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An Archive of Poetry: Surviving Settlement, Upholding Feminine Virtue,
and Practicing Narrative Discipline in Anne Bradstreet's
and Eliza R. Snow's Poetry

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

An Archive of Poetry: Surviving Settlement, Upholding Feminine Virtue, and Practicing Narrative Discipline in Anne Bradstreet's and Eliza R. Snow's Poetry

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Settlement is a frequent topic in scholarly conversations about early American literature. From studies about William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* to Anne Bradstreet's poetry, settlement is a consistent theme in texts written by early Americans and in scholarship written by experts about early American texts. Settlement is also a major theme in the poetry written by Eliza R. Snow after fleeing with the Latter-day Saints from Missouri and settling in Nauvoo, Illinois. Both Bradstreet and Snow lived through settlement crises, crises that incorporated and exacerbated religious tensions within their communities eventually taking the form of the Antinomian Controversy and the Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844. The poetry left behind by Bradstreet and Snow is often an overlooked archive of historical sources that gives its readers insight into how these women responded to the crises within their communities and how feminine virtue played a role in their settlement crises.

In light of this, in this paper I combine recent scholarship that focuses on Mormon settlement with scholarship that complicates the narratives about prominent women in Mormon history to unearth new insights into the lived experiences of Mormon women during settlement crisis. I borrow this move from scholars of early American history who have done this for a long time and have similarly uncovered new discoveries into the women that they study. Given that we now understand things that the Puritans did not fully—namely, that women are complex and that their historical images are often posthumously determined by archives (often controlled by powerful men)—I pay specific attention to the similarities of how settlement affects Puritan and Mormon women, both in their present-tense and in the historical narratives about them. Focusing on the intersection between settlement and women helps us to understand female writers, the way that women endured settlement, and the way that settlement affected the gender and overarching politics of their communities. Most notably, examining this intersection gives scholars insight into the ways that women writers—such as Anne Bradstreet and Eliza R. Snow—discipline their own narratives and leave behind poetical archives in order to be remembered as virtuous and well-behaved women, while the women who did not leave an archive are more susceptible to the narrative control of powerful men over historical archives.

Keywords: archive, poetry, settlement, virtue, Anne Bradstreet, Eliza R. Snow, Puritan, Mormon, Latter-day Saints

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Introduction

When the Puritan Pilgrims led by John Winthrop embarked on their journey to what they called “the New World,” they believed they were traveling to a Promised Land. Scholar Charlotte Gordon paints the picture of religious followers taught to see their journey as a reflection of Biblical proportions: “It was a leap in logic that made sense to a people who had been taught to compare their ‘bondage’ in England to the Israelites’ in Egypt, and who saw their journey to the New World as a reprise of the Jews’ famous exodus to the promised land” (7). Although the historical connections between the Puritan pilgrims and the Israelites’ are tenuous, the fact that the settlers firmly believed in the similarities is an important key to unearthing the significance of their settlement in what would become the Massachusetts Bay.

Settlement has been a recurring theme in American history. Whether propelled by religious zealotry, marginalization, or the whiteness-driven sense of Manifest Destiny, Americans and American-immigrants have been leaving their homelands and settling new ones for the past five centuries. These periods are moments of crisis for their participants. Settlement is a time of present-tense urgency, emergency, survival, and—most importantly—change that elicits states of uprootedness, impermanence, insecurity, and psychological distress in those who live through it. In her book, *Seasons of Misery*, historian Kathleen Donegan sets out to treat the early American settlement of New England as a crisis by viewing it in the present-tense.

Primary documents of this time are tricky; even in firsthand accounts, events are often strung together to form cohesive narratives with clear causes and effects and any

incomprehensible outlying events are either temporary, uncanny occurrences¹ or omissions.² Even still, Donegan asserts that these primary documents—because they function both as history and as literature—denote the chaos and catastrophe that was the colonial settlement of early America (8). In their present tense, these events had no immediate hope of being curated into a nice narrative or of being resolved from their original state of crisis (Donegan 8). During periods of settlement, bodies were moved from one place to another, routines were changed to accommodate new activities and social order, the food that was grown and consumed shifted with new landscapes and resources, violence broke out within and between groups, and the emotional and spiritual states of people were suddenly more malleable and more volatile.

This religious malleability and volatility was certainly present in John Winthrop's group. Despite their seemingly firm faith in the face of English oppression in Europe, in the "New World" their community would face a religious controversy that was deeply connected to the concerns of their settlement crisis: The Antinomian Controversy. This controversy erupted into a communal-wide faith-crisis just four years after Boston was established, and—after its "resolution"—remnants of the Antinomian controversy were cemented into the foundation of American Christianity and American settlement; echoes of it are present in other eras of American history.

Perhaps because of origin stories, like that of Boston, crises of settlement and religiosity coincide more often than not in American history. Another intriguing example of this dual crisis is the settlement of Nauvoo by Latter-day Saints in the late 1830s. Founded a decade earlier, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (originally known as the Church of Christ) already

¹ Such as the story of the settlers who shot at each other in a state of confusion in William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

² Such as the death of Dorothy Bradford from *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

had a history of internal and external conflicts. The Nauvoo era is sandwiched between the violent expulsion of Mormons in Missouri and their eventual exodus from the United States into what would ultimately become the state of Utah. After the assassination of the faith's founder, Joseph Smith Jr., the Latter-day Saint followers of Brigham Young tapped into their New England heritage by comparing their journey west from Nauvoo to the journey of the Israelites', just as the Puritans did. Christopher Blythe displays this connection in his book, *Terrible Revolution*, by noting, "When the Mormons marched en masse, leaving the borders of the United States, they sought a place where they could practice their religion unmolested. Mormons imagined their trek as a reenactment of the Israelites' exodus to the Promised Land. Theirs, too, was the story of an unwanted people guided by a prophet to an elusive land of prosperity and refuge by way of an imposing wilderness" (50). The transference of this mindset from the Puritans of Massachusetts to the Mormons of Nauvoo is especially notable when examining the impact of it on the women in both groups.

It is often difficult to capture the complexity of Puritan women from the primary sources of the 17th and 18th century. Historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich wrote to this issue in her now foundational article, "Vertuous Women Found," wherein she asserts that the best way to uncover the character and complexities of virtuous (rather than misbehaving) women during this time is to turn to eulogies, posthumous tributes written by male ministers, husbands, and sons. It is in this article that Ulrich also famously opens with an observation about the difference in archival treatment between virtuous and misbehaved women: "Well-behaved women seldom make history" (20). Instead, it is the women who break rules, make messes, and do terrible things who are most frequently discussed, analyzed, and remembered in historical archives. While the dichotomy between "misbehaving" and "virtuous" women is a false construct created by

patriarchy, it had significant impact on the women who lived through early American settlement, and its later iterations impacted and constrained the lives of 19th century women in both familiar and novel ways as they continued to settle America.

