

The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World (Broadview Editions)

Margaret Cavendish



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First published in 1666, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle's *Description of a New Blazing World* is the first fictional portrayal of women and the new science. In *Blazing World*, Cavendish depicts her heroine, the Empress, in multiple roles. The Empress is leader of a dreamlike utopian world reachable through the North Pole, filled with talking animals and intelligent hybrid creatures. She establishes a royal society of scientists, initiates learned conferences, interrogates existing knowledge, and spends her days speculating on natural philosophy. She also forms a lively intellectual collaboration with the "Duchess of Newcastle," a female character summoned from Earth. A companion volume to Cavendish's important *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*, Blazing World is the first known science fiction novel to have been written and published by a woman, and represents a pioneering female scientific utopia.

This Broadview Edition includes related historical materials on the new science and Cavendish's role in the intellectual world of her time.

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