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Fall 2018

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Samuel Fallon

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SAMUEL FALLON

ABSTRACT

This essay examines the curious belatedness of Anne Bradstreet's elegies for Philip Sidney, Guillaume du Bartas, and Elizabeth I in The Tenth Muse (1650). The elegies point toward a broader pattern of "untimeliness" in The Tenth Muse, a result of ongoing tension between two temporal registers: the historical past and the present tense of poetic address. This tension appears as a key theme in "The Four Monarchies," Bradstreet's long verse history, before emerging as a central conflict in the elegies. The untimeliness of these elegies reflects the contradictions of Bradstreet's transatlantic worldmaking, a project trailed throughout by a worrying sense of her own lateness. These poems exhibit a temporal distance that forecloses the recovery of a lost English unity. The Tenth Muse thus asks us to see worldmaking as a problem not just of space but also of time. That challenge lies at the heart of the volume's elegies, which conjure a world of their own through the immediacy of the lyric now—even as they wrestle with the demands of historical occasion.



Sometime in 1650, an octavo volume appeared at the shop of the stationer Stephen Bowtell at Pope's Head Alley in London. The book's title page announced the arrival of *The Tenth Muse, Lately sprung up in America*, and described the author of its contents, Anne Bradstreet, as "a Gentlewoman in those parts." For Bowtell, the publication of books from the colonies was beginning to emerge as a specialty. Three years earlier, he had brought Nathaniel Ward's *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam* to London, and in *The Tenth Muse* he found another successful import: seven years after its publication, William London included the book in his *Catalogue of the most vendible*

books in England, where it appeared alongside the poems of Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton.¹ So began the public career of Anne Bradstreet, remembered today as an inaugurating figure in the history of American verse but first printed and published on the other side of the Atlantic. Bradstreet's double home was, of course, central to her appeal. From its perch in Bowtell's shop, the geography of *The Tenth Muse* advertised the thrill of the exotic: a colonial curiosity for sale at home. English and "American" alike, the book marked the widened horizons of a transatlantic literary culture, even as its novelty status raised the question of just how traversable the distance between imperial center and colonial periphery really was.

It is a distance that seems to haunt Bradstreet's book. In one of the several commendatory verses that begin the volume, N. H. introduces her as "at present residing in the Occidentall parts of the World, in *America*, alias *NOV-ANGLIA*," a description that proposes three different geographies but seems unable to settle on any (sig. A7r). Is Bradstreet from altogether different "parts of the World," or is she, more familiarly, from New England? For that matter, is she in any real sense "American," or is she rather an Englishwoman abroad—a visitor residing in America only "at present"? Bradstreet, who had arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony only twenty years earlier, in 1630, seems preoccupied by such questions herself, and in one of *The Tenth Muse's* most striking poems, "A Dialogue between Old *England* and New, concerning their present troubles," she confronts them directly. The poem casts England as an ailing mother, her illness an allegory for the pains of civil war, and New England as the "humble child" who entreats her to "shew your grief" (182).² It may be a sign of the distance between them that she even has to ask. This, at least, is what a reproachful Old England seems to think: "Art ignorant indeed," she asks her daughter, "of these my woes?" (180). The familial metaphor that sustains the dialogue may argue an enduring unity—"You are my mother, nurse, I once your flesh," New England reminds her (187)—but even this is reassurance is only ambiguous comfort: if "once" indicates genetic identity, it also marks the recognition that mother and daughter are one flesh no longer.³

Like N. H.'s verse, Bradstreet's poem confronts a world in "parts"—a world fragmented and multiplied and dispersed. This world, as a growing body of scholarship holds, was a central legacy of the colonization of what Europe called the "new world." For even as the designs of geographic expansion seemed to bring the globe itself within the grasp of European mastery, they threw the idea of "the world" into some doubt; in Roland Greene's

account, “the Columbian project” marked “the fracturing of an ideal integrity, a breach that cannot be repaired” (*Five Words*, 150). For Greene, the very term *world* emerged as an early modern “key word” through this breach, caught between its ambition to singular wholeness (*the world*) and the division and multiplicity that brought wholeness into dialectical focus. If a new sense of geographic and cultural plurality unsettled the singular globe, that is, it also demanded new ways of totalizing—of fashioning a comprehensive unity from dispersed and heterogeneous pieces. Early modern practices of worldmaking thus aimed, as Ayesha Ramachandran has recently argued, “to synthesize new global experiences into a structure that would bind individual fragments into a collective unity” (7). For Bradstreet, the dislocations of transatlantic expansion, and the need for a unifying structure, seem to have been particularly acute: in *The Tenth Muse*, she confronts an England fragmented not only by the distances of colonial expansion but also by conflicts within and among the British kingdoms in 1630s and 1640s. The “Dialogue” both records these dislocations—its personifications casting geographic distance as alienation and civil discord as illness—and attempts to remedy them, to fashion a world that Bradstreet’s estranged Englands might share.

The Tenth Muse is, in this sense, a work of worldmaking. But although Bradstreet’s poems reckon with the fragmenting geography of the English colonial project, I will suggest that the world they imagine relies less on the logic of space (the articulation of a global “structure”) than on that of time. In the “Dialogue,” for instance, it is the metaphor of familial descent that argues cultural unity, and the conversation between mother and daughter is, among other things, a rehearsal of a shared history. That history encompasses old woes (the deposition of Richard II, the Wars of the Roses) and “present troubles”: not only the English Civil War, but the outbreak of conflicts in Scotland and in Ireland that threatened Charles’s authority across the archipelago. And although the “British problem” and the crisis of political identity it occasioned linger behind the family troubles of the “Dialogue,” New England remains optimistic, urging her mother to look beyond the present to a redeemed future: the “latter dayes of hop’d for good” when England—when Britain—might be one again (188). Bradstreet was, of course, hardly alone in conceiving of worlds as temporal forms; indeed, the idea is already implicit in names like “New England” and “the New World.”²⁴ Worlds are spaces, but they are also processes; or rather, what makes a world is its endurance of process, its persistence across time. If *new* and *old* suggest the displacement of one world by

another, they also insist on the durability of their connection. The loss of this connection is what Old England fears, and in order to ward it off, her daughter invokes the language of filial care: “Pray in plain termes, what is your present grief, / Then let’s join heads, and hands for your relief” (185).⁵ Worldmaking in such moments is not a matter of charting global space, but something more modest: the careful tending of a fragile intimacy.

