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"Metaphor and Mastery: M. Cavendish and the Language of the Royal Society"

Lisa Anscomb, St Hilda's College, Oxford, UK

As part of their new scientific project, The Royal Society championed 'Plain Speech' and derided figurative language - what T. Sprat called 'specious tropes and figures' - as non empirical. 'Specious' means misleading, albeit superficially appealing. However, careful examination of propaganda by writers such as W. Charleton, J. Glanvill or K. Digby shows a heavy dependence on metaphor, and metaphors of the female figures in particular. These figurations were indeed 'specious' since they represented the complex and seductive natural world awaiting appropriation, examination and classification by the (male) scientist. With Bacon as their precursor, these writers coded scientific exchange as an exclusively male venture. Their linguistic practice contributed to the myth of scientific mastery which was initiated by Bacon, established by the Enlightenment, and continues to be challenged by twentieth-century feminist critique. How could M. Cavendish engage with this 'male' discourse? 'Specious' logic is sophistry or false reasoning, also described as 'feminine' logic in the modern thesaurus. In addition to outlining the significant gendered figurations used by the Royal Society scientists, this paper will describe contemporary figurations of Cavendish, responses to her which attempt to reduce her to the very antithesis of the scientific project. It will also discuss ways in which Cavendish's own consciousness of metaphor in general and female figuration in particular allows her to undertake and manipulate scientific discourse to create her own scientific strategy. The 'Fantasticall motion" of Cavendish's thought processes counters the divisive and exclusive tendencies which underpin the collective beliefs of the Royal Society. She proposes instead a metaphysics of continual change, developed from her original atomic theories. I will demonstrate how this crucial formulation of a constantly metamorphosing universe questions such binaries as mind and body, or male and female, and suggests contiguity rather than categorisation. This reading has political as well as metaphysical import since it reflects on the bias against intellectual possibilities for women because of their desired (by men) sociological roles and their general 'speciousness'. Cavendish undermines notions of truth crucial to the Royal Society through

a metaphysics transcribed in language that Sprat would have found wholly 'specious' or suspicious, it is so 'Fanstasticall' or figurative. As Cavendish herself put it, 'all Bodies are in the way of transmigrations perpetuall'. This 'specious' notion, antithetical to the drive for mastery promulgated by the Royal Society, probably ensured Cavendish's exile from the seventeenth-century scientific canon. However, it makes her work all the more attractive and suggestive for twentieth-century discussions of gender and science.

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"Staging Battlefields: M. Cavendish and the Theatre of War"

Alexandra G. Bennett, McGill University, Canada.

Having composed most, if not all, of her nineteen plays while in exile on the Continent during the 1640s and 1650s, M. Cavendish might have been expected to deal with the circumstances of the English Civil War. But the number of plays that directly explore the roles of women in relation to military endeavours is striking, and it has been suggested that these plotlines are a result of Cavendish's own vain fantasies of heroism equal to that of her warrior husband. Sidonie Smith argues, for instance, that, "unable to grasp the sword or to ride a horse into battle as her husband (and male relatives) can, she can grasp the pen and ride words across pages." While such readings are persuasive up to a point, Cavendish's female "Heroicks" are based upon much more than her wild imagination or current artistic trends in favour of "femmes fortes". Using *Bell in Campo* as a prime example, this paper explores the notable parallels between the Duchess's dramatic heroines and actual women warriors in England, particularly those involved in the Covenanter Rebellion in Scotland just prior to the Civil War itself. The remarkable similarities and crucial differences between history and fiction revealed by this study suggest that the "fantastical" elements of *Bell in Campo* are not, as has been previously suggested, those which depict women fighting in battle, but those which ascribe perfect justice, legitimacy, and Royalist values to the victors within the bounds of the play's allegory. Instead of deriving her plots solely from an overactive imagination, then, Cavendish carefully interwove history and fiction for her own ends as a Royalist playwright.

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"Dual Reward: Cavendish's Claim to Fame in *The Life of . . . William Cavendish*"

Irene Bom, Queen's University, Canada

Most readers claim Margaret Cavendish sold out by focussing on her husband in her final text, *The Life of . . . William Cavendish*. Indeed, she seems doubly concealed, writing as a wife and as a historian. But this concealment is part of a deliberate strategy to turn Charles II's political rhetoric against himself. Cavendish presents herself as a dutiful wife in order to expose the tension between William's two marriages -- that of his disinterested public self and that of his economically interested private self. Stuart writers used the marriage analogy to absolve politics of self-interest on both sides. Cavendish praises William in these terms, as a loyal servant with "no self-designs or self-interest". Yet she also calculates in great detail the financial cost of such service. By setting a price on William's services, she invokes the Hobbesian notion of politics as based on exchange rather than on sacrifice. By writing as a wife, she also challenges the conventions of historical discourse. Classical and humanist biographies usually concealed both the private life of the hero and information about the author. Cavendish does the reverse on both counts. She exposes William's private losses and personal habits, and she appropriates for herself the fame usually reserved for the idealized subject of the biography. Since the public realm is flawed, the truth about public action must come from a voice outside it. Books 3 and 4 are structured to privilege this voice from the private realm. Cavendish suggests that women writers are best suited for this task because they

observe the private cost behind the public image. The Life warrants more attention than it has recently received. Contradictory politics also appear in her earlier texts, but they are particularly interesting in the Life because there she engages contemporary political debates most directly and in terms of her own authorship.

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"The Cavendish Family: Patronage, Politics and Philosophy: Hobbes's 70 Years in the Cavendish Household"

Luc Borot, Université de Montpellier 3, France.

Thomas Hobbes was a retainer of the Cavendish family for seven decades. He dedicated several works to men and women of the family, and he educated several heirs to the title. Whether he followed them in their pleasures or in their exile, he remained faithful to his first patrons. He collaborated with his masters in business and politics, he mourned them with the family, and he demonstrated towards them his celebrated power of fidelity in friendship. Without the enlightened patronage -- and sometimes friendship -- of the Cavendishes, he would never have found the leisure to produce a work of such compass. He could be a bitter critic, but he knew how to acknowledge a blessing with more than words. Comparing the rhetoric of Hobbes's letters to several generations of Cavendish men and women, including Margaret Cavendish, and following him in his decades of service to the family, this paper will endeavour to paint a family portrait with a genius on the margins. Claire Boulard, Université de Reims, France. "*Nature's Pictures* (1656) or the Politics of Feminine Fancy". In the six prefaces and epistles to the readers that can be numbered in *Nature's Pictures*, M. Cavendish opposes picture-making -- which she defines as the true imitation of Nature through the eye sight -- to fancy -- which forms and deforms because it is a creation of the brain. But progressively she redefines her concepts and blurs the distinctions between the two, showing that imitation does not bring out visual truth more than fancy. On the contrary, she states that fancy is "natural" and being such must be applied to every process, including those of scientific examination and imitation. Thus fanciful descriptions of nature can conjure up invisible truths and be true to the nature of their originals since they proceed from the natural process of creation. I contend that M. Cavendish uses this theory not only to justify her composition of "feigned stories" but also to show that fancy and its literary consequence (feminine fiction) can alone prove the equation between the feminine nature and the political form of monarchy. The fragmented composition of *Nature's Pictures* with its 11 books and its multiple literary forms (from verses, short disconcerting descriptions and dialogues to fables and short stories) culminating with the genre of the autobiography provides us with a detailed picture of Cavendish's nature (her ability to fancy/create). It also equates her natural genius with the defence of the true nature of monarchy: poetical creation/fancy. Margaret's fancy depicts new worlds made visible thanks to fiction. These are all monarchies which sometimes are literally described as well organized bodies (see "Phancies Monarchy in the land of poetry"). This enables her to turn the reader into a gazer, a spectator who by sharing her fanciful political visions / truths / allegories will in turn be convinced of their veracity and will also resort to the hybrid form of imaginative depictions. It is rather fascinating already to observe in M. Cavendish's *Nature's Pictures* the use of a theory of vision and imagination for political and literary purposes. In so doing M. Cavendish paves the way to Addison's imagination papers in the Spectator.

