Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, published a wide variety of works including poems, plays, letters, and treatises of natural philosophy, but her significance as a political writer has only recently been recognised. This major contribution to the series of Cambridge Texts includes the first ever modern edition of her Deivers Orationes on English social and political life, together with a new student-friendly rendition of her imaginary voyage, *A New World called the Blazing World*. Susan James explains the allusions made in this classic text, and directs readers to the many intellectual debates with which Cavendish engages. Together these two works reveal the character and scope of Margaret Cavendish’s political thought. She emerges as a singular and probing writer, who simultaneously upholds a conservative social and political order and destabilises it through her critical and unresolved observations about natural philosophy, scientific institutions, religion, and the relations between men and women.

Susan James is Professor of Philosophy at Birkbeck College, London. Her publications include *The Content of Social Explanation* (Cambridge, 1984) and *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford, 1997).
CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE
HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Series editors
RAYMOND GEUSS
Reader in Philosophy, University of Cambridge
QUENTIN SKINNER
Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge

Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought is now firmly established as the major student textbook series in political theory. It aims to make available to students all the most important texts in the history of western political thought, from ancient Greece to the early twentieth century. All the familiar classic texts will be included, but the series seeks at the same time to enlarge the conventional canon by incorporating an extensive range of less well-known works, many of them never before available in a modern English edition. Wherever possible, texts are published in complete and unabridged form, and translations are specially commissioned for the series. Each volume contains a critical introduction together with chronologies, biographical sketches, a guide to further reading, and any necessary glossaries and textual apparatus. When completed the series will aim to offer an outline of the entire evolution of western political thought.

For a list of titles published in the series, please see end of book
MARGARET CAVENDISH, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE

Political Writings

EDITED BY
SUSAN JAMES
Contents

Preface
Introduction
Chronology of Margaret Cavendish
Further reading

The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing World

Orations of Divers Sorts, Accommodated to Divers Places

Index
Preface

The text of *A New World called the Blazing World* contained in this volume was originally edited by Kate Lilley, who included it in her collection, *The Blazing World and Other Writings*, published by Penguin Classics in 1992. I am extremely grateful to Pickering and Chatto, who hold the copyright, for allowing me to use it. Lilley provided forty-one explanatory notes, some of which I have adopted. However, since there is no critical edition of this work, and since it contains allusions and references to a wide range of authors and events, I have added considerably to her annotations. In doing so, I have been aided and inspired by Eileen O’Neill’s outstanding edition of *Observations on Experimental Philosophy*, the companion piece to *Blazing World*, now published by Cambridge University Press.

While *Blazing World* has become relatively well known, *Divers Orations* remains less familiar. This is, to the best of my knowledge, the first modern edition. As well as modernising spelling and occasionally altering punctuation, I have numbered individual orations for ease of reference. However, some inconsistencies, for example in titles, have been left. Because it is a relatively self-explanatory work I have added only a few notes, though I hope readers who wish to explore it in greater detail will use the list of Further Reading.

In preparing this pair of texts for publication I have been helped by Shirley Stacey, who gave me comprehensive advice about the various editions of Margaret Cavendish’s works; by Virginia Cox, the Academic Librarian of Christ’s College Cambridge, who generously allowed me to use the College’s copy of *Divers Orations*; by Caroline Murray of Cambridge University Press, who took charge of scanning the text of *Orations*; by Olivia Skinner, who did the same for *Blazing World*; by Jean
Preface

Field, who expertly copy-edited the whole volume; by Philip Riley and Janet Hall, who checked the proofs; and by the staff of the Rare Books Room of Cambridge University Library. Together with the General Editors of Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, and Richard Fisher, the most patient and considerate of editors, they have made this volume possible.

At the same time, I am deeply grateful for the enthusiasm and advice of several friends and colleagues. I was lucky to be shown something of Antwerp, including the Rubenshuis where Margaret Cavendish lived, by so knowledgeable a guide as Walter Van Herck. Hero Chalmers, Stephen Clucas, Catherine Wilson, and Susan Wiseman have all helped me to try to understand the intellectual milieu in which Cavendish worked, and I have benefited enormously from their writings and conversation. Noel Malcolm has been exceptionally generous with his time and learning, and identified Robert Withers as the source of Cavendish’s views about the Ottoman Empire. Raymond Geuss proposed some improvements to an earlier version of the Introduction. He has been, as always, a thoughtful and constructive interlocutor. Julie Sanders, in the manner of a true friend, listened critically and at length, and shared her sensitive grasp of seventeenth-century politics and drama. Most of all, however, I am indebted to Quentin Skinner, who has closely followed the fortunes of this edition. His suggestions, comments, and interest have been a continuing and vital source of encouragement.
Introduction

I

Margaret Cavendish was a strikingly prolific writer who, in the course of a comparatively short life, published eleven volumes of work. They include plays, poems, stories, letters, and, unprecedentedly for a female author, three books of natural philosophy. Cavendish’s ideas about politics and government are spread through many of these writings, but are concentrated in the two works reprinted here, where the political themes that most absorbed her are intensively explored. These preoccupations arose out of her own experience, which was dramatically shaped by the English Civil War, the execution of King Charles I, the years of Cromwellian rule, and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy. Throughout this period Cavendish lived on the edge of the arena of high politics, and the course of her life was moulded by the fortunes of the Royalist party to which she belonged. The fears and convictions generated by this odyssey form the main elements of her political philosophy which, like the work of many of her conservative contemporaries, focuses on the question of how a monarch can most effectively avoid the dangers of faction and preserve social harmony. A more distinctive feature of Cavendish’s writing, however, is her interest in specific forms of social power, a concern which again echoes her own circumstances. The weight she places on a dramaturgical model of political authority, for example, and above all her multifaceted analyses of the hierarchical relations between men and women, reflect her acquaintance with the centre and the margins of English society. The double exclusion of a woman writer who spent the first fifteen years of her adult life in exile is counterbalanced by a familiarity with
Introduction

the ways of power and an aristocratic confidence in her own protected position. To begin to understand this unusual amalgam, and the political views to which it gave rise, it is helpful to know more about her life.

