Recent Studies in the English Renaissance

ELR bibliographical articles are intended to combine a topical review of research with a reasonably complete bibliography. Scholarship is organized by authors or titles of anonymous works. Items included represent combined entries listed in the annual bibliographies published by PMLA, YWES, and MHRA from 1970 through, in the present instance, 2000 with additional items. The format used here is a modified version of that used in Recent Studies in English Renaissance Drama, ed. Terence P. Logan and Denzel S. Smith, 4 vols. (Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1973–78).

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RECENT STUDIES IN MARGARET CAVENDISH, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE (1623–1674); WILLIAM CAVENDISH, DUKE OF NEWCASTLE (1593–1676); ELIZABETH CAVENDISH EGERTON (1627–1663); AND JANE CAVENDISH CHEYNE (1622–1669)

IRENE BURGESS

MARGARET CAVENDISH, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE (mid 1993–2000)

EDITIONS

Although there is no complete edition of Cavendish’s writing, Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson have edited Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader (2000) and Kate Lilley has edited The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World and Other Writings (1992; rpt. 1994). A large number of Cavendish texts are on the textbase Renaissance Women Online (RWO), a subset of Women Writers Online by the Brown University Women Writers Project (http://www.wwp.brown.edu). Anne Shaver, ed. The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays (1999), provides six plays. Editions of individual works are listed below.

I. General Studies

Cavendish’s autobiography, A True Relation of My Birth, Breeding, and Life, is available in Bowerbank and Mendelson and as an RWO text with introductory materials by Nancy Weitz Miller.

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Anna Battigelli, *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* (1998), asserts that Cavendish’s overriding interest in the life of the mind controls how she creates herself as an exiled Cavalier. According to this critical biography, the uncensored prodigality of Cavendish’s work leads to her creation of many forms of subjectivity in addition to her identity as a Cavalier. In her introduction to *The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays* (1999), Anne Shaver provides a useful overview of biographical issues currently surrounding Cavendish studies. Douglas Grant, *Margaret the First: A Biography of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, 1623–1673* (1957) and Kathleen Jones, *A Glorious Fame: The Life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, 1623–1673* (1988) remain important. Steven Max Miller, “Margaret Lucas Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle,” *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 131 (1993), 36–48, provides pictures and a short introductory biography of Cavendish.

*In-Between* (an English language journal printed at the University of Delhi in New Delhi, India) 9 (2000), has an entire volume on Margaret Cavendish, and Emma Rees has edited a special issue of *WoWr* 4 (1997), dedicated to Margaret Cavendish. References to these issues can be found below.


II. Studies of selected topics


Eve Keller, “Producing Petty Gods: Margaret Cavendish’s Critique of Experimental Science,” ELH 64 (1997), 447–71, sees in Cavendish’s Observations and New Blazing World a critique of the social forces that inform the new mechanist experimental sciences in a way that presages current feminist questionings of received knowledge. John Rogers, The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton (1996), pp. 177–211, discusses Cavendish’s mechanist natural philosophy of self-propelled matter as a radical concern with free will much like Milton’s. However, Cavendish’s proto-feminist way of looking at culture ultimately does not work because her approach cannot reconcile the interior autonomy of domesticity with the exterior autonomy of politics. Sarah Hutton, “In Dialogue with Thomas Hobbes: Margaret Cavendish’s Natural Philosophy,” WoWr 4 (1997), 421–32, examines Cavendish’s natural philosophy as different from Hobbes with regard to sources for matter, yet sharing important ideas such as the foundation of reasoned deduction instead of experimental induction. Hutton thus places Cavendish more squarely among the thinkers of her day rather than as a figure outside the male realm of science.

Rebecca Merrens, “A Nature of ‘Infinite Sense and Reason’: Margaret Cavendish’s Natural Philosophy and the ‘Noise’ of a Feminized Nature,” WS 25 (1996), 421–38, sees Cavendish’s Epicurean atomism with its focus on the power of nature over being as a challenge to males, such as Robert Boyle in his A Free Inquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notions of Nature, who wish to establish the primacy of God in the formation and movement of matter. Marguerite Corporaal, “‘My Mind a Busy Fool’: Margaret Cavendish’s Reflections on Science,” In-Between 9 (2000), 147–60, discusses Cavendish’s use of the term “fancy” to describe her method as a “legitimizing strategy” in the face of bans to women participating in scientific discourse. Lisa Anscomb, “‘A Close, Naked, Natural Way of Speaking’: Gendered Metaphor in the Texts of Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society,” In-Between 9 (2000), 161–77, examines Cavendish’s employment of “gendered metaphor” in her scientific writing to establish her legitimacy with regard to a male scientific mode that frequently used masculine imagery to describe proper scientific thought. Neil Ankers, “Margaret Cavendish and the Nature of the Individual,” In-Between 9 (2000), 301–15, sees Cavendish’s scientific theory evolving as she struggles with the mirroring of the natural world and the political world of tension between the individual and the community.