Although one can find more information about the lives of Mormon women than the virtuous Puritan women Ulrich wrote about, the historical archive still sorts Mormon women into the misogynistic dichotomy of being either virtuous or misbehaving. In Mormon historical archives, both virtuous and misbehaved women are mentioned, but neither are treated holistically. The dominant narratives of control written and kept by powerful men in Mormon archives have historically cast misbehaved women as one-dimensionally unvirtuous, such is the case with historical renderings of Sarah M. Pratt, Nancy Rigdon, and even Emma Hale Smith, at times. Even virtuous Mormon women are not always present in accessible, historical archives because of their connections to polygamy—a practice in Mormon history that even the most adept scholars struggle to tease out.

Despite these intricacies, there simply are more primary documents written by and about Mormon women than about the Puritan women of the 17th and 18th century, and these primary documents reveal much about their lived experiences and how they perceived their settlement crises. Ulrich touches on the importance of primary documents in discovering the present-tense concerns of Mormon women in her more recent publication, *A House Full of Females*. In this book, Ulrich uses the same methodology as Donegan. To capture the present, Ulrich emphasizes the need to read primary accounts written *during* the time of crisis. In the Introduction to *A House Full of Females*, Ulrich clarifies that while retrospective accounts (like memoirs and autobiographies) are important, they are also produced within the exigency of when they were written, which is often decades after the events described within them. Diaries, letters, and other

contemporary accounts are “better at conveying the instability of events as they unfolded” (xx). In other words, they are better at accurately representing the instability and urgency of the crises in which they were written.

In building on this historiography, I hope to submit another form of primary document to this conversation: poetry. Ulrich, herself, analyzes poetry alongside letters and diaries in *A House Full of Females*, though she says little about the methodology behind it. It’s safe to assume that she sees poetry (particularly poetry written on the spot in response to current events) functioning in the same way as the other historical documents she examines that were written in the midst of a crisis. This makes poetry another important (and often overlooked) piece of the historical archive, a piece that—like most other historical texts—is even more overlooked when written by women.

Even still, poetry can be elusive. Although poems are often written as contemporary accounts (like a diary entry), there are certainly times when they are retrospective. For that reason, I have selected poems that are introspective and written in immediate response to aspects of settlement crisis from two female poets, one who lived through Puritan settlement and one who lived through Mormon settlement: Anne Dudley Bradstreet and Eliza Roxcy Snow. These women used poetry to process, withstand, and make meaning out of their settlement crises. Notably, both women wrote about the more communal aspects of settlement crisis—such as political upheaval, plagues, and tensions within their communities—and they wrote about the individual aspects of it—grief, loss, confusion, faith-crisis, and their own psychological and emotional distress. While it is common for communal-focused, historical narratives to focus on big-picture aspects of crises, it is rarer for them to note the personal journey through the individual pieces of crisis. The fact that Bradstreet and Snow both note that personal journey in

their archives of poetry gives historians a unique perspective into the female experience of settlement crisis. Examination of their writing also gives one insight into the constructs of feminine virtue and how it may have constrained and propelled their behaviors, particularly when in comparison with two other female contemporaries who seemingly failed to live up to the standards of that virtue: Anne Hutchinson and Emma Hale Smith.

In this paper, I combine recent scholarship that focuses on Mormon settlement with scholarship that complicates the narratives about prominent women in Mormon history to unearth new insights into the lived experiences of Mormon women during settlement crisis. I borrow this move from scholars of early American history who have done this for a long time and have similarly uncovered new discoveries into the women that they study. Given that we now understand things that the Puritans did not fully—namely, that women are complex and that their historical images are often posthumously determined by archives (often controlled by powerful men)—I pay specific attention to the similarities of how settlement affects Puritan and Mormon women, both in their present-tense and in the historical narratives about them. Focusing on the intersection between settlement and women helps us to understand female writers, the way that women endured settlement, and the way that settlement affected the gender and overarching politics of their communities. Most notably, examining this intersection gives scholars insight into the ways that women writers—such as Anne Bradstreet and Eliza R. Snow—discipline their own narratives and leave behind poetical archives in order to be remembered as virtuous and well-behaved women, while the women who did not leave an archive are more susceptible to the narrative control of powerful men over historical archives.

The Puritan Settlement of Boston

Much like the initial settlement efforts in Plymouth described by Donegan, the settlement of Boston and nearby Salem were similarly tumultuous. Before sailing to Massachusetts himself, John Winthrop sent out a smaller, preliminary group to start the process of settling Salem. Although this was a seemingly good idea, it ended in disaster. When Winthrop's party arrived, they discovered an "all but collapsed colony" (Gordon 7). Eighty people had died from the brutal winter and the remaining survivors were emaciated from starvation and incredibly sick from the poor living conditions. This coupled with the intimidating terrain made it clear to Winthrop and his people, including Thomas Dudley and his daughter Anne Dudley Bradstreet, "that Salem was not Canaan" (Gordon 8). In fact, Gordon continues, "To the newcomers, it seemed that the Englishmen they had sent to improve the land had instead deteriorated into savages, and that the wilderness, instead of being subdued, had succeeded in toppling the forces of civilization" (Gordon 8). For the recent arrivals, admitting to this realization would have been the same as admitting defeat in the face of their attempt at settling Massachusetts, and it made the danger of settlement all that much more real.

Wanting to put distance between themselves and the Salem party, Winthrop and Dudley decided to occupy a nearby area, known to the English as Charlestown. Soon after, the group moved to Boston in search of fresh water and finally established Winthrop's longed-for city on a hill in 1630. The first year of settlement was extremely difficult, especially because of the lingering failure at Salem. Though Winthrop's party fared slightly better than the Salem party, 200 of his 1,000 incoming colonists died, and grief permeated the air of each colony. Although Boston eventually became a success story for the colonists, the crisis of settlement plagued the community continuously in the early years.

Anne Bradstreet's Settlement Poetry

Anne Dudley Bradstreet was eighteen years old when she arrived with her father, Thomas Dudley, her mother, and her sisters to what they saw as the “New World.” She grew up in Northampton, England amid many books and intellectual conversations. From a young age, she was well-read and religiously devout. She was married at sixteen to her husband, Simon Bradstreet, whom she would later describe in her poetry as “dear and loving.” Both Simon Bradstreet and Anne’s father, Thomas Dudley, filled many political roles in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. While the men in her life fulfilled lofty official roles, Anne fulfilled the domestic and motherly roles expected of her, and yet, she also made time to write. By the end of her lifetime, she was the first published female poet in the American colonies and a quite famous one at that.