II

Margaret Cavendish was the youngest child of Elizabeth Lucas, the capable and resourceful widow of Sir Thomas Lucas, an Essex gentleman who died when Margaret was two years old. An apparently uneventful childhood and adolescence spent at her home near Colchester came to an end with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642, when she and her mother moved to Oxford, the Royalist stronghold to which Charles I had just transferred his court. As her brothers prepared to fight for the king, Margaret became a maid of honour to Queen Henrietta Maria and had to adapt to the claustrophobic and competitive mores of court life. This adjustment was rapidly succeeded by another, for within a year the political situation deteriorated and the queen and her attendants went into exile. Margaret found herself in Paris at the age of twenty-one, in the midst of a troubled community whose expectations and ambitions had been disrupted by civil war.

A few months later, this small band of courtiers was joined by William Cavendish, Marquis of Newcastle. Newcastle was a loyal servant of the Stuarts and an unswerving devotee of the Royalist cause, who had been Governor to the Prince of Wales (the future King Charles II) at the end of the 1630s, and since 1642 had been commanding an army in the north of England. In 1644 he had been heavily defeated at Marston Moor and, together with his brother and two sons who had fought alongside him, immediately left the country.¹ When he arrived in Paris he was fifty-two, a widower with five children, exiled from his estates and cut off from his immense wealth. He immediately set about wooing the young Margaret Lucas with daily letters and poems, and by the end of the year they were married.

Margaret joined a household whose principal members were her husband and his younger brother, Sir Charles Cavendish, both cultivated

¹ Edward Hyde, the Earl of Clarendon, later suggested that Newcastle left because he did not enjoy military life and ‘was so utterly tired with a condition and employment so contrary to his humour, nature and education’, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, ed. W. Dunn Macray (Oxford, 1888), vol. 1, p. 167.
Introduction

men who kept up with the latest developments in natural philosophy and the arts. Sir Charles, the more professional of the two, had a particular talent for mathematics. Before his exile he had discussed a range of optical and mechanical problems with the circle of scholars surrounding John Pell, among whom was Thomas Hobbes, and had corresponded with several European mathematicians and scientists, including Marin Mersenne. From France, and later from Antwerp, he continued to write to Pell about mathematical problems. Newcastle’s intellectual concerns were less specialised, but he nevertheless took a serious interest in scientific developments. In England he had undertaken some chemical experiments with Robert Payne, and since the 1630s had been an important patron of Thomas Hobbes. (He had invited Hobbes to come and live in one of his houses in 1636, and was the dedicatee of Hobbes’s first political treatise, The Elements of Law.) Newcastle also loved the theatre. As well as writing his own poems and plays, he had commissioned masques from Ben Jonson in the early 1630s as part of the lavish entertainments he had laid on for the king and queen. In 1649 two of his plays were published, and after the Restoration one was performed in London.

Hobbes was already in Paris when the Cavendishes arrived there, and they again took up their habit of discussing his work with him. Charles Cavendish’s papers contain detailed notes on De Corpore and De Gave from this period, while his elder brother, who regularly invited Hobbes to dinner, talked to him about his theory of the passions and encouraged him to

---

3 Newcastle mentions these experiments in a short piece appended to Cavendish’s Philosophical and Physical Opinions (1655).
6 Newcastle entertained Charles 1 at Welbeck Abbey in 1633 and both Charles I and Henrietta Maria at Bolsover Castle in 1634. Jonson wrote a masque for each occasion. Several other poets, including Richard Brome, John Ford, James Shirley, and later Thomas Shadwell, dedicated works to Newcastle.
7 Clarendon described him as ‘a very fine gentleman, active and full of courage, and most accomplished in those qualities of horsemanship, dancing, and fencing, which accompany a good breeding; in which his delight was. Besides that, he was amorous in poetry and music, to which he indulged the greater part of his time; and nothing could have tempted him out of those paths of pleasure which he enjoyed in a full and ample fortune, but honour, and ambition to serve the king’, History of the Rebellion, vol. viii, p. 381.
Introduction

publish his treatise *Of Libertie and Necessitie.* Newcastle also began to pursue a new form of enquiry when he took up the study of microscopy. While in Paris he owned seven microscopes and telescopes which he subsequently sold to Hobbes. Perhaps with Hobbes’s help, the Cavendishes also expanded their intellectual circle. One of their celebrated new acquaintances, and another guest at their table, was Descartes, although according to Margaret he said very little. Nevertheless, Newcastle later plied him with questions about his physics, and Charles Cavendish seems to have mediated in his disputes with Hobbes and Roberval. A further visitor was Gassendi, the champion of Epicurean atomism, described by Hobbes as a man whose knowledge was greater than that of any other mortal and whose virtue was even greater than his knowledge. In addition, Charles Cavendish kept up his connections with Mersenne who, as well as discussing scientific problems with him, lent him books and showed him some curiosities he had brought back from Italy.

When Margaret Cavendish came to publish her own works of natural philosophy, she insisted that she had never had a single conversation with any of these learned men, and had gained all her knowledge from her husband and brothers. She presumably intended this description to encompass Charles Cavendish and her elder brother Lord Lucas, a founding member of the Royal Society who was in London during the two years she spent there between 1651 and 1653. ‘Likewise’, she writes,

if they should tell me all the parts of an animal body... I conceive it as perfectly to my understanding as if I had seen it dissected... for truly I have gathered more by piece-meals than from a full relation, or a methodical education for knowledge; but my fancy will build thereupon and make discourse therefrom, and so of everything they discourse (I say, that is, my husband and brothers); for the singularity of my affections are such that though I have an ill memory [for]... anything long that I shall hear from strangers... when from my near

9 *De Corpore (On Body)* was published in 1655 and *De Cive (On The Citizen)* appeared in 1642. *Of Libertie and Necessitie*, Hobbes’s dispute with John Bramhall, had been drafted in 1646 but was not published until 1654–5.
10 *Philosophical and Physical Opinions* (1655), sig. B, 3v.
Introduction

friends (especially my Lord), whose discourses are lively descriptions, I cannot forget anything they say, such deep impressions their words print on my brain.  

Even if she did not speak to the great philosophers who came to the house, and was unable to read works in Latin or Greek, she learned about the debates they were conducting, and when she developed views of her own, Descartes and Hobbes were among the authors with whom she engaged.

