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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Susan Denise Boerckel entitled "Woman Speaking to Woman: The Reshaping of Male Conventions in Katherine Philips' 'Lucasia' Poems." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

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WOMAN SPEAKING TO WOMAN: THE RESHAPING OF MALE CONVENTIONS IN KATHERINE PHILIPS' "LUCASIA" POEMS

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ABSTRACT

Although Katherine Philips held an unusual position in seventeenth-century society (she was an accepted woman writer), she was praised more for her virtue than her verse. Because of her early fame, modern critics have tended to dismiss Philips' capabilities as a writer, and thus, have overlooked her carefully constructed poetics of friendship between women. In a series of poems addressed to Anne Owen ("Lucasia"), Philips reworks male conventions into a philosophy of friendship. Working from an essentially Christian/Neo-Platonic world view (much like Henry More's), Philips constructs a schematics of friendship which depict "Lucasia" as the embodiment of the Ideal. Philips also utilizes the Pythagorean concept of harmonies and the Alchemical principal of sympathies within the philosophy of friendship.

The "Lucasia Poems" also reflect Philips' reworking of literary traditions. Like much of Donne's poetry, these poems are written in the "private mode" and thus convey the highly personal nature of this friendship. Like Spenser, Philips uses elements of the pastoral to construct an "Arcadia." In addition, Philips is probably the first woman writer since Sappho to put another woman on a pedestal. This thesis analyzes the "Lucasia Poems"

in light of Philips' reshaping of these conventions, and suggests that she succeeds in constructing a poetics of friendship for women.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Biographical Sketch

The brief life of the "Matchless Orinda," Katherine Philips, coincided with a turbulent period in British history. She witnessed the upheaval of the Civil War and Commonwealth England and celebrated, in 1660, the Restoration of Charles II to the throne. Like many others, Katherine Philips' family had conflicting loyalties during the Civil War and Commonwealth Era. Philips, having rejected a Puritan upbringing, was an Anglican, more sympathetic to the Royalist cause than the Parliamentary. Her husband, James Philips on the other hand, was a Cromwellian, a Welsh representative to the Long Parliament and a Puritan.[1] As Phillip Souers, Orinda's only modern biographer, has pointed out, Philips chose to de-emphasize these surface conflicts both in her life and in her poetry. She preferred a world of her own making, governed by the ideal precepts of friendship.[2]

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[1]Phillip Souers, The Matchless Orinda (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), p. 52.

[2]Souers, p. 53.

Consequently, most of Katherine Philips' poetry addresses a select group of friends and discusses the nature of friendship. The frequency of this theme is such that, until Souer's book in 1931, much of Philips' fame was based on the mistaken impression that she organized a salon of sorts, dubbed the "Society of Friendship."[3] This society supposedly included Philips' friends of both sexes and fostered philosophical conversation about friendship.

As Souers explains, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the "Society of Friendship" existed as a literal reality.[4] Philips does not mention its existence in her letters and only refers to it twice in her poetry. Rather than a salon, the term "Society of Friendship" more probably refers to a poetic expression of an ideal. And, more specifically, it only occurs in Philips' poetry addressed to Anne Owen. As Souer points out, these references hardly support the idea that the Society included both sexes;[5] the Society was only ". . . such that will transmit to Fame/Lucasia and Orinda's Name."[6]

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[3]Sir Edmund Gosse, Seventeenth Century Studies (London: n.p., 1914), p. 234.

[4]Souers, p. 44.

[5]Souers, p. 41.

[6]Katherine Philips, "Friendship in Emblem, or the Seal. To my dearest Lucasia," in Minor Poets of the Caroline Period, ed. George Saintsbury, I (Oxford:

Philips wrote many poems about Anne Owen, "Lucasia," during their friendship from 1652 until Owen's marriage in 1662. Owen lived in Orielton, Wales, not far from Philips' home in Cardigan. She exerted a powerful influence on Philips; Souers shows that the two spent much time together, apparently with the blessing of Philips' husband.[7]

This intimate relationship came to an end, however, when Owen married Marcus Trevor and became Lady Dungannon.

Although Philips dutifully traveled to Ireland in 1662 and helped Lucasia set up her new household,[8] she records her displeasure with the marriage in a letter to her close friend, Sir Charles Cotterell: "I went to the [marriage] ceremony vex'd to the degree, that I could not disguise my concern . . . . I have wept so much that my Eyes almost refuse me this present Service."[9] Cotterell, in answer to this letter, begs Orinda to be calm, and Philips, heeding this advice, writes to him to show that she has weathered the storm: "I now see by Experience

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Clarendon Press, 1905), p. 529. All subsequent quotations from Philips' poetry are taken from this edition and will be noted parenthetically by line numbers in text.

[7]Souers, p. 52.

[8]Souers, p. 133.

[9]Katherine Philips, Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus (London: n.p., 1729), p. 41.

that one may love too much, and offend more by a too fond sincerity, than by a careless Indifferency . . . . We may generally conclude the Marriage of a Friend to be the Funeral of a Friendship."[10]

Though Philips here laments the death of a Friendship, Orinda and Lucasia's fame has survived. Philips' poetry to Lucasia stands out in her brief cannon, as the most intellectually mature, sustained expression of her vision of Friendship.

General Overview

To be accepted as a woman writer in seventeenth-century England was a highly unlikely proposition. Fueled first by the Puritans' endorsement of Pauline Patriarchy and reflected later in the century by the Restoration inversion of the ideal of the courtly woman, the general view of women as subordinate, passion-ridden, and intellectually fragile was supported by the prevalent religious, literary and philosophical thinkers. At the close of the Renaissance, Francis Bacon sought to inaugurate the "truly masculine birth of time."[11]

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[10]Philips, p. 53.

[11]Brian Easlea, Witch Hunting, Magic, and The New Philosophy (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980), p. 152.