pp. 218–34, compares Cavendish’s and Anne Conway’s views on the essential matter of the physical world with Cavendish tending to value the physical nature of matter while Conway values the spiritual, and suggests that their very different approaches to science are part of the comparative newness of the field of scientific inquiry. Stephen Clucas, “The Duchess and the Viscountess: Negotiations Between Mechanism and Vitalism in the Natural Philosophies of Margaret Cavendish and Anne Conway,” *In-Between* 9 (2000), 125–36, sees many similarities in Cavendish’s and Conway’s viewpoints on atomism despite differences in their understanding of the role of God in the movement of atoms. Jo Wallwork, “Old Worlds and New: Margaret Cavendish’s Response to Robert Hooke’s *Micrographia,*” *Meridian* 18 (2001), 191–200, discusses Cavendish’s disagreement with Hooke’s view of the use of microscopic discovery because of her belief that the microscope provides only representations of reality rather than reality itself. Rebecca Totaro, ‘‘Fly from that Pestilent Destruction’: Plague in the Works of Margaret Cavendish,” *In-Between* 9 (2000), 119–23, considers Cavendish’s use of the plague in her various works as a utopian metaphor for “spreading evil.”


Lisa Hopkins, “Margaret Cavendish and the Cavendish Houses,” *In-Between* 9 (2000), 63–75, suggests that *Bell in Campo, Blazing World,* and *The Convent of Pleasure* reveal Cavendish’s pride in the properties of the Newcastle family. Hilda L. Smith, “A General War amongst the Men [but] None amongst the Women: Political Differences between Margaret and William Cavendish,” in *Politics and
the Political Imagination in Later Stuart Britain, ed. Howard Nenner (1997), pp. 143–60, argues first, that the relationship between the two was not as happy as people assume and second, that the philosophical viewpoints of the Duke and Duchess were quite distinct and not mere copies of each other. Ellayne Fowler, “Margaret Cavendish and the Ideal Commonwealth,” *UtopSt* 7 (1996), 38–48, considers the similarities and contrasts between Margaret Cavendish’s “The Inventory of Judgement’s Commonwealth” and William Cavendish’s *Advice to Charles II*; while they both have a strong desire for hierarchal harmony supported by a strong monarchy, William Cavendish is directly addressing a monarch while Margaret Cavendish is developing a social utopia.


Elaine Hobby, “‘Delight in a Singularity’: Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, in 1671,” *In-Between* 9 (2000), 41–62, considers Cavendish’s revision of *Nature’s Pictures* and *The World’s Olio* in 1671 in comparison with other
women’s work published that year as a means of examining exactly how Cavendish’s claims to “singularity” work in practice. Anne Shaver, “Agency and Marriage in the Fictions of Lady Mary Wroth and Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle,” Pilgrimage for Love: Essays in Early Modern Literature in Honor of Josephine A. Roberts, ed. Sigrid King (1999), pp. 177–90, contrasts both women in their fictions of marriage based on their own experiences and their explanation of the problems of marriage as a comment on the lack of consonance of women’s ambitions with marriage for all women. Susannah Quinsee, “Margaret Cavendish’s Critical Heritage and the Creation of an Infamous Gendered Literary Identity,” In-Between 9 (2000), 89–105, suggests that Cavendish’s poetry reveals a desire to mediate between traditionally masculine and feminine posturing as a response to potential criticism of her desire for literary fame. Examining Cavendish’s work in light of Hamlet and Ophelia’s concern with honesty, Rhonda R. Powers, “Margaret Cavendish and Shakespeare’s Ophelia: Female Role-Playing and Self-Fashioned Identity,” In-Between 9 (2000), 107–15, states that Cavendish excuses her writing by saying it is the truth, and therefore, it is honest, chaste behavior. In “‘But Madam’: The Interlocutor in Margaret Cavendish’s Writing,” In-Between 9 (2000), 17–27, Susan M. Fitzmaurice claims that the use of the interlocutor in various guises in Sociable Letters and Convent of Pleasure allows Cavendish to express her subjectivity through dialogue.

Anne Shaver, “Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle,” in Teaching Tudor and Stuart Women Writers, ed. Susanne Woods and Margaret P. Hannay (2000), discusses ways to develop a full course on Cavendish’s themes of science, women, royalism, and theater as well as ways to incorporate her work into survey courses.

D. Rhetoric. Using detailed rhetorical analysis of Margaret Cavendish’s biography of her husband, Patricia A. Sullivan, “Female Writing beside the Rhetorical Tradition: Seventeenth-Century British Biography and a Female Tradition in Rhetoric,” International Journal of Women’s Studies 3 (1980), 143–60, discusses the difference between male and female biography with male writers more concerned about following strict rhetorical forms, while female writers are concerned with providing detailed narratives of the person. Christine Mason Sutherland, “Aspiring to the Rhetorical Tradition: A Study of Margaret Cavendish,” in Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women, ed. Molly Meijer Wertheimer (1997), pp. 255–71, discusses Cavendish’s attempts to enter the rhetorical worlds of oration in Oration of Divers Sorts and scientific discourse in New Blazing World, thus establishing female roles in typically male genres.

