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A Cultural Chase: The Gendered Medieval and Renaissance Discourses in Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World* and Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*

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Abstract

Ahead of feminine writing in the linear track of western literary gendered and chronological progression, feminine writing has always been a chronological step back. The Renaissance female writers entered the already masculine-occupied space of literary scripture and used several strategies and tactics to secure a rightful place within the literary continuum. This paper investigates "The Cultural Chase" between Margaret Cavendish and Francis Bacon, and attempts to display the generic and chronological differences between their representative works: *Blazing World* and *New Atlantis*. The first section of this paper's argument explores those texts' introductory passages and the role the authors' genders play in selecting a literary genre to convey their agendas. The later section explores the strategies used by Cavendish and Bacon in presenting major contemporary intellectual controversies. Furthermore, we explore the successes and frustrations of Cavendish and Bacon and their impact on the cultural arena of the time. Finally, the paper blurs the binary opposition forced on humanities, as well as the sciences and attempts to use Newton's Laws of Gravity to analyze and explain the nature of this Cultural Chase.

Keywords: Feminine writing; Gendered Writing; Cavendish; Bacon; Newton.

Introduction

Margaret Cavendish's *The Description of a New World, called the Blazing World* (1666) has often been read as a work that both draws on the utopian genre and departs or even violates it. While Cavendish's work emulates earlier utopian models, it does not exactly follow their course. Cavendish's work departs from mainstream masculine conventions of the utopian genre to represent a feminine text where its protagonist is a 'young Lady' who faces fantastic challenges both physically and intellectually. Thus, though the earlier utopian works with their emphasis on exploration, philosophy, and politics indirectly excluded women from such interests as they are exclusively masculine, Cavendish "began to encroach on the masculine arenas of politics, literature, and consumption, curiosity without method and without justification became female" (Benedict 2001, 118). As writer's words come from their specific subjective experience where language "is never neutral…A voice comes through a body which is situated

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in time and space. The subject is always speaking from a place" (Anderson 1995, 66) this paper aims to investigate the cultural differences reflected in Cavendish's *The Blazing World* and Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626). This article is divided into three sections. The first section, The Genre, explores the texts' introductory passages and the role the authors' genders play in selecting a literary genre to convey their message.

Accordingly, *The Blazing World* is a typical feminine writing "that only exists in an elsewhere" (Penrod 1996, 37). Cavendish's use of the romance furnishes the creation of this "elsewhere" with the suitable literary genre to create imaginative plots that establish a relaxing atmosphere for Cavendish's readers of all genders. For men, it provides the illusion that this work follows masculine literary codifications, and does not bear any subversive message. As for women, this pseudo-romance situates them in a familiar literary atmosphere they can easily identify with. This section also discusses Bacon's use of the journey motif in his text. This "journey" genre is a distinctly masculine writing style, emphasizing the male exploration or invasion of the public sphere. Each author's choice of genre highlights their different cultural experiences and locations.

The second section, the Epitasis, discusses how Bacon and Cavendish handle major contemporary intellectual controversies. In Cavendish's texts, the debate between the Empress and the intellectuals in *Blazing World* is analyzed according to its relevance to feminine cultural criticism. In this part of her text, Cavendish departs from romance to introduce her feminine readers to major contemporary intellectual debates. The Blazing World (the text and the world) becomes an emancipatory space for women on epistemological levels. Thus, Cavendish rejects knowledge as a solely masculine domain and separates it from the masculine dominant epistemology. This part of her work transports the reader to an alternate reality in which Cavendish freely displays her ideology. On the other hand, in his work, Bacon preaches his ideas about the ideal educational system. Bacon sees the educational system as a means to transfer society from the medieval mode of thinking to a new scientific one.

The Closure is the title of this paper's final section. In this section, we explore the frustrations of both Bacon and Cavendish. Cavendish's presence, and hence her reality, penetrates and taints the Blazing World's ideal Medieval harmony and order. The introduction of reality into the imaginative space is a cultural rupture that forces Cavendish to retreat to her imaginative personal world to maintain her text's narrative. On the contrary, Bacon's closure does not force him to retreat inwardly. Bacon could not have anticipated the Colonial Era, full of geographical exploration, but his work displays his disillusionment with the way explorations are often exploited to accumulate wealth and power.