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"M. Cavendish: Royalism and the Rhetoric of Ravenous and Beastly Desire"

Deborah Burks, The Ohio State University, US

In "Assaulted and Pursued Chastity," Margaret Cavendish engages a literary theme which presented difficulties for Royalist writers, a theme which was especially fraught for Royalist women writers: aristocratic male lust. "Assaulted and Pursued Chastity" appeared in 1656 as part of Nature's Pictures. Cavendish's work appeared during a period when London presses were busily churning out anti-Stuart polemical "histories" which clearly feared that the ideological work of undermining monarchy had not yet been fully accomplished.

Of particular interest in relation to Cavendish are a series of "historical" accounts of the lives and reigns of the first two Stuart kings of England which use anecdotes of aristocratic sexual excess, abuse, and perversion as means to assassinate the characters of England's Stuart kings. (The authors of this literature include Milton, Peyton, Weldon, and Osborne.) These texts attack the private conduct of James and Charles Stuart and their supporters, who emerge from their lurid pages as "ravening wolves" with multivalent and voracious sexual appetites.

In this context, we see that Cavendish's fiction offers a uniquely awkward version of Royalist mythology. Her representations of aristocratic men so often accept this negative stereotype of debauched cavaliers and lustful princes. The plot of "Assaulted and Pursued Chastity" is a case in point: it centers on a virtuous young Lady serially assaulted by just such a prince, whose "ravenous" lust Cavendish portrays as an extension of his expectation that all things lie within his prerogative rights.

It is my argument that if we expect to see Cavendish taking up the gauntlet thrown down by Milton and his fellows, we will see at best an awkward gesture. Margaret Cavendish's ambivalence about marriage and about her culture's sexual double standard bubbles up through the fissures in her fiction in her representations of masculinity. While we do not have any reason to suppose that she was ambivalent about the Royalist cause, her characterizations of aristocratic men create an uncomfortable paradox: as a victim of Parliamentary violence, as a former gentlewoman-in-waiting in Henrietta Maria's service and as the wife of a Royalist commander, she has reason to uphold the symbols of the Royalist cause, but as a woman, she implicitly distrusts the central symbol of that cause: the aristocratic man. Thus, she and the anti-monarchists share a rhetoric of violation in which the villains are royal and royalist men.

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"Other World, Inner World, Blazing-World: Observations on Two Milieux"

Mary Baine Campbell, Brandeis University, US

Cavendish's immediate textual milieu, as the work of A. Battigelli in particular has emphasized, included saliently the works of those men of science the Duke and his brother were wont to party with abroad and at home. Her own most famous text, in an age that has assumed the primacy of "imaginative literature" in its literary canons, is the *New Blazing World*, a work of scientific (some call it utopian) fiction. But it comes attached to her more ambitious *Observations on Experimental Philosophy*, itself a response to Robert Hooke's *Micrographia*. And though *The Blazing World* is formed as a romance intended for "ladies", it is a version of those scientific *Observations* with which Cavendish more directly confronts the mechanical philosophy of Hooke and his fellows at the Royal Society and elsewhere. This paper, drawn from the pivotal chapter in my forthcoming *Wonder and Science* (Fall 1999, an account of entangled European developments in early modern natural philosophy and fiction) places this generically novel text in both its original mechanistic (and science-fictionizing) milieu and its current feminist one. The *Discovery of a New World Called the Blazing-World* distances itself quickly from the then-current craze for voyages and especially moon voyages -- unlike America or the moon, *The Blazing World* is "a world of my own creating" -- and shows little affinity with the aims of utopian writing beyond the simple creation of an alternative "world". Unlike the utopia, the writerly and readerly hunger this narrative aims to satisfy is the

hunger for something else -- not better, necessarily, in the terms of virtues generated after all by a patriarchal, monarchist, colonialist status quo, but other. Its logical opposite might be Christian Huygens's striking *Cosmotheoros* (1698), in which the astronomer proves logically that the inhabitants of each planet of the solar system must be almost identical physically, culturally and morally to Enlightenment Europeans. An other world that merely functioned to produce the Earth and "Man" as back-formations could not satisfy, it seems, the needs of a resident alien for a truly alien textual alternative to the actual world of her incarcerations. *The Blazing World* is the most "scientific" of the period's imaginary voyages, then, because M. Cavendish has to construct its world from the atom up. Not only will embodiment be a different matter here, so will the dust of which bodies are made. Cavendish has to make a world in the same fundamental sense that an infant in the mirror stage does; she has to make a boundary between interior and exterior, "own" and other. Both must be created together, as they are functions of each other, and in this Cavendish may be more truly a forerunner of the modern novel than either Francis Godwin or Cyrano de Bergerac (or even her wonderful contemporary Madame de Lafayette). This ambitious and potentially sublime restructuring (and realignment) of matter helps to account for the peculiar joy that attends the reading of Cavendish's proto-novel for many contemporary women readers: the joy is connected to the practice of absolute creation, and at the same time to the fragmentation and disembodiment Cavendish dramatizes as the condition of her creator(s). For early Feminists the joy brought shame in its tow: the latest wave of attention to Cavendish, as scientist and world-maker, has been a powerful response to the liberating effects of new theories of pleasure and a recent reevaluation of female violence. In our apocalyptic milieu, *The Blazing-World* functions as a rescued and reborn vision of a feminist sublime.

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"Women's Discourse on Science and Learning and the Image of the Learned Lady" Laura Carraro, Università di Pisa, and Antonella Rigamonti (independent), Italy

Whereas from Bacon onwards the rise of experimental science entailed the construction of a new image for the male scientist, the few attempts aiming at defining an image for the female scientist were doomed to failure as women found it almost impossible not only to propose the image of the female scientist as socially acceptable, but also to view themselves as such. The two plays we are going to consider, Molière's *Les Femmes savantes* (1672) and Thomas Wright's English rendering of the same as *Female Virtuoso's* (1693), show quite clearly the way satire -- which claimed to voice normal, and therefore normative, values -- worked to debunk the social feasibility of the image of the learned and scientific lady. Their misreading of female discourse on science and learning will become all the more apparent as M. Cavendish's *The Female Academy and Youths Glory*, and *Death's Banquet* (1662) are used here as sub-texts to Molière's and Wright's plays. As women tried to assert a learned image of themselves mainly through two specific varieties of discourse: *precieux* and learned/scientific, satire undermined their attempt by demonstrating that women are unable to plan an alternative image for themselves and that their learned words are the deceitful cover of a discourse which apparently aims at science but, in the words of Mary Evelyn, terminates in "oaths and obscenity", thus associating, as far as women are concerned, intellectual with sexual hybris. M. Cavendish's two plays gives us a good vantage point from which to observe the way these practices of exclusion, interiorized by Cavendish as a cultural/patriarchal denial, worked. Her ambivalent heroines, whose long learned discourses are meant as instruments to assert themselves and be accepted as learned ladies, seem at first to succeed even in robbing men of their discourse but then, "stop'd with Thoughts of fear and doubt", they are suddenly silenced: they either re-enter their appointed social roles as wives and "breeders" where the inarticulate language of the body (Lady's Sanspareille's "groaning and sighing...instead of discoursing") replaces any rational discourse or, if

unable to face their fate, they choose to let their learned discourse fade into the silence of death.

