

## Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle. 1624?-1674.

Margaret Lucas Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1623 – 15 December 1673) was an English aristocrat, philosopher, poet, scientist, fiction-writer, and playwright during the 17th century. Born Margaret Lucas, she was the youngest sister of prominent royalists Sir John Lucas and Sir Charles Lucas, who owned the manor of St. John's Abbey in Colchester. She became an attendant of Queen Henrietta Maria and travelled with her into exile in France, living for a time at the court of the young King Louis XIV. She became the second wife of William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1645, when he was a marquess.

Cavendish was a poet, philosopher, writer of prose romances, essayist, and playwright who published under her own name at a time when most women writers published anonymously. Her writing addressed a number of topics, including gender, power, manners, scientific method, and philosophy. Her utopian romance, *The Blazing World*, is one of the earliest examples of science fiction. She is singular in having published extensively in natural philosophy and early modern science. She published over a dozen original works; inclusion of her revised works brings her total number of publications to twenty-one.

Cavendish has been championed and criticized as a unique and groundbreaking woman writer. She rejected the Aristotelianism and mechanical philosophy of the seventeenth century, preferring a vitalist model instead. She was the first woman to attend a meeting at Royal Society of London in 1667 and she criticized and engaged with members and philosophers Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, and Robert Boyle. She has been claimed as an advocate for animals and as an early opponent of animal testing.

is there a  
posthum an  
reading  
available  
here?

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### To the Readers of My Works, from *Orations of Divers Sorts*

I Know not how to Please All, that are pleased to  
Read my Works; for do what I can, Some will  
find Fault; and the worst is, that those Faults or  
Imperfections, I accuse my-self of in my Praefatory  
Epistles, they fling back with a double  
strength against my poor harmless Works, which shewes their  
Malice and my Truth: And as for my Playes, which they say  
are not made up so exactly as they should be, as having no Plots,  
Designs, Catastrophes and such like I know not what, I expressed  
in the Epistles praefixed before my Playes, that I had  
not Skil nor Art to Form them, as they should be, for that  
Work was like a Taylors Work to make Cloaths: But many  
that find such Faults, are not so good as a Taylor, but meet  
Botchers or Brokers, to Patch and Set several Old and New  
Pieces together to make up a Play, which I never did, for I  
thank my Fates, all is not only New, but my Own, what I have  
Presented to the World; But this Age is so Censorious, that  
the Best Poets are found Fault with, wherefore it is an Honour  
to my Writings, which are so much Inferiour to theirs; Neither  
can their Dislikes Deterr me from Writing, for I Write to

Please my Self, rather than to Please such Crabbed Readers.  
 Yet all my Readers have not been so Cross nor Cruel, for  
 there are Many, to whom my Endeavours and Works are Acceptable,  
 and the more Honour it is to my Works, as being  
 Approved and Known by Worthy and Judicious Men, and  
 Noble Persons; But many Men have more Ill Natures to Find  
 Faults with their Neighbours, than Virtue to Mend Faults in  
 Themselves; also they are apt to Censure Other mens Wit,  
 and yet have None of their Own; the truth is, they are a sort  
 of Persons that in Playes preferr Plots before Wit, and Scenes  
 before Humours; in Poëms, Rime before Similizing, and Numbers  
 before Distinguishing; in Theology, Faction before Faith,  
 and Sophistry before Truth; in Philosophy, Old Authors before  
 New Truths, and Opinions before Reason; And in Orations,  
 they preferr Artificial Connexions, before Natural  
 Eloquence: All which makes them Foolish, Censorious, and  
 Unjust Judges. Wherefore, I desire, these my Orations may  
 not be Read by such Humour'd men, but by the Just and VVife,  
 which will be a Satisfaction to me.

oof!  
that one  
hurts

although  
there is some  
cheeky sophistry  
here already,  
with which  
I'm pleased

'Tis Probable, had I been a Learned Scholar, I might have  
 Written my Orations more Short than I have done, but yet  
 some of them are so short, that had they been shorter, they  
 would not have been of Force to Perswade, whereas the Intention  
 of an Orator, or Use of Orations, is to Perswade the  
 Auditors to be of the Orators Opinion or Belief, and it is not  
 Probable, that Forcible Arguments or Perswasions can be Contain'd  
 in two or three Lines of VVords; Also had I been a  
 Learned Scholar, I might have Written them more Compendiously,  
 and not so Loose, but I affect Freedom and Ease, even  
 in my Works, of VVritings; Besides, I have Observ'd, that  
 whatsoever is Bound or Knit Close, is difficult to Disclose, and  
 for VVritings, whatsoever is very Compendious, requires some  
 Study to Conceive and Understand the Sense and Design of  
 the Authors Meaning; But I hope that Defect or want of Learning,  
 will not Blemish my VVork, nor Obstruct the Sense of  
 my Orations, nor Puzzle the Understanding of the Reader.  
 Only one thing more I desire my Noble Readers, as to Observe  
 that most of my Orations are General Orations, viz. such as  
 may be spoken in any Kingdome or Government, for I suppose,  
 that in All, at least in Most Kingdomes and Governments there  
 are Souldiers, Magistrates, Privy-Counsellours, Lawyers, Preachers,  
 and University Scholars.