Literature Review

The main idea in this article is not to analyze the differences between the philosophical stances of both Cavendish and Bacon (Aït-Touati; Keller; Tillery; James; Michaelian). This article is not going to present an in-depth investigation of the political views of Cavendish and her violations of her contemporary utopian writing conventions (Boyle; Hintz; Jowitt; Walters). Though this article is interested in Cavendish's feminine writing style (Stark; Prakas; Suzuki; Leslie), nonetheless, the main

premise is to use Cavendish's and Bacon's utopian treaties to invesitigate feminine and masculine writing. The literature that has investigated the connections and differences between those witers philosophically, stylistically, and politically in most cases explores them in isolation of the larger feminine/masculine dichotomy. However, this article attempts to treat those texts as a threshold or a reference point to present the article's main idea of the cultural chase. As the seventeenth century was a time of change in the west, especially England, *The Balzing World* and *New Atlantis* can be read as manifestations of such historical, political, epistemic, and literary transformations. Those two works are going to be analyzed as representatives of feminine and masculine reflections on such change and transformation.

The signficance of this article is in its presentation of the cultural chase as an exploration and explanation of feminine/masculine writing. The cultural chase proposes that the advent of feminine writing in western civilization faced many challenges and posed others. Cavendish's text is read as a subversive text that present an alternative style and view to those of masculine texts which Bacon's utopia is a representative. *The Balzing World* represents an antidiscursive space to the dominant masculine discourse in literature, science, philosophy, politics, and religion. Thus, Cavendish's utopia is read as an historical event that ruptures the linear track of masculine discourse. Cavendish, therefore, presents a set of textual strategies to subvert the contemporary dominant discourse in various fields of knowledge. This article will explore such strategies and the role they play in the birth of feminine writing. Finally, this paper aims at hypothesizing that Cavendish and other contemporary women writers are part of the medieval discourse of imagination and romance. Cavendish's texts is no more seen as a feminine mimetic representation of masculine reality. Rather, it enacts a distinctive feature in women writing: retreating into medieval modes of thinking. The cultural chase begins.

The Genre

The complete title of Cavendish's work is *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing-World*. The book, though traditionally classified as a utopian novel, is multi generic; it can be classified as science fiction (Spender 1986, 43), satire, philosophical fiction, feminist literature, and autobiography (Propp 2004, 383). *The Blazing World* is divided into three parts: Romance, Philosophical, and fantastical (Whitaker 2003, 282). The first romance section describes a damsel in distress who is kidnapped by a merchant to force her to marry him. As punishment, the gods blow the merchant's ship toward the North Pole, where the Lady's world is joint to the pole of an alternative world. The merchant and his crew freeze to death, but the Lady survives. She finds herself in this other world—the Blazing World—which is full of strange creatures who have the appearance of animals but act like humans. In the second "philosophical" section the Lady is presented to the Emperor of this world who falls in love with her and marries her and she becomes the Empress of the Blazing World. As an Empress, the Lady discusses these topics with the scientists, philosophers, and academics of *The Blazing World* topics of religion, magic, philosophy, and politics. The Empress fantastically meets Cavendish and the become soulmates. Both characters visit each other's world and present their views on politics and government. In the final

"fantastical" part, the Empress returns back to her world to suppress civil turmoil and wins a war against her enemies.

Cavendish's opening passage shows the difference in her writing from that of Bacon, both substantively and formally. She begins her text with a romance, while Bacon starts with the seemingly true narrative of a scientific treaties. The difference in their use of genre results in different spaces, places, and ideologies that both authors aim to convey.

Cavendish uses the traditional hierarchical classification of literary genres to her advantage. Romance was the most popular genre of her time; it was associated with female attitudes. Samuel Pepys describes Cavendish upon her visit to the Royal Society in 1667 as "a romance, and all she doth is romantic" (vol.VIII, 186-87). Cavendish's work opens like this,

> A merchant traveling into a foreign country, fell extremely in love with a young lady; but being a stranger in that nation, and beneath her, both in birth and wealth, he could have little hopes of obtaining his desire; however his love growing more and more vehement upon him, even the slighting of all difficulties, he resolved, at last, to steal her away; which he had to better opportunity to do because her father's house was not far from the sea. (3)

The book's opening contains many romance genre motifs: a lady, a lover, an obstacle to their love, the elopement, and the journey. This introduction, however, also includes a supernatural element. Nevertheless, the work does not solely follow a traditional "romance" narrative. Instead, it introduces the reader to a new space," For they were not only driven to the very end or point of the Pole of the World, but even to another World which joined close to it … At last, the Boat still passing on, was forced into another World" (3).