Encouraged by mechanical philosophy, which proclaimed that an examination of matter revealed the workings of Nature, Bacon sought to unlock Nature's secrets, "conquer and subdue her to shake her to her foundations."[12] As Brian Easlea points out, the mechanical philosophy reinforced in the seventeenth century a world view which was "sternly masculine."[13] Since only man had been made by God in his likeness, he was afforded the unique opportunity to command and appropriate nature, the feminine principle.

Thus, in a century which sought to dominate and control the feminine principle, a woman asserting herself as a writer was viewed as an anomaly. A woman writer was either seen as innately immoral, as was Aphra Behn, or was treated as a harmless novelty, a scribbling woman. Katherine Philips, to her contemporaries, fell into the latter category. Praised as the "Matchless Orinda," Philips was revered as late as the nineteenth century because she was thought to represent the "ideal" woman writer. John Aubrey writes that Philips possessed a "good-natured disposition" and was not at all "highminded."[14]

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[12]Easlea, p. 152.

[13]Easlea, p. 152.

[14]John Aubrey, Brief Lives, ed. A. Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 242.

In the same manner, Mary Hays praises her "sweetness," her unassuming manner, her "charming" conversational ability.[15] Philips was accepted as a writer because she was thought to be virtuous and moral; her reluctance to have her verse read outside a handful of friends attested to her feminity; she had no pretensions to male ambition.

Thus, her verse was important only insofar as it manifested her virtue. Her writing was held up as an endorsement of the prevalent social view of women. As late as the twentieth century, it is Orinda's reputation, and not her verse, which is praised.

Ironically, in the midst of a tremendous renewal of interest in women writers of the seventeenth century, Philips' reputation as a writer has declined considerably; paradoxically, she is dismissed now for the very reason she was considered "matchless" by earlier critics. B.G. MacCarthy views Philips' fame as due solely to her morality; she sees Philips as a superficial talent who worked harder on developing her persona than on developing

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[15]Mary Hays, "Katherine Philips," in Female Biography; or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women (London: Thomas Davison for Richard Phillips, 1803), 6, 61.

her talent.[16] Yet, while a study of an Aphra Behn is undoubtedly crucial to our understanding of woman writers of the time, affording an almost textbook examination of a woman writer oppressed by her society, a re-examination of Katherine Philips' writing is equally important. What we find in her verse is a feminist consciousness transforming male intellectual and religious traditions into a unique poetics. Philips is highly aware of the tremendous religious, political and scientific developments occurring in Commonwealth and Restoration England and is able to reshape the intellectual mileu to support her philosophy of friendship between women. She may in fact be the first writer since Sappho to focus on relationships between two women. Her most mature poetry concerns her friendship with Anne Owen; as "Lucasia," Owen becomes the muse, the guiding spirit in Philips' philosophy of friendship. This thesis will examine the "Lucasia Poems" in light of Katherine Philips' role as a woman writer conscious of being a woman, and reshaping in her poetry a male intellectual tradition.

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[16]B.G. MacCarthy, Women Writers: Their Contribution to the English Novel 1621-1744 (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1944), p. 30.

More and Neo-Platonism

Like her contemporary Henry More, Katherine Philips champions the potential for beauty within the human soul and seeks to understand the instinctual longing that forces humanity to strive for perfection in a fallen world. Like More, Philips is essentially a humanist; rather than perceiving the universe from a mechanical point of view as did Hobbes and Descartes, Philips, like More, conceives of the universe from an essentially Christian/Neo-Platonic point of view that embraces elements of both alchemical lore and a Pythagorean cosmology.[17] But, whereas More uses his philosophical framework, above all else, to champion Christianity, Philips, though certainly a Christian, uses her philosophical/religious framework to reshape a philosophy and religion of friendship.

At the heart of her poetry is an attempt to convey a vision of the One. This One is the source of all beauty, all truth, and Divine Love. While More identifies the One consistently as God, Philips is more likely to place Friendship, as personified by Lucasia, at the pinnacle of this schema in her poetry.

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[17]Aharon Lichtenstein, Henry More: The Rational Theology of a Cambridge Platonist (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 51.

In both Philips' and More's schematics, one can conceive spatially of mankind as participating in, perhaps possessing a spark of the Divine One by way of a vertical chain of being (as Philips expresses this relationship, our love is "the next to Angel's love") and by way of an horizontally emanating force which permeates all nature. This horizontal emanation enables not only mankind, but all manifestations of nature to possess a portion of the Divine One. Thus, all elements of nature are drawn to each other due to their common source. Both Philips and More share this sympathetic (as opposed to mechanical) view of nature, and this view, with its alchemical association, enables Philips to express poetically the merging of her soul with Lucasia's to form a Divine Friendship. For More, of course, this view expresses Christ's affinity for mankind.

This emanation throughout Nature of a Divine One is explained by both writers, not only in terms of sympathies but by way of a Pythagorean idea of universal, numerical harmony. The One diffuses itself throughout Nature in perfect gradations; hence, musical chords struck in unison mirror the One even though they are composed of distinct notes.[18] Similarly, for Philips, friends can harmonize

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[18]Ernst Cassirer, The Platonic Renaissance in England, trans. James Pettegrove (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1953), p. 34.

and thus resemble the One; while for More, through Christ man can achieve perfect harmony with God.

Thus, rather than viewing Nature as Bacon and Hobbes did, and explain complex actions in terms of simpler ones, Philips, like More and the Cambridge Neo-Platonists, proceeded from the whole to the parts, and liked to show how the one original force governing nature is infinitely manifested in nature. For these writers, the universe must be explored in terms of Divinity's vital link with its manifestations.

Philips, like the alchemists, believed that since Divinity was linked to the material world, the interaction of material elements could result in a new, rarified substance. Hence the alchemical principle of "sympathies," a natural attraction between divine portions of the material world, abounds in Philips works. The interaction of sympathetic souls could produce that rare, refined touchstone--friendship.