III. Studies of individual works

Second Part of Bell in Campo, The Bridals, and The Convent of Pleasure. Convent is also in Paper Bodies (Editions, above), and in a separate edition by Amanda Rowsell (1995). Amanda Holton has edited The Sociable Companions (1996). Bell in Campo is in Paul Salzman, Early Modern Women’s Writing, 1560–1700 (2000), pp. 167–245. The RWO textbase has contextual materials for the preliminary matter by Jeffrey Masten, for Loves Adventures by Sara Mendelson, for The Several Wits by Laura Rosenthal, for Youth’s Glory and Death’s Banquet by Linda R. Pavus, for The Lady Contemplation by Irene Burgess, for Wits Cabal by Line Cottegenies, for The Unnatural Tragedy by Alexandra Bennett, for The Public Wooing by Susan Wiseman, for The Matrimonial Trouble by Erika Mae Olbricht, for Nature’s Three Daughters by Claire Gheeraert-Graffeuille, for The Religious by Cecile Jagodzinski, for The Comical Hash by Sarah Moreman, for A Comedy of the Apocryphal Ladies by Alexandra Bennett, for The Female Academy by Lisa Gim, for The Sociable Companions by Andrew Hiscock, for The Presence and Scenes by Gweno Williams, for The Convent of Pleasure by Anne Shaver, and for A Piece of a Play by Susannah Quinsee.

Jeffrey Masten, “Mistris Carnivall: Margaret Cavendish’s Dramatic Productions,” in his Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama (1997), pp. 156–64, analyzes the prefatory materials of the 1662 Plays to discuss Cavendish’s emerging authorial position as sole creator of original works. Karen Raber, “‘Our wits joined as in matrimony’: Margaret Cavendish’s Playes and the Drama of Authority,” ELR 28, 464–93, claims that in the process of presenting herself and other aristocratic women as autonomous, Cavendish is also supporting her husband’s aristocratic role in the Royalist cause; she includes discussion of the ambivalence portrayed in the placement of Newcastle’s additions to her plays. Raber, “Warrior Women in the Plays of Cavendish and Killigrew,” SEL 40 (2000), 413–33, considers the image of the Amazon in the plays of Anne Killigrew and Cavendish; for Killigrew, the importance of the image lies in the women’s submission to the patriarchal order, while for Cavendish, the warrior women use their martial skills to transform society. Comparing Moliere’s Les Femmes Savantes and Thomas Wright’s Female Vertuoso to Cavendish’s The Female Academy and Youth’s Glory and Death’s Banquet, Laura Favero Carraro and Antonella Rigamonti, “Women’s Discourse on Science and Learning and the Image of the Learned Lady,” In-Between 9 (2000), 137–46, contrast Cavendish’s learned women with the more traditionally misogynistic versions of learned women in the other two texts.

Mihoko Suzuki, “Margaret Cavendish and the Female Satirist,” SEL 37 (1997), 483–500, examines Cavendish’s use of the traditionally male form of satire to unbalance patriarchy in her dramas. Erin Lang Bonin, “Margaret Cavendish’s Dramatic Utopias and the Politics of Gender,” SEL 40 (2000), 339–54, discusses the utopian potentials of The Female Academy, Bell in Campo, and The Convent of Pleasure for female autonomy. Although the utopias disintegrate eventually, the
suppression by the male-dominant society is reinforced through the very act of change. Bernadette Andrea, “Coming Out in Margaret Cavendish’s Closet Dramas,” In-Between 9 (2000), 219–41, asserts that although patriarchy ultimately triumphs in Convent of Pleasure and The Female Academy, nevertheless Cavendish offers “women’s public speech and women-identified pleasure” as a means of mediating that triumph. Hero Chalmers, “The Politics of Feminine Retreat in Margaret Cavendish’s The Female Academy and The Convent of Pleasure,” WoWr 6 (1999), 81–94, sees Cavendish’s female retreats in the two plays supporting “the Interregnum Royalist’s need to promulgate the notion that the feminised space of retreat is in some sense the centre of power.”

1. The Convent of Pleasure. Laura Rosenthal, “‘Authoress of a Whole World’: The Duchess of Newcastle and Imaginary Property,” in her Playwrights and Plagiarists in Early Modern England: Gender, Authorship, Literary Property (1996), pp. 58–104, asserts that in her claims to originality Cavendish attempts to retain property of the self as subject; the homoerotic tensions in The Blazing World and Convent of Pleasure reinforce these claims by depolarizing gender differences, thus allowing aristocratic women a more flexible, self-possessed subject position. Andrew Hiscock, “‘Here’s no design, no plot, nor any ground’: The Drama of Margaret Cavendish and the Disorderly Woman,” WoWr 4 (1997), 401–20, suggests that by allowing the women in her drama verbal acuity, physical activity, and the expanded horizons of cross-dressing, Cavendish enabled her female characters to explore their identities so as to question the patriarchal role for women while still thriving within that system. Misty G. Anderson, “Tactile Places: Materializing Desire in Margaret Cavendish and Jane Barker,” TexP 13 (1999), 329–52, discusses Cavendish’s Convent of Pleasure as an answer to Cartesian abstraction and rationalism by placing value in the “tactile” world of sensory pleasure that affirms the value of female materiality. Julie Sanders, “‘A Woman Write a Play!’: Jonsonian Strategies and the Dramatic Writings of Margaret Cavendish; or, Did the Duchess Feel the Anxiety of Influence?,” in Readings in Renaissance Women’s Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594–1998, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (1998), pp. 293–305, considers the influence of Jonson and Shirley on Cavendish’s approach to The Convent of Pleasure, particularly with regard to the performative aspects of females.