Recognizing that worlds are forms of time allows us to confront a central challenge of *The Tenth Muse*: its curious, uncertain relation to the histories that it invokes. The “Dialogue” is a poem of its moment, packed with references to the Civil War (to the execution of the Earl of Strafford and the arrest of Archbishop Laud, for example) that seemingly confirm its 1642 dating. So, too, is “David’s Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan,” a poem whose mourning of Saul—“Alas, slaine is the head of *Israel*” (204)—summons fresh memories of regicide. But in the volume’s other poems, the historical moment can seem oddly remote, and the range of cultural reference distinctly out of date. Near the end of the book, most strikingly, Bradstreet offers elegies for Philip Sidney, Guillaume du Bartas, and Elizabeth I: a trio of poems that together would have carried readers in London, circa 1650, half a century into the past—to a moment when, as the elegy for Sidney begins, “*England* did injoy her Halsion days” (191). The appeal of such nostalgia is not hard to grasp, but the poems are nonetheless oddities, out of step with the novelty so eagerly attributed to Bradstreet in the book’s paratexts. The effect is only heightened by the choice of genre: since the elegy is among the most timely and occasional of forms, it is hard to escape the sense that these elegies are *mistimed*—that they have arrived too late. Why was Bradstreet so eager, as one critic puts it, to “wrestl[e] with the Renaissance”?⁶

This essay is an attempt to answer that question, and in the process to make sense of the untimeliness that pervades *The Tenth Muse*. I will return to the elegies before long: it is in their peculiar belatedness that Bradstreet works through what I will argue are the conjoined problems of world and time. First, however, we need to take stock of the poems that precede the elegies, for it is there—in the eccentric blend of philosophical meditation and verse history that occupies the better part of the volume—that these problems take root. The most significant (and by far the longest) of these poems, the verse history “The Four Monarchies,” develops a complex account of history as both the durable continuity that enables worldhood and a force of gradual dispersal and disintegration. Although guided by an implicit millennialism, the poem

ends not with apocalypse but with the dissolution of history into the present of poetic enunciation, a time that escapes and obstructs chronology. The tension between these two modes, latent throughout *The Tenth Muse*, emerges most fully in the volume's elegies, where historical time collides with an abstract *now* that resists the demands of occasional punctuality. In this sense, the elegies reveal worlds to be temporal things. More importantly, they frame worldmaking as a practice that is crucially mediated by genre: in this case, by the competing temporalities of history and lyric. The untimeliness of the elegies reflects this friction and discloses the contradictions of Bradstreet's worldmaking—her attempt to conjure a world both different from and adequate to the real one—even as it marks her attempt to overcome them.

World and Time in *The Tenth Muse*

Anne Bradstreet has always been a difficult writer to place. In a discipline shaped by national borders, her position between nations has left her caught between literary histories. That much of the most influential criticism of her poetry has appeared in the journal *Early American Literature* suggests which nation has staked the strongest claim: she is most often encountered as the author, in Adrienne Rich's assessment, of "the first good poems in America" (xx).⁷ While one critical line has tied Bradstreet to America (indeed to American-ness), however, another has sought to reclaim her for the other side of the Atlantic. Important recent work on British women writers, in particular, has positioned Bradstreet alongside Lucy Hutchinson, Margaret Cavendish, and Aphra Behn amid the complex politics of the civil war.⁸ Caught in the middle, Bradstreet fits comfortably into neither history; instead, she indexes the limits of the worlds that criticism guided by the nation can accommodate. But if her reception points to a split between worlds, it also points to one between the temporal forms that animate them. In the short time of contextualizing historicism, she takes her place among the anti-monarchist circles that radiated out from London. Approached retrospectively, however, in the longer time of literary tradition, her Englishness falls away.⁹ Or else it disappoints: for Rich, the "long, rather listless" poems of *The Tenth Muse*, marred by Bradstreet's nostalgia for "her former world," are redeemed only by her later, more personal, and more "American" lyrics (xv).¹⁰

For Bradstreet's reception, then, the recent turn to the global and transnational in literary studies is a welcome development, one that heralds a release

from the pull of competing national histories.¹¹ In a compelling example of such work, Kate Chedgzoy has read Bradstreet as a writer possessed of a “unique Atlantic perspective” on the crises of the 1630s and 1640s. In Chedgzoy’s account, the “Dialogue” is a dialogue of equals; privileging neither Old nor New England, she suggests, the poem instead argues “the continuing transatlantic entanglement” of their fates (129). Even as the expanded geographic frame of such criticism promises valuable new ways of reading Bradstreet’s poetry, however, the history of Bradstreet’s reception also raises questions about the nature of the worlds that literary history pursues. In a recent revisionist treatment of the concept of “world literature,” Pheng Cheah observes the critical tendency to construe worlds as spatial things: as networks, maps, globes. A world is more than the “Mercatorian space” of the globe, Cheah insists; it is a temporal modality, a state of being whose “unity and permanence is premised on the persistence of time” (303).¹² Persistence is what enables one to live in a world, grounding the experience of “relating, belonging, or being-with” that a world imparts (319). Cheah’s polemical claim is that figuring the world as chartable space troublingly naturalizes the logic of capitalist globalization. But his larger point is that only an understanding of worlds as temporal things made in and sustained across time can reveal the full range of their significance: as gestalts, histories, communities, homes. It is time that gives worlds their normative force—the force at work when the label “American” affixes itself to Bradstreet, marking her as an originary figure in a history whose end is precisely the realization of an American literary identity.¹³

