant to explain the relationships between its lines, the use of consonance helps guide the reader through those relationships--and through the relationship between the speaker and her beloved husband.

FORM, METER, AND RHYME

FORM

The poem doesn't follow a specific overall form and instead consists of six rhyming couplets, creating twelve lines total. As we'll talk about more in rhyme scheme, these iambic pentameter couplets are more specifically something called "heroic couplets"—a form usually used to talk about big, important subjects. This suggests just how highly the speaker thinks of her love for her husband. "To My Dear and Loving Husband" is also a highly end-stopped poem. As a result, many of its lines stand on their own conceptually; there is not always a clear relationship between one line and the next, nor is there a clear order or logical progression to the poem. (For example, the first two lines

could be reversed without really changing the poem's meaning.) There are places in the poem, however, where the second line of the couplet completes or comments on the idea set up in the first line, for instance in lines 9-10:

Thy love is such I can no way repay;

The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.

Line 10 acts almost as a response to line 9: since the speaker cannot repay her husband, she prays for Heaven to reward him. There is an implied causal relationship between the two lines—though the speaker does not spell it out. Instead, the reader is asked to assemble the pieces, to find the places in the poem where there are strong relationships between the lines of the couplets.

METER

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" is in iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter is a meter with a distinguished pedigree in English poetry: it was used by some of the poets Bradstreet most admired, including Shakespeare and Spenser. In taking on the meter, she is demonstrating her capacity to write literary poetry—demonstrating more broadly that women can write as skilfully as men can, a controversial point at the time she was writing. Bradstreet makes her point thoroughly: the meter of "To My Dear and Loving Husband" is exceptionally precise and regular. There are no metrical variations to speak of until line 10. Line 10 is slightly more complicated than the previous lines: The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray

The opening of the line is metrically ambiguous. After an unstressed and a stressed syllable, there are two unstressed syllables. This is an unexpected and disturbing hiccup after nearly a hundred syllables of iambic writing. Further, they make the line hard to scan with any certainty. It is tempting to read the first two syllables of the line as an iamb followed by a pyrrhic—but then the rest of the line becomes trochaic. Better, then, to read the first three syllables as an amphibrach (one stressed syllable between two unstressed syllables) followed by four iambs: The heavens |reward | thee man- | ifold, | I pray Though it is unusual to encounter amphibrachs in English poetry, they were used in the 17th century with some regularity as metrical variations. After this disturbance, the following lines return to regular iambs (although both lines 11 and 12 have feminine endings). With the exception of a few moments of slight disturbance, the poem and the poet thus proudly display their mastery of a difficult and prestigious meter.

RHYME SCHEME

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" is a poem in rhyming couplets: AABBCCDDEEFF. None of the poem's rhymes occur in more than one couplet. This non-repeating rhyme scheme affects the reader's experience of the poem: the poem feels somewhat loose and unstructured. Its couplets are piled on top of each other, seemingly at random. For example, one might easily reverse the order of the first two couplets without seriously affecting the content or narrative of the poem. Though the poem's argument does build over the course of its twelve lines, the poem's rhyme scheme does not highlight or mark the internal variations in the argument. "To My Dear and Loving Husband" generally uses strong, direct rhymes—most of which are one syllable. These strong rhymes convey a sense of confidence and self-assurance: though the speaker is making bold claims, she apparently does not feel any uncertainty about their merit. The major exception comes in lines 7-8:

My love is such that rivers cannot quench,

Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.

