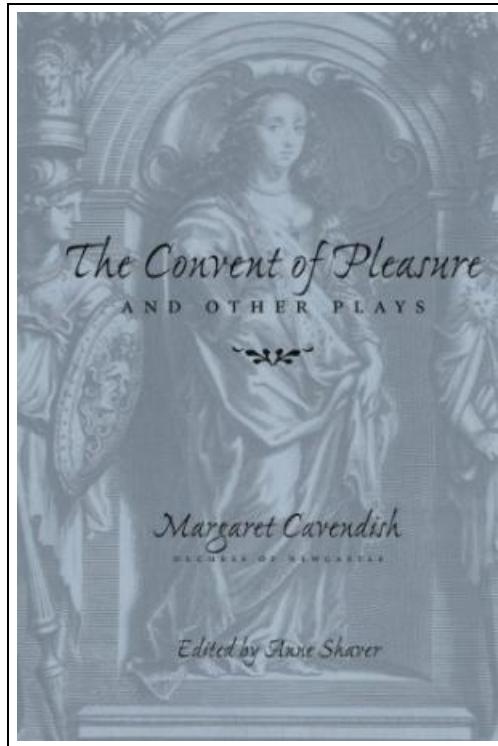


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Reviews

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(Julia Mohr II)

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Johns Hopkins University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Shaver, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1623-1673), until recently remembered more as a flamboyant eccentric than as a serious writer, was in fact the most prolific, thought-provoking, and original woman writer of the Restoration. Cavendish is the author of many poems, short stories, biographies, memoirs, letters, philosophical and scientific works (including *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing World*, the first work of science fiction by a woman), and nineteen plays. "The Convent of Pleasure" and Other Plays collects four of Cavendish's dramatic works that are among the most revealing of her attitudes toward marriage and her desire for fame. *Loves Adventures* (1662) centers on a woman succeeding in war and diplomacy by passing as a man. Similarly, the heroine of *Bell in Campo* (1662) rescues her husband at the head of an army of women in this tale of a marriage of near equals. *The Convent of Pleasure* (1668) proposes a separatist community of women and has received attention for its suggestion of lesbian sexuality. *The Bridals* (1662), a more typical restoration comedy satirizing marriage, rounds out the collection. Edited with notes and annotation by Anne Shaver, "The Convent of Pleasure" and Other Plays also contains a timeline, biography and bibliography of the Duchess, an appreciation of Cavendish's life and work, and a bibliography of critical essays. Also included are all of Cavendish's epistles To the Reader as well as Other Preliminary Matter from Playes (1662), and Cavendish's original preface to Plays Never Before Printed (1668). A valuable collection from an extraordinary writer, "The Convent of Pleasure" and Other Plays raises important issues about women and gender.

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