To see worlds as temporal formations is to see them as social formations: as spaces that are, as Mary Baine Campbell suggests, by definition “habitable or inhabited” (10).¹⁴ Habitability comes in different sizes and rhythms, from the local, prosaic familiarity of Cheah’s “being-with” to the large-scale political temporalities of tradition and history. *The Tenth Muse* carefully modulates between these registers: it begins with an evocation of familial time in Bradstreet’s poem “To Her Most Honoured Father” and ends with the typological time of biblical history in “David’s Lamentation.” The poems that intervene take the problem of time as a central challenge. In the quaternions—a set of four poems, each in four parts, on the elements, the humors, the ages of man, and the seasons—Bradstreet offers a pair of competing temporal models. There is, on the one hand, the linear succession outlined in “The Four Ages of Man,” where the transition from childhood to adulthood to old age

points up the brevity of life and the finality of death: “A nothing,” Childhood says of life, “here to day, but gone to morrow” (43). “The Four Seasons,” by contrast, offers a model of circular, redemptive time, with winter coming round to a new spring as the sun, at the end of the poem, “by’s heat [. . .] drives all cold away” (64). The tension between these competing schemes is what drives the “Dialogue,” where the central question is precisely whether or not Old England’s illness is terminal.

The significance of these competing temporal forms emerges more clearly, however, in the sprawling, *longue durée* verse history “The Four Monarchies.” Bradstreet’s poem traces the history of ancient imperial politics: the “monarchies” to which its title refers are the Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman empires.¹⁵ Like the English chronicles, this history follows the reigns of rulers, and the constant punctuating force of death gives time the feel of meaningless flux. Only rarely does Bradstreet hint at a politics of her own. The opening lines offer a brief moment of direct political judgment, intimating a skepticism toward monarchal rule by recalling a “Golden Age” before its invention: “When Time was young, and World in infancy, / Man did not strive for Sovereignty” (65). Yet the poem’s politics are to some extent implicit in its topic: to invoke the “four monarchies,” as Susan Wiseman points out, was to allude to the current of fifth monarchist thought popular in parliamentarian and Puritan circles in the 1640s.¹⁶ Drawing on prophecies from the Book of Daniel, fifth monarchism construed secular history as sacred arc, with the fall of Rome preparing the way for Christ’s final empire. The modest chronologies of “The Four Monarchies,” with their linear narratives of succession, thus furnish between the lines an argument for significant time, time made whole by the second coming. The dialectical interpretation that this history demanded, Wiseman explains, asked readers “to set each example against a trajectory of repeated monarchical degeneracy” (190). By implication, it also asked them to set those examples against the degeneracy of seventeenth-century monarchy, which in turn became legible itself as a sign of the approaching millennium.

It is by way of this teleological history that Bradstreet’s imperial monarchies disclose, as the arena of their degeneration, the “world.” Later, in a revision of *The Tenth Muse* published in 1678 as *Several Poems*, Bradstreet added a brief new conclusion to the poem:

No more I’le do sith I have suffer’d wrack,
Although my Monarchies their legs do lack:

Nor matter is't this last, the world now sees,
Hath many Ages been upon his knees. (191)

The world to which Bradstreet gestures here has multiple senses. It represents the public that the poem has addressed, which can now see history's lesson. But it is also the historical backdrop against which empires dissolve—a larger unity that survives political transition—and the long perspective (“many ages”) through which succession acquires meaning. Thus the emphasis on the present tense of a world that “now sees”: the retrospection that allows the poem to grasp the world depends on a sense of historical lateness. Of course, in another sense, this perspective is distinctly premature, arriving after the ancient monarchies but *before* the anticipated millennium—a future that the poem, inevitably, never reaches. Indeed, as the end nears, Bradstreet hesitates. At the conclusion of her history of Greece, she writes:

With these three Monarchies, now I have done,
But how the fourth, their Kingdoms from them won;
And how from small beginnings it did grow,
To fill the world with terrour, and with woe:
My tired braine, leaves to a better pen;
This taske befits not women, like to men. (174)

Although she announces a change of a heart a few lines later and embarks on her history's final chapter, the Roman monarchy, her energy soon flags again, and she breaks off abruptly, only later, in *Several Poems*, appending an apology protesting her inadequacy for a “subject large my mind and body weak” (191). The abrupt ending reflects the pressures of narrating this climactic final empire, which would complete the prophetic cycle and, presumably, open onto the end of the world. “That the Roman monarchy is the last, yet time continues,” argues Wiseman, “provokes the political and religious question of the relationship between the Roman monarchy and the present, troubling the relationship between Bradstreet's moment of composition and time's end” (194).¹⁷ Incapable of prophesy, Bradstreet trades cosmic teleology for the personal time of writing and reading. Instead of the end of history, her chronicle runs up against the present tense of “[m]y tired braine”—a modest *now* that nonetheless allows writer and reader to inhabit a shared time and a common world.

The world of “The Four Monarchies” is thus an awkwardly doubled thing. On the one hand, it emerges gradually as the object of a history of the world from “infancy” to end; on the other, it is realized as a function of poetic address. The latter of these points up the implication of worldmaking in literary form—in how, as Brent Dawson puts it, “literary texts themselves shape notions of the world” (167). Much of the most powerful work on literature’s worlds has pursued this insight: it lies behind Campbell’s writing on voyage narratives, for instance, and Ramachandran’s account of the world as, for early moderns, “a thing made” (10). Both in and beyond early modern studies, such work tends to privilege discursive and narrative forms. To take an influential example, Eric Hayot’s *On Literary Worlds* proposes the term *aesthetic world* to denote “the *diegetic* totality constituted by the sum of all aspects of a single text, constellated into a structure or system” (44).¹⁸ Hayot’s implicit conflation of aesthetic with narrative worlds attests to the dependence of world-concepts on a sense of time: here the total “structure” is disclosed and sustained by the process of story. As we have seen, the world of “The Four Monarchies” is indeed a diegetic totality (though its diegesis is historical rather than novelistic). But it is equally the product of another, less obvious formal resource: the first-person immediacy that, at the end of the poem, brings poet and reader together in an imagined space of their own. We are likely to recognize this present tense of enunciation as the special province of lyric, and so it is fitting that in its final pages *The Tenth Muse* leaves narrative behind and turns to one of the most complexly timed of lyric forms: elegy.