"Quench" and "recompense" are, at best, slant rhymes. The introduction of slant rhyme is perhaps surprising: it seems like a moment of hesitation or complication in an otherwise smooth and confident poem. There is something apt and appropriate about using slant rhyme here. In these lines, the speaker emphasizes the depth of her love—and argues that only her husband's love will satisfy her. The imperfection in the rhyme scheme suggests the failure of other pleasures to satisfy her. The lines are specifically rhyming iambic pentameter couplets, which are also called "heroic couplets." As their name suggests, heroic couplets are usually reserved for grand, important subjects: battles, political events, philosophical disputes. There is thus some tension between the rhyme scheme, with its grandiosity, and its subject: the love between married people, which tends to be rather more mundane. But the poem attempts to resolve this tension. By using a lofty form for a simple subject, Bradstreet subtly asserts that her marriage is as important and dignified as any traditionally "heroic" subject. The poem moves slowly to justify that assertion, beginning with the speaker's personal happiness. But, by its end, it has moved to weighty, monumental concerns—salvation, eternal life—and it argues that marriage is central to these issues. The content of the poem thus turns out to justify its formal ambition.

Vocabulary

Thee (Line 2, Line 8, Line 10) - "Thee" is a now-obsolete synonym for the word "you." In the past, English—like most other European languages—had two ways of saying "you," one formal and the other informal. "Thee" was an informal way of addressing someone; it implies intimacy and familiarity. Ye (Line 4) - "Ye" is a now-obsolete pronoun. It is synonymous with a word like "y'all:" it was used to address a group of people, rather than a specific person.

Thy (Line 5, Line 9) - "Thy" is a now-obsolete pronoun. It is equivalent in contemporary speech to "your." Until roughly the end of the 19th century, English had two different ways of saying "you" and "your"—one formal and one informal. "Thy" is informal: it's a pronoun that close friends and family members would use with each other. The speaker's use of it thus suggests, appropriately enough, the intimacy and familiarity of her relationship with her husband.

East (Line 6) - The "East" is one of the four cardinal directions (North, South, East, and West) that people use to navigate the world. However, the speaker does not use the word in this neutral sense. Rather, for her, the east is a specific geographic region: Asia and the Middle East. In Bradstreet's culture, this region was associated with wealth and opulence; it seemed very foreign and strange to a British woman living in an American colony in the mid-17th century. The use of the word "East" thus marks the speaker's position in geographic and cultural space and also brings to mind distant riches.

Recompense (Line 8) - "Recompense" has two primary meanings, both of which are relevant to "To My Dear and Loving Husband." First, the word describes an act of reparation or atonement: if someone injures or insults another person, they might offer recompense to right the wrong. The word's second sense is less fraught: it simply describes a payment or a wage, something offered in return for work or a service.

Heavens (Line 10) - The word "heavens" functions a catch-all descriptor for everything that hangs above the earth: the stars, the sky, the moon, the atmosphere. It is often used metaphorically, however, as a symbol for God himself, who is traditionally believed to live in the heavens and, from there, to observe and judge human actions.

Manifold (Line 10) - In the sense that Bradstreet uses the word, "manifold" means "generously" or, simply, "well." It can also mean "many," but here, the speaker simply hopes that her husband will receive a rich and worthy reward for his dedication to her.

Persever (Line 11) - A contracted spelling of the word "persevere." To persevere is to survive, to endure—despite significant challenges or opposition.

In silent night when rest I took
For sorrow near I did not look
I wakened 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.

And when I could no longer look,
I blest His name that gave and took,
That laid my goods now in the dust:
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.
When by the ruins oft I past,
My sorrowing eyes aside did cast,
And here and there the places spy
Where oft I sat and long did lie:

Here stood that trunk and there that chest,
There lay that store I counted best.
My pleasant things in ashes lie,
And them behold no more shall I.
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 shalt thou lie;
Adieu, Adieu, all's vanity.

Then straight I 'gin my heart to chide,

And did thy wealth on earth abide?
Didst fix thy hope on mold'ring dust?
The arm of flesh didst make thy trust?
Raise up thy thoughts above the sky
That dunghill mists away may fly.

Thou hast an house on high erect,
Framed by that mighty Architect,
With glory richly furnishéd,
Stands permanent though this be fled.
It's purchaséd 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;
There's wealth enough, I need no more,
Farewell, my pelf, farewell my store.
The world no longer let me love,
My hope and treasure lies above.

