Part 3: The Seventeenth Century – The Age of the Revolution (1603-1688)

# 3.9 MARGARET CAVENDISH, THE DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE

(1623-1673)

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Frank in her pursuit of fame, Margaret Cavendish published an astonishing number of works in a diverse array of genres—including letters, essays, autobiography, utopian romance, natural philosophy (science), and drama. All of her work is marked by experimentation and her self-consciousness as a female author. They also display the “doubleness” female authors often worked through when modeling their work on male authors—like John Donne and John Milton—and on male-dominated traditions—like the lyric—while at the same time subverting and rebelling against them. She challenged culturally-imposed limits on her desire to pursue pleasure, mirth, and fame; she elevated the goddess Natura as the world’s true and benevolent guide, implicitly criticizing male abuse of the world God placed under their care; she identified with nature and animals, especially in their vulnerability to aggressive—even violent—male mistreatment. As she declares in “The Hunting of the Hare:” “Man doth think himselfe so gentle, mild,/ When he of Creatures is most cruell wild” (101-102).



Image 3.10 | Margaret Cavendish

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Her contemporaries took a double view of Cavendish herself, with some viewing her as eccentric and egotistical—then considered a deplorable characteristic in a female—and others admiring her abilities. For a woman of her position, born to wealthy Royalist parents, Cavendish followed somewhat conventional expectations by becoming a maid of honor to Queen Henrietta Maria (1609-1669), remaining loyal to her when she was exiled to Paris. She also did what was expected when, in Paris, she met and married William Cavendish (1592-1676), a Royalist general and exile with Charles II, a writer and patron of the arts who was thirty years her senior, and a Duke who recovered his property and title after the Restoration. But through this conformity Cavendish reached comparative freedom, as her husband wholeheartedly encouraged and financially supported Cavendish’s writing and philosophical education, even when it entailed a visit to the Royal Society and acquaintanceship with such philosophers as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Rene Descartes (1596-1650).

## 3.9.1 “The Hunting of the Hare”

(1653)

Betwixt two *Ridges* of *land*, lay *Wat*,

*Pressing* his *Body* close to *Earth* lay squat.

His *Nose* upon his two *Fore-feet* close lies,

Glaring obliquely with his *great gray Fyes*.

His *Head* he alwaies sets against the *Wind*;

If turne his *Taile* his *Haires* blow up behind:

Which *he* too cold will grow, but *he* is wise,

And keepes his *Coat* still downe, so warm *he* lies.

Thus resting all the *day*, till *Sun* doth set,

Then riseth up, his *Reliefe* for to get.

Walking about until the *Sun* doth rise,

Then back returnes, downe in his *Forme he* lyes.

At last, *Poore Wat* was found, as *he* there lay,

By *Hunts-men*, with their *Dogs* which came that way.

Seeing, gets up, and fast begins to run,

Hoping some waies the *Dogs* to shun.

But they by *Nature* have so quick a *Sent*,

That by their *Nose* they trace what way *he* went.

And with their deep, wide *Mouths* set forth a *Cry*,

Which answer’d was by *Ecchoes* in the *Skie*.

Then *Wat* was struck with *Terrour*, and with *Feare*,

Thinkes every *Shadow* still the *Dogs* they were.

And running out some distance from the *noise*,

To hide himselfe, his *Thoughts* he new imploies.

Under a *Clod* of *Earth* in *Sand-pit* wide,

Poore *Wat* fat close, hoping himselfe to hide.

There long he not sat, but strait his *Eares*

The *Winding*, and crying *Dogs* he heares:

Starting with *Feare*, up leapes, then doth he run,

And with such speed, the *Ground* scarce treades upon.

Into a great thick *Wood* strait way gets,

Where underneath a *broken Bough* he sits.

At every *Lease* that with the *wind* did shake,

Did bring such, made his *Heart* to ake.

That *Place he* left, to *Champian Plaines* he went,

Winding about, for to deceive their *Sent*.

And while they were, to sind his *Track*,

*Poore Wat*, being weary, his swift pace did slack.

On his two *hinder legs* for ease did sit,

His *Fore-feet* rub’d his *Face* from *Dust*, and *Sweat*.

Licking his *Feet*, *he* wip’d his *Eares* so cleane,

That none could tell that *Wat* had hunted been.

But casting round about his *faire great Eyes*,

The *Hounds* in full *Careere he* him ’spies:

To *Wat* it was so terrible a *Sight*,

*Feare* gave him *Wings*, and made his *Body* light.

Though weary was before, by running long,

Yet now his *Breath* he never felt more strong.

Like those that *dying* are, think *Health* returnes,

When tis but a *faint Blast*, which *Life* out burnes.

For *Spirits* seek to guard the *Heart* about,

Striving with *Death*, but *Death* doth quench them out.

Thus they so fast came on, with such loud *Cries*,

That *he* no hopes hath left, nor *help* espies.

With that the *Winds* did pity *poore Wats* case,

And with their *Breath* the *Sent* blew from the *Place*.

Then every *Nose* is busily imployed,

And every *Nostrill* is set open, wide:

And every *Head* doth seek a severall way,

To find what, or *Track*, the *Sent* on lay.

*Thus quick Industry, that is not slack,*

*Is like to Witchery, brings lost things back.*

For though the *Wind* had the *Sent* up close,

A *Busie Dog* thrust in his *Nose*:

And drew it out, with it did foremost run,

Then *Hornes* blew loud, for th’ *rest* to follow on.

The *great slow-Hounds*, their throats did set a *Base*,

The *Fleet swift Hounds*, as *Tenours* next in place;

The little *Beagles* they a *Trebble* sing,

And through the *Aire* their *Voice* a round did ring?

Which made a *Consort*, as they ran along;

If they but *words* could speak, might sing a *Song*,

The *Hornes* kept time, the *Hunters* shout for *Joy*,

And valiant seeme, *poore Wat* for to destroy:

Spurring their *Horses* to a full *Careere*,

*Swim Rivers deep, leap Ditches* without feare;

Indanger *Life*, and *Limbes*, so fast will ride,

Onely to see how patiently *Wat* died.

For why, the *Dogs* so neere his *Heeles* did get,

That they their sharp *Teeth* in his *Breech* did set.

Then tumbling downe, did fall with *weeping Eyes*,

Gives up his *Ghost*, and thus poore *Wat he* dies.

*Men* hooping loud, such *Acclamations* make,

As if the *Devill* they did *Prisoner* take.

When they do but a *shiftlesse Creature* kill;

To hunt, there needs no *Valiant Souldiers* skill.

But *Man* doth think that *Exercise*, and *Toile*,

To keep their *Health*, is best, which makes most spoile.

Thinking that *Food*, and *Nourishment* so good,

And *Appetite*, that feeds on *Flesh*, and *Blood*.

When they do *Lions, Wolves, Beares, Tigers* see,

To kill poore *Sheep*, strait say, they cruell be.

