

Sonderdruck aus

Ästhetische Reflexionsfiguren in der Vormoderne

Herausgegeben von

ANNETTE GEROK-REITER

ANJA WOLKENHAUER

JÖRG ROBERT

STEFANIE GROPPER

Universitätsverlag
WINTER
Heidelberg
2019

Inhaltsverzeichnis

I Theoretische Perspektiven

ANNETTE GEROK-REITER und JÖRG ROBERT Reflexionsfiguren der Künste in der Vormoderne Ansätze – Fragestellungen – Perspektiven	11
MANUEL BRAUN und ANNETTE GEROK-REITER Selbstbezüglichkeit und ästhetische Reflexionsfigur als Bausteine einer historischen Literarästhetik. Einige grundsätzliche Überlegungen aus Sicht der germanistischen Mediävistik	35
JOACHIM KNAPE Ästhetische Relativitätstheorie und Literatur	67
II Fallstudien	
ANJA WÖLKENHAUER Lukrez' Honigbechergleichnis als ästhetische Reflexionsfigur. Struktur, Funktion, Kontexte	111
ANNEMARIE AMBÜHL <i>Venturi me teque legent</i> (Lucan, <i>Bellum civile</i> 9.985). <i>Self-fulfilling prophecies</i> in der lateinischen Dichtung als Reflexionsfiguren einer Rezeptionsästhetik.	133
STEFAN FREUND Von Hahnenschrei und Osterspeise. Zur Entstehung und Gestalt von Reflexionsfiguren in der christlichen lateinischen Dichtung	159
FRANK BEZNER <i>Lusus ficticius?</i> Ästhetische Reflexionsfiguren in der mittellateinischen Liebesdichtung	185
JÖRN STAEBCKER Die Ästhetik der Runensteine	211

JUSTIN VOLLMANN Präsente Präsente. Zu einer mittelalterlichen Poetologie der Gabe am Beispiel des Marienlobs	241
SANDRA LINDEN Frau Kunst vor Gericht. Die Personifikation als Mittel ästhetischer Reflexion in Konrads von Würzburg <i>Klage der Kunst</i>	271
CHRISTIAN KIENING Ästhetik der Struktur. Experimentalanordnungen mittelalterlicher Kurzerzählungen (<i>Fleischpfand</i> , <i>Halbe Birne</i>)	303
STEFANIE GROPPER Hrærð dikt með ástarorðum. Die Lilja als Synthese zwischen skaldischer Tradition und Innovation	329
MICHAEL STOLZ Bewegtes Beiwerk. Ästhetische Funktionen der Kleiderthematik bei Alanus ab Insulis und Giovanni Boccaccio	357
SUSANNE GOUMEGOU Von der magischen Täuschung zu einer Ästhetik der Illusion <i>avant la lettre</i> . Die »illusionne diabolica« vom <i>Novellino</i> bis zu Ariosts <i>Orlando furioso</i>	393
MATTHIAS BAUER und ANGELIKA ZIRKER Autorschaft und Mitschöpfung in der englischen Literatur der Frühen Neuzeit. Von George Herbert bis William Shakespeare	419
MICHAEL BUTTER Maternal Duty. The Negotiation of Authorship in Anne Bradstreet's <i>The Author to Her Book</i>	445
DIRK NIEFANGER Metadrama als ästhetische Reflexionsfigur. Christian Weises <i>Nachspiel von Tobias und der Schwalbe</i> (1682) und seine Prätexte	463
JÖRG WESCHE Echo als Reflexionsfigur des Widerrufs	487

MICHAEL BUTTER

Maternal Duty: The Negotiation of Authorship in Anne Bradstreet's *The Author to Her Book*

Abstract

Der Artikel behandelt die ästhetische Selbstreflexion in Anne Bradstreets *The Author to Her Book*, das 1678 in der posthum erschienenen, überarbeiteten Ausgabe ihrer Werke erschien und von ihr als letztes Gedicht des Bandes vorgesehen war. Meine These ist, dass Bradstreet in diesem Gedicht ihre poetische Praxis und insbesondere das Publizieren ihrer Gedichte mit Metaphern aus dem häuslichen Bereich und vor allem von Mutterschaft beschreibt, um so Vorwürfen vorzubeugen, sie habe die dominanten Geschlechternormen verletzt. Gleichzeitig unterläuft sie im zweiten Teil des Gedichts diese konformistische Haltung durch Bilder, die über das semantische Feld von Mutterschaft hinausgehen. Auch ihr übertriebener Gebrauch des Bescheidenheitstopos im Gedicht kann als Moment der subtilen Subversion gelesen werden. Der Artikel führt zunächst in die Gedankenwelt des Puritanismus und dessen Geschlechterordnung ein, widmet sich dann Bradstreet und der ungewöhnlichen Publikationsgeschichte ihrer Werke, die im Gedicht verhandelt wird, und konzentriert sich schließlich auf das Gedicht selbst.

Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672) was a pioneer in more than one sense. Most importantly, she was the first writer from colonial America who published a work of poetry. The first edition of her poems was printed in London in 1650 under the title *The Tenth Muse, Lately Sprung up in America, or Several Poems Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning*; the second one came out a few years after her death in Boston in 1678 with the arguably less poetic title *Several Poems, Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning*. But Anne Bradstreet was also a pioneer because she spent most of her life on the frontier. After arriving in New England, she lived first in Boston, then in Salem and finally in Ipswich. As the first European colonists in these parts slowly pushed their settlements westward, she moved with them, and »each move brought the Bradstreets to a frontier setting where once again a community had to be established in the midst of the wilderness«.¹ However, the terms »pioneer« and »frontier« almost certainly evoke the wrong associations as they

¹ Theresa F. Nicolay: *Gender Roles, Literary Authority, and Three American Wom-*

conjure up images of wagon trains that move across plains and prairies and are attacked by Indians on horseback, images ingrained into cultural memory through countless Western movies. But Anne Bradstreet was not one of the nineteenth-century pioneers whose journeys western movies usually represent inaccurately anyway, but a seventeenth-century Puritan. She belonged to a group of radical Protestants who left England from the 1620s onward in order to live more godly lives across the Atlantic.

Since one needs some background knowledge about the Puritans, and especially their attitude toward women and in particular poetry written by women, in order to understand what it meant that Anne Bradstreet's poems were published and how she positioned herself as an author in the second edition of her poetry, I begin by addressing these general issues (I). Afterwards I turn to Anne Bradstreet, her poetry and its publication history, and also briefly discuss how Bradstreet has been treated by literary criticism. This latter topic is of special interest in the context of this volume because there have been various attempts by scholars to integrate her into the teleological trajectory toward modernism that this collection positions itself against (II). In the third and longest part of this essay I then do a close reading of Bradstreet's *The Author to Her Book*², a poem of twenty-four lines that she intended to be placed at the end of the 1678 edition of her poetry. However, since Bradstreet died before the edition went into print, and her heirs decided to include several poems that she had not meant to be published and placed them after *The Author to Her Book*, the poem is situated about three-quarters through the printed version (III).

I will argue that *The Author to Her Book* works to legitimize her role as a female author by likening authorship to giving birth to and caring for a child. Casting the writing and, even more importantly, the publishing of poetry as the duties of a mother was clearly meant to forestall criticism that she had overstepped the boundaries imposed by Puritan culture on her sex. However, as I will show, Bradstreet, albeit carefully, does exactly this in the second part of the poem by drawing on imagery from beyond the semantic field of maternal nursing. Moreover, Bradstreet's excessive use of the rhetoric of modesty throughout the poem can be read as ironically undermining it. My article thus

en Writers: Anne Dudley Bradstreet, Mercy Otis Warren, Margaret Fuller Ossoli, New York 1995, 10.

² Anne Bradstreet: *Several Poems, Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning, Full of Delight: Wherein Especially is Contained a Complete Discourse, and Description of the Four Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons of the Year, Together with an Exact Epitome of the Three*, 2nd ed., Boston 1678. Web, 20.09.2016.

centers on a specific trope of writerly self-reflexivity, the metaphor of motherhood. Bradstreet's poetic reflection, however, also concerns the medium of print, as it is not so much the writing of poems as such but their printing and thus their exposure to people that do not personally know the author that creates the need but also the opportunity for Bradstreet to position herself and her work in a very specific fashion.

I

The Puritans were dissenters from the Church of England whose only goal it initially was to reform this church and to strip it of what they regarded as Catholic remnants of ritual and hierarchy that, in their eyes, prevented the true exercise of religion.³ In other words, they originally did not want to found a church of their own but – and this is where their name comes from – wanted to purify the Church of England. This is why many of them »remained within the national church« until 1660.⁴ Others, however, left this church and England much earlier and settled across the Atlantic in New England, sometimes to escape religious prosecution, but more frequently to be able to live their lives and exercise their religion as they saw fit. Among these Puritans, the »embattled sense of identity« that John Coffey and Paul Lim have identified as typical of Puritanism in general,⁵ was particularly pronounced. After all, they had settled in »those, which were once the *Devil's Territories*«, as Puritan Minister Cotton Mather put it in *Wonders of the Invisible World*, his account of the Salem Witchcraft Crisis in 1692.⁶ Surrounded by Native Americans and Catholics and threatened by natural disasters on a scale unknown in Europe, the Puritan settlers in the New World saw themselves at the forefront of a cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil.

While many Christian denominations shared this Manichean worldview, albeit sometimes to a lesser degree, the Puritans were truly unique in their fo-

³ Unless indicated otherwise in the text, this short overview of Puritanism is based on the concise introduction provided by Coffey and Lim.

⁴ John Coffey/Paul C. H. Lim: *Introduction: Locating Puritanism*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. by John Coffey/Paul C. H. Lim, Cambridge 2008, 5.

⁵ Coffey/Lim 2008, 3.