Alongside his intellectual activities, Newcastle contributed optimistically to the queen’s efforts to rally support for the king, and like other exiled Royalists Margaret Cavendish presumably believed that she would soon return to England. However, any confidence she may have had that life would go on as before must have been shaken by the deaths of her mother and two of her siblings in 1647. The following year, a more public disaster overtook her when her elder brother, the Royalist general Sir Charles Lucas, surrendered the besieged city of Colchester to the parliamentary forces and was summarily shot. In the aftermath of the siege, the family vault at her childhood home was vandalised and the recently interred bodies of her mother and sister were brutally mutilated. News of these events was widely circulated in pamphlets and papers, and not surprisingly Margaret became seriously unwell. Over the next two years, the group of English Royalists gathered around Henrietta Maria watched their prospects decline, and when in 1649 the king was executed and a Commonwealth declared, many of them embarked on an uncharted period of exile which was to last a further eleven years.

One of the most urgent problems facing Newcastle at this juncture was lack of money, and as his Parisian creditors became increasingly pressing he decided to move to Antwerp, where he rented a substantial and gracious house which had been built by Rubens. Although he continued to be intermittently involved in a series of unsuccessful attempts to restore the English monarchy, he mainly turned his attention to horsemanship. In the garden of the Rubenshuis he set up a successful riding school where

---

12 Philosophical and Physical Opinions (1655), sig. B, 3v. See also The World’s Olio (1655), Epistle sig. E2r–E6v.r.
13 Sir Theodore Mayrner, Margaret’s doctor, wrote to Newcastle in May 1648: ‘Touching conception, I know not if in the estate she’s in, you ought earnestly to desire it. It is hard to get children with good courage when one is melancholy, and after they are got and come into the world, they bring a great deal of pain with them.’ Quoted in Douglas Grant, Margaret the First (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), p. 96.
he demonstrated dressage or ‘the art of manage’, a popular aristocratic pastime of which he became an internationally acknowledged master, and about which he published a magnificently illustrated book. Margaret Cavendish, meanwhile, began to write. This occupation, as she later indicated, was a familiar one, since in spite of her limited education she had as a child filled sixteen books with her smudged and irregular hand. It seems to have been at this stage, however, that writing started to become for her an intensely satisfying form of retreat, ‘a great delight and pleasure to me, as being the only pastime which imploys my idle hours’. This way of life continued until 1651, when Newcastle’s financial affairs took his wife to London. Because he had been impeached by Parliament for his part in the Civil War and excluded from any future amnesty, there was no prospect of his returning to England under a parliamen-
tary government, nor was he able to reclaim his property. Even before his estates were confiscated he was forced to live in what were by his standards desperately straitened circumstances, and Margaret Cavendish’s accounts of their exile dwell on his recurrent negotiations with his creditors. When her brother-in-law discovered that his estates were about to be sold, he was persuaded to go to London to compound for them, and it was agreed that Margaret should go too, in the hope that she would be able to claim a pension payable to the wives of Royalists who had lost their property during the war. She duly petitioned the relevant parliamentary committee, but it turned down her request on the grounds that she had not married until after her husband’s estates had been confiscated. Mortified, she persuaded her brother, as she later put it, ‘to conduct me out of that ungentlemanship place’ and it was left to Newcastle’s children, brother, and friends to raise money for him wherever they could.

During the two years she spent in London, Cavendish produced ‘a book of poems and a little book called my Philosophical Fancies’, a playful exposition of Lucretian atomism in verse, influenced, perhaps, by Henry

---

14 William Cavendish, *La Méthode Nouvelle et Invention Extraordinaire de Dresser les Chevaux* (Antwerp, 1668), illustrated with engravings after Abraham van Diepenbeke. In 1667 Newcastle published a revised version in English, which was translated into French and German.

15 ‘A True Relation’ in *Nature’s Pictures* (1656), p. 385; *Sociable Letters* (1664), CXXI.


Introduction

More’s poem, *Democritus Platonissans*. Returning to Antwerp in 1653, she continued to write, and also gained Newcastle’s permission to publish her work. *Poems and Philosophical Fancies* appeared in 1653, followed two years later by *The World’s Olio,* and a year after that by *Nature’s Pictures*, in which she included an autobiographical piece, ‘A True Relation of my Birth and Breeding’. In 1655 she also published *Philosophical and Physical Opinions*, her first work of systematic natural philosophy. As she later confided, she was hampered when she first began to read philosophical treatises by her lack of learning (especially of languages) and by her ignorance of the technical terms they employed. It is clear, however, that *Philosophical and Physical Opinions* is grounded on an acquaintance with some of the most up-to-date natural philosophy of the period: with the work of Galileo; with Harvey’s account of the circulation of the blood; with mechanical conceptions of bodily motion and perception; with some aspects of the work of Descartes; and with some of Hobbes’s objections to Cartesianism. Cavendish entreats her readers to believe ‘that whatever is new is my own which I hope all is; for I never had any guide to direct me, not intelligence from any authors to advise me, but writ according to my own natural cogitations’. However, we know that, at least once she began to publish her natural philosophy, she sometimes discussed scientific questions with people outside her family circle, and in 1657 corresponded with the poet and diplomat, Constantijn Huygens. Huygens sent her some small drops of glass formed by putting molten glass into water, and asked if she could tell him why they were liable to explode. This was a widely discussed scientific puzzle at the time, one that Charles II later put to the members of the Royal Society who, like Cavendish, were unable to solve it.