But for themselves all *Creatures* think too few,

For *Luxury*, wish *God* would make them new.

As if that *God* made *Creatures* for *Mans meat*,

To give them *Life*, and *Sense*, for *Man* to eat;

Or else for *Sport*, or *Recreations* sake,

Destroy those *Lifes* that *God* saw good to make:

Making their *Stomacks, Graves*, which full they fill

With *Murther’d Bodies*, that in sport they kill.

Yet *Man* doth think himselfe so gentle, mild,

When *he* of *Creatures* is most cruell wild.

And is so *Proud*, thinks onely he shall live,

That *God* a *God*-like *Nature* did him give.

And that all *Creatures* for his sake alone,

Was made for him, to *Tyramize* upon.

## 3.9.2 “A True Relation of the Birth, Breeding and Life of Margaret Cavendish, Written by Herself”

(1656)

My father was a gentleman, which title is grounded and given by merit, not by princes; and it is the act of time, not favour: and though my father was not a peer of the realm, yet there were few peers who had much greater estates, or lived more noble therewith. Yet at that time great titles were to be sold, and not at so high rates, but that his estate might have easily purchased, and was pressed for to take; but my father did not esteem titles, unless they were gained by heroic actions, and the kingdom being in a happy peace with all other nations, and in itself being governed by a wise king, King James, there was no employments for heroic spirits; and towards the latter end of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, as soon as he came to man’s estate, he unfortunately killed one Mr. Brooks in a single duel. For my father by the laws of honour could do no less than call him to the field to question him for an injury he did him, where their swords were to dispute, and one or both of their lives to decide the argument, wherein my father had the better; and though my father by honour challenged him, with valour fought him, and in justice killed him, yet he suffered more than any person of quality usually doth in cases of honour; for though the laws be rigorous, yet the present princes most commonly are gracious in those misfortunes, especially to the injured: but my father found it not, for his exile was from the time of his misfortunes to Queen Elizabeth’s death. For the Lord Cobham being then a great man with Queen Elizabeth, and this gentleman, Mr. Brooks, a kind of a favourite, and as I take it brother to the then Lord Cobham, which made Queen Elizabeth so severe, not to pardon him. But King James of blessed memory graciously gave him his pardon, and leave to return home to his native country, wherein he lived happily, and died peaceably, leaving a wife and eight children, three sons, and five daughters, I being the youngest child he had, and an infant when he died.

As for my breeding, it was according to my birth, and the nature of my sex; for my birth was not lost in my breeding. For as my sisters was or had been bred, so was I in plenty, or rather with superfluity. Likewise we were bred virtuously, modestly, civilly, honourably, and on honest principles. As for plenty, we had not only for necessity, conveniency, and decency, but for delight and pleasure to a superfluity; it is true we did not riot, but we lived orderly; for riot, even in kings’ courts and princes’ palaces, brings ruin without content or pleasure, when order in less fortunes shall live more plentifully and deliciously than princes that lives in a hurly-burly, as I may term it, in which they are seldom well served. For disorder obstructs; besides, it doth disgust life, distract the appetites, and yield no true relish to the senses; for pleasure, delight, peace, and felicity live in method and temperance.

As for our garments, my mother did not only delight to see us neat and cleanly, fine and gay, but rich and costly; maintaining us to the height of her estate, but not beyond it. For we were so far from being in debt, before these wars, as we were rather beforehand with the world; buying all with ready money, not on the score. For although after my father’s death the estate was divided between my mother and her sons, paying such a sum of money for portions to her daughters, either at the day of their marriage, or when they should come to age; yet by reason she and her children agreed with a mutual consent, all their affairs were managed so well, as she lived not in a much lower condition than when my father lived. ’Tis true, my mother might have increased her daughters’ portions by a thrifty sparing, yet she chose to bestow it on our breeding, honest pleasures, and harmless delights, out of an opinion, that if she bred us with needy necessity, it might chance to create in us sharking qualities, mean thoughts, and base actions, which she knew my father, as well as herself, did abhor. Likewise we were bred tenderly, for my mother naturally did strive, to please and delight her children, not to cross or torment them, terrifying them with threats, or lashing them with slavish whips; but instead of threats, reason was used to persuade us, and instead of lashes, the deformities of vice was discovered, and the graces and virtues were presented unto us. Also we were bred with respectful attendance, every one being severally waited upon, and all her servants in general used the same respect to her children (even those that were very young) as they did to herself; for she suffered not her servants, either to be rude before us, or to domineer over us, which all vulgar servants are apt, and ofttimes which some have leave to do. Likewise she never suffered the vulgar serving-men to be in the nursery among the nursemaids, lest their rude love-making might do unseemly actions, or speak unhandsome words in the presence of her children, knowing that youth is apt to take infection by ill examples, having not the reason of distinguishing good from bad. Neither were we suffered to have any familiarity with the vulgar servants, or conversation: yet caused us to demean ourselves with an humble civility towards them, as they with a dutiful respect to us. Not because they were servants were we so reserved; for many noble persons are forced to serve through necessity; but by reason the vulgar sort of servants are as ill-bred as meanly born, giving children ill examples and worse counsel.

As for tutors, although we had for all sorts of virtues, as singing, dancing, playing on music, reading, writing, working, and the like, yet we were not kept strictly thereto, they were rather for formality than benefit; for my mother cared not so much for our dancing and fiddling, singing and prating of several languages, as that we should be bred virtuously, modestly, civilly, honourably, and on honest principles.

As for my brothers, of which I had three, I know not how they were bred. First, they were bred when I was not capable to observe, or before I was born; likewise the breeding of men were after different manner of ways from those of women. But this I know, that they loved virtue, endeavoured merit, practised justice, and spoke truth; they were constantly loyal, and truly valiant. …

As for the pastime of my sisters when they were in the country, it was to read, work, walk, and discourse with each other. … But to rehearse their recreations. Their customs were in winter time to go sometimes to plays, or to ride in their coaches about the streets to see the concourse and recourse of people: and in the spring time to visit the Spring Garden, Hyde Park, and the like places; and sometimes they would have music, and sup in barges upon the water. …