⁶ Cotton Mather: *Wonders of the Invisible World. Observations as Well Historical as Theological, upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the Devils*, 1693, ed. by Reiner Smolinski, Nebraska. Web, 20.09.2016. [*Electronic Texts in American Studies*], 13 (his italics).

cus on personal salvation. For them, the bible was the sole source of authority. Ministers were important because they acted as spiritual advisers and provided guidance but did not occupy a privileged position – at least in theory, the lived practice was an entirely different matter. Moreover, the Puritans were heavily influenced by the teachings of John Calvin and especially his theory of predestination. They believed that all humans were depraved and that there was nothing an individual could do to earn a place in heaven. Rather, an inscrutable god had determined long ago who would go to heaven and to hell, who, in other words, was among the elect and who belonged to the damned. Therefore the Puritans used much time and energy looking for signs of their personal salvation. Frequently, this search took the form of a typological interpretation of the bible in which they interpreted events from the Old Testament as prefigurations of their own individual and collective experiences.⁷ As a consequence, the Puritans valued reading and writing highly, and the literacy rates in New England were significantly higher than in other colonies on American soil or in Europe, because everybody, no matter if rich or poor, male or female, was supposed to be able to read the bible and to reflect on their own salvational experiences in diaries or spiritual autobiographies.

However, the Puritans also held many other forms of writing in high regard. The often heard claim that they rejected literature in the more narrow sense *per se* is wrong. They had strong reservations about plays and eyed the theater as a social space suspiciously, but they valued different genres of prose and poetry highly – as long as they were perceived to serve the religious edification of the individual and the community. However, there is no explicit poetological discourse about the surplus value of clothing religious reflections in poetic forms, and if there is one implicit in Puritan poetry itself, it still has to be extracted by critics. Tellingly, the poetic self-reflection I investigate in this article concerns the author's position as a woman and not authorship or the function of poetry as such.

This misconception about the Puritans' attitude toward literature has also partly been caused by the fact that hardly any literary texts were printed in New England during the heydays of Puritanism. But for most of the seventeenth century Plymouth Plantation and the Massachusetts Bay Colony possessed only one printing press, so »it was necessary to select only the most relevant material for publication«,⁸ and sermons and other religious treatises were simply considered more relevant by those in control of the press.

⁷ Sacvan Bercovitch: *Introduction*, in: *Typology and Early American Literature*, ed. by Sacvan Bercovitch. Amherst, Massachusetts (P.) 1972, 1–10.

⁸ Nicolay 1995, 13.

This does not mean, however, that no or hardly any poetry was written and read in New England. Many Puritans wrote poems, and if Anne Bradstreet is a reliable indicator they addressed topics as diverse as occurrences from their daily lives, more abstract religious or philosophical themes or major historical events. These poems were circulated in manuscript form among the author's friends and neighbors and most probably even beyond such a narrow circle. Edward Taylor, arguably the most highly valued Puritan poet today, made his poems available to his acquaintances in bindings of his own making, but he also left explicit instructions to his heirs never to print his works. As a consequence, his poems were only rediscovered in 1937, more than 200 years after his death, and subsequently published.⁹

By the same token, the Puritans' attitude toward women was not as straightforwardly negative as is often assumed. On the one hand, theirs was a strictly patriarchal society in which offices were reserved for men, and women were restricted to being wives and mothers and subjected to the authority of first their fathers and then their husbands, an authority that was imagined in analogy to the authority that God had over all humans. Women who violated social expectations were often severely punished, and throughout the seventeenth century the overwhelming majority of condemned witches were women.¹⁰ On the other hand, Puritan culture was more egalitarian than many other societies at the time. There was, for example, no double standard, as sexual purity was expected of men and women. Even more importantly, there was no differentiation between genders when it came to grace. Women were seen to be as capable of experiencing personal salvation as men. In fact, they were often even seen as more easily saved:

»Both sympathisers [...] and enemies of Puritanism thought that female piety was more intense and perhaps more effective than men's. It might be, positively, that women's nurturing and emotional nature, their passivity, made them more able to subordinate themselves to an all-powerful God.«¹¹

And indeed, as church records show, there were more women than men among New England's visible saints, that is, those who in the eyes of the community had been touched by god's grace. What is more, especially Puritan women

⁹ Thomas H. Johnson: *Edward Taylor*, in: *The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor*, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by Thomas H. Johnson, New York 1939, 11 [1st Princeton Paperback Edition 1966].

¹⁰ Marilyn J. Westerkamp: *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600–1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions*, London 1999, 62.

¹¹ Karen Hughes: *Puritanism and Gender*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. by John Coffey/Paul C.H. Lim, Cambridge 2008, 298.

of higher social classes were very much part of the community and not at all isolated in their homes. As Hughes puts it, »[t]he household itself should not be defined as a private world cut off from public affairs, for propertied households were centres of employment and training, as well as of economic, political and religious influence«. ¹²

However, there were high barriers for women when it came to publishing texts. For once, they were generally not as educated as men and thus usually could not write the historical and religious treatises that make up so much of the Puritan record. Moreover, they were not supposed to publish what they wrote. ¹³ Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, arguably the most famous and most frequently taught Puritan text today, is a case in point. The account of her captivity among Native Americans during King Philip's War, which Rowlandson interprets as divine punishment for her sins, would never have been published without the preface by Increase Mather, the most influential minister of his time, who stressed in his preface that friends who had read the text had encouraged her to publish it because she could serve as a model for the community. ¹⁴

II

Anne Bradstreet was born in England in 1612. Her father was Thomas Dudley, a steward to the Earl of Lincoln, who gave her a much better education than was common even for upper-class women at that time. She married Simon Bradstreet and left with him and her parents for New England aboard the *Arbella* in 1630. Thus, she must have heard John Winthrop's sermon »A Model of Christian Charity«, which he preached during that journey and in which he famously described the Massachusetts Bay Colony that the pilgrims were about to found as »a city upon a hill«. ¹⁵ Winthrop became the colony's first governor, and Simon Bradstreet held many public offices over the next decades. Hence Anne Bradstreet knew and was probably quite familiar with many of the colony's leading figures, and, for all we know, was well respected by them. She led an exemplary Puritan life, oversaw the

¹² Hughes 2008, 299.

