

MARGARET CAVENDISH ON SKEPTICISM

Sponsored by the Department of History & Philosophy



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Margaret Cavendish's (1623–1673) theories of sense perception and epistemology have been a debated matter in the recent commentary literature. I discuss Cavendish in relation to skeptical philosophy of her time, contextualizing the historical background of her knowledge of skepticism and arguing that Cavendish is sympathetic to skepticism, especially the probabilistic skepticism of the later Academics. She can then be read as supporting a stance of 'mitigated' skepticism towards natural philosophy and science, in which she is fully skeptical of certain fields while asserts the importance of scientific inquiry on others, such as the study of particulars, but views that study to be based on speculation with little epistemic ground.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7
5:00-6:30 pm, Halle 300