Elegiac Worldmaking

Bradstreet’s elegy “In Honour of That High and Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory” begins by addressing Elizabeth herself:

Although great Queen, thou now in silence lye,
 Yet thy loud Herauld Fame, doth to the sky
 Thy wondrous worth proclaime, in every clime,
 And so has vow’d while there is world, or time. (199)

Elizabeth’s is a world of spatial extension, ranging even to the distant “clime” of Bradstreet’s New England—a term that evokes the language of geographic

reportage on the Americas. It is also a world of long duration: the public voice of Fame, we are told, will carry her worth both to the edges of the world and to the end of time. The poem certainly makes no attempt to hold off the claims of the historical narrative that alone can measure Elizabeth's "worth." Against the long view of national chronology, however, Bradstreet sets the alternative temporality of poetic utterance, and against Fame's proclamations the voice that apostrophizes the dead queen. This voice exists within the stream of historical time—"Thou never didst," writes Bradstreet, carefully stitching past to present, "nor canst thou now disdain, / T' accept the tribute of a loyall Braine" (200)—but it also claims a place beyond it, in a temporality constituted by the act of address.

It is in its reliance on the constitutive force of address that Bradstreet's elegy is most characteristically lyric. Lyric's defining trope, according to Jonathan Culler, is apostrophe, a figure premised on the transformative power of a voice that animates an absent or inanimate addressee precisely by addressing it. In its reliance on apostrophe, Culler suggests, lyric resists the "time of narrative," striving instead "to be an event in the special temporality of the lyric present" (226, 243). This definition is not without its critics. Paul Alpers has observed its limits for early modern poetry, in which, he argues, apostrophe does not frame a solipsistic relation between speaker and apostrophized object so much as organize a social relation around it.¹⁹ For Heather Dubrow, too, early modern lyric is a relational mode, its forms of address marking out a range of different positions that speaker and listener might inhabit. These include the immediate presence we might expect of lyric, but Dubrow insists that Renaissance lyrics also "tempe[r] . . . effects of presence with impressions of distance" (*Challenges of Orpheus*, 109). Effects of presence and impressions of distance combine in Bradstreet's elegy, a poem rooted in the present of address but shot through with the matter of historical narrative: the recollection of glorious victories against the Irish and the Armada, the recounting of the exploits of sailors who "through all straights the world did round" (201). For much of the poem, indeed, the historical frame takes priority. Even the opening apostrophe, with its performative *now*, is contained within a concessive clause; in the main clause it is overtaken by Fame, the public voice of historical memory. Bradstreet's subordination of her own voice is of a piece with the modesty of so much of *The Tenth Muse*. But the lines' careful syntax also registers the competing claims of presence and distance—the outside of

history against the fragile world summoned in the event of poetic address—and the need to mediate between them.²⁰

Such doubling is especially pervasive in elegy, a lyric form that is both performative and occasional: an event of its own, but one called forth and determined by events beyond it.²¹ “Like rituals,” Andrea Brady observes, “elegies are sociable” (2). They organize collective mourning, marking public time and, in doing so, securing memory against time’s passage. For Max Cavitch, elegy’s social form works “to sustain the goal of achieving a prizable, meaningful diachronic relation to others that is not based merely on personal or collective grievances against the past” (26). Insisting on a shared past that stands as the guarantee of an enduring future, elegies extract prospective power from retrospection—a power that, in Cavitch’s account, participates in the imagined community of a nascent American nation. But it is not retrospection alone that confers this power; rather, it is the transposition of the past onto the durable presence of poetic address (or, conversely, the embedding of the latter within the stream of historical time) that enables the fashioning of what Brady calls a “community of shared loss” (10), or what Cavitch recognizes, more hopefully, as a “specifically political, shared happiness that ‘loss’ misnames” (24). The communal force of elegy emerges through the juxtaposition of collective historical memory and the redemptive *now* of the poem-as-event.

In choosing as subjects Sidney, du Bartas, and Elizabeth, Bradstreet drew on elegy’s considerable social force. Proud symbols of a militant, pan-European Protestantism, they furnish an implicit politics in their contrast to the suspiciously popish Charles I. Sidney and Elizabeth, in particular, ground a nostalgia for a unified England that enables the fantasy of a unified Britain. (At the beginning of the elegy for Sidney, Bradstreet shifts from an invocation of “*England*” to “our *British Land*,” hinting at the complexities of national identity amid the conflicts of the mid-century [191].) They were also all figures who had inspired outpourings of memorial verse. Elizabeth’s death, Bradstreet observes, was met with a “hundred Hecatombs of roaring Verse,” and Sidney, too, had been the subject of several volumes’ worth of elegiac poetry (*Tenth Muse*, 200).²² The version of the Sidney elegy published in 1678 remembers one such volume in particular: the poems collected with Spenser’s *Astrophenel* and appended to the 1595 quarto *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*. “*Phœnix Spencer*,” Bradstreet writes,

doth unto his life,
 His death present in sable to his wife.
Stella the fair, whose streams from Conduits fell
 For the sad loss of her dear *Astrophel*. (*Several Poems*, 205)

Spenser's elegy and its companion poems used the occasion of mourning to shape a community of poets, with each one adopting a persona of his own—or her own, in the case of “The Doleful Lay of Clorinda”—modeled on Sidney's *alter ego* Astrophil. Evoking Spenser not as historical personage but as fellow mourner, Bradstreet claims a place for herself in their company.²³

Claiming this company was one way of framing the vast space between imperial center and colonial periphery as a coherent world. Like the “Dialogue Between Old *England* and New,” the elegies are preoccupied with distance and animated by the possibility of overcoming it. In the Sidney elegy, Bradstreet decides to leave his fame “to *England's* Rolls” (195)—as if she were too far removed to praise him adequately. But she is also careful to remind her readers that, as she wrote in a line added in the 1678 edition, “English blood yet runs within my veins” (204). This “yet”—with its shift from a spatial to a temporal logic—is a subtle tell: her England is a faraway place, but it is also a moment in time, a sense of belonging (or of presence) at risk of slipping away. Hence the note of nostalgia that marks the beginning of the Sidney elegy: “When *England* did enjoy her Halsion dayes, / Her noble *Sidney* wore the Crown of Bayes” (191). If the invocation of Spenser's *Astrophel* later in the poem depends on the force of the present tense, here, England and Sidney belong instead to decidedly distant past. Indeed, Bradstreet's nostalgia reminds us of the strange belatedness of the poem, and of each of the elegies in *The Tenth Muse*.²⁴ Elegies necessarily arrive after the fact, but in Bradstreet's poems the gap between memorialized event and poetic present is strained to the point of breaking.