In conjunction with her writing, by most accounts, Anne Bradstreet fits the description of Ulrich’s “well-behaved,” virtuous woman. She got married, she had children, she performed domestic work, she was religiously faithful, and for all intents and purposes she measured up to the high standards of her community. It is clear in her poetry that she was a deep thinker and feeler, who worked out her complex thoughts and feelings via writing. She wrote a variety of poems ranging from personal accounts wherein she processes her emotions and psychological distress to philosophical musings about English politics, though topics surrounding settlement are especially prominent in all of her poetry. Throughout her archive of poetry, Bradstreet put pen to paper to describe the uprootedness that comes with settlement, the way that Puritan faith provided a way through the crisis, and the difficulty with which she maintained her feminine virtue while promoting the idea that women are as capable as men.

One poem in which Anne Bradstreet meditates on uprootedness is “Verses upon the Burning of our House, July 10th, 1666.” In this poem, she wrestles with a common tragedy of settlement: the sudden loss of home. Although this house fire occurred decades after the initial settlement of Massachusetts, it is not a far stretch to assume that Bradstreet’s sudden loss reminded her of those early days as a struggling, homeless colonist. Still, it is worth noting that Bradstreet’s family was wealthy, and the home they lost had been large and sturdy; yet, the writing conveys the emotional devastation that followed the fire. It is likely that Bradstreet wrote about this incident with such emotion because the events brought her mind back to the early days of settlement when everything felt insecure and uncertain. As a result, this poem gives readers an important look into the emotional turbulence that suddenly being without a home causes—an experience common to English settlers.

In one such instance of emotional turmoil in the poem, Bradstreet recounts all of the material goods that her family lost in the fire (since her family was unable to save most of the contents of the house): “Here stood that trunk, and there that chest,/There lay that store I counted best./My pleasant things in ashes lie/And them behold no more shall I” (Bradstreet, “Verses” 25-28). From there, Bradstreet mourns the loss of community that her home once brought her, such as the ability to entertain guests and “eat a bit” together at her table (Bradstreet, “Verses” 30). She concludes that with everything gone, it is her lot to remain “in silence” from now on (Bradstreet, “Verses” 35). This last line shows with precision the pain caused by her uprootedness. Where once Bradstreet had a home filled with material comforts and community, she is now left with perpetual silence in its place. However, after that admission, Bradstreet begins to shift her thinking with the idea introduced in the following line that “all’s vanity” (“Verses” 36).

From here, the poem turns and provides Bradstreet with a solution to the pain caused by her losing her home through her faith. She remembers that in her current state of loss she still has “an house on high erect,/Framed by that mighty Architect,” which meets all of her needs (Bradstreet, “Verses” 43-44). This realization replaces her need for the material goods that she has lost. She concludes at the end of the poem: “The world no longer let me love,/My hope and treasure lies above.” (Bradstreet, “Verses” 53-54). This conclusion demonstrates the way that Bradstreet’s faith comforts her and sustains her through the crises that she experiences because of settlement. This turn to faith as a way to resolve the emotional upheaval Bradstreet lays bare in her poetry is a common one, especially in her poems with themes of settlement crisis.

Another Bradstreet poem that demonstrates the psychological distress associated with settlement is “Dialogue between Old England and New.” Written during the early years of Bradstreet’s life in Boston, “Dialogue between Old England and New”—a poem wherein Bradstreet frames the crisis of settlement within the relationship between a mother and a daughter—keenly speaks to the issues of emotional distress and uncertainty. Bradstreet also makes her issues with the archive prominent in this poem by displaying her discomfort at not knowing what is going on in England during the tumultuous English Civil War. In this poem, Old England as a cryptic and forlorn mother and New England as an inquisitive and distressed child have a dialectic conversation about the state of the English commonwealth. The poem begins with New England asking why Old England is somber to which Old England elusively responds that it is sick. New England then inquires what has caused the sickness and recounts various historical events as potential sources for the sickness, affording Bradstreet an opportunity to show off her intellect and knowledge of English history. After a lot of back and forth, Old England eventually reveals the source of its malady: the English Civil War (Bradstreet,

“Dialogue” 165). Although initially distressed about her mother’s illness, New England’s demeanor switches quickly once she learns what it is. Rather than lamenting with her mother, New England immediately responds with “Dear Mother, cease complaints and wipe your eyes,/Shake off your dust, cheer up, and now arise” (Bradstreet, “Dialogue” 214-215).

This assured and perhaps even dismissive response seems odd from a speaker who earlier in the poem begged her mother to disclose her ailment so that she “may sympathize” (Bradstreet, “Dialogue” 12). While some may argue that this response from New England is merely an indication of her lack of sympathy for the country that would not accept her Puritan inhabitants, the rest of the poem argues the opposite. Throughout the poem, New England shows genuine care for Old England, even when Old England is being difficult and aloof. No, this quick shift from notable psychological distress to sudden confidence in New England is indicative of a purposeful move on the part of the author. In this shift, Bradstreet demonstrates her ability to discipline the narratives that she writes in her own poetry, the poetry that will eventually make up the archive about her life and experiences as a female settler.

The reason behind New England’s sudden confidence is revealed in the final stanza of the poem as New England describes the coming holy war that will—with swords, fire, and blood—bring “much good fruit” out of Old England’s current troubles (Bradstreet, “Dialogue” 219). In other words, New England finds comfort and confidence for her mother—and for her own psychological distress—in an apocalyptic narrative in which true Christians (i.e. Puritans) will be victorious. The poem ends with another confident couplet in which New England reasserts for a final time that her salvation is rooted in a Christian apocalypse worthy of stories: “Farewell, dear Mother, rightest cause prevail,/And in a while, you’ll tell another tale” (Bradstreet, “Dialogue” 298-299). This poem demonstrates another way that Bradstreet uses her faith to navigate the

psychological distress associated with settlement: she finds comfort and assurance in a promised apocalyptic end of days in order to discipline her own mind and quiet her own anxieties. Rather than write a poem that perpetually stewes in the discomfort of distance, difference, and dissidence, Bradstreet resolves all tension with a core belief of contemporary Christian eschatology and a sense of renewed faith. After this resolution, there is no longer a need for tears or emotional distress, there is only hope packaged up in Christian apocalypticism.

Finding hope—and a path to assuage one’s emotional distress—in apocalypse is not exclusive to Puritans alive during Bradstreet’s lifetime. In fact, Mormons did this, too. As Christopher Blythe demonstrates in *Terrible Revolution*, the Mormon people had a distinct and powerful martyrology that was connected to their apocalypticism. The Mormons thought of martyrdom as necessary to bring about the apocalypse depicted in Revelation, which enabled them to relieve their grief and emotional distress at the deaths of faithful saints (Blythe 54). This connection is relevant to this argument because Eliza R. Snow—another female poet who wrote about settlement crisis—also incorporated apocalypse as a means to resolve emotional distress in her poetry about settlement crises. Prominent examples of this in her poetry archive include “The Gathering of the Saints,” “Time and Change,” and “The Nauvoo Legion.” All in all, the move on Bradstreet’s part to use an imminently expected apocalypse to resolve her own emotional distress shows the way that Puritans used their faith to respond to and even resolve aspects of settlement crises faced. This usefulness made faith very important to the stability of the group as a whole.

