**Moving from Annotations to Outlines and Essays**

1. **First, think about the piece (poem, essay, short story, etc.) and try to identify some main ideas or themes. A TP-CASTT or annotations may be helpful in doing this.**

EX: In Anne Bradstreet’s “Here Follow Some Verses Upon the Burning of Our House,” I know the poem is about her house burning. In parts of the poem she grieves her loss but by the end of the poem she comes to accept it because she believes her earthly life possessions are not as important as her spiritual life or heavenly home.

1. **Based upon my reading and thoughts above, I can compose a thesis statement. The thesis will identify what the main argument of the essay will be (often the theme of the piece) as well as some of the main points that will be discussed.**

EX: Bradstreet’s mournful yet accepting tones in “Here Follow Some Verses Upon the Burning of Our House” reflect her internal conflict concerning the loss of her home and all her possessions.

1. **Next, I can outline some of the evidence that led me to writing the above thesis. I’m taking the annotations or points that led me to the above thesis and organizing them into categories. These will form the body paragraphs.**

EX:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| GRIEF | ACCEPTANCE | EARTHLY LIFE | SPIRITUAL LIFE |
| “when I could no longer look” (13)  “sorrowing eyes” (22) – synecdoche – her eyes represent her whole self sorrowing; emphasizes the terrible sight of the destruction of her home  “my pleasant things in ashes lie” (27)  --trunk, chest, store- possessions she will mourn  --pleasant tale, candle shining, bridegroom’s voice – pleasant memories or events | “blest his name that gave and took” (14) – allusion to Job  “so it was and so twas just” (16)  “there’s wealth enough, I need no more” (51)  “The world no longer let me love” (53) | Laid my goods in the dust (15)  “my pleasant things in ashes lie” (27):  “Dust” and “ash” show earthly possessions as worthless  “All’s vanity” (36) –  Allusion to Solomon who was a king but realized all his earthly wealth was useless or futile  “Farewell my pelf” – word “pelf” expresses contempt for her earthly possessions | “Raise up thy thoughts above the sky” (41)  “mighty Architect” (44) – metaphor comparing God to an architect which shows the glory of her heavenly home  “price so vast as is unknown” (49) – the value of her heavenly home cannot be measured; reference to the crucifixion  “My hope and treasure lies above” (54) |

1. **After outlining and seeing what evidence I have, I may realize that I can group points together or that I want to revise my thesis. Then, I need to decide what is the most logical order for the points (paragraphs).**

EX: My thought process might be: First, I want to talk about that she lost her home in a fire and that she grieves the loss as any person would (GRIEF). Then, I can talk about how she views her earthly life—some images may be pleasant but often she characterizes her earthly possessions as worthless (EARTHLY LIFE). Next, I would talk about how she contrasts her spiritual possessions with her earthly ones, showing they have more value (SPIRITUAL LIFE). Finally, I would discuss how her reflecting on this contrast leads her to accept the loss of her home and possessions (ACCEPTANCE).

1. **Again, after outlining further, I may decide I want to revise my points or thesis.**

EX: In thinking through the above outline, I realize I may want to move the evidence about the “trunk, chest, store” and the “pleasant tale, candle shining, bridegroom’s voice” to “Earthly Life” column because those details will show the contrast between pleasant images and worthless images.

1. **Now I could write out a clearer outline of my essay, which will also help clarify and solidify my thinking. If I can outline clearly, then my essay should be more logical and coherent.**
   1. Grief
      1. The sight is too terrible
         1. “when I could no longer look”
         2. “sorrowing eyes”
      2. The loss is irreparable
         1. “pleasant things in ashes lie”
   2. Earthly life
      1. Some images are pleasant
         1. “store I counted best”
         2. “pleasant tale, candle shining, bridegroom’s voice”
      2. The majority show her earthly possessions as ultimately worthless
         1. Dust and ash
         2. Pelf
         3. “All’s vanity” allusion
   3. Spiritual life
      1. Shifts focus from earth to heaven -“Raise up thy thoughts above the sky”
      2. Contrasts spiritual home with earthly home
         1. Indestructible - “mighty Architect”
         2. Priceless - “price so vast as is unknown”
         3. Eternal worth - “My hope and treasure lies above”
   4. Acceptance
      1. God provides
         1. “blest his name that gave and took” (14) – allusion to Job
         2. “sufficient for us left” (20) ----------ADDED as I outlined
      2. God knows best -- “so it was and so twas just” (16)
      3. True blessing
         1. “there’s wealth enough, I need no more” (51)
         2. “The world no longer let me love” (53)
2. **Using this outline, I can begin to draft body paragraphs.**

EX:

Bradstreet’s mournful yet accepting tones in “Here Follow Some Verses Upon the Burning of Our House” reflect her internal conflict concerning the loss of her home and all her possessions.

