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The reputation of Katherine Philips

Trefousse, Rashelle F., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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THE REPUTATION OF KATHERINE PHILIPS

by

Rashelle F. Trefousse

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1990

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date

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Introduction

Katherine Philips, the "Matchless Orinda," demands a late twentieth-century study. Born in London January 1, 1631, she was the daughter of Katherine Oxenbridge and William Fowler, a wealthy merchant. According to John Aubrey in Brief Lives, she was educated first by her cousin, a Mrs. Blacket, and later, according to both Aubrey and other biographical sources (Ballard, Jacob, and Cibber among them), she was sent to Mrs. Salmon's School at Hackney, the most well-known of the girls' schools of the time. In 1648, she married James Philips, a Welsh kinsman of her mother's second husband, with whom she had two children, one a boy, Hector, who lived for only a few weeks, and Katherine, who lived to marry Lewis Wogan.

Philips lived most of her life at the Priory in Cardigan, making frequent visits to London to be with her husband, a Parliamentarian, and later spending time with her close friend, Mrs. Anne Owen (Lucasia), in Ireland. It was here that she became acquainted with a group of royalists, one of whom was Roger Boyle, Lord of Orrery. He and others of his coterie encouraged Philips to complete the translation of Corneille's Pompey, which was subsequently performed in Dublin.

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Philips' association with Jeremy Taylor (whose Discourse on the Nature and Offices of Friendship was written for her) and her close friendship with Sir Charles Cotterell, Master of Ceremonies at the court, attest to the regard for her by people of considerable importance.

Philips died of smallpox on June 22, 1664 and is buried in the Church of Sherehog in London where her father, grandfather, and grandmother had been buried before (Biographical Anecdotes, Birch Collection Ms. Add. 4223, fol. 138).

Poet, translator, leader of a "Society of Friendship"--all more than ordinary accomplishments for a seventeenth-century woman--she was lauded by both men and women, by ordinary people as well as poets. Her reputation is a phenomenon interesting, and perhaps revealing, in its own right. Why was Orinda singled out for special praise in her lifetime? Why, in an age which demanded from women obedience, subservience, and the gaining of happiness only through housewifely accomplishments or through basking in the sunshine of male achievements, did a woman of upper middle-class background accomplish what she did? Was she simply the right person at the right moment in history--or literature? Is the praise of her work an automatic carry-over from that lavished upon her as a person? Or

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was her reputation truly based upon her lasting value as a poet?

For the twentieth-century aspect of Philips' reputation, basically the same questions must be asked. Since women writers, as a result of feminism, are given much more attention than in the previous centuries, is Philips' prominence a consequence of this trend, or does it stem from critics' firm conviction to her value as a poet? To compare the reputation of a woman writing in a time when women are just beginning to assert themselves beyond what seemed to be firmly established limits to such a reputation in a time when women are being encouraged to accept ever-increasing opportunities provides an interesting challenge. A study of the conditions of the society in which Philips lived and worked, particularly the attitudes of that society toward poetry in general as well as toward women poets specifically, is imperative. The same inspection is obviously crucial for the twentieth century too.

Furthermore, since for the most part value is relative, since comparison is necessary for determining merit, Philips' work and reputation ought to be compared to that of other poets of the period in which she lived, with an emphasis on the work of female poets.

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This is not to say that a firm commitment to the study of Katherine Philips' work in itself is not essential. To estimate her value as a poet, a contemplation of her work--116 poems, 45 letters, translations of two plays from the French of Corneille, and that of a poem by Saint-Amant--must be attempted. In doing so, it will be seen that the theme of friendship is clearly what evoked the greatest poetic response from Philips. It is undoubtedly the most powerful stimulus to her writing, and, although she is in many ways a highly conventional poet using traditional forms, expected imagery, and established diction, her provocative and original treatment of this theme makes her a poet worthy of study.

Although Philips' oeuvre is much less extensive than that of either the Duchess of Newcastle or Aphra Behn, no doubt exists about the need to study a woman who made such an impact on several important poets and literary figures of her day. By means of a serious and thorough examination of her work, we may be able to find clues to the reasons for her being talked about and written about during her lifetime and to the reasons for her remaining in the canon for several decades after her death and influencing other writers, both male and female. If even a poet of the stature of Marvell is affected by Philips' ideas, how can there be

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any question that she is a poet deserving of serious consideration?

Part of this consideration requires an investigation into why in her day she was chosen to be admired. Is it that she was a representative woman, following the course her contemporary male poets themselves espoused? Surely she was a conventional poet adhering to the principles of propriety and decorum which her age demanded. Did these writers find in Philips' work reflections of their own which please them? To what extent should she be thought of as merely dilettantish? Or, on the other hand, was she a serious writer worthy of attention not only as a quintessential woman poet but as capable in her own right?

The view of Philips' capability as a poet in the eyes of twentieth-century thinkers and critics must be determined. To what extent is she today included in anthologies, referred to in poetic criticism, held up as a model, and discussed whenever seventeenth-century poetry is the subject? In making the choice to include her, what is the role played by feminist influences? Is it possible to dissociate this prevalent mode of thought and to provide thereby a more clearly objective judgment of her work?

The questions, then, to be asked about Philips'

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reputation in both the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries are similar. To investigate the work of Katherine Philips, a woman who, three hundred years earlier, thought and wrote and acted to some extent like her modern counterparts, is particularly appropriate. Analyzing her reputation may provide not only a clearer understanding of Philips' worth as a poet but a greater insight into the phenomenon of poetic reputation itself.

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Chapter I

The World of Women

In exploring the world of women in the seventeenth century, unquestionably a repressive time for women, several questions come to mind: What was the proper sphere of women's activity? What kind of education was fitting to keep them functioning adequately in that sphere? How did men respond to those who stepped beyond what men consider women's proper realms? To what extent did women accept men's prescriptions regarding their duties as wives and mothers, and what kind of education did they demand for themselves? How did men and women feel about learned women? The answers to these questions will yield some consensus, with notable exceptions to which we must pay particular attention.

Not only are there varying responses to these inquiries, but these questions sometimes impinge upon one another to such a degree that it is impossible to deal with them separately. For example, what men believe to be women's duties as wives and housewives is related to what they think women ought to study. This, in turn, is relevant to their view of what womanly virtues ought to be cultivated.

In her _Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance_, Ruth Kelso lists five major womanly virtues--modesty,

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humility, constancy, temperance, and chastity, the last of which receives the greatest emphasis. Discretion and silence are virtues added by DuBosc in The Compleat Woman (18), and Barnabe Rich puts "Justice, Fortitude, Patience, pitty, and Mercy" on his list (The Excellency of Good Women 3). To practice womanly virtues is the advice given to women by Richard Brathwaite in his English Gentlewoman. Charity, chastity, and humility are the qualities which will give honor to those who cultivate them (202), and even though women may be "weak in sexe and condition," they may "yet [be] parallels to men for charity, chastity, piety, purity, and vertuous conversation" (30). While promoting several virtues for women, Brathwaite emphasizes one--humility--as crucial. The ideal woman is the special practitioner of this one virtue:

> Humilitie, which is the princesse of Vertues, the conqueresse of Vices, the mirror of Virgins, and Crowne of Christians, she so much honours, as she values it above all humane glory: whence it is, that shee hath ever reapt more spirituall profit by distesteeme than selfe-esteeme. (Preface)

The entire catalog of attributes of character and personality appears in Gervase Markham's English Huswife:

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> She must . . . be of chaste thought, stout courage, patient, untired, watchful, diligent, witty, pleasant, constant in friendship, full of good Neighbor-hood, wise in Discourse but not frequent therein, sharp and quick of speech, but not bitter or talkative, secret in her affairs, comfortable in her counsels, and generally skillful in the worthy knowledges which belong to her vocation. (Quoted in Hole 99)

What prompts this emphasis on virtuous behavior is men's need to keep women in subjection. The acquisition of proper virtues will help women more readily to consent to the subjugation men demand. Several works of the period cleverly attempt to convince by referring to Biblical injunctions. The Woman's Glorie proposes the example of Sarah, the woman "from whom Kings and Nations came," who "called her husband Lord" (154). The 1632 document, Lawes Resolution of the Rights of Women, quotes Genesis: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children, thy desires shall bee subject to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (6). Any attempt, warns "The Ladies Calling," to reverse the Bible's directive requiring subjection of women, is disobedience (56).

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The call for the subjection of women, when not based on Biblical stricture, is sometimes founded in the theory of the naturally greater endowment of men. A 1634 document states unequivocally that Nature provides that man should govern and that women should obey: "the husband may command the wife, but not she him," positing even beyond this that even if a man is guilty of bad conduct [if he is a drunkard or a blasphemer], his wife must still honor him (Of Domestical Duties, Treatise III, 271, 275). Richard Brathwaite, after arguing that women must obey because "it is not fit for an inferiour member to command the head, nor for them to soveraignize over their husbands," adds, with a light touch:

> Wives with obediance husbands should subdue,
> For by this means they'le be subdued to you.
> (The English Gentlewoman 110)

If women do not "demean themselves toward their Husbands," if a woman does not "sayle . . . to the winde of wisdome, winde of her husbandes breath," "if she is not ruled by her husbandes word, but is crosse and contrary to his directions," "if she does not make the best of what is settled by Law and Custom," she is considered at least foolish, if not downright evil. (Dedication to Ladies Dictionary, Barnabe Riche, The Excellencie of Good Women, 8, 10; Halifax, The Lady's

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New Year's Gift 32).

Even a man like John Shirley, who seems to believe women to be more than abject, mindless, servile creatures, shows some ambivalence when he advises a wife involved in a dispute with her husband to wait until his anger has abated somewhat and then "mildly argue the Matter with him, not so much to condemn him, as to acquit herself." Basically, the wife is asked then to adapt herself in order to think like her husband (The Illustrious History of Women quoted in Margaret Ezell, The Patriarch's Wife 40). Shirley, however, does speak enthusiastically about women's capabilities, asking why is it not possible for women "to be Register'd in the Book of Fame, as those who stile themselves the Nobler Sex"? (Shirley 126). Furthermore, he clearly blames men for keeping women down:

> Man, having attain'd the upperhand in Rule and Power, claiming it by Birthright as first created, as much as in him lyes strives to keep that station as his prerogative, by endeavouring to keep the Softer Sex in Ignorance; and to Effect this, he uses his utmost endeavours to possess her with a belief of her Incapacities, that she may not reach at things Sublime, and by comprehending

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them, know the largeness of her Soul. (127)

Not only does he find women's souls equal to men's but "Their wisdom is nothing Inferior nor their Thoughts confined to narrower limits . . ." (128). Shirley courageously indicts his fellows and holds high the female banner.

This banner continued to be carried by several others who bolstered their positions in various ways. Some believed that women's good qualities were given them when they were created. Henry Cornelius Agrippa finds that since women were created in Paradise they are greater than men in dignity, that they are composed of a "refined and purified substance, enlivened and activated by a Rational Soul . . ." (11, 13). In order to prove that women have characteristics of higher quality than men, the author of Woman's Worth works chapter by chapter to prove his point, not only seeing women (as one might expect) more chaste, more religious, more charitable, but also wiser and more valiant, suggesting that they "bare rule" over men. The reason women have "such sovereign power and command over man" is that there is in woman a "secrete inbred value . . . above man" (90). This same view of women's superiority is in the statement in A Present for the Ladies in which the writer claims that all of the vices attributed to women can be found in larger measure in

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man (Preface). When men derogate women, they "over-value themselves and set prizes on their own worth" (Reflexions on Marriage 100). A much more grudging admission of women's worth is made by George Savile Halifax in "The Lady's New Year's Gift or Advice to a Daughter." Although men are more reasonable, women more compliant; men stronger, women softer; some women might manage to be "above the level of their own Sex" and might "obtain a Mitigation in their own particular of a Sentence which was given generally against Woman-kind" (26-27).

Finally, two impassioned pleas for men to regard women in a better light emerge in A Present for the Ladies and in an issue of Ladies Mercury: In the first, men are asked to look upon women as their equals, not as "Entertainments of idle Hours," but with proper mindfulness of their merit (100). In the second, the writer makes a veritable argument for the emancipation of women:

> A Woman, at least a sensible one, is a Bird that Sings least in a Cage. Something in nature prompts her to believe that she's as rightful an Inheritrix at least to the innocent Blessings and Pleasures of Life, as the Tyrant Lord can pretend to" (March 17, 1693).

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In view of such men advocates for women, it comes as a surprise that many women themselves were willing to accept limitations placed upon them by men. They accepted the emphasis men placed upon particular "womanly" virtues and upon particular patterns of behavior in marriage, and they agreed with men who insisted on their inferiority in matters of the mind. What is astonishing is that even those who are among the most ardent champions of women must be included here.

Mary Chudleigh, for instance, reiterates what many men believe about women--that they are "shining Examples of Piety, Prudence, Moderation, Patience, and all other valuable Qualities . . ." (The Ladies Defence, Epistle Dedicatory). "Compassion seems Natural to our Sex, whose soft Breasts were made to entertain Tenderness and Pitty," and "Affability," befitting the female sex, is more necessary in women than in men, says another woman, adding virtues less often listed (Whole Duty of Woman 21, 29). The one virtue consistently stressed as essential for women, humility, seems to be unquestionably accepted by this writer, who sees it as both a Christian virtue and as a means of obtaining the praises of others. If a woman seems "rather mean in [her] own Opinion," then others will laud her, and if meekness is practiced as a

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Christian virtue, if women accept their own "unworthiness without repining" and submit to the will of God, they will be fulfilling the "peculiar Accomplishment of the Sex" (50, 9, 5-6).

Meekness and obedience were the two key words for women to bear in mind in their marriages. Women must behave like women, that is, they must "demeane and behave themselves, both towards their husbands and in their families" (The Gossips Greeting Epistle to the Reader). For Hannah Woolley, it is clear that women are inferior, men superior, and that since woman was made after man, she was meant to be subservient. The husband has the power and the wife must be subject to him, she adds (104). Furthermore, Woolley and Chudleigh agree that being subject to men includes the bearing of a husband's anger, trying to pacify him and hiding his "faults and infirmities." Even if women are married to "Men of brutish unsociable Tempers, to Monsters in Humane Shape," Chudleigh asks them to "struggle with their Afflictions" and to "pay 'em as much Respect, and to obey their Commands with as much readiness as if they were the best and most indearing husbands in the World" (Woolley 156, 159-60, 161; Chudleigh, Epistle Dedicatory). Although this seems like almost too much to ask, it is in keeping with Christine Hole's analysis of women as good wives and

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mothers--"to be what was known as 'a notable housewife' was the cherished ambition of all but the most idle and frivolous (99)."

Mary Evelyn, who is neither "idle" nor "frivolous," accepts the same stress on "womanly" activities, adding her view that women need not wield the pen:

> Women were not born to read Authors . . . We are willing to acknowledge all time borrowed from Family duties as misspent; the care of Children's education, observing a Husband's commands, assisting the Sick, relieving the Poore, and being serviceable to our Friends, are of sufficient weight to employ the most improved capacities amongst us. If sometimes it happens by accident that one of a thousand aspires a little higher, her fate commonly exposes her to wonder, but adds little esteeme. The Distaff will defend our quarrells as well as the Sword, and the Needle is as instructive as the Penne. (Letter to Ralph Bohun at Oxford, January 4, 1672, in <u>The Life and Writings of John Evelyn</u> 300)

Not all women are so browbeaten. Dorothy Osborne Temple, for example, did not at all accept the

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prevailing attitudes. She refused to acknowledge any inferiority of women in marriage or in the world. Osborne set up her own requirements for a husband, demanding that ". . . he must not be so much a country gentleman as to understand nothing but hawks and dogs, and not to be fonder of either than of his wife." Moreover, she had her own stipulations for happiness in marriage. It was to be found in "a true friend, a moderate fortune, and a retired life" (Love Letters of Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple, Letters 36, 52). Mary Chudleigh subscribed to this theory in her call for the elimination of arranged marriages. If children are not consulted in choices of mates, unhappiness will be the inevitable result. Wives may be "obsequious and respectful to their Husbands," she admits, but "there cannot be that Friendship, that Tenderness, that Unity of Affection which ought to be in that sacred State." (The Ladies Defence, Preface to the Reader). Chudleigh warns men, too, not to expect women "to be their most obedient Slaves and Vassals" although she admits that woman was made "for the comfort and benefit of men" (20). The Parson in The Ladies Defence reveals men's deplorably base attitudes, telling the women: "Your shallow Minds can nothing else contain/ [only working, dancing, singing, playing] You were not made for Labours of the Brain./ Those are the manly Toils which

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we sustain." Even lower in his degradation of women does the Parson sink when he remarks that men are on high "While you poor worthless Insects crawl below/ And less than Mites t'our exhalted Reason show" (4,7).

Such an extreme statement vis-à-vis women, it may be said, can be found in a biting satire such as Chudleigh's, and should, therefore, be dismissed as unrelated to reality. However, as we have seen earlier, real seventeenth-century men make statements very little removed from this extreme. Women continued to see that men looked upon them as weaker by nature and that they "strive to make them weaker by nurture; and if in degree of place low, they strive by their policy to keep [them] more under" (Women's Sharp Revenge 170). And well into the eighteenth century, Mary Hays found that men saw themselves as superior beings, and that "consequently, nature and reason invest them with authority over the weaker sex" (Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women 95).

It was the limitations put upon their education which helped women to think of themselves as members of the weaker sex. The denigrating attitude of men and unquestioning acquiescence of women contributed to this. The actual limitations of women's education is readily seen in a study of the standard curriculum for

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girls in boarding schools. In most cases, music, singing, embroidery or needlework, and a little French were the only courses taught. In his Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Education Foster Watson sums up the aim of what he calls a "private venture school" as having a "tendency to devote attention to what was considered ornamental to the exclusion of more solid and useful education." They were "'academies'" or "'seminaries'" and "aimed at teaching 'accomplishments'" (195). Georgiana Hill refers to this education as "ladyism," but she also mentions tutors' being hired for Latin and Italian as well as French (Women in English Life from Medieval to Modern Times 149). There is, however, very little evidence for the teaching of Latin to girls; on the contrary, while the study of Latin and Greek was a necessity for boys, sometimes there was a warning that the study of Latin would be inimical to girls. On the matter of teaching French, there is some conflicting evidence: using a pamphlet printed in 1703, a student is quoted as saying, "By the help of a French Dancing Master, a French Singing Master, and a French Waiting Woman," this young gentlewoman says she could "jabber French" before she could "speak English plain" (Adburgham, 37). An early nineteenth-century work, on the other hand, does not testify to the excellence of French teaching since it is described as follows:

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"'repeat[ing] familiar words of the French language with a sound peculiar to boarding schools, and quite unintelligible to a native of France.'"

The fact that French was taught to many women, whether well or badly, receives corroboration from several sources, among them Lady Fanshawe in her Memoirs and Judith Drake in her Essay in Defence of the Female Sex. Fanshawe speaks of her education as having "all the advantages which time afforded, both for working all sorts of fine work with . . . needle, and learning French, singing, lute, the virginals and dancing . . .," while Drake promotes the view that French is "almost as Familiar amongst Women of Quality as Men" (Memoirs 55; Drake 37).

The degree to which French was studied seriously is a particularly interesting question associated with Katharine Philips. In view of the lack of serious emphasis on this study in boarding schools (and we have no reason to imagine that Mrs. Salmon's School in Hackney was very different from others), how is it that Philips, without a serious foundation in this subject, managed to study it well enough to write two translations of plays of Corneille that were produced on both the Irish and English stages during her lifetime? Rosemary Masek's point of view is certainly relevant here: ". . . a woman learned only what her

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own interest, resourcefulness and social position permitted" ("Age of Transition" 155). Mistress A. Barrett als. Lennard, mentioned in The Lives of the Norths, is just such a case in point. She "was addicted to books, and was a mistress of French and Italian, as well as to speak as read." She had, too, "more than ordinary wit and fluency of discourse" (28-9). This can readily be said of Philips as well, and perhaps she and Philips are both self-taught. In connection with Philips' own reading, Edmund Gosse cites some of her letters to Sir Charles Cotterell (Poliarchus) telling him that "she is reading English books with patience and French ones with pleasure." (Seventeenth Century Studies 218)

When Hannah Woolley advised women to study languages, she gave examples of women for "imitation and incouragement in treading the paths of learning . . . forbear[ing] to speak of the incomparable worth and pregnant parts of some Gentlewomen lately deceased, as Mrs. Philips the ingenious translatress of Pompey, etc. since what is extant of hers, or her Contemporaries will more at large express their matchless merit . . ." (The Gentlewoman's Companion 29-30).

In spite of large-scale agreement on curricula for women, Bathsua Makin, Hannah Woolley, and Mary Astell

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were valuable dissenters. Makin did believe in keeping what was being taught in other schools, but she wished to inculcate a knowledge of Latin and French, with the possibility of adding Greek, Hebrew, Italian, and Spanish for those interested. As a matter of fact, Makin saw very little that women should not study; she mentioned as admissible subjects grammar, rhetoric, logic, Greek and Hebrew, mathematics, geography, music, painting, and poetry. Because she saw no possibility for women to make use of "Public Employments in the Field or Courts," these were the only studies she would not recommend (Gardiner, 224, 245). Woolley, in the introduction to her work, predicted that if women were to study as men do, men ". . . would find [their] brains as fruitful as [their] bodies." Following her lead, Astell advocated a seminary for ladies "to expel that cloud of Ignorance which Custom has involved us in . . . and to furnish our minds with a stock of solid and useful knowledge" (Mary Astell, A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest, quoted in Gardiner, 222).

Not only was there disagreement among women on the question of curriculum in schools for women, but there was debate among them also on the question of learning as fit or unfit for the female sex. To think of some who were in the forefront of promoting women to

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positions of greater equality with men in learning and in life is to think of Anna Schurman, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, Lady Anne Fanshawe, Bathsua Makin, and Lucy Hutchinson, to name a few. Even an advocate like Schurman, answering Sir Simonds D'Ewes, as she thanks him for his kind remarks about the "Glory" of her learning, cannot admit their veracity because to do so would be an offense "against the Lawes of Truth and sobernesse." She is, she admits, "very much delighted with the best and noblest things, though some times they exceed [her] capacitie" (The Learned Maid 49). Scholarly pursuits are possible for a woman under very special conditions: she must not be "unapt for learning," not in want, have the time to be away from "the Exercises of Piety and Household Affairs," and see as the end the furtherance of "God's Glory and salvation of her own Soul," as well as the instruction of her family and the usefulness of "her whole Sex" (102). As forward-looking as Anna Schurman may seem to be, these limitations prevent thinking of her as a facilitator of general improvement in women's education. Bathsua Makin echoed the limitations expressed by Schurman: she too believed that education should be limited to wealthy intelligent women who have both the means and the leisure time needed for learning (J.R. Brink, Female Scholars 97).

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Although the Duchess of Newcastle clearly falls within the category of aristocratic and intelligent women, and although her avant-garde attitude and behavior lead to different expectations, even she accepted her severely circumscribed position. She felt she could not venture to give her opinion on public affairs because she "ought not to meddle, being a woman" (Quoted in Goreau 94). Newcastle gives a list of do's and don't's for women: she counsels them not to go "running about with their severall causes, complaining of their severall grievances . . . speaking too much . . . words rushing against words, thwarting and crossing each other, and pulling with reproches, striving to throw each other down with disgrace, thinking to advance themselves thereby." The way to be sure of attaining a good reputation was to concentrate on having "an honest heart, a noble soul, a chaste life, and a true speaking tongue" (Life of the 1st Duchess of Newcastle & Other Writings, 1667 edition 201) Truth, chastity, and nobility of soul--these are the very virtues which women were consistently asked to pursue and the Duchess did not, at least in this writing, stray far from the established pattern.

It must be said, though, that Newcastle's writing her autobiography before turning to the biography of her husband was an unusual assertion of self-worth. By

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contrast, Lady Fanshawe and Lucy Hutchinson showed in their works that they considered themselves inferior to their husbands. Lady Fanshawe's Autobiography, "which trails off rapidly after her husband's death," gives evidence of her sense of inferiority. Lucy Hutchinson, too, seems not to have a separate existence as she breaks off her autobiography completely to turn to the writing of her husband's biography. This act is seen as a desire to maintain her reputation "as she constructs an image of herself as a dutiful loving wife, who lives in and through her husband" ("Seventeenth Century Women's Autobiography" in 1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century 25-26).