For Orinda, this sympathetic, vitalistic basis for friendship is due not to any rational decisions on a person's part, but rather to an intuitive longing to participate in the Divinity which is the ultimate source of life.[19] Though, like More, Philips believed human reason resembles and is linked to Divine reason, it is by

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[19]Lichtenstein, p. 140.

no means the primary means by which humankind is able to participate in the One. Human reason, to Philips, is more often than not the source of "dull philosophy," that which seeks to explain nature by cause and experiment. As such, this self-centered power of ratiocination gives humanity the illusion of power.

Rather than furthering the cause of self-centered rationality, Philips seeks to participate in the One through a process of self-negation. By an assimilation into the One made possible by the Divine Love of Friendship, she can become a purer, more refined "Flame." As an account of this process her poetry achieves a human warmth and complexity that is lacking in the philosophy of her contemporaries like More. More needed no human intermediary in his quest for the Divine, but "Orinda" needed a "Lucasia," at once the embodiment and the elusive vision of love.

Poetic Traditions

Just as Philips drew from the established philosophical and religious ideas of the time to develop her philosophy of Friendship, she also drew upon an established literary tradition. Though the mid-seventeenth century was a period of flux in English literary history, Philips' verse shows strong links to the Renaissance traditions of Spenser and Donne. Much in the spirit of

Spenser, Philips utilizes the pastoral throughout her poetry, and in her writing we see some of the finest poetry in the metaphysical mode of the mid-seventeenth century.

Philips does not merely imitate these literary models, however. Perhaps her most striking departure from mainstream literary techniques is her utilization of a feminine model for her ideals: she is probably the first woman writer since Sappho to place another woman on a pedestal and strive to be worthy of her attention. She similarly transforms the metaphysical and pastoral elements in her poetry to convey her philosophy of friendship.

Like John Donne, she strives to express immediate, felt experience in such a way as to elucidate the meaning of that experience. Yet, in doing so, she does more than approximate the surface charm of Donne's writing; she effectively utilizes, as Earl Miner expresses it, "the most distinctive and distinguishing feature of metaphysical poetry . . . the private mode."[20] The audience addressed in metaphysical poetry is not primarily the reader at large (as in Johnson or Dryden's poetry), but

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[20]Earl Miner, The Metaphysical Mode from Donne to Cowley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 3.

rather a specific, often personal audience.[21] Thus, she uses the natural poetic vehicle of expression in metaphysical poetry, the dialogue or monologue.[22]

Although the biographical connection between Donne's poet-speaker and his audience is often difficult to ascertain, the audience of Philips' most successful poetry is clearly Anne Owen, Lucasia. Most of the poems to Lucasia begin with a direct address to this private audience ("Come, my Lucasia . . .") and then establish a dramatic situation within which the poet-speaker can analyze specific issues for that specific audience. The reader at large is excluded from active participation. One gets the sense in Philips' poetry, as in Donne's, of eavesdropping on a very private exchange between two friends.

For Philips, as for Donne, the private mode was a very natural means of poetic expression. Both sought to convey "felt thoughts" that put them at odds with the outside world, to posit the outside world as the "other." It is this sense of self-containment in Philips' writing, of a need to distance herself poetically from the social world, that links her to another literary tradition, the pastoral.

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[21]Miner, p. 4.

[22]Miner, p. 5.

Certainly, for Philips, the outside world was an impediment to her construction of an "Arcadia" based on the friendship between two women. She felt the world had deteriorated from a "Golden Age," when the precepts of friendship reigned, to an increasingly corrupt world that perverted the ideas of friendship. Along these lines, she exhibits the primary impulse of the pastoral: to re-establish the Golden Age poetically.[23] Thus, in a poetic struggle to recapture the Golden Age, which Lucasia embodies, Philips assumes two postures toward ordinary life. She either withdraws poetically into a created world (the "Society of Friendship") where Lucasia reigns harmoniously, or she seeks to reform the decadent age using Lucasia, the personification of the Golden Age, as an example. As Toliver points out, these tendencies are characteristic of seventeenth-century pastoral.[24]

Her most overt link to Pastoral tradition is, of course, her use of highly stylized names: "Lucasia," "Antenor," "Rosiania." It is probably due to the use of this convention that critics have called her "affected."

These critics, however, overlook a tension quite evident in the Lucasia poems and underscored by her use of

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[23]Harold Toliver, Pastoral Forms and Attitudes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 5.

[24]Toliver, p. 16.

two literary genres that naturally embody the thematic tension between the ideal and real worlds. As in Donne's poetry, Philips' use of the private mode enables her to write highly personal verse which still suggests a larger world view. Thus, the metaphysical mode is used to convey Philips' overall vision, a search for the One through Friendship, as well as her personal relationship with Lucasia. By using the pastoral, Philips further emphasizes the distance between the world of friendship and the real world. She establishes an Arcadia from which the actions of the real world can be judged. If, as McLuhan has suggested, the "medium is the message," Philips draws from two "media," the pastoral and the metaphysical, that most closely fit her message: the ideals of Friendship are not the mores of the real world, and these ideals are best understood by examining the personal exchange between two very close friends.

Grouping the Poems

From internal evidence alone, it is very difficult to establish an accurate chronology for Philips' known poetry; nor is it really within the scope of this thesis to attempt such a chronology. Therefore, while some poems can clearly be grouped since their dates are given in titles or because their subject matter has been pinpointed by Souers as occurring at a certain point in Philips'

life, I have ordered my analysis primarily along thematic grounds.

A close reading of Philips' Lucasia poems reveals two main themes:

1. A celebration of Lucasia as Muse. In the majority of the Lucasia poems, Philips portrays her as the active, rejuvenative force in their friendship, a source of inspiration for Philips, the "lesser" soul.
2. A longing for Lucasia to reassume her position as Muse. Three poems within the otherwise optimistic Lucasia series reflect tensions between the two friends. Rather than celebrating Lucasia, these poems lament Lucasia's reluctance to continue as Muse and plead with her to assume her former position in her friend's life.

