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A COMPANION TO THE CAVENDISHES

Edited by
LISA HOPKINS
and **TOM RUTTER**

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For Chris and Sam, and for Sophie, Caedmon, and Aphra

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PREFACE

LIKE THE HERBERTS, the Howards, and the Sidneys, the Cavendishes are remarkable among aristocratic families of the early modern period both as artistic patrons and as creative figures in their own right. Their enthusiasm for building shaped the landscape of the north Midlands of England, giving rise to prodigy houses such as Hardwick Hall, Bolsover Castle, and the great estate of Chatsworth. As well as the Smythson dynasty of architects, they patronized writers including Ben Jonson, painters such as Anthony van Dyck, and the philosopher Thomas Hobbes. However, family members would themselves produce literary and philosophical works of enduring interest and historical importance. William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle, was an amateur playwright who collaborated with James Shirley before the civil wars and with Thomas Shadwell after the Restoration, and his daughters Jane and Elizabeth were pioneering female dramatists. His second wife Margaret is a figure of particular significance as a poet, biographer, dramatist, scientist, and author of the science-fiction romance *The Blazing World*. More generally, members of the Devonshire and Newcastle dynasties that sprang from the marriage of Elizabeth Hardwick ("Bess of Hardwick") to Sir William Cavendish in 1547 would go on to play considerable roles in English history, including the 1st Duke (then Marquess), who commanded King Charles I's army in the north of England during the first Civil War, and the Earl (later Duke) of Devonshire, who was one of the signatories to the letter inviting William of Orange to invade in 1688. Arbella Stuart, granddaughter of Elizabeth and William, was the unwilling centre of plots against James VI and I and would become a tragic victim of Stuart succession politics after marrying the grandson of the Earl of Hertford in 1610.

There is already a considerable body of work on the Cavendishes (especially Margaret) in the form of biographies, editions, critical articles, monographs, and essay collections. However, this book attempts to do something new: to treat the Cavendishes as a collective, bringing together specially written essays on key literary figures such as Margaret Cavendish (or the Duchess of Newcastle, as she should properly be termed), her husband the 1st Duke, and the duke's daughters Jane and Elizabeth, as well as on relevant cultural practices such as patronage, horsemanship, and the building of houses and monuments. It also includes chapters on other members of the extended family, such as George Cavendish, the servant and biographer of Thomas Wolsey, and the musician Michael Cavendish. The order is, so far as possible, chronological, beginning with George and proceeding through to Margaret, followed by chapters on Cavendish buildings and funerary monuments.

The editors regret some omissions. We would have liked, for example, to have been able to include a chapter on Sir Charles Cavendish, younger brother of the 1st Duke of Newcastle, one of the foremost mathematicians of his day and the correspondent not

only of Hobbes and Walter Warner but of French luminaries such as Mersenne, Mydorge, and Roberval. However, we offer the book that follows not as the last word on the Cavendishes but as a stimulus to further scholarship: It has been important to us that as well as providing readers with an overview of work that has been done already, the contributions should represent new and ground-breaking research. We hope that their insights will encourage yet greater interest in this diverse and fascinating family.

Chapter 7

THE CAVENDISHES AND BEN JONSON

Tom Rutter

THE CURRENT CHAPTER surveys the literary relationship between William Cavendish, Earl (later Duke) of Newcastle, and the poet and dramatist Ben Jonson; it also considers Jonson's literary influence on Cavendish's daughters Jane and Elizabeth and on his second wife Margaret. Among all of Cavendish's patron-client relationships, it is worth singling out that with Jonson for several reasons. First, it was extremely long-lived, conceivably dating from 1610 when the 16-year-old Cavendish was one of fifty-eight challengers at Prince Henry's Barriers (for which Jonson would write an Arthurian entertainment) and continuing until Jonson's death in 1637.[1] Second, it was very productive on Jonson's side, leading to a number of direct commissions as well as other texts that seem to bear Cavendish's influence. And finally, as the chapters by Matthew Steggle and Richard Wood have already demonstrated, it had a pervasive and enduring effect on Cavendish's own writing: he repeatedly alluded to Jonson right up to *The Triumphant Widow*, staged at Dorset Garden in 1674.[2] This chapter is divided into four sections: the first considers Jonson's oeuvre in light of his relationship with Cavendish; the second, Jonson's influence on Cavendish; and the third and fourth, the presence of Jonson in the writings of Jane, Elizabeth, and Margaret Cavendish.

Ben Jonson

It is impossible to know what contact, if any, Cavendish had with Jonson on the occasion of Prince Henry's Barriers or on that of *A Challenge at Tilt* over the 1613–1614 Christmas season. However, by the summer of 1618 he knew Jonson sufficiently well not only to offer him hospitality at Welbeck for six nights during his celebrated "Foot Voyage" to Scotland but also to give him authority over the household during a period of absence, "commanding his steward and all the rest of the officers to obey [Jonson] in all things."[3] The recently discovered account of this walk written by an unnamed companion of Jonson is a productive place to begin the current survey. Not only does it have chronological priority; in this brief, sometimes obscure, record, the reader finds allusions to people, places, and ideas that feature more prominently in subsequent writings:

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1 James Loxley, Anna Groundwater, and Julie Sanders, ed., *Ben Jonson's Walk to Scotland: An Annotated Edition of the "Foot Voyage"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 50.

2 Lynn Hulse, "Cavendish, William, 1st Duke of Newcastle upon Tyne (bap. 1593, d. 1676)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online), January 6, 2011.

3 Loxley, Groundwater, and Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Walk to Scotland*, 52–53.

> The next day Sir William Candish carried my gossip to see Bolsover, alias Bozers, castle, on which Sir Charles had built a delicate little house etc. As also to meet one Smithson, an excellent architect, who was to consult with Mr Jonson about the erection of a tomb for Sir William's father, for which my gossip was to make an epitaph.
>
> The next morning Sir William rid his great horse, which he did with that readiness and steadiness, as my gossip say they were both one piece.[4]

This text provides invaluable evidence about Jonson's work for Cavendish. It establishes that Jonson knew at first hand the venue for which he would write the 1634 *Entertainment at Bolsover*. It also demonstrates that he did not merely submit the poem "Charles Cavendish to His Posterity" for inscription at Bolsover Church but actively consulted the architect John Smythson about the monument on which it was to appear.[5] Finally, it contains the seeds of "An Epigram. To William, Earl of Newcastle" (one of two printed in *The Underwood*) that begins:

> When first, my lord, I saw you back your horse,
> Provoke his mettle and command his force
> To all the uses of the field and race,
> Methought I read the ancient art of Thrace,
> And saw a centaur past those tales of Greece;
> So seemed your horse and you, both of a piece!