But sometime after this war began, I knew not how they lived. For though most of them were in Oxford, wherein the King was, yet after the Queen went from Oxford, and so out of England, I was parted from them. For when the Queen was in Oxford I had a great desire to be one of her maids of honour, hearing the Queen had not the same number she was used to have. Whereupon I wooed and won my mother to let me go; for my mother, being fond of all her children, was desirous to please them, which made her consent to my request. But my brothers and sisters seemed not very well pleased, by reason I had never been from home, nor seldom out of their sight; for though they knew I would not behave myself to their or my own dishonour, yet they thought I might to my disadvantage, being inexperienced in the world. Which indeed I did, for I was so bashful when I was out of my mother’s, brothers’, and sisters’ sight, whose presence used to give me confidence — thinking I could not do amiss whilst any one of them were by, for I knew they would gently reform me if I did; besides, I was ambitious they should approve of my actions and behaviour — that when I was gone from them, I was like one that had no foundation to stand, or guide to direct me, which made me afraid, lest I should wander with ignorance out of the ways of honour, so that I knew not how to behave myself. Besides, I had heard that the world was apt to lay aspersions even on the innocent, for which I durst neither look up with my eyes, nor speak, nor be any way sociable, insomuch as I was thought a natural fool. Indeed I had not much wit, yet I was not an idiot, my wit was according to my years; and though I might have learnt more wit, and advanced my understanding by living in a Court, yet being dull, fearful, and bashful, I neither heeded what was said or practised, but just what belonged to my loyal duty, and my own honest reputation. And, indeed, I was so afraid to dishonour my friends and family by my indiscreet actions, that I rather chose to be accounted a fool than to be thought rude or wanton. In truth, my bashfulness and fears made me repent my going from home to see the world abroad, and much I did desire to return to my mother again, or to my sister Pye, with whom I often lived when she was in London, and loved with a supernatural affection. But my mother advised me there to stay, although I put her to more charges than if she had kept me at home, and the more, by reason she and my brothers were sequestered from their estates, and plundered of all their goods, yet she maintained me so, that I was in a condition rather to lend than to borrow, which courtiers usually are not, being always necessitated by reason of great expenses Courts put them to. But my mother said it would be a disgrace for me to return out of the Court so soon after I was placed; so I continued almost two years, until such time as I was married from thence. For my Lord the Marquis of Newcastle did approve of those bashful fears which many condemned, and would choose such a wife as he might bring to his own humours, and not such a one as was wedded to self-conceit, or one that had been tempered to the humours of another; for which he wooed me for his wife; and though I did dread marriage, and shunned men’s company as much as I could, yet I could not, nor had not the power to refuse him, by reason my affections were fixed on him, and he was the only person I ever was in love with. Neither was I ashamed to own it, but gloried therein. For it was not amorous love (I never was infected therewith, it is a disease, or a passion, or both, I only know by relation, not by experience), neither could title, wealth, power, or person entice me to love. But my love was honest and honourable, being placed upon merit, which affection joyed at the fame of his worth, pleased with delight in his wit, proud of the respects he used to me, and triumphing in the affections he professed for me, which affections he hath confirmed to me by a deed of time, sealed by constancy, and assigned by an unalterable decree of his promise, which makes me happy in despite of Fortune’s frowns. For though misfortunes may and do oft dissolve base, wild, loose, and ungrounded affections, yet she hath no power of those that are united either by merit, justice, gratitude, duty, fidelity, or the like. And though my Lord hath lost his estate, and banished out of his country for his loyalty to his King and country, yet neither despised poverty, nor pinching necessity could make him break the bonds of friendship, or weaken his loyal duty to his King or country. …

Also she [my mother] was an affectionate mother, breeding her children with a most industrious care, and tender love; and having eight children, three sons and five daughters, there was not any one crooked, or any ways deformed, neither were they dwarfish, or of a giant-like stature, but every ways proportionable; likewise well-featured, clear complexions, brown hairs (but some lighter than others), sound teeth, sweet breaths, plain speeches, tunable voices (I mean not so much to sing as in speaking, as not stuttering, nor wharling in the throat, or speaking through the nose, or hoarsely, unless they had a cold, or squeakingly, which impediments many have): neither were their voices of too low a strain, or too high, but their notes and words were tunable and timely. I hope this truth will not offend my readers, and lest they should think I am a partial register, I dare not commend my sisters, as to say they were handsome; although many would say they were very handsome. But this I dare say, their beauty, if any they had, was not so lasting as my mother’s. …

For the truth is, our sex doth nothing but jostle for the preeminence of words (I mean not for speaking well, but speaking much) as they do for the preeminence of place, words rushing against words, thwarting and crossing each other, and pulling with reproaches, striving to throw each other down with disgrace, thinking to advance themselves thereby. But if our sex would but well consider, and rationally ponder, they will perceive and find, that it is neither words nor place that can advance them, but worth and merit. Nor can words or place disgrace them, but inconstancy and boldness: for an honest heart, a noble soul, a chaste life, and a true speaking tongue, is the throne, sceptre, crown, and footstool that advances them to an honourable renown. I mean not noble, virtuous, discreet, and worthy persons whom necessity did enforce to submit, comply, and follow their own suits, but such as had nothing to lose, but made it their trade to solicit. …

Besides I am naturally bashful, not that I am ashamed of my mind or body, my birth or breeding, my actions or fortunes, for my bashfulness is my nature, not for any crime, and though I have strived and reasoned with myself, yet that which is inbred I find is difficult to root out. But I do not find that my bashfulness is concerned with the qualities of the persons, but the number; for were I to enter amongst a company of Lazaruses, I should be as much out of countenance as if they were all Caesars or Alexanders, Cleopatras or Queen Didos. Neither do I find my bashfulness riseth so often in blushes, as contracts my spirits to a chill paleness. But the best of it is, most commonly it soon vanisheth away, and many times before it can be perceived; and the more foolish or unworthy I conceive the company to be, the worse I am, and the best remedy I ever found was, is to persuade myself that all those persons I meet are wise and virtuous. The reason I take to be is, that the wise and virtuous censure least, excuse most, praise best, esteem rightly, judge justly, behave themselves civilly, demean themselves respectfully, and speak modestly when fools or unworthy persons are apt to commit absurdities, as to be bold, rude, uncivil both in words and actions, forgetting or not well understanding themselves or the company they are with. And though I never met such sorts of ill-bred creatures, yet naturally I have such an aversion to such kind of people, as I am afraid to meet them, as children are afraid of spirits, or those that are afraid to see or meet devils; which makes me think this natural defect in me, if it be a defect, is rather a fear than a bashfulness, but whatsoever it is, I find it troublesome, for it hath many times obstructed the passage of my speech, and perturbed my natural actions, forcing a constrainedness or unusual motions. However, since it is rather a fear of others than a bashful distrust of myself, I despair of a perfect cure, unless nature as well as human governments could be civilized and brought into a methodical order, ruling the words and actions with a supreme power of reason, and the authority of discretion: but a rude nature is worse than a brute nature by so much more as man is better than beast, but those that are of civil natures and gentle dispositions are as much nearer to celestial creatures, as those that are of rude or cruel are to devils. …

But after I had been in England a year and a half, part of which time I writ a book of poems, and a little book called my Philosophical Fancies, to which I have writ a large addition, since I returned out of England, besides this book and one other. As for my book entitled The World’s Olio, I writ most part of it before I went into England, but being not of a merry, although not of a froward or peevish disposition, became very melancholy, by reason I was from my Lord, which made my mind so restless, as it did break my sleep, and distemper my health, with which growing impatient of a longer delay, I resolved to return, although I was grieved to leave Sir Charles, my Lord’s brother, he being sick of an ague, of which sickness he died. …