It is no surprise, then, that the elegies themselves are pervaded by a sense of scrambled time. In the Sidney elegy, Bradstreet continually modulates between the conventional present of lyric (“Thy fame, and praise, *is* farre beyond my straine” [192]; my emphasis) and the past of a historical narrative rooted in the “records” and “rolls” that tell of Sidney's “famous feats” (ll. 192, 195, 193). The former ostensibly governs the latter, with apostrophic address framing those records in the present tense of utterance. At times, the effect of their combination is striking:

O brave *Achilles*, I wish some *Homer* would
 Engrave on Marble, in characters of Gold,
 What famous feats thou didst, on *Flanders* coast,
 Of which, this day, fair *Belgia* doth boast. (193)

Hailing Sidney in the present tense, Bradstreet here finds herself pulled into a recollection (“thou didst”) that eventually returns her to a present that has been transformed in the interim: now it encompasses not only poet and addressee but Belgium and the broader European world. But this balance soon proves unsustainable. In the poem’s final third, a decisive shift into the past tense records Bradstreet’s abandonment of her elegiac project, as she describes the Muses’ refusal to inspire her:

[Apollo] promised much, but th’ muses had no will,
 To give to their detractor any quill.
 With high disdain, they said they gave no more,
 Since *Sydney* had exhausted all their store,
 That this contempt it did the more perplex,
 In being done by one of their own sex;
 They took from me, the scribbling pen I had,
 I to be eas’d of such a task was glad.
 For to revenge his wrong, themselves ingage,
 And drave me from *Parnassus* in a rage. (195)

If Bradstreet began her poem as an elegy, by the end it has become something else: a poem *about* elegy, or, more precisely, a poem about elegy’s failure. The slip from lyric into narrative marks the poem’s displacement from the present it sets out to commemorate and preserve, relegating Bradstreet to the position of outsider and latecomer.

For Bradstreet, it seems, lyric apostrophe is a kind of lateness—of presence glimpsed in its vanishing, at the moment when it lapses into retrospection. It may be that this double time is the price of the poem’s worldmaking ambition: placing the elegiac poet back into the stream of historical time, the abandonment of lyric time enables the articulation of a diachronic coherence that might unite Old England and New. Yet the return of retrospection also lays bare the fantasy of presence and personal contact that lies beneath the elegy’s apostrophic address.²⁵ And it is the resulting ambivalence, more than

anything else, that produces the moments of “rupture”—the abrupt refusals of the obligations of elegy that critics have long observed in the poems for both Sidney and du Bartas. Louisa Hall takes these ruptures as moments of “innovative error . . . striving to create space for a distinctly feminine perspective” (3). Rather less optimistically, Ivy Schweitzer reads the elegy’s breakdown as a “self-punishing conclusion” that exposes “the consequences of putting a feminine figure at the center of previously male-centered myths” of authorship (303).²⁶ We can add another reason: Bradstreet is wrestling with the challenges intrinsic to the project of elegiac worldmaking. For the fault-line along which the Sidney elegy breaks down lies between its competing temporalities: the poem’s rupture is a collision between the universal *now* of apostrophic address and the sequential pull of historical narration.

This tension is even more pronounced in Bradstreet’s elegy for du Bartas, which likewise culminates in an abandonment of elegiac praise. In the poem’s most striking passage, Bradstreet describes being astonished by the power of du Bartas’s verse:

A thousand thousand times my senseless Sences,
Movelesse, stand charm’d by thy sweet influences,
More senseless then the stones to *Amphions* Lute,
Mine eyes are sightlesse, and my tongue is mute;
My full astonish’d heart doth pant to break,
Through grief it wants a faculty to speak. (197–98)

The allusion to Amphion is a tellingly troubled one. For early modern audiences, Amphion offered perhaps the signal image of lyric worldbuilding: in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), George Puttenham celebrates poets by declaring them the world’s “first legislators and politicians” and cites Amphion, who “built up cities and reared walls with the stones that came in heaps to the sound of his harp” (96).²⁷ But as Hall points out, the elegy precisely reverses the force of the myth, with Amphion’s music producing not uncanny motion but “like Medusa’s head . . . the horror of stony paralysis” (15). Bradstreet thus imagines herself as a stone under du Bartas’s spell and yet, at the same time, as one worryingly resistant to his architectonic powers. In accounts like Puttenham’s, Amphion appears as a distant mythic origin; Bradstreet, on the other hand, brings him—and du Bartas—forward into an impossibly dilated present. The “thousand thousand times” that du Bartas has charmed her seem to

demand recourse to the past tense, as the narration of her interaction with the Muses does in the preceding elegy for Sidney, but instead her “senseless Sences [. . .] stand” in a serial present. If the poem thus resists the encroachment of narrative, it does so at the cost of poetry’s legislative force: unable to conjure the stones into the walls of Thebes and so pass into mythic history, Amphion is caught in a temporal impasse. Du Bartas is thus himself preserved, his poetry still enchanting Bradstreet. Bradstreet herself, however, is left “moveless,” caught in a lyric now that paradoxically freezes her out of utterance.