¹³ Nicolay 1995, 14.

¹⁴ Increase Mather: *The Preface to the Reader. A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, 4th ed., London 1682, iii.

¹⁵ John Winthrop: *A Model of Christian Charity, 1630*, in: *The Norton Anthology: American Literature*, shorter 7th ed., ed. by Nina Baym et al. New York 2008, 86.

household, gave birth to and raised eight children, and, in her spare time, wrote poetry. ¹⁶

Her works were circulated among friends and acquaintances before they were published in London in 1650. The official story, which is spun by the paratexts of that edition and is continued in the second edition, as we will see, by the poem *The Author to Her Book*, holds that Bradstreet's brother-in-law, Reverend John Woodbridge, took a copy of her poems with him when he travelled to London and had them published there against her will and without her knowledge. Ever since literary critics began to seriously consider Bradstreet's poetry in the 1960s, scholars have fervently debated if Bradstreet was indeed unaware that Woodbridge intended to have her manuscript published or if this story was just a clever ploy to get around the reservations about women publishing their writing and thus meant to protect Bradstreet against any accusation that she had violated female decorum. ¹⁷ Even recent studies fundamentally disagree on this issue: Gillian Wright holds that the poems were really published against Bradstreet's will, ¹⁸ while Patricia Pender and Kathryn Engberg claim that the poems were meant for print, albeit probably not in the form in which they were first published in London. ¹⁹ This controversy is unlikely to be ever resolved, simply because there is no »smoking gun«, no single piece of evidence that can unambiguously resolve the matter. Instead, all evidence is circumstantial, as critics draw on what little is known about Bradstreet's life beside her poetry and search the poems themselves for hints at her true aims.

The studies just mentioned may disagree on Bradstreet's intentions concerning the publication of her poetry, but they share a concentration on Bradstreet's oeuvre as a whole and draw especially on the poems that were already included in the 1650 edition and that Bradstreet revised for the 1678 edition. This constitutes a shift in scholarly interest because until recently scholars focused on the poems that Bradstreet's heirs added, against her will, to the revised edition after her death. The last poem that Bradstreet wanted to include in *Several Poems* was »The Vanity of All Worldly Things«, which ends on page 235 of the original edition. At the bottom of that page, framed by two

¹⁶ This biographical sketch condenses the far more extensive one by Nicolay in her chapter on Bradstreet.

¹⁷ Margaret J. M. Ezell: *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*, Baltimore 1999, 50.

¹⁸ Gillian Wright: *Producing Women's Poetry, 1600–1730: Text and Paratext, Manuscript and Print*, Cambridge 2013, 77.

¹⁹ Patricia Pender: *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, New York 2012, 150. Kathryn Engberg: *The Right to Write: The Literary Politics of Anne Bradstreet and Phillis Wheatley*, Lanham 2010, 11.

black lines, follows the word »Finis«. The next page contains *The Author to Her Book* which was thus clearly intended as a paratext providing closure. However, the collection does not end there but continues for another twenty pages, thus effectively removing *The Author to Her Book* from its intended final position. At the top of the next page Bradstreet's heirs – the driving force was probably John Rogers, the husband of her niece and future president of Harvard²⁰ – announce:

»Several other Poems made by the Author upon Diverse Occasions, were found among her Papers after her Death, which she never meant should come to publick view; amongst which these following (at the desire of some friends that knew her well) are here inserted«. ²¹

The poems the heirs selected are quite different from the historical and philosophical reflections in the first part of the volume. Among them are poems in which Bradstreet deals with her illnesses or mourns the death of her grandchildren, and letters in verse that she wrote to her husband when he was away on official duty.

The reason why these more personal poems were at the center of attention for several decades after Bradstreet's rediscovery in the 1960s – and, to a certain degree, still are – is of particular interest in the context of this volume because it is connected to the long prevailing tendency in literary criticism to see modernist notions of aesthetics and authorship as the norm and to measure different and especially earlier forms against them. Largely triggered by a 1967 essay by Adrienne Rich,²² interest in Bradstreet arose at a historical moment of canon revision and a search for a female and sometimes even feminist literary tradition – a search conducted under the auspices of what I have elsewhere called the »modernist bias«. ²³ The characteristics of modernist works of art – complexity, ambiguity and so on – were taken as what literature proper should be like and thus the search began for authors that preceded modernism but could be said to anticipate or even already embody it. Scholars thus »rediscovered« Bradstreet, but focused almost exclusively on the poems she herself never selected for publication, because they detected in these autobiographical texts the tensions and the originality they were looking for.

²⁰ Ezell 1999, 51.

²¹ The Puritans spelled many words differently than is customary today. I quote here from a digitized version of the 1678 edition and preserve the peculiarities of the orthography. Ezell 1999, 237.

²² Pender 2012, 165–69.

