

A parental ode to my
son and upon my son
samuel essay sample



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' A Parental ode to my Son, aged Three Years and Five months,' by Thomas Hood, was written about Hood's own son. The poet contrasts the idealised view of childhood with the reality of his son, John's, misbehaviour. This makes the poem quite humorous and light hearted.

' Upon My Son Samuel on his going for England, November 8, 1657, ' by Anne Bradstreet, is also about her son. However, this poem is more serious as, the poet was a Puritan woman. She was controversial at the time the poem was published as it was a rarity that woman's literature was published. She left England for the New World in 1630 and lived in a Puritan society. Puritans were strong in belief that God controls everything. Bradstreet named her son Samuel after the story of Hannah and Samuel in the bible. Hannah struggled to conceive, like Bradstreet, but God gave her a son.

Perhaps, the reasons for Bradstreet's worries as her Son left for England were influenced by the fact that she had made the opposite journey in 1630. She wrote, on her arrival, of the ' half-dying, famine ridden frontier village of Salem after a journey of three months close quarters, raw nerves, sickness, hysteria and salt meat.'

Both poems address the poet's sons in the titles and they show you how important a child is to a parent as they have written poems about their children. This is especially unusual for ' A Parental Ode...' as the child is very young, only three years and five months, and his father is already writing a poem to praise him.

Both poems have one narrator or voice and this gives the idea that these are personal poems about the personal lives of the poets.

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' A Parental Ode...' is in a form of poetry called an ode. Odes are used to praise something and in this case, the poet is praising his son, John. This Ode, however, is unusual due to the use of brackets. The brackets, which contain information on the mischievous behaviour of the boy, are used for comic deflation to show that the idealised image of childhood is not always true. There is also an overuse of exclamation marks to indicate the heightened lines. The alternate, full rhyme scheme of the lines makes the poem flow. However, the rhyme scheme of the lines in brackets are more broken, giving the sense of the poet's frustration and broken concentration because of the boy being in the room with him.

' Upon my Son Samuel...' differs from ' A Parental Ode...' as it is a prayer like structure which consists of 10 octosyllabic rhyming couplets. These give the effect of the poet pleading to God as they rush the reader along. The poem is like a prayer as it praises, ' Thou mighty God of sea and land,' gives thanks, ' Then shall I celebrate thy praise,' and pleads with God, ' Preserve, O Lord, from storms and wrack.'

' A Parental Ode...' is a praiseful poem but the bracketed phrases add humor. The care and tenderness of the father's love are highlighted by lines like ' let me kiss away that tear.' The poet becomes frustrated by the boy and says ' I cannot write, unless he's sent above.' The use of exclamation marks and hyphens, in the poem, high light this frustration. The tone of the poem is light hearted. The poem is personal as it is about the poet's family and addresses his son. It includes the name of his son, ' John,' and his wife ' Jane,' which makes the poem more realistic. The every-day, domestic setting of the poem makes it homely and interesting.

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However, 'Upon my Son Samuel...' is very different in tone and mood as it is serious and pleading. It is praiseful but the poet is praising God not the child, as she says 'no friend I have like thee to trust.' The poet pleads 'preserve, O Lord, from storms and wrack,' and trusts God as she 'gives him thee.' In lines 13-20 the poet begins to acknowledge that she may die before her son returns but she is calm and accepting as she says 'Persuade my heart I shall him see for ever happy'd with thee.' The poem is personal, like 'A Parental Ode...' as it includes the name of her son, Samuel, and gives the idea that she is confessing all her worries to God. A prayer is usually about personal thoughts and feelings.

The language used in 'A Parental Ode...' is typical of the form of an ode. The poet uses the words 'thee' and 'thou,' to lift the estimation of the boy to almost holy level. He also uses images of fantasy creatures like 'happy elf!' 'laughing sprite,' 'tricksy Puck,' and 'cherub,' to make the reader imagine the child as a perfect angel. These show the idealized view of childhood as a time of sweetness and innocence. The poem also includes religious images like 'untouched by sorrow and unsoiled by sin,' and 'Youth's Elysium,' again, to show the poet's rose-tinted view of his son and the godly innocence of John.