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"Variation, Irregularity and Probabilism: M. Cavendish and the Rhetoric of Natural Philosophy"

Stephen Clucas, Birkbeck College, London, UK

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"'The Honor of Our Nation and Sex': Susan DuVerger's Debate with M. Cavendish"

Jane Collins, Pace University, US

My presentation introduces Cavendish scholars to a heretofore-unattributed original work by Englishwoman Susan DuVerger. As the volume editor on Susan DuVerger for the "Early Modern Englishwoman Series: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, 1500-1640" (Scolar Press), I made an extensive search for works by DuVerger, previously known only as the translator of moral tales by the prolific French bishop, Jean-Pierre Camus. Previous research on DuVerger had overlooked that she is likely the author of the 1657 Du Vergers Humble Reflections. This work is a defence of monastic life against charges made by M. Cavendish in her *World's Olio* (1655). Although Smith and Cardinale attribute Du Vergers Humble Reflections to a French male author (Du Verger of Douai) in *Women and Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, internal evidence suggests that the DuVerger of the title is in fact an English female author. In the epistle to Cavendish that prefaces the work, the author claims to share Cavendish's nationality and gender but not her views on monastic life. Describing her experience reading Cavendish's *World's Olio*, she claims: MADAME, I must ingenuously confesse that at the first onsett, my sharpe appetite greedily tooke downe those unaccustomed cates, and that with much satisfaction, and delight (eying in it the honour of our nation, and sexe, wherin we have had but few arguments of such abilitie) till I had past a great part of that which first offered itselfe. But w[h]en I came so farre into your OLIO, that Monasticall life discovered it self, I must not lye to you, I mett with mortels [sic] so wallowish and unsound, that I may not say, wholly corrupted, that my stomacke began to ryse, and loathe, what formerly it so much liked. In my presentation, I present newly uncovered information about DuVerger's personal history and describe DuVerger's debate with Cavendish. I hope to explore how this newly rediscovered work adds to our own understanding of gender, spirituality and female authority in the 17th century.

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"M. Cavendish and Cyrano de Bergerac"

Line Cottegnies, Université de Paris 8, France

This paper explores intriguing connections between M. Cavendish's *The Blazing World* and Cyrano's libertine *Etats et Empires de la Lune*, originally published in 1657 and translated into English as early as 1659. As it turns out, the Cavendishes, who had connections with the Gassendi circle while in exile, could have come across the famous wit, although no record of a formal meeting has emerged. In any case, it seems that M. Cavendish had read the translation of Cyrano's famous voyage to the moon, as is first suggested by her reference to it in her preface to *Blazing World*, and corroborated by a closer study of her work in conjunction with Cyrano's. Several deeper connections between both works can thus be established: both were anti-systematic works defending heliocentrism and the idea of a plurality of worlds, while including references to a materialistic conception of the world. Both were satirical works in which the authorial voice (under a thin disguise) emerges to blur the distinction between facts and fiction, and thus share

characteristics which Joan DeJean defined as belonging specifically to the seventeenth-century "libertine novel" (*Libertine Strategies: Freedom and the Novel in Seventeenth-Century France*, Ohio State UP, 1981).

"M. Cavendish in Antwerp"

Jim Fitzmaurice, Northern Arizona University, US

While M. Cavendish did not ordinarily write about actual cities, in one segment of *Sociable Letters* she depicts a city in a way that is detailed enough to lodge the description in the tradition of Isabella Whitney and Ben Jonson. The difference between Whitney and Jonson on the one hand and Cavendish on the other is less to be found in the sort of appreciation evidenced and more to be seen in the fact that Whitney and Jonson, obviously enough, appreciate their native city while Cavendish appreciates the city where she lives in exile. One might expect that Cavendish would feel some longing to return to her native Colchester, but such is not the case. Instead, it would seem that Cavendish genuinely was drawn to the particulars of a world where she had no direct role, where she was a long-term tourist. Ironically, living as a long-term tourist offered Cavendish certain advantages over life as she might have lived it in England at the same time. As a tourist, she could freely explore a great deal of Antwerp. Her descriptions of the city are sometimes unmediated and direct. On other occasions they are framed by stories in which her husband urges her to see the sights or in which she reflects on what she has seen. As an observer and reflector, she sometimes casts herself as a quirky incompetent. She says, for instance, that she would have broken through the ice on the canals of her imagination and drowned if she had not chosen to change her line of thought. Perhaps most interesting is her appreciation of a woman in a mountebank's show who is equally adept at performing male and female roles.

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"'Dear Madam': The argumentative interlocutor in M. Cavendish's writing"

Susan Fitzmaurice, Northern Arizona University, US

This paper explores M. Cavendish's discourses in her dramatic writing, her sociable letters and her philosophical writing in an attempt to locate her audience linguistically. I argue that Cavendish constructs an audience for her work that is not consistent with the readers of her plays or of her prose writings, whom she identifies and addresses in the many prefaces to her works. I suggest that Cavendish develops an intellectual, gendered addressee with whom she engages in verbal, philosophical argument throughout her writing life, in all her writings. The profoundly reflective subjectivity that marks this writing is, I argue, figured in this intelligence. I adopt the linguistic techniques of discourse analysis and Gricean pragmatics in the examination of the strategic and subjective positioning of the essay set-pieces that Cavendish places in each of her genres. Thus I examine the ways in which her monologues in *The Convent of Pleasure* resonate in situation, topic, structure and function with her essays on the relations between men and women in *Sociable Letters* and *The Blazing World*. I conclude that the rhetorical structure of her argumentation in these set-pieces implicates an audience whom she seeks to engage, respond to, and persuade.

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"'Delight in Singularity': M. Cavendish in 1671"

Elaine Hobby, University of Loughborough, UK

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"Science and Satire: the Lucianic Voice of Margaret Cavendish's Writings on Natural Philosophy"

Sarah Hutton, University of Hertfordshire, UK

M. Cavendish, like F. Bacon, proposed a new system of natural philosophy. In so doing she criticised contemporary thought as much, or even more than, received opinion. Her *Philosophical Letters*, *Observations on Experimental Philosophy and Grounds of Natural Philosophy*, aim specific objections at the scientific ideas of her time. Her fictional *A Description of a New World called the Blazing World*, contains a light-hearted critique of contemporary natural philosophy in the manner of the classical satirist, Lucian of Samosata. Cavendish's first engagement with seventeenth-century natural philosophy can be traced to the period of her exile in The Netherlands and Paris, when she encountered leading thinkers of the time in the circle of her husband, William Marquis of Newcastle, and his brother, Sir Charles Cavendish. My paper will discuss the relationship of M. Cavendish's writings on Natural Philosophy to the scientific culture of her time, with particular attention to the Cavendish circle. I shall argue that it was in Paris that she perfected her critical method, and that the French translation of Lucian by Perrot d'Ablancourt was an important resource in the development of her satirical voice.