works with regard to what is offered women in their traditional roles. Jeanne Addison Roberts, “Convents, Conventions, and Contraventions: Love’s Labor’s Lost and The Convent of Pleasure,” in Shakespeare’s Sweet Thunder: Essays on the Early Comedies, ed. Michael J. Collins (1997), pp. 75–89, and “Margaret Cavendish Plays with Shakespeare,” RenP (1997), pp. 113–24, compares Cavendish’s The Convent of Pleasure to Shakespeare’s Love’s Labours Lost, suggesting some influences from the older drama in terms of subverting the New Comedy’s theme of the submissive female. Robin DeRosa, “‘What Have I On a Petticoat?’: The Convent of Pleasure and the Reality of Performance,” In-Between 9 (2000), 275–86, reads The Convent as a text that examines the ambivalence of reality versus performance in understanding the truth. Alison Findlay, Gweno Williams, and Stephanie J. Hodgson-Wright, “‘The Play is Ready to be Acted’: Women and Dramatic Production, 1570–1670,” WoWr 6 (1999), 129–48, claim that seeing closet drama as unperformable is underestimating plays such as Egerton and Cheyne’s The Concealed Fancies and Cavendish’s The Convent of Pleasure because actual production reveals technical and dramatic forethought. Harriette Andreadis, “Writers Transgressing: Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn,” in her Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics, 1550–1714 (2001), pp. 83–91, examines Convent to show that Cavendish “identifies the sexual implications of the passionate friendships and erotic intimacies only hinted at in the idealized poetry” of Katherine Philips and others of her contemporaries.

2. Bell in Campo. Alexandra Bennett, “Margaret Cavendish and the Theatre of War,” In-Between 9 (2000), 263–73, examines Cavendish’s creation of a female leader based on actual historical figures in a redemptive allegory of Royalists during the Civil War.

3. The Female Academy. Rebecca Merrens, “‘Ignoring the Men’: Female Speech and Male Anxiety in Cavendish’s The Female Academy and Jonson’s Epicoene,” In-Between 9 (2000), 243–60, sees Cavendish’s play as exploring the ironic and often contradictory dichotomy between speaking and silent women as presented in Jonson’s play.


Comparing Hooke’s Micrographia to Cavendish’s Blazing World, Mary Baine Campbell, “Outside In: Hooke, Cavendish, and the Invisible Worlds,” in her Wonder and Science: Representing Worlds in Early Modern Europe (1997), pp. 181–220, claims that Cavendish’s work calls into question the New Science’s ability...
to see into the interiority of things. Instead, it is merely examining the physical surface without going into the real interior, which, according to Cavendish, is immaterial in nature. Marina Leslie, “Gender, Genre and the Utopian Body in Margaret Cavendish’s Blazing World,” *UtopSt* 7 (1996), 6–24; rpt. in her *Renaissance Utopias and the Problem of History* (1998), suggests that by taking advantage of the Utopia’s looseness of generic code, Cavendish renews the Utopia. Her combination of natural history, anti-woman narratives of female autonomy, and the romance make her activities as writer and thinker “active, heroical, and world-transforming.” Oddvar Holmesland, “Margaret Cavendish’s *The Blazing World*: Natural Art and the Body Politic,” *SP* 96 (1999), 457–79, addresses some of the seeming contradictions in Cavendish’s approach to the primacy of the self and the natural rationality of an aristocratic order by suggesting *The Blazing World* offers an ambivalently dialectical resolution based on notions of a balance in nature that encompasses both the individual and the natural order.


in the context of Joseph Hall’s *Mundus Alter et Idem* and Richard Brome’s drama, *The Antipodes*, to examine how in the two male texts the idea of an antipodal world encourages a return of domestic concerns because of a fear of “women on top”; by making women on top the emblem of domestic virtue, Margaret Cavendish’s text turns the standard trope around. Amy Boesky, “‘No Subjects to the Commonwealth’: Nation and Imagination in Margaret Cavendish’s *Blazing World,*” in her *Founding Fictions: Utopias in Early Modern England,* (1996), pp. 116–40, considers the image of fire as a negotiation of the theatrical ambivalence “between ruin and restoration” for women in a society created by men.

Carrie Hintz, “‘But One Opinion’: Fear of Dissent in Cavendish’s *New Blazing World,*” *UtopSt* 7 (1996), 25–37, argues that in *Blazing World,* Cavendish expresses such a great desire for uniformity and unity to achieve a stable harmony that all individual diversity must be quashed in a way that makes Cavendish’s own uniqueness disquieting. Ros Ballaster, “Restoring the Renaissance: Margaret Cavendish and Katharine Phillips,” *Renaissance Configurations,* ed. Gordon McMullan (1998), pp. 234–52, sees both women establishing a different fiction of the Renaissance relationship between patron and artist to include women precisely because of their lack of public power. Robert Ignatius Letellier, “Some Feminine Perceptions of Freedom in an Age of Restoration and Absolutism: Prophetic and Realistic Voices in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish and Madame de Lafayette,” in *Trends in English and American Studies: Literature and the Imagination,* ed. Wolfgang Gortschacher and M. Klein Holger (1996), pp. 129–44, compares Cavendish’s and de Lafayette’s treatments of the subject of female autonomy in a time of growing desire to reinforce constrained visions; in Cavendish’s case, it results in a work that envisions a whole other world of possibility for women. Claire Jowitt, “Imperial Dreams? Margaret Cavendish and the Cult of Elizabeth,” *WoWr* 4 (1997), 383–99, claims that Cavendish uses the figure of Elizabeth not only to push for Royalist sentiment but also to determine a role for the reign of imaginative women in a male-centered world of reason.