For Newcastle, the late 1650s was also a period of literary activity. Towards the end of it, probably once the death of Oliver Cromwell made

19 Henry More attempts to reconcile atomism and Platonism, and defends the idea that there could be an infinite number of worlds. See *Democritus Platonissans*, or, An Essay on the Infinity of Worlds out of Platonick Principles (1646).
20 *This work contains an attack on monasticism which prompted a response from S. Du Verger. He defends the institution at length in Du Verger’s Humble Reflections upon some Passages of the Right Honourable the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle’s Olio, or, An Appeale from her mis-informed to her own better informed judgement* (London 1657). In many of her subsequent Prefaces, Cavendish acknowledges that her works have excited criticism.
21 *Philosophical and Physical Opinions* (1655), ch. 209, p. 171.
22 See Grant, *Margaret the First*, pp. 194–5. The phenomenon of ‘Rupert’s Drops’ was investigated by the Royal Society in 1661.
Introduction

It seems more likely that Charles II might regain the throne, he wrote his old pupil a letter of advice, explaining how to go about consolidating and maintaining a stable and prosperous kingdom. The optimism implicit in this gesture turned out to be justified, and as soon as the monarchy and the House of Lords were restored in 1660 he set sail for England, leaving his wife in Antwerp to stand surety for him until his creditors were satisfied. She arrived in London a few months later, and after a comparatively short stay, during which it became evident that Newcastle would play no significant role in Charles II’s court or government, they retired to his estates. Assuring the king that ‘I am in no kind of way displeased, for I am so joyed at your Majesty’s happy restoration that I cannot be sad or troubled for any concern to my own particular’, he withdrew with Margaret to Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire. While he began to repair his property and returned to his old habit of writing plays, she settled once more to her work, and over the next eight years published six further books: two volumes of plays; Divers Orationes; Sociable Letters (a vivid and sometimes savage commentary on social mores); Philosophical Letters; and Observations on Experimental Philosophy which appeared in the same volume as its companion piece, The Description of a New World called The Blazing World.

In 1665, Newcastle was made a duke and Cavendish accompanied him to London to attend the court. Her reputation as an author, together with her exotic mode of dress, made her something of a public spectacle, and her visit is mentioned in several contemporary letters and diaries. Pepys, for example, records seeing coaches jostling around her carriage as she drove through Hyde Park, and boys and girls running after her as she drove to her house at Clerkenwell. She also became the first woman to visit the Royal Society, which put on a display of experimental curiosities for her benefit, much as the bear men entertain the Empress in The Blazing World. Boyle’s famous air pump was used to create a vacuum (a challenge to Cavendish, who had denied the possibility of such a thing); a piece of meat was dissolved in sulphuric acid; coloured liquors were mixed together; and a magnet was used to move iron

Introduction

filings. But whereas the fictional Empress replies sceptically and intelligently to the bear men’s claims, the Fellows of the Royal Society seem to have been disappointed, or perhaps reassured, by what they perceived as Cavendish’s inarticulate and bewildered responses to their experiments. Not long after she attained this moment of equivocal recognition, Cavendish’s spectacular energy seems to have begun to decline. Back at Welbeck, she wrote and published a biography of her husband and reissued several of her other works, but in the winter of 1673 she fell ill and died. Newcastle, who outlived her by two years, gathered together a collection of letters and poems in her honour. He also wrote the epitaph that adorns her grave in Westminster Abbey, where he describes her as ‘a wise, witty and learned lady, which her many booke do testifie’.

III

Cavendish wrote in many literary forms, and as her work developed she increasingly used genres considered unsuitable for women. As she explained, some of her female contemporaries wrote poems and plays, and also ‘devotions, or romances, or receipts of medicines, for cookery or confections, or complementary letters, or a copy or two of verses’ which ‘express our brief wit in our short books’. But very few published systematic philosophical treatises, and no other woman explained in print how her views outshone those of the most celebrated philosophers of the age. In this audacious mood, Cavendish insists that, ‘as an honourable dueller will fight only with an honourable and valiant opponent, so I am resolved to argue only with famous and subtle philosophers’. At other moments, however, her confidence wavers. Many of her prefatory epistles ask her dedicatees and readers to take account of the fact that she is not learned, and her awareness that she is likely to be the target of both social and intellectual criticism often prompts her to defend herself in advance.

28 Letters and Poems in Honour of the Incomparable Princess, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle (1676).
29 Sociable Letters, cxii.
30 Observations upon Experimental Philosophy (1668), Preface to the ensuing treatise sig. b3. v.
Introduction

She is consistent, however, in claiming that she writes to satisfy an extreme and unusual desire for fame. Many people, she allows, will regard this as a disease and many others will condemn her as opinionated and vainglorious; but in her own estimation it is an admirable and honest ambition.

Fame, as Cavendish understands it, is the opposite of oblivion, and consists in being remembered as an honourable person.31 It can be achieved in a number of ways, but for a woman excluded from heroic actions, public employments, or eloquent pleadings it is most readily attained through authorship.32 Cavendish began to publish her work and advertise her ambition for fame during the 1650s, at a time when the lives of exiled Royalists were in danger of being forgotten. In her own case, the fact that she had no children after several years of marriage may have increased her anxiety that she would disappear without trace, a fear poignantly expressed at the end of ‘A True Relation’. Equally, the reputations of the men to whom she was closest were at a low ebb; national histories had become dangerous reminders of past discord, and her husband had been branded a traitor. Her desire to secure Newcastle’s reputation is manifested in the many praises and vindications of him scattered throughout her books, including the appearance of his fictional double in The Blazing World. By incorporating him into her work and presenting him as a superlatively honourable man, she both basks in the glory of her association with him and ensures that he is encompassed by whatever fame she acquires.

At the same time, however, she appeals to the strictly gendered nature of honour to justify her role as an author and to fend off the charge that she should be living a more ‘feminine’ life. While honourable men are required to exemplify a delicate blend of social virtues – to be honest, courageous, prudent, magnanimous, and so on – female honour is primarily a sexual matter and consists above all in chastity.33 This difference has direct political implications, since it makes way for the view that inconstant women or whores, about whom Cavendish writes with extreme violence, are the ruin of the Commonwealth. Their infidelities, she asserts, ‘decay breed’, and because men are unwilling to provide for children who may not be their own progeny this in turn ‘decays industry’.34 While she is simultaneously stern about the absolute demands of female honour and eloquent about the sufferings imposed upon women by the sexual double

31 See for example Divers Oration (1662), 22.
33 Sociable Letters, lx. 34 Nature’s Pictures, p. 338.
standard, she also celebrates the fact that many aspects of women’s lives do not bear directly on their virtue. As long as they remain chaste, she suggests, women have a certain latitude. In particular, there is nothing dishonourable about a life devoted to writing; it possesses the seriousness appropriate to a married woman and keeps her away from vice; it may provide an improving and profitable entertainment for others; and if it brings its author fame, it enhances an aspect of her honour that she shares with men.