I have included two poems in my analysis, "Friendship" and "A Friend," which, although they do not directly address Lucasia, stand as poems essential to understanding Philips' reworking of traditional male-dominated ideologies. Thus, the following chapter begins with these two poems, moves to a discussion of the poetry which celebrates Lucasia, and concludes by analyzing of the poems which suggest a breakdown of this "inspired" friendship.

CHAPTER II

THE "LUCASIA POEMS" IN CONTEXT

"Friendship"

The poem "Friendship" conveys Philips' purest expression of the philosophy of Friendship. It sustains a much more impersonal tone than usual, only the last two lines containing the "we" and "I" which are generally prevalent in the "Lucasia poems." Here, the author defines the hierarchy of Friendship by intermingling elements of Neo-Platonism, alchemy, and Christianity.

The poem begins by distinguishing between those who do not perceive the exalted nature of friendship and those refined souls who do. Clearly, Philips is a spokeswoman for these refined few:

> Let the dull brutish World that know not Love,
> Continue heretics, and disapprove
> That Noble flame; but the refined know,
> 'Tis all the Heaven we have here below.
> Nature subsists by Love, and they do tie
> Things to their causes but by sympathy.
> Love chains the different Elements in one
> Great Harmony, linked to the Heav'nly Throne. (1-8)

Philips here immediately establishes a distance from the normal world; it is dull and brutish. By comparison, the world of Friendship is bright and refined. Symbolically, she works here with the idea of Divine Love as a Flame, thus drawing from the alchemical principle of fire as a primary, purifying substance. As this flame is a "noble" one, it is a symbol of divinity. By not participating in this divinity, the world is brutish and consequently heretical.

She establishes the idea of a hierarchy in line 4. The "noble flame" exists in purest form in heaven but is linked to, and is the source of, human love. For Philips, love is the manifestation of the noble flame on earth. Having alluded to a Neo-Platonic idea of gradations, ("'Tis all the Heaven we have here below") she explains the pervasiveness of Divine Love throughout Nature in terms of "harmony" and "sympathy." Thus far in the poem we recognize a rather traditional schema: a Neo-Platonic hierarchy, a conception of the One as a Pure Flame of Love, the world's participation in this flame by way of harmonies and sympathies.

As yet, Philips has not clearly equated Divine Love with Friendship. She is deliberately establishing the traditional tenets of her Philosophy before introducing

the unique additions to the tradition in lines 27-56. As a poetic strategy, this structure is quite effective. The audience accepts the first tenet of a philosoophy of friendship and is thus prepared to accept more unusual ideas.

In line 27, Philips begins to rework her metaphysics. She redefines friendship as an abstract of the Noble Flame ("this is Friendship, that abstracted flame/which . . . mortals know not how to name"); in line 37, she explains why friendship is an abstract of Love; it is the purest manifestation of love "which burns the clearer because it burns the higher." In Philips' philosophy of Friendship, there are gradations within the Noble Flame. Friendship represents the pinnacle of Love's flame; it is "Love's elixir."

The elevation of Friendship is not the only interesting aspect of this poem, however. Philips also introduces her ideas on marriage in relation to the hierachy of love:

> All Love is sacred, and
> the marriage tie
> Hath much of honour and
> divinity.
> But Lust, Design, or some
> unworthy ends
> May mingle there which are
> despised by Friends . . .
> So when the end is served their
> Love will bate,
> If Friendship made it not more
> Fortunate. (29-36)

While Philips, in theory, does not exclude marriage from the realm of Friendship, it is clear that she perceives marriage as a state much more susceptible to the perversions of "Lust" and "Design." It is interesting here that she describes the shortcomings of marriage in intellectual ("Design") as well as physical terms ("Lust").

Throughout the poems, "Design" is used in a negative sense to describe any imposed intellectual stricture of society (male society). In marriage, the man "designs" the plot, dictates the terms. Clearly, for Philips, this design violates an important precept of friendship: that it be a mutually rewarding state. In addition to this manipulative quality, marriage overly emphasizes the physical: "Is with offensive smoke accompanied" (line 41). This preoccupation with the physical is avoided in marriage only by "resisting" this tendency. Only then will marriage become friendship.

Friendship "scorns the assistance of a foreign aid (line 46), exists on a spiritual, asexual level: Friendship is plain, "alone" (line 48), "calm as a virgin" (line 49), a "Saint in Vision" (line 51).

"A Friend"

This poem easily reads as a companion piece to "Friendship" though they are separated in Saintsbury's

edition. The first four stanzas further develop the philosophy of friendship established by the first poem and point out, quite specifically, that friendship can exist, and nobly, between women. The poem also addresses the human qualities which must exist in friends for their relationship to aspire to divine qualities.

Stanzas one and two again develop the idea of Friendship as the apex of the hierarchy of love. This force permeates the material world where it is manifested by the intuitive sympathies and harmonies which exist between all matter and beings. Philips also adds a new dimension to Friendship: time.

In stanza one, she envisions a Golden Age of Friendship: an "earliest, Whitest, blesseds't time" (line 4) when mankind was safe, happy and satisfied with the "Universal Law" of friendship. This age was Golden because, although a manifestation <u>in</u> time of a timeless quality (Divine Friendship, which exists in its purest form apart from the realm of time, "antedates a glad eternity" (line 11)); for Philips, the Golden Age is more closely linked to divinity than the present age. The Golden Age is "earliest," therefore friendships were blessed; as the world grows older, friendship is steadily corrupted.

She seems to be asserting, however, that the Divine Elements of Friendship can be manifested in a later age if

one recognizes the gross elements which have corrupted it and strives to "liberate" Friendship. For example, Friendship need not be dictated by social factors; it is "nobler than kindred or the marriage band (line 13)." Friendship does not depend on the physical world for definition. Even as manifested in time, it belongs more to the spiritual world of the soul than the physical/ social world:

> If souls no sexes have,
> for men t'exclude
> Woman from Friendship's vast
> capacity
> Is a design injurious or
> rude,
> Only maintain'd by partial
> tyranny.
> Love is allowed to us and
> Innocence,
> And noblest friendships do
> proceed from thence. (1-5)

This is an interesting argument. Philips is again establishing that Friendship is beyond the physical realm and that, though the soul may be encased in time, in itself the soul is sexless. Thus, to exclude women from Friendship's vast capacity is a "design," an exclusion based on temporal, social precepts. To Philips, this is totally unreasonable; women can form "noblest friendships."