²³ Michael Butter: *Caught between Cultural and Literary Studies: Popular Fiction's Double Otherness*, in: *Journal of Literary Theory* 4.2 (2010), 206.

This tendency culminated in Wendy Martin's 1984 study *American Triptych* which aligned Bradstreet with Emily Dickinson, another poet frequently said to be proto-modernist, and the figure who had all started it, Adrienne Rich, a poet situated at the crossroads of modernism and postmodernism.

Closely related to this placement of Bradstreet within a tradition that inescapably led towards modernism was the tendency to see her as developing from imitating established male poets and addressing subject matters of public concern into a more individualistic writer who drew on her own experiences, worked through them in a series of poems and no longer needed male role-models. However, as can already be glanced from what I said about the design of the 1678 edition, as should be apparent to anybody who looks at this edition and sees that the first of the autobiographical poems in the appendix is from 1632,²⁴ and as Gillian Wright has recently demonstrated in great detail, this trajectory is wrong. The story of an early Bradstreet who wrote public poems and a late Bradstreet who wrote private and even intimate ones is, as Wright puts it, »a construct of print-publication« that depends entirely on the absence of private poems from the first and the arrangement of the second edition.²⁵ Bradstreet wrote more private poems throughout her life, but she simply never intended them for print. Accordingly, *The Author to Her Book*, to which I now turn, is the most personal poem she ever wanted to see published.

III

- 1 Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain,
Who after birth didst by my side remain,
Till snatcht from thence by friends, less wise then true,
Who thee abroad, expos'd to publick view,
- 5 Made thee in raggs, halting to th' 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,
- 10 Thy Visage was so irksome in my sight;
Yet being mine own, at length affection would
Thy blemishes amend, if so I could:
I wash'd thy face, but more defects I saw,
And rubbing off a spot still made a flaw.

²⁴ Bradstreet 1678, 237.

²⁵ Wright 2013, 79.

- 15 I stretch thy joynts to make thee even feet,
 Yet still thou run'st more hobling than is meet;
 In better dress to trim thee was my mind,
 But nought save homespun Cloth i' th' house I find
 In this array 'mongst Vulgars mayst thou roam
 20 In Criticks hands, beware thou dost not come;
 And take thy way where yet thou art not known,
 If for thy Father askt, say thou hadst none:
 And for thy mother, she alas is poor,
 Which caus'd her thus to send thee out of door.

The poem consists of twelve heroic couplets, that is, rhyming couplets in iambic pentameter, a very common verse form at that time, which Bradstreet frequently employed. The poem is symmetrically structured into two parts of twelve lines which are separated by the colon at the end of line 12. The first twelve lines recount the either true or invented story that the poems were published without the author's knowledge and against her will. This part in itself consists of two parts of six lines that comprise one sentence each. (As is not unusual for Puritan poetry, the full stops at the end of the lines are sometimes missing.) Lines 1–6 suggest that Bradstreet – due to the paratextual nature of the poem, author and speaker can be conflated here – never intended to have her poems printed but wanted to keep them »by [her] side,« that is, circulating only among her acquaintances. She claims that they were stolen – »snatcht« (l. 3) – by well-meaning but mistaken friends. Moreover, she criticizes the printer for increasing instead of reducing the poems' deficiencies – a deserved criticism since he misread many words in her quite legible manuscript and thus produced lines that do not make any sense. Lines seven to twelve, then, describe her reaction when she first saw the printed edition of her poems. Embarrassed that her poems have been »exposed to public view« (l. 4), she ignores the book for quite a while before the affection for her creation wins out. Critics who believe that Bradstreet had nothing to do with the publication tend to read these lines as a truthful account of her response; critics who do not believe this story see Bradstreet continuing an elaborate fiction created almost three decades ago. The second part of the poem, which also consists of two parts, has received much less attention by critics, because it does not concern the mysterious first but the preparations for the second edition, which Bradstreet obviously authorized. Since the poems had already been published, Bradstreet argues here, the task fell to her to improve their weaknesses. Lines 13–18 therefore are dedicated to her, as she claims, rather unsuccessful attempts at revision; the final six lines envision the reception of the second edition. She repeats the claim that the poems are deficient but also highlights her authorship stronger than in the rest of the poem.

The whole poem is organized around the extended metaphor of motherhood and the personification of her poetry as a child. Bradstreet presents herself as a mother who has given birth to her child, the poems, and cared for it ever since. She calls her book of poetry her »offspring« (l. 1) and later also a »rambling brat« (l. 8), and casts the act of »friends, less wise then true« taking the poems to London as a case of child abduction, and the faulty work of the printer as clothing the child in »raggs« (l. 5). She describes her initial reaction to seeing the printed book as being repelled by the face of the child because it was »irksome« (l. 10), but finally her motherly »affection« won the better of her and she decided to care for the child, that is, revise the poems (l. 11). She represents this act of revision as »wash[ing]« the child's face, »rubbing off« spots (l. 13, 14), and providing it with a »better dress« (l. 17). Finally, she likens publishing the second edition to sending the child out into the world and frames her mentioning of the audience that she hopes for – »Vulgars« and not »Criticks« (l. 19, 20) – as an advice to the child which company to keep.