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"M. Cavendish and 'Nature'"

Lee Cullen Khanna, Montclair State University, US

In a provocative study of the mid-seventeenth-century vitalist movement, John Rogers (*The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton*, Cornell UP, 1996) argues that M. Cavendish's natural philosophy goes further than her contemporaries' in writing a science that granted individual agency to matter, thus fostering a discursive environment favorable to political individualism. Rogers also sees a feminism in Cavendish's science that is more radical and consistent than in her literary texts. Specific allusions to 'nature' in *Philosophical Letters* (1664) illuminate, I believe, both Cavendish's attention to and intriguing departures from contemporary scientific discourses and their connections to gender. *Philosophical Letters* addresses ostensible critical responses to Cavendish's natural philosophy communicated by a female friend who seeks clarification of the contentious issues. For example, readers have quarreled with her ideas about the relationship between God and Nature and, in addressing such concerns, Cavendish both concedes the authority of learned divines and maintains her heretical view of Nature's position. My paper will examine passages in this text which not only intervene in the ways nature is constructed in the period, but, I believe, amplify our understanding of the ways Cavendish positions herself as writer and woman. My paper will also look at changes between early and late editions of *Nature's Pictures* and *Poems and Fancies* which may inform our understanding of Cavendish's representation of herself in relation to family, friends, and women readers. These revisions also provide, I believe, greater understanding of M. Cavendish's rhetorical strategies to gain authority for her writing and to imagine an receptive audience. In a time of political, social, and geographic dislocation Milton, too, could conceive only of a finely selected readership, as in Book Seven of *Paradise Lost* the narrator acknowledges himself "fallen on evil days...and evil tongues" but still in hope of that "fit audience...though few". Cavendish's quest for those few who might understand, greatly complicated by her gender position, is enacted not only in her numerous prefaces, apologies, and assertions, but also in crucial textual revisions and daring constructions of "nature".

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"Women's Education in some of Cavendish's Plays"

Guyonne Leduc, University of Lille 3, France

Before Makin and Astell, Cavendish demanded for women's better education (as the development

of knowledge and character), a topic that is linked to the question of woman's nature and of the (in)equality between men and women and that raises the political question of women's roles in society. Her concern for women's condition, education and speech was reflected through her many independent-minded dramatic heroines. The question of women's education results in an internal debate for Cavendish who held contradictory positions. A first aspect of this paper concerns nature and nurture, questioning women's innate or acquired intellectual limitations (her attitude toward women's intellectual limitations changed over time and varied according to genre) and showing her ambition as a dynamic force for improvement. Then her critical opinion of women's traditional education and her proposals are assessed. Genuine education aims at enabling self-definition; as women's social situation cannot be changed, Cavendish wishes that women, whose personalities have been formed by appropriate education, were active and had the right to choose to remain single or get married. This leads to focus on the import of women's education (for intellectual posterity, despite the fear of social and sexual transgression) and the close link she saw between mastering language and successful education as illustrated by the educational value of theatre. The theatrical metaphor is used to enable the performance of female identity; rather than simply preaching about women's education, plays can enact it and the use of disguise, as a metaphor and as theatricality, allows to raise the issue of cross-gendering. Despite contradictions in all her works, which but mirrors the complexity of real life, Cavendish's plays anticipate a long prefeminist tradition of claiming more for women's education. She urges that women may be allowed access to language, education and public life, insisting on women's rights to choose for themselves the way they wish to live.

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"For he never suffered her to read in romances': Life-Writing and Romance in M. Cavendish's *Nature's Pictures Drawn by Fancies Pencil to the Life* (1656)"
Marie H. Loughlin, Okanagan University, Canada.

M. Cavendish's *Nature's Pictures Drawn By Fancies Pencil to the Life* (1656) occupies an uncomfortable place in the minds of many Cavendish scholars. In its entirety it is perhaps the least examined of this prolific writer's work; however, its twelfth book which comprises Cavendish's autobiography, "A True Relation of My Birth, Breeding and Life", is perhaps the most often studied of her many self-reflexive texts. There is, in short, a tendency to focus narrowly on Cavendish's autobiography and on those very few stories which we would now unequivocally grant the label 'romance', such as "The Contract", and "Assaulted and Pursued Chastity", which Kate Lilley has anthologized in her recent Penguin edition of Cavendish's *The Blazing World and Other Writings* (1992). However, this concentration on a few exceptional pieces from the rich miscellany of *Nature's Pictures* deprives us of the opportunity to explore how the work's various pieces shape our reading of its final autobiographical account. Cavendish's inclusion of her autobiography at the end of *Nature's Pictures* changes the way we perceive her account of her own life, the poems and stories which precede it and our conception of how Cavendish constructs and deploys her spectacular and "extravagant...textual self-witnessing" (Lilley, 1992, p. xii). Like many seventeenth-century female life-writers, from Ann Fanshawe and Lady Ann Halkett to Mary Boyle Rich, M. Cavendish skillfully employs the characteristic tropes, themes and generic conventions of romance in order to structure her self-representations. However, unlike these writers, Cavendish is also interested in using romance to structure scientific debate, feminist colloquy and socio-cultural exploration, all of which figure in *Nature's Pictures*'s various pieces. Unlike these writers, then, Cavendish seems bent on rehabilitating the feminized genre of romance for more serious purposes, for the creation as Salzman suggests of the "didactic romance" (*English Prose Fiction 1558-1700*, p. 357). More importantly, however, she is interested in interrogating rather than simply condemning the desires

and expectations romance depicts and in turn arouses in the female reader and writer. In short, Cavendish creates *Nature's Pictures* as an exploration and problematization of the inter-penetration of romance and life-writing, of the different cultural standards which apply to the expression of desire and the self in these two genres.

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"Writing New Worlds: Cavendish's Cabbala as Hermeneutic Model"

Martina Mittag, University of Giessen, Germany

Focusing on M. Cavendish's *Blazing World*, this paper will situate her within emergent traditions of textualizing new worlds in (proto)colonial and philosophical writing, investigating both similarities and differences. On the crossroads of New Science and colonial discourse, Cavendish's text opens up interesting perspectives of (re)thinking gender, knowledge and textuality itself. If her *Blazing World* reflects her position -- or lack of position -- within academic institutions (and thus affirms the highly gendered basis of 'New Science' in the early modern period), she nevertheless provides alternative modes of thinking bodies and world, which differ radically from the appropriative strategies of both colonialist and scientific writing of her time. Seen against the background of her philosophical works and compared to male thinkers of the period (which will include Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes and Henry More) some of the basic questions to be discussed include: How does she represent Other in her text? How is Wonder textualized (in contrast to male strategies when describing nature/world/new worlds)? How does she relate to contemporary male philosophy, both in the field of "New Science" and seventeenth-century vitalism? In what ways do her literary strategies (intertextual strategies, parody, irony) relate to her epistemological approach? These questions will be discussed especially with regard to her rewriting of the cabbala as a hermeneutic device promising a semantic home for women within an infinite world. Rather than disqualifying her cabbalistic enterprise by a literal reading, its metaphoric function in unsettling the order of the sexes with its concomitant gendered territories seems to serve as a bridge for women into the scientific realm by offering a rational model for interpreting the world without insisting on the masculinized language of the Royal Society, but pointing to hidden meanings underneath the surface of mere words.

