

"The Feminist Ontologies of Cavendish and Conway"

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Abstract: It seems obvious that **ontological commitments can affect the perception of the moral status of individuals**. This talk considers the ways in which **how we theorize** about the basic constituents of the world affects our understanding of the status of the individuals in the world. In particular, I consider whether the ontologies of Margaret Cavendish and Anne Conway might provide the foundations for understanding the equality of men and women. My suggestion is that they do, and I will examine the extent of their commitments to feminist ontology. Finally, I turn to some speculation about why other women philosophers did not take advantage their ontological commitments.