I made the more haste to return to my Lord, with whom I had rather be as a poor beggar, than to be mistress of the world absented from him, yet, Heaven hitherto hath kept us, and though Fortune hath been cross, yet we do submit, and are both content with what is, and cannot be mended, and are so prepared that the worst of fortunes shall not afflict our minds, so as to make us unhappy, howsoever it doth pinch our lives with poverty. For, if tranquillity lives in an honest mind, the mind lives in peace, although the body suffer. But patience hath armed us, and misery hath tried us, and finds us fortune-proof. For the truth is, my Lord is a person whose humour is neither extravagantly merry nor unnecessarily sad, his mind is above his fortune as his generosity is above his purse, his courage above danger, his justice above bribes, his friendship above self-interest, his truth too firm for falsehood, his temperance beyond temptation. His conversation is pleasing and affable, his wit is quick, and his judgment is strong, distinguishing clearly without clouds of mistakes, dissecting truth, so as it justly admits not of disputes: his discourse is always new upon the occasion, without troubling the hearers with old historical relations, nor stuffed with useless sentences. His behaviour is manly without formality, and free without constraint, and his mind hath the same freedom. His nature is noble, and his disposition sweet; his loyalty is proved by his public service for his King and country, by his often hazarding of his life, by the loss of his estate, and the banishment of his person, by his necessitated condition, and his constant and patient suffering. But, howsoever our fortunes are, we are both content, spending our time harmlessly, for my Lord pleaseth himself with the management of some few horses, and exercises himself with the use of the sword; which two arts he hath brought by his studious thoughts, rational experience, and industrious practice, to an absolute perfection. And though he hath taken as much pains in those arts, both by study and practice, as chymists for the philosopher’s-stone, yet he hath this advantage of them, that he hath found the right and the truth thereof and therein, which chymists never found in their art, and I believe never will. Also here creates himself with his pen, writing what his wit dictates to him, but I pass my time rather with scribbling than writing, with words than wit. Not that I speak much, because I am addicted to contemplation, unless I am with my Lord, yet then I rather attentively listen to what he says, than impertinently speak. Yet when I am writing any sad feigned stories, or serious humours, or melancholy passions, I am forced many times to express them with the tongue before I can write them with the pen, by reason those thoughts that are sad, serious, and melancholy are apt to contract, and to draw too much back, which oppression doth as it were overpower or smother the conception in the brain. But when some of those thoughts are sent out in words, they give the rest more liberty to place themselves in a more methodical order, marching more regularly with my pen on the ground of white paper; but my letters seem rather as a ragged rout than a well-armed body, for the brain being quicker in creating than the hand in writing or the memory in retaining, many fancies are lost, by reason they ofttimes outrun the pen, where I, to keep speed in the race, write so fast as I stay not so long as to write my letters plain, insomuch as some have taken my hand-writing for some strange character, and being accustomed so to do, I cannot now write very plain, when I strive to write my best; indeed, my ordinary handwriting is so bad as few can read it, so as to write it fair for the press; but however, that little wit I have, it delights me to scribble it out, and disperse it about. For I being addicted from my childhood to contemplation rather than conversation, to solitariness rather than society, to melancholy rather than mirth, to write with the pen than to work with a needle, passing my time with harmless fancies, their company being pleasing, their conversation innocent (in which I take such pleasure as I neglect my health, for it is as great a grief to leave their society as a joy to be in their company), my only trouble is, lest my brain should grow barren, or that the root of my fancies should become insipid, withering into a dull stupidity for want of maturing subjects to write on. …

But now I have declared to my readers my birth, breeding, and actions, to this part of my life (I mean the material parts, for should I write every particular, as my childish sports and the like, it would be ridiculous and tedious); but I have been honourably born and nobly matched; I have been bred to elevated thoughts, not to a dejected spirit, my life hath been ruled with honesty, attended by modesty, and directed by truth. But since I have writ in general thus far of my life, I think it fit I should speak something of my humour, particular practice and disposition. As for my humour, I was from my childhood given to contemplation, being more taken or delighted with thoughts than in conversation with a society, insomuch as I would walk two or three hours, and never rest, in a musing, considering, contemplating manner, reasoning with myself of everything my senses did present. But when I was in the company of my natural friends, I was very attentive of what they said or did; but for strangers I regarded not much what they said, but many times I did observe their actions, whereupon my reason as judge, and my thoughts as accusers, or excusers, or approvers and commenders, did plead, or appeal to accuse, or complain thereto. Also I never took delight in closets, or cabinets of toys, but in the variety of fine clothes, and such toys as only were to adorn my person. Likewise I had a natural stupidity towards the learning of any other language than my native tongue, for I could sooner and with more facility understand the sense, than remember the words, and for want of such memory makes me so unlearned in foreign languages as I am. As for my practice, I was never very active, by reason I was given so much to contemplation … As for my study of books it was little, yet I chose rather to read, than to employ my time in any other work, or practice, and when I read what I understood not, I would ask my brother, the Lord Lucas, he being learned, the sense or meaning thereof. But my serious study could not be much, by reason I took great delight in attiring, fine dressing, and fashions especially such fashions as I did invent myself, not taking that pleasure in such fashions as was invented by others. Also I did dislike any should follow my fashions, for I always took delight in a singularity, even in accoutrements of habits. But whatsoever I was addicted to, either in fashion of clothes, contemplation of thoughts, actions of life, they were lawful, honest, honourable, and modest, of which I can avouch to the world with a great confidence, because it is a pure truth. As for my disposition, it is more inclining to be melancholy than merry, but not crabbed or peevishly melancholy, but soft, melting, solitary, and contemplating melancholy. And I am apt to weep rather than laugh, not that I do often either of them. Also I am tender natured, for it troubles my conscience to kill a fly, and the groans of a dying beast strike my soul. Also where I place a particular affection, I love extraordinarily and constantly, yet not fondly, but soberly and observingly, not to hang about them as a trouble, but to wait upon them as a servant; but this affection will take no root, but where I think or find merit, and have leave both from divine and moral laws. Yet I find this passion so troublesome, as it is the only torment of my life, for fear any evil misfortune or accident, or sickness, or death, should come unto them, insomuch as I am never freely at rest. Likewise I am grateful, for I never received a courtesy — but I am impatient and troubled until I can return it. Also I am chaste, both by nature, and education, insomuch as I do abhor an unchaste thought. Likewise, I am seldom angry, as my servants may witness for me, for I rather choose to suffer some inconveniences than disturb my thoughts, which makes me wink many times at their faults; but when I am angry, I am very angry, but yet it is soon over, and I am easily pacified, if it be not such an injury as may create a hate. Neither am I apt to be exceptious or jealous, but if I have the least symptom of this passion, I declare it to those it concerns, for I never let it lie smothering in my breast to breed a malignant disease in the mind, which might break out into extravagant passions, or railing speeches, or indiscreet actions; but I examine moderately, reason soberly, and plead gently in my own behalf, through a desire to keep those affections I had, or at least thought to have. And truly I am so vain, as to be so self-conceited, or so naturally partial, to think my friends have as much reason to love me as another, since none can love more sincerely than I, and it were an injustice to prefer a fainter affection, or to esteem the body more than the mind. Likewise I am neither spiteful, envious, nor malicious. I repine not at the gifts that Nature or Fortune bestows upon others, yet I am a great emulator; for, though I wish none worse than they are, yet it is lawful for me to wish myself the best, and to do my honest endeavour thereunto. For I think it no crime to wish myself the exactest of Nature’s works, my thread of life the longest, my chain of destiny the strongest, my mind the peaceablest, my life the pleasantest, my death the easiest, and the greatest saint in heaven; also to do my endeavour, so far as honour and honesty doth allow of, to be the highest on Fortune’s wheel and to hold the wheel from turning, if I can. And if it be commendable to wish another’s good, it were a sin not to wish my own; for as envy is a vice, so emulation is a virtue, but emulation is in the way to ambition, or indeed it is a noble ambition.