The epigram must date from some time after the walk, for Jonson goes on to state that he had not yet seen Cavendish's "stable"—presumably the riding-school that Smythson built for Cavendish in the 1620s.[6] In turn, this would seem to suggest multiple visits to Cavendish's houses over a period of time.

In addition to discussing the epitaph for Cavendish's father, Jonson would meet during the walk to Scotland two members of the Cavendish family for whom he would later write memorial verses. Before his stay at Welbeck, he was at Rufford, "where the countess gave us extraordinary grace and entertainment": this was William's aunt Jane Ogle, widowed the preceding February and herself to die in 1625.[7] Jonson's period of rule over Welbeck occurred when "Sir William with my old Lady Candish and his own lady went to Rufford"; "my old Lady Candish" was William's mother Katherine Ogle, memorialized by Jonson after her death in 1629 in a poem and possibly (as will be discussed below) in *The Magnetic Lady*.[8] Certainly the poem uses scientific and mathematical imagery that it shares with the play, claiming "All circles had their spring and end / In her! And what could perfect be, / Or without angles, it was she!" and ascribing

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4 Loxley, Groundwater, and Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Walk to Scotland*, 57.

5 See *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5:350.

6 *Works of Ben Jonson*, 7:201–2. See also 7:207–8.

7 Loxley, Groundwater, and Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Walk to Scotland*, 49. For Jonson's epitaph, see *Works of Ben Jonson*, 5:715.

8 Loxley, Groundwater, and Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Walk to Scotland*, 52.

to Katherine "All that was solid in the name / Of virtue, precious in the frame, / Or else magnetic in the force."[9]

Jonson's next Cavendish commission was of a different order from the monument to Sir Charles. This was an entertainment written at some time before 1625 to celebrate the christening of another Charles, to whom the Prince of Wales stood as godfather. Although it is uncertain whether the child involved was from the Welbeck or Chatsworth branch of the family (both of whom produced Charleses during this period), the fact that the entertainment appears prominently in the Newcastle Manuscript, alongside the three memorial poems and the two epigrams to the earl, may suggest the former.[10] Most of the entertainment's amusement is derived from a squabble between the wet-nurse Dugs and the dry-nurse Kecks over who should have priority, with the midwife Holdback unsuccessfully trying to calm them down; there is a particular stress on the gender, work, and social status of the disputants, all of which serve to demean them. The bodies of the women are sexualized from the moment Dugs attempts to get "a standing behind the arras," to which Kecks responds, "You'll be thrust there, i'faith, nurse," and their involvement in intimate processes of feeding and washing is figured in the drama in terms of a grotesque physicality.[11] Kecks responds to Dugs's prediction that she will choke the child with her breath by saying:

> Indeed, you had like to have overlaid it the other night and prevented its christendom, if I had not looked unto you, when you came so bedewed out of the wine cellar and so watered your couch that, to save your credit with my lady next morning, you were glad to lay it upon your innocent bedfellow, and slander him to his mother how plentifully he had sucked.[12]

While Kecks accuses Dugs of blaming the infant for the wet patch, the entertainment itself performs a contrary deception, displacing the incontinence of the child onto its social and gender inferior. Indeed, the women partly serve as the embodiment of qualities—low status and femininity—that need to be cast out in the celebration of an aristocratic male. The antimasque comes to an end when Holdfast gives way to the Mathematician with the words, "Here comes a wise man will tell us another tale"; his ensuing speech moves the focus from the body to the heavens, where "all good aspects agree / To bless with wonder this nativity," and from the midwives to the prince, whose virtues will be passed on to his young namesake.[13]

Although the *Christening Entertainment* was written for the familiar Jonsonian location of the Blackfriars, a notable feature of the work Jonson produced under Cavendish's influence is its willingness to engage with the England that lay beyond his native

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9 *Works of Ben Jonson*, 6:315–16.

10 See James Knowles's introduction to *A Cavendish Christening Entertainment*, *Works of Ben Jonson*, 5:401–2.

11 *A Cavendish Christening Entertainment*, lines 12–13.

12 *A Cavendish Christening Entertainment*, lines 159–63.

13 *A Cavendish Christening Entertainment*, lines 166–67, 169–70.

London.[14] It is particularly evident in the entertainment written for Cavendish to welcome King Charles to Welbeck on his 1633 journey to Scotland, a text that, in its emphasis on local topography and custom, acknowledges Cavendish's role as Lord Lieutenant both of Nottinghamshire and of Derbyshire. The entertainments after dinner are introduced by Accidence, a schoolmaster from Mansfield, and Fitzale, a herald from Derby, the latter clad in "an industrious collection of all the written, or reported, wonders of the Peak":

> Saint Anne of Buxton's boiling well,
> Or Elden, bottomless like hell,
> Poole's Hole, or Satan's sumptuous arse,
> Sir-reverence, with the mine-men's farce.[15]

As James Knowles points out, the reference to the Devil's Arse (Peak Cavern) recalls Jonson's earlier masque, *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*; the wider focus on the wonders of the peak also resembles a more recent work by a member of the Cavendish circle, Thomas Hobbes's Latin poem *De mirabilibus pecci*, presented to Hobbes's employer the Duke of Devonshire around 1627.[16] Fitzale is specifically identified as a repository of regional lore, able to report "odd tales, / Of our outlaw Robin Hood / That revelled here in Sherwood"; these interests reflect those of Cavendish, himself a Robin Hood enthusiast.[17]

At the same time, the comic treatment of these themes makes it hard to be sure how Cavendish is being placed in relation to them. Accidence and Fitzale invite the listeners to celebrate the wedding of Fitzale's daughter Pem to Stub, an "old stock / O' the yeoman block / And forest blood / Of old Sherwood," a symbolic union of the counties that allegorizes Cavendish's double Lord Lieutenancy. Pem, however, is "a daughter stale … Known up and down / For a great antiquity," whereas the fact that her groom is "no shrimp … But a bold Stub" who "Presents himself, / Like doughty elf" seems to imply a potentially comic diminutive stature.[18] A degree of ambivalence also surrounds the wedding sport of running at the quintain, a post set up as a target and equipped with a revolving sandbag that would strike the unwary rider. On the one hand, this would have allowed for displays of horsemanship by Stub and others that Cavendish would have appreciated, as well as exemplifying local custom. On the other, both the event and the

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14 See Martin Butler, "Jonson in the Caroline Period," in *Ben Jonson in Context*, ed. Julie Sanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 31–38, 36 and Julie Sanders, "Domestic Travel and Social Mobility," in *Ben Jonson in Context*, 271–80, 277.