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"Margaret Cavendish and Lucy Hutchinson"

David Norbrook, University of Maryland, US

Lucy Hutchinson and Margaret Cavendish were near-contemporaries with very similar interests; but they were also ideological antagonists, and this has had a lasting effect on the huge and volatile fluctuations in their reputations over the centuries. Hutchinson's popularity in the nineteenth century has given way to her near-disappearance from current anthologies of women's writing, with her strong Puritanism and refusal of a feminist agenda being contrasted unfavourably with Cavendish's celebration and problematization of female identity. Yet Hutchinson was a far more radical and prolific writer than has been recognized. She was indeed ambivalent about woman's status as a writer, and her relationship with Cavendish focussed that ambivalence. Her decision in the 1650s or late 1640s to translate Lucretius's atheistic epic, unlikely in a Puritan writer, can be explained as an attempt to emulate and engage with the sceptical culture of M. Cavendish and other royalist exiles -- amongst whom Cavendish was in many ways the most daring challenger of received religion. After 1660, as the Cavendishes' fortunes rose the Hutchinsons' calamitously declined. With atheism or scepticism becoming an ideological support for the reformed church and monarchy, Hutchinson became haunted with guilt at having compromised herself, and this guilt heavily

overdetermined her comments about women's propensity to intellectual error. Nonetheless she pressed forward with a life of her husband which adopted a highly original intellectual structure, its insistence that individual virtues must be grounded in the people contrasting very sharply with Cavendish's top-down model of political virtue in her life of the Duke. For all its ambitions, the life of John Hutchinson was in a significant sense a diversion from her main project as a writer in her later years, a long Biblical epic which she published in part in 1679 as *Order and Disorder* (the traditional ascription to her brother Sir Allen Apsley is highly implausible). Here Hutchinson set herself not just to accept women's propensity to error but to show that a women poet could outgo a pagan epic and redeem her muse. Her death coincided with a period of political reaction, ensuring that she would never gain in her lifetime the kind of reputation achieved by Cavendish.

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"'Heroickesses' and 'Philosophical Fancies': M. Cavendish's Contributions to Seventeenth-Century Science Fiction"

Patricia Phillips (Independent), Oxford, UK

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"'Solitariness rather than Society': M. Cavendish's Sociable Exile"

Susannah Quinsee, Liverpool University, UK.

M. Cavendish's exile in Europe during the Interregnum was crucial for her literary development. Although she was alienated from England, she nonetheless began writing productively, composing such texts as *Poems and Fancies* and *Sociable Letters*. Creative realisations of exile are central to these texts, as Cavendish transforms the supposed constraints of expatriation into imaginative literary creations. I shall consider how Cavendish describes both physical and metaphorical forms of exile in order, paradoxically, to write herself into society. Robert Edwards' definition of exile serves to provide the critical context for my reading of Cavendish's texts (Robert Edwards, "Exile, Self, and Society", in Maria-Ines Lagos-Pope, ed., *Exile in Literature*, London, Associated University Presses, 1988, pp. 15-31). Edwards maintains that 'exile intensifies the dialectical relation of the individual with the social', and, as a result, its meaning is inherently linked with transformation and transgression (p. 17). This idea of exile is apparent in Cavendish's literary reworking of her experiences of banishment. In "Assaulted and Pursued Chastity", she presents a heroine who voluntarily places herself in exile both physically, by leaving her home, and, metaphorically, through acting as a boy. Travellia's experience of exile, though, is ultimately positive as she comes to occupy a powerful position. In the narrative, exile exists as a trope which represents the transgressive potentialities of such isolation. A similar process operates in *Sociable Letters*, which actually serves to indicate Cavendish's isolation from society in general, and other women in particular. In the letters, Cavendish criticises women, implying her difference from them. Cavendish's use of this genre to write fictional epistles also has parallels with other seventeenth-century writers, such as Katherine Philips. For Cavendish, the epistolary genre allows her to resume control over her work and identity, which was denied by the fact of her exile. In both texts, exile is posited as an empowering experience. For Cavendish, it provides the literary space to express herself, affording her the opportunity to achieve her ambition for notoriety through publication.

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"'Warrior Women in the Works of M. Cavendish and Thomas Killigrew"

Karen Raber, University of Mississippi, US

From Camilla and Penthesilea, to Joan of Arc or Brittomart, the figure of the woman warrior in

classical and early Renaissance literature makes gender fundamental to myths of national identity and ideologies of state-formation. Her triumph in battle could symbolize the triumphal wholeness of an undivided nation; her defeat could represent the containment and reassignment of threatening forces within society. But the fictionalized, mythic women warriors I just named -- and hence political -- participation in the generation of the nation-state. For English writers during the Civil War, however, national identity was a question of immediate and material importance, and the boundaries between myth and lived experience could quickly dissolve under the pressures of war. History records the many heroic exploits of women during this period of social and political crisis; through their deeds, the woman warrior was temporarily liberated from her prison within the safe walls of myth and metaphor, to prove her currency, her power to inspire Royalist and Roundhead women, her potential as flesh and bone. What difference does the gender of authors who appropriate the literary tradition of the woman warrior make to their respective strategies for invoking her? M. Cavendish and T. Killigrew, who share Royalist affiliations and write from similar positions as exiles abroad, both include woman warriors in their Civil War closet plays, and so usefully illuminate these questions. Through a comparison of Killigrew's *Cicilia and Clorinda, or Love in Arms* and Cavendish's various women warriors, especially those in *Bell in Campo*, I discuss how the figure of the chaste military maid is employed to different ends. In Killigrew's case, the warrior maid Clorinda's value lies in her susceptibility to the aggressor's sword -- that is, her flesh's (gendered) weakness can be productively translated into both the metaphor of her wounded land and the marital union that will heal both. Killigrew's use of the woman warrior is politically conservative: she frames and in some ways precipitates the play's secondary drama of assaulted chastity, but her example is static, exotic, and quickly foreclosed in favor of a sub-plot that deals with the socio-political consequences of women's virtues in a more domestic domain. Killigrew's warrior woman remains figurative, effacing the lived reality of civil war women's participation in martial matters. M. Cavendish's *Bell in Campo* trades on the same literary precedents as Killigrew's *Cicilia and Clorinda*, but its fiction resonates more complexly with the material lives of civil war women. Cavendish's reaction to the traditional image of women's role in war is found in her principal character's denunciation of Penelope, who allowed the "fort" of her chastity to be assaulted while her husband struggled on the battlefields of Troy. Cavendish overthrows conservative ideologies of women's function in war-time -- her Heroickesses are a varied host of married and single women, sisters, mothers and lovers who permanently transform themselves, overwriting what men call their "nature" with defense of their own chastity, or in a metaphoric relationship to King and country, but in active intervention in the doings of war. Killigrew's military maid is an allegory for the anxieties, the pain, and the possible salvation of England, figured through images that reflect past and present queens. Cavendish rejects allegories of chastity and passive virtue, insofar as they are represented through the Penelope story, and instead makes the case for women's functional participation in government and politics through their successful participation in soldiering. While Cavendish ultimately contains the implications of her own representation of warrior women, her gestures toward liberating the trope from the prison of metaphor must stand in contradistinction to Killigrew's work: where Killigrew uses the figure of the warrior woman to defend against change, imagining instead a return or restoration of social order without difference, Cavendish creates the possibility for women warriors and the woman warrior to imaginatively exploit the cultural disruptions generated by civil war and exile.