But I fear my ambition inclines to vain-glory, for I am very ambitious; yet ’tis neither for beauty, wit, titles, wealth, or power, but as they are steps to raise me to Fame’s tower, which is to live by remembrance in after-ages. Likewise I am that the vulgar call proud, not out of self-conceit, or to slight or condemn any, but scorning to do a base or mean act, and disdaining rude or unworthy persons; insomuch, that if I should find any that were rude, or too bold, I should be apt to be so passionate, as to affront them, if I can, unless discretion should get betwixt my passion and their boldness, which sometimes perchance it might if discretion should crowd hard for place. For though I am naturally bashful, yet in such a cause my spirits would be all on fire. Otherwise I am so well bred, as to be civil to all persons, of all degrees, or qualities. Likewise I am so proud, or rather just to my Lord, as to abate nothing of the quality of his wife, for if honour be the mark of merit, and his master’s royal favour, who will favour none but those that have merit to deserve, it were a baseness for me to neglect the ceremony thereof. Also in some cases I am naturally a coward, and in other cases very valiant. As for example, if any of my nearest friends were in danger I should never consider my life in striving to help them, though I were sure to do them no good, and would willingly, nay cheerfully, resign my life for their sakes: likewise I should not spare my life, if honour bids me die. But in a danger where my friends, or my honour is not concerned, or engaged, but only my life to be unprofitably lost, I am the veriest coward in nature, as upon the sea, or any dangerous places, or of thieves, or fire, or the like. Nay the shooting of a gun, although but a pot-gun, will make me start, and stop my hearing, much less have I courage to discharge one; or if a sword should be held against me, although but in jest, I am afraid. Also as I am not covetous, so I am not prodigal, but of the two I am inclining to be prodigal, yet I cannot say to a vain prodigality, because I imagine it is to a profitable end; for perceiving the world is given, or apt to honour the outside more than the inside, worshipping show more than substance; and I am so vain (if it be a vanity) as to endeavour to be worshipped, rather than not to be regarded. Yet I shall never be so prodigal as to impoverish my friends, or go beyond the limits or facility of our estate. And though I desire to appear to the best advantage, whilst I live in the view of the public world, yet I could most willingly exclude myself, so as never to see the face of any creature but my Lord as long as I live, inclosing myself like an anchorite, wearing a frieze gown, tied with a cord about my waist. But I hope my readers will not think me vain for writing my life, since there have been many that have done the like, as Caesar, Ovid, and many more, both men and women, and I know no reason I may not do it as well as they: but I verily believe some censuring readers will scornfully say, why hath this Lady writ her own life? since none cares to know whose daughter she was or whose wife she is, or how she was bred, or what fortunes she had, or how she lived, or what humour or disposition she was of. I answer that it is true, that ’tis to no purpose to the readers, but it is to the authoress, because I write it for my own sake, not theirs. Neither did I intend this piece for to delight, but to divulge; not to please the fancy, but to tell the truth, lest after-ages should mistake, in not knowing I was daughter to one Master Lucas of St. Johns, near Colchester, in Essex, second wife to the Lord Marquis of Newcastle; for my Lord having had two wives, I might easily have been mistaken, especially if I should die and my Lord marry again.

## 3.9.3 from The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing World

(1666, 1668)

A Merchant travelling into a foreign Country, fell extreamly in Love with a young Lady; but being a stranger in that Nation, and beneath her, both in Birth and Wealth, he could have but little hopes of obtaining his desire; however his Love growing more and more vehement upon him, even to the slighting of all difficulties, he resolved at last to Steal her away; which he had the better opportunity to do, because her Father’s house was not far from the Sea, and she often using to gather shells upon the shore, accompanied not with above two or three of her servants, it encouraged him the more to execute his design. Thus coming one time with a little leight Vessel, not unlike a Packet-boat, mann’d with some few Sea-men, and well victualled, for fear of some accidents, which might perhaps retard their journey, to the place where she used to repair; he forced her away: But when he fancied himself the happiest man of the World, he proved to be the most unfortunate; for Heaven frowning at his Theft, raised such a Tempest, as they knew not what to do, or whither to steer their course; so that the Vessel, both by its own leightness, and the violent motion of the Wind, was carried as swift as an Arrow out of a Bow, towards the North-pole, and in a short time reached the Icy Sea, where the wind forced it amongst huge pieces of Ice; but being little, and leight, it did by the assistance and favour of the gods to this virtuous Lady, so turn and wind through those precipices, as if it had been guided by some experienced Pilot, and skilful Mariner: But alas! Those few men which were in it, not knowing whither they went, nor what was to be done in so strange an Adventure, and not being provided for so cold a Voyage, were all frozen to death; the young Lady onely, by the light of her Beauty, the heat of her Youth, and Protection of the Gods, remaining alive: Neither was it a wonder that the men did freeze to death; for they were not onely driven to the very end or point of the Pole of that World, but even to another Pole of another World, which joined close to it; so that the cold having a dou ble strength at the conjunction of those two Poles, was insupportable: At last, the Boat still passing on, was forced into another World; for it is impossible to round this Worlds Globe from Pole to Pole, so as we do from East to West; because the Poles of the other World, joining to the Poles of this, do not allow any further passage to surround the World that way; but if any one arrives to either of these Poles, he is either forced to return, or to enter into another World: and lest you should scruple at it, and think, if it were thus, those that live at the Poles would either see two Suns at one time, or else they would never want the Sun’s light for six months together, as it is commonly believed: You must know, that each of these Worlds having its own Sun to enlighten it, they move each one in their peculiar Circles; which motion is so just and exact, that neither can hinder or obstruct the other; for they do not exceed their Tropicks: and although they should meet, yet we in this World cannot so well perceive them, by reason of the brightness of our Sun, which being nearer to us, obstructs the splendor of the Sun of the other World, they being too far off to be discerned by our optick perception, except we use very good Telescopes; by which, skilful Astronomers have often observed two or three Suns at once.