15 *The King's Entertainment at Welbeck*, lines 77–80, *Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 6.

16 See Knowles's introduction to *Entertainment at Welbeck*, *Works of Ben Jonson*, 6:662; Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 240.

17 *Entertainment at Welbeck*, lines 90–92. On the painted ceiling in the Heaven Closet at Bolsover, one of the cherubs can be seen holding the music for a country dance tune of Robin Hood and Little John. See Lucy Worsley, *Cavalier: The Life of a Seventeenth-Century Playboy* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 82.

18 *Entertainment at Welbeck*, lines 120–23, 106–9, 133–34.

challengers were a far cry from what Cavendish would have contributed to Prince Henry's Barriers. The songs and hornpipes that follow are "broken off" by the entry of "an officer or servant of the Lord Lieutenant's," who berates the revellers for interrupting the King's "serious hours / With light, impertinent, unworthy objects."[19] The entertainment thus enacts both an expression of local culture in keeping with Cavendish's status as regional magnate and a disciplining of it in keeping with his status as officer of the king.

A similar ambivalence is visible in another drama set in Cavendish territory, namely *The Sad Shepherd*, possibly Jonson's last play. As the Prologue explains, Jonson's "scene is Sherwood, and his play a tale / Of Robin Hood's inviting from the Vale / Of Belvoir all the shepherds to a feast": the play is, therefore, as the editors of the *Walk to Scotland* observe, "very much a product of the Cavendish and Rutland domains that Jonson had experienced directly on his 1618 journey through Nottinghamshire," as well as speaking to Cavendish's Robin Hood interests.[20] As Julie Sanders points out, however, Robin Hood in this play is not an outlaw but a "woodman" or forest official; Friar Tuck is his steward, Little John his bow-bearer, Much the miller's son his bailiff. Robin is thus domesticated, professionalized, and placed within an orderly forest hierarchy akin to a noble household, and the crime of stealing venison is committed not by the merry men but the witch Maudlin.[21] Although *The Sad Shepherd* is unfinished and its intended venue unknown, the play's simultaneous evocation of the Robin Hood myth and resistance to the myth's subversive implications recall the Welbeck entertainment and are in keeping with Cavendish's role as Lord Lieutenant.

The *Entertainment at Welbeck* and *The Sad Shepherd* both reveal a Jonson willing to exploit provincial settings and materials. Perhaps surprisingly, the same is not quite true of his final entertainment, *The King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover*, staged during a visit whose total cost (according to Cavendish's future wife Margaret) was "between Fourteen and Fifteen thousand pounds."[22] In some respects, this is highly localized drama, exploiting the internal and external spaces of Bolsover Castle. Its opening song, which includes the lines "When were the senses in such order placed? / The sight, the hearing, smelling, touching, taste, / All at one banquet," would have been well suited to the Pillar Chamber, which is decorated with "lunettes depicting the Five senses, copied from engravings by Cornelis Cort after Franz Floris."[23] The second sequence is written to be performed in the garden, which is fittingly adorned with a

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19 *Entertainment at Welbeck*, lines 261–62, 273–74.

20 *The Sad Shepherd*, Prologue, lines 15–17, *Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 7; Loxley, Groundwater, and Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Walk to Scotland*, 168.

21 Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama 1620–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 86, 89, 94.

22 Margaret Cavendish, *The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and puissant Prince William Cavendishe, Duke, Marquess and Earl of Newcastle* (London, 1667), 140.

23 *The King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover*, lines 5–7, *Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 6; Timothy Raylor, " 'Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue': William Cavendish, Ben Jonson, and the Decorative Scheme of Bolsover Castle," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52 (1999): 402–39 at 412, 416.

statue of Venus as well as possessing a circular shape that "symbolises the perfect circle of love that links a husband and wife in the fashionable philosophy of Neoplatonism that Charles I's court … adopted."[24] In the final section, Eros observes of love, "It is the place sure breeds it, where we are," to which Anteros replies, "The King and Queen's court, that is circular / And perfect."[25]

And yet, in so far as the entertainment is taking place at court, defined as such by the presence of the king and queen, to just that extent it is not taking place in Bolsover. Unlike at Welbeck, there is very little sense here of geographical space beyond Philalethes' qualification of his own description of the place as "the divine school of love": "Which if you, brethren, should report and swear to, would hardly get credit above a fable here in Derbyshire, the region of ale." The provincial location, rather than driving the entertainment as at Welbeck, is invoked only to represent the mundane perspective that would not credit the place's true status as "an academy or court where all the true lessons of love are throughly read and taught."[26] The most comic sequence in proceedings, featuring Colonel Vitruvius and the mechanics, is a scarcely veiled satire on Inigo Jones; just as Charles and Henrietta Maria brought the entertainment's court setting with them, so to speak, when they came to Bolsover, so Jonson's court rivalries also shape the piece.

The Neoplatonic ideas about love that inform the *Entertainment at Bolsover* had already been explored by Jonson five years earlier in *The New Inn*, where the character Lovel utters his description of love as "a spiritual coupling of two souls, / So much more excellent as it least relates / Unto the body; circular, eternal" (and much more besides) to the Court of Love over which Prudence presides. However, Beaufort's stated preference for "a banquet o' sense like that of Ovid" not only anticipates the imagery of the opening song at Bolsover but also creates a double image of love—spiritual and sensual—that chimes with the willingness to entertain contraries that can be discerned in the juxtaposition of the baroque Heaven Closet beside Cavendish's chamber at Bolsover with the more Ovidian Elysium.[27]

Although *The New Inn* was written for the Blackfriars theatre, not for any specifically Cavendish auspices, its themes dovetail with the known interests of William Cavendish in a number of respects. It engages repeatedly with the concept of nobility, as exemplified in the opening scene when Lovel and the Host discuss the role of the noble household as an "academy of honour" and its fall from that ideal in the present age.[28] Cavendish's obsession of *manège* informs both this conversation and, in a different key, the lengthy below-stairs discussion of the corrupt practices of ostlers. The Host's veneration of Euclid as "The only fencer of name"—"He does it all by lines and angles"—although treated comically, overlaps intriguingly with Cavendish's later interest in the

24 Worsley, *Cavalier*, 95.

25 *Entertainment at Bolsover*, lines 121–23.