The Antinomian Controversy

With settlement crises ranging from destruction, death, starvation, plague, and famine, the Antinomian Controversy of 1636-1638 may seem trivial in comparison, but to many of those involved it was equally terrifying. The theological implications of the crisis were large. On one

side, there was the argument maintained by important men like John Winthrop that though there is no salvific power in good works, it is still an integral part of Christian living. On the other side, the Antinomians—which centered Anne Hutchinson and included others like John Cotton and John Wheelwright—argued that because works have no salvific power, there is no point in preaching the necessity of good works. These two ideas posed a problem for the Puritan colonists of Boston, if they were to pick the wrong side, they risked the wrath of God and the loss of their salvation.

On top of this, the social order of the community was in peril during the Antinomian Controversy. Though Anne Hutchinson had faced obstacles in her efforts to blend into the community initially, it wasn't long after her arrival that she had made quite a name for herself and carved out an integral role in the female community as a midwife and spiritual leader (Gordon 152). The potential loss of Anne Hutchinson would wreak havoc on the existing systems and relationships present in Boston, and this was exactly what the male ministers hoped for. Distaining Anne Hutchinson for the power and prestige she had gained in the community, the men hoped to win that power back by blacklisting her. On top of that, the controversy itself had divided many people and risked a complete rupture within the community at large. With both the new religious order and communities hanging in the balance of this controversy, this schism of theology threatened to destroy everything the colonial settlers had worked to create and preserve since departing Europe; in essence, the threat that the controversy posed to the community re-immersed Bostonians in the settlement crisis they had begun just four years prior.

Like Anne Bradstreet, Anne Hutchinson came from a religiously devout family led by a strong-willed father (Winship 7). Also, like Bradstreet, Hutchinson was educated from a young age, she even knew how to write which was a fairly rare skill among women of her time

(Winship 9). Still, she was devoutly Puritan and after her favorite preacher, John Cotton, fled to the “New World,” Anne followed him with her family in the summer of 1634, arriving four years after the first colonists (Winship 19). John Cotton, the preacher who she dutifully followed to Boston, had sowed seeds in the community singing Hutchinson’s praises, and she and her husband built their house on a prime spot of land, directly across from the Winthrops (Gordon 150). From the very beginning, Anne Hutchinson made a name for herself in the community by inviting women to her home to discuss scripture and doctrine. Despite her quick integration with the women of the community, Hutchinson was still thought to be somewhat aloof because she did not attend optional doctrinal and scriptural discussion groups held by other people in the community (Gordon 152). Whether this choice was a sign that she did not like participating in groups that she did not organize or if it was merely a sign that she was a bit introverted, it was not taken well by the male leaders of the community. Her fellow Puritans only came to see her as controversial once they learned of her pro-Antinomian stance on the buzzing topic of “good works”—a potentially dangerous belief in a community continually facing settlement crisis that relied on good, consistent work in order to thrive.

It is not uncommon for women to be blamed when crisis arises in their communities, particularly when they are seemingly in the center of the crisis. Throughout time, by contemporaries and historians alike, the Antinomian Controversy is almost always blamed entirely on Anne Hutchinson as demonstrated in the transcriptions of her trial. Though John Winthrop begins the proceedings by explaining to Anne that she has been “Called here as *one of those* that have troubled the peace of the commonwealth” (Hall 312; emphasis added), he quickly shifts his stance and claims that she holds the largest blame in starting the controversy: “You are known to be a woman that hath had a great share in the promoting and divulging of those

opinions that are causes of this trouble” (Hall 312). He then goes as far as to suggest that removing Anne from the community would resolve the crisis itself: “if you be obstinate in your course that then the court may take such course that you may trouble us not further” (Hall 312). In these excerpts, it becomes clear that Anne was blamed for much of the trouble suffered by the colonists during the Antinomian Controversy even though there were male preachers who had certainly contributed to the communal schism.

By the end of her trial and after her excommunication had been decided, John Wilson solidifies Anne Hutchinson as the ultimate instigator of the controversy when he delivers the context for her expulsion: “Forasmuch as you, Mrs. Hutchinson, have highly transgressed and offended and forasmuch as you have soe many ways *troubled the Church with your Errors* and have drawn away many a poor soule [. . .] and forasmuch as *you have made a Lye*” (Hall 388). Here Anne, represented by the repeated “you” is responsible for seemingly all. However, a close reading of all the history available shows that John Cotton, John Wheelwright, Governor Henry Vane, the other women who participated in her gatherings, and (perhaps most importantly) the men who could not abide being questioned or criticized also contributed to the crisis through their varying actions and feelings. Still, Anne Hutchinson, the once pious, renowned, and devoted follower of John Cotton, was written off as the source of the problem in its entirety, and for that she was exiled, and the Antinomian Controversy was seemingly exiled with her.

The implications of Anne Hutchinson being labeled as the instigator of the controversy are massive when read within the context of Ulrich’s discoveries about 17th century virtuous womanhood, especially when Anne Bradstreet is brought into the picture. Although Bradstreet was living in Ipswich (and not Boston) during Hutchinson’s trial, she certainly knew about it as both her father and her husband were participants. We do not know what Bradstreet’s personal

feelings were when it came to the issue of “good works.” Whether she genuinely believed, like her father and husband, that good works were necessary for salvation or whether she sided with Antinomians in their support of free grace—it’s likely that Anne Bradstreet’s geographical distance, social connections, wealth, and personal wit ensured that she came out of the controversy unscathed and in line with the rubric of virtue laid out by Ulrich.

What may be surprising to some is that Anne Hutchinson also met many of the 17th century requirements of feminine virtuous as laid out by Ulrich. Before the Antinomian controversy, Anne was well-thought of by the women in her community. She was mother to fifteen children, a practiced and trusted midwife, and a highly regarded spiritual leader for the women in Boston (Winship 1). In her article, Ulrich highlights the virtuous quality of conversing (“Vertuous Women” 24), something that Hutchinson was particularly known for among her circles of female friends (Gordon 153). Hutchinson was also a good manager—another quality of virtuous women uncovered by Ulrich (“Vertuous Women” 26). Despite all of these virtuous qualities, Winship notes how Hutchinson’s “well-publicized trials and the attendant accusations against her made her the most famous, or infamous, English-woman in colonial American history” (1).

The rubric of virtue is often cruel to women. In fact, it’s not far off to say that it was designed to be that way, and these rubrics often determine which texts get attention and which do not. Even as expectations and metrics change over time, women often find themselves caught in double-binds, whether it’s the virtuous vs. the misbehaved woman of the 17th and 18th centuries or the “Angel in the House” vs. the fallen woman of the 19th century. The virtue expected from women living in between these two time periods is more difficult to track. Certainly, there are

some shared elements from the virtue that Ulrich outlines in her article, such as piety, devotion to the well-being of their children, and so on; however, there do seem to be some differences.