The remaining stanzas of the poem explain the particular qualities which exist in a Friend. Since

Friendship occurs in Time, it has multiple characteristics: Honour, Trust, Discretion, and Constancy. But these must be distinguished from mundane attitudes "such as every breath fans to and fro" (line 32). The traits of true friendship are neither intellectually nor emotionally based; they are intuitive qualities arising out of that "chiefest things in Friends . . . sympathy" (line 24).

Philips establishes that women can develop noblest friendship by way of a traditionally feminine means of interpreting the universe--intuition:

> There is a secret that doth
> friendship guide,
> which makes two souls
> before they know agree . . . . (25-26)

"To the truly Noble Mrs. Anne Owen,

on my first Approaches"

From internal evidence, this poem appears to be the first of Philips' tributes to Mrs. Anne Owen, written before Owen entered the "Society of Friendship" and was christened "Lucasia." Here, Philips explains the hopes she has for their friendship and the roles each friend is to play. It is written in the private mode; the author is explaining the qualities of a particular friendship which set it apart from the world and make it a source of surprise to the world. The prevalent theme is the woman

as role model, as a source of inspiration for another woman. Although Philips uses traditional literary devices to develop this idea, the idea itself is somewhat radical coming from a woman writer.

Philips employs elevated imagery to describe Owen; she puts Owen on a pedestal and thus assumes what has traditionally been considered a male stance. She begins with an image of Owen as conquerer:

> Madam,
> As in a triumph conquerers
> admit
> Their meanest captives to
> attend on it,
> Who though unworthy, have
> the power confest,
> And justified the yielding
> of the rest:
> So when the busy world
> (in hopes t'excuse their
> own surprise)
> Your conquests persue
> And find my name, they will be
> apt to say
> Your charms were blinded, or else
> thrown away
> There is no honor got in gaining
> me . . . . (1-9)

Philips here establishes a motif of Owen as all-powerful conquerer and Philips as an unworthy captive. Owen becomes a female Caesar marching her captives in a triumphant processional. Both the conquerer and the conquered are female, and the busy world is "surprised" to see in Owen not only a woman of aristocratic stature but one capable of powerfully influencing other women.

Philips emphasizes her own unworthiness as contrasted to Owen's nobility. The world may well accept a woman of Owen's stature, but will be hard pressed to understand why she wasted her charms on Philips, "a prize not worth" Owens' attention. Both from society's point of view (why would a woman waste such gifts on another woman?) and from an individual point of view (why would one so noble deign to receive the affections of one much less her equal?), this friendship is baffling.

Philips offers Owen a possible solution to the world's queries:

> But this will clear you,
> that tis general,
> The worst applaud what is
> admir'd by all. (11-12)

Philips is only admiring what is generally recognized as Owen's exemplary character. Philips, however, does not conclude on this note. She is hopeful that Owen cannot only conquer her but transform her "unworthy" soul:

> And since in you all
> wonders common are,
> Your votaries may in your
> virtues share
> While you by noble magic
> worth impart:
> She that can conquer,
> can reclaim a heart. (17-20)

Owen here is depicted as a divine magician who can tap into her concentrated virtues and impart them at will. By

sharing these virtues with her "votaries," she can "reclaim" them, redeem them. The use of "votaries" here further emphasizes the religious significance Philips perceives in their relationship. Owen is not only conquerer and magician but a symbol of divinity.

The poem concludes with an affirmation of belief in Owen's power to transform Philips and assigns the ultimate glory of this transformation to Owen:

> For 'tis more honour
> that the world should know
> You made a noble soul,
> than found it so. (23-24)

"To the Excellent Mrs. Anne Owen,
upon her receiving the Name of
Lucasia, and Adoption into our
Society, December 28, 1651"

In this poem, written to commemorate Lucasia's adoption into the "Society of Friendship," Philips again celebrates Lucasia as a muse, the ideal of Friendship. There is an exultant tone to the poem. To Philips, Lucasia's entrance into the society is a "blessing" that will ensure its future glory. To posterity, December 28 will be important enough to be kept as a "perpetual holy day" (line 24).

Whereas in "First Approaches" Philips remarked simply that in Lucasia "all wonders common are," here she

embodies and elaborates on her friend's "wonderous" nature in an extended metaphor. The basis for the conceit is the traditional comparison of woman to the sun:

> But as through a burning-
> glass
> The Sun more vigorous
> doth pass,
> Yet still with general freedom
> shines;
> For that contracts, but not
> confines:
> So though by this her beams
> are fixed here,
> Yet she diffuses Glory everywhere. (7-12)

For Philips, it is not sufficient to simply describe Lucasia as the Sun: she is the sun <u>intensified</u> "as through a burning-glass." Lucasia is a concentrated, active personification of the sun whose influence, like the sun's rays, radiates throughout the Earth. The movement in this stanza is from a highly compact image (Lucasia as the source of Glory) to an idea of the dispersal of this glory throughout Nature. Lucasia's qualities are contracted, but not confined. Like the sun, Lucasia is a rejuvenative, Divine Power.

The overall sense of this stanza is an important clue to Philips' perception of their friendship. Above all else, Lucasia is depicted in terms of <u>motion</u>: she is the active principle in their friendship. As the muse, she is the source and director of Friendship.

Philips is careful to stress Lucasia's superiority:

> Her mind is so entirely
> bright,
> The splendour would but
> wound our sight,
> And must to some disguise submit,
> Or we could never worship it.
> And we by this relation are
> allow'd
> Lustre enough to Lucasia's cloud. (13-18)

The author here is alluding to the Platonic image of the One which is too powerful for humanity, in its frailty, to endure full force. Lucasia's purity is so intense, she must "submit" to a disguise before her unworthy supplicants can even begin to worship her. They receive what small portion of her divinity they can, but only "lustre enough to be Lucasia's cloud."