26 *Entertainment at Bolsover*, lines 128–33.

27 *The New Inn*, 3.2.103–5, 124, *Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 6.

28 *New Inn*, 1.3.57.

mathematics of swordsmanship, on which he had Thomas Hobbes write a treatise in the mid to late 1640s.[29] The Host's complaints that Lovel spends his time "poring through a multiplying glass / Upon a captived crab-louse or a cheese-mite" recall Cavendish's longstanding interest in lens manufacture.[30] And Anne Barton links the nostalgia for old-fashioned notions of nobility expressed by Lovel and the Host to Cavendish's neo-Elizabethanism as exemplified in *The Variety*.[31] Given the way Lady Frampul's praise of his swordsmanship, "his sword and arm were of a piece," and Lovel's own description of riding as "the centaurs' skill, the art of Thrace" both incorporate phrases from Jonson's epigram on Cavendish, it is tempting to wonder whether the character is intended as some sort of homage.[32]

However, the desire to make connections between Jonson's plays and historical individuals needs to be balanced with an awareness of the dramatist's own playfulness and tendency to misdirection. Critical response to Jonson's next work for the theatre, *The Magnetic Lady; or, Humours Reconciled*, exemplifies the problem. On the one hand the play has been read by Helen Ostovich as "a major tribute to the family of [Jonson's] best patron" and part of its source material as being "the Cavendish family 'romance.' " As Ostovich points out, Katherine Ogle was "the woman whom Jonson first described as 'magnetic' "; Cavendish's use of the same epithet to describe the widow Beaufield in *The Variety* (see the next section of this chapter) implies some kind of shared discourse of magnetism, a topic in which Cavendish was certainly interested. While Compass's skill in mathematics likens him both to William and, especially, to his brother Charles, Ostovich suggests that his friend, the more irascible Ironside, has the qualities of their father, the "spoils" of whose heroic victory over Sir John Stanhope and a group of hired killers Jonson saw at Welbeck.[33]

Other critics, however, have found a more autobiographical side to Compass, Anne Barton suggesting that he is "in some measure to be identified with Jonson himself." In the play, Compass's task is the metadramatic one of achieving a harmonious ending by drawing together the other characters' different humours. Jonson's Induction refers to this play as shutting up the circle of his career, giving it a biographical significance to which Compass's character name seems to speak. Barton also cites William Drummond's

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29 *New Inn*, 2.5.91–92; Timothy Raylor, "Thomas Hobbes and 'The Mathematical Demonstration of the Sword,' " *The Seventeenth Century* 15 (2000): 175–98.

30 *New Inn*, 1.1.29–30; Timothy Raylor, "William Cavendish as a Patron of Philosophers and Scientists," in *Royalist Refugees: William and Margaret Cavendish in the Rubens House 1648–1660*, ed. Ben Van Beneden and Nora De Poorter (Schoten: BAI, 2006), 78–82, 79.

31 Anne Barton, *Ben Jonson, Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 300–320.

32 *New Inn*, 4.3.20, 1.3.61. For a nuanced account of this play in relation to Cavendish, see Nick Rowe, " 'My Best Patron': William Cavendish and Jonson's Caroline Dramas," *The Seventeenth Century* 9 (1994): 197–212.

33 See Ostovich's introduction to *The Magnetic Lady; or, Humours Reconciled*, in *Works of Ben Jonson*, 6:393, 400, 402, 408. On Stanhope, see Loxley, Groundwater, and Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Walk to Scotland*, 51.

note that Jonson chose as his personal impresa a broken compass; Ironside, in this reading, represents another side to Jonson's personality, less measured and more irrational, that is needed to complete the whole.[34]

Perhaps, however, there is no need to choose between the two interpretations of *The Magnetic Lady*, the Cavendish one and the autobiographical one. As the Boy puts it in the Induction, the poet, "finding himself now near the close or shutting up of his circle, hath fancied to himself in idea this magnetic mistress. A lady, a brave bountiful housekeeper and a virtuous widow."[35] Thus Jonson's late-career self-fashioning seems to have been bound up with his relationship to the Cavendishes, including the woman of whom he had written "All circles had their spring and end / In her." Jonson's return to humours comedy with *The Magnetic Lady* is presented, however accurately, as a return to his own dramatic beginnings; if Lady Loadstone is in some sense a figuring of Katherine Ogle, "Old Lady Candish," as conceived in Jonson's epitaph, makes a very appropriate presiding genius.

Willliam Cavendish

The preceding section of this chapter identified some of the benefits that William Cavendish obtained through his patronage of Jonson, including memorials to family members, laudatory epigrams, and royal entertainments.[36] However, at a less strategic level there is abundant evidence that Cavendish simply liked the things that Jonson wrote: not only do his plays explore themes of interest to Cavendish, including nobility, experimental science, and provincial folklore, but an array of references to Jonson in Cavendish's writings attest to the significance the older writer held for him and to Jonson's influence on his own work. As Gerard Langbaine would write in 1691, this "*English Mecænas*" had a "particular kindness for that Great Master of Dramatick Poesy, the Excellent *Johnson*; and 'twas from him that he attain'd to a perfect Knowledge of what was to be accounted True Humour in Comedy."[37]

One tangible indication of Cavendish's personal interest in Jonson is the Newcastle Manuscript (British Library, MS Harley 4955), a folio volume transcribed by Cavendish's secretary John Rolleston in the early 1630s.[38] In addition to works of obvious family interest such as the Blackfriars, Welbeck, and Bolsover entertainments, it includes *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, some twenty-six leaves of miscellaneous verse by Jonson dating back to around 1612, and other works by King James, John Donne, Thomas Carew, and

34 Barton, *Ben Jonson*, 296; *Informations to William Drummond of Hawthornden*, lines 457–58, *Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 5.

35 *Magnetic Lady*, Induction, lines 79–82.

36 Cedric C. Brown offers a wide-ranging account of this topic in "Courtesies of Place and the Arts of Diplomacy in Ben Jonson's Last Two Entertainments for Royalty," *The Seventeenth Century* 9 (1994): 147–71.