HOMEWORK/ ANALYZE THE POEM ABOVE

Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758

When Jonathan Edwards delivered a sermon, with its fiery descriptions of hell and eternal damnation, people listened. Edwards believed that religion should be rooted in emotion rather than reason. Although 19th-century editors tried to tone down his style, Edwards is recognized today as a masterful preacher. In fact, he is considered by many to be America's greatest religious thinker.

A Spiritual Calling: Born in East Windsor, Connecticut, Edwards was a child prodigy and entered what is now Yale University at the age of 12. While a graduate student there, Edwards experienced a spiritual crisis that led to what he later described as "religious joy." He came to believe that such an intense religious experience was an important step toward salvation.

In 1722, after finishing his education, Edwards followed the path of his father and grandfather and became a Puritan minister. In 1726, Edwards began assisting his grandfather, who was the minister at the parish church in Northampton, Massachusetts. When his grandfather died three years later, Edwards became the church's pastor.

Religious Revivalist : Edwards soon became an effective preacher. In 1734 and 1735, he delivered a series of sermons that resulted in a great number of conversions. The converts believed they had felt God's grace and were "born again" when they accepted Jesus Christ. Edwards's sermons helped trigger the Great Awakening, a religious revival that swept through New England from 1734 to 1750. The movement grew out of a sense among some Puritan ministers that their congregations had grown too selfsatisfied. Delivered at the height of the Great Awakening, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is the most famous of Edwards's nearly 1,200 sermons.

Last Years : Although Edwards inspired thousands, his church dismissed him in 1750 because he wanted to limit membership to those who had undergone conversion. A year later, Edwards went to Stockbridge,

Massachusetts, where he became a missionary in a Native American settlement. In 1757, he accepted an appointment as president of what is now Princeton University. By the time of Edwards's death the following year, the extremism of the Great Awakening had been rejected. However, his vision of humanity suspended, like a spider, over the burning pit of hell still maintains its emotional impact

Literary analysis: sermon

A sermon is a form of religious persuasion in which a speaker exhorts listeners to behave in a more spiritual and moral fashion. Like all sermons, Jonathan Edwards's is shaped by

- purpose—why Edwards delivers the sermon
- audience—whom Edwards is addressing
- context—when and where Edwards delivers the sermon As you read Edwards's sermon, look for passages that reveal his purpose, his audience, and the context for his delivery.

Analyse emotional appeals

Emotional appeals are messages designed to persuade an audience by creating strong feelings rather than by providing facts and evidence. Writers often use tone, imagery, and figurative language to make these types of emotional appeals:

- appeal to fear, which taps into people's fear of losing their safety or security
- appeal to pity, which takes advantage of people's sympathy and compassion for others
- appeal to vanity, which relies on people's desire to feel good about themselves As you read, use a chart like the one shown to record examples of language used to appeal to the audience's emotions.

examples	Emotional appeals
"arrows of death fly unseen"	appeals to fear by creating anxiety, unease

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

By Jonathan Edwards

We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by; thus easy is it for God when he pleases to cast his enemies down to hell. . . .

They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as angry as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is

prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them. . . .

Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. . . .

So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell; and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out: and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of. . . .

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. . . .

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered6 to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by

your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. . . .

It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: For "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in the danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. . . .

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in the door calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming10 from the east, west, north, and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? . . .

Therefore, let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. . . .

Compare Literary Works

Use a chart like the one shown to compare some of Jonathan Edwards's and Anne Bradstreet's attitudes and beliefs. Cite specific details from their writings to support your ideas.

	Edwards	Bradstreet
Eternal Life		
God's Relation to People		
Religious Beliefs		
Human Frailty		

Literary Criticism .

Historical Context: In the 18th century, many people died at a much younger age than they do today. How might awareness of the fragility of life have affected people's receptiveness to Edwards's sermon?