The slightly new standard of virtue among early 19th century women certainly influenced the women associated with the Latter-day Saint movement. Although it is not the main focus of the book, Ulrich gives her readers a view into the standards of the Puritan-inherited feminine virtue present in Mormon communities in *A House Full of Females*. From this examination into the lived experiences of Mormon women from 1835-1870, we learn a lot about the expectations of feminine virtue in Mormon communities. The establishment of the Female Relief Society in Nauvoo shows a kindred interest with other ladies' groups in the U.S. set on establishing temperance, wisdom, and charity as important characteristics of feminine virtue. Mormon polygamy is an excellent example of a double-bind presented to women in Nauvoo. The wrestlings with polygamy in Nauvoo make it clear that female virtue was certainly measured in one's response to the idea of plural marriage, though the virtue found in that response depended on which definition of feminine virtue you subscribed to. Most of all, Ulrich's examination of women's personal struggles in Nauvoo and during the trek to Utah demonstrate a cultural assumption that virtuous, faithful women struggle internally within their own diaries, writings, and poems and/or with other women in their community. The women who remained in good standing—like Phebe Woodruff, the Moon sisters, and Eliza R. Snow—often kept their hardships to themselves, whether they dealt with personal or shared, communal struggles related to settlement. The women who's perceived virtue did not stand the test of time—like Emma Hale Smith and Sarah M. Pratt—were more public or outspoken about their issues, bringing their struggles to the community as a whole rather than limiting them to diaries and unsent letters

(Ulrich 51). Virtuous women seem to acknowledge and resolve things on their own, rather than bringing their problems to the community or blaming it on the community.

The Mormon Settlement of Nauvoo

When the Mormons were expelled from Missouri, they had faced the crisis of settlement before. The earliest followers of Joseph had moved with him from New York to settle Kirtland, Ohio, and then to Missouri. Even still, the relocation from Missouri to what would eventually be called Nauvoo, Illinois was different. Mormon, apocalypse-centered eschatology led saints to view themselves as “exiles from the Promised Land” after being forced out of Missouri (Blythe 27). This communal understanding of their expulsion, the urgent nature of their departure, and the violence they had been subjected to at the hands of the Missourians left a dark cloud hanging over the Mormon refugees as they entered the state of Illinois.

In her article, “Silent Memories of Missouri: Mormon Women and Men and Sexual Assault in Group Memory and Religious Identity,” Andrea Radke-Moss further demonstrates the way that violence in Missouri stayed with the saints even as they began to de-swamp and settle Nauvoo. In the article, Radke-Moss outlines the ways that narratives about sexual assault (particularly the sexual assault of women) were used by men to bolster the community with a perhaps co-opted sense of communal injustice. She also notes how women were much more individualized and often silent in their approach to narrativizing sexual assault and its lingering trauma. While this may seem counterintuitive, Radke-Moss points out how foundational and important the “silent memories of Missouri” were in female communities embedded within Mormonism. Once such foundational account of sexual assault is rooted in one of Mormonism’s most influential mothers: Eliza R. Snow.

Eliza R. Snow's Settlement Poetry

Often known as Mormonism's poetess, prophetess, and presidentess, Eliza Roxcy Snow is a foundational figure in both Mormon history and has continued to be revered in the current faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Historian Maureen Ursenbach Beecher describes Snow as "the one woman of Mormondom recognized by the present Mormon laity and the historical community alike as the epitome of Latter-day Saint womanhood" (6). From her youth, Snow was a literary minded girl who performed well in school. Beecher describes the Snow family as "loyal American, socially conscious, religious, educated, and intellectually liberal" (7), and Snow certainly followed that familial standard. Although a tad more intellectual than many of her female, Mormon peers, Snow fell nicely into the expectations for Mormon women once she joined the Church. Much like the virtuous women described by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich in her famous article "Vertuous Women Found," Snow was prayerful, contemplative, and a good organizer among the women in her community.

Snow, the poetess, really came into her own while settling and living in Nauvoo. It was during this seven-year period that Eliza was the most prolific (Derr and Davidson 76), after having been appointed by Joseph before fleeing Missouri to be "Zion's poetess," a role that Snow took very seriously (Derr and Davidson 73). She wrote, and often published, several poems during this period that reflected her "disruptive emotional life" after her secret marriage to Joseph Smith in 1844 (Beecher 9), though it is also clear that her Nauvoo-era poetry meditates on the crisis of leaving Missouri and settling Nauvoo.

In fact, Eliza R. Snow's poetry written and/or published in the early years of Nauvoo is very focused on resettlement crisis of the saints and its reverberations throughout the wounded Mormon community. One poem in which Snow wrestles with the futility of human efforts in the

act of settlement is, perhaps, one of her most pessimistic: “Stanzas (Go look on the ocean)” also published in the *Quincy Whig* in January of 1840. In this poem, Snow takes her audience through several vignettes of natural features (such as oceans, streamlets, tempests, and volcanoes), focusing on one specific feature in each stanza. In the first reading, the natural features that Snow describes in this poem seem to be metaphorical stand-ins for negative experiences: the ocean in the first stanza represents “human woe,” the streamlet in the second stanza represents “misfortune's course,” the “fierce tempest” in the third stanza is a metaphor for “affliction” and “distress” and so on. Snow uses these natural features in order to show the futility in attempting to govern, control, or change them. In essence, just as one cannot take a tempest and “still its fury,/Or its wrath suppress,” one cannot also “chain affliction,/And charm distress” (Snow, “Stanzas,” 21-25). But there is another reading here.

If we think of this poem from the perspective of a person attempting to settle somewhere, the poem’s meaning expands. Rather than being a simple metaphorical comparison between natural features and human emotions, through this lens, “Stanzas” becomes a poem demonstrating the psychological difficulty of encountering natural phenomena in new places and not being able to change them. The emotional toil that ends each stanza circles back to the psychological states brought on by the seeming futility of settlement.

This reading is supported by the original last stanza of “Stanzas” (which is only seen in the 1840 version of the poem):

But oh! fellow mortal!

It is not for thee;

To define the bounds

Of thy destiny.

Thy days are all numbered—

They are fleet and few;

Then haste to perform

“What thy hands find to do.” (33-40)

Here Snow accepts the futility of settlement by admitting that it is not up to her to “define” her destiny and acknowledging that her days are “fleet and few” (in other words, there is no sense in trying to change the land), and instead resolves to focus only on what *can* be done with her reference to Ecclesiastes 9:10. This is akin to the ultimate conclusion of settlement: you can only do what you can do whether you are in a season of joy or grief.