37 Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (London, 1691), 386.

38 Hilton Kelliher, "Donne, Jonson, Richard Andrews and The Newcastle Manuscript," *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700* 4 (1993): 134–73 at 144, 150.

Richard Andrews. The Jonson on display here is not simply an object of patronage but a poet to be admired and enjoyed alongside other poets. The manuscript places Jonson as an important literary figure within the private space of Cavendish's household, his works made personal to Cavendish through processes of selection and transcription.

Jonson's textual presence within this environment is revealed in a different manner in the "private verse laments that Cavendish was to write on his passing in 1637."[39] Timothy Raylor has shown how manuscripts of one of these, "To Ben Jonson's Ghost," give us Cavendish's original draft and corrections, further substantial emendations in the hand of his chaplain Robert Payne, and Rolleston's transcription, which includes yet more minor changes. In resurrecting Jonson as shade, then, the poem also offers a glimpse of Jonson as material for the "process of collaborative composition" that Raylor reconstructs at Welbeck.[40] In addition, it represents an important example of Cavendish self-consciously engaging with Jonson's creative legacy. Jonson is compared positively both to ancient Romans ("Their witt, to Thine's as heauy as thy lead") and to the insubstantial wit of "our liueing Men"; he being gone, we have no poets, only wits. The poem concludes:

> Rest then, in Peace, in our vast Mothers wombe,
> Thou art a Monument, without a Tombe.
> Is any Infidel? Let him but looke
> And read, Hee may be saued by thy Booke.[41]

There is a slightly double-edged quality to these lines: although "infidel" inscribes Jonson as a poetic deity, giving his works the quality of scripture, "saued by thy Booke" also alludes to his notorious escape from hanging for murder by pleading benefit of clergy. The reference to "our vast Mothers wombe," too, seems pointed in view of the earlier reference to Jonson's weight: the Earth needs to be vast in order to hold him. Finally, it is difficult to know how to take the description of Jonson as "a Monument, without a Tombe," which repeats a line from Jonson's prefatory verses to the 1623 Shakespeare Folio. As Raylor acknowledges, there is something appropriate in a memorial poem about Jonson recycling a memorial poem by Jonson. However, Raylor goes on to point to Cavendish's repeated "reliance on the crutches provided by Jonsonian conceits and Jonsonian plots" elsewhere in his writings, a phenomenon that he sees less as "imitation" than as "appropriation."[42] In this view of Jonson's relationship with Cavendish, the older writer becomes an unacknowledged, if posthumous, helper, his invisible labour akin to that of Payne and Rolleston.

One piece of evidence that Raylor adduces is the early drama *Wit's Triumvirate*, which survives in a manuscript transcribed by Rolleston with revisions by Cavendish and

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39 Kelliher, "Donne, Jonson," 158.

40 Timothy Raylor, "Newcastle's Ghosts: Robert Payne, Ben Jonson, and the 'Cavendish Circle,' " in *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 92–114 at 108.

41 Cited from Raylor, "Newcastle's Ghosts," 109.

42 Raylor, "Newcastle's Ghosts," 113–14.

Payne and whose "Prologue before the King and Queen" is dated "1635."[43] The premise of this play is clearly taken from *The Alchemist*: three cheaters share a house in which, as a lawyer, a divine, and a physician, they minister to characters suffering from a range of humorous afflictions such as morbid fear of the dark, superstition, and hypochondria. As the play's modern editor observes, the shifting allegiances between the characters also recall *The Alchemist*, as does the presence of a disbelieving character who attempts to uncover the cheats' deceptions. And "the author follows Jonson's example in using dramatic satire, comic 'humor' characterization, and a 'norm' character," the sceptic Algebra.[44]

However, just as Cavendish in the elegy complicates his praise of Jonson with allusions to his weight and criminal past, so his use of Jonson in *Wit's Triumvirate* is less derivative than Raylor allows. The play is not so dramatically sophisticated as *The Alchemist*, consisting of episodic and unrelated interactions between individual cheaters and their gulls. While this may stem from Cavendish's lack of Jonson's expertise in plotting, it also reflects the play's different priorities. Much more than Jonson, Cavendish is interested in the gulls' delusions for their own sake, as with Fright's hallucinations:

> FRIGHT. Then, Doctor, walking in my park, methought I saw—
> CLYSTER. What, sir?
> FRIGHT. The red dragon looking—
> CLYSTER. How looking?
> FRIGHT. Whom he might devour. And as I near it came, what do you think it was?
> CLYSTER. A tree, some odd tree.
> FRIGHT. Ay, by my troth, *deceptio visus*. A sleight,
> I fear, of the old Juggler, the Great Deceiver.[45]

The love-melancholy and compulsive versifying of Phantsy, the horn-madness of Jealousia, the murders committed in dreams by the coward Conquest: all are recounted at unnecessary length, the focus being more on the sufferers themselves than on the means used to cheat them. This emphasis on pathology over drama informs the ending, where, instead of the characters being purged of their humours in Jonsonian manner, they are reassured by Algebra that their behaviour falls within the spectrum of normality: Sickly is told, for example, "you had a little too much care of your body, but most, sir, have a touch that way. Therefore, think you are well, and you are so, for none in this world hath perfect health."[46]

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43 Kelliher, "Donne, Jonson," 150–52; Raylor, "Newcastle's Ghosts," 101; Cathryn Anne Nelson, "A Critical Edition of 'Wit's Triumvirate, or The Philosopher,' " PhD thesis, University of Arizona, 1970, 97.

44 *Wit's Triumvirate*, 8–11, 1–2.

45 *Wit's Triumvirate*, 1.2.43–51.

46 *Wit's Triumvirate*, 5.4.73–77.