C. *A True Relation of My Birth, Breeding, and Life.* Bowerbank and Mendelson’s *Paper Bodies* contains Cavendish’s *A True Relation,* pp. 41–63. The RWO text has contextual materials by Nancy Weitz Miller.

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21 (1997), 52–65, sees Cavendish’s demand for self-recognition as a distinctly pleasurable act akin to modern psychological views of narcissism and contrasts it to Hobbes’ more traditionally linear version of the rational self-server that people mistakenly see as the gendered approach to Cavendish’s viewpoint. Effie Botonski, “Marching on the Catwalk and Marketing the Self: Margaret Cavendish’s Autobiography,” ABSi 13 (1998), 159–81, argues that Margaret Cavendish employs the ability of the autobiography to package the self into a “marketable” commodity in answer to her detractors; despite her attempts to redress her eccentric reputation, her desire for fame and notice undermine her self-representation. Hero Chalmers, “Dismantling the Myth of ‘Mad Madge’: The Cultural Context of Margaret Cavendish’s Authorial Self-Presentation,” WoWt 4 (1997), 323–40, suggests that Cavendish’s desire for fame through self-presentation in actuality becomes a means of using her self-conceived image as a valorous female to support her husband’s place in the aristocracy as well as in the Royalist agenda.


Bronwen Price, “Feminine Modes of Knowing and Scientific Enquiry: Margaret Cavendish’s Poetry as Case Study,” Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700, ed. Helen Wilcox (1996), pp. 117–39, claims that in Cavendish’s discussion of atomism and other scientific principles in Poems and Fancies, she challenges the process of male scientific knowledge through a concentration on the multivalent nature of thinking that breaks up patriarchal binary thinking. Randall Ingram, “First Words and Second Thoughts: Margaret Cavendish, Humphrey Moseley, and ‘the Book,’” JMEMS 30 (2000), 101–24, contrasts Cavendish’s use of the preface in her introduction to Poems and Fancies with other male-authored texts of the period. He concludes that while these texts written by men were trying to establish the book as an objective entity, separate from the author, Cavendish was interested in establishing the subjectivity of her work through excessive prefatorial material and as a way to deal with possible complaints about a female-authored text. Sylvia Brown, “Margaret Cavendish: Strategies Rhetorical and Philosophical against the Charge of Wantoness: Or, Her Excuses for Writing So Much,” CMat 6 (1991), 20–45, examines the
proscriptions in Cavendish’s works, particularly *Poems and Fancies*, against women’s speech by stressing the “natural virtue” of women’s self-created words as opposed to the “artificial” conventions of educated male discourse.

Roberto Bertuol, “The *Square Circle* of Margaret Cavendish: The 17th-Century Conceptualization of Mind by Means of Mathematics,” *Lang & Lit* 10 (2001), 21–39, considers Cavendish’s use of the metaphor of squaring the circle to address the inadvisability of using masculine rational mathematics to constrain feminine fancy. Jennifer Low, “Surface and Interiority: Self-Creation in Margaret Cavendish’s ‘The Claspe,’” *PQ* 77 (1998), 149–69, discusses the use of the blazon in “The Claspe” from *Poems and Fancies* (1653) to discuss the complex negotiations between external and internal traits for determining subjectivity; in this, Cavendish is recognizing the complex relationship of her own egotism to the court culture that surrounds her. Elaine Walker, “Longing for Ambrosia: Margaret Cavendish and the Torment of a Restless Mind in *Poems and Fancies* (1653),” *WoWr* 4 (1997), 341–351, considers Cavendish’s attempts to maintain the pose of the rational thinker while in reality using the more appealing powers of the imagination to create the sort of rational persona she desires. Emma L. E. Rees, “‘Sweet Honey of the Muses’: Lucretian Resonance in *Poems and Fancies*,” *In-Between* 9 (2000), 3–16, sees Cavendish’s use of poetry to discuss politics and science as directly influenced by Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*. In Alice Fulton, *Feeling as a Foreign Language: The Good Strangeness of Poetry* (1999), pp. 85–124, a chapter entitled “Unordinary Passions: Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle,” considers Margaret Cavendish’s poems with their emphasis on the natural as a means to challenge the authority of tradition.

