



The Blazing World: A New World

By Margaret Cavendish

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The Blazing World: A New World By Margaret Cavendish

The Blazing World - A New World - A 1666 Work of Prose Fiction by Margaret Cavendish. The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing-World, better known as The Blazing World, is a 1666 work of prose fiction by the English writer Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle. It has been mentioned as an early forerunner of science fiction. As its full title suggests, Blazing World is a fanciful depiction of a satirical, utopian kingdom in another world (with different stars in the sky) that can be reached via the North Pole. It is "the only known work of utopian fiction by a woman in the 17th century, as well as one of the earliest examples of what we now call 'science fiction' — although it is also a romance, an adventure story, and even autobiography." A young woman enters this other world, becomes the empress of a society composed of various species of talking animals, and organizes an invasion back into her world complete with submarines towed by the "fish men" and the dropping of "fire stones" by the "bird men" to confound the enemies of her homeland, the Kingdom of Esfi. The work was republished in 1668 with Cavendish's Observations upon Experimental Philosophy and thus functioned as an imaginative component to what was otherwise a reasoned endeavour in 17th century science. Cavendish's book inspired a notable sonnet by her husband, William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which celebrates her imaginative powers. The sonnet was included in her book.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1623 – 15 December 1673) was an English aristocrat, a prolific writer, and a scientist. Born Margaret Lucas, she was the youngest sister of prominent royalists Sir John Lucas and Sir Charles Lucas. 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.

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