The image of the writing and revising of poetry as performing her maternal duty legitimizes and even naturalizes the publication of a second edition, as it casts this endeavor as what a good mother has to do. For this logic to work it is crucial that Bradstreet emphasizes that she never intended her poetry to be published in the first place. The poems were meant for herself and for her friends, but not for print and for people who did not know her personally. She never intended to overstep the boundaries placed on her sex, she thus suggests. Only after the poems were printed against her will did she accept her duty as their creator to improve them as much as possible. Since her writing poetry is not problematic for Puritan culture and since she rejects responsibility for the first edition, it is the publication of the second edition that the poem focuses on. *The Author to Her Book* works to justify the revised edition by suggesting that since the child has been exposed to »publick view« already anyway (l. 4), she cannot refuse the motherly task of making it more presentable. This is why the poem holds that what happens after birth, the rearing of and caring for the child, is far more important than the act of giving birth itself, which is only addressed in passing in the first line.

However, Bradstreet claims that her efforts have only been moderately successful at best. Not only has the child – as a result of her »feeble brain« – been »ill-formed« from the very beginning (l. 1), and has its exposure to the public made things worse, but Bradstreet stresses that her attempts to refine the child, that is, to dress it better and correct its mistakes after its return home, have only been of limited success. Its »feet« are still uneven, meaning that the meter is still imperfect, and due to her limited means – she has only »homespun cloth« (l. 18) at her disposal – the poems are not as elegant and pleasing as she would wish them to be. Her poetry, she thus implies once

more, was never meant for public consumption, but an effort that she meant to keep private because she was well aware of its limitations. Only because it had been published against her will did she accept the responsibility to improve it, fully aware that she lacked the talent to produce really high quality. Therefore, she suggests that the poems might be well received by »Vulgars«, that is, average readers, but that »Criticks« will still find fault with them (l. 19, 20).

Bradstreet's use of the modesty trope is unsurprising since proclamations of inaptitude permeate the writings of early modern women in general. However, the excessive use of the trope, permeating the whole poem and not only occurring in a few lines at the beginning or the end, should make one pause as it raises the suspicion that Bradstreet is ironically exaggerating an established and expected discourse here. Moreover, despite all the insistence on her shortcomings as an author, Bradstreet does not employ »the most striking [modesty trope of the time,] that species of *occupatio* or apology in which the woman writer denies her own authorial agency.«²⁶ Instead, Bradstreet insists from the first – where she calls the collection her child – to the last lines – where she explicitly states that the child does not have a father – that the poetry is her brainchild and hers alone.

Accordingly, *The Author to Her Book* continues a play with the rhetoric of modesty that Bradstreet already performed, as Patricia Pender has shown,²⁷ in *The Prologue* to the original manuscript edition of her works. In fact, if one takes into account Gillian Wright's conclusive argument that *The Prologue* »stems from an intermediate stage in the circulation of Bradstreet's poetry«,²⁸ *The Author to Her Book* marks a further step in asserting rather than questioning Bradstreet's authorial authority. This dimension is already apparent in the self-confident title of the poem which makes it quite clear that it is *her* book. But, as I will show in the remainder of this chapter, it also comes to the fore in Bradstreet's intertextual dialogue with the classical and Renaissance models she drew on for the poem and in the few moments where she transcends the role of what Theresa Freda Nicolay has called the »Puritan Mother« with capital letters.²⁹ These moments, though, remain isolated and are marked by a striking ambivalence because once Bradstreet moves beyond the part of the Puritan model mother, she can only claim roles that Puritan culture viewed suspiciously if not altogether unsuited for a decent woman.

As in many others of her poems, Bradstreet draws on established literary traditions for *The Author to Her Book*. The first of these traditions is ad-

²⁶ Pender 2012, 1 (her italics).

²⁷ Id., 160f.

²⁸ Id., 82.

²⁹ Nicolay 1995, 8.

dressing one's own book, a practice that goes back to antiquity and of which Horace's *Epistles* 1,20 and Ovid's *Tristia*, 1,1 are the most important examples.³⁰ Both Horace and Ovid personify their books in these passages but not as children. The other tradition Bradstreet draws on is the »established early modern literary convention« of likening the act of creation to the birth of a child.³¹ A well-known example is the first sonnet of Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, in which the male speaker imagines the process of artistic creation as being pregnant and then giving birth. Bradstreet was undoubtedly familiar with all three texts because guided by her father, Thomas Dudley, she studied the canonical classical and Renaissance authors.³² Later she even wrote »An Elegy upon Sir Philip Sidney«, which is included in both editions of her poems.

Maybe taking her cue from Horace's verse »non ita nutritus« (l. 5 [I didn't raise you so; my translation]), which, taken in isolation could be seen as spoken to a child, while the context makes it quite clear that the poet construes the book as a slave who wants to leave him,³³ Bradstreet merges and thereby transforms these two traditions in her poem when she addresses her book as a child. As in Horace and Ovid where the book is personified as male because of its grammatical gender,³⁴ Bradstreet addresses a male child. And like Horace it is specifically the irreversible process of publishing a book that worries her. But whereas for Horace this concern has no consequences, Bradstreet projects it as initiating the whole process of revising the work. In similar fashion, the male poet in Sidney's sonnet imagines the work to be finished after giving birth, but *The Author to Her Book* suggests that a mother's duties only really begin at that moment. Finally, while Ovid celebrates the poor material state of the book as an appropriate expression of the sorrow he feels because he is exiled,³⁵ Bradstreet modifies this idea, too, and presents the poor condition of the first edition of her poems as requiring and thus legitimizing a revised edition under her control. The relationship between her text and its pretexts is thus characterized by a high degree of what Manfred

³⁰ I wish to thank Anja Wolkenhauer for pointing me to these passages and the relevant secondary sources.