With few exceptions, then, women were willing to accept the view of their "betters" that they were neither capable nor should they be desirous of improving their intellectual status.

Many treatises and articles demonstrated the unreceptiveness of men to the development of women's minds. In the answer to a question about whether women should be learned, the Athenian Oracle, a publication which existed from 1691 to 1697, indicated that learning would make women prouder and therefore less obedient. Besides, they are "too delicate" and "the moisture of their Brain hindrith solidity of Judgement . . ." (V, 327). The author of Freedom of the Fair

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Sex recognizes as good qualities in women their light and "diverting" conversation, innocent and ingenious. What they need to remember is that they ought to have enough knowledge "to make their lives useful." Useful to men, particularly! Although this writer does not wish women to assist men "in a Servile and Laborious way," he reminds a woman that she should be a companion "who Condoles man's Calamaties, Rejoyces at his Welfare, and Sympathizes with every Passion" (10, 13).

Perhaps many women, even some today, might accept this particular list of desired patterns of behavior, but we do not have to strain our ingenuity to find outrageous statements by men--often, it is true, in satirical works--but nevertheless authentically expressing views of many men. For example, in the "Letter from Chloe to Urania," Chloe repeats her husband's arguments against learning for women: Women's bodies have already given them much power over men, and the pride which would result from being educated would only encourage them to want more power; God designed women for obedience, for taking care of the household, and for being instructed by men (Gildon, Miscellaneous Letters and Essays 56).

As for learning, a woman knows enough when she can tell the difference "between her Husband's Shirt and his Breeches." If this is not insulting enough, we may

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turn to the comment made by the misogynist friend in Walsh's Dialogue, that talking to the woman after lovemaking was as great a "penance" to him "as it would be to sit in a greasy cook's shop when [his] belly was full" (William Walsh, Works 167, 133). Almost as disrespectful, but saved by its jocular tone, is the remark made by a wife to her husband in response to his suggestion that she has been strangely occupied in her dressing room:

> . . . I was so visited in a Morning by the Virtuosi, Criticks, Poets, Booksellers; so taken up with Correspondence with the Learned, both at Home and Abroad, that I had little time to talk with my Milliner, Dresser, Mantua-maker, and such Illiterate People" (William King, Miscellanies 303-4).

Both satirically and more straightforwardly, men gave clear signals that they were basically unhappy with the expansion of women's education. Fear of losing power, fear of being disobeyed, fear of being surpassed--these were well-founded anxieties--and it is all the more surprising, then, that one finds men of substance and even of renown who can be cited for their positive attitudes toward the education of women. Cornelius Agrippa is such a one, claiming that "By a brutish custome" have men prevented women from entering

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the "Doors of the Muses Temple." However, this has not worked--"by nature alone [they] excell the Professors of Arts, even in those particular Arts which they pretend to" (60). Even though the writer of Youth's Behavior may not agree that women excel men, he does recognize and bemoan the fact that the "tyrannny of Custome hath hindered many of them from publishing their works." The "custom" of regarding women as inferior to men was decried by several who promoted the equality of the sexes. "Brains," one claims, "have no sex," and, therefore, no study is beyond women. (De L'Egalité des deux Sexes, quoted in S. A. Richards 57). There is nothing beyond their reach. As nature herself has made the sexes equal (Gentleman's Journal, May 1692, 9), there is nothing to prevent women from attaining "the greatest knowledge" (Youth's Behavior 61-2). Poulain de la Barre sums up the defense of women with the thesis "Que les femmes sont aussi nobles, aussi parfaites, et aussi capables que les hommes" (Quoted in Richards 55).

The bases for men's approval of learning for women varied. Sometimes such a posture stemmed from a progressive view that educated women could make vital contributions to society and to the arts. Sometimes it came from a belief that learned women could contribute more to men's happiness than could the uneducated.

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Some men actually did seem to think that the sexes were equal in endowment and that women should be permitted to prove it. But whatever the reason, it is nonetheless remarkable that men were willing to espouse such a view.

If men needed courage to accept such a stance, how much more of that quality did women need! Pamphlets, treatises, and even some works of literature by women cried out for them to refuse the roles assigned to them by men, for them to step forward and tell men that they would no longer be kept down by men's restrictions, that they knew they were just as capable as men and were going to prove it. In The Ladies Defence, Chudleigh is convinced that women's "weakness" emanated solely from the "illness of [their] education" (Preface). More forcefully promoting the intellectual potential of women, Judith Drake, in her Essay, proposes that women "were chiefly intended for Thought and the Exercise of the Mind" but that their lack of education and the jealousy of men prevent their exercising their mental powers (18, 20-21). Women should not excuse their sisters for their "complaisancy" and lack of desire to "furnish their Minds with true Knowledge that [they] may know something more than a well-chosen Petticoat or a fashionable Commode" (Preface to Triumphs of Female

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Wit; Chudleigh, Preface to The Female Advocate).

Desiring to get men to recognize that it was clearly their restraints upon women that prevented women's advancement, Mary Astell reminded them:

> For a Man ought no more to value himself upon being wiser than a Woman if he owes his Advantage to a better Education, and greater Means of Information, than he ought to boast of his Courage for beating a Man when his Hands were bound (18).

David Cressy's work on literacy in the seventeenth century is most useful in showing how successful men were in curtailing women's education. Cressy discusses the changes in literacy and their relationship to changes in educational opportunity, making the point that education, which had expanded in the Elizabethan period, shrank for those below the level of the gentry by the end of the sixteenth century. Conservative thinkers, he says, "began to suggest that education bred social disruption and spawned political sedition, and should be very tightly controlled" (Cressy, "Educational Opportunity in Tudor and Stuart England" 315-16). The strictures he speaks of surely exemplify attitudes toward women's education in particular. It is clear that seventeenth-century men considered women's participation in political activity of any kind

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ungodly, un-Christian, and unfeminine. If literacy resulted in their becoming more political, it had to be thoroughly discouraged. Therefore, women needed to know how to read and write only as those skills promoted feminine accomplishments such as cooking and needlework. For any other matters, they were really to rely on their husbands as their guides (Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order 128-9).

Acting as an additional deterrent to women's serious reading were authors and publishers who "apparently did not feel women needed or could comprehend more than the simplest subjects and the easiest instructions" (Hull, Chaste, Silent and Obedient 28). An advertisement for a book for women in the early eighteenth century says that it is written in language of the "utmost plainness and simplicity" and that it does not contain any foreign or technical words, nor even any references to works of authors from which the material is taken. The author hopes that women will read his book rather than the "novels and romances, which greatly tend to mislead the understanding and corrupt the heart" (History of Women 94) Mary Chudleigh, too, rejects the reading of romances because they are too exciting and prevent the soul from being strong (Essays, passim), while the author of "Decency in Conversation Amongst Women"

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suggests that women read only romances of a serious and noble type.

Despite the prevalence of many who deplored women's reading, some bravely counterattacked. Hannah Woolley and Mary Chudleigh were the best promoters of such a counter-offensive. Reading, Woolley proclaimed, gives women the knowledge they need for "agreeable discourse," helping them to understand themselves (7). Reading is suggested as a leisure-time activity, necessary "for the ornament of the mind" (125). Satirically, Chudleigh demonstrates the foolish attitudes of men like Sir John Brute, who wishes that laws might prohibit women from reading so that they would know less how to plot and intrigue--"how their Snares to lay" (16). In the same work, the Parson is Chudleigh's symbol of a man totally unaware of the ludicrousness of his remarks:

> . . . Women were not for this Province made,
> And should not our Prerogative invade;
> What e'er they know shou'd be from us convey'd;
> We their Preceptors and their Guides shou'd prove,
> And teach them what to hate, and what to love.
> But from our Sermons they no ill can Learn,
> They're there instructed in their true
> Concern:
> Told what they must, and what they must not

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be

And shew'd the utmost Bounds of Liberty.

(17).

In spite of these attempts at a counter-offensive, the pervasive anti-education and anti-intellectual attitudes among men and women yielded hardly any ground. Is it not remarkable, then, that Katherine Philips, although not born into an aristocratic family, managed to achieve what she did and be recognized for her accomplishment? There were women of the aristocracy who admirably discharged their duties toward their husbands during the Civil War in keeping the family estates and affairs in order--Lady Fanshawe, Lady Verney, Lady Falkland, Lady Halkett, and Lucy Hutchinson among them. Some of these women wrote too, as we have seen, and there was Anne Conway (living some time before Philips) who developed intellectually to such a degree that she was treated by men as their intellectual equal (Conway Letters). According to Praise of Worthy Women, some "excellent ladies" are cited for doing as well as men in learning and governing (45-46). John Shirley lists women, among them Sappho and Lady Jane Grey, who are "skillful in the Languages, in Philosophy, and Divinity, but above all, Excellent in Divine Poetry" (Illustrious History of Women 79). Although Shirley neglected to mention

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Philips in his list, William Walsh and a writer in the Athenian Oracle did not. Walsh thought of Philips after giving a list of important Greek and Latin poets. Denouncing his countrymen for keeping English women from learning (in opposition to the French who foster it), he talked also of women of antiquity who offered proof of the great intellectual potential of women. In a roster of learned women that includes Margaret More and Queen Elizabeth, the writer in Athenian Oracle adds, "And nearer our own Times, Mrs. Katherine Philips, commended by the great Cowley" (IV, 51-53).

Looking back at the achievement of Philips, living in a time laden with problems for writing women, we can only conclude that she was one of the "remarkable" women Adburgham refers to as "leav[ing] behind them a legend of learning--in many cases with published proof of intellectual gifts of the highest order" (40).

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Chapter II

The Concept of Reputation

Before investigating the precise reputation of a single individual, the concept itself requires study. In general, reputation may be defined as whatever is said, written, or thought about a person. It is, according to both the O.E.D. and modern dictionaries, the estimation in which a person is held, in connection with character and/or other qualities. In both, also, the concept can be defined as "good report," "good name"; that is, favorable estimation. While the definition in the earlier time seems to give greater emphasis to the concept as positive--being "highly regarded," even "fame in general," without any reference to who is making the judgment, two modern sources do employ the phrase "by the public" to complete the definition. In the case of a literary judgment, it is obvious that a greater awareness of the identity of the person giving the opinion is required. Is the judgment that "of the public," or is it that of a recognized or qualified person? What standards are being used and to what degree is the person qualified to set them? Upon what are these standards based? In this study, three grounds for the making of a reputation--taste, fashion, and rules of thought of the period--will be dealt with. In addition, since

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reputation and canonicity are allied, and since rules of thought are closely connected to convention and tradition, these factors must also be examined. An exploration of all of this will provide some insight into the forces behind the reputation of Katharine Philips.

A look at poetic criticism in general in both centuries forms a basis for the detailed analysis of reputation. One frequently encountered but not surprising seventeenth-century complaint made by critics is that people do not discriminate between poems of value and those of little or no worth. In letters to Dryden both John Dennis and Charles Gildon make the point that fickleness is evident in people's praise of poets--that approbation is sometimes simply a matter of chance or "Fortune." Saying that it is necessary for him to be a Stoic to protect himself against "publick censure," Gildon writes: "Reputation [is] but a Whim, since the Worst [have] their Admirers, as well as the Best, at least in our Age" (Miscellaneous Letters and Essays 2). Dennis too indicates his lack of confidence in the validity of people's judgments: "The people gave me some little applause before, but to whom, when they are in the humour, will they not give it? and to whom, when they are froward, will they not refuse it?" (Dryden, Works,

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Letter X, 113). Edward Phillips' preface to the <u>Theatrum Poetarum</u> corroborates this view:

> . . . so in the State of Learning, among the Writers of all Ages, some deserve Fame, some have it, not deserving. Others, though deserving, yet totally miss it, or have it not equally to their desserts.

In response to this capriciousness of the multitude in assigning value to poets, critics advised paying attention to the accolades of only the judicious few who were capable of discernment. Dennis believes that this is "the surest way to arrive at Reputation" since these knowing few will eventually take the majority with them and never be swayed by them ("Large Account of the Taste in Poetry," in Durham, <u>Critical Essays 129</u>). In essence, however, Dennis resorted to his personal assessment of a poet, asserting that the only thing that counts in forming a good poetic reputation is "Genius running thro' a Work." If it does, all is forgiven, and errors are not noticed, as is, for example, the case with Dryden (Dennis, <u>Original Letters</u> 292).

Turning to modern times, we find T.S. Eliot, in one sense, in agreement with Dennis, referring to a "kind of orthodoxy" when judging the comparative importance of poets, while stressing, at the same time,

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the inconstancy of reputations. Eliot, Harold Bloom and David Daiches are strong in emphasizing changes in literary renown from one generation to another. Bloom even speaks of a firm judgment of a period seeming "ludicrous" in the next (John Donne and the Seventeenth Century Metaphysical Poets 1). As an example, Bloom mentions Cowley as enormously influential in his own day, still considered important enough to be the first in Johnson's Lives of the Poets, but "remembered today only by scholars." Poetic reputation, Eliot agrees, is a "stock market of constant fluctuation" ("What is Minor Poetry" in On Poetry and Poets 46). It is not the "constant fluctuation" which David Daiches studies, but rather the revival of a writer after a period of dormancy. He admits that such a resurgence may be due to the particular requirements of the restoring period, but suggests that it may also be that the quality of the work is so inherently worthy that it "cannot be indefinitely kept down by fashion, ignorance, or prejudice" (Strelka 175). Definitive judgments of literary works (even for those of admittedly great authors), then, may be impossible to make.

Even greater uncertainty pervaded specific ideas about taste, a favorite subject particularly in the eighteenth century, but with proponents in the seventeenth as well. La Bruyère, in Les Caractères,

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makes an attempt to define perfect taste:

> Il y a dans l'art un point de perfection, comme de bonté ou de maturité dans la nature. Celui qui le sent et qui l'aime a le goût parfait (Bateson 40).

How, precisely, to recognize this perfect taste La Bruyère did not tell us. Boileau defined it with some certainty, assuming that there was no such thing as good or bad taste, but only one taste, "a bar to which subjects are to be brought" (Saintsbury, History of Criticism 269).

The elusiveness of the concept is illustrated in an early eighteenth-century epistle:

> Taste is a Mark so small, no common Sight
> Can guide the uncertain Arrow to the White;
> Like Wit, and Humour, 'tis a Cob-web Theme,
> An unknown Substance, but familiar Name:
> Taste to the Mind is like the Mode in Dress,
> What all admire, and covet to possess,
> But, oft deceived in both, the publick Voice
> Mocks its own Fondness by an Idiot choice.
>
> (Gilmore 5)

The "Idiot choice" is what upsets many critics as they notice that the prevailing judgment, the common taste, praises the worst ("faint, obscure, obscene, sordid, humble, improper, or effeminate Phrase") while a writer

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"of substance may be called dull" (Jonson, Timber 271, 274). Dennis complained in his Letter to Buckingham of people's ignorance and lack of taste (Original Letters 208). Echoing this, a commentary on Buckingham's Essay on Poetry bemoaned the fact that "a fine taste and judgment [have] never yet appear'd in this nation" (40).

Even though people in general seem to lack discrimination, is it possible that taste can be discovered in any single individual? Several writers agree that some individual taste is valid, that taste is an inborn quality, an extra sense present in some individuals, and that reason and judgment do not have to be regarded as the basis of good taste, but rather that we can look for it in an inherent sensibility of mind and heart. To prove that individuals have innate taste, Gilmore points out that even those ignorant of music are offended by harsh and discordant sounds ("Taste, an Essay" 6). He does admit, though, that if people do not have the proper instruction, or if they are prejudiced by notions of an age or a country, they may not manifest good taste. (Unfortunately, Gilmore seemed to think he could have it both ways.) Edward Hooker and Thomas Reid, dealing with the same question, were also convinced of the intuitiveness of good taste available in an individual's "constitution" if he is

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free from prejudice (Gilmore 591; Reid 375).

If some individual taste is valid, what such individuals say, either singly or in groups, must also be valid. Proper guidance, therefore, can be received from "the brightest and wisest men of former ages [who are] the Masters and Instructors of Mankind . . . the supreme judges of Taste" (Gilmore 32). Several eighteenth-century philosophers (Lord Kames, Alexander Gerard, and Edmund Burke) agree that the standard of taste to be applied is what the group of educated, cultivated men approve of. Only those competent and experienced enough to make judgments are proper mentors (Saintsbury, History of Criticism 269). Mistaken judgments, Gilmore reiterates, can be corrected by a "return to what persons of a refined and approved Taste judge most proper, delicate, and exact . . ." (8).

Despite the fact that many advocate looking to critics for refining public taste, some questions about their proper functions do arise. Should they establish taste? Should they justify it? Should they try to perfect it? Should they be the voices to which men must listen? These questions can be answered by examining the remarks made by some critics and by some who criticize them. It is the duty of the critic, asserted Birrell, to help form the taste of his readers (Essays About Men, Women, and Books 231). Kellett

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decried the fact that taste often calls upon criticism to support and defend it, and wished that "taste would be oftener ruled by criticism than criticism by taste" (Fashion in Literature 88, 106). A strong dissenting voice proclaimed that critics can not recognize truly good writing because it is "too simple, too unaffected, and too delicate to stir the callous organs of the generality of critics" (Cooper, "Of Writing to the Taste of the Age" 171).

Even though there was disagreement on critics' creating taste, there was considerable agreement on the relationship between taste and the age in which it was formed. Taste in literature is inevitably the "creature of the age, circumscribed by its limitations, stirred by its passions, warped by its defects" (The Whirligig of Taste 27). In fact, Kellett maintains that books are written only for their own time and, if they do survive beyond, it is only because there is something of permanent interest in the time in which they are written (153).

Any discussion of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century taste would be incomplete without considering the use of rules, a matter of consuming interest and great controversy at this time. What is the connection between following rules of harmony, order, and unity and the establishment of good taste?

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Harmony, received by the mind, produces true taste, observes an eighteenth-century critic, but he cautions that genius is the "Soul" of the matter, "Nature" the body, both of which are unified and reconciled by "Taste" (Gilmore 5). De la Méré seems to stand the whole issue on its head: ". . . it is good taste which alone can create good rules in all that concerns what is proper and fitting" and "no rule or method should be followed except in so far as good taste approves" (Springarn xcv-xcvi). We are not, at this point, left with a very clear picture of which is guiding which, taste the rules, or rules taste.

When we turn to the twentieth century, however, major ideas on the formation of taste become much clearer. Eliot, first of all, is in agreement with earlier critics that art is a function of the time: ". . . each generation brings to the contemplation of art its own categories of appreciation, makes its own demands upon art, and has its own uses for art" ("The Function of Criticism" 94). Second, on the function of the critic, Eliot did not hesitate to assure his reader of his (Eliot's) obligation to correct taste. He suggested to those who did not think well of a poet, whom generations of intelligent and sensitive men have appreciated, that they try to find out why and try to appreciate him too ("What is Minor Poetry?" 46). He

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advised developing greater sensibility through studying the ideas of worthy critics. Greater appreciation and good taste would be the result of such a practice. The ideal antidote for bad taste is the reading and study of the works of great writers and poets.

Frank Kermode agrees with Eliot on the method for improving taste, but adds a new dimension when he brings to bear a study of canon formation as it is related to taste. As a crucial consideration in the formation of taste, Kermode requires that we look at the relationship between knowledge and opinion, emphasizing the need to separate the two, but calling for a clear acknowledgement of the validity of opinion. Kermode believes that it has its place in contributing, in the form of enthusiasm, to a work's rightfully remaining in the canon. He cautions, however, that being liable to error, opinion may wrongly contribute to the perpetuation of a work of art. Kermode, however, does not view this as a potential disaster.

On the other hand, he is very much concerned about the decline in reputation of works or writers of value. Kermode cites the important example for this study of the long period of depreciation of the metaphysical poets, in particular of Donne. He explains the decline as the result of the "intervening generations, each partially blinded by its own prejudices . . . mistaking

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its custom for nature and its opinion for knowledge" (Forms of Attention 71). The reference here to custom and nature goes back to Kermode's earlier discussion of Johnson's distinction between "saying something is right because it is the custom and saying that something is the custom because it is right." Although in this analysis of Donne's reputation Kermode seems to separate the concepts, his final statement on this issue is that at present "one man's nature is another man's custom" and the forceful antithesis between these two as well as between knowledge and opinion can no longer be sustained (88). Thus, the "forms of attention" accorded works of literature are complex and difficult to sort out, making the issue of canonicity and taste equally enigmatic. Certainly, these issues are fundamental to an understanding of the changing reputation of a woman poet.

Kermode continues to be our mentor in distinguishing between taste and one other ingredient in the formulation of a reputation: fashion. If fashion is defined as popularity or popular taste, it is not necessarily thoughtful, or based on judgment, as real or true taste is. Fashion, then is Kermode's "opinion," which may or may not be valid.

Regarding this question of the difference between, as well as the alignment of, taste and fashion, a

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favorite subject of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century critics, we may begin by looking at the introduction to Gilmore's collection of early eighteenth-century essays. Gilmore tells us that taste is thought to be synonymous with reason or judgment, with nature or good sense as the standard. But he points out that, somewhat later, excessive zeal is satirized when it is seen to be "substitut[ing] temporary fashion or local custom for its universality" (vi-vii). Jonson decries what fashion has done to poetry: "Nothing is fashionable, till it bee deform'd" (<u>Timber</u> 21). La Bruyère views fashion as inimical to taste, bemoaning the fact that people give way to fashion "in everything that regards taste" (377). In the same vein of disparaging public taste, Dennis proclaims that people simply follow what they are told, that they "approve by Vogue and by Fashion . . ." (Original Letters 70). Phillips goes even beyond this, virtually denying the possibility of "transcendent judgment" needed for things of "transcendent excellence" because the total takeover of custom and opinion prevents judgment from being operative. In Shaftesbury's statements on this subject, we find the total picture displayed: taste, to be a proper standard, must follow nature, and must always be wary of fashion and custom which contrive to seduce it

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("Advice to an Author" 228).

In the present century, Northrop Frye expresses even greater uneasiness about the effect of fashion on literary evaluation (and thus on reputation). His worry is that in particular times there are "categories" which appeal to "sensibilities of the critic because they are fashionable in his age," and, as a result, the taste of that age will become canonized and "binding on future generations" (Strelka 19). The kind of anxiety Frye expresses here must be of concern whenever women poets' reputations are discussed after the advent of the women's movement and feminist criticism. If essays on the work of a woman poet appear in books and periodicals, if her poems appear in almost every anthology, if her name, rarely mentioned before, is now almost a byword, to what force behind a poetic reputation can this be attributed-- taste, fashion, or rules of thought? Is this a sign of "canonization of the taste of an age"? The answers to these questions are surely requisite in analyzing the reputation of Katherine Philips.

There is, finally, one consideration pertinent to the matter of taste and fashion in promoting reputation, and that is the relationship of these concepts to the roles of the publishers and/or booksellers in creating them. Is Augustine Birrell

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correct in his essay, "Books Old and New," when he says that "booksellers' names should be cherished" because of the good taste they fostered? (Essays on Men, Women, and Books 142). What of Francis Saunders' claim that his collection of poems shows the good taste of the "Age and Nation" thereby sanctioning their acceptance by posterity? (Preface, A Collection of Poems). Saunders does protect himself to some degree by warning that although the chosen poems have followed the rules and have been highly recommended, "the Richest Ore will have some Dross." What publication indicates for reputation, whether it predicts, follows, or establishes taste or simply signifies fashion, is even today still a matter of controversy. This question is particularly relevant to the several editions of Katherine Philips' poems in the late seventeenth century and her inclusion in anthologies of the twentieth.