Lyric time thus comes with risks of its own: if elegiac apostrophe promises to repair the distances of time and space alike, unifying Old England and New, it is also repeatedly undone by them—fractured and paralyzed by the impossibility of transposing past onto present, colony onto nation. In “The Four Monarchies,” the impasses of millenarian historicism resulted in a collision with another temporal horizon, the present of poetic address. In the last of *The Tenth Muse’s* elegies, the dynamic is reversed: now apocalyptic time emerges as the solution to the temporal impasses of lyric utterance.

Apart from its striking apostrophic proem, Bradstreet’s elegy for Elizabeth is noticeably more detached than those for Sidney and du Bartas. Unlike its companions, this elegy largely avoids the first person, hewing instead to a more soberly historical line in its political nostalgia: “Was ever people better rul’d than hers? / Was ever Land more happy, freed from stirs? / Did ever wealth in *England* so abound?” (201). When Bradstreet does refer to herself, she does so with reticence, insisting, for instance, that “my pride doth but aspire, / To read what others write, and then admire” (202). Although such caution preempts a crisis of the sort that fractures the Sidney elegy, it does so by evacuating the time of poetic address, leaving the present tense unoccupied and Elizabeth, as a result, definitively relegated to the historical past. As the poem’s end nears, this evacuation becomes increasingly troublesome, with Bradstreet puzzling over Elizabeth’s viability as an exemplar of women’s “worth” in an age at risk of forgetting it:

Now say, have women worth, or have they none?
 Or had they some, but with our Queen ist gone?
 Nay Masculines, you have thus tax’d us long,
 But she though dead, will vindicate our wrong.
 Let such, as say our sex is void of reason,
 Know ’tis a slander now, but once was treason.

But happy *England*, which had such a Queen,
 O happy, happy, had those dayes still been,
 But happinesse, lies in a higher sphere,
 Then wonder not, *Eliza* moves not here. (202–03)

The passage's guiding question—"have women worth?"—turns out to be a question of time and loss: do they *now*? England, Bradstreet seems to argue, is "happy" to have been ruled by Eliza; but on closer inspection the line is distinctly ambiguous: was England in fact happy *only when* it "had such a Queen"? The next line confirms this latter reading, framing England's happiness as counterfactual—something that might have survived "had those dayes still been." Now it lies elsewhere, for "*Eliza* moves not here." In contrast to du Bartas's persistent, paralyzing presence in the preceding elegy, Elizabeth is simply absent.

But not for long. In the elegy's conclusion, Bradstreet imagines Elizabeth's redemptive return:

Full fraught with honour, riches, and with days:
 She set, she set, like Titan in his rayes.
 No more shall rise or set so glorious Sun,
 Untill the heavens great revolution:
 If then new things, their old form must retain,
Eliza shall rule *Albian* once again. (203)

As Ivy Schweitzer observes, these concluding lines carry the queen beyond "her historical and literary context [into] the higher sphere of Puritan millennialism" (306–07). The apocalyptic time thus invoked is a running thread in *The Tenth Muse*, lingering behind both "The Four Monarchies" and "David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan," the poem that follows the elegy for Elizabeth and closes the volume. In "David's Lamentation," typological history seems to hint obliquely at politics, with Saul's fate suggesting Charles's. In Elizabeth's elegy, the turn toward secular history is sharper: its millennium comes shorn not just of overt Puritanism, but seemingly of divinity altogether.²⁸ Elizabeth, already associated with the phoenix, slides into the place of Christ returning to "rule [. . .] again." The poem no doubt relies on the analogy of theological salvation, and yet apocalyptic time appears less as a mode of transcendence than as a way of poetically remaking *this* world. In a telling

shift, Elizabeth returns to rule not England (the nation invoked earlier in the elegy) but “Albian.” This Albion belongs equally to the deep past of national myth and to a yet-unrealized future; it names a Britain whose kingdoms had been unified only after Elizabeth’s death in 1603, and riven again by the Bishops’ Wars of 1639 and 1640. To invoke Albion is both to reclaim an old British unity and to look forward to the “latter dayes of hop’d for good” that New England, in the “Dialogue,” had urged her mother to anticipate (188).

Fashioning a unified Albion thus requires the prophetic voice that had eluded “The Four Monarchies”: where before the pressures of the poetic present had dissolved the prospective ambitions of Bradstreet’s history, now her voice vaults forward, into the future tense that governs the final couplet. The future glimpsed here is not an escape from historical time, nor simply its continuation. Instead, as the metaphor of solar revolution suggests, it is the transposition of old onto new. And while Bradstreet remains cautious, setting the elegy’s prophetic ending within a guardedly conditional grammar, she discovers in it nonetheless a momentary glimpse of a unified space and time: a lyric temporality realized not as counterpoint to history but as its redemption.

Epitaphic Space-Time

The promise of a lyric time that might combine “old form” and “new things” is also the promise of a unified world that might encompass Britain and New England alike. Untimeliness, that is, suggests as its spatial counterpart the eccentric geography of a transatlantic world. The linking of time and space, a recurring theme in the elegies, is realized most fully in the epitaphs that conclude them. In conjoining epitaphs to elegies, Bradstreet was practicing a hybrid genre that, as Joshua Scodel and Scott Newstok have shown, became increasingly common in the seventeenth century. Elegies and epitaphs share the topic of death, but their orientations toward it are different in important ways: where elegies foreground mourning, epitaphs argue closure and finality; where elegies invoke funerary ritual, epitaphs are resolutely objective—etymologically, they are “on tombs.”²⁹ The epitaph’s spatial logic focuses attention on place in a way that the elegy does not: “More consistently than most any other type of speech act,” argues Newstok, “and certainly more than any other type of literary genre, the epitaph marks something *here* in one place” (42). Yet this insistence on place necessarily implicates the paradoxes of elegiac time.

As material inscriptions, or (in this case) as fictions of inscription, epitaphs stake a claim to historical specificity: they present themselves as monuments that mark the passage of time.³⁰ At the same time, they invoke an apostrophic mode of their own—the voice that hails passersby to remind them, forever in the present tense, that the deceased “here lies.”