While *Wit's Triumvirate* is built on a Jonsonian premise, Cavendish uses the trio of cheaters and their humorous gulls for intellectual purposes very different from those of *The Alchemist*. There is one explicit mention of Jonson. When Phantsy explains that one can get a reputation as a playwright by putting "old jests into ballad rhyme" and patching them up with bits of old plays, Clyster responds, "But this is mean and poor, not worthy of a poet." Phantsy initially seems to agree: "Not of our kingdom's immortal honor and his own, our learned and most famous Jonson, our best poet."[47] This jars confusingly with his earlier lines, and, in fact, the sentence has been inserted into Rolleston's transcription in Cavendish's hand. The addition is difficult to interpret: it could be seen as a tribute made after Jonson's death in 1637, an apologetic gesture acknowledging Jonson's influence on the play, or, perhaps, a playful joke at Cavendish's own expense. Not only does the line appear in a conversation about making new plays out of old ones: Phantsy's later defence of writing for the stage, "as long as I am not mercenary but give it them, is it not as lawful for me to give them wit as noblemen and ladies to give them clothes?" seems to chime with Cavendish's own situation as aristocratic amateur.[48]

The two plays written for the Blackfriars before the Civil War and published during Cavendish's time in Antwerp, *The Country Captain* and *The Variety*, both include Jonsonian touches. In addition to those already mentioned in Matthew Steggle's chapter, I would note that in the former, the Prologue opposes audiences' "sight" to their "understandings," a Jonsonian contrast; the penitence of the would-be seducer Sir Francis Courtwell recalls Wittipoll in *The Devil is an Ass*, and the scene where Engine, the projector, vomits the items on which he has monopolies revisits the purge in *Poetaster*.[49] The dramatist James Shirley seems to have contributed to the writing of these two plays; however, Richard Brome in his verses "To my Lord of *Newcastle*, on his *Play* called *The Variety*" explicitly linked Cavendish with Jonson when he wrote that "all was such, to all that understood, / As knowing *Johnson*, swore By God 'twas good," while, as Richard Wood explains in the current volume, the play has been read as expressing a nostalgia for the age of Elizabeth, which Cavendish shared with the later Jonson.[50] The recurrent use of the language of "humours" clearly situates the drama in a Jonsonian idiom.[51]

As in *Wit's Triumvirate*, though, Cavendish's use of this idiom is far from slavish. Manly, although laudable, is not idealized to the extent of Lovel or Compass: his eccentricity of dress is a "humor," and his evocations of Elizabethan style are frequently ridiculous, as when he says of a lord and lady dancing the volta, "Marry as soon as he had ended his dance she would lye down as dead as a swing'd chicken, with the head under

47 *Wit's Triumvirate*, 4.4.151, 164–68.

48 *Wit's Triumvirate*, 4.4.209–12.

49 William Cavendish, *The Countrie Captaine*, sig. A1r, in *The Countrie Captaine, and The Varietie* (London, 1649).

50 On Shirley's contribution, see Hulse, "Cavendish, William"; for Brome's poem, see Richard Brome, *The Weeding of the Covent-Garden*, sig. A4r, in *Five Nevv Playes* (London, 1659).

51 William Cavendish, *The Varietie*, 2, in *The Countrie Captaine, and The Varietie*.

the wing, so dissie was she, and so out of breath."[52] More impressive than a Bobadilla but more absurd than an Edward Knowell, Manly is hard to gauge, perhaps expressing Cavendish's own uneasy sense of his place in the Caroline court; Barton notes that in 1632 "he described himself sourly as a Lord of Misrule, for 'I take that title for an honor in these dayes.' "[53]

Barton finds proof of the play's identification with the age of Elizabeth in the fact that when another character, Simpleton, adopts a Jacobean manner, the effect is more self-evidently ridiculous: only a clown would dream of treating James's reign as a source of retro chic. It is therefore odd that one of Simpleton's affectations is to sing a piece from *The Devil is an Ass* and even more odd, given Cavendish's admiration for Jonson, that Manly chooses to mock it:

> SIMP. Have you felt the wooll of Beaver?
> MAN. —Or sheepes down ever?
> SIM. —Have you smelt of the bud of the Rose?
> MAN. —In his pudding hose.[54]

Simpleton goes on to sing verses from the ballads of Little Musgrave and Chevy Chase, so perhaps the overall effect is not so much to ridicule Jonson as—only a few years after his death—to place him in the literary past, alongside Shakespeare (whose plays are brought on stage in *The Country Captain*) and Marlowe (whose *Tamburlaine* Simpleton quotes in a later scene).[55] The episode marks a shift in Cavendish's use of Jonson: from imitation alone to a kind of literary curatorship.

This sense of the pastness of Jonson is even more evident in Cavendish's dramatic works after the Restoration. He continues to imitate: witness Master Furrs in *The Humorous Lovers*, "An old Gentleman very fearful of catching cold" who is said to wear "such a Turbant of Night-caps, that he is almost as tall as *Grantham* steeple" and who seems indebted to *Epicoene*'s Morose.[56] But he also consigns Jonson to literary history. In *The Triumphant Widow, or The Medley of Humours*, characters discuss how to revive a poet who has fallen into a rapture: various Greek and Latin poets are suggested and rejected, then Shakespeare, then Beaumont and Fletcher:

> DOCT. The last Remedy, like Pigeons to the soles of the feet, must be to apply my dear Friend Mr. *Johnson*'s Works, but they must be apply'd to his head.
> CODSH. Oh, have a care, Doctor, he hates *Ben. Johnson*, he has an Antipathy to him.
> CRAMB. Oh, I hate *Johnson*, oh oh, dull dull, oh oh no Wit.

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52 *The Varietie*, 3, 43–44.

53 Barton, *Ben Jonson*, 318.

54 *The Varietie*, 57.

55 *The Countrie Captain*, 25; *The Varietie*, 72.

56 William Cavendish, *The Humorous Lovers* (London, 1677), sig. A3v, 9.

> DOCT. 'Tis you are dull; he speaks now, but I have less hopes of him for this; dull! he was the Honour of his Nation, and the Poet of Poets, if any thing will do't, he will bring your Poet into his Wits again, and make him write Sense and Reason, and purifie his Language, and make him leave his foolish phantastical heroick Fustian.[57]

The Doctor's reference to "my dear Friend Mr. *Johnson*" may express Cavendish's personal affection, but Jonson, nearly four decades dead by the time the play was staged at Dorset Garden, is spoken of very much in the past tense, as well as being associated with worthy values of "Sense and Reason." The fact that the Doctor refers only to English dramatists who have been published in folio may say something, too, about the monumental status they have acquired. Jonson is now a material object, his Works—to be applied to the head. The public, canonical, national playwright embodied in the Works is a far cry from the friend (and client) whose writings were copied into the Newcastle Manuscript for Cavendish's private enjoyment, and the contrast between the two texts reflects the changing significance of Jonson for Cavendish over the decades: from entertainer and employee to influence, and finally to shorthand for a specific dramatic tradition with which Cavendish chose to identify himself.

Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley

While Jonson is explicitly made a presiding genius in William Cavendish's dramatic writings, he occupies no such place in the work of William's daughters, Jane and Elizabeth. If anyone is given the role of external literary authority in *The Concealed Fancies*, it is Cavendish himself, aka Lord Calsindow, Luceny's "Alpha & Omega of Gouernemt" (2.3).[58] As far as less obvious allusions go, the play seems to engage more creatively with Shakespeare (in particular *The Taming of the Shrew*) than with Jonson.[59] Alison Findlay, however, notes that the godlike descent from the sky of Courtley and Presumption recalls that of the Cupids in *Entertainment at Bolsover* and wonders whether "costumes from the Jonson entertainments were still in the Cavendish houses," available for reuse.[60] Elements of the play's structure and idiom are also Jonsonian. The

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57 William Cavendish, *The Triumphant Widow, or The Medley of Humours* (London, 1677), 60–61.

58 Jane Cavendish, *The Collected Works of Jane Cavendish*, ed. Alexandra G. Bennett (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 103. See also Margaret J. M. Ezell, " 'To Be Your Daughter in Your Pen': The Social Functions of Literature in the Writings of Lady Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 51 (1988): 281–96.

59 See Lisa Hopkins, "Judith Shakespeare's Reading: Teaching 'The Concealed Fancies,' " *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47 (1996): 396–406.

60 Alison Findlay, " 'She Gave You the Civility of the House': Household Performance in 'The Concealed Fancies,' " in *Readings in Renaissance Women's Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594–1998*, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (London: Routledge, 1998), 259–71, 264.

word "humour" appears four times in the opening scene, and much of its characterization relies on the contrasting of humours: Courtley versus Presumption, Action versus Moderate, the enthusiastic Elder versus the discreet Younger Stellow. More specifically, I would argue for the pervasive influence of *The New Inn*, a play that is fundamentally about the concealed fancies of Lovel and Lady Frampul. Both include courting scenes where an appearance of disdain obscures characters' real feelings; notably, the unusual word "courting-stock" appears in both (a search of Early English Books Online found *The New Inn* and *Cynthia's Revels* as the only instances before 1656). And both place women firmly in charge of these scenes, a feature of Jonson's play that may have appealed to the sisters. Finally, the way the action of *The New Inn* oscillates between above and below stairs anticipates the way *The Concealed Fancies* cuts between different social groupings: the two sets of sisters and their suitors, but also ushers, stewards, kitchen servants, and maidservants. The impression of two sprawling households seems to pick up on the way Jonson surveys the full extent of the Inn's occupants and employees. If *The New Inn* was written with William Cavendish in mind, as I suggested earlier, that would make it an obvious reference point for his daughters; the fact that it had appeared in octavo in 1631 may also have made it more readily available to them than the plays of the second folio, published a decade later.

Marion Wynne-Davies has linked the rustic antemasque in *A Pastorall*, too, to Jonson, citing the "low comedy" of the Welbeck and Bolosover entertainments as an influence.[61] Another relevant text, though, may be *The Masque of Queens*, which (like *A Pastorall*) includes an antemasque of witches. There, Dame Ate enters with "a torch made of a dead man's arm," the Fourth Hag has brought a skull from a charnel-house, and the Sixth has "Kill'd an Infant, to have his fat"; the grotesque use of body parts is conventional, but Jonson's text may be remembered in the following exchange between the prentice and the two other witches:

> PRE. What's the ingredience of your Perfume
> BELL. All horrid things to burne i' th Roome
> HAG. As Childrens heads
> BELL. Mens leggs
> HAG. Weomens Armes
> BELL. And little Barnes

Their injunction to her "that vs you shall not slight," "For with vs you shall oynt and make a flight" also echoes the Jonsonian Hag's opening charm calling on Ate "That she quickly anoint, and come away."[62] However, while *The Masque of Queens* celebrates royalty, the

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61 Marion Wynne-Davies, "'My Seeled Chamber and Dark Parlour Room': The English Country House and Renaissance Women Dramatists," in *Readings*, ed. Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, 60–68, 66.

62 *Works of Jane Cavendish*, 80–81; *The Masque of Queens*, lines 79, 151, 34, *Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 3.

Cavendishes make *A Pastorall* speak to its Civil War context and their own fortunes, with the witches claiming responsibility for setting families against one another and capturing women.

Margaret Cavendish

Ben Jonson's ghost, lamented by William Cavendish in 1637, makes another appearance in his prefatory poem to the second edition of Margaret Cavendish's *Poems, and Phancies* in 1664:

> Your *New-born, Sublime Fancies,* and such store,
> May make our *Poets* blush, and Write no more:
> Nay, *Spencers Ghost* will haunt you in the Night,
> And *Johnson* rise, full fraught with *Venom's Spight*[63]

Having invoked Jonson as a point of reference in his own writings, he does the same when praising those of his wife; here, though, Jonson is ranked with Spenser, Beaumont, Fletcher, Shakespeare, and Chaucer as consigned to oblivion by her superior work. Margaret Cavendish herself is somewhat more conservative in her assessment of her oeuvre, but critics have noted the way she, too, uses Jonson and Shakespeare as a way of creating an authorial identity. In her letters to the readers of her 1662 *Playes*, Jonson is repeatedly mentioned. Acknowledging their length, she continues, "yet, I believe none of my Playes are so long as *Ben. Johnson's* Fox, or Alchymist, which in truth, are somewhat too long."[64] Defending their failure to observe the unity of time, she observes that "though *Ben. Johnson* as I have heard was of that opinion, that a Comedy cannot be good, nor is a natural or true Comedy, if it should present more than one dayes action, yet his Comedies that he hath published, could never be the actions of one day; for could any rational person think that the whole Play of the Fox could be the action of one day?"[65] Cavendish's use of Jonson here is ambiguous, identifying Jonson as an authority on drama only to note his plays' imperfections or absurdities. The same is true of her "General Prologue to all my Playes," where Cavendish contrasts her dramatic profusion, that "like to a common rout, / Gathers in throngs, and heedlesly runs out," with Jonson's plays, which "came forth … Like Forein Emperors, which do appear / Unto their Subjects, not 'bove once a year." The plays themselves are "Master-pieces," imperial, but the praise of Jonson's slowness is equivocal, recalling Captain Tucca's accusation against Jonson's alter ego Horace in *Satiromastix*, "you and your Itchy Poetry breake out like Christmas, but once a yeare."[66] In fact, as Shannon Miller has argued, Cavendish invokes Jonson partly to distance herself from his example. With ostensible humility, she contrasts her poems with those of "former daies; / As Johnson, Shakespear, Beamont, Fletcher

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63 Margaret Cavendish, *Poems, and Phancies* (London, 1664), sig. Ar2.