But to return to the wandering Boat, and the distresed Lady; she seeing all the Men dead, found small comfort in life; their Bodies which were preserved all that while from putrefaction and stench, by the extremity of cold, began now to thaw, and corrupt; whereupon she having not strength enough to fling them overboard, was forced to remove out of her small Cabine, upon the deck, to avoid that nauseous smell; and finding the Boat swim between two plains of Ice, as a stream that runs betwixt two shores, at last perceived land, but covered all with Snow: from which came, walking upon the Ice, strange Creatures, in shape like Bears, only they went upright as men; those Creatures coming near the Boat, catched hold of it with their Paws, that served them instead of hands; some two or three of them entred first; and when they came out, the rest went in one after another; at last having viewed and observed all that was in the Boat, they spake to each other in a language which the Lady did not understand; and having carried her out of the Boat, sunk it, together with the dead men.

The Lady now finding herself in so strange a place, and amongst such wonderful kind of Creatures, was extreamly strucken with fear, and could entertain no other Thoughts, but that every moment her life was to be a sacrifice to their cruelty; but those Bear-like Creatures, how terrible soever they appear’d to her sight, yet were they so far from exercising any cruelty upon her, that rather they shewed her all civility and kindness imaginable; for she being not able to go up on the Ice, by reason of its slipperiness, they took her up in their rough arms, and carried her into their City, where instead of Houses, they had Caves under ground; and as soon as they enter’d the City, both Males and Females, young and old, flockt together to see this Lady, holding up their Paws in admiration; at last having brought her into a certain large and spacious Cave, which they intended for her reception, they left her to the custody of the Females, who entertained her with all kindness and respect, and gave her such victuals as they used to eat; but seeing her Constitution neither agreed with the temper of that Climate, nor their Diet, they were resolved to carry her into another Island of a warmer temper; in which were men like Foxes, onely walking in an upright shape, who received their neighbours the Bear-men with great civility and Courtship, very much admiring this beauteous Lady; and having discoursed some while together, agreed at last to make her a Present to the Emperor of their World; to which end, after she had made some short stay in the same place, they brought her cross that Island to a large River, whose stream run smooth and clear, like Chrystal; in which were numerous Boats, much like our Fox-traps; in one whereof she was carried, some of the Bear- and Fox-men waiting on her; and as soon as they had crossed the River, they came into an Island where there were Men which had heads, beaks, and feathers, like wild-Geese, onely they went in an upright shape, like the Bear-men and Fox-men: their rumps they carried between their legs, their wings were of the same length with their Bodies, and their tails of an indifferent size, trailing after them like a Ladie’s Garment; and after the Bear- and Fox-men had declared their intention and design to their Neighbours, the Geese-or Bird-men, some of them joined to the rest, and attended the Lady through that Island, till they came to another great and large River, where there was a preparation made of many Boats, much like Birds nests, onely of a bigger size; and having crost that River, they arrived into another Island, which was of a pleasant and mild temper, full of Woods and the Inhabitants thereof were *Satyrs,* who received both the Bear- Fox- and Bird-men, with all respect and civility; and after some conferences (for they all understood each others language) some chief of the *Satyrs* joining to them, accompanied the Lady out of that Island to another River, wherein were many handsome and commodious Barges; and having crost that River, they entered into a large and spacious Kingdom, the men whereof were of a Grass-Green Complexion, who entertained them very kindly, and provided all conveniences for their further voyage: hitherto they had onely crost Rivers, but now they could not avoid the open Seas any longer; wherefore they made their Ships and tacklings ready to sail over into the Island, where the Emperor of the Blazing-world (for so it was call’d) kept his residence. Very good Navigators they were; and though they had no knowledg of the Load-stone, or Needle, or pendulous Watches, yet (which was as serviceable to them) they had subtile observations, and great practice; in so much that they could not onely tell the depth of the Sea in every place, but where there were shelves of Sand, Rocks, and other obstructions to be avoided by skilful and experienced Sea-men: Besides, they were excellent Augurers, which skill they counted more necessary and beneficial then the use of Compasses, Cards, Watches, and the like; but, above the rest, they had an extraordinary Art, much to be taken notice of by Experimental Philosophers, and that was a certain Engin, which would draw in a great quantity of Air, and shoot forth Wind with a great force; this Engine in a calm, they placed behind their Ships, and in a storm, before; for it served against the raging waves, like Cannons against an hostile Army, or besieged Town; it would batter and beat the waves in pieces, were they as high as Steeples; and as soon as a breach was made, they forced their passage through, in spight even of the most furious wind, using two of those Engins at every Ship, one before, to beat off the waves, and another behind to drive it on; so that the artificial wind had the better of the natural; for, it had a greater advantage of the waves, then the natural of the Ships: the natural being above the face of the Water, could not without a down right motion enter or press into the Ships; whereas the artificial with a sideward-motion, did pierce into the bowels of the Waves: Moreover, it is to be observed, that in a great Tempest they would join their Ships in battel-aray: and when they feared Wind and Waves would be too strong for them, if they divided their Ships; they joined as many together as the compass or advantage of the places of the Liquid Element would give them leave. For, their Ships were so ingeniously contrived, that they could fasten them together as close as a Honey-comb, without waste of place; and being thus united, no Wind nor Waves were able to separate them. The Emperor’s Ships, were all of Gold; but the Merchants and Skippers, of Leather; the Golden Ships were not much heavier then ours of Wood, by reason they were neatly made, and required not such thickness, neither were they troubled with Pitch, Tar, Pumps, Guns, and the like, which make our Woodden-Ships very heavy; for though they were not all of a piece, yet they were so well sodder’d, that there was no fear of Leaks, Chinks, or Clefts; and as for Guns, there was no use of them, because they had no other enemies but the Winds: But the Leather Ships were not altogether so sure, although much leighter; besides, they were pitched to keep out Water.