Versions of this formula begin each of the elegies’ epitaphs. “Here lyes the pearl of *France, Parnassus* glory,” Bradstreet writes of du Bartas, “The world rejoyc’d at’s birth, at’s death was sorry” (199). Of Elizabeth: “Here sleeps *THE* Queen, this is the royall bed / O’ th’ Damask Rose, sprung from the white and red” (203). The elegy for Elizabeth in fact comes with a pair of epitaphs, the second of which repeats the gesture:

Here lies the pride of Queens, pattern of Kings,
So blaze it fame, here’s feathers for thy wings.
Here lies the envy’d, yet unparalell’d Prince,
Whose living vertues speak (though dead long since).
If many worlds, as that fantastick framed,
In every one, be her great glory famed. (203)

The epitaph’s *here*, like the lyric *now*, is a form of deixis—a shifter whose reference depends on the specificity of situation, of context. For Newstok, “epitaphs are constitutively deictic,” defined by the gesture of indexical reference (44). We might add that they are *deictically constitutive*: that they bring a situation into being precisely by indicating it.³¹ Where is *here*? When is *now*? In the generative power of these questions lies the distinctive world-making force of both epitaph and elegy, forms whose ambitions are at least, in this respect, continuous. It is little surprise, then, that Bradstreet’s second epitaph for Elizabeth reproduces the conclusion of the elegy: there, Elizabeth’s future return to a unified Albion is proleptically imagined; here, she is resurrected in the present, her “living vertues speak[ing]” even after death. That this is a “textual epitaph,” marking no real tomb, only underscores its power.³² Without a definite referent, the poem’s indefinite deixis must make a space and a time of its own.

It may be this imaginative burden that provokes the strange, final couplet of the book’s last epitaph: “If many worlds, as that fantastick framed, / In every one, be her great glory famed.” The fantastic in question may be Giordano

Bruno, an acquaintance of Sidney's during Bruno's time in England; it may be Lucretius, whose atomic materialism led him to argue that there must exist "other worlds in other regions" (*alios [loca] aliis terrarium in partibus orbis*) (2.1075). In any case, the possibility of a plurality of worlds is for Bradstreet only conditionally admissible, attributed to an eccentric philosophy and governed by an *if*. Yet the conditional status of other worlds is what gives them their power. Bradstreet's glimpse of a plural cosmos militates against the local specificity, the historical anchoring, of the epitaphic *here*, placing it instead in a world beyond. In the couplet's conditional grammar, this world cannot be affirmed or disproven; its function is not referential but fantastical. Thus the assured declaration that "[i]n every [world] be her great glory famed" functions, at the same time, as a wish: *let it be so*. For a brief moment, the poetic present flickers into the subjunctive time of desire—a syntactical signature of sorts for *The Tenth Muse's* untimely worldmaking.

Yet perhaps the deictics of Bradstreet's epitaphs do refer after all. Although not on stone, these epitaphs undoubtedly are inscribed, made material: their place is the book—or rather, the books—in which Bradstreet's readers encounter them. For readers in London, circa 1650, the epitaphs' *here* was *The Tenth Muse*, a volume that stood, like a grave stone, as an uncanny compound of past and present, presence and absence. Books, unlike tombs, are mobile, and hence present their own problems of spatial reference. And in this respect *The Tenth Muse* was especially paradoxical. For it was placed twice: written by an author "lately sprung up in America" but printed "in London for Stephen Bowtell at the signe of the Bible in Popes-Head Alley." Situated between (or just beyond) London and America, the book's eccentricity stands as the spatial parallel to the untimeliness of the poems it contains, poems that are at once late and new. Out of place and out of date, the elegies and epitaphs of *The Tenth Muse* reach for a unity of space and time whose value is a function of its impossibility. To read them is to participate in the uncertain work of worldmaking: the fashioning of an imaginary, indefinite, and yet real here-and-now in which Old England and New, Elizabethan past and Civil War present, history and its prophetic end might live with each other. The paradoxes of this work shape *The Tenth Muse* down to the description, on Bowtell's title page, of its author's own untimeliness. *Lately* sprung up in America, Bradstreet is herself at once hopelessly out of date and imbued with the promise of the vibrantly new.

NOTES

I am grateful to Matt Hunter, Tessie Prakas, and Debapriya Sarkar for their advice on earlier versions of this essay.

1. See London, sig. Ee4^r. For a detailed account of the publication of *The Tenth Muse*, see Gillian Wright, 60–66.

2. Quotations of Bradstreet's poetry, except where noted otherwise, are taken from the 1650 edition of *The Tenth Muse* and, because this edition lacks line numbers, are cited by page number.

3. Intriguingly, the revised second edition of *The Tenth Muse*, published with additions in 1678 as *Several Poems Compiled with great variety of Wit and Learning*, resolves the line's ambivalence by removing *once*: "You are my Mother Nurse, and I your flesh" (199).

4. On the literary and cultural response to the "British problem," see Kerrigan. Kerrigan's insistence (55–56) that the "Dialogue" is unconcerned with Britain, and that Bradstreet instead offers a resolutely English perspective, is belied by the poem's references to conflicts in Scotland and Ireland—as when New England asks her mother whether "the Scots play false behind your back" (182) or Old England recalls seeing "poore Ireland bleeding out her last" (185).

5. As Katherine Gillespie observes, however, New England's filial care paradoxically places her into "the maternal role of advisor," a reversal that suggests succession and displacement even as it performs the intimacy of mother and daughter (111).

6. The suggestive phrase is from the title of Ivy Schweitzer's essay "Anne Bradstreet Wrestles with the Renaissance."

7. From *Early American Literature*, see especially Requa, Schweitzer, Sweet, Nancy Wright, and more recently Hall.

8. See especially Wiseman and Gillian Wright.

9. For a classic reading of Bradstreet as emblematically American, see Martin, who describes her subjects—Bradstreet, Dickinson, and Rich—as "spann[ing] the development of American history and culture from Puritanism to transcendentalism to modern feminism" (4) and as tracing "the outlines of an American female poetic" (11). For a more recent example, see Breitwieser's *National Melancholy*, the first essay of which positions Bradstreet as an "early American Antigone"; or Showalter's invocation of Anne Bradstreet ("A New Literature Springs Up in the New World") at the beginning of her survey of American women writers.