For a large portion of the poem, Bradstreet’s grief over her loss is evident. After escaping her burning house, she surveys the destruction and sees her “pleasant things in ashes.” The sight of this destruction is too terrible to behold; she says she “could no longer look” and turns her “sorrowing eyes” away. To emphasize the pain the sight causes, Bradstreet uses synecdoche, using only the eyes to represent her whole being. Her eyes are “sorrowing,” which emphasizes her anguish. Later, she details the many possessions she has lost—a trunk, a chest, and a “store [she] counted best.” She follows the list of material possessions with a list of experiences that she feels she has been robbed of—the sharing of “pleasant tale[s],” the candle’s shining, the celebration of marriage, represented by the “bridegroom’s voice.” This list of loss ends with a despondent farewell as she bids these treasures adieu.

While Bradstreet’s grief is clear, her internal conflict is apparent by contrasting descriptions of her loss. In places she mourns the loss of her “pleasant things” or fond memories. Yet, much of the diction expresses the worthlessness of her earthly possessions. Words such as “dust” and “ash” reflect that material things are destructible and will one day amount to nothing of worth. As Bradstreet bids farewell to these things, she alludes to the Biblical story of King Solomon, who, although he was extremely wealthy, came to the realization that all the money on earth would not benefit him at death. Bradstreet tries to convince herself that her belongings are not important, agreeing with King Solomon that “All’s vanity.” Finally, at the end of the poem, she once again says farewell to her possessions: “Farewell my pelf,” she says. The connotation of the word “pelf” expresses contempt for her earthly goods. They are nothing in comparison to what God has in store.

After considering the vanity of her earthly possessions, Bradstreet shifts her focus to her spiritual life: She instructs herself to "raise up [her] thoughts above the sky" to heaven. Using an extended metaphor, Bradstreet explores the contrasts between her earthly home and her heavenly home. First, she suggests that her heavenly home is indestructible since it was built by the "might Architect," God himself. She also notes that her home in heaven "stands permanent" although her earthly home is "fled." Furthermore, her heavenly home's value is immeasurable. The cost of her earthly home could be calculated; however, the price of her heavenly home is "so vast as is unknown" since the only one who could have paid the price was God himself through the sacrifice of Jesus. After exploring many positives of her heavenly home, Bradstreet realizes that her earthly possessions cannot compare and concludes that her "hope and treasure lies above."

The resolution of Bradstreet's internal conflict over the course of the poem reflects her struggle as a Puritan to understand God's ways but her ultimate acceptance of His will. A central allusion Bradstreet makes is to the Biblical story of Job. Despite being a faithful man of God, Job lost all his earthly possessions and suffered greatly. Still, Job acknowledged that the source of his wealth was God and that God was just in taking these possessions away. Similarly, Bradstreet believes the burning of her house must be part of God's plan, and although she cannot explain it, she concludes "so it 'twas and so 'twas just."

Bradstreet's poem details her experiences after losing her home in a tragic fire; however, the poem reaches beyond the literal level to reflect a spiritual awakening. She may have lost much, but she accepts that God's provision is "sufficient" and that she "need[s] no more." Ultimately, she realizes that her focus has been in the wrong place—on material possessions and her own abilities—and that God's provision and blessing is all she needs.

1. **After drafting, I can go back revise or edit as necessary. Some questions I might consider include**
   1. Does my intro need development?
   2. Can I make my conclusion more effective?
   3. Have I made typos?
   4. Are my topic sentences clear?
   5. Have I included sufficient evidence?
   6. Does the evidence relate specifically to the topic of the paragraph?
   7. Do I use effective transitions to show the relationship among ideas?
   8. Have I embedded textual evidence into the sentences?
   9. Does the essay read smoothly when read aloud?