Having thus prepar’d, and order’d their Navy, they went on in despight of Calm or Storm: And though the Lady at first fancied her self in a very sad condition, and her mind was much tormented with doubts and fears, not knowing whether this strange Adventure would tend to her safety or destruction; yet she being withal of a generous spirit, and ready wit, considering what dangers she had past, and finding those sorts of men civil and diligent attendants to her, took courage, and endeavoured to learn their language; which after she had obtained so far, that partly by some words and signs she was able to apprehend their meaning, she was so far from being afraid of them, that she thought her self not onely safe, but very happy in their company: By which we may see, that Novelty discomposes the mind, but acquaintance settles it in peace and tranquillity. At last, having passed by several rich Islands and Kingdoms, they went towards *Paradise,* which was the seat of the Emperor; and coming in sight of it, rejoiced very much; the Lady at first could perceive nothing but high Rocks, which seemed to touch the Skies; and although they appear’d not of an equal heigth, yet they seemed to be all one piece, without partitions: but at last drawing nearer, she perceived a clift, which was a part of those Rocks, out of which she spied coming forth a great number of Boats, which afar off shewed like a company of Ants, marching one after another; the Boats appeared like the holes or partitions in a Honey-comb, and when joined together, stood as close; the men were of several Complexions, but none like any of our World; and when both the Boats and Ships met, they saluted and spake to each other very courteously; for there was but one language in all that World: nor no more but one Emperor, to whom they all submitted with the greatest duty and obedience, which made them live in a continued Peace and Happiness; not acquainted with Foreign Wars, or Home-bred Insurrections. The Lady now being arrived at this place, was carried out of her Ship into one of those Boats, and conveighed through the same passage (for there was no other) into that part of the World where the Emperor did reside; which part was very pleasant, and of a mild temper: Within it self it was divided by a great number of vast and large Rivers, all ebbing and flowing, into several Islands of unequal distance from each other, which in most parts were as pleasant, healthful, rich, and fruitful, as Nature could make them; and, as I mentioned before, secure from all Foreign Invasions, by reason there was but one way to enter, and that like a Labyrinth, so winding and turning among the Rocks, that no other Vessels but small Boats, could pass, carrying not above three passengers at a time: On each side all along this narrow and winding River, there were several Cities, some of Marble, some of Alabaster, some of Agat, some of Amber, some of Coral, and some of other precious materials not known in our world; all which after the Lady had passed, she came to the Imperial City, named *Paradise,* which appeared in form like several Islands; for, Rivers did run betwixt every street, which together with the Bridges, whereof there was a great number, were all paved. The City itself was built of Gold; and their Architectures were noble, stately, and magnificent, not like our Modern, but like those in the *Romans* time; for, our Modern Buildings are like those Houses which Children use to make of Cards, one story above another, fitter for Birds, then Men; but theirs were more Large, and Broad, then high; the highest of them did not exceed two stories, besides those rooms that were under-ground, as Cellars, and other Offices. The Emperor’s Palace stood upon an indifferent ascent from the Imperial City; at the top of which ascent was a broad Arch, supported by several Pillars, which went round the Palace, and contained four of our English miles in compass: within the Arch stood the Emperor’s Guard, which consisted of several sorts of Men; at every half mile, was a Gate to enter, and every Gate was of a different fashion; the first, which allowed a passage from the Imperial City into the Palace, had on either hand a Cloyster, the outward part whereof stood upon Arches sustained by Pillars, but the inner part was close: Being entred through the Gate, the Palace it self appear’d in its middle like the Isle of a Church, a mile and a half long, and half a mile broad; the roof of it was all Arched, and rested upon Pillars, so artificially placed that a stranger would lose himself therein without a Guide; at the extream sides, that is, between the outward and inward part of the Cloyster, were Lodgings for Attendants; and in the midst of the Palace, the Emperor’s own Rooms; whose Lights were placed at the top of every one, because of the heat of the Sun: the Emperor’s appartment for State was no more inclosed then the rest; onely an Imperial Throne was in every appartment, of which the several adornments could not be perceived until one entered, because the Pillars were so just opposite to one another, that all the adornments could not be seen at one. The first part of the Palace was, as the Imperial City, all of Gold; and when it came to the Emperors appartment, it was so rich with Diamonds, Pearls, Rubies, and the like precious Stones, that it surpasses my skill to enumerate them all. Amongst the rest, the Imperial Room of State appear’d most magnificent; it was paved with green Diamonds (for there are in that World Diamonds of all Colours) so artificially, as it seemed but of one piece; the Pillars were set with Diamonds so close, and in such a manner, that they appear’d most Glorious to the sight; between every Pillar was a Bow or Arch of a certain sort of Diamonds, the like whereof our World does not afford; which being placed in every one of the Arches in several rows, seemed just like so many Rainbows of several different colours. The roof of the Arches was of blew Diamonds, and in the midst thereof was a Carbuncle, which represented the Sun; and the Rising and Setting-Sun at the East and West-side of the Room were made of Rubies. Out of this Room there was a passage into the Emperor’s Bed-Chamber, the Walls whereof were of Jet, and the Floor of black Marble; the Roof was of Mother of Pearl, where the Moon and Blazing-Stars were represented by white Diamonds, and his Bed was made of Diamonds and Carbuncles.

No sooner was the Lady brought before the Emperor, but he conceived her to be some Goddess, and offered to worship her; which she refused, telling him, (for by that time she had pretty well learned their Language) that although she came out of another world, yet was she but a mortal. At which the Emperor rejoycing, made her his Wife, and gave her an absolute power to rule and govern all that World as she pleased. But her subjects, who could hardly be perswaded to believe her mortal, tender’d her all the Veneration and Worship due to a Deity.

… None was allowed to use or wear Gold but those of the Imperial Race, which were the onely Nobles of the State; nor durst any one wear Jewels but the Emperor, the Emrpess, and their Eldest Son; notwithstanding that they had an infinite quantity both of Gold and precious Stones in that World; for they had larger extents of Gold, then our *Arabian* Sands; their precious Stones were Rocks, and their Diamonds of several Colours; they used no Coyn, but all their Traffick was by exchange of several Commodities.

Their Priests and Governors were Princes of the Imperial Blood, and made Eunuches for that purpose; and as for the ordinary sort of men in that part of the World where the Emperor resided, they were of several Complexions; not white, black, tawny, olive- or ash-coloured; but some appear’d of an Azure, some of a deep Purple, some of a Grass-green, some of a Scarlet, some of an Orange-colour, &c. Which Colours and Complexions, whether they were made bythe bare reflection of light, without the assistance of small particles; or by the help of well-ranged and order’d Atoms; or by a continual agitation of little Globules; or by some pressing and re-acting motion, I am not able to determine. The rest of the Inhabitants of that World, were men of several different sorts, shapes, figures, dispositions, and humors, as I have already made mention, heretofore; some were Bear-men, some Worm-men, some Fish-or Mear-men, otherwise called Syrens; some Bird-men, some Fly-men, some Ant-men, some Geese-men, some Spider-men, some Lice-men, some Fox-men, some Ape-men, some Jack-daw-men, some Magpie-men, some Parrot-men, some Satyrs, some Gyants, and many more, which I cannot all remember; and of these several sorts of men, each followed such a profession as was most proper for the nature of their Species, which the Empress encouraged them in, especially those that had applied themselves to the study of several Arts and Sciences; for they were as ingenious and witty in the invention of profitable and useful Arts, as we are in our world, nay, more; and to that end she erected Schools, and founded several Societies. The Bear-men were to be her Experimental Philosophers, the Bird-men her Astronomers, the Fly- Worm- and Fish-men her Natural Philosophers, the Ape-men her Chymists, the Satyrs her Galenick Physicians, the Fox-men her Politicians, the Spider-and Lice-men her Mathematicians, the Jackdaw-Magpie- and Parrot-men her Orators and Logicians, the Gyants her Architects, &c . But before all things, she having got a Soveraign power from the Emperor over all the World, desired to be informed both of the manner of their Religion and Government; and to that end, she called the Priests and States-men, to give her an account of either. Of the States-men she enquired, first, Why they had so few Laws? To which they answered, That many Laws made many Divisions, which most commonly did breed Factions, and at last brake out into open Wars. Next, she asked, Why they preferred the Monarchical form of Government before any other? They answered, That as it was natural for one Body to have but one Head, so it was also natural for a Politick body to have but one Governor; and that a Common-wealth, which had many Governors was like a Monster with many Heads. Besides, said they, a Monarchy is a 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.