When modern critics examine miscellanies and commonplace books of the seventeenth century, they find that they demonstrate both the prevailing reading taste and the specific reading of individuals (Wasserman, "Pre-Restoration Poetry" 548). A study of the Dryden Miscellanies published from 1684 to 1694 does not seem to show that Dryden catered to public taste, but Wasserman posits the view that it may be that he did

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not have to because of his own personal reputation and appeal. On the other hand, after Dryden's death, Tonson, in republishing all six volumes, seemed to wish to "make the contents more popular" (Ibid.) One writer asserted that miscellanies indicate "what was thought to be the best poetry of the time" (taste) or "that most in vogue" (fashion) (Havens, "Changing Taste" 501). Havens is, unfortunately, of little help, since his use of the two terms synonymously serves only to sharpen the dilemma.

Despite the fact that dilemmas sometimes present themselves because of different outlooks in different epochs, Shaftesbury's eighteenth-century opinion of writers and their audiences not only constitute a dilemma for the modern reader, but indeed can be said to predict modern thinking:

> Our modern authors . . . are turned and modelled . . . by the public relish and current humour of the times. They regulate themselves by the irregular fancy of the world, and frankly own they are preposterous and absurd, in order to accommodate themselves to the genius of the age. In our days the audience makes the poet, and the bookseller the author, with what profit to the public, or what prospect of lasting fame

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> and honour to the writer, let anyone who has judgment imagine (Characteristics I, 172)

For examples today of the "public relish" and the influence of fashion implied in Shaftsbury's statement, we need only look at the best-seller lists, at the crowds on line for movies, and at the sold-out Broadway plays. Indeed, "let anyone who has judgment imagine" the reputation of these works in future eras to see the influence of fashion.

Unlike fashion, "rules of thought," the final element to be discussed here, emanates from the thinking of philosophers who are talking about language, about words as they signify thoughts. What are the factors involved in developing understanding through language? To what extent can language signify or represent reality or truth? How does the prevalent language theory affect what is being said about a poet's work? Any discussion of these rules of thought will necessarily impinge from time to time upon ideas assigned to literary criticism.

Important to bear in mind in beginning this study with the seventeenth century is that the quest for truth or reality is based upon an important series of conflicts: that between religion and science, between reason and sensuality, between conformity and non-conformity, and between free inquiry and adherence to

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dogma. That there is much philosophical writing designed to resolve, at least to some degree, many of these conflicts is not surprising, and that they continue to be unresolved we in the twentieth century acknowledge. Since the rules of thought in both centuries, then, are by no means unrelated, comparisons are readily available.

For the seventeenth-century study of rules of thought, six major thinkers require comment--Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Glanvill, Sprat, and Locke. According to Basil Willey, (to whose Seventeenth Century Thought this section is much indebted), the major problem of the seventeenth century is the search for the true nature of things. The concomitant demand --to determine precisely how people can achieve knowledge and what it is they can know--is of equal interest.

Bacon's way of achieving knowledge involves discarding some traditional ideas, such as the emphasis on final, rather than on efficient causes; accepting both science and religion, with a determination to keep them separate and to allow each its place, which may be considered a part of his larger idea of accepting uncertainties; recognizing the fact that knowledge can be achieved only through the "things themselves." Bacon sees the very use of words as a hindrance to

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understanding and knowledge. The "Idols of the Marketplace" idea in the Novum Organum demonstrates the difficulties involved in attempting to get at truth through words. Since words are used according to the understanding of the vulgar and therefore "follow those lines of division which are most obvious to the vulgar understanding," words resist changes which become necessary through a more acute understanding. Bacon classifies "idols" or "false notions" into two types: names of nonexistent things (incorrectly supposed to exist or nonexistent because of lack of observation of them) and those which are ill-defined because of unskillful "abstracting." Many words, then, have no constant meaning, and are, therefore, not true. It becomes manifest readily from this discussion that there is no room in Bacon's scheme for the imaginative use of words as truth.

The seminal philosophy of Descartes is the basis for this idea--real knowledge being achieved only through reason, through the "abstracting intellect." Descartes views with skepticism knowledge received through the senses or by received opinions, since the only reality is the "I." Descartes' two additions to the true--the existence of God and that of the mechanical world and its properties--are of no help in endowing poetry with truth or reality.

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When we come to Hobbes, the material and the mechanical as the only reality comes to the fore. Unlike the possibilities available in Descartes, for Hobbes everything is matter, and the only truth is the mechanical. This process of looking upon "body" as the only real world extends also into Hobbes' theory of the truth of words. Words are classified as names which signify bodies, sense-impressions, parts of speech, or relations between names. He says he tries to "think behind words to the objects or images which they symbolize" (Leviathan, Part I, Ch. IV quoted in Witherspoon and Warnke 206), but the truth consists only in the right ordering of names. Since words are true only insofar as they are proper significations of things, once again imaginative or metaphorical uses of words are not counted within the realm of reality or truth.

An extreme condemnation of the imagination is found in the works of Joseph Glanvill and Bishop Sprat. According to Glanvill, imagination is the culprit which prevents reason from being godlike (true), but true reason may correct the "impious suggestions of imagination" (Willey 165). Sprat "declares war on poetry," rejecting "all forms of poetic utterance," as the evil which interferes with philosophical presentation of ideas (191). His rejection, however,

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is not total because he offers poets advice on finding "new and true images" in the knowledge of nature. Glanvill seems more "scientific" than Sprat in promulgating two ideas: like Hobbes, he wishes to deal not with words but only with things, and through reason, he wants to create a mechanical model for seeing into the hidden processes of Nature.

If we leave behind this Hobbesian stress on materialism and the mechanical world and turn to John Locke, some small hope for poetry seems to emerge in his assumption that there are three ways for people to obtain knowledge: through intuition (what is innate or our own existence), through demonstration (as in the existence of God), and through sensation (other things). Sensation, however, he admonishes, is real only when the idea of a thing matches the reality of it; therefore, he sees the need to "exorcise phantasms of the imagination" and "pleasant pictures and agreeable visions" which do not conform to reason (248, 259, 262). Although this admission of "other things" through sensation, seems, on the surface, to permit poetry to enter into the sphere of knowledge, the reality seems to amount essentially to its removal.

Despite the middle to late seventeenth-century outlook on poetry as inconsistent with truth and reality, despite the emphasis on reason as opposed to

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imagination, despite the warnings about words' inability to express thoughts in an orderly, reasonable fashion, some poets, both good and great, forge ahead in their pursuit of the fruits of their imaginations. For the kind of use of language and for the type of poetry supported by the rules of thought which have just been discussed, we do not have to wait long--eighteenth-century poets are ready to follow these rules. But beyond their own time the metaphysical poets had to wait for some twentieth-century thought to vindicate them and their reputations.

In the twentieth century, an examination of rules of thought takes us to the ideas about language promulgated by some literary and linguistic theorists. Although the list of possible figures is long, this study will confine itself to some who have made major comments on the use of language as it can be related to a poetic reputation.

Although some may feel that Eliot has to some degree been discredited, in this writer's view his remarks on twentieth-century readings and evaluation of poetry are valuable today. "Readings of texts," Eliot says, "are entrenched in a tradition of thought" (Hoy, The Critical Circle, 140), and for him a literary work is valid only as it becomes part of the tradition. To be accepted, the tradition must flow through it

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("Tradition and the Individual Talent," in _The Sacred Wood_ 51). The very definition of poetry, that it is "a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written," leads him to believe that "The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together" (_The Sacred Wood_ 53, 55). It is the universality of language which makes tradition possible because it has within it all the past use of language. Harry Antrim, in his monograph, "T. S. Eliot's Concept of Language," makes this point along with the reminder of Eliot's assumption that to utilize tradition, the poet must get rid of "his own ego, his own personality" (29). Eliot emphasizes this required impersonality in "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

> Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality (57).

(If Katherine Philips were to be rated by Eliot according to this dictum, she would surely be found wanting.)

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To come more precisely to Eliot's opinions on use of language, it is necessary to speak first of the "dissociation of sensibility." In the article on Philip Massinger, Eliot bemoaned the end of the period "when the intellect was immediately at the tips of the senses," when "sensation became word and word was sensation" (129). In criticizing Jonson and praising some of his contemporaries, Eliot proposed that words could communicate with the reader only if they were part of a "network of tentacular roots reaching down to the deepest terrors and desires" (The Sacred Wood 115).

In spite of this acceptance of words as conveyors of meaning, Eliot at times expressed views of language which might be compared with those of Michel Foucault in his work on the philosophy of language. Language, Foucault posits, is a "fragmented nature and deprived of its transparency by admixture." It is a "buried revelation" and can no longer express ideas or represent the world of things (Foucault 35-36). Eliot, in promulgating his view of the poetry which exists somewhere in between the "poetry of sound" and the "poetry of sense" claimed that it "represents an attempt to extend the confines of the human consciousness and to report of things unknown, to express the inexpressible" (On Poetry and Poets 193). As we read this, we cannot help but think of Foucault's

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remark that expressing or representing is virtually impossible, that language is meaningful in what it is not able to express. An additional stress on this point appears in another Eliot essay, "Rhetoric and Poetic Drama," in which he asserts, "Some writers appear to believe that emotions gain in intensity through being inarticulate" (The Sacred Wood 84). Language, therefore, cannot express as much emotion as lack of language.

If language cannot express or represent, how can it be related to knowledge or to reality? Foucault answers that language and knowledge "support one another, complement one another, and criticize one another incessantly." He proposes language as knowledge in "unreflecting form . . . Knowledge is like a language whose every word has been examined and every relation verified" (Foucault 86). As for reality, according to the structuralist view of Foucault and the "eschatological" branch of this philosophy, men are isolated from one another and are unable to see the reality of the world (White 258-59). Eliot tells anyone who complains about his not defining "truth" or "reality" that it has not been his intention to do so. He wants only to "find a scheme into which, whatever they are, they will fit, if they exist" (Selected Essays 22). Reality, then, for both is a dubious

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phenomenon.

Allied to the search for reality is the search for truth in literary interpretation, and for this we must turn to some consideration of both linguistic and feminist theorists. Roland Barthes and Hans Gadamer are alike in their criticism of objectivity in interpretation because they assume that meaning comes from the critic, not from the text alone. They deny authorial intention and also reject reading the text only "as it was originally read" (Hoy 144). In statements on "truth," the two differ, Barthes denying the possibility of real truth, seeing only "aesthetic contemplation of syntactical possibilities," and Gadamer admitting that the text has immanent, truthful meaning. However, the text exists only in the dialogue between the text and the interpreter (Hoy 52). This is part of an ongoing language process in which "Past and present, text, and interpretation" participate. All understanding, therefore, is related to linguisticality and historicity since man cannot see language except from a linguistic view and he cannot get away from history because he is involved in it (Hoy 70). Two final statements on truth made at the symposium on formalist criticism at the University of Texas in 1965 by Elder Olson and Kenneth Burke allow us to consider opposing views. Olson sees truth as varying: in some

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systems, "truth is correspondence of thought to thing; thought to word in another; word to thing in still another" (The Dialectical Foundations of Critical Pluralism 35). Burke, on the other hand, asserts that a work should be judged "not by tests of 'truth,' 'scientific' or 'factual' accuracy, but on the basis of 'verisimilitude.' The truth of the 'data' in a literary production by no means guarantees its artistic appeal. But to appeal it must have some kind of verisimilitude" ("Formalist Criticism: Its Principles and Limits" 83).

In order to deal more directly with linguistics and literature, we must leave Burke and critics like him to scrutinize the ideas of some literary theorists whose concentration is on linguistic theory. Linguists and literary theorists were unhappy with each other in the early days, as Raymond Chapman in Linguistics and Literature makes clear: linguists, in their desire to keep their study separate, did not look upon literature as relevant, while students of literature considered linguistics too scientific, its terminology too far removed, and its use of empirical observation unrelated to the study of literature (4ff). Despite this early feud, each group has now admitted the other into its province.

E. D. Hirsch, Stanley Fish, and Harold Bloom

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represent literary theorists who concentrate to a large degree on linguistic theory and on reader response. Hirsch wishes to distinguish "understanding" and "interpretation" from "judgment" and "criticism." Understanding, he says, is the "construction of a text's meaning in its own terms," and interpretation is explication. Judgment, however, is evaluation, and criticism is an explanation of the relationship between the text and something else. Therefore, only one correct understanding is possible since otherwise the text would not be understood in its own terms (Hoy 15). Hirsch denies the possibility of the text's being understood in "our own terms" because any verbal meaning _must_ be "constructed in its own terms" (16). Furthermore, for Hirsch, "intention" is a linguistic term, and the author is not the biographical person but the "speaking subject, a linguistic construct" (31).

Fish's linguistic stress is not on the author as a "linguistic construct" but on the reader as a "linguistic ideal" in his relationship with the words on the page. Fish does, nevertheless, consider the "political, cultural, and literary determinants behind each reading" (Hoy, 154). But he asks as a primary question what "each word, sentence, paragraph, chapter . . . _does_." There is, then, no necessary relationship between the reading and the meaning of the words which

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constitute it.

Bloom agrees with Fish in his contention that the meaning of the poem comes from the reading of it, adding to this his own special theory of "the anxiety of influence." In the reading, the poem is reduced to a "precursor poem," and all poems are interpreted through other poems (although the poet may not be conscious of this influence). The truth and meaning of a work are to be found in this influence of the past.

Finally, feminist literary theorists, too, very often concentrate on the influence of the past, although their stress is on the effect of the patriarchal system and the need to remove men's long-entrenched power base. The social experience of women and men determines their "different relationship to language" (Moi 154). Women write as they do because of the "constraints" and proscriptions of a male-dominated society, Ruthven points out (107). Women write differently from men because of their need to express "their real selves, not selves that have been created for them" (Ruthven 105), the selves without power. In connection with gaining power, some modern feminists view Virginia Woolf's idea of the creative urge as androgynous as another demonstration of sexism, an "annexation of the female by the male: which results in more power for the male through assuming him to be more

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versatile" (106). Sexism in language, in the final analysis, does not inhere in the language itself, but is an effect of the dominant power relationship between the sexes" (Moi 158). Moi quotes Dale Spender's cogent analysis of language as belonging to man, serving him and derogating woman:

> The English language has been literally man-made and . . . is still primarily under male control. This monopoly over language is one of the means by which males have ensured their own primacy, and consequently have ensured the invisibility or 'other' nature of females, and this primacy is perpetuated while women continue to use, unchanged, the language which we have inherited (Moi 156).

Moi indicates an additional view of woman as "other" in pointing out the marginality of both women and language: semiotics is marginal to language as the feminine is marginal to the dominant masculine.

To what extent, then, is Katherine Philips herself marginal? To what extent does her reputation fulfill the requirements of taste, fashion, and rules of thought in her day and in the twentieth century? In the seventeenth century, she wrote poetry which largely suited the taste of readers, critics, and her fellow poets. According to some, she seemed to know what was

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demanded and was on the alert to provide it. She wrote "fashionably," using subjects and verse forms expected and praised by her contemporaries. However, the large number of friendship poems to women were not really expected and left her vulnerable to adverse criticism. Her popularity, nevertheless, was not diminished by this act, and was, in some ways, increased. Women writers not only admired her, but often imitated her, while some male poets joined in praise of her ideas of women's friendship, despite the fact that this subject was not in fashion. On the other hand, Philips did indeed write the occasional poem, the expected poem for her time, and did remain part of the group of writers lauded by contemporary promoters of seventeenth-century taste and fashion.

Taste and fashion in the twentieth century, with its revival of interest in seventeenth-century poetry and its renewal of attention to women, provide the basis for the promotion of women poets into prominence. Katherine Philips' reputation soars on both counts. An examination of her work according to twentieth-century "rules of thought," especially those of feminists, would not find her deficient. There are, therefore, sufficient forces at work in the twentieth-century concept of reputation to allow Katherine Philips an estimable place among the poets of her time.

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Chapter III

The Work of Katherine Philips

Before making a detailed study of Philips' work, we may do well to look at the record of publication of her poems, letters, and translations. Publication of Philips began with the editions of her translations of Corneille's _Pompey_ in 1663 in both Dublin and London. In 1664 came the unauthorized version of seventy-four of her poems, followed in 1667, several years after her death, by the first complete edition of poems and translations prepared by her friend, Sir Charles Cotterell. 1669, 1678, and 1710 marked the dates of three more editions, while 1705 brought to the public her _Letters to Poliarchus_. These letters were republished in 1727 and 1729. J. R. Tutin edited the _Orinda Booklets_, for which he chose selected poems. George Saintsbury, in 1905, provided readers with all of her poems and translations in Volume I of _Minor Poets of the Caroline Period_. In 1921, some of her poems appeared in G. Thorn Drury's _A Little Ark Containing Sundry Pieces of Seventeenth Century Verse_.

Several collections of poems in the 1950's and 1960's contained samples of Philips' work. Norman Ault's _Seventeenth Century Lyrics_ and the Edmund Blunden and Bernard Mellor collection, _Wayside Poems of the Seventeenth Century_, for example, included her

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work. Louise Bernikow, Florence Howe and Ellen Bass, Cora Kaplan, Ann Stanford, Elaine Hobby, and Germaine Greer, et al. are among current anthologists who offered Philips a prominent place in their poetic selections.

Although the publication information about a writer's work is highly significant in determining reputation, a thorough analysis of the work itself provides a solid basis for judgment. An examination of the 116 poems of Katherine Philips reveals the person of the poet. Even the poems addressed to royalty and members of the nobility not personally known to her expressed her personality. How much more, then, is manifest in the purely personal poems which constitute the bulk of her work! Naturally, some care must be exercised in judging the response of a poet to a particular request made by a person in high position. Besides, poems written for specific occasions were expected to follow definite conventions and traditions. With these caveats in mind, we are ready to survey the poetry of the "minor" poet, Katherine Philips.

In my view, Philips is "minor" largely because she did not have time in her short life to contribute more to the seventeenth-century poetic phenomenon. But it is best to allow some of the poems to speak for themselves, beginning with Philips' poems on the

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subject of friendship. These may be divided into several themes: happiness, and despair, resulting from relationships with friends; the nature of friendship; the connection between friendship and love.

As is well-known many of the friendship poems were addressed to and/or are about the particular status of the friendship between Philips and one of her women friends, most often Lucasia (Mrs. Anne Owen) and Rosania (Mary Aubrey).[1] Other poems in this category were written on the occasion of the admission of a noteworthy person to the "Society of Friendship." The poems expressing a state of happiness in friendship and those expressing a state of unhappiness or even despair were often addressed to Lucasia. The most frequently anthologized Philips poem in this group, "To my Excellent Lucasia, on our Friendship," is a good place to begin. This spare and moving poem gives evidence of Philips' attention to emotional detail, of her effective use of imagery, of her capacity to rhyme unobtrusively, and of her skill in adhering to a metrical pattern which enhances the theme. It is worth quoting in full as the basis for discussion:

> I did not live until this time
> Crown'd my felicity
> When I could say without a crime,
> I am not thine, but Thee.

[1]Interpretation of these poems as evidence of lesbian relationships will be discussed in Chapter VI.

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This Carcass breath'd, and walk't, and slept
So that the World believ'd
There was a Soul the Motions kept;
But they were all deceiv'd.

For as a Watch by art is wound
To motion, such was mine;
But never had Orinda found
A Soul till she found thine,

Which now inspires, cures and supplies,
And guides my dark'ned Breast:
For thou art all that I can prize,
My Joy, my Life, my Rest.

No Bridegrooms nor Crown-conquerors mirth
To mine compar'd can be:
They have but pieces of this Earth,
I've all the World in thee.

Then let our Flames still light and shine,
And no false fear controul,
As innocent as our Design,
Immortal as our Soul. (51)

The strength of Philips' feeling for her friend is seen in her diction and imagery. Her attention to crafting the poem is evident in the precision of her choices of words--"carcass," for example, which surprises in an almost Donne-like way--as well as in the specific comparisons selected for each stanza. The poem, as well as many others in this friendship group, demonstrate the neo-Platonic and metaphysical concern with the soul. The soul of one moves the soul of the other, and the two souls even more often merge and become one.

Discovered in numerous poems, this concept of one-ness is employed by the poet from a somewhat different

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perspective in "Friendship's Mystery, To my dearest Lucasia." In choosing love, Orinda says, there is no loss of liberty as one might think, but instead:

> Our hearts are doubled by the loss,
> Here Mixture is Addition grown;
> We both diffuse, and both ingross:
> And we whose minds are so much one,
> Never, yet ever are alone. (21)

This same mystery, this paradox which attends close friendship (which in Donne is love), is further elaborated in the final stanza of the poem:

> Our Hearts are mutual Victims laid,
> While they (such power in Friendship lies)
> Are Altars, Priests, and Off'rings made:
> And each Heart which thus kindly dies,
> Grows deathless by the Sacrifice. (22)

In the "power of friendship" lie possibilities for happiness. "Content, To my dearest Lucasia" shows them to us, but once again, Orinda makes use of one of her favorite figures, paradox. Content, like the Fairy Red-Cross Knight, is elusive--"Men think they have it when they have it not." After going through a list of what content is not, the poet provides another paradox. Only two who are so "mixed" that they become one can achieve contentment. In addition, Philips here presents still another paradox--that of friendship

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along with privacy. "Who would wish for other things," she asks, "Than Privacy and Friendship brings" (25).

The "two being one" paradox can be found as well in "Friendship in Embleme, or the Seal. To my dearest Lucasia," in which the influence of Donne is more directly observed. Utilizing the very compass image, Philips writes:

> The Compasses that stand above
> Express this great immortal Love;
> For Friends, like them, can prove this true,
> They are, and yet they are not, two. (37)

The image of the compass is continued in several succeeding stanzas to delineate the friendship paradox:

> Each follows where the other leans,
> And what each does, this other means.
>
> And as when one foot does stand fast,
> And t'other circles seeks to cast,
> That steddy part does regulate
> And makes the wandrer's motion straight. (38)

Although evidence of Philips' reading Donne is not available, her potent use of this image may lead us to believe she did.

In other poems to Lucasia, Orinda employs images of nature--the sun, water, flowers, and animals being her favorites. The look of Lucasia is likened to the

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sun on drooping flowers; just as the "River continually moves around the ocean and the shore," the soul is always in motion and the souls will always meet; like the traveler's finding shade, like evening showers for the "parched Violet," so is Lucasia's glance for her friend ("To my Lucasia, in defence of declared Friendship" 83). Just as the sun, although more vigorous "through a Burning-glass," shines without confinement in general, so Lucasia's beam, although for the moment fixed on the Society into which she is being accepted, "diffuses glory everywhere." It is, no doubt, this "glory" which prompted Philips to be concerned about her own fitness for such a friendship. Vowing to "forsake [her]self" for a new, more worthy one, she utilizes the image of the bee in an effective figure:

> Thus the poor Bee unmark'd doth hum and flye
> And droned with age would unregarded dye,
> Unless some lucky drop of precious Gum
> Do bless the Insect with an Amber-tomb.
> Then glorious in its funeral the Bee
> Gets Eminence and gets Eternity.
>
> ("To my Lucasia" 59)

The same desire for eminence and eternity is evident in a poem dealing more precisely with the subject of death, "Wiston Vault." She will survive, she claims, if she has Lucasia's heart, and the inscription on her

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tomb will be one which does not appear on any tomb--"'Not here Orinda lies,' but 'Here she lives'" (36).

Orinda seems to comfort herself for possible loss through a reliance upon "eternity," but it is clear in many poems, both to Lucasia and especially to Rosania (Mary Aubrey), that parting from friends, even temporarily, causes her very grave distress. In some of the poems on the subject, Philips is pessimistic and despairing, while in others the hope of return and renewal offers consolation. One of the best poems focusing on this theme is "Orinda to Lucasia" (153-54), which sustains various images of nature into a coherent totality. The poet observes that the "weary birds . . . With feathers hung with dew,/ And trembling voices too" would like to call forth the sun, as would as well the "drooping Flowers" [who] "hang their heads,/ And languish down into their beds: . . ." These are joined by the brooks, who, although they seem to be strong enough on their own, "openly murmur and demand the day." Just so, the poet needs the "heat and light" which can be restored only by the return of the friend (153-54).