Eliza R. Snow writes explicitly of the crisis that the Mormons faced as they moved to Nauvoo after their expulsion from Missouri in “Hast Thou Known Suffering.” This poem was published in *The Quincy Whig* in August of 1839 and directly references the expulsion of the Mormons from Missouri. The poem centers on the idea of home, of longing for it, of losing it, of reminiscing on past iterations of it. Throughout the poem, she repetitiously uses words that center on the theme of settlement, such as “home,” “stranger,” and “dwell.” Even the fact that this poem is composed entirely of questions speaks to the unsettlement that Snow feels after fleeing Missouri; she is certainly in a time of uncertainty, a time of being “unknowing and unknown” (Snow, “Hast Thou Known Suffering,” 14). Notably, the uncertainty she describes is directly connected to Mormon resettlement she refers to as “the finger of expulsion,/Pushing from they fav’rite land?” (“Hast Thou Known Suffering,” 3-4). Snow is clearly uprooted, lost, and homesick here.

Unlike other poems of Snow's, "Hast Thou Known Suffering?" does not end in a show of narrative discipline wherein she concludes by reasserting her faith in God, which is her usual trend. Instead, this poem, like every other line throughout the text, ends in a question:

When thy earthly hopes were riven;
 Couldst thou, meekly bowing down;
 Still adore the God of Heaven,
 Saying, "*let thy will be done*"? (25-28).

Rather than ending with an assertion of faith, the speaker ends by questioning whether or not her faith survived the crisis that she has endured. This different style of ending speaks to the unsettlement that Snow and the other Saints likely felt after fleeing Missouri. Unlike her other poems, where she has no qualms with scolding weak faith, Snow poses a question to her audience about the state of their faith. The push to question one's faith does not leave her audience with the same confidence that her reliance on faith normally does, but it does act as a catalyst for evaluating and (presumably) reinforcing their faith in the face of settlement crisis. The ending question of this poem is likely meant to be read as a call to which the saints are meant to respond with a reinvigorated "yes," effectively providing the audience with a means to navigate their unsettled spirits.

The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844

Crisis was not a new experience for the Mormon people by the time Joseph Smith was killed in 1844, igniting new and feeding existing fires. Much like the Puritan settlers of early Boston, the Mormon people had dealt with the crisis of settlement, unsettlement, and resettlement several times over in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. The settlement of Nauvoo was still fresh in the minds of many and the threat of needing to leave yet another settlement that the

saints had put so much effort into was ever-present. Though the Latter-day Saints had faced settlement again and again, Joseph's death made this iteration different. Unlike in Ohio and Missouri, the Mormon people were not merely facing crises of settlement and persecution, they were also facing a crisis of succession and fractures within the community itself. As with the Antinomian crisis in Boston, the risk of losing their hard-fought community rooted the Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844 within their recent and forward-looking settlement crises.

The issue of succession arose because Joseph died without a clear plan of who should succeed him as prophet, which caused significant stress in the now very hierarchical church. There were several contenders for power within the weeks following Joseph's death, which ultimately came to a head in August of 1844 with Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young, who initially contested that power rested with the Quorum of the Twelve of which he was president. Intertwined with this succession crisis, were concerns about where the Mormon community would settle. In the months leading up to Joseph's death and as tensions boiled between non-Mormon residents of Commerce and the Mormons in Nauvoo, plans had been made for possibly relocating. Several suggestions had been made—ranging from the Republic of Texas to Iowa Territory to what would become Utah Territory—and whoever ended up in charge would have the deciding power.

Another risk to the community at this time were the fractures sewed by Mormon polygamy, also known as plural marriage. By the time of Joseph's death, there were clear supporters and detractors of plural marriage for those who were in the know in Nauvoo. Brigham and Emma Hale Smith (the first wife of Joseph Smith) were on opposing sides; Brigham Young was a strong supporter of plural marriage, having already married multiple plural wives himself, and Smith was a strong detractor. In fact, Smith had dedicated much of her time as President of

the Relief Society to disparage plural marriage within the community of Nauvoo (Ulrich, *A House* 113). Smith's outspoken disgust for and campaigns against polygamy maligned her in the eyes of multiple male leaders at that time, including Hyrum Smith (Joseph's brother) and Brigham Young.

Emma Smith was not always a female leader in a large community, fighting to retain whatever power she could muster to protect her family and—as she saw it—her husband's legacy. She started out as an intelligent and religious daughter of Isaac Hale and Elizabeth Lewis Hale in her hometown of Harmony, Pennsylvania. She met Joseph Smith Jr. as a young woman and married him in 1827 at the age of 23. Emma Smith had a strong influence in the early development in the Mormon faith. She assisted Joseph in transcribing the Book of Mormon and ministered to many saints from the church's inception (Derr and others, "The First Fifty Years" 19). In 1842, Smith was elected as the President of the Ladies' Relief Society of Nauvoo (Derr and others, "The First Fifty Years" 32). Smith was also a devoted mother and a devoted wife, but—as it would turn out—that would not be enough to sustain a good reputation among the Latter-day Saints.

Public and subsequent historical opinion of Emma Smith has shifted again and again throughout time. Much like Anne Hutchinson, Emma Hale Smith was heralded in the early days of the Latter-day Saint movement, though that would change as time went on. Smith's stance on polygamy made her less and less favorable to the male leadership of the church, led by Brigham Young, while their insistence on maintaining the practice made them less and less favorable to her (Newell and Avery 203). In September of 1844, the tension between the male leaders of the church and Smith was so palpable that "newspapers published stories about a rift between [them]" (Newell and Avery 204). By the time the largest group of Latter-day Saints had resolved

their succession crisis by sustaining Brigham Young as their new Prophet, Smith, the once revered wife of Joseph Smith, had lost much of her power and influence within the Nauvoo community. When the majority of the Saints followed Brigham Young to Utah in the mid-to-late 1840s, Smith's social connections were dwindling, and by the time the Brighamites (the saints who followed Young) had openly espoused polygamy in 1852, they were all but gone. Rather than being exiled—as Anne Hutchinson was—she had been left behind and forgotten but abandoned all the same.

Feminine Virtue and Narrative Discipline in Bradstreet and Snow

In the cases of both these settlement crises, feminine virtue clearly played a role in which women were revered and which were defamed in the historical archive, just as Ulrich claims in “Vertuous Women Found.” While Ulrich provides a great rubric for defining feminine virtue in Puritan communities, it is difficult to do the same with Mormon women in the 1840s. Feminine virtue in Nauvoo was riddled with complexities and even contradictions due to emerging Mormon polygamy. In some ways, the question of what qualifies as feminine virtue is at its most complicated when talking about Emma Hale Smith. To some, she was a paragon of virtue, who led the Relief Society in charges to uphold morality within the community; but to others, she was unvirtuous and outspoken in her attempts to stand against her husband, the Prophet, in her battle against the polygamous marriages that he started. The situation only becomes more complex when considering Snow's position as the secretary of the Relief Society, who worked with Emma to rally against immorality in the community while being sealed to Joseph Smith herself (Beecher 59).