E. *Nature’s Pictures Drawn By Fancies Pictures to the Life*. The RWO text has contextual materials by Emma Rees.

Victoria Kahn, “Margaret Cavendish and the Romance of Contract,” *RenQ* 50 (1997), 526–66, examines Margaret Cavendish’s “The Contract” in *Nature’s Pictures* as a means of challenging the severely rationalistic notion of political contract theory with some underpinnings of love and passion; this also has uneasy repercussions for Cavendish’s role as a Monarchist since it would seem more Parliamentarian in valorizing the role of the individual’s loyalty and love. James Fitzmaurice, “Front Matter and the Physical Make-Up of *Nature’s Pictures*,” *WoWr* 4 (1997), 353–67, discusses the prefatory materials of both images and words in Cavendish’s two versions of the text as revelations of different images of the author’s social placement and artistic placement. As illustrated by the end of *Nature’s Pictures in Heaven’s Library*, according to Emma L. E. Rees, “*Heaven’s Library* and *Nature’s Picture*: Platonic Paradigm and Trial by Genre,” *WoWr* 4 (1997), 369–81, Cavendish uses the mixing of generic conventions and forms of literature to adapt Platonic ideas to a critique of the Puritan government.

Melissa Hill, "'A Conversation of Souls’: Community and Subjectivity in Margaret Cavendish’s Sociable Letters,” *PPMRC* (1992–93), 16–17 and 139–47, discusses Cavendish’s use of the private world of letter writing in The Sociable Letters to establish herself within the community and to provide herself with a claim to fame. James Fitzmaurice’s introduction to his text, Sociable Letters, pp. xi–xxi, reveals the essay-like nature of the humorous letters as well as the variety of concerns that the letters contain. Fitzmaurice, “Margaret Cavendish in Antwerp: The Actual and the Imaginary,” *In-Between* 9 (2000), 30–39, suggests that Cavendish uses the genre of travel writing to make her discussion of unusual customs in Antwerp a reflection of her own experience and how that experience translates into imagination. After examining an exchange of poems between William Cavendish and John Evelyn on each other’s marriages, Fitzmaurice’s “The Cavendishes, the Evelyns, and Teasing in Verse and Prose,” *JRMMRA* 16 & 17 (1995–96), 160–86, discusses teasing in Cavendish’s Sociable Letters as a means of describing others’ problems with her femininity and issues of sexual and gender relationships. Diana Barnes, “The Restoration of Royalist Form in Margaret Cavendish’s Sociable Letters,” *Meridian* 18 (2001), 201–14, argues that Cavendish in the beginning of the Letters ties her epistolary form to a humanist tradition of letters while still claiming a place for the female voice in that tradition.


IV. Editions of other works


V. Textual studies

Paul Salzman, “Shakespeare and Margaret Cavendish: The Crisis in Editing and Early Modern Women’s Writing,” *Meridian* 12 (1997), 123–32, discusses the problems of creating a standardized modern edition, particularly given Cavendish’s concern with the presentation of her work.

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VI. State of criticism

Much current critical energy has been devoted to an evaluation of Cavendish’s scientific interests, her utopian *New Blazing World*, and a limited number of plays—most notably, *Convent of Pleasure*. Much remains to be done on the other writings, including her plays and poems, and on her political, literary, and family concerns. Scholars have only begun to investigate the extent of her collaboration with her husband and her place within Continental intellectual circles while the family was exiled from England. Increased attention should be paid to her as a serious writer, rather than a mere eccentric. As a playwright, her work is extensive and reveals knowledge of a variety of dramatists; as a poet, Cavendish combines lyric interests with her interest on social commentary and science. The level of her social satire and humor has been underestimated, particularly with regard to her plays and *The Sociable Letters*.

See also


Wiseman, Susan. “Margaret Cavendish Among the Prophets: Performance Ideologies and Gender In and After the English Civil War,” *WoWr* 6 (1999), 95–111.
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WILLIAM CAVENDISH, DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

EDITIONS


I. General studies


Lisa Hopkins, “Margaret Cavendish and the Cavendish Houses,” In-Between 9 (2000), 63–75, suggests that Bell in Campo, Blazing World, and The Convent of Pleasure reveal Margaret Cavendish’s pride in the properties of the Newcastle family. Hilda L. Smith, “A General War amongst the Men [but] None amongst the Women: Political Differences between Margaret and William Cavendish,” in Politics and the Political Imagination in Later Stuart Britain, ed. Howard Nenner (1997), pp. 143–60, argues first, that the relationship between the two was not as happy as people assume and second, that the philosophical viewpoints of the Duke and Duchess were quite distinct and not mere copies of each other.

Although dealing more fully with Jonson, Anne Barton, “Harking Back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline Nostalgia,” ELH 48 (1981), 106–31,
discusses Newcastle taking Jonson under his patronage late in Jonson’s career and states that it was Jonson’s nostalgia for the Elizabethan era that spoke most strongly to Newcastle’s sensibility. Cedric Brown, “Courtesies of Place and Arts of Diplomacy in Ben Jonson’s Last Two Entertainments for Royalty,” *Scen* 4 (1994), 147–71, suggests that the Bolsover and Welbeck entertainments written by Jonson serve the normal function of supporting the patron and his sense of place as well as its appropriateness for the King; this function is undercut somewhat by the humor of Jonson’s masque. Nick Rowe, “‘My Best Patron’: William Cavendish and Jonson’s Caroline Dramas,” *Scen* 4 (1994), 197–212, points out that in Jonson’s late plays there are many signs of influence from Cavendish’s patronage; Cavendish’s interests are portrayed in the promotion of courtly life and a hearkening back to a nostalgic vision of the past. James Fitzmaurice, “William Cavendish and Two Entertainments by Ben Jonson,” *BJJ*, 5 (1988), 63–80, discusses William Cavendish’s apprenticeship in playwriting through his assistance of Jonson in the development of two masques, *The King’s Entertainment at Welbeck* and *Love’s Welcome*, that were meant to convince Charles I and Henrietta Maria to give Cavendish the wardship of the prince.