In the final stanza, Lucasia is likened to a sacred personage who transforms the Society of Friendship into a "Temple of Divinity" (line 20). Philips clearly is ready to worship her.

"Friendship in Emblem, or the Seal. To my dearest Lucasia"

This poem elaborately explains the symbolism found in the Emblem of Friendship: two joined hearts beneath a compass with spread points. It has an air of ceremony; Philips is solemnly proclaiming the purity of friendship inherent in her relationship with Lucasia: theirs is an

"immortal love" that will "transmit to Fame/Lucasia and Orinda's name." Conscious that she is breaking new ground in poetry, she is equally confident that her concepts are noteworthy enough to insure the fame of both her muse and herself.

Stanzas one through five explain the symbolism of the joined hearts, the seat of this friendship:

> The Hearts thus intermixed
> speak
> A love that no bold shock
> can break;
> For join'd and growing both in
> one,
> None can be disturb'd alone. (1-4)

Their unity is based on "the mutual knowledge" of their hearts. They are intuitively drawn together. Thus, just as sympathetic elements in nature "intermix" alchemically to form a new, purer substance, Orinda and Lucasia's hearts mix to form a new, "growing" unity.

These hearts are capable of passion: Orinda admits "They flame, tis true, and several ways" (line 13), but she is quick to emphasize in stanzas four and five the purifying nature of love's flame:

> But still those flames
> do so much raise,
> That while to either they incline,
> They yet are noble and divine.
>
> From smoke or hurt those
> flames are free,

From grossness or mortality:
The Heart (like Moses' Bush
presumed)
warm'd and enlightened, not
consumed. (14-20)

While their hearts are drawn together ("incline" to each other), the spiritual flame of their love purges them from the taint of physicality. Hence, theirs is not a consuming flame of lust, but a love that is smoke free, like the elemental fire of Alchemy. Like Moses' Bush, this fire is magical; it has a boundless source of energy and can purify, elevate, enlighten.

Stanzas six through eight elaborate on the meaning of the compass:

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
. . . . . .
And in their posture is
exprest
Friendship's exalted interest:
Each follows where the
other leans,
And what each does, this
other means.
. . . . . .
As when one foot does stand fast
And t'other circles seek to cast,
The steady part does regulate
And make the wand'rer's motion
straight . . . (21-32)

These stanzas show the author's familiarity with Donne's "Valediction Forbidding Mourning." She is explaining that, paradoxically, friends can be two separate, physical beings, yet compose one spiritual entity as well. Just as when one compass leg "leans," the other leg necessarily follows suit, so the interests of friends are inextricably bound together: one friend naturally follows the other's lead. Similarly, one friend can provide a steadying influence for the other.

Philips extends this Donnesque interpretation of friendship to include a Pythagorean conception of mathematical harmony.

> And as in Nature's nothing's
> set
> So just as lines in number
> met;
> So compasses for these b'ing
> made,
> Do Friendship's harmony
> persuade. (45-48)

Just as a compass is made to demonstrate an inherent mathematical harmony, the intersection of lines at a point, so friendship demonstrates the mathematical harmony of the universe when two friends "intersect" in unity.

For Philips, this unity is invariable. Like a compass, she and Lucasia are merged beyond division. Though their bodies, like the points of a compass, <u>can</u>

separate, their souls, like the head of a compass, are sealed.

This poem stresses the almost mystical union of these two women in friendship and reflects the intensity with which Philips views their relationship.

"To my Lucasia"

In this poem, Philips examines the body/soul duality. How can a body and mind, which move in time, attain the perfection which exists in the spiritual realm?

The first twelve lines assert Philips' basic way of perceiving the universe: one must move from a conception of the whole in order to understand parts:

> Let dull philosophers
> enquire no more
> In Nature's womb,
> or causes strive
> t'explore,
> By what strange harmony and
> course of things
> Each body to the whole a
> tribute brings;
> What secret unions secret
> neighbourings make,
> And of each other how they do
> partake,
> These are but low experiments . . . (1-7)

These who seek to explain nature by physical causes remain on the lowest level of understanding. "True" science seeks to discover the spiritual substance which exists in

matter. Hence, Philips seeks to redirect these experimenters:

> . . . he
> That Nature's entire harmony
> would see,
> Must search agreeing souls,
> sit down and view
> How sweet the mixture is,
> how full, how true;
> By what soft touches spirits
> greet and kiss,
> And in each other can
> complete their bliss. (7-12)

Friendship here is seen as the "union of agreeing souls," the purest substance with the capability to refine those who can perceive it. Only the most spiritually pure individual in time can even begin to "see" this spiritual realm:

> A wonder so sublime,
> it will admit
> No rude spectator . . .
> he that can
> Friendship revere, must be a
> noble man . . . . (13-16)

Philips aspires by way of her Friendship with Lucasia to move "above the common rate of things" (line 14), so she can contemplate this sweet mixture. Yet, she questions her innate worthiness:

> ... he that knew my unimproved soul,
> Would say I meant all friendship to
> control . . .
> To such friendship add some patience
> now.

O may good Heav'n but so much
virtue lend,
To make me fit to be Lucasia's
friend. (21-25)

Just as alchemists sought to discover spiritual virtues so that the divine portions could be utilized and separated from the base, Philips asks Heaven to "lend" her virtue so that she may be freed from her base, self-centered designs to control the nature of Friendship.

Thus, Philips discovers a path by which she might dissolve the body/soul duality: by losing herself in Lucasia, she can become spiritual and receive the "sweet mixture" of friendship:

. . . I'll forsake myself, and seek
a new
Self in her breast that's far
more rich and true.
Thus the poor Bee unmark'd
doth hum and fly.
And dron'd with age would
unregarded die,
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. (29-36)

Like the Bee, Philips would die "unregarded" unless blessed with a "lucky drop" of this mixture. However, once blessed by Lucasia with Friendship, Philips' death is ultimately rebirth; she gains "Eternity."

