

Course Title: Survey of American Literature from Anne Bradstreet to Walt Whitman**Course Code: ENG-305**

American literature, as exemplified by Anne Bradstreet and Walt Whitman, exhibits several distinctive features:

1. **Puritan Influence (Anne Bradstreet):** Anne Bradstreet, as one of the earliest American poets, reflects the Puritan influence prevalent in early American literature. Her works often explore themes of religion, morality, and the struggles of early settlers in the New World. Bradstreet's poetry is characterized by its introspective and spiritual nature, focusing on personal experiences and faith.
2. **Exploration of Identity and Democracy (Walt Whitman):** Walt Whitman, a pivotal figure in American literature, is known for his celebration of democracy, individualism, and the diversity of American identity. His poetry in works such as "Leaves of Grass" embodies a uniquely American voice, promoting equality and the idea of America as a melting pot of cultures and experiences. Whitman's writing style is marked by its free verse form, expansive imagery, and a direct, conversational tone.
3. **Nature and Transcendentalism:** Both Bradstreet and Whitman engage with nature in their writings, albeit in different ways. Bradstreet often uses nature as a backdrop to explore spiritual themes and God's presence in the world. Whitman, influenced by Transcendentalist ideas, views nature as a source of spiritual insight and connection to the universe. His poetry often celebrates the beauty of the natural world and explores the interconnectedness of all living things.
4. **Social Critique and Reform:** Whitman, in particular, addresses social issues such as slavery, democracy, and the role of the individual in society. His poetry is not only celebratory but also

critical of societal norms and injustices, advocating for social reform and equality. This engagement with contemporary social issues marks a significant aspect of American literature, reflecting the country's ongoing evolution and challenges.

American literature, as demonstrated by Anne Bradstreet and Walt Whitman, encompasses themes of identity, democracy, nature, and social critique. Their works contribute to a rich tapestry of American literary tradition, shaping cultural and intellectual discourse both in their time and beyond.

❖ Anne Bradstreet

Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672) was a prominent early American poet and is often considered the first female poet to be published in both England and the American colonies. She was born in England and emigrated to America with her family in 1630 as part of the Puritan migration. Bradstreet's work is notable for its exploration of themes such as love, motherhood, religion, and the experience of life in the New World. Her most famous collection, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*, was published in 1650 and was well-received both in England and the colonies.

Some key points about Anne Bradstreet:

1. **Literary Significance:** Bradstreet's work is significant for its pioneering role in American literature. She was the first woman to have a book of poetry published in colonial America.
2. **Themes:** Her poetry often explores personal and intimate themes, including her family, her faith, and her struggles with illness and adversity. She also wrote about more public themes, such as the role of women in Puritan society.
3. **Style:** Bradstreet's style is marked by its use of formal structures and classical references, as well as a personal, reflective tone. Her work often reveals her deep intellect and education.
4. **Legacy:** Bradstreet's legacy endures as a foundational figure in American literature. She paved the way for future generations of female writers and remains a subject of scholarly study and admiration.

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.

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