Robert C. Evans, “‘Making just approaches’: Ben Jonson’s Poems to the Earl of Newcastle,” *RenP*, (1988), 63–75, examines two poems by Jonson dedicated to Newcastle that take on William Cavendish’s favorite topics of horsemanship and swordsmanship and while praising his abilities, warn him about the dangers of becoming too deeply entrenched in these activities. After examining an exchange of poems between William Cavendish and John Evelyn on each other’s marriages, James Fitzmaurice’s “The Cavendishes, the Evelyns, and Teasing in Verse and Prose,” *JRMMRA*, 16 & 17 (1995–96), 160–86, discusses teasing in Margaret Cavendish’s *Sociable Letters* as a means of describing others’ problems with her femininity and issues of sexual and gender relationships. Fitzmaurice also prints a poem by William Cavendish called “On Mr. Euling his Marriage to Mrs. Browne Eleven years old.”

Lisa Hopkins, “Play Houses: Drama at Bolsover and Welbeck,” *EaT* 2 (1999), 25–44, analyzes the “metatheatricality” of Jonson’s plays, Cheyne’s and Egerton’s play, and Newcastle’s own plays in reference to the performance space of the house. Dale B. J. Randall, “The Cavendish Phenomenon,” in his *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642–1660* (1995), pp. 313–36, addresses the whole Cavendish family as a family of dramatists, focusing on William Cavendish as a comic dramatist influenced by and perhaps collaborating with Jonson, Shirley, Dryden, and Shadwell. Karen Raber, “‘Our wits joined as in matrimony’: Margaret Cavendish’s *Plays* and the Drama of Authority,” *ELR* 28 (1998) 464–93, claims that in the process of presenting herself and other aristocratic women as autonomous, Margaret Cavendish is also supporting her husband’s role in the Royalist cause; she includes discussion of the ambivalence resulting from the

II. Studies of individual works


Slaughter’s introduction, xi–xxxiv, reveals the Hobbesian nature of Newcastle’s advice as well as its desire to look nostalgically at the Elizabethan reign while examining the extent to which Charles II may have followed this advice. Ellayne Fowler, “Margaret Cavendish and the Ideal Commonwealth,” *UtopSt* 7 (1996), 38–48, considers the similarities and contrasts between Margaret Cavendish’s “The Inventory of Judgement’s Commonwealth” and William Cavendish’s *Advice to Charles II*; while they both have a strong desire for hierarchal harmony supported by a strong monarch, William Cavendish is directly addressing a monarch, and Margaret Cavendish is developing a social utopia. Gloria Italiano-Anzilotti, “Two Pragmatic Political Advisors: Niccolo Machiavelli and William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle,” *StIL* 7 (1984), 65–67, analyzes Newcastle’s *Little Book* or *Advice to Charles II* with regard to its Machiavellian influence particularly in terms of the pragmatic political theory of the strong leader.

B. *The Triumphant Widow*. Carolyn Kephart, “An Unnoticed Forerunner of ‘The Beggar’s Opera,’” *M&L* 61 (1980), 266–71, points out the strong similarities of Newcastle’s *The Triumphant Widow* to Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* “in tone, in its specific satiric attitudes and . . . its ballad opera characteristics” particularly with
regard to the characters of Footpad and MacHeath. Lynn Hulse, “Matthew Locke: Three Newly Discovered Songs for the Restoration Stage,” *M&L* 75 (1994), 200–13, discusses two songs by Locke that were used in Newcastle’s *The Triumphant Widow* and gives some background to the play.

C. “The King’s Entertainment.” Lynn Hulse, “‘The King’s Entertainment’ by the Duke of Newcastle,” *Viator* 26 (1995), 355–405, has an edition of the play as well as an introduction that considers the influence of the play on Newcastle’s *The Triumphant Widow* as well as his theme of appropriate courtly behavior and its rewards.

III. STATE OF CRITICISM

Patronage is an important part of Newcastle’s literary identity, yet more critical examination of his works, particularly his plays and his advice to Charles II, would be useful. His plays reveal the dramatic concerns of the late English Renaissance and suggest influences on his wife’s and daughters’ works. His advice to the King shows the perspective of aging royalists in a time of rapid political change. Newcastle, as a grandson of Bess of Hardwick, represents a seemingly forgotten segment of society that desires more recognition during the early Restoration. Newcastle had a strong imprint on his wife’s work, particularly with regard to the prefaces and dramatic sections written by him; certainly, his influence and their joined work suggest untapped areas for further critical consideration. One of the most fruitful topics for further exploration is the consideration of the entire family as writers and thinkers: this study would include Newcastle’s younger brother, Charles, and several other William Cavendishes (an uncle and several cousins of Newcastle) who wrote during the period.

*See also*

Bowden, Betsy. “Before the Houyhnhnms: Rational Horses in the Late Seventeenth-Century,” *N&Q* 39 (1992), 38–40 (on *La Methode et Invention Novelle de Dresser les Chevaux*).