"Friendship's Mystery, To my Dearest Lucasia"

This is undoubtedly one of Philip's finest poems; well structured, highly metaphysical, it is much in the manner of Donne's "The Sun Rising" and Jonson's "Come, My Celia, Let Us Prove." The poem begins with a direct address to Lucasia:

> Come, my Lucasia, since we see
> That miracles men's faith do
> move,
> By wonder and by prodigy
> To the dull, angry would let's
> prove
> There's a religion in our Love.

Philips is attempting to "prove" here that friendship between two women should command the respect of men--indeed the rest of the world. Thus, if she must express this friendship in religious terms for the world to agree with her, she will do so. While these opening lines are much like Jonson's: "Come my Celia, let us prove while we can,/the sports of love . . .," Philips is modifying Jonson's theme significantly. She does not want to "prove" the sports of love, and thus glorify the physical aspect of love; rather, she wishes to explore the spirituality inherent in friendship and thus "prove" this love exists on a much more exalted level.

The poem draws from a variety of beliefs to validate Philips' religion of love: stanza one introduces the need to reform the world via "miracle"; stanza two deals in Calvinist terminology with the paradoxical notion of predestination and free will; stanza three discusses alchemical merging of souls; stanzas four and five discuss, via Calvinism, the kingdom of the soul; and stanza six concludes with a symbolic re-enactment, in High Anglican terminology, of the Eucharist.

In stanza two, Philips establishes that her friendship with Lucasia was preordained:

> For though we were design'd
> t'agree,
> That Fate no liberty destroys
> But our Election is as free
> As Angels', who with greedy
> choice
> Are yet determined to their
> joys. (6-10)

This "Election" does not bind them in any negative sense; rather Lucasia and Orinda are made free to aspire to the divinity inherent in their friendship. This freedom will not lead to Depravity but rather to exaltation. There is an underlying idea in this stanza that Orinda and Lucasia are irresisitibly drawn to this Friendship. Thus, it is preordained that their friendship should transpire.

In stanza three, the loss of individual identity enables an integration of two souls:

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. (11-15)

Their hearts are strengthened by this loss of self. Orinda and Lucasia intermix in such a way that they can form a One and release the divinity inherent in both their souls.

In stanza four, Philips extends the idea of predestination as a "captivity" to make a point about the kingdom of heaven:

We court our own captivity
Than thrones more great and
innocent:
'Twere banishment to be set
free,
Since we wear fetters whose
intent
Not bondage is but ornament. (16-20)

Paradoxically, the "captivity" of friendship enables Orinda and Lucasia to aspire to a throne far more elevated than an earthly one. Here Philips seems to be alluding to Charles II in exile. His forced exile was intended as "bondage," an impediment to his egaining an earthly throne. Friendship will allow Philips to transcend any need of earthly glory. Hence, for Philips to deny her

captivity with Lucasia is truly banishment far worse than physical exile.

Stanza five continues to develop the idea of freedom in captivity:

> Divided joys are tedious found,
> And griefs united easier grow
> We are ourselves but by rebound,
> And all our titles shuffled so,
> Both Princes and both subjects too. (21-25)

Philips in this stanza indicates an equality in her Friendship with Lucasia. Their identities have merged so completely that they are interchangeably ruler and ruled. This stanza is interesting because, for the first time, Philips places herself on the same level as Lucasia.

Stanza six explores the loss of personal identity in Friendship through High Anglican imagery of the Eucharist. In the religion of friendship the process of this loss becomes a ritual of rebirth:

> 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. (26-30)

Philips here is using an age-old conception of victimage. Like the Body of Christ, the hearts of the two friends are symbolically sacrificed on the alter of friendship. As in the Eucharist, this offering represents the supreme sacrifice. To die in such a manner ensures a glorious rebirth.

This is a bold conclusion and exhibits Philips' total integration of Friendship into the religious ideas of her time. She has reached a thematic high point, and the remainder of her poetry to Lucasia lacks the complex unity exhibited in this poem.

"Lucasia and Orinda parting with Pastora and Phillis at Ipswich" and "To Pastora being with her Friend"

In the two poems which deal with Pastora and Phillis, we are presented, in a sense, with the doubles of Lucasia and Orinda. In the parting poem, we get the sense of the strength, the inspiration given to Lucasia and Orinda by these friends:

> In your converse we best
> can read,
> How constant we should be;
> But, 'tis in losing that,
> we need
> All your philosophy. (1-4)

Pastora and Phyllis are examples of how "constant" Orinda and Lucasia "should be." Obviously, to have spent time with these friends invigorated Orinda; yet one detects a note of envy in these lines. Could it be that with the parting of these friends Orinda loses an example of the philosophy of friendship needed to prop up a reluctant muse? Obviously so, for the next poem to Pastora and Phillis reads as a tribute to their friendship, yet curiously concludes:

> Fear not infection from
> my Fate,
> Though I must be unfortunate
> For having paid my vows
> due, I
> Shall soon withdraw, wither,
> and die. (41-44)

This is not the estatic death which precedes rebirth found in "Friendship's Mystery" or "To my Lucasia"; this is the death of the "unregarded" bee who is not blessed with the lucky drop. Pastora and Phillis have upheld the philosophy of friendship; Orinda has become "infected." Her illness does not stem from a lack of effort on her part; however, she has "paid her vows due." Rather, her illness is like that of the medevial poet who has been rejected by his courtly lover. Clearly, Philips' muse has deserted her; hence, she sees her fate as unavoidable: she must "withdraw, wither, and die."

"To my Lucasia, in defence of declared Friendship"

This poem elaborates on Philips'despondency in the Pastora and Phillis poems. As we have seen, the great majority of the Lucasia poems celebrate the vibrant effect the muse has had on the poet. This poem is a twenty-stanza argument for the Muse to become active once again, so that the heights of friendship Philips and Owen have attained together will not vanish as mysteriously as they appeared:

> Now we have gain'd, we
> must not stop, and sleep
> Out all the rest of our mysterious reign:
> It is as hard and glorious to keep
> A victory, as it is
> to obtain. (9-12)

Lucasia, the muse once depicted as pure motion, is now asleep.