10. Rich's 1979 postscript to this essay (written in 1967) retreats somewhat from her stern original verdict on *The Tenth Muse*. Wiseman criticizes Rich for a "failure of historical imagination" (184). For a consideration of Rich's "additive emendations," which preserve the original essay while reflecting on its errors, see Rust.

11. In addition to Chedgzoy, see Gillespie and Ivic for readings that emphasize Bradstreet's Atlantic perspective.

12. Cheah's essay develops the Heideggerian distinction between *world*, "a form of relating, belonging, or being-with," and *globe*, "a bounded object in Mercatorian space" (319).

13. Britwieser's reflections on the American idea helpfully frame this idea's temporal motivation. The "crucially American thing," he argues, is the "permanent futurity of the nation" (14), a futurity hauntingly glimpsed in the potential form of the "not-yet" (30).

14. Campbell's study predates the more recent "global turn"—both in early modern studies and in literary studies more generally—and its anthropological orientation is

distinct and powerfully illuminating in its movement across different senses of the term *world*: as geographic space, as anthropological culture, as literary-fictional gestalt.

15. On “The Four Monarchies” as a “rare and belated example” of the verse history, a popular late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century form, see Gillian Wright, 83–96.

16. See Wiseman, 181–96. On fifth monarchist thought and other branches of millenarian radicalism in seventeenth-century New England, see Gura, 126–52.

17. Gillian Wright offers a similar assessment: “*The Tenth Muse* . . . refuses to offer either apocalyptic or political solutions to the dilemmas confronting the post-monarchical nation. . . . ‘The Four Monarchies’ ends not with the apocalyptic denouement which its title seems to anticipate—and which seems likely to have been Bradstreet’s own plan for the poem—but with the abrupt and directionless termination of the Roman Monarchy” (95).

18. For further examples of this narrative bent, see Pavel and Berger as well as, in more recent work specific to early modern studies, Campbell, Ramachandran, and Dawson.

19. I draw here on a common thread in Culler’s and Alpers’s diverging arguments—the ability of lyric apostrophe to conjure worlds *both* through personification and through the generative possibilities of the social embeddedness of figuration.

20. For an account of lyric that emphasizes temporal duality, see the first chapter of Greene, *Post-Petrarchanism*. Greene argues that Petrarch’s modulation of past and present—crystallized in the deictic forms *then* and *now*—marshals a balance between ritual utterance and narrative fiction that would, following Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, become the organizing dynamic of lyric poetry. For Petrarch, narrative inheres in the process of the *Canzoniere*’s own development; for Bradstreet, it appears as the historical record that her poems both respond to and attempt to move beyond.

21. Sacks emphasizes repetition as a central trope of elegy, linking it to the repetition compulsion in order to develop a psychoanalytic interpretation of the genre.

22. On the elegies published in the wake of Sidney’s death in 1587—including volumes of Latin verse from both universities—see Baker-Smith, and on elegiac verse for Elizabeth, see Woodcock.

23. On *The Tenth Muse*’s elegies as acts of affiliation with the Sidney circle—and with the women poets in Sidney’s family, including Mary Wroth and Mary Sidney Herbert—see Nancy Wright.

24. In a reminder of the pressure of punctuality on elegy, Pigman notes that the publication of a collection of Oxford elegies for Sidney, *Exequiae Illustrissimi Equitis, D. Philippi Sidnaei* (1588), began with an apology from William Gager for its belatedness—it had been published “a few days over a year after Sidney’s death” (57).

25. The figuration of a voice and presence that belies poetic textuality is central to de Man’s definition of lyric as depending on the “phenomenalization of the poetic voice” via the “hallucinatory” trope of prosopopeia (55, 63). In a more precisely historical study of nineteenth-century lyric, Tucker develops a similar account of lyric as something displaced from the start: “Lyric, in the dramatic monologue, is what you cannot have and what you cannot forget” (149).

26. Sweet and Delacroix also read Bradstreet’s elegies as encoding her exclusion from a primarily masculine tradition. But see Nancy Wright for an argument that Bradstreet’s subjects deliberately invoke a tradition of women elegists.

27. In *The Defense of Poesy* (1595), Philip Sidney offers a similar account of Amphion. In “mov[ing] stones with his poetry to build Thebes,” Sidney writes, Amphion demonstrates

the power of poets “to draw with their charming sweetness the wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowledge” (213).

28. This is not to say that religious tropes are absent; it is precisely their presence that renders the return of Elizabeth so striking. Lisa Gim describes some of these effects—noting particular the significance of the forty-year period since Elizabeth’s death—in an account that, like those of Wiseman and Gillian Wright, locates the poem amid millenarian Puritanism in the 1640s (177).

29. On elegy as process, see Pigman’s psychologically inflected analysis: “Even when elegy does not enact an abbreviated process of mourning by progressing from praise and lament to consolation and recovery, the recurring features of elegy are psychologically coherent expressions of different parts of the process of mourning” (45).

30. If epitaphs are temporal as well as spatial, Brady’s emphasis on the materials of funerary ritual reminds us that the converse is true of elegies: “The elegy was one funerary document among many including sermons, epitaphs, murder pamphlets, guides to and descriptions of holy dying, mothers’ legacies, wills, confessions and last testaments. These documents joined other ritual props—such as death masks, escutcheons and other heraldic instruments, effigies, hearses, monumental sculpture, domestic funerary architecture and decorations—and other forms of writing, including musical laments and hymns” (6).

31. Dubrow gets at this effect when she describes deictics like *this* and *here* as “convergers” that “point to someone or something, generally with the aim of gathering in and gathering together,” and in doing so bring addresser, addressee, and deictic object into relation with each other (*Deixis*, 37).

32. Newstok uses the term “textual epitaph” to distinguish those epitaphs that are “written and . . . only purportedly inscribed on stone” (35).

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