As most female writers of her time do, Cavendish uses Medieval conventions to tell her story via the romance genre with fantasy elements. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), the mystical writer of the twelfth century, for example, relates the source of her writing to divine inspiration. The French writer Christine de Pizan (1365-1429) maintains that her book, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), is a vision inspired by "three ladies." Thus, it can be argued that Cavendish follows a feminine literary technique that previous women writers also has adopted to circumvent the masculine definition of genres and convey their agenda. It seems here that Cavendish uses a palimpsest technique where she sets the scene for a conventional romance, but she then adds subversive emphasis of her own.

Cavendish's multi-dimensional writing is consistent with Elaine Showalter's (1981) presentation of women within a dual cultural zone, where feminine culture overlaps or sometimes clashes with the dominant culture. Moreover, Shirley Ardener (1993) argues that patriarchal institutions' "*social map*" created ground rules for men's and women's behavior in a social and literary sense. Thus, these ground rules had established some spaces as feminine and others as masculine. Gender contrasts were thus seen "…as inscribing spatial difference" (Blunt and Rose 1994, 1**)**. We can argue that Cavendish is in a feminine space but then transgresses into a masculine space, contradicting traditional literary spatial

differences. Cavendish utilizes the romance genre to give her readers a familiar literary experience that is somewhat detached from reality. This technique enables her to create a generic illusion that she can deceive with both her feminine and masculine readers.

The tendency or excitement or romance in feminine writing can be related to the difference between public and private spaces. Rosaldo et. al. (1974), for example, argue that the distinction between these two spaces is fundamental to sustaining masculine hegemony. They explain this masculine domination by exploring the hierarchy between these gendered spaces. Rosaldo et. al. differentiate between the private domestic space around women and the public space, which refers to masculine institutions that control the domestic/private space (17). Rosaldo et. al. maintain that these spaces were defined by two different "kinds of sociality" (42). The "domestic" sociality of women is characterized by interpersonal skills and specific characteristics because "women are daughters and mothers, women relate to other people as individuals, seeing each as different and unique" (Blunt and Rose 1994, 2-3). In contrast, men's public sphere is concerned not with individuality and details but with the "maintenance of the economic, cultural, and political system as a whole" (3).

Following this line of analysis, Cavendish's romance, at the beginning of her work, falls within the private sphere. The romance, and the entire text, takes place within a domesticated space that emphasizes individuality and relationship building. *The Blazing World* is a story of individuals: the Empress, Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, and the beast-men creatures. The text does not investigate in-depth, institutions of politics or religion. Instead, it focuses on traits like clothing, colors, and buildings. However, Cavendish undermines this utopian literature genre by succumbing it on the private space and the female gaze. This subversion creates an erasure of masculinity. The men die by freezing, and the Emperor disappears after the introduction of the Empress. As a consequence, *The Blazing World* emerges as a feminine manifesto.

Although Cavendish's novel starts as a romance, the genre changes to one that resembles science fiction and flips the typical female/romance narrative on its head. The female protagonist faces the threat of masculine sexual urges at the story's beginning. However, when men begin to die of frostbite, Cavendish's work erases any masculine undertones it may have had previously. Even the Emperor of the Blazing World, though not entirely human, becomes absent as soon as the woman enters his world.

The Blazing World, the fictitious world and the text, gradually become dominated by the feminine. The imagery within the first section of the text relates the Blazing World's geography to the topography of the feminine body. Many parts of this new world, such as the "*paradise*," resemble a womb; it is "…a world of Life only, without Matter, for this world, though it be most pleasant and fruitful, yet it is not a world of mere Immaterial life, but a world of living, Material Creatures. " (44). The protagonist must sail through rivers and seas to reach this secluded place. The fluidity of this world, with its rivers, seas, and islands, also allude to feminine traits. In order to indicate female supremacy in this world and mastery of masculine literary conventions, Cavendish references male anatomy. Phallic-like boats that "…swim between two plains of Ice" are used to penetrate the "clift" and enclosures of the Blazing World (4).

On the other hand, *New Atlantis* is an unfinished philosophical utopia by the English philosopher Francis Bacon, published posthumously in 1626 . The work describes the culture of the utopian island of "Bensalem" in South America. The main focus of Bacon is the center of science and research called "Salomon's House".