³¹ Pender 2012, 154.

³² Nicolay 1995, 9.

³³ Gabriele Wissig-Baving: *Die Anrede an das Buch in der römischen Dichtung: Studien zum Verhältnis des Dichters zu seinem Werk*, Frankfurt/M. 1991, 11n2.

³⁴ Siegfried Besslich: *Anrede an das Buch: Gedanken zu einem Topos in der römischen Dichtung. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Buches und seiner Funktion in der Gesellschaft*, hg. von Alfred Swierk, Stuttgart 1974, 1.

³⁵ Besslich 1974, 4.

Pfister, drawing on Bakhtin, has called »dialogicity« in his theory of intertextuality, that is, the ideological tension between the original texts and the text that quotes them.³⁶ Bradstreet does not merely follow her models but revises their ideas.

In a different, yet related fashion Bradstreet also asserts her own authority by leaving behind twice the idealized image of the Puritan mother that she otherwise projects for herself. The first of these departure occurs early in the second part of the poem after she describes how she »wash[es]« her child's face (l.13). While cleaning the offspring was, of course, regarded as a mother's duty at the time, the way she then describes her attempts to make the meter more regular is striking: »I stretch thy joynts to make thee even feet« (l. 15). Doctors were scarce in seventeenth-century New England and therefore, as Rebecca Tannenbaum has shown, many of the medical procedures that were performed by male doctors from the eighteenth century on were done by women at that time.³⁷ However, it is unlikely that the rather complicated operation of trying to lengthen a leg would have been performed by a child's mother. It is far more probable that it would have been done by a male surgeon or a woman who possessed special skills, a healer. Either way, Bradstreet is treading on dangerous ground here, as she is either, albeit only metaphorically, claiming male authority for herself, or fashions herself as a healer – and thus that kind of woman that was often eyed suspiciously and frequently associated with witchcraft.³⁸

The same ambivalence characterizes the second moment at which Bradstreet positions herself in violation of the ideal of motherhood. The final three lines of the poem, »If for thy Father askt, say thou hadst none: / And for thy mother, she alas is poor, / Which caus'd her thus to send thee out of door« (ll. 22–24), articulate her strongest claim at authorship, as they explicitly disavow the existence of a father. A modern reader might even see Bradstreet moving toward an aesthetics of autonomy here because she sends her child away. Once created, the work of art can, and maybe even should, stand alone, this seems to imply. Moreover, implicitly casting the collection as an orphan made sense, of course, because Bradstreet knew that the new edition would only be published after her death. However, such a reading overlooks the cultural context in which the lines must have registered far more ambivalently with

³⁶ Manfred Pfister: *Konzepte der Intertextualität*, in: *Intertextualität: Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, hg. von Ulrich Broich/Manfred Pfister, Tübingen 1985, 29.

³⁷ Rebecca J. Tannenbaum: *The Healer's Calling: Women and Medicine in Early New England*, Ithaca 2002, 3.

³⁸ Tannenbaum 2002, 5.

Bradstreet's readers. Not only does a good mother not send her child away, even if she is poor. What is more, in Puritan culture, when a child was said to have no father this usually meant that nobody had acknowledged the child as his own and the mother either could or would not reveal the father. And this normally only happened when the child had been born out of wedlock or if the mother was a prostitute.

The ambivalent evaluation of herself that Bradstreet delivers through this passage, then, is transformed but by no way diminished if one considers the end of the poem as relating back to the first line where Bradstreet addresses her poetry as »Thou ill-form'd offspring of my feeble brain« (l. 1). On the one hand, while readers are bound to pay more attention to the apostrophe and the adjective »ill-form'd« when reading the poem for the first time, Bradstreet's insistence that the poems have no father and only a mother at the end of it might make readers reconsider the first line and recognize how she stresses her sole authorship there already by way of the personal pronoun »my«. Her motherhood does not complement a husband's fatherhood, but it is all there is. On the other hand, the description of her child as »ill-form'd« is not simply erased by such an emphasis. In fact, the child's appearance is now all the stronger linked to her as the sole creator. And describing her child in this fashion does more than introduce the discourse of modesty that she pursues and undermines throughout the poem.

As Lisa Day-Lindsey has convincingly argued, »ill-form'd« echoes the descriptions of the stillborn babies of women who had overstepped social boundaries and whose fates were interpreted as divine punishment by male figures of authority.³⁹ In his account of the Antinomian controversy during which a group around Anne Hutchinson challenged the authority of several ministers, for example, Bradstreet's close acquaintance John Winthrop described the dead fetus of Hutchinson as »not one [...] but 30. monstrous births or thereabouts, at once; some of them bigger, some lesser, some of one shape, some of another; few of any perfect shape, none at all of them (as farre as I could ever learn) of humane shape«. And he concludes: »[S]ee how the wisdom of God fitted this judgement to her sinne every way, for looke as she had vented misshapen opinions, so she must bring forth deformed monsters«. ⁴⁰ Once again, Bradstreet's assertive insistence on her authorship is thus tied to projecting herself as violating the norms of her culture.