Optimism about return is part of the theme of "Farewell to Rosania" and of "Lucasia, Rosania, and Orinda parting at a Fountain. July 1663." In the latter poem, nature imagery works effectually once more

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in a comparison of the coldness of streams and snow with the bitterness of hearts at parting. The image of winter, "sapless and dead," is summoned up by Philips in another poem to Rosania on the subject of absence, but this time she finds little relief from the grief of separation, "doubting a reprieve." So depressed does she finally become, so excessive is her grief, so "dead and dull" is she that she concludes she is no longer capable of being the object of love ("To Mrs. M. A. Upon Absence" 80).

A notion of parting quite the opposite of the one just discussed is in the poem "To Mrs. M.A. at parting," chosen by John Keats as worthwhile reading. In a letter to Reynolds, Keats enclosed a copy of the poem, remarking that even if Reynolds had already seen it, it was worth reading again. Orinda, here, writes a kind of hymn to friendship, with an emphasis we have already noted in many other poems, that of two souls becoming one. Even when they are apart their souls will meet and communicate. The souls will go back and forth between the two, and all thoughts will be revealed. In this way, their

> twin-Souls in one shall grow,
> And teach the World new Love,
> Redeem the Age and Sex, and shew
> A Flame Fate dares not move . . .

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Even death will not separate them, and no epitaph will be needed except "Orinda and Rosania." Both Philips' imagery and her evaluation of friendship in this poem would have appealed to Keats.

One more poem addressed to Rosania demonstrates even more strongly the same stress on oneness. The first stanza of this work, entitled simply, "To Mrs. Mary Aubrey," discloses the motif:

> Soul of my Soul, my joy, my crown, my Friend,
> A name which all the rest doth comprehend;
> How happy are we now, whose Souls have grown
> By an incomparable mixture one . . .
>
> (70)

The paradox of such oneness is expressed: "Thou shed'st no tear but what my moisture lent,/ And if I sigh, it is thy breath is spent" (71). Furthermore, in this poem, Orinda rejoices in the fact that their love permits them to rise above all worldly things.

And this idea was a very important one for Philips, who revealed in several poems the desire for solitude and the need to get away from the fray to achieve a higher degree of happiness. A poem previously considered, "Content. To my dearest Lucasia," manifests her devotion to retirement and solitude as a prescription for delight. Not to wish for "court applause and fame," to be "free from Tumult,

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Discontent,/ From Flattery or Fears!", to be unburdened with titles and free from the "chains" of greatness, to shed the world's "rude noise"--achieving such a sense of freedom will contribute to people's happiness. Writing to Ardelia in "A retir'd Friendship," Orinda sees them together away from the cares of the world, away from "quarreling for Crowns," from "Blood and Plots," unconcerned with "how the World is turn'd" (28-29). Anyone is foolish who does not look for this kind of "shade" in "such a scorching Age as this." The precise peace and quiet she herself seeks is discovered in a rock made by Nature for a seat, where a willow "repulses all the heat," near a brook "which sobb'd aloud and ran away." At this contented moment, the poet is interrupted by thoughts of envious and ambitious men, dying for causes or for no cause. She realizes Death as a "Leveller," leading her back to the focus of contentment as "inward," and to her favorite theme of friendship as necessary for that contentment ("A Revery" 86).

In solitude and in friendship, individually and collectively, fortified by an appreciation of nature--here lies the key to happiness.

Although there are corollaries in some occasional poems to Philips' major theme of friendship, she relentlessly pursues this concept through a comparison

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or contrast of friendship with love, and through a study of the negative features of relationships between friends. In "A Friend," Orinda both analyzes the qualities necessary for friendship--sympathy, honor and honesty, trust, wisdom and knowledge, discretion, patience, and constancy--and discusses the differences and the connection between friendship and love. For her, friendship is defined as the pure form of love, "purg'd from all its dross." It is better than love or marriage because it is free, not originating in force or design (94). Marriage, she states, moves love either to friendship or to misery; in this we see her clinging to friendship as the only purely worthwhile affiliation. The superiority of friendship over love is again declared in "On Mr. Francis Finch, the Excellent Palaemon." His work shows that "Friends more than Lovers burn" and that "Love [will] to sacred Friendship turn" (73). Talking about her friend Rosania's marriage, Philips sees the practical advantages of that state in its encouraging man's positive attitude toward women, for a woman is now

> more diffusive than before,
> And what men then admired they now adore
> For this Exchange make's not her Power less
> But only fitter for the World's Address (53).

However the world may feel about love, Orinda, in

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one poem unambiguously entitled, "Against Love," professes her antagonism. Cupid cheats, all joys are merely "painted," any pleasure "destroies" itself, lovers "burn and rave" desiring what will harm them, while those who remain outside of this struggle can attain a state of "Peace and liberty" (143). This particular poem is unique in its total rejection of love and in its avoidance of any mention of friendship.

In a final statement on love as distinct from friendship, Orinda proves to be somewhat equivocal as she berates those who do not know love or who "disapprove that noble Flame," while at the same time she avers that only saints and angels are maintained by love. It is the ocean, the "Fountain," which is in heaven, while here below we have but temporary streams of affection. She then proceeds to point to friendship as the "elixir" of love, the "pure flame," as opposed to love which is "accompanied" by "offensive smoke." To find love free from adversity one must look to heaven.

Like mortal love, friendship, too, is not without adversity. Ambiguity, brevity of contact, and ephemerality as well as the obvious--betrayal and treachery--all contribute to preventing unalloyed happiness in friendship. Rosania is upset with Lucasia because in her letters she does not clarify her

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feelings. She is asked, therefore, to be "more kind, or more severe." Some lovers are unhappy because they do not achieve the prize, but this, she says, is not as bad as being "plunder'd from [one's] own" (145). Ambiguity is worse than loss. In elucidating her disappointment in her relationship with Rosania, Orinda makes two points--that little contact causes more pain than none and that love which is not equally returned is disastrous. The lines illustrating the first point are worth quoting for their apt comparison with Nature:

> So when the Earth long gasps for rain,
> If she at last some few drops gain,
> She is more parched than at first
> That small recruit increas'd the thirst. (58)

The ephemeral quality of happiness causes pain, with memory becoming a torment obliterating joys which sink quickly into the past. The poem "Lucasia and Orinda parting with Pastora and Phillis at Ipswich" (156) illustrates this point. The poet reiterates this in another poem ("Parting with a Friend"), here blaming "Fortune" for taking people away from the sight of those they love:

> A thousand unconcerned Eyes
> She'l suffer us to see
> But of those we chiefly prize,
> We must deprived be. (159-60)

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In a poem devoted largely to the notion that friendship has fallen on evil days, Orinda summons up the question of the perishability of friendship, asking, "Why do we step with so light sense/ From Friendship to Indifference?" ("The Enquiry" 81). Indifference is not far from treachery or betrayal, and Regina Collier, having taken new friends in place of the old, is an example of such a betrayal. What is interesting in "To the Queen of Inconstancy, Regina Collier in Antwerp" is a very light touch rarely seen in ostensibly serious poems:

> Then let the Frenchmen never fear
> The victory while thou art there:
> For if Sins will call Judgments down,
> Thou hast enough to stock the Town.
>
> (50)

But no light touch appears in "Injuria Amici." The poet suggests that obedience and worship of the loved person may be the cause of the betrayal. Constancy turns out to be a "crime" and "Friendship a Heresie." The injured person cannot escape; she is a martyr to the cause of friendship, "wounded" by the lover's "Power," who must continue to "adore the Author of [her] Death . . ." (54-55).

The consideration of Philips' poetry, then, leads inescapably to the conclusion that friendship is at the

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center of Philips' being. Two questions arise, however: one about her friends, and one about her husband. Was it possible for Orinda, in theory and in practice, to have more than one close friend at the same time? Second, what can we tell from her poetry about her feelings for her husband, called "Antenor" in her work? A few poems may be cited in answer to these two questions. The first, "A Dialogue of Friendship multiplyed," consists of questions asked by Musidorus and answered by Orinda. He asks whether she must confine her attention to only one person, commenting that "Love that's engros'd by one alone,/ Is envy not affection." Orinda answers that friendship, like rivers, is weakened by being multiplied, adding that in friendship the two are so close "They no third partner can admit." Like the sun, she says, love "burns most by contracted fire." Finally, she is quite clear: "Then though I Honour every worthy guest,/ Yet my Lucasia only rules my breast" (144). The very same choice is made in "On Rosania's Apostacy, and Lucasia's Friendship" (106). The Soul of Friendship is asked to return so that she may see that with the advent of Lucasia and the disappearance of Rosania all is made ready for Friendship to live and for her soul to be given "Eternity." In these two poems, Orinda unequivocally answers the first question.

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However, what is to be done about a poem like "To Rosania and Lucasia. Articles of Friendship" in which she urges these two to acknowledge their love for each other? She also advises them to talk freely to each other, to share their concerns so that their troubles may be lessened and their joys increased. If they agree to follow the rules she has set down, she says they should "joine hearts, and lips, and hands" (Poetry Ancient and Modern Ms. 17). How can this view be reconciled with the other? Since it cannot, only a recognition of ambivalence in Orinda can be the answer.

Ambivalence is the word used quite readily in discussing Orinda's relationship with James Philips. Her poetry gives us clues only in three poems addressed to him and in one to Lucasia related to a problem connected with him. In the latter poem, the issue is "honor," brought up with Lucasia as "the truly competent judge" of it. Because J. J. (presumably John Jones, a royalist friend) has threatened to publish something Orinda has written that would be harmful to her husband, she is very upset but tries to comfort herself in the realization that a person of honor should not be concerned about the actions of an undeserving being.

> So Honour . . .
> is its own Reward and End

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> And satisfied within, cannot descend
> To beg the suffrage of a vulgar Tongue,
> Which by commending Virtue doth it wrong.
>
> (46)

Although she realizes that "fame" cannot be affected by what most people think, she must appeal to those, like Lucasia, who are capable of making proper judgments. This same subject, with a different emphasis, is fleshed out in one of the three poems to Antenor (Philips). This time Orinda stresses the injustice of Antenor's being blamed for the opinions of his wife. She makes her point with a Biblical allusion: "For Eve's Rebellion did not Adam blast,/ Untill himself forbidden Fruit did taste" (47), and she strengthens her position by telling of her willingness to sacrifice herself to save him:

> Alone I'd court the Torments with content,
> To testifie that thou art innocent.
> So if my Ink through malice prov'd a stain,
> My Bloud should justly wash it off again.

Political problems seem to be the core of another poem to Antenor, "To my Antenor, March 16, 1661/2." At this moment he is depressed because of his fear of future political difficulties, and Orinda writes to reassure him. She bases her advice to discontinue grieving on several reasonable details of argument:

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grief should not linger on if no possibility of mending or shortening it exists; since there is an ebb and flow in everything, even so is it with troubles in men's lives; since he has been rescued by being re-elected to Parliament, he must believe that "Providence" will rescue him as well.

The final poem to Antenor, written on the occasion of their temporary parting, exemplifies in imagery and diction other poems on this subject addressed to her friends, with some differences in tone that I believe to be significant in demonstrating her love for her husband. The Platonic union of two souls is here, supported by a "metaphysical" comparison with the hand of a watch, the movement of which cannot be seen although its activity is unquestioned. In analyzing their unity, Philips indicates that, unlike other man-woman relationships, theirs is not fed by separation. He is the "Guardian of [her] Heart" as she is of his, and when he comes back, he will find her heart "Still safe, with all the love [that he did] impart." Employing a metaphor not previously used, in the final lines of the poem Orinda charms the reader:

> So in my Breast thy Picture drawn shall be,
> My Guide, Life, Object, Friend, and Destiny:
> And none shall know, though they employ their wit,

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Which is the right Antenor, thou, or it.
(76-77)

Which _is_ the right Antenor, one might ask. Is he the person for whom Orinda cares less than she does for her women friends? Or is he really the person closest to her heart? A poem written by Lucasia, published in the _Gentleman's Journal_ in July, 1694, gives an unmistakable clue. Entitled "Friendship. An Elegy, by Lucasia," the poem deals with Lucasia's unhappiness because of Orinda's desire to be back with her husband. She complains that Orinda's concern for her is less, and that their friendship is losing its force because of this wish. Assuming that this poem proves the power of Orinda's love for her husband is somewhat perilous; however, Lucasia's sentiment expressed in the poem must be given serious attention. If Orinda's behavior at this time upset Lucasia to such a degree, obviously her feelings for Antenor were stronger than her few poems to him might lead one to believe.

Before turning our attention from Philips' personal poems to her public ones, we must survey her poems on the subject of death. These vary in quality, depending in her case upon the depth of the poet's attachment to the person being eulogized. It does not come as a surprise that the two poems written on the death of her children, one her stepson and the other

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her own child who died as a baby, are the most moving. In clear and direct language, often astonishingly modern in its diction and syntax, she writes "In memory of F.P. who died at Acton, the 24 May, 1660 at 12 and 1/2 of Age." Philips recognizes the futility of trying to convey her sorrow in words because "There is no pity in the stupid Grave." To other parents she gives advice--to ". . . reckon Children among those passing joys/ Which one hour gives, and the next hour destroys" (40-1). The attitude expressed in this poem parallels Lawrence Stone's comments; i.e. that the high rate of infant mortality led to acceptance of loss of children, with little evidence of real mourning (The Family, Sex and Marriage 105-106). Assuming the proper seventeenth-century religious posture, Philips finds solace in the necessity for the soul unable to fulfill its excellence on earth to return to heaven, "That finding nothing to fill her thirsting here,/ To the Spring-head she went to quench it there . . ." Despite what seems to be religious acceptance, Philips does not altogether forgo her questioning. One might as well ask, she remarks,

> . . . when Roses die,
> to what retirement their sweet Odours flie;
> Whither their Virtues and their Blushes haste,
> When the short triumph of their life is past; . . .

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(39).

The only way she can reconcile herself to her grief is to think of the passing of the "unhappy Minutes" until she is able to join him. Philips' sorrow upon the death of her baby of a few weeks is compounded by their having waited seven years for this child. There is no resignation here, no help from the world, no possible comfort in this poem. "Tears are my Muse, and sorrow all my Art,/ So piercing groans must be thy Elogy" ("Orinda upon little Hector Philips" 148). The heavy sadness upon the occasion of this personal tragedy is reflected in the performance of Nature as the sun, who, like Hector, "takes a shrowd,/ Buried in a morning Cloud" (134).

Adhering once more to Nature as a vehicle, Orinda, in the only other poem of substance on this topic, sympathizes with Lucasia on the occasion of the death of her husband. Her feeling for her friend is exemplified in a comparison of the two of them with "sister rivulets" coming out of the snow, finding each other's "bosom" and sobbing. The poem is largely one of praise for Owen, not only for himself, but especially for his appreciation of his wife. She makes particular note of his having "valu'd all of her, but lov[ing] her mind" ("To Mrs. A. Owen, upon her greatest loss" 137-8). Orinda does not often lose sight of the

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need to recognize the intellectual capacity of women.

The poems on death treated separately here might just as well have been included in the larger group of poems categorized as "occasional" poems. Like all seventeenth-century poets, Philips is called upon or chooses to prepare poems for various specific occasions. The occasional poems she writes can be subdivided into the following groups: to poets and other artists; to, or about, members of the royal family; to members of the nobility; and to women friends or acquaintances on occasions of significance to them. Vaughan, Cartwright, and Cowley are the recipients of poems of praise. Wit and sense are lauded in the poems to Vaughan and Cartwright, and in each case Philips bemoans the age's lack of understanding and sensitivity, both of which are required for a deep appreciation of the work of these men (27,71). The term "prince of Phancie" used by Philips for Cartwright is referred to by later critics as being particularly apt. The ode "Upon Mr. Abraham Cowley's Retirement," using images of government and imprisonment, shows Orinda's wish to find a calm retreat from the world where she can commune with nature as Cowley is doing, deriving comfort from within. The poem is reminiscent of her other "solitude" poems as she seizes upon this particular

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occasion to expound her prescription for happiness, with very little of the poem directly relevant to the person of Abraham Cowley (122-24).

In "To Mr. Henry Lawes," on the other hand, the poet pays great tribute to the man and his work. His music is exactly like nature in its harmony, beauty, concord, and composure. The art of music is above the art of poetry--one inspires and adorns the other, and the poet shares his laurel with the composer. Philips shows her craftsmanship in sustaining musical language to convey her appreciation of the composer's skill, at the same time as she once again promotes friendship:

> Beauty is but Composure, and we find
> Content is but the Concord of the Mind,
> Friendship the Union of well-tun'd Hearts,
> Honour the chorus of the noblest parts,
> And all the World on which we can reflect
> Musick to the Ear, or to the Intellect. (18)

While the poems of praise addressed to fellow poets or artists are prepared for people of Philips' acquaintance, the same cannot be said of the verse commemorating or commenting upon events in the lives of members of the royalty. The King, the Queen, the Princess Royal, the Queen of Bohemia, and the Queen Mother are all recipients of one or more of Philips' poems. The most interesting question here is the

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determination of whether any vital differences exist between those poems about events in friends' or acquaintances' lives and those related to members of the royal family.

The most obvious difference, though not unexpected, is that poems addressed to royalty, or to members of the nobility, are truly "occasional" poems. Two major events Philips commemorates are death or an important political or personal occasion. Both types contain Biblical allusions and references to Nature found elsewhere in Orinda's work. What is obviously dissimilar is a number of references to these individuals as "divinities," a more substantial number of comments on her own unworthiness, and a larger emphasis on the connection between the greatness of the actions of royalty and the happiness of their subjects.

One occasion which poets of the time celebrated was the coronation of Charles II. Orinda's poem entitled "On the Fair Weather just at the Coronation, it having rained immediately before and after," utilizes both allusions to the Bible (Israel's passing over the Red Sea "While in obedient heaps the Ocean stood") and to Nature's role in the event: the sun, she remarks, appeared "in a bright Parenthesis" obviously happy to be there. Her comment is that it is hard to determine "which look'd most content,/ The King, the

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People, or the Firmament" (5).

The two persistent themes--the contribution of nature to an event and the unworthiness of the poet--appear in "To the Queen's Majesty on her Arrival at Portsmouth, May 14, 1662" (5). Nature sends her "lov'd Ambassadour the Spring" at this particular moment, and the poet notes her inability to compete with what Nature has wrought. She is the "obscurer muse" whose offerings the Queen must forgive. Orinda's deference to the King here, with much of the poem devoted to Charles' defiance of Spain and his subduing that country through his courtship of the Portuguese princess, demonstrates her knowing that the emphasis must always be on the King.

Three poems addressed to women of noble blood are not ambivalent in their praise--one to the Countess of Carbury on her visit to Wales (16), one on the Princess Royal's return to England (8), and one to the Queen Mother (7). The first two insist upon the idea of the divinity of each one as well as on the unfitness of the writer to express the proper sentiment. The third is almost personal in its expression of sorrow for the torment the Queen Mother has suffered and of appreciation for her "mothering," her endurance and her humanity.

Although on the surface the poem to the Queen

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Mother may seem inordinate in its expression of grief, when compared to a poem clearly hyperbolic, it seems genuine in its emotion. Using hyperbole to praise the recipient and to demean herself, Philips writes "To Her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York, On her commanding me to send her some things that I had written" (11). The Duchess, she affirms, calls forth awe and love from the people, and, as for herself, if the lady does not like her poems, she will feel like a "hinde," who, having long escaped being wounded by a Prince, "falls without shame," gaining fame by being so shot. Therefore, she tells the Duchess,

> . . . if a Ray from you chance to be sent,
> Which to consume, and not to warm is meant;
> My trembling Muse at least more nobly dies,
> and Falls by that a truer sacrifice.

Three poems on the subject of actual death differ in their emphasis. Praise of her noble character and its effect on her subjects is the thrust of "On the Death of the Queen of Bohemia" (12), while "On the death of the Illustrious Duke of Gloucester" (9-11) accentuates his present state of bliss away from the troubles of rule, looking down "with pity on Earth's monarchs." This kind of euphoric outlook on death is very unusual for Philips, although perhaps commonplace in such commemorative poems. The third poem, one of

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comfort to the Earl of Warwick on the occasion of the death from smallpox of Lord Rich, his only son (135-36), is not only in total contrast to these in its tone, but is ironic as well in view of her own death from the same disease very soon thereafter. Smallpox is "That Great, fierce Disease, which knows not how to spare/ The Young, the Great, the Knowing, or the Fair." Any hope or comfort at such times is simply a delusion, she concludes.

In a much more optimistic vein are several poems demonstrating Orinda's positive views of marriage, written to encourage women to see the pleasure of such a state, to urge them to look upon their union as a bonding of souls, an important theme for Philips. The two will be so united that it will be impossible to tell "Whose Love is strongest, or whose Bliss is most" ("To my dear Sister Mr. C.P. on her Marriage" 26). To the Countess of Thanet she speaks, too, of the increase of joy on both parts through their union, ending with a wish for long life and for the blessing of children (133). The identical wish for children is based, in the case of Lord and Lady Dungannon (Anne Owen), on the great inheritance of "Beauty, Fame, and Merit" awaiting such a child. If Orinda is unhappy about the marriage of Lucasia, she certainly keeps it secret in this poem as she takes note of their "souls being ty'd" and of

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the "beauteous Union . . ./ Which was at once Heaven's care and [their] desire" (165).

An unusually modern feminist view, very different from the previous "marriage" poems, is available in a delightfully humorous poem answering a man who has been trying to get a woman to marry him (155). Although his actions may be considered "courtship" by some, to the woman of his choice it is "Sacriledge." Then she makes it very clear that his plan cannot work, for

> She is a Publick Deity,
> And were't not very odd
> She should depose her self to be
> A petty Household God?

Seventeenth-century diction with twentieth-century point of view!

Other poems with twentieth-century vision are "Death," "The World," and "Song to the Tune of Adieu Phillis." The first two contain ideas and even language reminding a modern reader of the absurdist philosophy of Samuel Beckett and others. If men only knew what the world was like, Philips says in "The World," they would ask to die just as they were born, for "Mankind is mad." They can't live alone because "their joys stand by comparison," but they don't get along well with other men "And strive to kill they know not whom, or why" (111). Therefore, "Happy are they to

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whom God gives a Grave/ . . . Tis good not to be born; but if we must,/ The next good is, soon to return to dust" (113). The poem, "Death," although paralleling the theme of other seventeenth-century poems, evokes Beckett even more strongly--Men ". . . think not on the narrow space/ Between a Table and a Grave" (120). This reminds a modern reader of Beckett's "giv[ing] birth astride of a grave" and the "grave-digger pu[ting] on his forceps." And finally, "Tis true our Life is but a long disease/ Made up of real pain and seeming ease," the poet says, and, in her dejected state, asks,

> You Stars, who these entangled fortunes give,
> O tell me why
> It is so hard to dye,
> Yet such a task to Live?
>
> ("Song to the Tune of Adieu Phillis" 127)

In the final analysis, despite some incidental modern touches, Philips' poems, like all poems, are children of their time. They are written in prevailing verse forms--iambic tetrameter rhymed verse or iambic pentameter couplets. Her odes are in the Pindaric Cowley mode, and the imagery she chooses in all of her poems is natural, Biblical, and political. Her repertory--dedicatory poems of praise for others' books or for their work in general; poems in praise of royalty and nobility for their behavior and for their

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attitudes; poems to commemorate specific important occasions of state or in the lives of acquaintances and friends; philosophical poems explaining her view of life, all this is what is expected of a seventeenth-century poet of royalist sympathies. The singularity in the work of Katherine Philips is seen in her poems on the subject of friendship. In these poems, as well as in some of the more traditional or conventional types referred to above, the reader gets an insight into the person of the poet. He/She can discover, to some extent, the nature of the poet, the core of her personality and of her being.