a theory of  
that is  
forwarded  
here

VVe have, its true, gotten a Foolish Custom both in our  
 VVriting and Speaking, to Indeavour more to Match or Marry  
 VVords together, than to Match and Marry Sense: and Reason  
 together, which is strange, we should Preferr Shaddows before  
 Substances, or the Spig or Tap before the Liquor, for VVords

are but to Conveigh the Sense of an **O**ration to the Ears, and so into the Understanding of the Hearers, like as Spouts do VVine into Bottels; and who, that is VVise, will Regard what the Vessel is, so it be VVholesome and Clean? **for should not we believe those to be Fools, that had rather have Foul VVater out of a Golden Vessel, than Pure VVine out of Earthen or VVoodden Vessels?** the like may be said for VVords and Sense, for who, that is VVise, would Choose Choice VVords before Profitable Reasons? VVherefore, Noble Readers, let me Advise you to Leave this Custom in VVriting and Speaking, **or rather be Silently Wife, than Foolish in Rhetorick.**

I have Indeavoured in this Book to Express Perfect Orators, that Speak Perfect Orations, as to Cause their Auditors to Act, or Believe, according to the Orators Opinion, Judgement, Design, or Desire; But before I did put this my Book forth, Know, Noble Readers, I did Inquire, to find whether any Person had Composed and Put out a Whole Book of Pure and Perfect Orations, but I could neither hear of, nor see any such Works of any Person that Composed and Set forth to the Publick View, a Book of Pure Orations, **Composed out of One Orators Own Fancy, Wit, and Eloquence.** 'Tis true, I have heard of Single Orations, made by Single Persons, in Single Parts; Also I have seen Orations mixt with History, wherein the Substance of the History is the Ground of their Orations; Also I have seen two 'Translations call'd Orations, but they are rather Orations in Name than in Reality, for their Nature is History, the One contains Relations of several Countries, in the Other are Relations from several Princes of their Actilons, or Fortunes, or Both, Exprest in an Orators Style; **yet those are not Perfect or Right Orations, but Adulterated, or**  
\* **rather Hermophrodites.** But perchance my Readers will say, I Understand not True Orations; If I do not, I am Sorry for, and ask their Pardon for Speaking what I Understand not. But I desire, Noble Readers, you will not think or believe, I speak to Illustrate my Own VVorks, and to Detract from the VVorks of Others, for upon my Conscience I Speak and VVrite as I Believe, and if I Commit an Error in this Belief, I ask your Pardon, and if you Excuse me, I shall take it for a Favour and Obligation.

I have Written Orations and Speeches of all Sorts, and in all Places sit for Orations, Speeches, or particular Discourses; **and first imagining my Self and You to be in a Metropolitan City,** I invite you into the Chief Market-place, as the most Populous place, where usually Orations are Spoken, at least they were so in Older times, and there you shall hear **O**ration Concerning Peace and Warr; but the Generality of the People being more apt to make Warr, than to keep Peace, I desire

you to Arm your Selves, supposing you to be of the Masculine Sex, and of Valiant Heroical Natures, to enter into the Field of Warr; and fince Warrs bring Ruine and Destruction to One or Some Parties, if not to All, and Loss causes men to Delsire Peace, out of Warr I bring you into great Disorders, caused by the Ruins Warrs have made, which I am Sorry for, yet it Must be so, the Fates have Decreed it; and Misery causing men to be Prudent and Industrious, by which they come to Flourish again, at least their Successors, and to shew you their Industry, I bring you out of the Field of Warr into a New-built City, where you must stay the Building of it, for it will be Built Soon, having Many Labourers, and after it is Built, there being a Large Market-place, you may stand or sit with Ease and hear the Orations that are there Spoken; and by Reason, there are some Causes or Cases to be Pleaded, I shall indeavour to Perswade you, after some time of Refreshment, at your own Homes, to go into the Courts or Halls of Judicature; after these Causes are Judged or at least Pleaded, I shall desire you, to Adorn your Selves fit for the Court, then to Wait upon the Kings Majesty, and if you be Privy-Counsellours, or have any Business or Petitions at the Council-Table, by the Kings Permission you may Enter into the Council Chamber; but great Monarchs having Many Subjects, whereof some are more Active than Wise, and more apt to Complain than to Obey, you may hear the Petitions of the Subjects, and the Speeches or Orations of the Sovereign, and after a good Agreement, Unity, and Love, you may Rest your Selves in Peace, untill such time as your Charity calls you forth to Visit the Sick, and when as Death hath Releas'd those Sick Persons of their Pains, Humanity will perswade you to wait on their Dead Corps to the Grave, and after some Tears showred on their Graves, and having Dried your Eyes, and Heard some Sermons of Reproof and Instructions, you will be Invited as Bridal-Guests to see some Men and VVomen United in Holy Matrimony; after the VVedding Ceremonies are ended, you may, as formerly you have done, go into the Market-place again, and hear what Orations there are Spoken, wherein one short Oration concerning the Liberty of Women hath so Anger'd that Sex, as after the Mens Orations are ended, they Privately Assemble together, where three or four take the place of an Orator, and Speak to the rest; the only Difficulty will be, to get Undiscovered amongst them, to hear their Private Conventicles; but if you regard not what Women say, you may Ride to a Country Market-Town, and hear a Company of Gentlemen associate together their Discourse and Pastime; and if you like not their Pastime, then you may Walk into the Fields of Peace, to Receive the Sweet and Healthfull Air, or to View the Curious and Various VVorks of Nature, and for Variety of Pastime, you may stand or sit under

what to make of this final  
 litany? is she tracing  
 genres or contexts? is  
 their significance to the  
 order, to the volume?

a Spreading Tree, and hear the Country Clowns or Peasants speak, concerning their own Affairs and Course of Life; in which Shady place, Sweet Air, and Happiness of Peace I leave you, unless you will Travel to see the Government or rather Disorders in other States or Kingdomes, to which Observation I will VVait upon you, and when all is in Peace, before we reiturn Home, we will, if you Please, enter some of their Colleges, and hear some School-Arguments, after which return, I shall Kiss your Hands and take my Leave.

-M. Newcastle.