The authors treated here were two of three daughters of William Cavendish by his first wife, Elizabeth Basset. Elizabeth Cavendish married John Egerton, Viscount Brackley, in 1636, and she is therefore often referred to as Lady Elizabeth Brackley, the name abbreviated “EB” in the Bodleian Library manuscript of Concealed Fancies (c. 1645). Because John Egerton became the second Earl of Bridgewater in 1649, she also is known today as Elizabeth Egerton, Countess of Bridgewater. Some nine years after writing Concealed Fancies, Jane Cavendish (“JC” in the Bodleian manuscript) married Charles Cheney, later first Viscount of Newhaven.

I. General studies

In her extended introduction to Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England: the Case of Elizabeth Cavendish Egerton and Her “Loose Papers” (1999), Betty S. Travitsky discusses the effects of family on “issues of subordination and authorship in the early modern period,” particularly with regard to the difficulty of generalizing specific findings of Egerton’s life and work to all early modern women.

II. Studies of individual Works

A. Concealed Fancies. Elizabeth Cavendish Egerton’s and Jane Cavendish Cheyne’s The Concealed Fancies is in Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (1996).

Margaret J. M. Ezell, “‘To be your daughter in your pen’: The Social Functions of Literature in the Writings of Lady Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish,” HLQ 51 (1988), 281–96; rpt. Readings in Renaissance Women’s Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance, 1594–1998, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (1998), pp. 246–58, analyzes the private nature of the process of dissemination and suggests that in their work, Egerton and Cheyne inscribed the social norms of their cavalier position as well as celebrating their father’s life through the writing that is an integral part of the Cavendish family. Catherine Burroughs, “‘Hymen’s Monkey Love’: The Concealed Fancies and Female Sexual Initiation,” TJ 51 (1999), 21–31, sees The Concealed Fancies as exploring women’s sexual initiation through fantasies of a putatively safer male head of household (the figure of William Cavendish, their father) and his sexual life. Alison Findlay, “Playing the
‘Scene Self’: Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley’s The Concealed Fancies,” in *Enacting Gender on the English Renaissance Stage*, ed. Viviana Comensoli and Anne Russell (1999), pp. 154–76, examines the idea of performance in the play by female characters and its allowance of exploration of the mimicry of traditional married women’s roles, thus questioning patriarchal constructions of wifely behavior. Findlay, “‘To Be Your Daughter in Pen’: The Social Functions of Literature in the Writings of Lady Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish,” *Readings in Renaissance Women’s Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance, 1594–1998*, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (1998), pp. 246–58, discusses the manuscript in which the play is found as a piece of public writing meant to convey metaphorically the proper functioning of the world during a revolutionary period. Jane Milling, “Siege and Cipher: The Closet Drama of the Cavendish Sisters,” *Women’s History Review* 6 (1997), 411–26, examines the presentation copy of the manuscript that houses The Concealed Fancies as well as a pastoral masque and 85 poems by the sisters. She sees the texts as a way for the sisters to re-establish familial identity within the context of their exile from their father, William Cavendish. Lisa Hopkins, “Play Houses: Drama at Bolsover and Welbeck,” *EaT* 2 (1999), 25–44, considers the space of the house as an appropriate setting for their drama of “exile and imprisonment.”

Lisa Hopkins, “Judith Shakespeare’s Reading: Teaching The Concealed Fancies,” *SQ* 47 (1996), 396–406, reviews possible influences on The Concealed Fancies, particularly Shakespeare and Ford, but also Mary Sidney Herbert, Middleton and Rowley, and Webster. Alison Findlay, Gweno Williams, and Stephanie J. Hodgson-Wright, “‘The Play is Ready to be Acted’: Women and Dramatic Production, 1570–1670,” *WoWr* 6 (1999), 129–48, claim that seeing closet drama as unperformable is underestimating plays such as Egerton and Cheyne’s The Concealed Fancies and Margaret Cavendish’s The Convent of Pleasure because actual production reveals technical and dramatic forethought. Dale B. J. Randall, in his *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642–1660* (1995), treats both Concealed Fancies and their other drama, A Pastoral, as amateur expressions of “aristocratic gynocentrism.”

B. Egerton’s Loose Papers. Betty Travitsky’s edition of Elizabeth Egerton’s loose papers, a miscellany of her private writings, is in *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England: The Case of Elizabeth Cavendish Egerton and Her “Loose Papers”* (I, above). These loose papers, a manuscript collection of meditations, poems, and prayers collected after her death, are in the British Library (BL MS Egerton 607) as well as in private hands. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott’s edition of *Female and Male Voices in Early Modern England* (2000), contains Elizabeth Egerton’s poem, “On My Boy, Henry,” and journal excerpts on the loss of her daughter, Kate, from this miscellany.

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III. State of Criticism

Critics have only started to consider Egerton’s and Cheyne’s contributions to the Cavendish/Newcastle canon and to seventeenth-century literature in general. In particular need of work are their pastoral masque and over 80 poems transcribed in the same manuscript as *Concealed Fancies*.

See also

Travitsky, Betty S. “Down-Home Bacon; Or, a Seventeenth-Century Woman’s ‘Considerations concerning Marriage,’” *ANQ* 2–3 (1992), 134–37 (on Egerton’s *Loose Papers*).