Cavendish was a determined promoter of her own work who sent presentation copies of her books to the Library of the University of Leyden, to several of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges, to the playwright Thomas Shadwell, and to individual philosophers including Glanvill, Charleton, More, Digby, and Hobbes.35 Her quest for fame made her anxious to win the respect of her powerful male contemporaries, and may also help to explain why she often wrote on what were generally regarded as masculine subjects. Nonetheless, she never produced anything resembling a political treatise and she steered clear of direct engagement with matters of church or state.36 By way of justification, she claimed that unless you expect to be the favourite of an absolute prince (or, one might add, adviser to the Empress of the Blazing World) the study of a deceiving profession such as politics is a waste of time, especially for women who are not employed in state affairs.37 Elsewhere, however, she explores the implications of excluding women from political life with characteristic acuity. In a remarkable passage, the author of Sociable Letters argues that, because women do not possess the civic rights and duties accorded to men, they are not citizens. Moreover, ‘if we be not citizens in the Commonwealth, I know no reason we should be subjects to the Commonwealth; and the truth is we are no subjects, unless it be to our husbands’.38

Here, as in her other works, Cavendish avoids discussing political issues in her own voice and creates a distance between author and text which serves both as a precaution and as an opportunity. This is a feature both of Divers Orationes, which employs the conventions of the art of rhetoric to view each of the issues it discusses from a variety of angles, and of

35 On Cavendish’s gift to the University of Leyden see Grant, Margaret the First, p. 218; for letters of thanks from other recipients of her work see Letters and Poems in Honour of the Incomparable Princess, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle (1676).
36 Philosophical Letters (1664), Preface to the Reader, sig. b, i-v; see also pp. 3, 17.
37 Philosophical Letters, Section 1, Letter xiii, p. 47. 38 Sociable Letters, xvi.
Introduction

A Description of a New World called the Blazing World, which depicts an imaginary polity.\textsuperscript{39} The latter piece belongs to a popular early-modern genre of utopian writing to which it relates in two specific ways. On the one hand, scientific innovations had led to the revival of a classical discussion as to whether or not the world we inhabit is unique. Cavendish repeatedly addresses this question, and argues that there are many worlds. On the other hand, moralists and political theorists kept up the ancient practice of illuminating the character and worth of an existing society by contrasting it with an imaginary one. Several works of this type are mentioned in The Blazing World, and its title seems to allude to yet another of them, a book by Joseph Hall called The Discovery of a New World. A Description of the South Indies Hitherto Unknown, which appeared in English in 1605.\textsuperscript{40} Cavendish’s own fiction tells the story of a virtuous lady who is transported to an exotic and orderly Blazing World, becomes its empress, and with the help of her adviser the Duchess of Newcastle rules it wisely and well.

In both the 1666 and 1668 editions, The Blazing World was published together with Observations on Experimental Philosophy, a critique of the recently established Royal Society of London which had been incorporated by Charles II in 1662.\textsuperscript{41} Cavendish takes issue with the conclusions reached by some of the Society’s greatest luminaries, especially Robert Hooke, Henry Power, and Robert Boyle. She criticises their experimental approach, and especially their use of dissection and microscopic observation, claiming that it is far inferior to her more speculative style of philosophising. At the same time, she attacks the corpuscularian assumptions underlying their work. The view that the natural world consists of inanimate material particles is, she argues, much weaker from an explanatory point of view than her own vitalist principles. While Observations challenges the Royal Society’s philosophical findings, the fictional narrative of The Blazing World enables Cavendish to offer a more playful, but also more wide-ranging, commentary on the relationship between scientific investigation and government. Like Charles II, the newly installed empress

\textsuperscript{39} Although Cavendish does not deign to write romances, her work shares some of the traits of the ‘royal romances’ published in the middle of the century. See Annabel Patterson, Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 159–202.

\textsuperscript{40} And also, perhaps, to the title of a masque by Ben Jonson, News from a New World Discovered in the Moon, which had been performed in 1620.

\textsuperscript{41} Charles also had a hand in the founding of the Mathematical School at Christ’s Hospital in 1673, and the building of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich in 1675.
enthusiastically forms her physicists, chemists, logicians, and other investigators into learned societies. However, when she quizzes them about their discoveries she is on the whole disappointed, and eventually decides to dissolve them on the grounds that their controversies and quarrels are dangerous to the state. Re-enacting the laws she had started with, the Empress turns her attention to the defence of her native country, and after a brilliant naval campaign succeeds in subduing the enemies of a king whom we are allowed to identify as none other than Charles II. The overall trajectory of the text is therefore a nostalgic one in which the state’s support for novel forms of enquiry is abandoned in favour of a government overwhelmingly concerned with security and conquest. In advocating this traditional type of polity, and in emphasising the importance of military glory, it can be read as a plea to the recently restored king to reinstate the policies of his predecessors, and particularly of Elizabeth I.  

The Blazing World also explores the character and limits of political knowledge. When the Empress yearns for a political kabbala—a comprehensive set of insights into the truth about politics—she is informed by her counsellor, the Duchess of Newcastle, that there is no need for such a thing, since the only basis of government is reward and punishment. Cavendish here enables the reader to make several connections. As well as echoing a view that she elsewhere attributes to her husband and tacitly criticising the project of attempting to provide a systematic political philosophy, she presents government as an art, grounded on simple and accessible principles and dependent for its success on the skill of rulers and their advisers. The implication that neither speculative philosophy nor experimental investigation can contribute anything worthwhile to our understanding of practical politics underlines her more general view that all forms of enquiry should be useful, and suggests that the approach of the Royal Society is irrelevant, if not damaging, to the vital business of government. A prudent prince, we are encouraged to infer, would do well to emulate the Empress of the Blazing World and exchange his learned societies for capable counsellors.