In contrast to Cavendish's utopia, Bacon's *New Atlantis* opens in a scientific and 'realistic' fashion, stating:

> We sailed from Peru (where we had continued by the space of one whole year) for China and Japan by the South Sea; taking with us victuals for twelve months; and had good winds from the east, though soft and weak, for five months' space and more. But then the wind came about, and settled in the west for many days, so as we could make little or no way, and were sometimes in purpose to turn back. But then again arose strong and great winds from the south, with appoint east. (545)

The above passage maintains a writing style found throughout most of the author's work, and one might notice Bacon's references to fixed places and times. Contrary to Cavendish, Bacon attracts his reader via the journey motif. With the distinction between a feminine domestic space and a masculine public space in mind, one can argue that the journey genre falls under the realm of the masculine space. *New Atlantis* discusses institutions and organizations of government, logically noting the dichotomy between science and religion. It also emphasizes the role of patriarchy when it comes to maintaining order. Although the narrator sometimes refers to particularities, these are only to emphasize the truth of the narrative. An example of this is when Bacon describes the Stranger's house as "a fair and spacious house, built of brick, of somewhat a bluer colour than our brick" (6).

Another distinctive feature of Bacon's introductory passages, differentiating them from Cavendish's narrative, is the fixation of space and place. References to time (like twelve months, five months, and many days) and places (Peru, China, Japan, South Sea, East, and South) support the authenticity of the narrative and reflect Bacon's mode of thinking. Blunt and Rose (1994) argue that his use of "mapping" has "a double meaning of stage as spatially bounded and visible but also part of a linear temporal progression". However, they also add that this method of bounded-spaces "…depend on Enlightenment appeals to universalize reason only accessible to a masculine gaze" (10). On the other hand, Cavendish's introductory passages are absent of such fixations; neither the geographical landscape nor the temporal limitations are bounded or even defined. Mapping becomes a gendered tendency. Cixous (1986) argues that feminine language is identifiable by the double use of the French verb *voler* ("to fly" as well as "to steal"). She states that flying "is women gesture—flying in language and make it fly … we've lived in flight, stealing away, finding, when desired, narrow passageways, hidden crossovers" (316). Thus, Cavendish's introductory passages are a kind of *voler*. Cavendish's work is unrestricted by time or place and flies readers away to the fantastical. The text can subvert the masculine discourse by appropriating the romance genre to create a parallel matriarchal reality. It is a floating text.

Bacon's fixations are too reflected in the use of his language. This is achieved, Kate Aughterson (1992) argues, by the "use of past perfect tense and constructions such as '*then … again … so that*". These language constructs give an impression of following a specific logical sequence of events (122). In contrast, Cavendish's language reflects the floating character of her text; the progressive form "-ing" is the dominant verbal form in the introductory passages. This progressive form reflects the floating character of the feminine writing and reflects the *voler*, the flight, of the narrative. Moreover, Aughterson postulates that Bacon's narrative is a characterization of the *Hellenic* mode of thinking. In the Hellenic narrative, "details are equally illuminated; even digressions into the past are narrated in the same level" (123).

On the other hand, Cavendish's work reflects a *Hebraic* representation. As Aughterson points out, this representation is reflected by its unexplained words and actions, "and sentences do not follow logically" (123). The introductory passages of *The Blazing World* reflect this Hebraic mode through its explanation of actions. For example, how the boat reaches the North Pole, the death of the men but not the women, the parallel world, etc. The passages' confusing and incoherent structure and syntax (progressive, past, present) also reflect this modality.

The difference in exploiting a literary genre to convey a personal agenda can be attributed to a difference in the writers' genders. The romance in Cavendish's book becomes a feminine genre characterized by the absence of geographical mapping, un-limitedness of time, incoherent use of syntax, and the Hebraic mode of narration. All of these qualities give Cavendish's text a certain fluidity. In contrast, the travel/journey genre of *New Atlantis* reflects the Enlightenment mode's emphasis on logic and reason. With its marking of time and geography, logical flow of sentences, and the aura of truth, *New Atlantis* is Bacon's manifesto on the discourse of the Enlightenment. Contrariwise, Cavendish's *The Blazing World* is a counter-Enlightenment text through its hints of medieval tradition and thinking. Their works represent the gendered differences between the two discourses of the Medieval and the Enlightenment.