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"True Relations: M. Cavendish's Exilic Paratexts"

Emma Rees, University of East Anglia, UK

Focusing primarily on *Nature's Pictures* (1656), this paper considered the versions of self presented in Margaret Cavendish's exilic publications. Using the theories of Gérard Genette (Seuils, 1987), I argued that the carefully politicised 'self' presented in Cavendish's paratextual materia is rhetorically quite differently constituted from that presented in 'A True Relation', a text which is explicitly generically designated as 'autobiographical'. Further, when read as autobiographical 'thresholds', the paratextual materials (and by this I mean prefaces, epistles and dedications) suggest that the voice of the politicised self will continue to speak in the main body of the text, even when that which is being written appears to be of quite another genre, and in a way which might not have been appropriate in the openly-assigned space of an early-modern woman's 'autobiography'. Cavendish's experience of exile is replicated and manipulated in the spatial arrangement of her texts: she resists generic delimitations in order to make her presence felt throughout her volumes. Her 'interior exile' is registered, then, in the material organisation of her exilic publications, and signals not a stance of resignation or despair, but a wily and deliberate resistance and manipulation of the generic expectations of her cultural milieu in the 1650s.

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"Trouble in *The Blazing World*: War, Foreign Domination and Absolute Rule in Margaret Cavendish's Utopian Writing"

Virginia Richter, University of Munich, Germany

The empire of *The Blazing World* in M. Cavendish's eponymous text is a well-ordered, harmonious state; any change -- even any improvement -- would disturb its perfect balance. This means that the seemingly all-powerful Empress is in danger of losing her agency. The little crisis occurring at the end of part I is countered by two symmetrically opposed gestures: the creation of immaterial mental worlds, and the military intervention on behalf of the Empress's native country. Foreign war -- as opposed to Civil War -- functions here as a means to curb rebellion and restore a disrupted "natural" order. But precisely at the intersection of the feminist and the political discourse, the Empress's intervention entails two highly problematical features. First, the victory over her enemies results in their total suppression justified only by their perception as rebels, not as sovereign nations. Hence the concept of sovereignty crucial to the construction of the ideal state is not extended beyond the borders of the home state. Second, an even greater difficulty in the perspective of Cavendish's contemporaries is the fact that the Empress commands her navy in person. The divergent demands of gender, monarchy and soldiery have to be reconciled in an alternative model of "semiotic" warfare: the female monarch's body operates as a sign of divine kingship. The Empress wins the war not by military superiority, but by fashioning an image which unites the beauty of the female body with the sacredness of the absolute monarch. The celebration of royal and female power is accompanied by the repression of agency outside an exclusive privileged group. The static and monolithic structure of the *Blazing World* is imposed on the conquered parallel world. Despite the diversity of their wonderful inhabitants, Cavendish's plural worlds have no room for political plurality.

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"The Literary Patronage of William Cavendish before 1640"

Nick Rowe, King Alfred's College, Winchester, UK

This paper will offer a detailed analysis of the range and character of Cavendish's literary patronage, with particular attention given to the period before 1640 drawing on evidence from both printed and manuscript sources. There will be detailed analysis of his most significant patronage relationship of the period, that with Ben Jonson. Two main arguments will emerge from this study.

First, that much of his patronage activity can be associated with the construction of a particular identity for Cavendish, supporting his emergence from the rank of his birth within the upper echelons of the provincial gentry to take a place among the elite aristocratic families in the realm. Patronized writers place Cavendish at the forefront of the society of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, placing the foundations of his status in his leadership of his locality. They also emphasize his participation, and that of his family, in a range of activities associated with the great nobility, naturalizing his movement into its ranks. Secondly, that the character of much of Cavendish's literary patronage is marked by an unusual degree of indulgence towards the writers patronized, offering some of them an unusual degree of freedom. This is revealed in the coterie literary games played within the family circle, where Cavendish's festive participation gave a degree of license to other participants, but also extends to more public arenas such as his participation in the public drama and presentations of him in a series of Jonson's works. The paper will conclude by arguing that Margaret Cavendish's *Life of her husband* can usefully be read in relation to these earlier works and patronage relationships. The biography was the culmination of this fashioning of Cavendish is the role of the great nobleman, and it was the product not only of a marriage, but also of the literary patronage of a notably indulgent patron.

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"The Limits of a Great Imagination"
Anne Shaver, Denison University, US

This paper is on M. Cavendish's efforts to think beyond the social paradigms that she was born and raised to. I explore possible reasons why she took her astonishing inventions so far, but no farther than she did. Cavendish invents many female protagonists who must be called heroes, because the term "heroines", with its connotations of prizes and passivity, simply does not describe what they are and what they accomplish. These women do manly things as well as or better than their male peers do. It is interesting, then, that the two young women who are avoiding love, or who are busy accomplishing the world's business quite irrespective of love, do it in skirts. Why would this be so? One possibility for why her most triumphant heroes remain strongly gendered as female is that M. Cavendish truly enjoyed being a woman, and an object of the male gaze. It is clear that she knew in what low esteem the men around her held women except as objects of their own lust, love, ambition, or greed, but she also enjoyed the idea of being admired, of being looked at with awe and desire, even though she declares that she was so fearful and shy that she dared not raise her eyes to acknowledge a compliment. It is difficult for anyone to stop wanting what she has been taught is a good thing, a sign of her value as a person. What she then does, with the Empress in *Blazing World* and to a lesser extent Lady Victoria in *Bell in Campo*, is exaggerate woman as spectacle to the point of assigning her powers well beyond sexual attractiveness. But why then the two breeches hero/ines, Lady Orphant/Affectionata and Miseria/Travellia? And why, for all their triumphs as men, do they end up married as women? And why are they not spectacular as women? Possibly Cavendish could not desire for them anything but the ultimate prize awarded to a successful woman -- a desirable man. Possibly she scared herself with the inevitable lesbian implications of cross-dressing, though it is interesting that the only overt lesbianism I am aware of appears in *Convent of Pleasure* where Lady Happy, who never cross-dresses, allows herself to feel desire for a man she believes to be a woman, and expresses no relief when she finds out he's a man. Certainly even the great spectacular female heroes end up with less than they might have. The Empress fights on behalf of the King of ESFI, makes mistakes in ruling her *Blazing World*, and can't help her beloved Duchess as much as she would like to; further, the concessions that Lady Victoria wins as prizes for doing the "man's work" she obviously enjoyed are pretty limited to the domestic. Another reason for these limits may have to do not with limits but with a writer's choice of the pleasure inherent in

process, even in digression and delay. In all the cases of female heroism, the pleasure (for the hero, the reader, and I assume for the writer as well) is in the process of winning, not in ruling, or in enjoying a prize once it has been won. All of the stories have a good deal of travelling in them; most end when the travelling is done. The hero whom we get to see enjoying her power in one place for any time after she wins it is the Empress, and she grows bored, and makes mistakes which have then to be corrected. Cavendish could imagine wonderful powers for her women characters when she chose to. But why did she stop where she did?