42 Newcastle repeatedly advises Charles II to revert to the policies of Elizabeth I. See Newcastle’s Advice, pp. 73, 75. Cf. The World’s Olio (1655), p. 126.
44 It is worth remembering that Newcastle was the patron of Hobbes, who wrote no fewer than three systematic treatises on politics: Elements of Law, De Cive, and Leviathan.
Introduction

Cavendish’s book of orations, like several of her stories and plays, combines fiction with the use of rhetorical conventions in such a way as to provide another means of airing a variety of political and social views without espousing any of them. *Divers Orations* consists of sets of speeches loosely organised into a narrative. We are to imagine ourselves visiting a country on the brink of civil war where we listen to citizens and soldiers talking about the impending hostilities and the restoration of peace. We then hear proceedings in the law courts and the royal council chamber, attend weddings and funerals, join the crowd in the market place, are admitted to a meeting of women, and are treated to the views of country gentlemen. Crossing the border, we travel to a neighbouring state where the government is in crisis, before hearing a final set of orations by scholars. Although many details make it natural to identify this imagined country as England, Cavendish insists that her orations are ‘such as may be spoken by any kingdom or government’, and by putting them in the mouths of social types rather than individuals she makes them to some degree anonymous. Although she frequently follows the standard practice of writing two speeches on a single topic, each defending one of two opposing views, she sometimes produces three or four on the same subject, and turns her verbal contests into many-sided debates as speakers answer one another back and forth. Defending herself against the complaint that she is unduly forthright, Cavendish claims that her orations are for the most part declamations ‘wherein I speak pro and con and determine nothing; and as for that part which contains several pleadings, it is fit and lawful that both parties should bring in their arguments as well as they can’. But by introducing sets of speeches, she both breaks the rules of formal rhetoric and introduces the thought that there are sometimes more than two sides to a question.

A further potential criticism of *Divers Orations*, which Cavendish also tries to fend off, focuses on her ignorance of artificial eloquence – the elaborate conventions governing the composition of speeches, set out in manuals of rhetoric and practised by schoolboys and university students as part of their education. Cavendish admits that she lacks this training,

---

45 See for example ‘The She Anchoret’ in *Nature’s Pictures* (1656); ‘The Female Academy’ and ‘Youth’s Glory and Death’s Banquet’ in *Plays* (1662).
46 *Divers Orations*, ‘To the Readers of my Works’, sig. a 2.r–4.r.
47 *Sociable Letters*, Preface, sig. C., 2.r.
Introduction

but contrasts artificial eloquence unfavourably with its natural counterpart. People whose heads are filled with tropes and conceits are often vanquished in debate by speakers of natural eloquence who, although they follow fewer rules and speak in plainer terms, find that their words flow easily and freely.49

Despite her disclaimers, Cavendish in fact reveals a considerable familiarity with artificial eloquence, and especially with Aristotle’s Rhetoric, which had first been translated into English by Thomas Hobbes and published in 1637.50 Aristotle distinguishes three types of oration, each with its own function: a demonstrative oration praises or dispraises and aims to prove a thing honourable or dishonourable; a deliberative oration exhorts or dehorts and aims to prove a thing profitable or unprofitable; and a judicial oration accuses or defends and aims to prove a thing just or unjust.51 Although Cavendish’s speeches do not all conform precisely to this classification, she includes many examples of each type and often follows Aristotle’s advice about the topics appropriate to each of them. For example, deliberative orations about the business of government will, according to Aristotle, be about levying money, peace and war, the safeguard of the country, and the provisions needed to maintain the state.52 Cavendish’s opening section is duly headed ‘Orations to citizens in a chief city concerning peace and war’, while Parts I and XIV contain speeches about the pros and cons of levying taxes and the same sections include orations on various aspects of safeguarding the state. In Parts IV and V, Cavendish moves on to judicial orations delivered in courts of law and in the royal council, and here, too, she writes on a pair of themes mentioned by Aristotle – theft and adultery.53 Finally, she devotes Parts VII and VIII to demonstrative orations, a genre which became important in Renaissance rhetoric in the form of the funeral oration.54 Funeral speeches were designed both to celebrate the virtue and honour of the deceased and to inspire the audience to imitate their qualities, and although Cavendish keeps to this pattern, she adapts it to her own purposes. Instead

Introduction

of remembering an individual, as humanist orators had tended to do, she mainly outlines the virtues appropriate to particular roles, creating portraits of actors who know how to play their parts in public and private life. In this respect, her commemorative speeches are continuous with many of the orations she puts in the mouths of citizens, councillors, kings, or generals, in which they handle volatile or contentious situations with honour and finesse.

Both The Blazing World and Divers Oration articulate a political position answering to the problems uppermost in the minds of English people who had lived through the Civil War: the justification of war itself; the legitimacy of monarchical government; the significance of social order; the relation between church and state; and the best means to maintain peace and increase prosperity. Cavendish addresses all these issues, but she is less concerned than some of her contemporaries with constitutional questions or with the nature of legitimacy. Confidently Royalist in her assumptions, she mainly concentrates on identifying policies that will enable absolute monarchs to rule successfully and consolidate their power. To achieve this goal, it is not enough to exercise a monopoly of force, in the manner of a Hobbesian sovereign. It is also necessary to promote a particular set of values—a classical conception of virtue which had been revived in the Renaissance—and to win the admiration and love of the people. Some of Cavendish’s most intriguing and distinctive discussions are concerned with these latter themes, and open up a broad conception of the practices that are relevant to politics.

According to this picture, the supreme values of a healthy commonwealth are wisdom and above all honour. Communities dedicated to these ends are by no means pacific, since military glory and the fame that accompanies it are essential aspects of the honour code. (Thus, the Empress of the Blazing World attacks the enemies of her native country, and in Divers Oration the advantages of war are extolled by generals, kings, and common soldiers alike.) Honourable polities are, however, free from the rancorous envy between citizens that leads to rebellion and civil war, and sustain a social climate in which individuals devote themselves to the collective pursuit of glory and prosperity. As well as celebrating this notion of the good society and exploring its political implications, Cavendish sometimes engages with its critics. To those who protest that honour is a fundamentally aristocratic and elitist value, she replies that it is applicable to everyone. People should be as hospitable as their means allow and should seek the kinds of glory appropriate to their lives. For example, although
common soldiers do not achieve as much fame as their commanders, their deeds are remembered by their families and friends.\textsuperscript{55} Turning to the conflict between the demands of honour and law, Cavendish sides firmly with the former. She is a staunch defender of duelling even when it is illegal, and deplores the modern habit of fighting with pistols rather than swords.\textsuperscript{56} She is equally firm in her view that the law should reflect the differing demands of male and female virtue. In one of her court scenes, two brothers who have murdered their sister because her unchastity has stained their reputation go unpunished on the grounds that they acted as honour required.\textsuperscript{57}