A text that demonstrates all of these tensions well is “The Voice of Innocence From Nauvoo,” which was altered by Emma Hale Smith from W.W. Phelps’s original text and put forward as a response on behalf of the women in Nauvoo to all of the allegations of polygamy (Derr and others, “The First Fifty Years” 152). In it, Smith equates feminine virtue with chastity and states that “Female virtue is a pearl of great price,” invoking the thirteenth chapter of Matthew to argue that female virtue is a priceless thing that ought to be vehemently defended (Derr and others, “The First Fifty Years” 154). While the members of the Relief Society approved this document unanimously, Smith’s eventual fallout from the majority of the Mormon community due to her stance on polygamy indicates that this definition of female virtue is too narrow. Ulrich argues it is likely that the women “who were themselves plural wives probably considered their sealings sanctioned by God and therefore moral” (*A House* 113), showing that their definition of feminine virtue expanded to include behaviors Smith’s did not.

Anne Bradstreet and Eliza R. Snow demonstrate that women who survive settlement crisis with their feminine virtue intact do so by accepting the majority definition of feminine virtue and sometimes expanding it—in their own writings—to include themselves. In fact, in their poetry, Bradstreet and Snow uphold patriarchy and the patriarchal standards of feminine virtue enough to sprinkle their work with feminist-female advancement, but not enough to rock the boat, like Smith and Hutchinson. Rather than tearing their communities apart by highlighting differences of belief, weeding out unvirtuous behaviors, and standing resolute in their own divisive opinions, Bradstreet and Snow—for better and for worse—left an archive that brought their communities together and that upheld feminine virtue by upholding patriarchy. As Charlotte Gordon puts it in *Mistress Bradstreet*:

If Hutchinson's preaching was destroying New England, then Anne [Bradstreet] was determined to pen righteous words on its behalf, to help save the colony from the dissension, discord, and factional fighting that now plagued it. Perhaps she could also rescue the reputation of women, proving that they were capable of achieving work of Puritan merit. (179)

It is because of this drive to write, to record her thoughts in a form that requires great attention to detail and a healthy amount of literary evasion that Bradstreet was able to ensure her good reputation as a woman. Poor Anne Hutchinson, who did not write her own poetry, never had an equal chance.

All the primary sources that we have about Anne Hutchinson were not written by her. Instead, they were written by the men around her. In fact, most of the extant primary sources about Anne Hutchinson are court records from her arrest and trial. Unlike Bradstreet, Hutchinson did not write pages of poetry, subtly disclosing her thoughts and feelings about the theological war she found herself in. This made it all too easy for the men around her to curate a historical narrative about her through her trial and examination, effectively placing all the blame of the Antinomian controversy at her feet. Winship notes this move in *The Times and Trials of Anne Hutchinson*, "There were powerful men whose messy roles [in the controversy] needed to be covered up ... Blaming Hutchinson for the entire controversy allowed much else to be swept under the rug" (4). Hutchinson was blamed for the controversy, outcast by the community as a result, and the controversy seemingly resolved itself because of her exile.

The same can also be said of Emma Smith. While there are some primary documents from Smith herself (i.e. letters, the 1835 hymnal, *The Voice of Innocence*, etc.), very few of those sources were considered in the dominant narratives that defined Emma before the 1970s.

Part of the reason for that is that the men who compiled the dominant narrative that shaped church history for decades (i.e. *The History of the Church*, discourses from Brigham Young as published in the Journal of Discourses, and affidavits from Joseph's other wives) did not include primary sources from Emma—they never felt the need to give her space in the conversation.

In the cases of both Anne Hutchinson and Emma Hale Smith, they have not told their stories (both due to the lack of existing or accessible primary documents and due to historian bias toward primary documents that curate specific narratives about them). It's easy to write off Anne Hutchinson as an eccentric, unrepentant, misbehaved heretic when we are only working with words written by her most avid detractors. The same can be said of the neglect paid to Smith from the histories compiled by the Brighamite faction of saints who meant to either display loyalty to their new leader, Brigham Young, or to demonstrate their potent sense of betrayal at Smith's unwillingness to support Young through their mistrust, indifference, and eventual erasure toward her. Due to their circumstances, Hutchinson and Smith did not leave an archive behind that ensured their good reputations and told their stories, and so the men around them told their stories for them, casting them as villains and the male leaders who dealt with them as heroes.

Anne Bradstreet and Eliza Snow, on the other hand, were prolific writers whose poetry shape the narratives about them and reveal the often tight-rope-walk they made to write and maintain good reputations. While history would have us believe that Bradstreet and Snow survived their communal crises because they were more virtuous than Hutchinson and Smith, they actually survived because they left an archive which spoke to their virtue and upheld patriarchal power. Their survival had nothing to do with their actual virtue; it rested entirely on the continued perception of their virtue within their own communities and by the historians

and scholars who followed. In essence, Anne Bradstreet and Eliza R. Snow survived their crises because they disciplined—by catering to patriarchy—their own writing enough to control the historical narratives constructed about them while also arguing in favor of women’s capability.

Bradstreet demonstrates the way that she both toes and subtly crosses the lines of Puritan gender roles in her poem, “In Honour of that High and Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory.” In this poem, Bradstreet eulogizes Elizabeth I, paying particular attention to her greatness and her gender, intertwining the two for her audience. Early on, Bradstreet makes a big claim that through Elizabeth’s accomplishments as queen “She hath wiped off th’aspersion of her sex,/That women wisdom lack to play the rex” (“In Honour” 34-35). Bradstreet uses Elizabeth as a powerful and indisputable means to prove that women are capable and wise. This trend continues when Bradstreet compares Elizabeth I to Minerva: “Had ever a prince such counsellors as she?/Herself Minerva caused them so to be” (“In Honour” 62-63). The comparison between Elizabeth and Minerva is especially notable because Bradstreet takes her arguments a step further by claiming that even male princes fall short in comparison to Elizabeth I.

While these claims are a bit audacious by 17th century, Puritan standards, Bradstreet balances them with a few moments of humility as seen in the lines when she claims that her “pride doth but aspire/To read what others write and so admire” (“In Honour” 98-99), rather than writing, herself, with ink from the “Heleconian well” (“In Honour” 97). This humility seemingly separates Bradstreet from both Elizabeth and those who have written about her before—assuring the audience that she is merely playing at poet. Even still, near the end of the poem, Bradstreet reinforces the idea that the example of Elizabeth I proves that woman are capable, when she wittily adds “Let such as say our sex is void of reason,/Know ‘tis a slander now but once was

treason” (“In Honour” 104-105). Although this poem might read as a fanciful eulogy, it is much more than that. Bradstreet uses allusions, wit, and heroic couplets to tout the wisdom and power of a great woman that she generalizes to represent the greatness of all women, and she was able to do this by carefully selecting the subject of her poem. Though she could have written about other women in history, Bradstreet herself is quick to note within the poem that some women are more infamous than they are respected (“In Honour” 73). Her selection of Elizabeth I as her subject is certainly precise and on purpose. After all, writing about a woman who she is allowed to revere (and who men must revere, as well) keeps her safe, and gives her the room to explore and challenge gender roles and misconceptions.