Philips implores Lucasia to rejuvenate her with a glance:

> But as the morning Sun to
> drooping flowers,
> As weary travellers a shade
> do find,
> As to the parched violet
> evening showers;
> Such is from thee to me a
> look that's kind. (65-68)

This is the language of the courtly lover seeking to transform the most trivial glance into a moment of import. This is not the state of equilibrium where titles are shuffled so that neither knows which is "Prince or subject." Philips is imploring Lucasia to merely "be kind to me." She is desperately trying to rekindle the flame of Friendship:

> Before we knew the
> treasures of our
> Love,
> Our noble aims our joys
> did entertain;
> And shall enjoyment nothing
> then improve?
> 'Twere best for us then to
> begin again. (5-8)

Philips' best poetry occurs when her Muse and her are in harmony: her verse is tight, her themes complex. This poem suffers because of the poet's uncertainty. Its tone is shrill, its metaphysics hollow. As Lucasia withdrew, Philips apparently quit writing poems to celebrate the Philosophy of Friendship. This poem could hardly have been written during the same general time span as her optimistic poems. Most probably, this poem was written very near the time of Lucasia's marriage; very possibly, this is Orinda's last poem to Lucasia.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The Legacy of the "Matchless Orinda"

Katherine Philips is hardly the "scribbling woman" or the superficial talent critics have labelled her. In many respects, she breaks new ground in her poetry: her verse anticipates Dryden's thematic struggle to reconcile alternate world visions; she openly celebrates the potential of woman's relationship with woman, and, most importantly perhaps, she carefully constructs a metaphysics of friendship for women. Despite the collapse of her own friendship with Lucasia, she still extends to Pastora and Phillis the possibility that they may achieve the ideal expressed in her poetry.

The world view Philips envisioned was radically at odds with the world she lived in. Man had fashioned, finally, religious, political, and scientific justifications for his own superiority. Philips not only asserted that women were equally capable of noble friendships, she proclaimed that the souls were "sexless." From her world view, a proclamation of superiority revealed "dull philosophy" at work.

She transformed male conventions in her poetry; Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Alchemy, Pythagorean

cosmology, the private mode, pastoral vision are all reshaped richly. Her poetry is complex, her metaphysics sound. Philips utilized traditionally male conventions to shape a poetic voice that would enable woman to speak sincerely and deeply to another woman.

Yet the muse Philips celebrated failed her in the end. Until her death, Philips concentrated on translating Corneille's Pompei into English. It is highly ironic that Philips, who spent so much of her brief career developing a private mode of poetry that expressed a woman's vision, should end her career translating, for the public, a man's vision.

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Rogers discusses "a significant new interest in woman's nature and position" in the eighteenth century.

_____. The Troublesome Helpmate. Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 1966.

Rogers examines pmisogyny in literature from the Bible to twentieth-century literature. In the seventeenth century, the subordination of women was accepted "almost universally," and the most enthusiastic endorsement of the Pauline doctrine ("God hath denied to woman power to commande man") can be found in religious writings of the period.

Rowton, Frederic. The Female Poets of Great Britain. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1848.

Rowton gives a brief biography of Philips and remarks that "her versification . . . is chaste and harmonious." Selections here include "A Country Life" and "Ode Against Pleasure."

Souers, Phillip W. The Matchless Orinda. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931.

To date, the definitive biography of Philips. Souers corrects many early errors by Philips' biographers, identifies the society of friendship as a concept rather than an actual salon, and offers new evidenced which helps identify many of Philips'

poetic characters. Although Souers incorporates a critique of Philips' poetry in this work, he primarily gives a biographical reading of the works.

Thomas, Keith. Religion and the Decline of Magic. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.

Thomas meticulously documents the widespread belief in magic in England from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century and attempts to explain why such beliefs declined in popularity in the eighteenth century.

Thomas, Patrick. "Orinda, Vaughn, and Watkyns: Anglo-Welsh Literary Relationships during the Interregnum." Anglo-Welsh Review, 26 (1976), 86-102.

Though Philips resided in Wales during this time, she maintained her ties to English literary society, having poems appear in Cartwright's Comedies, Tragicomedies, with other Poems and Vaughn's Olor Iscanus, both published in 1651.

Todd, Janet. Women's Friendship in Literature. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980.

Although Todd primarily discusses novels, she offers a definition of "sentimental" friendship which is applicable to Philips' ideas: characterized by a "close, effusive tie," such friends revel in "rapture and rhetoric" and thus "provide close emotional support in a patriarchal world." This friendship "may even threaten and replace heterosexual love."

Toliver, Harold. Pastoral Forms and Attitudes. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971.

For Toliver, the pastoral exhibits a "dialectical, tensive structure" which operates on many levels and changes significantly from Sidney's and Spenser's poetry to Stevens'.

Walker, Jennifer R. "My Hand A Needle Better Fits: Anne Bradstreet and Women Poets in the Renaissance." Dalhousie Review, 54 (1974), 436-50.

Walker calls Philips' work important "attempts from a more sophisticated, less provincial stance to enter a male preserve," and attempts to define common characteristics of women poets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Williams, Jane. The Literary Women of England. London: Saunders, Otley, 1861.

Williams offer a brief biography of Philips and remarks that "Specimens of her poetry can scarcely fail to dissapoint the expectations raised by such elegies; but in versification . . . her compositions show an acquaintance with the literature of her day."

VITA

Susan Denise Boerckel was born August 24, 1958 in Augusta, Georgia. After graduating from Richmond Academy in 1976, she attended Queens College in Charlotte, North Carolina, and received a B.A. in English in 1980. In 1981, she was awarded a Graduate Assistantship at The University of Tennessee and began work on an M.A. in English. In 1982, she received a Teaching Assistantship from Tennessee.

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