The Letters

Following particular conventions in writing poetry is common in the seventeenth century, and this is no less true in letter-writing. The Academy of Complements, published in six versions from 1640 to 1671, has as part of its title "Wherein Ladies, Gentlewomen, Schollars, and Strangers may accommodate their Courtly practice with most Curious Ceremonies, Complementall, Amorous, High Expressions, and formes of speaking, or writing." The preface to the 1640 edition proclaims that all kinds of letters are made available in proper language for the different occasions. For the French, standards of letter writing were set by

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Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac and Thomas Voiture, with "elegant language" and "refined sentiment" as the keys. In translating Voiture's work, John Davies makes a special appeal for the attention of the ladies ("Standards of Taste Advocated for Feminine Letter Writing, 1640-1797," 262-63). In the same article, however, Sister Mary Humiliata quotes part of a letter from Mary Evelyn in which Evelyn states that she does not aspire to write like the famous French letter writer, Jean Louis Guez de Balzac, "express[ing] distaste for the 'literary' letter." The same sentiment is seen in remarks made by Lady Dorothy Temple, a letter-writer par excellence: "Letters," she says "should be free and Easy as one's discourse, not studdyed, as an Oration, nor made up of hard words like a Charme" (Ibid. 265-66).

To which school did Katherine Philips belong? The answer is to be found in the forty-five <u>Letters to Poliarchus</u> published in 1705 and the letters to Berenice published in a collection of John Rochester's <u>Familiar Letters</u>. Even a cursory look at the letters to Sir Charles Cotterell, named Poliarchus by Orinda, reveals the clarity and ease of her style. One would be hard-pressed to find signs of "elegant language" or "refined sentiment." Orinda writes without pretense about what she is thinking and feeling. Several topics

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are on her mind during the two years she is involved in writing these letters--from 1662 to 1664. Feelings about herself and her work, about relationships with friends and acquaintances, and about her husband, are accessible in her letters. In addition, she is very much concerned about Cotterell's activities, particularly those connected with his love life.

In looking for clues to Orinda's feelings about herself and her work, seeing the emphasis on her unworthiness may lead to the conclusion that Orinda is simply following the tradition of humility as a required womanly trait. Discovering authenticity, separating genuineness of feeling from what is expected of a woman, is a formidable task. "Useless," "undeserving," and "troublesome," are words Philips uses fairly often in these letters. She apologizes for taking up Cotterell's time (Letter IV); she feels herself "unworthy of so great a Blessing" as to talk to him (Letter XXX); she assures Poliarchus of her faithfulness, although she is a "useless and undeserving Friend" (Letter XVIII); she knows she cannot write anything deserving of being read by him and speaks of her "wretched Scribbles" (Letters XVI and XVII). The unaffectedness of these comments are open to question, but so is the degree of intellectual confidence any woman of this period can possess when

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involved with an educated man.

Orinda's denigration of herself is even more pronounced in some letters to "Berenice," an aristocratic friend.[2] "Such a continual distrust of my own merit . . . will not permit me easily to believe myself favoured" (Familiar Letters 148), she claims in a demeaning statement. Furthermore, Berenice's "excess of Charity" to her has made her (Berenice) suffer; Orinda, however, asks her not to try to "recover her reputation" by changing her view because it will result in her "Ruine" (140). The letter gives no clue to the occasion of this request.

When one turns to Philips' comments about her work, especially about her translations, one must be more wary of interpretation. The letters show conflicting views about her work on Pompey, but she may have been at variance with herself about it. Letter XIV indicates that Lord Orrery is the spur to her continuing to work on the play. She showed him the translation of one scene, and sending her the French original, he implored her to complete the act. In the same letter, Orinda tells of being "conscious of her own Unworthiness" and of her "Incapacity to perform it." In the letter of October 19, 1662 (Letter XVI),

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[2] "Berenice" has never been identified, but thought by some to have been Lady Elizabeth Ker.

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she sends Poliarchus her translation, which she "fear[s] will not be deemed worthy to breathe in a place where so many of the greatest Wits have so long clubb'd for another of the same Play." On the other hand, in Letter XXXVI, she criticizes most severely the translation of the Wits, being horrified by their "adding, omitting, and altering the Original." She feel that this is a "Liberty not pardonable in Translations and unbecoming the Modesty of that Attempt." She finds "this way of garbling Authors . . . fitter for a Paraphrase than a Translation." Their style is denounced too for "frequently bad" rhymes and for not keeping the sense "confin'd to the couplet." However, in the very same letter, she becomes once more the humble female, saying, "for after all I really think the worst of their Lines equal to the best in my Translation." We may well ask at this point, "What does she _really_ think?"

The same type of ambivalence can be detected in Philips' attitude toward the publication of _Pompey_. On the one hand, she expresses the fervent wish that she not be forced to put her name on it--"not so much as the least mark or hint whereby the Publick may guess from whence it came" (Letter XXXI). On the other, when she learned that there were two rivals for the publication, she even evinced some business acumen in

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her desire to choose the publisher who would give her some copies of the work. She obviously expected her translation to be successful, as we can see from her request to Poliarchus that the Duchess of York receive her copy as soon as possible since she would not want the Duchess to hear about it before she saw it.

Orinda was obviously proud of her accomplishment and knew her own worth more than she was sometimes willing to admit. In telling Poliarchus about the writing of the prologue by Lord Roscommon and the epilogue by Sir Edward Dering, she mentioned to him that others had suggested they would like to perform these tasks, but she has chosen those who write best (Letter XXV). She is also gratified that Edmund Waller not only does not resent her having translated the work, but says that he will "borrow some of [her] Lines to mix with his own" (Letter XXXII). In asking Cotterell to be certain to tell her whatever the Duchess' thoughts were about her translation, without any cover-up, we can perhaps see most clearly the strength of Orinda's confidence in her ability (Letter XXIII). And if more proof is needed, her suggestion that her friend give a copy to the King may be cited as well (Letter XXVI).

In Philips' attitude toward her work, she followed precisely in the seventeenth-century courtly poetic

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tradition. As Arthur Marotti has shown, Donne is an outstanding example of a coterie group he calls "satellite-courtly" poets. Donne's poems are "products . . . of a series of social relationships over a number of years" (John Donne, Coterie Poet 24). Furthermore, Marotti's characterization of this type of late sixteenth-century verse may readily be used for Philips' verse as well:

> Most poems written by gentlemen-amateurs were occasional in nature, their production and reception strongly involved with their biographical and social contexts. Whatever its conventional literary features, such verse was attuned to the personal circumstances of the authors and to the social, economic, and political milieus they shared with their chosen audiences (10).

The emphasis here on "chosen audiences" leads to another point made by Marotti--that Donne, like many authors, "chose to function as literary amateurs, submerging their writing in their social lives" (xiv). Following this line of thought, J. W. Saunders in his essay "The Social Function of Seventeenth-Century Poetry" says that for Donne, "poetry was essential to his private life and thinking, but whose primary ambition was nonliterary and who therefore saw no

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justification in making poetry public" (Marotti, n. 5, 291).

Philips' reaction to the unauthorized publication of her poems demonstrates not only a lack of desire for publication, but a strong unequivocal negative response. Two letters, XLIV and XLV, contain the different elements of her distress. She "never writ a Line in [her] Life with Intention to have it printed"; if she could have gotten her hands on those "fugitive Papers," she would have burned them; she regrets her "incorrigible Inclination to the Vanity of Rhyming," indicating that she wrote only for her own amusement. But what is the underlying reason for her great affliction? The following passage from Letter XLV gives it away:

> . . . all my Imaginations and idle Notions [are] rifl'ed and expos'd to play the Mountebanks and dance upon the Ropes to entertain the Rabble, to undergo all the Raillery of the Wits, and all the Severity of the Wise, to be the Sport of some that can, and the Derision of others that cannot read a Verse.

Worry about whether all of the poems were really hers; anxiety over the accuracy of the printing, over the printer's conjecturing where he could not read a word--

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these were her concerns. It was her reputation which was of great consequence to her:

> Let me know what they say of me at Court and everywhere else, upon this last Accident, and whether the exposing of all my Follies in this dreadful Shape has not frighted the whole World out of all their Esteeme for me. (XLIV)

The question of what people of her acquaintance said or thought of her was of great importance to Orinda, although from time to time she protested that it was not so. For example, in a letter to the Honourable Berenice, she insisted that happiness was not to be achieved if it were to "be governed by the Votes of other Persons" (Familiar Letters, I, 139). "'Tis a Heresy (this of submitting to every blast of popular Extravagancy)," she continues, "which I have combated in Persons very dear to me" (Ibid.). In this letter, as well as in several others, Philips emphasizes, not unexpectedly, that friendship is far more important to her than fame. (Letter XLII about her competition with Waller and the wits about Pompey has already been referred to.) ". . . Loss of a Friendship is to me the greatest of all Losses," she reiterates in a subsequent letter (213).

Just as friendship, and the rivals of love and

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marriage, were on Orinda's mind while she was writing poetry, so were they too when she was writing letters. Berenice, Lucasia, Antenor, and Poliarchus himself were the people involved in her thoughts on these subjects. Some letters to Berenice demonstrate Orinda's deep-rooted feeling and obligation for her friendship. Several twentieth century feminist critics point to Orinda's diction as a clear manifestation of her lesbianism. In expressing a desire to have Berenice visit her, Orinda writes: ". . . I gasp for You with an impatience that is not to be imagined by any Soul wound up to a less concern in Friendship than Yours is, and therefore I cannot hope to make others sensible of my vast desires to enjoy You . . ." (145). Written a month before Orinda died, a later letter contains a request for Berenice to come to London, where Philips will "cast herself at [her] Feet, both in repentance of [her] own Faults, and acknowledgment of [her] Goodness . . ." For some reason that is not clear, Philips felt a need to assure this friend of her total devotion, mentioning specifically that neither Lucasia nor anyone else has ever lessened any of the feeling she has had for her. In contrast to this reassurance is the explanation Philips gave for not having written to Berenice for a week because of her being upset about not hearing from Lucasia. She again implored Berenice

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to visit, promising her that she and Lucasia would both be very grateful.

The passionate expression to which Orinda was prone, it seems to me, can be explained by her temperament, to which she herself makes reference in Letter XIV, commenting that she "could never govern [her] Passions by the Lessons of the Stoicks." They advise acceptance of the vicissitudes of life, but rather "tell us what we should be, than teach us how to be so." One change in Orinda's life which she found difficult, if not impossible, to accept, was the separation from Lucasia necessitated by Lucasia's marriage to Lord Dungannon. She refers to her "tenderness of Soul" which she must defeat, if not by reason, by "Time and Necessity" (Letter XXIX).

In view of Philips' observations on separation of friends as a result of marriage, what ideas about the institution of marriage are different from those found in her poems? Marriage, because it so closely tied to obligations of religion, supersedes any former relationship, she remarks. Therefore, with marriage, "the Heat and Zeal of our former Friendships decline and wear off into Lukewarmness and Indifferency." Only if the "spouse is of that rare temperament which enables him to advance the friendship, we may generally conclude the Marriage of a Friend to be the Funeral of

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a Friendship" (Letter XIII). Now then, what is to be concluded about Orinda's marriage to Antenor and her own close friendships?

The answer to this question lies in some very precise statements made in her letters to Poliarchus. She would, for example, like very much to go to London, but if doing so involved a "Forgetfulness of [her] duty to Antenor, "this would constitute a loss of her 'own inward Content . . ."' Her greatest wish is to do "him some handsome service." This she "would purchase with the hazard of [her] Life" (242-243). She believes she can be of help to Antenor in his affairs, but like a good seventeenth-century wife, she will not presume to let him know that she has such a high opinion of her own power (Letter XLIII). So keen is she on keeping this from him that she asks Poliarchus to write in Italian about the whole affair (Letter XXXIV). Her care and concern for Antenor are made clear, moreover, in her attempt to convince Poliarchus that his getting the votes he did when running for Burgess was purely a result of Antenor's promotion on his behalf. She says, too, in this letter, that a greater intimacy between him and Antenor "is now become absolutely necessary to the Satisfaction of [her] Life" (Letter XXVIII).

Antenor's happiness was obviously of great importance, but so was Poliarchus'. That both Philips

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and Cotterell were upset about Lucasia's marriage is understandable. He had been hoping to win his "Calanthe," and her decision to take Lord Dungannon was a blow. Orinda was worried about her being so far away and about what devotion to her new husband would mean for their friendship. In her attempt to ease Poliarchus' pain, she was undoubtedly talking to herself as well. "There is nothing more easie than to captivate one's self to Love and Grief; and no more evident Mark of a great Soul than to avoid those Bondages." Her advice was not to "give way to Melancholy" (6). Orinda's closeness to Poliarchus is evident not only in these remarks, but in her willingness to express her feelings on every subject dear to her heart. She submitted to him as critic, thanked him for his corrections, even requested that he suppress a poem if he did not think it worthy. If he could see into her heart, he would read there her "infinite and unspeakable Gratitude and Thankfulness . . . in Characters . . . deep and indelible . . ." (Letter XLIII). Besides, she feels her "obligations" to him as "ornaments" and takes pride in her "Fetters" (Letter XLII).

This obviously strong attachment to Cotterell so clearly revealed here is part of the portrait of the person, Orinda, disclosed in her letters. In both the

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volume of Letters to Poliarchus and in those to Berenice in Familiar Letters, she stands before us, revealed by her own words, largely without pretense. If she exaggerates some of her feelings for her friends or for her husband, if she wishes at a particular moment to create a particular effect, the basic premise of her honesty or her straightforwardness is not to be denied. Her skill as a writer and/or her sensitivity as a person can be blamed for any lapse. Perhaps even more than in her poetry, Orinda comes to life in her letters.

The Translations

That translation at this time was considered an art is indisputable. Spingarn, in acknowledging this emphasis as a seventeenth-century contribution, remarks that the two schools of translation are exemplified by Marvell and Chapman, on the one hand, as the literal, and by Cowley and Denham, on the other, as the creative or "loose paraphrase" variety (Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century 1, ii). In the "Dedication of the Aeneis," Dryden recognizes these two choices, making his decision as follows: ". . . I thought fit to steer between the two extremes of paraphrase and literal translation; to keep as near my author as I could, without losing all his graces, the most eminent of

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which are in the beauty of his words" (Works II, 76). Stringent requirements were set forth by Dryden for those who wishes to translate well:

> Thus it appears necessary that a Man shou'd be a nice Critick in his Mother tongue, before he attempts to Translate a foreign language. Neither is it sufficient that he be able to judge of words and Stile; but he must be a Master of them too: He must perfectly understand his Author's Tongue, and absolutely command his own: So that to be a thorow Translator, he must be a thorow Poet.
>
> (Miscellany Poems Preface iv, vii)

In making the decision to write in rhymed couplets, Philips certainly demonstrated that she was a "thorow Poet." At the same time that she performed this feat, she maintained high standards for herself on the process of translation. After having read the rival translation of Corneille's Pompey, done by the "Wits," Philips criticized various aspects of their technique, giving some illustrations of incorrect word choices and of "omissions of the Author's sense." She then proceeded with what she considered the cardinal rule for translation as applied to Corneille: "to write in Corneille's sense, as it is to be suppos'd Corneille would have done if he had been an Englishman:

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not confin'd to his lines, nor his numbers, (unless we can do it happily) but always to his meaning" (Waller, Poems lxxxviii-lxxxix). She seemed to wish to follow Dryden's precept for himself: to "make Virgil speak such English as he would himself have spoken, if he had been born in England and in this present age" ("Dedication of the Aeneis" 228). Four lines from the opening scene of Pompey serve to illustrate the fulfillment of this promise of good translation:

> Photin: Sire, quand par le feu les choses sont vuidées,
> La justice et le droit sont de vaines idées,
> Et qui veut estre juste en de telles saisons
> Balance le pouvoir, et non pas les raisons.
>
> Philips' version
>
> When things, Sir, are determined by the sword,
> Justice is nothing but an empty word:
> And he who then Affairs would rightly weigh
> Must not his Reasons but his power obey:

Comparing Philips' version to that of Waller, Sedley, Buckhurst, and Godolphin (The Wits) yields further

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proof of Philips' skill:

<u>"Wits" version</u>

> Sir, when the Sword great Causes does decide,
>
> Justice and Right good States-men lay aside
>
> And who will wisely Act in such a season,
>
> Must ballance Strength and not examine Reason.

Philips' version obviously follows the original more closely, is much more natural in its construction, conveying abstract ideas in unstilted language. Particularly when thinking of hearing these lines spoken on stage, one can have no problem in deciding which English version is the more effective.

Although Philips' translation is often praised for her strict adherence to the text, she does move away from precision in word choices, but always with good effect. In <u>Horace</u>, for example, "Albe, mon cher pais et mon premier amour" becomes "Albe, my native place and first delight" (<u>Le Theatre de Corneille</u> 92; <u>Horace</u> 70). Avoidance of a cliché may be the motive here, but, we must unfortunately take note of the unwelcome change from Corneille's felicitous "Albe, ou j'ay commence de respirer le jour" which becomes "Alba,

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where I began to see the light." Perhaps it is the necessity of writing rhymed couplets which interferes.

Following a difficult pattern of rhyme is, nevertheless, accomplished by Philips in her fine translation of La Solitude de Saint-Amant. It is not surprising that Philips chooses this work since Saint-Amant seems to have the same conflict as she, the choice between the desire for solitude and the wish to be with friends (Francoise Gourier, Etudes des Oeuvres Poétiques de Saint-Amant 182). A few lines from her Saint-Amant translation of La Solitude suffice to show Philips' sensitivity and craft in this arduous task of close rendition of meaning while adhering to an established poetic pattern:

> Mon Dieu! que mes yeux sont contens
> De voir ces Bois, qui se trouverènt
> A la nativité du Temps,
> Et que tous les siècles revèrent,
> Estre encore aussi beaux et vers
> Qu'aux premiers jours de L'Univers.
>
> O Heavens! what content is mine
> To see those Trees which have appear'd
> From the nativity of Time,
> And which all Ages have rever'd
> To look today as fresh and green,

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As when their beauties first were seen!

One must contemplate with some degree of wonder Philips' creditable translations of complex works from the French. The little French taught at Mrs. Salmon's School was not designed to, nor was it able to prepare girls for an assignment such as this. From Philips' letters, we know that she has an avid interest in the study of languages, both French and Italian, that she consistently asks Cotterell to instruct her and to send her books so that she may continue to improve her skill. That through her own efforts she achieves such proficiency in the language that her accomplishments are recognized and lauded by other poets, by critics of her own time and later, is, to some degree, miraculous.

A detailed examination of the work of Katherine Philips leads to some solid conclusions. In all of her writing--poems, letters, and translations--readers can see Philips as a person and as a poet. Her choices of works to translate reveal both her personal interests as well as other aspects of her personality and style of life. She chose Saint-Amant's long poem because he was concerned here with solitude and friendship. She chose Corneille's Pompey because of its theme of the struggle for royal power. The fact that she was urged to continue in this work by Lord Orrery cannot be ignored, but she wrote one scene before his suggestion,

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and undoubtedly her close friendships with members of the nobility were contributing factors in this choice. Horace, with its conflict between devotion to the state and loyalty to and love for a person, in addition to its romantic emphasis, certainly appealed to Orinda, who, it is said, did enjoy reading romances.

What she enjoyed and did not enjoy becomes infinitely clear in her letters also. One great source of pleasure was her reading and study of works in French, a consistent thirst to improve her skill in language. Moving in court circles as she did, this interest in all things French is not unexpected. She assuredly enjoyed her friendships with particular people, although there were situations in these relationships which contributed to her unhappiness. Her concern for Cotterell, always evident in these letters, demonstrates the responsiveness and sensitivity of her personality.

Finally, it is in her poetry that Philips exposes her personality. The occasional poems disclose her interest in members of the royal family and the nobility. Situations in her personal life and in that of members of her family who are the subjects of occasional poems, too, manifest what is important to her at a particular moment. But friendship, in its different forms, in its relationship to other aspects

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of life, and in its possibilities for contributing to human happiness--this is at the heart of Philips' thinking and is the essence of the person of the "matchless Orinda."

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Chapter IV

Language and Idea in Seventeenth Century Poetry

In our review of Philips' work, we have seen some evidence which makes the view of her clear and precise, but there are some aspects of both her work and her person which remain ambiguous. However, when we look at seventeenth-century thought as it is related to language and idea in poetry in general, we find an essential characteristic here to be ambiguity. Differences of opinion exist among critics on the qualities of good poetry as well as on the qualifications of a good poet. Whether the language and the subject of poetry ought to be passionate or reasonable, whether nature or art should be given the greater emphasis in creation and in judgment, whether rules are necessary or even helpful--these questions were being widely debated.

The critic John Dennis made valuable contributions to this debate. Speaking for the language of passion in the Letter to H . . . C . . . in _Original Letters_, Dennis claimed that "Bold and figurative language" was what was required, pointing out that "That which makes Poetry to be what it is, is only because it has more Passion than any other way of writing" (_Grounds of Criticism_ 8, 117). Even more forcefully, he averred:

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> Poetry is poetry because it is more passionate than Prose . . . For where ever a Discourse is not pathetick, then it is Prosaick . . . For passion can please without Harmony, but Harmony tires without Passion. (<u>Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry</u> 24)

The notion of "harmony" was implied too in Rapin's list of the five qualities necessary for perfection in poetry, and, although he cautioned that language must not be "florid," he did call for "heat and vehemence" of expression (41). Rapin insisted that a poet must "give to common and natural things a fabulous Gloss, to render them more Admirable, and heighten Truth by Fiction." Joseph Warton's demand was similar in its emphasis on the "creative and glowing Imagination" and the "Sublime and the Pathetic [as] the two chief nerves of all genuine poesy" (<u>Essay on Pope</u> IV, X).

Dissenting voices on the subject of passion in poetry are noted by George Williamson in <u>Seventeenth Century Contexts</u>. Hobbes, he says, "ties up deceits of speech with the passions and imagination," adding that he does not even allow room for inspiration in poets, associating the whole idea of "enthusiasm" with "madness" (214). The "frenzies of a bold and ungovern'd Imagination" cannot possibly lead to "any

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true and real knowledge," says Samuel Parker in 1666 (A Free and Impartial Censure, quoted in Williamson 226-7). Following up on Parker's idea, Williamson calls attention to the restriction of emotion and the modification of the imagination resulting from the discrediting of enthusiasm.

However, we hear voices in defense of passion as a positive force, as a power inducing lofty or noble thoughts. La Bruyère recommended works which provoke strong feeling in a reader while calling forth valuable thoughts--these were "written in a masterly manner," he said (18). The heart of poetry is passion, poets and critics said, but for good poetry, that passion must be religious, moving the soul. Cowley asserted that "the Soul must be filled with bright Idea's" and, while censuring poets for writing works designed to flatter important people, he expressed the hope that poetry would come back to its rightful place, to be "confine[d] to Heaven" (Preface to Poems, 1656). Expressing the same attitude, Rapin referred to the poetic genius as "that celestial fire . . . which enlarges and heightens the Soul, and makes it express things with a lofty air" (7). Moving the reader's soul, Charles Gildon concurred, was what was essential (Laws of Poetry 8). Adhering once more to the popular trend in criticism, Dennis found "Piety and Virtue" to

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be "not only the first Original but . . . the only solid Basis . . . the very Life and Soul of Greater Poetry" (Grounds of Criticism, Preface). In the following passage, he stands firmly behind his theory, with Aristotle as his guide:

> Passion is the mark of poetry, and great passion the mark of great Poetry . . . Admiration and Terrour make the Principal greatness of Poetry, and are the chief of the Enthusiastic Passions . . . Admiration, Terrour, and Pitty are chiefly to be derived from Religion . . . (94-5).

Subscribing to this theory but enhancing the role of religion was Sir William Davenant, who, while conceding the interrelationship, asserted the unqualified preeminence of the force of religion:

> For Poesy . . . is as all good arts, subservient to Religion; all marching under the same Banner, though of less discipline and esteem . . .

In this same passage, Davenant showed the function of poets as "usefull Moralists" whose task it was to "sweeten" and make morality more palatable (Gondibert, "The Author's Preface to his much honor'd Friend, Mr. Hobs" 64). Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury, too, proposed "the pleasure and good of others" as the project of

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poets, whose desire to move others was related to the furtherance of "moral truth" (Characteristics, I, 90, 94).