³⁹ Lisa Day-Lindsey: *Bradstreet's »The Author to Her Book«*, in: *Explicator* 64.2 (2006), 66 f.

⁴⁰ John Winthrop: *A Short Story of the Rise, Reign, and Ruine of the Antinomians, Familists & Libertines, 1692*, in: *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636–1638: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed., ed. by David D. Hall, Durham 1990, 214.

IV

The way in which Anne Bradstreet negotiates her own authorship in *The Author to Her Book*, then, is anything but straightforward and characterized by several ambivalences. Bradstreet employs the rhetoric of modesty but she does so in a fashion that effectively undermines what she states explicitly. Moreover, she legitimizes the publication of the second edition of her poetry by way of the extended metaphor of motherhood, arguing that it is her maternal duty to present her child, that is, her poetry, to the world in a better fashion than in the first edition. At the same time, however, at those moments where she insists most strongly on her authorship and authority she goes beyond that image of the ideal Puritan mother and claims for herself positions considered problematic by her culture. Thus, she acknowledges the constraints imposed on women while simultaneously subverting them.

Works Cited

- Bercovitch, Sacvan: *Introduction*, in: *Typology and Early American Literature*, ed. by Sacvan Bercovitch. Amherst, Massachusetts (P.) 1972, 1–10.
- Besslich, Siegfried: *Anrede an das Buch: Gedanken zu einem Topos in der römischen Dichtung*, in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Buches und seiner Funktion in der Gesellschaft*, hg. von Alfred Swierk, Stuttgart 1974, 1–12.
- Bradstreet, Anne: *Several Poems, Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning, Full of Delight: Wherein Especially is Contained a Complete Discourse, and Description of the Four Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons of the Year, Together with an Exact Epitome of the Three*, 2nd ed., Boston 1678. Web, 20.09.2016.
- Butter, Michael: *Caught between Cultural and Literary Studies: Popular Fiction's Double Otherness*, in: *Journal of Literary Theory* 4.2 (2010), 199–216.
- Coffey, John/Lim, Paul C. H.: *Introduction: Locating Puritanism*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. by John Coffey/Paul C. H. Lim, Cambridge 2008, 1–15.
- Day-Lindsey, Lisa: *Bradstreet's »The Author to Her Book«*, in: *Explicator* 64.2 (2006), 66–69.
- Engberg, Kathryn: *The Right to Write: The Literary Politics of Anne Bradstreet and Phillis Wheatley*, Lanham 2010.
- Ezell, Margaret J. M.: *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*, Baltimore 1999.
- Hughes, Karen: *Puritanism and Gender*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. by John Coffey/Paul C.H. Lim, Cambridge 2008, 294–308.
- Johnson, Thomas H.: *Edward Taylor*, in: *The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor*, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by Thomas H. Johnson, New York 1939, 11–15. [1st Princeton Paperback Edition 1966].

- Martin, Wendy: *An American Triptych: Anne Bradstreet, Emily Dickinson, Adrienne Rich*, Chapel Hill (N. C.) 1984.
- Mather, Cotton: *Wonders of the Invisible World. Observations as Well Historical as Theological, upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the Devils*, 1693, ed. by Reiner Smolinski, Nebraska. Web, 20.09.2016. [*Electronic Texts in American Studies*].
- Mather, Increase: *The Preface to the Reader*, in: *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, 4th ed., London 1682, i–v.
- Nicolay, Theresa F.: *Gender Roles, Literary Authority, and Three American Women Writers: Anne Dudley Bradstreet, Mercy Otis Warren, Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, New York 1995.
- Pender, Patricia: *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, New York 2012.
- Pfister, Manfred: *Konzepte der Intertextualität*, in: *Intertextualität: Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, hg. von Ulrich Broich/Manfred Pfister, Tübingen 1985, 1–30.
- Rich, Adrienne: *Anne Bradstreet and Her Poetry*, in: *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. by Jeannine Hensley, Cambridge 1967, ix–xxi.
- Smith, Cheryl C.: *Out of Her Place: Anne Hutchinson and the Dislocation of Power in New World Politics*, in: *The Journal of American Culture* 29.4 (2006), 437–53.
- Tannenbaum, Rebecca J.: *The Healer's Calling: Women and Medicine in Early New England*, Ithaca 2002.
- Westerkamp, Marilyn J.: *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600–1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions*, London 1999.
- Winthrop, John: *A Model of Christian Charity, 1630*, in: *The Norton Anthology: American Literature*, shorter 7th ed., ed. by Nina Baym et al. New York 2008, 76–87.
- Winthrop, John: *A Short Story of the Rise, Reign, and Ruine of the Antinomians, Familists & Libertines, 1692*, in: *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636–1638: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed., ed. by David D. Hall, Durham 1990, 199–282.
- Wissig-Baving, Gabriele: *Die Anrede an das Buch in der römischen Dichtung: Studien zum Verhältnis des Dichters zu Seinem Werk*, Frankfurt/M. 1991.
- Wright, Gillian: *Producing Women's Poetry, 1600–1730: Text and Paratext, Manuscript and Print*, Cambridge 2013.