The Epitasis

Cavendish's text subverts the romance genre to establish a matriarchal society through which the woman can introduce her contemporary controversies in different fields of knowledge which are traditionally limited to men. However, before the *lady* at the beginning of her book becomes the Empress of a new fantastical world, Cavendish provides the reader with a typical 'Hebraic' narrative. *The Blazing World* is a marvelous world that is not governed by limitations of place or time. Cavendish's language creates a mode of flight and fluidity. Her words reflect an interest in particularities and individuals. The land of the Blazing World is "…divided by a great number of vast and large rivers, all ebbing and flowing, into several islands of unequal distance from each other" (8). The entrance to these islands is through a" …labyrinth, so winding and turning among the rocks, that no other vessel but small boats, could pass" (8). Inside the labyrinth's walls, "…at every half mile was a gate to enter, and every gate was

of a different fashion" (8). These images of seclusion and enclosure reflect the limitations of not only the physical movement of women but also those imposed on their intellectual and imaginative faculties.

Cavendish attack and criticism of scientific societies of her time accentuates her peripheral location outside the scientific institution. Hostility marked the relationship between Cavendish and the Royal Society; the Royal Society marginalized Cavendish from scientific discourse until the 20th century where she is still described as a 'figure of fun' mainly because of her apparent "disregard for the methods and utilitarian aims of science" (Mintz 1952, 186).

Consequently, excluded from the meetings of the Royal Society on account of her sex, according to Evelyn Keller (1997), Cavendish is said to have criticized the august institution with a markedly female voice of opposition to the 'fathers of science' (447) and their society as "dangerous, useless, and deluded" (Sarasohn 2010, 1). Cavendish's physical isolation from the meetings of the Royal Society, though caused her intellectual isolation from contemporary debates, but it also empowered her with the ability to construct a feminine discourse free from the institutionalized and masculine discourse of the Royal Society. *The Blazing World* becomes Cavendish's emancipatory space where she can express her ideas away from the intellectual hegemony of the "fathers of science".

In Cavendish's description of the debates between the Empress and the representatives of the societies she founded, the author moves from an imaginative space to a space of feminine emancipation. Cavendish uses the debates to convey to female readers her contemporary perspective on the fields of science, law, politics, religion, and philosophy. These areas were traditionally only seen in masculine works, as Rosaldo et. al. postulate, which were often centered on institutions and public organizations (78-79). During Cavendish's time, these areas of knowledge were limited to the masculine discourse and were not considered a feminine interest. It can be argued that these debates between the Empress and the societies are a reflection of Cavendish's attacks on the Royal Society. Her criticism of the Royal Society's experimentalism, Keller maintains, is part of a gendered project to undermine and 'ridicule' the 'masculinist science' produced and monopolized by the Royal Society (447).

In addition, Cavendish does not only re-appropriate the discourse of knowledge and introduce it to women, but she also creates a parallel religious matriarchal institution. The Empress "…resolved to build churches, and make also up an congregation of women, whereof she intended to be the head herself, and to instruct them in the several points of her religion" (73). The Empress converted the population of the Blazing World to Christianity. Her congregation of women and her successful conversion of them to Christianity is Cavendish's attempt to rewrite the history of Christianity through the feminine gaze. This parallel religious institution displaces the control over religious discourse from its patriarchal locus into a feminine one. Thus, the Empress's "*congregation of women*" is an attempt to challenge the distinction between the masculine and the feminine space and the codes and values accorded to them. A feminine institution like this is a reconstruction and a decoding of the power relations of gendered spaces as the Empress intends to lead it herself.

In contrast, Bacon's *New Atlantis* continues the Hellenic narrative that reflects the masculine writing's interest in the public domain. The main body of the text focuses on organizations that are part of the institutionalized patriarchy. Bacon mentions the conversion of the Bensalemites to Christianity (554-556) and the impact of this conversion on the culture and history of the Bensalemites. The emphasis here is on the institutionalization of Christianity and its different manifestations of science and government. The conversion happened by a miracle of a "…pillar of light … by some mile into the sea" (554). This pillar of light is the divine sign that conveyed to them the Old and New Testament and a letter from Saint Bartholomew (555). Though at this point, the narrative seems to sway away from the Enlightenment mode, David Renaker (1990) emphasizes that through this miracle "Bacon has obviated millennia of superstitious practices" (181). Bacon departs from the Medieval discourse of saints and miracles and leans toward the Puritan belief that only the Bible is the word of God, not the words of any saint or Pope. Renaker argues that the miracles happen on the sea to prevent any shrine or pilgrimage," …hence no temptation of resident priesthood or monastic community to exploit the curiosity and credulity of pilgrims wit scared relics more or less authentic" (188).