Honour is compatible with several types of constitution, and the author of \textit{Sociable Letters} argues that the form of government best adapted to securing it varies with circumstances. Some countries are better off under a monarchy, others under a republic, and still others under the mixed form of government favoured by the Dutch.\textsuperscript{58} Usually, however, Cavendish takes the superiority of monarchy for granted, and in the texts reprinted here she produces a series of familiar and deeply conservative arguments for this judgement. Absolute monarchy accords with divine law; it satisfies the requirement that the body politic should have a single head; it is based on ancient rights of conquest; and it answers to the patriarchal claim that, just as children have a natural duty to obey their parents, so subjects are naturally bound to conform to the will of the king.\textsuperscript{59} However, while she rehearses these platitudes, Cavendish is not interested in developing them and concentrates instead on the practical business of identifying policies conducive to an honourable peace. Many of the proposals contained in \textit{The Blazing World} and \textit{Divers Orationes} implicitly suggest how Charles I might have averted civil war, or indicate how his son might strengthen his kingdom, and the two sets of ideas overlap substantially with those contained in Newcastle’s \textit{Advice} to Charles II. For both husband and wife, the recent past contained urgent lessons in the art of government.

Some of the political principles Cavendish defends are conventional features of English absolutist ideology during this period. If society is to be secure, it is vital that the king should possess military supremacy; he must recognise the potential military threat posed by a large capital

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Divers Orationes}, 21.  
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Sociable Letters}, lxviii. As Cavendish mentions here, her father was outlawed by Elizabeth I for killing his opponent in a duel. He went into exile and was only able to return when James I pardoned him in 1604.  
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Divers Orationes}, 54.  
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Sociable Letters}, cxxv.  
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Divers Orationes}, 161–8.
city (as Charles I had failed to do) and take care to maintain control over his army. Equally, if he is to be able to implement his policies, he must fill his treasury, partly through taxation, and partly by encouraging trade and suppressing monopolies. Furthermore, if trade is to flourish he must invest in shipping, on which both prosperity and security depend. Once the seas are safe, merchant adventurers will enrich the commonwealth, thereby increasing their sovereign’s independence. These themes are all debated in Divers Orations, though the geography and self-sufficiency of the Blazing World conveniently obviate any need for foreign trade or military defences.

At the same time, a monarch must be sure to control print, learning, and religion, all of which are potent sources of faction and rebellion. Cavendish is less adamantly opposed to the wide circulation of printed works than Newcastle who, in his Advice, recommends that books about controversial matters should be available only in Latin, and that works liable to encourage dissent should be suppressed. Although two of his wife’s orators express this point of view, a third points out that drawing attention to controversial works by censoring them may do more harm than good. This recognition of political complexity is characteristic of Cavendish, and is also echoed in her attitude to learning. While the fictional Duchess of Newcastle advises the Empress of the Blazing World to close down her academies as soon as they threaten to become factious, the Duchess’s wisdom is what makes her such a valuable counsellor.

Turning to the pressing issue of religious dissent, Cavendish and Newcastle are united in the view that the power of the sovereign must extend to the church. This point is emphasised in The Blazing World when the fictional Duchess argues that, although the power of the Ottoman Emperor appears to be absolute, his greatness is diminished by his inability to alter Mohammedan religion, so that in reality he is governed by priests. In a more local context, however, Cavendish enters what had been a bitter debate about the extent to which preaching should be controlled by the state. Some of the speeches in Divers Orations voice support for Newcastle’s proposal that the king should exercise direct control over the bishops, who should in turn prescribe the content of sermons, and in her biography of her husband Cavendish praises him for regulating preaching during the Civil War. More expeditiously still, the Empress of the Blazing World avoids all delegation by taking the task of preaching upon

60 Life of William Cavendish, p. 11.
Introduction

herself. In general, however, Cavendish favours religious compromise. She points out that, although absolute liberty leads to factiousness, the imposition of conformity generates fury, and she emphasises that people cannot be forced to hold particular theological beliefs. While it is necessary to suppress sects when they threaten to disrupt security, the most effective way to avoid dissent is to follow the example set in the Blazing World and require only a minimal level of religious conformity. Cavendish’s relatively tolerant attitude may have been shaped by her experience of the Netherlands, and was of a piece with the policy that Charles II tried unsuccessfully to impose after the Restoration.61 It was also consistent with the strikingly heterodox religious views that she herself defended in her philosophical writings. While we can be certain that God exists, she claims, natural reason can teach us virtually nothing about him, so that the detailed theological assertions to be found in established religions are grounded solely on faith.62

This agnosticism about theology is allied to a vivid analysis of the significance of devotional practices. Cavendish is keenly aware, for example, that certain styles of preaching can produce what are in her view tasteless and ridiculous emotional responses, and is regularly ironic, and even sarcastic, about the hyperbolical piety of Puritans.63 However, precisely because people are susceptible to the manner in which ideas are conveyed, she is convinced that the church cannot afford to ignore ceremonial. In the Blazing World, the Empress uses dazzling settings and quasi-magical devices (somewhat akin to the elaborate theatrical effects so popular in Caroline masques) to inspire religious devotion in her subjects. By conducting the rituals of her church herself, she ensures that the worship of the divine sovereign blends conveniently with obeisance to the temporal one, and the dominion of God is identified with that of the state. The link between these domains is created by ceremonies which, together with the related notion of order, play a key role in Cavendish’s political philosophy. Through these conventions, ordinary people are transformed into the holders of offices and the bearers of political power, and for want of it ‘the state goes down’.64 Hence Newcastle’s rhetorical question to Charles II, ‘What is a king more than a subject, but for ceremony and order?’65

61 Following the same policy during the 1640s, Newcastle had been criticised by Parliament for allowing Roman Catholics to fight in his army, and had publicly defended himself.

62 For further details see Blazing World, n. to p. 19.

63 Sociable Letters, li, lxxvi.

64 Nature’s Pictures, p. 172. Cf. Newcastle’s Advice, p. 44.

65 Newcastle’s Advice, p. 44.
Introduction

If a society is to remain stable, so this argument goes, people must be able to recognise those to whom they owe obedience and be willing to obey them. Ceremony creates the first of these conditions by making power visible, and this is why sumptuary laws are an essential ingredient of stability. Cavendish dwells on the need for different ranks to be distinguished by their dress and manners, and worries that the increasingly grand style being adopted by the bourgeoisie in Holland will destabilise the Dutch state. The second condition is met when the trappings of power inspire awe and subservience, and rulers must make use of images of divine splendour to achieve this end. In his Advice, Newcastle recommends that Charles II should appear to his people like a god, a suggestion taken to the limit by the Empress of the Blazing World, whose subjects and enemies come to view her as an immortal being.