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"The Empire of Choice: Agency and the Imagination in M. Cavendish's *Blazing World*"

Brandie R. Siegfried, Brigham Young University, US

In this paper I will suggest that Cavendish's *Blazing World* anticipates a theory of choice which has only recently been articulated at any length: "we create our own futures by choosing between imaginations." (A Theory of Choice: A Critical Guide, Shaun Hargreaves Heap, Martin Hollis, et al, eds., Cambridge, MA, Blackwell, 1992, p. 58). Also James G. March, "Bounded Rationality, Ambiguity, and the Engineering of Choice" in Rational Choice, ed. John Elster, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986) This perception of choice is also a crucial element in making Cavendish's work that rare thing, a conflict (non-cooperative) equilibrium-driven rather than zero-sum game. I will theorize this approach to agency in relation to the strategies outlined below in order to demonstrate the extent to which Cavendish not only challenged contemporary thoughts on agency, but developed a radical notion of choice that paradoxically supported expansionist discourse while severely critiquing the language of empiricism. By the conclusion of the *Blazing World*, the Romancical, Philosophical and Fantastical have, like a Chinese fan, folded into one stick with which Cavendish raps the Royal Society on its knuckles. In her experimental design, Cavendish has sketched a potential strategy for reconciling her position as pro-hierarchy with her desire to avoid the position of oppressed object in a discourse which habitually situates women as other. Recognizing that both expansionist and empiricist discourses rely for their power on fixed and proportionately distorted representations of a distanced other, Cavendish employs a three-pronged counter move. First, she cleverly adopts many of her opponents' tactics, a good preservation strategy which at the very least protects and reinforces whatever privileges of position she enjoys within the matrix. She appropriates the paradigm of colonial expansion, with its emphasis on governance, reducing her actual intellectual opponents (Hooke, Boyle, etc.) to the fictional object position of indigenous Bear-men, Worm-men, etc., whom she proceeds to colonize. Second, her apparently whimsical insistence that "each unit of matter englobes a self-sufficient and radically distinct consciousness" (Catherine Gallagher, "Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England", *Genders*, 1 (1988): 32) allows her to posit the "destruction of a hierarchy of knowers." It is this latter (sexual) hierarchy which threatened her potential as a participant in systems of administration and instruction, and it is a hierarchy which the Royal Society consistently maintained by formally excluding women from membership. Third, she counters the intellectual imperialists' desire for a fixed, unambiguous discourse with a work whose proliferation of reflections, folds, and whimsical details constitutes a vigorous parry-riposte of sheer representational ambiguity and verbal disruption of surface appearances. In conclusion, I will suggest that in contrast to several of the most importance thinkers of her day, Cavendish proffers an epistemological framework in which the tension between imagination and intellect creates the possibility of choice.

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"Managing the Grange, the Household and Medicine: Common Sense and the Fantastical M. Cavendish"

Hilda L. Smith, University of Cincinnati, US

This paper will argue that M. Cavendish was a woman of much more practical and common sense qualities than she is often given credit. I will focus on three moments in her life in particular, while placing them into a broader biographical perspective. Those moments were her years at the court in exile of Henrietta Maria. In her autobiography she portrayed herself as a shy, social misfit. But as a young woman seldom away from her protective family, she managed to attract the man who was widely termed the most eligible bachelor at court, against strong opposition from the queen herself and all of William Cavendish's friends. She did so even though her mother would not offer one cent as a dowry. Not enough attention had been given to her practical skills at courtship as revealed in their courtship correspondence, as well as correspondence regarding their exile held in the Portland Papers. Second, was the ability at which she handled the charge of adultery flung at her by the duke's steward and other high ranking servants (and likely family members) in an elaborate conspiracy which is recorded in a deposition by one of the conspirators given to a Nottinghamshire JP. Unlike the duke, she correctly identified the source of the conspiracy and encouraged an investigation to uncover it. Other information that comes out of this financial-based conspiracy confirms her continual perusal and supervision of the estate's books, which did not endear her either to William's servants or his children. It demonstrates, though, the practical work she did vis-à-vis the Cavendish estate; again, something that goes against her personal portrayal as a flop as a lady in charge of a household. Finally, there is fascinating materials in the correspondence at the University of Nottingham between the Duke and Theodore Mayerne and other physicians concerning M. Cavendish's efforts to control her own medical regimen and treatment. She was believed to be a difficult case that required extensive diuretics and enemas to clear her system. One recipe on making my lady's vomit argued that she needed three times as much vomit-inducing medicines as the typical female, and 100 % more than that of adult men. The correspondence between the duke and the physicians is filled with her resistance to their prescriptions, and how difficult it is to treat such an assessment of her skills at managing a grange, offer evidence that she should be seen as a person driven more by practicality than has traditionally been the case. That she was able to write such a large number of works, survive in a family where it often seemed that only William had any affection for her, and to fight both custom and the efforts of individuals to demean and suppress her works, provides strong evidence of her practical abilities to overcome opposition that would have defeated a lesser woman.

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"Burning the Candle in Fame's Library: M. Cavendish's Early Works (1653-56)"

Shirley Stacey, Hertford College, Oxford, UK

This paper is based on a bibliographical examination of some 350 extant copies of Cavendish's works within the U.K. and Ireland. It was supplemented by a hand-out (4 pp.) which gave supporting evidence and additional information on each of the 5 books Cavendish published during the period. The hand-out contained sections on: "title-page transcriptions", "title-page revision", "frontispieces", "preliminary matter, intertextual epistles and epilogues" (p. 1); "errata lists, holograph notes and systematic manuscript corrections", "works with evidence of in-press revision" (p. 2); "printers and publishers", "dedications", "contributions by Newcastle" (p. 3); "distribution to academic libraries before and after 1660", and a (hurried) list of "works cited" (p. 4). From the first exultant blazoning of her name, rank and body to the innumerable epistles and self-referential textual asides, Cavendish's books are a testament to her "extraordinary desire" for eternal fame. Yet

we cannot dismiss her works, or her decision to publish in print, as simply another facet of her eccentricity. On the contrary, Cavendish presented herself as a serious philosopher who published in print so that her ideas might be recorded and safe-guarded against misogynist criticism. Though she claimed not to revise her work, she was seriously concerned to communicate with her audience. During this period, she habitually sent additional material to the printers while her books were in-press. Two of the works have printed errata lists, copies of three have holograph notes, and she commissioned systematic hand-corrections to copies of another. Nor should we automatically assume that her first works were published under the financial or personal auspices of her husband. Had her title-pages said as much, or omitted any reference to a printer or bookseller, it could be claimed she financed the publication herself. However, her first six works were printed for the London booksellers J. Martin and J. Allestry, whose financial contribution would have typically included the cost of paper (up to 75 % of the total production costs). By 1655, Cavendish may have subsidised this cost by agreeing to purchase a percentage of the press run (this was not unknown, and would account for the number of extant gift copies of her fourth work); but before this, it could be argued that the booksellers thought her work to be a respectable risk. Newcastle's contribution to, and even his knowledge of, his wife's decision to begin publishing in print is also open to question. Cavendish's first two works were written and published during a prolonged separation and she admits she deliberately did not ask 'any friend' for permission to publish the work for fear of being denied. This is not to say that Newcastle would have refused permission, but rather that Cavendish thought this to be the case and, as she says, simply did not ask him. The laudatory poem associated with her *Poems and Fancies* is not an integral part of the 1653 edition and may have been written in response to the printed edition. It was only after the death of her patron, Sir Charles, that she began (sporadically) to dedicate works to her husband and he, for his part, made a greater public show of support for her actions. Cavendish's exhibitionism should not be allowed to overshadow her contribution to literature and philosophy. If not the first Englishwoman to write poetry, she was among the few of her contemporaries who published in print, and may well have been the first to openly embrace its attendant fame. From the extant records available, she was the first recorded woman to deposit copies of her own books in academic libraries in Oxford and Cambridge. Her persistent and public pursuit of the academic community is astounding now and must have shocked them then. Yet Cavendish's foresight in depositing these copies, and the libraries' willingness to keep them, had made her hopes of future fames (and our own work) possible.