Bacon eliminates any pretext for the presence of Saint Bartholomew himself. Renaker explains this elimination as "exquisitely appropriate" since the "purpose of the whole episode being to authenticate a book rather than a man or group of men" (192). In contrast to Cavendish's world, Bacon's world is established upon an ideal book, not a man or a woman as seen in *The Blazing World*. Finally, Bacon is interested on the effect of the Book on the public life of the Bensalemites. Different from reality or Cavendish's text, the Bible is instituted in an organization of scientific inquisition and rational exploration. This is clarified when only "…one of the wise men of the society of Salomon's House" is allowed to approach the pillar of light. This man is endowed with honor because he has "attentively and devoutly viewed and contemplated this pillar" (554). Bacon honors the contemplative and inquisitive mind here. This man is not part of an aristocratic or monastic elite, but instead of a society or college, that is the source of authority in *New Atlantis*. Thus, there are no shrines or saints, only the Book. The road is established for science and intellect to rule through Salomon's House.

It can be argued that the differences between Cavendish's *The Blazing World* and Bacon's *New Atlantis* exceed the limits of the difference between masculine and feminine writing. The difference is cultural, between the Medieval and the Enlightenment discourses. However, it can be argued that Cavendish establishes scientific societies dominated by feminine views because she was excluded "…from the male centres of scientific speculation, from participation in the new Royal Society." Hence, she "…created a utopia in which she could depict her own scientific society and in which women were not barred from the pursuit of knowledge" (Salzman 1985, 312). The Empress's rejection of contemporary scientific invention is not due to gender differences. The rejection of scientific discoveries, the perception of mathematicians as "excellent magicians and informers of spirit" (34), idea of

imperfectability of nature (59), the emphasis on Christianity as the only and true faith (61), and the realization on both Heaven and Hell (62) as concrete entities are all part of Medieval discourse. Also part of Medieval discourse is her long and futile controversies concerning the nature of spirits and angles, the Cabbala (41-44), and the perception of "Monarchy is a divine form of Government" (11).

In light of the distinction between Medieval and Enlightenment discourse Bacon's text is a reflection of the second. Bacon's emphasis on Salomon's House and the Bensalemite's culture around the "pillar of light" and "the Book" accentuate the nature of his "Enlightened" thinking. The "Feast of the Family" (565) is not a celebration of patriarchy, but of enlightenment, "…where she sitteth, but is not seen" (566). The Female is not omitted but rather deferred because the Middle Ages' cultural ideology was not represented in this new cultural discourse. The Hebraic, romantic, and unorganized fluidity of feminine discourse belongs to an extinct medieval mode of thinking that contradicts the Hellenic, scientific, and organized masculine discourse.

The Closure

Both texts are frustrating in their conclusions despite having different cultural agendas. In the final scene of *The Blazing World*, Cavendish's presence in the text becomes concrete. Her entrance into the imaginative spaces circumvents the epistemological supremacy of masculinity. By challenging the medieval literary tradition, especially the modesty topos, Cavendish weakens masculine authorities such as Aristotle, Plato, More, Galileo, and Descartes (53). The rejection of Classical and Renaissance intellectual authorities is not merely another erasure of masculinity, but instead a feminine intellectual supplementation. The erasure of classical authorities, "…either of Aristotle, Pythagoras, Plato Epicurus, or the like", and that of contemporary ones, "…as either of Galileo Gassendus, Discartes, Helmont, Hobbes, H. More, etc." (53) can be seen as a rejection of the discourse of the Renaissance and Neoclassicism (Garber 2020, 55-56). Cavendish's aim is not just to erase gender biases but also oppose them. Such biases represent a discourse that she wants to rewrite or even omit.

Cavendish's final scene can be read as a symbolic emphasis on the medieval nature of *The Blazing World*. Cavendish's presence in the Blazing World can be interpreted as a bridge or channel through which medieval ideology can be conveyed and filtered into reality. Though Cavendish exploits her presence and status in that world to improve her husband's social and financial status, the deterioration of the Newcastle family is an example of the destruction of the old medieval order. By invoking the help of the Empress, Cavendish can restore not only her husband's past glory but also the cultural order of the medieval past. Cavendish displays her private space as a symbol of the chaos which was introduced by the contemporary discourse of the Enlightenment. Her private, social, and political frustrations signal more considerable cultural frustrations.