The idea of the child's youth being a time of innocence, as his life is just beginning, is also shown by natural images like 'With pure heart stamped from Nature's mint,' 'No storms, no clouds, in thy foreseeing sky,' and 'Thou pretty opening rose.' These are romantic images that show how the poet praises his son. The line, 'Thou pretty opening rose!' and then the bracketed phrase 'go to your mother child and wipe your nose!' is an <https://assignbuster.com/a-parental-ode-to-my-son-and-upon-my-son-samuel-essay-sample/>

excellent example of bathos as the poet contrasts the image of a rose, which is associated with romance, with the image of the child with a runny nose. This makes the child seem unclean and not like the rose he is described as, in the line above.

The boy is also compared to animals like a ‘ young domestic dove,’ which is usually used to symbolize peace, and a ‘ human humming-bee,’ which shows that the child is very active and doesn’t sit still. These help you imagine the nature of the child.

The poet sees the boy as ‘ a link,’ in the marriage of his parents and shows how in a parents eyes, he is faultless as the ‘ Dear nursling of the hymeneal nest!’ His fathers pride is shown throughout the poem but especially in the second and fourth stanzas as he says ‘ thou darling of thy sire’ and ‘ thy father’s pride and hope!’

Despite the use of praiseful language and a rose tinted view of the boy, the reality is different. The language in the brackets is simpler and more factual. The mischief of the boy contrasts with the idealized idea as ‘ he’s poking peas in his ears,’ ‘ swallowing a pin,’ ‘ got a knife,’ ‘ sniping at your gown’ and ‘ squinting.’ By using the words in brackets, an effect of bathos is achieved and the poet makes fun of the form of poetry, which is an ode.

‘ Upon my Son Samuel...’ is very different to ‘ A Parental Ode...’ as there is only one metaphor, ‘ mortal helps are brittle dust.’ Humans do not compare with God. They are mortal and turn to dust, or die. He is the only one she can trust.

The poet's strong religious beliefs are shown throughout as she is talking to 'thou mighty God of sea and land,' and words like 'grace,' 'bless,' and 'praise,' which are associated with religion are used. The poem echoes the story of Hannah and Samuel in 1 Samuel, in the Bible as like Samuel is 'the son of prayers and tears.' Bradstreet is like the biblical Hannah as she prayed and made vows to have the child.

The poet's faith in God and heaven is shown as she says 'I here resign into thy hand,' 'No friend I have like thee to trust' and 'for that is best.' The poem echoes the Lord's prayer as 'thy will be done,' and this shows how she trusts in God and believes his way is the right way.

The simple and direct language, unlike in 'A Parental Ode...' helps to show the pleading of Bradstreet. The simplicity of her language is linked to her Puritan lifestyle. Commands like 'Preserve,' 'protect,' and 'bring him back,' shows her desperation for her son to be safe. She mentions 'storms and wrack,' as she refers to the journey he is going to make on the ship.

The poet uses euphemisms like 'go to rest,' as she accepts the possibility that she may die before her son returns. The poet is realistic at this point and she considers all the possible situations that may arise. She asks that 'persuade my heart I shall him see for ever happily'd with thee.' She wishes to see him in heaven again if she dies. The word 'happily'd' is invented by the poet to show how she will take comfort in her son being happy with God.

'A Parental Ode...' uses alliteration like 'untouched by sorrow and unsoiled by sin,' 'fit playfellow for fays' and 'thou human humming bee,' to highlight the important lines. It also uses repetition like 'no storms, no clouds,' to <https://assignbuster.com/a-parental-ode-to-my-son-and-upon-my-son-samuel-essay-sample/>

emphasise the meaning of the lines. Enjambement is used to make the poem flow smoothly and emphasise the idea of perfection, like 'thou human humming-bee, extracting honey from ever blossom in the world that blows.'

'Upon my Son Samuel...' also uses alliteration like 'thee to trust and 'bring him back,' to highlight the important phrases. The poem, like A Parental Ode, uses enjambement like 'I here resign into thy hand the son of prayers, of vows of tears,' and 'persuade my heart I shall him see for ever happily'd with thee.' These lines highlight the poet's main wishes of the poem.

I feel that although both poems are effective in expressing how the parents want to protect their children, 'A Parental Ode...' is more effective due to the use of brackets. The poem is comic and the many images in the poem make it easier to imagine what the poet is thinking. I feel the simple language and style of 'Upon My Son Samuel...' is boring and not as effective. The amusing style of 'A Parental Ode...' makes it more interesting and memorable.