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"Aphorism and the Essay Form: Reading *The World's Olio* through Montaigne and Bacon" Mihoko Suzuki, University of Miami, US

This paper will examine Cavendish's use of the essay in *The World's Olio* (1655), and the revisions of her (male) predecessors in the form, Montaigne and Bacon. Cavendish's understanding of the essay as an empirical form, based on experience, is evident in the work's last section (Book III, Part II), in which the topics of her essays are drawn from natural science (e.g., "Of Air," "Of the Motions of the Planets"). Moreover, the aphorisms--or what she calls "Short Essayes"--that comprise a large section of Book II, Part II, imply through their form an authoritative distillation of truths culled from experience that invites recognition and assent (Cavendish's work predates the publication of La Rochefoucault's *Maximes* (1665-78)--though these were previously circulated in the salons). Rather than follow Montaigne by basing her essays on personal experience, and examining each subject from various angles and perspectives, Cavendish is closer to Bacon in her strategy of presenting pithy, aphoristic observations that cut to the quick. The implied masculine universalist perspective that informs Bacon's essays, however, is often explicitly questioned or undercut by

Cavendish's equally authoritative aphoristic voice of the essayist. For example, juxtaposed to Cavendish's brutal demystification of ceremonies as "superstitious show...that keeps up the Church...[and] heightens and glorifies the powers of Kings, and States" (51), Bacon's essay on "Ceremonies and Respects (1625, LII) typically offers prudential advice on the proper amount of respect to pay to others and reveals itself to be written from within the ideology of established customs and institutions. Cavendish similarly contests Montaigne in her trenchant rejoinder to his essay, "De trois bonnes femmes" (II, 35), which praises women who commit suicide for the sake of their husbands: "Some say, it is not so much out of Love to their Husbands, as out of vainglorious Customes" (133). Here, as in the previous example, Cavendish competes with her authoritative male predecessors in the essay form by reexamining and demystifying social practices, customs, and institutions that they ultimately uphold.

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"M. Cavendish's Drama: An Aesthetic of Fragmentation"

Gisèle Venet, University of Paris 3, France

In her Prologue to *Female Wits*, Margaret Cavendish describes her own stage plays as fragmentary, having "no design, no plot", and fit for a world defined already by Donne as "all coherence gone". She uses a mathematical metaphor to assimilate her intellectual approach to creation: "mechanist geometry" is to prove the only unifying principle. She feels utterly vulnerable in a world of "fractures and disjunctures" (Wiseman), with the Civil War as central metaphor of the disruption. Yet at the same time she discovers in writing a means for her "valiantly to stand the adventure": emblematically, the recurring metaphor of the warlike female is to express her militant attitude as well as her subversive vindication of equal rights for the female sex, the male sex being most often represented by time-wasting idle men, unable to face up to their usurped reputation of superiority. Through the use of idealising models (pastoral, epic, mystical love) set within incomplete and fragmentary plots, Margaret Cavendish denies them cultural validity: not only are women victorious in battle where men flee or collapse, an idealisation of Pallas, through which her female figures become "monarchs" of their own selves; but, also, whether dominant or submissive, active or contemplative, women discover their mind as "a deity", complete by itself. They eventually prove self-sufficient "monads". Margaret Cavendish thus anticipates the creation of modern self as insular self, as emblemized in the next century in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders* or *Roxana*. Beyond the quarrel of male or female superiority, her aesthetics of fragmentation confirms the truth of Descartes's ontological paradox: "*Cogito, ergo sum*".

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"'Nor Silent Woman': M. Cavendish's engagement with male dramatists in her plays"

Gweno Williams, University College of Ripon and York St. John, UK.

This paper explores the ways in which M. Cavendish's 1662 and 1668 play collections present and articulate a variety of complex responses and challenges to the work of established male dramatists, including her husband William Cavendish, with whom she collaborated in play composition. Cavendish's repeated disingenuous statements in her 1662 prefatory poem: 'All my Playes Plots, my own poore brain did make... But I upon my own Foundation writ... All is my own, and nothing do I owe...' disguise the considerable extent of her dramatic reading. They have also diverted critical attention from the ways in which her plays often ingenuously and significantly rework plots, characters, language and ideas from other plays in order to problematise and redefine gender issues and assumptions about dramatic structure. I pay particular attention to exploring the nature and extent of the writing collaboration between Margaret and William Cavendish in her play collections,

in order to address previously neglected questions about their relative status as dramatists, and about her writing and editing practices. Finally I address the crucial issue of the performance potential of Cavendish's plays, particularly in connection with her singular status as a woman dramatist/

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"'No Thanks': Politics, Networks and Civil War in the Letters of Brilliana Harley and M. Cavendish's *Sociable Letters*"

Sue Wiseman, Birkbeck College, London, UK

The paper compared the networks of writing used by the Newcastle and Harley families to argue that in the early 1640s we can trace the crystallising of distinct vocabularies of politics and loyalty. The paper examined Margaret and William Cavendish's creation of a social world in letter form, contrasting this with the Puritan networks of the Harley.

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"'A Wit Running On Several Subjects': The Utopian and Dystopian Subjectivities of M. Cavendish"

Tanya Wood, University of Toronto, Canada.

In "Similising the Head of Man to the World" from *Poems and Fancies*, Cavendish writes "Wit, like to several Creatures, wildly runs / On severall Subjects, and each other shuns." Cavendish's inner world often contains a number of "creatures" who are mutually hostile. However, although Cavendish's model of the multiple subject is often fractured and tormented it can also be extremely productive; textually, ontologically, and in terms of pleasure. As Cavendish writes in *The Worlds Olio*, "I have not tyed myself to any one Opinion, for sometimes one Opinion crosses another,..and I contradict, or rather please myself." Cavendish's model of the self is consistent with Richard Lanham's rhetorical 'man' described in his *Motives for Eloquence*. The rhetorical 'man' does not adhere to a single set of values or to the idea of a central self: instead he concentrates on the production of literary pleasure. In *Sociable Letters*, Cavendish's correspondence with another 'lady' is actually a correspondence between two aspects of her self, and produces an intense textual pleasure. Throughout her philosophical work, Cavendish's method of uncovering nature's truth is dialogic, involving an exchange between different aspects of herself. This dialogue can also be highly problematic, producing violent argument, and even an internal exile of parts of the mind. In *Poems and Fancies* the divided self tends to be dystopian, often threatening a collapse into the divisions of the civil war. While Cavendish does occasionally attempt to produce a unified subject, as in "The Kingdom of Phancy in the World of Poetry" (*Natures Pictures*), this utopia is challenged by the internal and external pressures which predicate fragmentation. The unified, utopian self always threatens to collapse into the divided self, although this division can be as productive as it is dangerous.

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"'Cavendish, Milton and Radical Self-Representation"

Susanne Woods, Franklin and Marshall College, US

M. Cavendish and J. Milton both make self-conscious efforts to define themselves and redefine their culture, and both claim authority and assert individuality in the face of some hostility. Cavendish's prefaces and autobiography and Milton's prose self-justifications, prefaces and invocations provide a nice contrast between the royalist woman of limited education but high social standing and the republican man of wide education but middling social class as they seek to define

and exercise authorial agency. One can make a case that Cavendish's proud "singularity" is the secular parallel to Milton's insistence on the primacy of individual conscience, and that Cavendish's continual insistence on her own "virtue" has some interesting counterparts in Milton, especially in his insistence on male chastity. Despite all the obvious differences, there may be more in common between these two oddities (neither was exactly an outcast) than anyone has yet noticed. I propose to lay out a case that situates Cavendish in interesting relation to the most influential writer of her time.

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