The Empress's visit to reality is marked by her admiration of the institution of monarchy symbolized by her praise of the King and Queen of England (106-107). Though this can be seen as a political

statement on the Restoration discourse that "manifests a tremendous anxiety about the status of the King, the forms of traditional government, and how to maintain social order in a time of apparent instability" (Evans 1993, 54); however, Cavendish's opinion about these issues is displayed in the *The Blazing World*; it is easily put as such:

> Next, she asked, why they preferred the monarchial form of government before any other? They answered, that it was natural for one body to have but one head, so it was also natural for a politic body to have but one governor; and not a common-wealth, which had many governors was like monster with many heads. Besides, said they, a monarchy is divine form of government, and agrees most with our religion: for as there is but one god, whom we all unanimously worship and adore with one faith; so we are resolved to have but one emperor, to whom we all submit with one obedience. (11)

Cavendish here adheres to the medieval notion that the King is the shadow of God on Earth. Nevertheless, Cavendish's introduction to the Blazing World taints its harmony and order. Functioning as a bridge between reality and the fantasy world, the cultural discourse of the Enlightenment penetrates and violates the medieval order of the novel. The harmony and the fixed order of this imaginative space dissolve at the end of the book, as "contentions and divisions" (71) start to change it. The medieval and matriarchal paralleled space succumbs to historical reality.

Likewise, Bacon's *New Atlantis* is not established upon a monarchy, theocracy, or even an oligarchy. Bensalemites are governed by an elite of intellectuals (Salomon's House) who attain their authority from their innate knowledge and inquisitive cerebral faculties. Salomon's House is not interested in empowering or controlling their subjects or others," …it is dedicated to the study of the Works and Creatures of God" (563). In contrast with the reality of the geographical explorations, which were the threshold of Capitalism and Colonialism and the emergence of Europe, in general, and England, in particular, as super-power, the Bensalemites are not interested in the accumulation of wealth and territorial dominance. Instead, the Bensalemites are interested only in the "…knowledge of the affairs and state of those countries to which they are designed, and especially of science, arts, manufacturers, and inventions of all the world; and withal to bring unto us book, instruments, and patterns in every kind" (563). The Bensalemites' goal behind these explorations is different than that of the Europeans; their end goal "…is the knowledge of causes, and secret motion of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible" (574). This Human Empire is based on knowledge's contribution to the advancement of humanity in general.

Conclusion

Cavendish's text tries to re-inscribe masculine history "….by making women visible, by writing women into history" (Blunt and Rose 1994, 9). Cavendish also creates a parallel geography that manifests

feminine culture and physical seclusion. Towards the end of her work, she realizes that Enlightenment ideologies have culturally tainted her imaginative space. In the wake of her failure, she retreats to her feminine, private, inner space when she says "…every human creature can create an immaterial world fully inhabited by immaterial creatures, and populous of immaterial subjects" (57). Cavendish resorts to a feminine creative space that she inherits from her feminine medieval predecessors. If a woman cannot improve her conditions, she can retreat into her imagination. At this point, Cavendish can be closely identified with the medieval romantic imagination of Mari de France, or to the religious, and mystical writing of Hildegard of Bingen, and the philosophical and political imagination of Christine de Pizan. Cavendish and other contemporary female writers are justified in their retreat to the medieval discourse. This begins what can be termed as the cultural chase between masculinity and femininity, in Western culture at least.

Bacon's frustration with contemporary ideologies stems from a different source than Cavendish's. Bacon is frustrated with the end of European geographical explorations to accumulate wealth and appropriate territories. Bacon's work criticizes western ideologies of early Capitalism and Colonialism. The end goal of the Bensalemites' explorations should be an example for Europe. New Atlantis, at the end, is neither governed by medieval absolutist monarchs nor by a utilitarian materialistic oligarchy.