This same playing of one element against another, of one force influencing the other, with each a necessity for the other, is true also in a consideration of "nature" and "art" as they are reflected in a poet's work. Renatus Rapin cited these dual requirements for a poet, concluding that no one who was "defective in either" could attain great heights (18). Even more definitively, Gracian in The Courtier's Oracle posited that "The best Nature without Art, is but a Wilderness" (8). William Coward in Licentia Poetica insisted on the natural, but accepted some ornamentation (31) while Sir Thomas Blount, in De Re Poetica, forcefully denounced excesses of art beyond Nature, calling them monstrous and an "Excrescence" (31). In quoting Mulgrave, Blount pointed up the uselessness of an abundance of figurative language. He considered it simply "Art's needless Varnish to make Nature shine" (31).

Art and nature combined, supplementing each other, both guided by reason and judgment--this was the desired end. The Earl of Mulgrave ("Essay on Poetry") and Hobbes in his "Answer to Davenant" wrote about the positive effects to be achieved when art and nature

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complement each other, resulting in an amplification of expressive force. But this is not enough, for at the center of successful poetry were reason and knowledge. Hobbes found that the creator of a poem must "know well," that is, have a concrete knowledge of the images of nature and also that he "know much." He says, "A sign of the first is perspicuity, property [propriety] and decency." These attributes will appeal to the ignorant by instructing them and will "sooth[e] the learned in their knowledge. A sign of the later is novelty of expression, which pleaseth by excitation of the mind" (84-5). The Earl of Mulgrave brought into his emphasis on reason a connection between it and "fancy," calling the latter the element which "wins the heart," while reason, he says, is the "part/ Which gains the Head" (4-5). It is Sir William Temple who, agreeing with this distinction, stresses the "Wonder of Poesy" which is able to house the oppositions of wit and reason (237).

"Wit," as we know, has diverse connotations during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It is sometimes considered the poetic faculty itself, that is, talent or genius. It is sometimes used derogatorily for excesses in the use of conceits, and it is sometimes thought of as the imagination or as synonymous with "fancy." When critics discuss wit as

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fancy or imagination, they often warn poets to keep a wary eye upon it. It must, according to Giles Jacob, "be kept within bounds" while "Discretion and Judgment . . . moderate that Heat and govern its natural Fury: like Luxuriant Plants, it requires a great deal of Pruning" (Poetic Register II, XXI). The same kind of warning is discovered in the writing of Hobbes. Fancy and judgment are part of wit, but "Where Wit is wanting, it is not Fancy that is wanting, but Discretion. Judgement therefore without Fancy is Wit, but Fancy without Judgement is not" (Leviathan quoted in Tayler 29). Hobbes makes clear his view that the power and structure of a poem stems from judgment while the ornaments are born of fancy.

De-emphasizing fancy and emphasizing judgment lead to an examination of the seventeenth-century stress on precision in language and truth in expression. Here we look to Dryden who condemns the metaphysical poets "for their excesses . . . for their habit of making meaning depend upon the close correspondence of an image and a truth" (Zwicker 23). Truth, for Dryden, means avoiding ambiguity and utilizing scientific or mathematical precepts in furthering literary achievement. Zwicker makes an interesting observation about Dryden's own ambiguity in his Heroique Stanza's in which he indicates a "grudging admiration" for Cromwell, seeming

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uncertain about whether Cromwell's end is a blessing or a warning. Without a more intensive study of Dryden's political stance re Cromwell, it is difficult to determine whether or not he was deliberately maintaining an ambiguous position. In any case, Dryden's view of "truth" as absolutely essential for good poetry cannot be negated. And his point of view gains support from both Shaftesbury and Leonard Welsted, the latter finding "rigid Truth . . . as essential to the Nature of it [poetry] as in a question of Algebra" (Fineman 133), and the former admitting that poetry is "all fable," but finding "truth" as "perfection" (Shaftesbury I, 94).

Precision, proper proportion, truth--is it possible to establish rules for achieving these ends? Whether rules should be established and what good use a poet might make of them became a matter of considerable controversy. Both poets and critics took positions ranging from ignoring all rules to adhering strictly to every one. For some, rules were to be formulated to promote precision in diction, in rhythmical patterns, and in verse forms. In The Art of English Poetry, Edward Bysshe, in 1702, devoted a section to enumerating rules for number of syllables, number and types of stanzas, and for rhyme schemes. He used Cowley, Waller, Denham, Dryden, and Pope as prime

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examples of poets who adhered to rules. In the preface to the second section of this work, Bysshe advised poets on theme and content by arranging "A Collection of the Most Natural and Sublime Thoughts" that appeared in the best English poets. In the Preface to Joshua Poole's English Parnassus, "J. D." cautioned poets to avoid "feminine rhythms," "slant rhymes," "apostrophated words," and polysyllables; to observe the accent and rhythm in order to produce harmony like music. In his unequivocal stand on rules, the writer of this preface decried the fact that some people, in emphasizing "nature" as central to the creation of a poem, think that no rules are necessary. He, however, stressed the point that poetry, being an art, required care in the use of language. Jonson underscored this, stating that language must never "fly from all humanity," ignoring what is essential for a poet: to find "what word is proper, which hath ornament, which height . . . where figures are fit, which gentle, which strong to shew the composition Manly" (Timber 27).

This stress on rules with its demand for exactness and propriety is obviously related to the concept of order central to the thinking of the period under consideration. Many worried that the breakdown of order would lead to anarchy in the use of language, to a rioting in the imagination, and to the total collapse

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of reason and judgment. "Unless he go by Rules," said Rapin, "he [the poet] slips at every step towards Wit and falls into Errors as often as he sets out" (14). Unregulated "fancy" will not lead to the production of anything reasonable (17). In a comparison of ancients and moderns, Rapin maintained that most moderns "express their thoughts higgle-piggle." Even if there were some design, he says, it was lacking in unity and, therefore, of no value (26-7). In Grounds of Criticism, Dennis was even more emphatic on re-establishing order through art. It was the business of art to restore the order lost to human nature by the Fall of Man. It thus seemed totally out of the question--totally "ridiculous"--that this function could be fulfilled without the maintenance of specific precepts of "rule and order" (6-7).

How is it possible to gainsay these demonstrably logical points of view? How can such eminently reasonable precepts be denied? A formidable list of nay-sayers, however, is available, Charles Gildon, Sir William Temple, Edward Phillips, and Ben Jonson among them. For the most part, these writers leaned toward the view that unless nature and genius be present, or at least available, no rules could contribute to the making of good poetry. In establishing this, Temple averred that the only thing to be accomplished by rules

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is to "hinder some men from being very ill Poets, but not to make any Man a very good one" ("Of Poetry" 238). He reiterated this point even more strongly: "The truth is, there is something in the Genius of Poetry, too Libertine to be confined to so many Rules" (238). This genius, this nature with which man may or may not be endowed, solely determined the capability of the poet and the possibility of the creation of a good poem. Charles Gildon in Miscellaneous Letters and Essays (14) and Edward Phillips in the Preface to Theatrum Poetarum both took this same position: nature and genius can never be discovered when not innately present, and can certainly never be taught. Thus, rules, although efficacious to some degree as guidelines for reining in wild flights of fancy, wit or imagination, contribute very little, basically, to the poetic endeavor. Although echoing the call for order and rules, Jonson can be called upon for the final word on the other side:

> But arts and precepts avail nothing, except Nature be beneficial and aiding . . . No precepts will profit a fool, no more than beauty will the blind, or music the deaf (56).

In spite of the fact that the particular argument re nature vs. art has its basis in 5th century Athens'

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rhetorical debate, and in spite of the orthodox view found in Sidney--that both talent and craft are needed --the debate continued with some vigor into the seventeenth century.

In light, then, of contradictory opinions about poetic language and idea in the time of Katherine Philips, what was said about her work? To which precepts did she adhere, and to what extent was the seventeenth century view of her dependent upon the answers to these questions? What was the nature of Philips' reputation during her lifetime?

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Chapter V

Katherine Philips in the Seventeenth Century

The major difficulty in determining what might be labeled the "real" reputation of a writer is the degree to which one can separate remarks based on geniune belief or feeling from those based on necessity or expectation. It is certainly clear that in the seventeenth century a tradition of dedicatory poems of praise was accepted and expected. If therefore, a writer agreed to the writing of such a dedicatory poem, there was little doubt that it would be laudatory. The precise nature of the praise, its effusiveness or restraint varied, but the basic adulatory tone did not. The very fact, however, that a person of some position or note accepted such an assignment speaks to the high quality of the work. In his/her decision lay a personal commitment derived from at least a minimum respect for the person and/or the work.

In the case of Katherine Philips, a special problem arises in distinguishing between praise of the person and praise of the work. Because Philips seems to have been universally liked and respected as a woman, does her work receive more favorable comment than it deserves? To what extent do the commentators

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themselves make clear the exact basis of their approval? In addition to answering these questions, we need to distinguish between praise lavished on a seventeenth-century woman poet qua woman and that made without regard to gender. "Womanly" praise--praise of what were thought to be womanly virtues or female accomplishments--needs to be differentiated from "poetic" praise. While attempting to make this distinction, one must be wary of sometimes very subtle comparisons being made to male poets. Finding Philips' reputation in her own time, then, determined by studying the words of her contemporaries, requires alertness on several grounds.

The most obvious place to look for praise of a seventeenth-century poet is in the dedicatory poems and prefaces to the works. In the prefaces to Philips' Poems and to the Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus, the writers wax eloquent: she is the English Sappho, she deserves a statue sculpted by Michelangelo, she is the honor of her sex, she deserves to have her name listed among the muses. Although some do not forget that the poems "fell hastily from the pen but of a Woman," both her words and her virtuous person remained objects of profound appreciation. Documentation for the contention that some important poets and writers wrote dedicatory poems for her is readily available. One or

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both of the works mentioned above contain poems of praise by Henry Vaughan, Abraham Cowley, Thomas Flatman, and James Tyrell. Henry Vaughan, according to Jonathan Post, his biographer, thinks that Orinda "belongs to the valley of the Usk . . . she is the shrine to which poets flock . . . like sheep, in the hope of receiving inspiration." Her verse, Vaughan says, performs "new miracles in Poetrie" (Ed. L.C. Martin, Works 1, 62). In "To the Editor of the Matchless Orinda," which appears in Thalia Rediviva, Vaughan compares Orinda's effect to that of the sun returning to earth, putting "drowsy Nature into play,/ And rid[ding] impediments away." Then, he decides that if only a miracle could bring Philips back, she would impress even Phoebus, who would "himself [be] won over by these charms" (211-12). Her verse has the "incantatory" quality Vaughan admires, compared to which his work is but a "weak Eccho" (72). She is a person he worships, saying, "It was your light shew'd me the way." Even more grandly, he asserts, "No laurel grows, but for your Brow" (Olor Iscanus 28).

Vaughan was surely expansive in his praise, and, although we know that there was a personal relationship (probably even to the extent of his writing the epithalamion, "To the best, and most acomplished Couple" for Philips' marriage in 1648), his praise does

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persuade.[1]

Although it is possible to doubt Thomas Flatman's sincerity because of the profuseness of his language, still his Pindaric ode, "To the Memory of the Incomparable Orinda," in Poems and Songs must be taken into account. Because of her death, everything of value provided by women to the world is gone:

> Every soft and fragrant word,
> All that language could afford;
> Every high and lofty thing
> That's wont to set the soul on wing
> No longer with this worthless world should
> stay (8).

In addition, Flatman compared himself to Orinda, taking note, perhaps correctly, of his inferior position:

> Methinks it whould disturb thee to conceive
> That when poor I, this artless breath resign
> My dust should have as much of Poetry as
> thine. (10)

To speak as he does of Philips' lines making others live may be acceptable, but, in spite of this as a commonplace seventeenth-century assertion, to imagine

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[1] Vaughan's Thalia Rediviva contains a preface to the reader signed "I.W.", in which he asserts his view that since "the matchless Orinda" has given this work "her esteem and commendations" anyone who is not able to appreciate its value will be guilty of arrogance (Poems II, 168).

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their providing "immortality" must give one pause. Such seems to be the strength of Flatman's feeling for Orinda's work that he is led to say upon her death that "With her the soul of poesie is gone" (12). This kind of appraisal of a poet's work was certainly in the seventeenth-century tradition of hyperbole, and into this conventional mode it fits particularly well.

Another clear example of the same genre is to be found in James Tyrell's dedicatory verse for Philips' Poems. Tyrell exceeds even Flatman in claiming that in the book of "Fame" no name appears brighter than hers. His virtually religious feeling for Orinda leads him to add:

> Think, if but laid in her miraculous Tomb,
> As from the Prophets touch, new life from
> hers may come.

In the poem written after her death, Tyrell emphasizes once again his certainty that her name is, and deserves in future ages to be, remembered. He asks that

> Fame . . .
> Write every letter [of her name] in large Text.
> . . . with purest Gold,
> To dazzle this age, and outshine the next:
> Since not a Name more bright than Hers,
> In this, or thy large Book appeares.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Tyrell sees the

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probability of women's reaching greater heights than men if Nature were not "partial to . . . Men." If Nature were to put into all women the kind of soul which Orinda has, the entire order of the world would be reversed and women, not men, would be the rulers; men, not women would be the weaker sex, the one to obey, not the one to be obeyed. (Many feminist critics might readily accept such a view.)

These comments by poets and friends who write poems for her book may be considered suspect--as comments by any friends may be--but valued critics in Philips' time spoke about her, too. In his diary entry for August 10, 1667, Samuel Pepys mentioned being at the New Exchange (Herringman's bookshop) where he heard of "several new books coming out--Mr. Spratt's History of the Royal Society and Mrs. Philips's poems." On September 16, 1667, he says he "staid reading Mrs. Philips's poems" until his wife and a friend called him away. (Diary of Samuel Pepys III, 217, 251). John Evelyn, in a letter written to Samuel Pepys on August 12, 1689, listed Katherine Philips among those "illustrious of our Nation of both sexes" whose pictures were to be included in his volume (Letters 237). In a letter to the Duchess of Newcastle on June 15, 1674, Evelyn gave a long list of women in England and elsewhere who deserved some commendation. His list

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of "celebrated wits" includes "Mrs. Philips, our late Orinda" (Letters, 208). Evelyn, however, did not go so far as to list Orinda in the group of those whose pictures were to be added to the the gallery of "most of [the] ancient and modern witts, poets, philosophers, famous and learned Englishmen." He did, however, list two women in ths group--Elizabeth Jane Weston and Jane Grey (Memoirs, I, 417). It may be that Evelyn's emphasis on "learned" precluded the inclusion of Orinda, although his decision on this score is surely open to discussion.

Some argument can surely be made however, with the eidtors of miscellanies and anthologies or the writers of commonplace books. In examining poetical miscellanies and commonplace books, we find that Philips' work was rarely included. Her representation in collections of major poets cannot be expected, but even in works of "the most celebrated minor poets" she was often missing. Several of her friends, for example, did appear in the section on "Friend" in Edward Bysshe's Art of English Poetry--Sir John Denham, The Earl of Roscommon, and Cowley are here. Women are represented by Aphra Behn, and many virtually unknown poets appear, but Orinda does not. A Supplement to the Work of the Most Celebrated Minor Poets contains representative poems of the Earl of Roscommon, The Earl

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of Dorset, Sidney Godolphin, and even poems of several poets lesser-known than these, but no examples of Philips' work is here. (Perhaps only aristocrats could find a niche in such collections.) In neither Roscommon's Commonplace Book nor in A Collection of Poems of 1693 is one able to discover any reference to, or example of, Philips' poetry. Although John Oldmixon, in 1714, chose works of very little known poets and even included some translations from the French in his anthology, he did not deem it fit to cite Philips (Poems and Translations by Several Hands). It is not surprising that Aphra Behn in her 1686 Poems by Several Hands concentrated on her own poems, but it is appalling that, leaving Philips out, she included a number of poems, many of them anonymous, and not one of any compelling interest. When William Winstanley published his England's Worthies, he, too, failed to include any woman poet.

In spite of so much neglect by men compilers of poetry, there were some men who unhesitatingly showed their regard for women poets. When in 1684, Aphra Behn's Poems Upon Several Occasions was published, J. Adams, writing a dedicatory poem took the position that women's poetry was superior to men's, citing the work of both Sappho and Orinda, although as might be expected of such an admirer of Behn, he considered them

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"but low types" compared to her. Another poet, "F.N.W.," mourning Orinda's death as the end of "soft" and "chaste" language, and of "Learned breath," believed that the only hope lay in "A young succeeding Phoenix," whom he finds, of course, in the person of Astraea (Aphra Behn), chosen by "The God of Wit . . . to bear Orinda's and his Character."

Adams' high praise in his dedicatory poem can lead to some speculation on the reasons for the neglect in collections of poetry of a poet whose work was recognized and applauded by important poets and critics. The possibility exists that a very favorable attitude toward Aphra Behn may have ruled out inclusion or even mention of Philips. To some degree, people did take sides, often based upon personality rather than poetic achievement. Some, believing that Behn's aggressive behavior was to be denigrated because of its deviation from what is considered "womanly," ignored her poetry, while others, who approved of the kind of person Orinda was, chose her as the representative female poet. Since the editors of these collections often made no explanation for their choices, however, only speculation remains.

Clearer in its promotion of Philips' reputation was the publisher's advertisement of her book in _The Intelligencer_ of January 14, 1663, in which the editor

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told his readers: "There are newly published Poems of the incomparable Madam Catherine Philips. Sold by Richard Marriot at his shop under St. Dunstans Church in Fleetstreet." Since so few newspapers existed in these times, and since there were not many advertisements for books in those which were accessible, finding such mention of Philips' book might be significant.

The fact that manuscript collections contained examples of Philips' poems is also meaningful. A fair number of such collections exhibited her work. The number of poems varied from one to five or six. To make a judgment about which poems were the most popular can be readily accomplished by scrutinizing these compilations. The poems which appeared most often are "Against Pleasure," "Against Love," and "Country Life" (Rawlinson 173, fols. 76, 174, 180; fols. 179, 181; Locke 91, 95, 96). Missing from many of these were the friendship poems to Lucasia and Rosania, the predictable choices of anthologists of later centuries. Pondering this problem leads inevitably back to the question discussed earlier: the influence of literary taste and fashion in preserving a writer's work and reputation.

What _is_ certain in the case of Orinda's reputation is the substantial influence of Orinda on other poets,

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particularly women. Her power often seemed to result from the ideas of friendship in her poems and in the Society of Friendship she organized. Evidence of her influence is available directly in poems written by other poets (both men and women) and sometimes in critical commentary about other poets. Often the emphasis is on Philips as a model to be imitated.

As important a figure as John Dryden is aware of her being such a model. On two different occasions, one in a letter to Elizabeth Thomas (Rowe) and the other in the ode commemorating Anne Killigrew, Dryden showed this awareness. In the letter to Thomas, he lauded her manly strength and force, asserting, ". . . methinks I find much of Orinda in your manner" (Letters 125). In the poem, he associated her and Killigrew as smallpox victims, but commented on them also as "equal souls" (Works XI, 111).

In defense of the charge that she did not write her own poems, Killigrew herself points out in "Upon saying that my Verses were made by another" what Philips has accomplished as a woman:

> Nor did her Sex at all obstruct her Fame
> But higher 'mong the Stars it fixt her Name,
> What she did write, not only all allow'd,
> But every Laurel, to her Laurel, bow'd!
>
> (Poems 46).

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Myra Reynolds sees Killigrew's high praise of Orinda as a sign that "the spell of the 'Matchless Orinda' descended early upon her" (The Learned Lady 140). Although Orinda's "spell" does not seem to be on Aphra Behn in either poetry or personality, both Behn and Nahum Tate felt the strong connection between Philips and Behn. In Behn's work on Cowley's Six Books of Plants, she digressed in the section on the laurel tree with a brief poem asking the "sacred nymph" to allow her to be with Sappho and Orinda so that her verses would be given immortality. For Tate, Greece was now "out-rival'd" in that it had only one Sappho, while England had "two Orinda's" ("To the Incomparable Author" Works V, VI, 7).

Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, was even more direct in her appraisal of the value of Philips' poetry. In "An Epistle from Ardelia to Mrs. Randolph in answer to her Poem upon her Verses," she asserted:

> And whilst Orinda's part you far transcend,
> I proudly bear that of her glorious Friend,
> Who though not equaling her lofty Witt,
> Th' occasion was, of what so well she writt.
>
> (Poems 95-6)

Winchilsea's deference to Orinda appeared in an early poem in which she imagined the response of Apollo whom she had invoked:

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> I grant thee no pretence to Bays,
> Nor in bold print do thou appear,
> Nor shalt thou match Orinda's prayse,
> Tho' all thy aim, be fixt on Her. (Poems 7)

This stress on emulation of Philips appeared in two poems addressed to women by men. Robert Gould sent a copy of Philips' poems to his friend, Madam G., to be an inspiration:

> Accept and lay her to your Breast, you'l find
> She's entertainment for the noblest Mind.

He expects that she will see "this lasting Honour" as a sign that women are "capable of highest things" (Poems, chiefly consisting of Satyrs and Satyrical Epistles, sigs. F 1 - F 4). Writing to Elizabeth Rowe after her recovery from smallpox, Joseph Standen laments Philips' death, indicates his pleasure in the contemplation of "vacant thrones being filled again," finding, however, in loyalty to his friend, that her talent is a "double portion of her [Orinda's] fire" (Miscellaneous Works cii-ciii).

The desire to be like Philips was nowhere more obvious than in the contemplation of friendship and what was often its concomitant, solitude or retirement. This subject was of great interest to many seventeenth-century poets and writers, but friendship as an all-consuming passion made Philips' view and her

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contribution vital. Poets themselves recognized their debt to her in this regard, as did critics and commentators.

Anne Winchilsea, for one, admitted this particular influence. She worried about writing about love because she remembered the "great reservedness of Mrs. Philips in this particular, and the prayses [she has] heard given her upon that account . . ." (Poems 10). In "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat," Winchilsea accepts Orinda's commingling of the ideas of friendship and solitude. She wishes for the solitude of nature, but, like Orinda, she believes that the presence of a friend would make her happiness complete:

> Friendship still has been design'd,
> The Support of Human-kind;
>
> . . . .
>
> Give a Friend in that Retreat
> (Tho' withdrawn from all the rest)
> Still a Clue, to reach my Breast.
> Let a Friend be still convey'd
> Thro' those Windings, and that Shade! (44)

That Winchilsea has embraced Orinda's form of friendship is obvious in the dialogue of "Friendship between Ephelia and Ardelia." When the definition of friendship is demanded, the answer, "'Tis to love, as I love you," might well have been written by the other

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poet. When further details are demanded, the answer that friends must "share all joy and grief," must give up everything for one another, be willing "to die upon a Grave,/ If a friend therein do lie," is also reminiscent of words of the poet she so highly respected.

In the poetry of the woman writing as "Ephelia" (identified by most as Joan Philips, although her precise identity has not been discovered), we find both respect for Orinda in Ephelia's admiration of "sweet Orinda's happy strain" (Poems 87) and proof of Orinda's influence in her choice of both theme and language. Ephelia's "To Phylocles, Inviting Him to Friendship" contains the lines:

> We'll mix our souls, you shall be me, I you;
> And both so one it shall be hard to say
> Which is Phylocles, which Ephelia.
> (Stanford, The Women Poets in English 67)

"Ephelia's" modeling herself on Orinda is evident in her addressing poems to members of the nobility and using pseudonyms for friends.

Even more persuasive seems to be the influence of Philips on Mary Astell, Jane Barker, and Elizabeth Thomas. Astell salutes Philips, "Orinda! Sappho! Sister/ Friend!" Although it becomes clear that Astell and Philips differed on the need of women to separate

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themselves from men to achieve happiness, both emphasized the joy of their emotional ties to women. Astell, however, openly advocated the superiority of women's friendships over spousal relationships. Barker and Thomas manifested their ideological debt to Katherine Philips. The Barker poem, "On the Death of my Dear Friend and Play-Fellow, Mrs. E. D., Having Dreamed the Night Before I Heard Thereof, that I had Lost a Pearl," speaks of friendship as a "gem" and of the uniting of "two hearts" as one, purifying love (Quoted in Hobby, The Virtue of Necessity 161). In Pylades and Corinna, Elizabeth Thomas, referring to her feelings of love, states that she is "without doubt inspired with the noble Passion, by reading the Works of the justly admired Mrs. Katherine Philips" (XII).