If ceremony is to have the desired effect, the citizens of a polity must learn to recognise and respond appropriately to performances of power, a disposition generated by custom. Here the theatre plays an important role. One of Cavendish’s orators advises a magistrate to set up a company of players at the town’s expense, claiming that good players are better than tutors or dancing masters at fashioning the behaviour of young people. Equally, when the Emperor of the Blazing World expresses a wish to put on dramas that will make men wise, the fictional Duchess of Newcastle allows that her own plays would suit the purpose admirably. In answer to the Puritan view that the theatre is profane and corrupting, Cavendish suggests that plays inculcate a habit of responding to performance which carries over into church and state, and also offer images of virtue on which the more and less powerful can model their lives. At the same time, she challenges this argument in some of her own dramas which undercut the very order that ceremony is supposed to maintain. In ‘Bel in Campo’, for example, the leader of a victorious army of women points out to her troops that they did not know their own powers until they tried them, thus reminding the audience that women may possess capabilities far beyond the ones they are normally expected, or permitted, to exercise.

Cavendish’s discussions of the relations between men and women open up vistas which threaten to demolish the social hierarchy she usually defends. On a fictional level, she employs her literary imagination to put aside the constraints of her own social existence and create women such

66 Sociable Letters, lxv, xcvi. See also Newcastle’s Advice, pp. 45–6.
67 Divers Orations, 44. 68 ‘Bel in Campo’, in Plays.
as the Empress and Duchess in The Blazing World, who are powerful, childless, untroubled by their devoted but docile husbands, and bound together by conversation and adventure. Such figures recur throughout her writings, but their liberty and resourcefulness contrast starkly with her sombre picture of the condition of living women, whose subjection she sometimes describes as enslavement. Women’s suffering is widespread, she claims, but is most intense within marriage, a lottery rightly feared by maids since it exposes them to the risk of physical and psychological torture condoned by the law. The vulnerability of married women, and the failure of the law to treat them as legal subjects, is the theme of some of Cavendish’s most striking judicial orations. For instance, a wife who is afraid that her violent husband will kill her asks a court for protection, only to be told by the judge that he has no power to intervene on her behalf because the rights of husbands derive from God and nature. This dark picture of women’s condition is, however, only one of the many views that Cavendish offers on the subject. The complexity of her analysis is reflected in the set of female speeches included in Divers Orations, in which some women lament their subjection while others extol their power and several examine with varying degrees of scepticism the possibility, as well as the desirability, of social change. By contrast with her attitudes to government, which are largely settled, Cavendish’s treatment of the relations between women and men reveals a truly rhetorical ability to see the issue from many points of view.

The works included in this volume address the central political themes that run through Cavendish’s writing, but do so in very different styles. Divers Orations is relatively straightforward, and I have therefore annotated it lightly. Blazing World is a highly allusive fiction that engages with a wide range of seventeenth-century debates. While previous modern editions have mainly left readers to recognise these allusions themselves, I have added a number of notes designed to make Cavendish’s text easier to follow, and to provide a guide to the many philosophical and political positions discussed.
Chronology of Margaret Cavendish

1573 Birth of Thomas Lucas, Margaret Cavendish’s father.
1593 Birth of William Cavendish, Earl, Marquess, and later Duke of Newcastle.
1595 Birth of Sir Charles Cavendish, brother of William Cavendish.
1597–1603 Thomas Lucas outlawed from England by Elizabeth I for killing a relative of Lord Cobham in a duel.
Before 1604 Birth of Margaret’s eldest brother Thomas to Elizabeth Leighton, Thomas Lucas’s betrothed.
1603 Death of Elizabeth I; accession of James I, who allows Thomas Lucas to return to England.
1604 Marriage of Thomas Lucas and Elizabeth Leighton.
1606–17 Births of John, Mary, Elizabeth, Charles, Anne, and Catherine Lucas, Margaret’s siblings.
1618 Marriage of William Cavendish to Elizabeth Bassett, widow.
1622–30 Births of Jane, Charles, Elizabeth, Frances, and Henry, children of William and Elizabeth Cavendish.
1623 Birth of Margaret Lucas, eighth and last child of Thomas and Elizabeth Lucas, of St John’s Abbey, Colchester.
1625 Death of Margaret’s father.
Death of James I and accession of Charles I.
1633 William Cavendish entertains Charles I at Welbeck Abbey. Ben Jonson writes a masque for the occasion.
**Chronology of Margaret Cavendish**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1634</td>
<td>William Cavendish entertains Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria at Bolsover Castle. Jonson provides another masque.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1638</td>
<td>William Cavendish appointed Governor to Charles, Prince of Wales, then aged seven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1639</td>
<td>William Cavendish made Privy Councillor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1641</td>
<td>William Cavendish implicated in the Army Plot. At Parliament’s request, Charles I relieves him of post as Governor to Prince of Wales. Margaret Lucas’s home threatened by local people opposed to the king.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1642</td>
<td>The court leaves London for Oxford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Lucas family’s house again attacked; Elizabeth Lucas moves her household to Oxford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Cavendish raises an army in the north and takes York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1643</td>
<td>April: death of Elizabeth, William Cavendish’s wife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October: William Cavendish created Marquess of Newcastle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Margaret Lucas joins Queen Henrietta Maria’s court in Oxford as maid of honour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1644</td>
<td>Henrietta Maria and her court leave for Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Cavendish’s army heavily defeated at Marston Moor. He, his two sons, and Charles Cavendish leave England for Hamburg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td>April: William Cavendish arrives at Henrietta Maria’s court in Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December: Margaret Lucas marries William Cavendish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1646</td>
<td>May: Charles I captured by Scots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January: Charles I handed over to Parliament. Deaths of Margaret Cavendish’s brother, sister, and mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Paris, William and Charles Cavendish in contact with Hobbes, then tutor in mathematics to the Prince of Wales, and with Descartes, Gassendi, and Mersenne.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>