On the contrary, *New Atlantis* is governed by a body of high-level scholars and intellectuals. The main principle of this government is to maintain order through knowledge not power nor heritage. The Bensalemites are not seen, as the Europeans, motivated by wealth and hegemony in their explorations. They are, rather, driven by a universal and human endeavor to disseminate Bensalem's "economy of knowledge" which is directed to "the welfare of humankind" (Cowan 2011, 417) irrespective of race and religion. This "epistemarchy" (Irving 2006, 255-6) means to establish a "Human Empire" where all humans from all cultures," Hebrews, Persians, and Indians" live under the pillar of light of knowledge and reason (556). In this case, the absence of women from this text (Feast of the Family) shows Bacon's awareness of the feminine cultural retreat into medieval discourse. This, of course, is mainly caused by masculine hegemony. Until the gendered cultural chase ends, women's presence in masculine spaces will be deferred. The emergence of the West as a hegemonic power and the marginalization of the Other (the Other includes western women as well) terminates Bacon's aspirations of the end of the gendered cultural chase and the establishment of "epistemarchy."

The main premise of this paper is that male literary writing is ahead of female one in the linear track of western literary progression. This masculine position, however, does not indicate superiority, nor the feminine position indicates any deficiency. In order to explain this cultural chase between masculine and feminine writings one has to rely on the laws of physics concerning kinetic energy (the energy an object has because of its motion). Newton's first law of inertia postulates that a static object remains static, and an object in motion remains in motion at a constant speed and in a straight line unless acted upon by an external force. This law presupposes that all objects have this tendency to resist change in a state of motion which is called inertia.

Similarly, the kinetic cultural energy of masculine writing is higher than that of feminine one. As the kinetic energy is directly proportional to the mass of the moving body, the more mass in a moving object, the more kinetic energy it possesses. So it can be assumed that the mass of masculine writing is greater than that of feminine one. Nonetheless, the mass that masculine writing possesses is not a material one. What I call mass here is not a quantity of physical matter in an object; rather, it is the accumulation of social, political, economic, and literary advantages given to males all over history. Such cultural advantages provided masculine writing with *mass* which gave it the necessary forward momentum. As feminine writing lacks this historical or literary mass, so it is positioned in a secondary place, at least in the time of Cavendish and Bacon.

Further studies might aspire to apply Newton's law of inertia and the accumulation of cultural mass on other works of literature. As feminine writing started to accumulate such cultural mass and more kinetic energy, feminine writing started its momentum on the linear track of western literary history. More studies can be conducted to locate the moment when feminine writing started to gain momentum and catch up with masculine one. Further research, moreover, can be conducted to show the social and psychological impact of such cultural mass and momentum on female writers such as the Bronte sisters, Emily Dickinson, and Virginia Woolf for example.

مطاردة ثقافية: الخطابات الجنسانية في العصور الوسطى وعصر النهضة في *(عالم ملتهب)* لمارغريت كافنديش و*(أتلانتس الجديدة)* للسير فرانسيس بيكون

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الملخص

الفكرة الرئيسة في هذا البحث هو ما سنسميه "المطاردة الحضارية". يفترض المصطلح أن الكتابة الذكورية تتقدم على الكتابة الأنثوية في المسار الخطي للأدب الغربي الجنساني والزمني. لطالما كانت الكتابة الأنثوية متأخرة خطوة إلى الوراء بترتيب زمني. دخلت الكاتبات في عصر النهضة إلى الفضاء الذكوري للكتابة الأدبية واستخدمن العديد من الاستراتيجيات والتكتيكات لتأمين مكانة شرعية ضمن الإستمرارية الأدبية. تبحث هذه الورقة في "المطاردة الحضارية" بين مارغريت كافنديش وفرانسيس بيكون، وتحاول عرض الاختلافات العامة والتسلسل الزمني بين أعمالهما التمثيلية: Blazing World و New Atlantis. يستكشف القسم الأول من هذه الورقة المقاطع التمهيدية لتلك النصوص والدور الذي يلعبه جنس المؤلفين في اختيار النوع الأدبي لنقل أجنداتهم الخاصة. يستكشف القسم التالي الاستراتيجيات التي استخدمها كل من كافنديش وبيكون في تقديم الخلافات الفكرية المعاصرة الكبرى. في القسم الثالث، نستكشف نجاحات وإحباطات كافنديش وبيكون وتأثيرها على الساحة الثقافية في ذلك الوقت. أخيراً، البحث سيجتاز الحدود المعرفية المتمثلة بـالمعارضة الثنائية المفروضة على العلوم الإنسانية والعلوم الطبيعية محاولا استخدام قوانين نيوتن للجاذبية لتحليل وشرح طبيعة هذه المطاردة الثقافية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكتابة الأنثوية، الكتابة الجندرية، مارجريت كافنديش، فرانسيس بيكون، نيوتن.

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