Any discussion of Philips' influence on women poets of her own day would be incomplete without mentioning the Duchess of Newcastle. Despite a lack of evidence of any direct connection between Newcastle and Philips,[2] Newcastle does say, in "On Conversing by Letter," that their souls are one and will remain so after death, "for my mind and thoughts live always with you, although my person is at a distance from you" (Sociable Letters 217).

[2] The error in Douglas Grant's thinking that Newcastle was The Polycrite of the Society of Friendship has long been clear.

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Philips' ideas of friendship, clearly of some consequence in her own circle as well as outside of it, lead readily to a consideration of her poetic influence in promoting the idea of solitude. This is pointed out by a modern student of this subject, Maren-Sofie Rostvig, in The Happy Man: claiming that the Earl of Roscommon's poem "On Solitude" "blends the manner of Cowley with that of the Matchless Orinda, perhaps in a conscious effort to emulate them both," Rostvig quotes from the second stanza:

> Hail, Sacred Solitude, Soul of my Soul
> . . . .
> Nor is it for my Solitude unfit,
> For I am with my Friend alone,
> As if we were but one;
> 'Tis the polluted Love that multiplies,
> But Friendship does two Souls in one comprise. (Rostvig 360)

Friendship, solitude with a friend, the blending of two souls into one--everything is there.

These ideas of friendship, recognized as the kernel of Philips' thought, undoubtedly led to her wish to put them into practice in a more structured way through the formation of the Society of Friendship. Unfortunately the chief evidence for the actual existence of this society appears in Orinda's own

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letters and poems. References to it were made by others, but whether it met at any definite times, what precisely went on when and if it did meet, and exactly who the members were, are still matters of conjecture. That Philips was a serious student of the concept of friendship, that she wrote and talked about it profitably, and that her views on it were accepted or at least appreciated by some important seventeenth-century writers and thinkers is nevertheless beyond doubt.

The most influential of these thinkers was Jeremy Taylor, whose recognition of her came as a consequence of her questioning him about the possible conflict between devotion to God and the practice of friendship. Taylor's answer, his Discourse on the Nature and Offices of Friendship, becomes one of his best known works. Although it does not help to prove the existence of the Society, it does indicate that already in 1657 Philips was a person of some consequence whose interest in this subject must be seriously contemplated. In the "Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour" written in 1709, the Earl of Shaftesbury mentioned Taylor's Discourse in answer to Philips (Characteristics I, note 67). Anthony à Wood also referred to the Discourse in his article on Philips (Athenae Oxoniensis col. 402). Some of Taylor's own

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comments may be taken as indications of his knowledge and approval of Philips' particular conceptions of friendship. Taylor specifically equates Orinda's understanding of friendship with his own:

> . . . they who understand . . . the interior beauties of friendship are the fittest to give answers in all inquiries concerning the respective subjects . . . and therefore you who are so eminent in friendships could also have given the best answer to your own inquiries, and you could have trusted your own reason. (2-3)

Even though he does not believe that woman is as capable as man in giving advice or in defending men's honor, he does admit that "A woman can love as passionately, and converse as pleasantly, and retain a secret as faithfully [as a man]" (102).[3]

Another contemporary of Philips, Francis Finch, also responded to her ideas in his Discourse on Friendship dated March 30, 1654. This work seems to be more directly related to Orinda's circle since it was written at the request of Lucasia and is addressed to her. In it, Finch writes of the "uniting," "secret,"

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[3] Elizabeth Hageman believes that Philips is the innovator in proclaiming that women can have friendships as strong as those of men. See her essay, "The Matchless Orinda," in Women Writers of The Renaissance and Reformation.

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and "virtuous qualities of friendship" (W. G. Hiscock, Review of English Studies 15, 466-68).

Orinda's promotion of virtue in the form of friendship was applauded also by Nahum Tate in his preface to A Present for the Ladies, published in 1692:

> 'Tis then a necessary Consequence, that Women are capable of Friendship. He that will not allow that this Vertue is understood and practis'd by them in this most perfect degree, must never have read the names of Orinda and Lucasia.

Although extending to the end of the century, the influence of Orinda and her circle was at its most powerful during her lifetime. Kathleen Lynch, the biographer of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, finds Philips a distinct force in the family life of the Boyles. Lynch believes that Philips' coming to Dublin marked the opening of "a pleasant chapter in Orrery's life, claiming that the "Duchess of Ormonde and Lady Cork and her daughters gave Mrs. Philips a cordial welcome" (73). Since it was at this time that Orrery read and admired her translation of a scene from La Mort de Pompée, urging her to complete her translation, some discussions of drama (part of the activity of the Society of Friendship) must have taken place here.

In the view of Alfred Upham, these members of the

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nobility constituted only one of three groups which made up Orinda's coterie, the other two being in Cardigan and in London. His list of members consists of the following: Sir Charles Cotterell, Jeremy Taylor, Henry Lawes, Samuel Cooper, the Earl of Orrery, the Earl of Roscommon, James Tyrell, and James Ogilby (The French Influence in English Literature from the Accession of Elizabeth to the Restoration 353-54). According to later twentieth-century scholars (Upham's book was originally published in 1908) such as Souers, Thomas, and Mambretti, some of the people listed by Upham are not among those who were given pseudonyms in Philips' poems and letters. In addition to this kind of discrepancy, Sir Edward Dering, the "Silvander" of the society, is not mentioned. Evidence for his participation comes from his own letter written to Lucasia:

> Orinda had conceived the most generous designe, that in my opinion ever entred into any breast, which was to unite all those of her acquaintance, which she found worthy, or desired to make so, (among which later number she was pleased to give me a place) into one societie, and by the bands of friendship to make an alliance more firme than what nature, our country, or equall education can produce.

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(Letters of Sir Edward Dering, The Second Baronet, February 7, 1664).

Even though they are clearly not members of the Society, both Elizabeth Thomas and Mary North showed that they were swayed by the ideas promulgated by it. Thomas wrote that Philips' "refined and rational thoughts of friendship . . . show a Soul above the common Level of Mankind, and mightily raise my Desire of practicing what she so nobly describes" (Pylades and Corinna Letter XIV, 38). And, according to Lives of the Norths, Mary North literally did follow in the footsteps of Orinda, "institu[ting] a sort of order of the wits of her time and acquaintance, whereof the symbol was a sun with a circle touching the rays . . . which were dispersed to those wittified ladies who were willing to come into the order" (x and xi).

Philips' Society of Friendship, as well as its imitators, were patently related to, and clearly influenced by the French salons. The literary and social bases for these groups are incontrovertible. Although the "genuineness" of the different salons are open to question, and although some of their "poetic tendencies" may be considered by some to be "ridiculous," their meetings in the homes of aristocratic French women are unequivocally documented. Evelyn Gordon Bodek views the salon as a place where

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women were not afraid to give evidence of their interest in learning. It was, she says, "an informal university for women" ("Salonières and Bluestockings: Educated Obsolescence and Germinating Feminism" 186-87). Mlle. de Scudéry and Mme. de Maintenon advocated women's education, but not in a revolutionary way, and the "chief object of the 'réunions' was the cultivation of the art of conversation." Perhaps the basic aim of these societies was a social one: to enable the members "to shine brilliantly in society and to be considered as superior to the general run of women" (S. A. Richards, Feminist Writers of the Seventeenth Century 23, 25). Saint-Evremond in Le Cercle sees a few of the salons as "truly refined" but others as "a ridiculous affectation of refinement" in which love is "une espèce de religion" and "l'amour . . . un Dieu" (Donna Stanton, "The Fiction of Préciosité and the Fear of Women" 111; Richards 13).

The salon which seems to have in its focus the strongest resemblance to that of the Society of Friendship was the one in the Marais conducted by Mme. Comtesse de Suze. Mme. de Suze and two other aristocratic women appear to have had a desire to further their interest in poetry and letters (Georges Mongrédien, La Vie Littéraire au 17e Siecle 191ff). Philips' awareness of the Comtesse de Suze is evident

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in a letter to Cotterell in which she praises and discusses a poem of De Suze's which she has read. Philips' study of French, then, would seem to be the source of the French salon influence on her own society.

That Katherine Philips influenced poets of her time, particularly woman poets, is indisputable. That some of her favorite themes pervaded others' poems is obvious as well. That critics were not loath to mention her name along with those of major writers of the period argues strongly for her placement in a somewhat higher position in the realm of poets than she has heretofore enjoyed. However, specifying her place in the poetical hierarchy is problematical because of the confusion, either deliberate or unconscious, of Philips the poet with Philips the person. Souers, her biographer, makes this clear when he says, "Her personal character is apt to be so attractive that any real significance that she possesses as a writer tends to be forgotten" (The Matchless Orinda 252). The opposite tendency, increasing her value as a poet because of the attractiveness of her personal character, is also a potential source of difficulty in evaluation.

Examples of the mixture of praise of poet and praise of person are available in the poems of many

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poets who know Philips' work.

In the praise of aristocratic friends who are poets lies powerful evidence of approbation given to Philips as both poet and person. The Earl of Roscommon concentrated on her poetic skill, while Lord Orrery stressed the quality of her character, especially her kindness and her exemplary demonstration of friendship, both in word and deed. The warmth of Orrery's feeling for Orinda is clearly evident in the dedicatory poem to the 1669 edition when he says that, although he appreciates her "wit," he cannot help but praise her "practice more than theory." Roscommon, on the other hand, in "To Orinda: an imitation of Horace," in the same volume, underlines the effect of her verse, claiming that monsters, by "the magick of Orinda's name," would be tamed to "roar in verse." Further approval of Orinda is found in the collection of letters, <u>Pylades and Corinna</u>, in which the writer expresses pleasure in Philips' work, finding in it "solid Masculine thoughts, in no feminine Expression." In addition, the writer approves of Philips for qualities of her character as well: he praises her discretion, her good humor, her virtuosity and her ingenuity (II, Letter XIV, "A Parallel of Orinda and Corinna" 38, 29).

Any discussion of a woman poet as a person is

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never far from a discussion of her as a woman compared to men. Cowley, surprisingly, found men inferior to women as he observed that, after having succumbed to women's "tyranny of beauty," men must also acknowledge their superiority of wit and brain power. Unlike men who must work alongside "a whole company," Orinda is unique in not having to share her glory. Reiterating the point of her superiority in "Upon Mrs. K. Philips, Her Poems," Cowley views her as "the Roman Victory . . . over com[ing], enslav[ing] and better[ing] men."

Unlike Cowley, who found merit in the feminine, Vaughan, like most men of the time, in "To the Most Excellently Accomplish'd Mrs. K. Philips," saw her poetic skill as masculine:

> Where language smiles, and accents rise
> As quick and pleasing as your eyes,
> The poem smooth, and in each line
> Soft as yourself, yet masculine;
> Where not coarse trifles blot the page
> With matters borrow'd from the age,
> But thoughts as innocent and high
> As angels have, or saints that die.
>
> (Ed., Chambers, ed., Works II 100)

This mingling of her poetic skill and her physical person is not hard to find in other comments as well. James Tyrell admitted his confusion, saying, "Whether

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her Vertue, or her Wit/ We chuse for our eternal Theme,/ What hand can draw the perfect Scheme?" ("To the Memory of the Excellent Orinda"). Writing after Orinda's death, Thomas Flatman suggests that women can bid farewell to everything wonderful in wit, to all that is great in woman's mind, but if women wish to be, "pure as Angels are" they must come to "dress . . . by Orinda's Tomb." This kind of praise of a woman's virtue was recognized as a seventeenth-century commonplace, with poems to Orinda following such a pattern. Abraham Cowley, with whose name Orinda's is so often directly linked (See Octavian Pullen's dedicatory poem to Thomas Flatman's Poems and Songs), concentrated on her virtue in two famous poems, one the dedicatory verse to her Poems, and the other written in her honor after her death. In a very clear statement exemplifying her virtue, he refers to Sappho whose "Ill manners spoil the lustre of her fame" while "Orinda's inward Vertue is so bright,/ That, like a Lantern's fair enclosed light,/ It through the Paper shines where she doth write." Furthermore, in the poem after her death, Cowley made clear to the reader that "wit" could not be in any way effective unless it had been joined to "vertue." In the most precise intertwining of the poet and the person (in this case the physical person) Cowley wrote, her "gentle numbers" are as her "Forehead

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smooth" and her "Fancies high" are "sparkling as [her] Eye." Not only that, but "'tis manly all," and then, perhaps thinking better of it, he ended with "Or rather 'tis Angelical."

Such an "angelic ideal," a model for all women, "against which we can judge other women" was what Robert Gould considered the "matchless" or "chaste" poet (The Poetess, quoted in Felicity Nussbaum, The Brink of All We Hate). The words "chaste" and "modest" commonly used in praise of seventeenth-century women, were no less frequent in descriptions of Orinda. John Duncombe in the Feminead "heads the list of 'lettered nymphs' with the chaste Orinda" (Winchilsea, Poems lxxi). According to Myra Reynolds in The Learned Lady, Thomas Rowe in Poems on Several Occasions published in 1696, charcterizes his wife, Elizabeth, as "combin[ing] the fire and passion of Aphra Behn with the chaste purity of Mrs. Katherine Philips." Going even beyond this, J.C. (probably John Cleveland) tells Plato that his "wish't for Vision . . . put[ting] off her Clay" could be seen as "Vertue undrest, just like a naked Queen" (J.C., "An Elegy upon the Death of the Most Incomparable Katherine Philips"). A more hyperbolic statement can hardly be found than Sir William Temple's in "Upon Mrs. Philipps' Death":

> . . . And made alone so rich amends for all

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The faults her Sex committed since the fall,

Temple's poem contains a list of the effects of her virtuous influences, adding up to her being "The best example of how to Write and Live." (William Roberts, "Sir William Temple on Orinda: Neglected Publications" Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America, lvii 330).

"Modesty," the second prominent womanly virtue, although allied to chastity, had the additional connotation of desiring to hide one's light.[4] The writer known as "Sophia," lauding this quality, mentioned Philips along with Mary, Queen of Scots, and Lady Winchilsea as being among "many other English geniuses and poetesses of [their] sex [whose] best panegyric is the modesty with which they labour'd to conceal their abilities" (Woman's Superior Excellence Over Man 68).

The notion of "concealing one's abilities" is essential to any discussion of early women writers. Reluctance to be published and disclaimers in prefaces after being published (e.g., that it was only the extreme urging of friends which forced the issue)

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[4]The condemnation of both the Duchess of Newcastle and Aphra Behn on the basis of immodest behavior is quite clear, with Behn castigated as well for the unseemliness of her writing. Indeed, whenever Behn and Philips are mentioned together, writers specify their polarity in both the conduct of their lives and the quality of their writing.

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resulted from modesty of the sex, fear of adverse criticism, or pure literary convention (See Ezell, The Patriarch's Wife 85-87). The case of Philips demonstrates all of these forces at work and manifests her own ambivalence: she was both interested in promoting herself and her work and concerned lest some fame be achieved; she was worried about the reception her translation was receiving, but she commented unfavorably about her rivals' translations; she was both anxious about others' opinions of her work and unconcerned about what was said about her accomplishments.[5] The combination of pride in her own accomplishment, happiness in recognition of her by important people, and anxiety about being forced into the limelight was the conventional response for a woman in her position in her time. To recognize that no other course was available for a seventeenth-century woman of her class with feelings of self-worth and some ambition is essential.

Although Philips protested against her prominence, nevertheless poets, commentators on the literary scene, critics, and editors of collections of poetry all had something to say about Katherine Philips in her own

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[5] Philips' own feelings in this connection already discussed in Chapter III are available in both her Letters to Poliarchus and to the "Honorable Berenice."

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time. Her poetry, her letters, and her translations were commented upon, and her ideas, particularly on friendship, were taken seriously and approved by people of stature. If remarks made by friends or others who might expect to have some reward for their good offices on her behalf, are, therefore, suspect, then their unrestrained tone must be modified by our more objective judgment. If difficulties in judging the work arise because of the interference of personality, vigilance must be exercised. Remaining aware of these caveats, we may conclude that, in the later seventeenth century, this woman poet managed to attain a position of some influence and a reputation of some note.

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Chapter VI

Katherine Philips in the Twentieth Century

What has happened to the reputation of Katherine Philips in the twentieth century? What can we find in the criticism of this century relevant to this woman poet's work? If she is praised more for her personal qualities in the early part of the century and revived on the basis of both her poetic skill and her personal attributes in the latter part, of what significance is this? If even the first modern feminist, Virginia Woolf, does not mention her, what conclusions can be drawn? If, beginning in the late 1960's, her name is mentioned and her poems now appear in most anthologies, how can we account for the change? What has happened in the world of literary criticism, in the world of culture in general, but especially in the world of women must give us some answers.

To enter into the world of literary criticism in the early twentieth century is to look at the words of T. S. Eliot in several of his essays. "What is a Classic," "Tradition and the Individual Talent," and "The Frontiers of Criticism" all have something to say to critics, to readers, and to poets themselves. It is

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paying attention to the past which is crucial for all, and the poet, Eliot says, must remain aware of what has been done in the past and be willing and able to continue in the same path, to be a "continuer of their traditions . . ." ("What is a Classic?" 58). This historical sense shows a writer "his place in time [and] his contemporaneity" ("Tradition and the Individual Talent" 49). Eliot urges awareness of the fact that ". . . the past is altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (50). Such concentration on the historical sense will prevent provinciality of outlook, insuring the "proper relation of the Eternal and the Transient" without an over-estimation of the importance of our own time" (quoted in Kermode, The Classic 43). A further warning is issued by Eliot in "The Frontiers of Criticism": "One must divest [oneself] of the limitations of [one's] own age . . . in order to get the direct experience, the immediate contact with [the] poetry" (130). This contact can be made only through learning about the state of language as well as about conditions of society in the poet's time.

That the connection between society and literature is vital, Terry Eagleton notes in discussing comments made in Scrutiny. But here Eagleton turns his attention to the poet rather than to the reader,

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referring to Leavis' demand that a poet deal with social and political questions (33). Although Philip Henderson in The Poet and Society does not promote the poet as politician, he finds it incumbent upon him or her to "interpret imaginatively the crisis that is taking place in the minds of men" (242). Henderson makes clear that in order to do this the poet must "share to the full the life of his own age" (242).

According to Eliot, then, both the poet and his reader must be aware of the past, of history, and both must immerse themselves in their own times. The poet must participate in his or her society and the critic/reader must try to do so too. This process will enable the reader to get closer to an understanding of the work. In dealing with this problem of understanding, Eliot warns that no matter how much is known about a poet, there is something beyond that information, something inexplicable, which is of the greatest consequence ("The Frontiers of Criticism" 124). Helen Gardner agrees with the need for the critic to search out the "conception [which] governed [the poet's] creation" and to read the poem with that in mind (75). The attempt to carve out a path to the poet's meaning is of concern to Gardner, who is quite clear in her view:

> A poem is not whatever I choose to make of

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> it. It is something which its author made with deliberation, choosing that it should say this and not that. (75)

When E.D. Hirsch describes his quest for meaning, he assures his reader that "the best meaning is the one the author meant." He is the "meaner," and if we do not see this we are "imprisoned in our own culture" (Quoted in Kermode, The Classic 77).

In opposition to this method of arriving at meaning are all the deconstructionists and the reader-response critics, some of whose attitudes must be scrutinized. Jane Tompkins, refuting the affective fallacy (evaluating a work in terms of its effect on the reader), declares that the effects of a poem "are essential to any accurate description of its meaning, since that meaning has no effective existence outside of its realization in the mind of a reader" (ix). Many earlier voices are behind Tompkins, among them Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish, Bernard Holland, and Georges Poulet. "Co-creator" of the work is what Iser calls the reader; readers "participate in the creation of meaning," asserts Fish, calling literature "a sequence of events that unfold within the reader's mind"; the knowledge of self is what counts--"personal identity and self-awareness" are at the center, says Holland, as he emphasizes the psychoanalytic approach, i.e., that

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textual meaning is a combination of "what readers project onto a text and what the words actually mean," with "interpretation . . . a function of identity"; Poulet, taking perhaps what is the ultimate position, stresses the personal relationship between the author and the reader, with the reader achieving a mystical understanding through "ineffable" communication with the writer as he loses himself in the consciousness of the writer through internal communication with him. The experience for the reader consists in forgetting himself and becoming the writer (Tompkins xv, xvii, xxiv).

Although Virginia Woolf wrote criticism before the term "reader-response" came into common use, she makes this same suggestion to the reader:

> Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice. ("How Should One Read a Book?" 235)

In spite of the fact that she does not wish to be considered a feminist, Woolf, too, conveys messages that can be counted as such. Her worry about the view of her as feminist is evident in her remark in _A Writer's Diary_ about the reception of _A Room of One's Own_--"a shrill feminine tone in it" and the possibility of being "attacked for a feminist and hinted at for a Sapphist" are her concerns (148). But in the same work

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and in Three Guineas, Woolf as feminist is not to be denied. She decries men's attitudes toward the education of women, deplores women's attitudes toward themselves and their work, sees women as "outsiders," but recognizes some slight progress for women after suffrage is obtained. Women, she points out, are deemed unfit to be educated, fit only for marriage, in which state education may be a disadvantage. Exploring the relationship between marriage and education, Woolf declares:

> It was with a view to marriage that she tinkled on the piano, but was not allowed to join an orchestra; sketched innocent domestic scenes, but was not allowed to study the nude; read this book, but was not allowed to read that, charmed and talked. (Three Guineas 36, 56)

This "charm," the only influence women had in the past, Woolf recognizes as changing when women receive the vote (Three Guineas 24).

Nevertheless, this sign of progress does not convince Woolf that women can think of themselves as in the mainstream of activity, particularly as writers. "Outsiders" is what they really are. Although she deems "writing against the current" an "odd feeling," she will do it. More strongly still, she proclaims "as

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a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world." (Quoted in Daly 327). In a broad sense, this last statement may be thought illustrative of Woolf as a "social feminist," a descriptive term used by Naomi Black in her essay, "Virginia Woolf and the Women's Movement" (Marcus, ed., Virginia Woolf, A Feminist Slant 181). A more precise interpretation, on the other hand, may lead to a rejection of this term for Woolf. A certain ambivalence, therefore, is inevitable in any discussion of feminism and the first "feminist" twentieth-century woman writer.

The advent of feminism and feminist literary criticism marks the beginning of changes in attitudes toward women in general and women writers in particular. All agree that the social, cultural, and literary worlds have been male-dominated, that women have been confined and unable to enter readily into those worlds, that men's prejudices have forced women (with few exceptions) to stay within the bounds of their assigned gender positions, and that changes are unmistakably required. But in both the interpretation of the situation in need of change and the best method of effecting such changes, equivocality prevails.

Some of the emphases writers choose in analyzing the need for change are (1), that the accepted rules of

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discourse vary for men and women and these govern what may or may not be spoken (Kolodny "Some Notes on Defining a Feminist Literary Criticism" 39); (2), that the "social repression of women" prevents them from entering into cultural life (DiPesa, "The Imperious Muse" 59); (3), that "certain ideological assumptions . . . have led to the dismissal of women's writing and women's experience" (Findley and Hobby, "Seventeenth Century Women's Autobiography" 11); and (4), that the male orientation of criticism has been harmful (Guerin et al., A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature 248).