Eliza R. Snow demonstrates a similar level of subtlety and savviness in her poem “My Father in Heaven,” which is more commonly known today as an LDS hymn retitled “O My Father.” This poem was written in 1845 while Snow was still in Nauvoo (Derr and Davidson 314), and it stands as the best example of Snow’s many poems that attempt to weave understated female empowerment into a devotional poem. The poem opens with the speaker directly addressing God with the title “Father” and eventually comes to a logical conclusion that there must be a Mother in heaven, as well:

In the heav’ns are parents single?

No, the thought makes reason stare;

Truth is reason—truth eternal

Tells me I’ve a mother there. (21-24)

The logical argument that upholds this conclusion is key in Snow’s assertion of a feminine divine—without the logic, this theologically explosive claim would be difficult to sufficiently support for 19th century Christians (especially for those who are Puritan-descended).

The first stanza of the poem represents childhood and introduces the idea that God is a father. Here, the speaker of the poem mimics childhood by asking God child-like questions about her existence before living on earth. The speaker moves to earth in the second stanza and highlights, in the third stanza, that she has “learn’d to call [God] father/Through thy spirit from on high” (Snow, “My Father” 18-19). This habit establishes the idea that God is a father to the speaker and connects this discovery directly to the Latter-day restoration of the gospel with the following lines “But until the key of knowledge/Was restor’d, I knew not why” (Snow, “My Father” 20-21). In other words, it is through the restoration of the gospel, through the gaining of keys of knowledge, that the speaker finally understood why God felt like a father.

After the connection between God and fatherhood is established, the speaker then logically concludes that if she has a father in heaven then she must also have “a mother there” (Snow, “My Father” 24). The poem then shifts from referring to a single, male God with “thy” and “thou” pronouns to using plural pronouns of “you”: “Father, mother, may I meet you/In your royal court on high?” and “With your mutual approbation/Let me come and dwell with you” (Snow, “My Father” 27-28, 31-32). This shift to referring to God in the plural seems subtle in the poem—and it is that way by design—but, theologically speaking, this is a huge claim for a Puritan-descended woman to make in a devotional poem; she is, after all, testifying of a feminine divine. Snow makes this testimony possible through her logical progression of ideas in the poem itself, a move so masterful and powerful that it is still revered by LDS people today.

That being said, the poem—while feminist in its nature—is also inarguably patriarchal. Snow’s logical argument in favor of a feminine divine rests entirely on the existence of a male God and on the heteronormative standard that mothers only exist alongside fathers. While Snow is certainly dedicated to advancing the role and perception of women in her writing, she is

simultaneously comfortable and perhaps even content sustaining the patriarchy. Bradstreet shows a similar tendency in her poem for Elizabeth I. As I demonstrated earlier, Bradstreet uses her subject to advance women, but it—like Snow’s “My Father in Heaven”—upholds patriarchal standards in order to do so. Bradstreet herself espouses the dichotomy of virtuous and misbehaving women when she uplifts Elizabeth I by putting other defamed women down: “Semiramis to her is but obscure,/More infamy than fame she did procure” (Bradstreet, “Dialogue” 72-73). Bradstreet does the same with Dido, Cleopatra, and Zenobia, who—Bradstreet concludes—are “no fit parallel” for Elizabeth I (“Dialogue” 93). This section creates a problem for the rest of the claims that Bradstreet makes within the poem. While she certainly argues that women, in general, are better than men make them out to be, she proves that she upholds patriarchy when it comes to judging women’s worth through their virtue. The willingness to uphold patriarchy in both Snow and Bradstreet makes sense, as it is because of their ability to fit the standard of feminine virtue (a misogynistic, patriarchal standard of their times) that makes them notable in history at all.

After looking at these cases, it seems that the key quality to successfully navigating communal crisis as a woman is accepting and building on patriarchy in one’s writing and/or simply writing with restraint. That’s hardly an inspiring feminist message to rally behind, though I suppose that’s to be expected when talking about Anne Bradstreet and Eliza R. Snow. While they were amazing poets and women who had much influence and respect in their communities, patriarchy-smashing feminists they were not. Even still, they demonstrated the massive influence that leaving behind your own archive can have on contemporary and historical narratives about you. It is, after all, difficult to construct a hostile, defaming archive about a woman who you wish to portray as misbehaved when she has left ample evidence that she was virtuous.

Conclusion

Settlement—like other forms of crisis—makes people want to fix things, to resolve the insecurity, uprootedness, and psychological distress and move onto a state that is more secure, assured, and peaceful. Bradstreet and Snow display this tendency in their own poetry where they rely on their faith, theology, and eschatology in order to resolve their own sense of crisis. This tendency is understandable and certainly human, though this study of both poetical and historical archives has proven that it can bring out the worst in people when it moves them to uphold the virtue of some at the cost of others, sustain patriarchal values to ensure one’s own survival (and because those values have served you well while damaging others), and to write off specific women as scapegoats in order to resolve a settlement crisis in the history books.

The disparity in treatment between the four women highlighted in these crises is disappointing to say the least. It seems to display that the main difference between being cast as a well-behaved vs. a misbehaved woman is one’s proximity to male authority (Eliza was married to both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, while Anne Bradstreet was daughter and wife to two powerful men), as well as one’s successful attempts to add to their biographical canon—testifying of their own virtue—with their own writing. While it may be true that “well-behaved women seldom make history” (Ulrich, “Vertuous Women” 20), those that leave their own archive of writings seem to. This discovery begs the question: what other women-written, poetical archives about settlement currently remain unexamined, and what could a study of those archives reveal in the field of Mormon history and literature?³

³ There is certainly a treasure-trove of poetry published in *The Women’s Exponent* that could reveal much about the settlement crisis in Utah.

In “Vertuous Women Found,” Ulrich claims that “a collection of ministerial literature [written by men] cannot tell us what New England women, even of the more pious variety, were really like,” and while poetry written by New England and Mormon women may not give us the whole truth about who women were, it certainly gets us closer than sources written only by men and over-emphasizing their virtue. Poetry written by women experiencing settlement gives us a look into their internal responses to crises fueled by religious tensions, and if we truly work “in a field which suffers from so little data,” as Ulrich claims, then I repeat her central argument with a twist of my own: that there is value in the poetical archives and that they deserve a closer look.

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