64 Margaret Cavendish, *Playes Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious and Excellent Princess, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle* (London, 1662), sig. A3(2)v.

65 Cavendish, *Playes*, sig. A4v.

66 Thomas Dekker, *Satiro-mastix, or The Vntrussing of the Humorous Poet* (London, 1602), sig. L3v.

writ; / Mine want their Learning, Reading, Language, Wit." A few lines earlier, however, Cavendish has observed that while Jonson's brain "was so strong, / He could conceive, or judge, what's right, what's wrong," "Yet Gentle *Shakespear* had a fluent Wit, / Although less Learning, yet full well he writ." In setting up Shakespeare's wit against Jonson's learning, Cavendish asserts the possibility of writing great drama without being able to translate "Latin phrases," implicitly aligning herself with Shakespeare in this regard: "By employing common comparisons between these two playwrights, Cavendish can deploy her account of Jonson's work to elevate her writings through association with the emerging canonical frontrunner."[67]

Beyond these prefatory materials, Jonson has been identified as an influence on Cavendish's drama. Erna Kelly finds echoes of humours comedy in *The Religious* and *The Matrimonial Trouble*, while Brandie Siegfried links the treatment of sense versus reason in *The Convent of Pleasure* to the "banquet of sense" topos as variously treated by Jonson and Shakespeare.[68] Julie Sanders considers the "Fragments … of a Play which I did intend for my Blazing-World" published in *Plays, Never Before Printed* and finds in the half-human, half-animal characters suggestions of a "beast-fable" along the lines of *Volpone*.[69] And Lara Dodds has argued that, like her critical writings, Cavendish's dramatic works place Shakespeare and Jonson in dialogue with one another. In a nuanced and provocative reading, Dodds argues that in the multiple plots of *Loves Adventures* "Cavendish juxtaposes a clearly Shakespearean romantic comedy with two different explorations of Jonsonian humor."[70] This aspect of Cavendish studies promises to be a fertile ground for future research and can scarcely be done justice in the current brief survey.

However, it is *The Blazing World* that offers the most sustained explicit discussion of Jonson in Cavendish's writing outside the prefaces to *Playes*, when the Empress asks the Air Spirits summoned by the Fly-men about how things are in the world she has come from. After hearing the news and how her friends are doing, she asks about the state of experimental philosophy and whether anyone has "found out yet the Jews Cabbala." It seems that Dee and Kelly came nearest;

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67 Cavendish, *Playes*, sigs. A7r–A7v; Shannon Miller, " 'Thou Art a Moniment, without a Tombe': Affiliation and Memorialization in Margaret Cavendish's 'Playes' and 'Plays, Never Before Printed,' " in *Cavendish and Shakespeare, Interconnections*, ed. Katherine Romack and James Fitzmaurice (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 7–28, 9.

68 Erna Kelly, "Drama's Olio: A New Way to Serve Old Ingredients in 'The Religious' and 'The Matrimonial Trouble,' " in *Cavendish and Shakespeare*, ed. Romack and Fitzmaurice, 47–62; Brandie R. Siegfried, "Dining at the Table of Sense: Shakespeare, Cavendish, and 'The Convent of Pleasure,' " in *Cavendish and Shakespeare*, 63–83.

69 Margaret Cavendish, "A Piece of a Play," in *Plays, Never Before Printed* (London, 1668), sig. A1r; Julie Sanders, " 'A Woman Write a Play!' Jonsonian Strategies and the Dramatic Writings of Margaret Cavendish," in *Readings*, ed. Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, 293–305, 296.

70 Lara Dodds, *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2013), 159–90, 161.

> but yet they proved at last but meer Cheats, and were described by one of their own Country-men, a famous Poet, named *Ben. Johnson*, in a Play call'd *The Alchymist*, where he expressed *Kelly* by Capt. *Face*, and *Dee* by Dr. *Subtle*, and their two Wives by *Doll Common*, and the Widow; by the Spaniard in the Play, he meant the Spanish Ambassador, and by Sir *Epicure Mammon*, a Polish Lord. The Emperess remembred that she had seen the Play, and asked the Spirits whom he meant by the name of *Ananias*? Some Zealous Brethren, answered they, in *Holland*, *Germany*, and several other places. Then she asked them, Who was meant by the Druggist? Truly, answered the Spirits, we have forgot, it being so long since it was made and acted.[71]

As Sanders points out, *The Alchemist*'s "peculiar investment in questions of the feigned and the actual, and in utopian and dystopian visions" made it an especially appropriate reference point for Cavendish's sci-fi romance.[72] Another point worth making about the Empress's discussion, though, is the sense of cultural distance it expresses. While the play is sufficiently current in the theatrical repertory for the Empress to have seen it, the moment when it was written and first acted (and the poet's intentions accessible) is so long ago that the Spirits have forgotten who Drugger was supposed to represent. In this respect, their position is strangely analogous to that of Cavendish's own husband: once able to ascertain Jonson's intentions directly, but now bedevilled by time and memory loss. This makes *The Blazing World* an appropriate place to end a survey of Jonson's relationship with the Cavendishes, for it reasserts something that was noted at the outset: the sheer longevity of their collective span. When he had taken part in Jonson-scripted entertainments in the Jacobean period, the teenaged Cavendish had been twenty-one years Jonson's junior, and as well as employing the poet, Cavendish would go on to learn from him as a dramatist in his own right. Decades later, however, after exile and the Restoration, Cavendish found in Jonson a writer who stood for a past that was distant but still tangible—the dramatic golden age of the 1590s and 1600s. It is easy to see why Cavendish might have wanted to assert his connection to such a figure. And, in view of the ambivalent respect towards Jonson that comes across in her own work, perhaps it makes sense to see Margaret's allusion in *The Blazing World* as her own wry comment on her husband's reminiscences.

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71 Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World* (London, 1666), 65–66.

72 Sanders, " 'A Woman Write a Play!,' " 296.

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