If these are the offenses at the root of the problem, feminist critics say, then, we must determine what is involved in righting the wrongs. For Adrienne Rich, the general approach is a "Re-Vision . . . the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction . . . [this] is [for women] an act of survival" (Quoted by Anderson, "Feminism as a Criterion of the Literary Critic," in Brown and Olson 7). In the same general way, Patricia Spacks identifies the subject as "includ[ing] any mode that approaches a text with a primary concern for the nature of the female experience in it" (Quoted in Todd, Feminist Literary History 5). Annette Kolodny concentrates on the female experience

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as she divides feminist criticism into the following: works written by a woman, criticism by a woman about a man's book, using a feminist approach, and criticism by a woman about a woman's book or about female authors. She points out that this presupposes Virginia Woolf's assumption of "something unique in a woman's style stemming from a unique female mind." This uniqueness has three possible sources: woman's biology, her "feminine consciousness," or her being "alien" or "other" in the social order. The view of women as different and of female identity as central to any discussion of women's writing has many strong advocates. In The Distaff Muse, the author is unqualifiedly persuaded that women's verse and prose "ought to be as recognizably feminine as her handwriting is and that, if it is not, something has gone awry . . ." (4). Nelly Furman is equally convinced that women "speak, read, and write from a gender-marked place within [their] social and cultural context" (McConnell 52). When Gardiner discusses female identity, she tells how both women critics and women writers affect women. Many women critics, she says, "tell women readers how to read women writers; and they tell women writers how to write for women readers. The implied relationship between the self and what one reads and writes is personal and intense" ("On

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Female Identity" 355). But, paradoxically, Gardiner asserts, writers impart this sense of self through a manifestation of sameness and difference "from other women, from their mothers; from men; and from social injunctions for what women should be, including those inscribed in the literary canon" (314).

Josephine Donovan provides further strong affirmation for the premise that women's experience is essential to the understanding of women's poetics. Donovan gives a formidable list of women's experiences to be contemplated if "women's ways of seeing, [if] a women's epistemology" are to be realized. Among these are the "oppression" or "otherness," their preparation for home life rather than for the world outside, their involvement in bringing up children, and their "consignment to the domestic or private sphere" of activity (100 ff.). She quotes Lawrence Lipking's relevant remark that "a woman's poetics must begin . . . with the fact that few male theorists have ever had to confront: the possibility of never having been empowered to speak" (107).

Despite Kolodny's leaning toward Lipking's position, which stresses women's being confined in their discourse, she admits that differences between individual women may be as striking as differences between men and women ("Some Notes on Defining a

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Feminist Literary Criticism" 41). She does not believe that Woolf was right in saying that "'the creative power of women . . . differs greatly from the creative power of men'" (49).

What is more, Carolyn Heilbrun believes, "Feminist theory must be able to comprehend that which men and women share as well as that which is, or is accounted, intrinsically feminine." She warns of the "trap" which women must avoid--shunning male discourse--in view of the fact that there is "human discourse" which has been denied to women," adding that it is possible to find more space for women without "moving out of the patriarchy altogether" ("A Response to Writing and Sexual Difference 809, 811). Although Jan Montefiore seems somewhat rueful, she admits that "The traces of the opposite sex can never be entirely effaced from a woman's text . . . Certainly it is true that the notion of specifically female language and identity is utopian, like that of a female tradition of poetry written without reference to any masculine discourse" (178-79). The undesirability--as well as the virtual impossibility--of maintaining women's writing in a niche totally separated from men's is certainly recognized by many feminist critics.

It is to two men that we may look for even more forceful statements on this issue of separation. Wayne

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Booth, in an article in Critical Inquiry, acknowledges that "our various canons have been established by men, reading books written mostly by men for men, with women as eavesdroppers." He suggests that men must now join with women in "reeducating [their] imaginations" (74). In his discussion of the value of a separatist literary history, Ruthven makes a similar point in positing the view that such a separation would prevent men and women from learning from one another (128).

Although Katherine Philips would probably never consider the possibility that men might learn from her, the fact was that poets in her acquaintance actually did believe they could. It is twentieth-century critics and biographers of seventeenth-century writers who point this out. Reports on Philips in the twentieth century consistently make a few important points about her seventeenth-century renown. They refer to recognition by her contemporaries that she was a poet of worth, able to take her place alongside of them. They point to the specific signs of their regard in the poems written to her and in comments made about her and her work. Among those who held Philips in high esteem were Cowley, Vaughan, the Earls of Roscommon and Orrery, and William Cartwright. One of the earliest published poems of Philips is the dedicatory poem found in a prominent position among the poems prefaced to the

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1651 edition of Cartwright's work. In discussing Cartwright's popularity, R. C. Goffin, the editor of The Life and Poems of William Cartwright, makes particular mention of Philips' reference to him as a "Prince of Phansie" (xxi). Although F. E. Hutchinson refers to Vaughan's laudatory poem to Philips as "what was expected of a contemporary," he does mention that Vaughan was familiar with Philips' poetry thirteen years before it was published (81). Patrick Thomas corroborates this early relationship between Vaughan and Philips, speaking for the likelihood that the poem printed in Thalia Rediviva came from a manuscript sent by Orinda to Vaughan in 1651 (Thomas 99). A far more positive analysis of the friendship of these two was suggested by Louise Guiney in A Little English Gallery: "Not the least of Henry Vaughan's blessings was his warm friendship with 'the matchless Orinda'" (74), and, she even more forcefully, remarked, "Vaughan's association with her must have been a perpetual sunshine to him and his" (75). According to Patrick Thomas, Vaughan "is remembering Orinda as the precociously brilliant girl he had known during his years in London" when he wrote the poem, "To the Editor of the matchless Orinda" ("Orinda, Vaughan, Watkyns," Anglo-Welsh Review 99).

The same emphasis on Philips as a friend is made

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by Jeanne Loiseau in her biography, Abraham Cowley. She speaks of Philips' visit to Cowley's home, of her composing a poem while there ("Upon the graving of his name upon a tree in Barn-Elms Walks"), and she recounts their mutual respect: "Cowley proclaimed his admiration for the poetess in his Pindaric ode: 'On Orinda's Poems', and in her turn Orinda expresses her esteem in her ode: 'Upon Mr. Cowley's Retirement'" (6). In Philip Souers' biography of Philips, he mentions the fact that although he feels that her occasional poems are not of very high quality they were enthusiastically commended by Cowley and Orrery (The Matchless Orinda 265). Souers emphasizes particularly the skyrocketing of Orinda's reputation after her death: "At once, her reputation was exalted to the very skies, and her memory was lamented in extravagant tributes by her friends" (248). Finally, he believes "She had won an enviable place in the esteem of her contemporaries" (249). This surge in her reputation, this "attracting of the attention of the literary world," making people look upon "her as more than a simple composer of verses on friendship, was a result of the publication of Pompey and Horace, clearly winning her the admiration of the Earls of Orrery and Roscommon . . ." (231).

As a dramatist, then, it is believed that she became a member of a small group of well-known figures

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--the Earl of Orrery, Lord Buckhurst, Edward Howard, Sir Robert Howard, and John Dryden, who "seem to have talked often and at length about drama" (Ward, Life of Dryden 27).

The further enhancement of her literary career stems from her interest in pastoral poetry. This interest, it must be acknowledged, was vital to Philips' thinking. We can see it in her choice of pastoral names for her friends in the Society of Friendship. We can see it in her decision to translate La Solitude of Saint-Amant and Almahide of M. de Scudéry. We can, of course, see it in her own pastoral poems. Elaine Hobby, in this connection, finds that Philips took existing literary conventions and remade them from a female point of view. In a discussion of "A Dialogue betwixt Lucasia and Rosania, initiating that of Gentle Thyrsis," Hobby discovers that Philips "presents loving friendship between women as the part of their lives that is characterized by choice and freedom, but prevented from blossoming by the duties of female existence" (Virtue of Necessity 137). Hobby's feminist interpretation of Philips' pastoral poetry and its relationship to women's friendships seems particularly valid.

William Roberts, on the other hand, emphasizes only her particular craft as a pastoral poet. "Her

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reputation as an authority on the pastoral" (based upon her translation of Scudéry's Almahide) "was fixed by the end of 1662" (Roberts, "Dating of the French Translation of Almahide" 59). Roberts goes so far as to consider her a "small link in the Arcadian chain connecting Vergil, Poussin, and Thomas Gray." (67) Maren Rostvig, too, believes that Vaughan's praise of Orinda and his acknowledgment of her influence on them stems from his particular attachment to the theme of solitude (270). It was Philips' pastoral poems on solitude, Rostvig posits, which accounted for her popularity. The average reader, wishing to get away from the complexity of the metaphysical poems, finds solace in the ideas of solitude and friendship presented by Philips in a style which can be readily grasped (355). Her poems on solitude and Cowley's essays on the topic contribute to its becoming "one of the accepted popular poetic motifs" (445). Rostvig is convinced that "The Matchless Orinda . . . in her own day and age . . . was an object of a perfect frenzy of admiration" (356).

In their twentieth-century summing up of Philips' contemporaries' views of her, Mahl and Koon in The Female Spectator talk about Cowley's writing "extravagant praise of her wit and virtue," of Jeremy Taylor's "praising her as a friend," and of the writing

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of poems to, and the general admiration of her to be seen in the work of John Aubrey, the Earls of Roscommon and Orrery, and of Dryden (156). Talked about as "Being the rage" (Julia Longe, Life and Letters of Martha Giffard 46) and noted as being an inspiration "to the contemporary world" as well as a source of a "liberal education"--these comments underline without question the positive feelings of Orinda's contemporaries about her intellectual prowess. The twentieth-century report on Philips' reputation in her own day has been summed up by Chauncey Brewster Tinker in The Salon and English Letters: "Her contemporaries appear to have been serious in their belief that she had made herself a permanent place in English literature" (94). Clearly, what modern critics, in looking back at an earlier period, conceive to be a poetic reputation in that time is important to the study of that reputation. However, what modern critics conceive to be that poet's reputation at the moment is what we must find out.

In the work of both reader-response and feminist critics, we discover a clear antithesis to Eliot's proscription against concentration on one's own time. If it is the individual response which counts, which authorizes meaning, if "there are no texts, but only interpretations . . . [if] a strong reading is the only

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text" (Bloom, "The Breaking of Form" in Deconstruction and Criticism 7), and if the reader produces the text, obviously the re-creation will be based on the literary, social, and cultural situation of the time of the re-creation. Even though feminist critics use the past history of women as an important underpinning for their theories, much of their focus is on the present, on our own time.

A brief examination of the highlights of feminist critical thinking is necessary before determining the more precise views of some feminist writers on Philips. Feminist commentary on women writers has its basis in the major drives of sexual politics: recognition of the need to fight against sexism, of the need to effect changes in the status of women, and especially in the desire to obtain a share of the power long denied to women. No longer should women be content to worship the "masculine mind," or to accept the inferior position to which they have been assigned in the male power structure. Jan Montefiore finds ambivalence, however, in the mind of the woman writer, whom she describes as having a "mental conflict between collusion with and rebellion against the patriarchal culture in which she lives and against which she pits her imaginative struggle" (Feminism and Poetry 58). Elaine Showalter agrees with this in her view of woman

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as "inside two traditions simultaneously, as "undercurrents . . . of the mainstream" ("Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" 32). According to Ann Jones, women make viable choices in writing within but against the center of the traditions that surround them, using traditional discourse in "visionary and interrogatory ways" ("Assimilation with a Difference" 135).

Certainly the strongest desire of feminist literary critics, although obviously rooted in the need to redress the balance of power and to eliminate patriarchal attitudes, is to find places in the literary canon for deserving women writers too long excluded. In the case of Katherine Philips, it seems to me that this goal has been accomplished.

Commentary on Philips from the feminist point of view considers her skill as a poet, her importance as a woman poet, and her leadership and influence as both poet and person. Her poetic craft, her choice of theme, and her personal qualities are all subjects of interest to writers who contemplate the problem of women's place in the literary world. Philips is commended for her cadences and lyrical grace, her pictorialism, her effective use of metaphor and simile, and her diction. Also mentioned are her artistry in the employment of the Pindaric ode form and the

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elimination of extravagant conceits resulting in her being, along with Waller, a purifier of the language. "When the dust settles," write the editors of Kissing the Rod, "perhaps we shall see that 'Orinda' should be counted amongst those who purified the language of the tribe" (188). In "The Matchless Orinda," Elizabeth Hageman gives her credit for "deft manipulation of language" (567).

Philips' poetic skill is indeed recognized by some, but the motif of her writing and the core of her thinking--friendship among women--is at the heart of much feminist criticism of Orinda. How do twentieth-century critics look upon the concept of friendship advocated by her? There are, of course, multiple answers to this question, from a simple "joyful celebration" (Hobby 1) to a "feminist landmark" (Ferguson 102); from a relationship free of "carnal interest" (Kissing the Rod 188), to a passionate, tender, sensual affinity. It is Lillian Faderman who proposes the last interpretation, saying the poet's emotions "cannot be viewed as simply 'literary'," and explaining her lack of attention to the physical manifestations of love (as in Sappho) to her living in Puritan times. Faderman implies that the conventions of the time, in general, prevented the clear exhibition of such same sex romantic displays of emotion. She

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makes the additional suggestion that men did not mind this closeness of women because they viewed it only as a manifestation of spiritual, not physical passion (71-72). On opposite sides of this issue are Bernikow, who claims that friendship in some of the poems becomes love (23), and Stanford who alleges that Orinda rejects passionate love (xxxvii). Hageman sees her only as an advocate of Platonic friendship, taking for granted "the notion that women could be friends with each other and with men" ("The Matchless Orinda" 573). An interesting comment on this question can be found in an edition of Philips' Poems formerly owned by Sarah Orne Jewett, who notes that Orinda "was the first to dignify the love and friendship of women for each other" (New York Public Library, Berg Collection. 1669 Edition).

The ramifications in a study of Philips' ideas of friendships among women are many. What modern critics believe to be her influence on women of her own time and what special purpose her ideas serve today are of considerable interest for this study of her reputation. Orinda's advocacy of women's love for members of their own sex has a strong influence on other women, Ruth Perry asserts, claiming that for Mary Astell she is an example of what women are capable of (116). Other commentators detect this type of influence as well. Philips persuaded other women to carry on in the

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tradition she had made possible for them. Her recognition and acceptance as a poet paved the way for literary activity among women (Women in English Society 231, The Female Wits 11, Europa Biographical Dictionary 326). "She was the first woman to stand on her own," notes Louise Bernikow, adding that she, "Aphra Behn, Ann Collins, and the Countess of Winchilsea are less corseted than their ancestors by the bounds of modesty, chastity, and virtue" (22).

The "standing on her own" of Bernikow's characterization can unquestionably be applied to Philips' espousal of women's friendships. This particular aspect of Philips' life, of special interest to all feminist critics, is especially pertinent to lesbian critics. Influential feminist critics discuss the issues of female emotional bonding and the degree of its acceptance by society, and the possibility of the simultaneous existence of heterosexual and homosexual love relationships.

Carol Smith-Rosenberg emphasizes that the bonding of women stems from their futile attempts to gain power in the world closed to them by men. She sees as the result of this bonding an improvement in status and prestige for women. Love of women, Smith-Rosenberg asserts, "became a plausible and socially accepted form of human interaction" ("Love and Ritual," Signs 1, 14,

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8). Defining lesbianism as a "sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support" and part of a continuum of "female resistance to enslavement," Adrienne Rich provides the reader with her particular theory ("Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" in Signs 5,4, 648-49). Audre Lorde's definition points the way to the crucial question in any discussion of lesbianism and lesbian criticism--that of the existence of the sexual component. Lorde's characterization of the relationship as the "sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional or psychic" (650), provides the way to the freedom of definition Smith-Rosenberg also suggests in her notion of "sexual and emotional impulses as part of a continuum or spectrum" between committed homosexuality and heterosexuality. She envisions a "wide latitude of emotions and sexual feelings," taking particular note of the fact that there is, in some cultures, a great deal of freedom of movement. Thinking along the same lines, Kennard reminds the reader of Rich's view (in discussing Dickinson) that in the nineteenth century highly emotional relationships with women are accepted because "none of this was perceived or condemned as 'lesbianism'" (Signs 9, 661). Smith-Rosenberg corroborates this point in her discussion of four

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women, respectable and conservative, who demonstrate that love of women could become "a plausible and socially accepted form of human interaction" (Signs 1, 8-9).

Her discussion brings us to the question of the compatibility of heterosexuality with single-sex relationships, since the women she describes find their relationships with women not only totally acceptable socially but reconcilable with heterosexual marriage. In describing another love between two women, Smith-Rosenberg sustains the point that an emotional relationship can be both sensual and platonic, "that marriage does not have to affect such a relationship, and that their affection for each other can remain undiminished, "underscored by their loneliness and their desire to be together" ("Love and Ritual" 4). This observation, another made by Rich in discussing Zora Neale Hurston, commenting on being "drawn to men of intellectual quality," and finding that women provide the major "fascination and sustenance of life," applies to the relationships of Katherine Philips. That she was drawn to Sir Charles Cotterell and to Jeremy Taylor, as well as to Royalist and metaphysical poets, and that they provided her with intellectual stimulation; that she developed close relationships with women who provided her with the "sustenance of

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life," and that she, all the while, remained contented in her marriage seems beyond question.

In a recent article in Signs, Harriette Andreadis takes the position that Philips was indeed a lesbian. If we accept her view that sexual experience is not essential to the lesbian relationship, then the logic of Andreadis' argument cannot easily be denied. Philips' poems to women, she maintains, follow outward conventions to obtain male approval and to make them fit into a socially acceptable tradition of homoeroticism. Since, as Andreadis specifies, it is impossible to get any substantiating data about Philips' actual activities in her female friendships, just exactly what the "lesbian" relationships are cannot be determined. That this question of the sexual component is irrelevant is not at all the case. It seems to me the heart of the matter. Actually, as others have shown, in the seventeenth century, female friendships were of great importance in women's lives. Men's attitudes toward, and their proscriptions against many types of activities, particularly those involving the use of their intellects, made it imperative for women to develop close relationships with other women in order to fulfill themselves. Men's attitudes, then, led to the strong need intellectual women felt to be with women friends. Expressing ideas without fear of

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denigration, having a serious discussion without fear of reprisal, generally being free to be themselves without fear of evoking adverse reactions or responses --these were desires that could be fulfilled only in conversations and in close relationships with other women.

Any discussion of Philips as a lesbian poet must take into account the "lesbian reading" of a text. What is involved in using a lesbian perspective is being conscious of avoiding the traditional male literary point of view and acknowledging the existence of sexual orientation as an important element in creativity (Zimmerman 470, 452). Kennard finds the lesbian perspective part of "the reader['s] redefin[ing] herself in opposition to the text" and "if that self-definition includes lesbianism, this becomes apparent in any commentary she may make on the reading" (662). If this lesbian perspective is part of a critic's awareness, the result will be an increased understanding of the "lesbian aesthetic" (Zimmerman 470). Such a reading will obviously counteract the entrenched male literary outlook. On the importance of sexual orientation as a consideration in criticism, several lesbian critics strongly condemn feminist critics who do not see the crucial role of lesbian criticism in expanding our notions of what is possible

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for women. (471). Adrienne Rich is the most accusatory, reminding feminist critics that any approach which ignores lesbianism or treats it as marginal is "actually working against the liberation and empowerment of women as a group" (647-48). Any evidence of heterosexism in criticism must be eliminated, then, while recognition and awareness of lesbianism is not only desirable, but mandatory, most especially for such feminist critics.

This point of view is applied by Zimmerman in her citing anthologists' choices of poems. It is obvious to her that the heterosexist point of view is evident in their choosing to include "only the heterosexual or nonsexual works of a writer like Philips" (452). This is not an accurate picture of the situation, since "Friendship's Mystery," a poem to Lucasia, is often printed in modern anthologies. Furthermore, how is it possible to be certain about the reasons for an anthologist's choices? Since so many anthologists favor certain poems, may it not simply mean that these are the poems considered by many the most worthy to be read regardless of their sexual orientation? If the argument that lesbian poems are not anthologized is pursued, one might indeed be forced into the conclusion that Philips' "lesbianism" is not the power behind the recognized evidence of her creativity.

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Although controversy exists on some questions associated with Katherine Philips' reputation in the twentieth century, several undeniable conclusions may be drawn. A revival of interest in her and her work began in the early part of the century with her inclusion in collections of seventeenth-century verse. Edmund Gosse, J.R. Tutin, George Saintsbury, and Louise Guiney may all be credited with helping in this renewal. A little later in the century, Philip Souers' biography provided an additional spur. These are perhaps small steps in the direction of giving Philips the possibility of becoming part of the canon. However, as we look at the last three decades of the century, we see giant steps being taken to permit this to happen. Not only is she included in virtually every collection of women's poetry, but in some in which very few other women are included; not only is she widely discussed and approved by lesbian poets because of her emphasis on female friendship, but she is written about in periodicals and is often the focal point of discussions of women poets from various feminist perspectives. In spite of the fact that the feminist movement is indubitably the stimulus in these last decades of the century to the restoration of Katherine Philips to what many consider her rightful place among women poets, the attention paid to her, although less

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vigorous in the opening years of the twentieth century, indicates that the century and a half of very nearly total neglect (the fate of many seventeenth-century poets) was coming to an end.

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Conclusion

In both the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries, the political climate for women was--and is --in the process of change. Women are beginning to take stands, to come forward, to be heard. More than ever before, they and their views are being taken into account. In the seventeenth century, although progress was limited because of the persistence of repressive attitudes, some women did insist on taking religious and political positions of their own. While arguments were made calling for women to return to their proper spheres of running households and mothering, women did continue to step beyond their set limitations both in politics and in the literary world. To an even greater extent, of course, all this is true in the twentieth century as well.

The initial impetus for the development of a healthier climate for women is visible in the early part of this century, but the strong drive for truly effective change had to wait for the 1960's. With the coming of the feminist movement, all was "changed utterly." Women were not only permitted in politics, in the world of work, and in the world of writers, but were recognized and encouraged there as well. This is

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not to say that dissenting voices have been silenced, but in many ways they are at least muted.

Katherine Philips has fared well in both times. In her own day, she was afforded recognition from many sources and her work received high praise. That she had influence on other poets, and that this influence extended to the point of imitation in both thought and use of language, is not in doubt. The "English Sappho" was respected, even revered, for her effective promotion of friendship in her poetry. Other women poets were advised to read her work and to use her as a model. If one could write like Orinda, it was said, one would have reached the summit of poetic achievement. Some added directly, or by implication, "for a woman poet," but not all did so. Several male poets compared themselves unfavorably with Philips, not only acknowledging her superior poetic skill, but recognizing, because of her, the possible superiority of women poets in general. These were indeed statements about a woman writer hardly to be expected, and they give clear evidence of the changing climate in the seventeenth century.

The changing climate is a vital factor in the improvement of women's reputations, but it is not the whole story. One must deal with the effect of personality and behavior on the reputation of a woman

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poet. How much of the praise of Philips was a reflection of her demonstrating the desired womanly attributes, of her moving in the right circles, of her having friends among the royalists who were willing to promote her literary achievements? It is often true that when she is compared to both the Duchess of Newcastle and to Aphra Behn, she gets the better rating because her behavior is lauded while theirs is blamed. It must be admitted, therefore, that some of the "matchless Orinda" designation has to do with the person of the poet. Since commentary on Philips' work and on her character and personality are so often contiguous or even simultaneous so as to be difficult to differentiate, this problem, in both centuries, must unfortunately remain unsolved. With no hard evidence available, only speculation is possible.

Unquestionably, however, a woman forging a trail, an advocate of women's friendship in her poetry and in her life, a woman whose very existence is bound up in her associations with men friends in the literary world--surely such a woman must receive recognition in the world of the twentieth century as a person worthy of note. The emphasis here is indubitably on "person" rather than "poet." It is difficult to deny that in the last several decades of this century women who have been in the forefronts of movements promoting women in

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ways not previously considered possible, receive the highest praise.

In addition, special emphasis is placed today on discovering or rediscovering women writers who have been neglected. Although Katherine Philips, because she is recognized in the early part of the century, does not fit precisely into these categories, she was included in anthologies and is virtually always mentioned when women writers of the past are discussed. Acknowledgment of her worth is assumed by feminist critics who see in her a courageous figure finding a place as a poet rarely occupied before, advocating relationships between women rarely so clearly delineated before, and remaining at the same time within the accepted tradition of the poets of her day.

To regard Katherine Philips today as a valuable poet deserving of considerable recognition is not problematic. Looking back on her poetry, her letters, her translations, and on the renown she achieves in her own day in itself offers ample reason for her acceptance. Philips does not need the special preference for women used to promote admission into the canon. Philips' work gives her a place in the canon among seventeenth century poets, a place she had without question in her day and for several decades thereafter, a place she lost for a time--as did even

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the greatest seventeenth century figures--and a place to which she is now rightfully returned.

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