Then the Empress seeing that the several sorts of her Subjects had each their Churches apart, asked the Priests, whether they were of several Religions? They answered her Majesty, That there was no more but one Religion in all that World, nor no diversity of opinions in that same Religion; for though there were several sorts of men, yet had they all but one opinion concerning the Worship and Adoration of God. The Empress asked them, Whether they were Jews, Turks, or Christians? We do not know, said they, what Religions those are; but we do all unanimously acknowledg, worship and adore the Onely, Omnipotenr, and Eternal God, with all reverence, submission, and duty. Again, the Empress enquired, Whether they had several Forms of Worship? They answered, No: For our Devotion and Worship consists onely in Prayers, which we frame according to our several Necessities, in Petitions, Humiliations, Thanksgiving, &c. Truly, replied the Empress, I thought you had been either Jews, or Turks, because I never perceived any Women in your Congregations: But what is the reason, you bar them from your religious Assemblies? It is not fit, said they, that Men and Women should be promiscuously together in time of Religious Worship; for their company hinders Devotion, and makes many, instead of praying to God, direct their Devotion to their Mistresses. But, asked the Empress, Have they no Congregation of their own, to perform the duties of Divine Worship, as well as Men? No, answered they: but they stay at home, and say their Prayers by themselves in their Closets. Then the Empress desir’d to know the reason why the Priests and Governors of their World were made Eunuchs? They answer’d, To keep them from Marriage: For Women and Children most commonly make disturbance both in Church and State. But, said she, Women and Children have no Employment in Church or State. ’Tis true, answer’d they; but, although they are not admitted to publick Employments, yet are they so prevalent with their Husbands and Parents, that many times by their importunate perswasions, they cause as much, nay, more mischief secretly, then if they had the management of publick Affairs.

…The Empress was very well satisfied with their answers; and after some time, when she thought that her new founded societies of the Vertuoso’s had made a good progress in the several Employments she had put them upon, she caused a Convocation first of the Bird-men, and commanded them to give her a true relation of the two Coelestial Bodies, viz . the Sun and Moon, which they did with all the obedience and faithfulness befitting their duty.

The Sun, as much as they could observe, they related to be a firm or solid Stone, of a vast bigness; of colour yellowish, and of an extraordinary splendor: But the Moon, they said, was of a whitish colour; and although she looked dim in the presence of the Sun, yet had she her own light, and was a shining body of herself, as might be perceived by her vigorous appearance in Moon-shiny-nights; the difference onely betwixt her own and the Sun’s light was, that the Sun did strike his beams in a direct line; but the Moon never respected the Centre of their World in a right line, but her Centre was always excentrical. The Spots both in the Sun and Moon, as far as they were able to perceive, they affirmed to be nothing else but flaws and stains of their stony Bodies. Concerning the heat of the Sun, they were not of one opinion; some would have the Sun hot in it self, alledging an old Tradition, that it should at some time break asunder, and burn the Heavens, and consume this world into hot Embers, which, said they, could not be done, if the Sun were not fiery of itself. Others again said, This opinion could not stand with reason; for Fire being a destroyer of all things, the Sun-stone after this manner would burn up all the near adjoining Bodies: Besides, said they, Fire cannot subsist without fuel; and the Sunstone having nothing to feed on, would in a short time consume it self; wherefore they thought it more probable that the Sun was not actually hot, but onely by the reflection of its light; so that its heat was an effect of its light, both being immaterial. But this opinion again was laught at by others, and rejected as ridiculous, who thought it impossible that one immaterial should produce another; and believed that both the light and heat of the Sun proceeded from a swift Circular motion of the AEthereal Globules, which by their striking upon the Optick nerve, caused light, and their motion produced heat: But neither would this opinion hold; for, said some, then it would follow, that the sight of Animals is the cause of light; and that, were there no eyes, there would be no light; which was against all sense and reason. Thus they argued concerning the heat and light of the Sun; but, which is remarkable, none did say, that the Sun was a Globous fluid body, and had a swift Circular motion; but all agreed, It was fixt and firm like a Center, and therefore they generally called it the Sun-stone.

Then the Empress asked them the reason, Why the Sun and Moon did often appear in different postures or shapes, as sometimes magnified, sometimes diminished; sometimes elevated, otherwhiles depressed; now thrown to the right, and then to the left? To which some of the Bird-men answered, That it proceeded from the various degrees of heat and cold, which are found in the Air, from whence did follow a differing density and rarity; and likewise from the vapours that are interposed, whereof those that ascend are higher and less dense then the ambient air, but those which descend are heavier and more dense. But others did with more probability affirm, that it was nothing else but the various patterns of the Air; for like as Painters do not copy out one and the same original just alike at all times; so, said they, do several parts of the Air make different patterns of the luminous Bodies of the Sun and Moon: which patterns, as several copies, the sensitive motions do figure out in the substance of our eyes.

This answer the Empress liked much better then the former, and enquired further, What opinion they had of those Creatures that are called the motes of the Sun? To which they answered, That they were nothing else but streams of very small, rare and transparent particles, through which the Sun was represented as through a glass: for if they were not transparent, said they, they would eclipse the light of the Sun; and if not rare and of an airy substance, they would hinder Flies from flying in the Air, at least retard their flying motion: Nevertheless, although they were thinner then the thinnest vapour, yet were they not so thin as the body of air, or else they would not be perceptible by animal sight. Then the Empress asked, Whether they were living Creatures? They answered, Yes: Because they did encrease and decrease, and were nourished by the presence, and starved by the absence of the Sun.

Having thus finished their discourse of the Sun and Moon, the Empress desired to know what Stars there were besides? But they answer’d, that they could perceive in that World none other but Blazing Stars, and from thence it had the name that it was called the Blazing-World; and these Blazing-Stars, said they, were such solid, firm and shining bodies as the Sun and Moon, not of a Globular, but of several sorts of figures: some had tails; and some, other kinds of shapes.

After this, The Empress asked them, What kind of substance or creature the Air was? The Bird-men answered, That they could have no other perception of the Air, but by their own Respiration: For, said they, some bodies are onely subject to touch, others onely to sight, and others onely to smell; but some are subject to none of our exterior Senses: For Nature is so full of variety, that our weak Senses cannot perceive all the various sorts of her Creatures; neither is there any one object perceptible by all our Senses, no more then several objects are by one sense. I believe you, replied the Empress; but if you can give no account of the Air, said she, you will hardly be able to inform me how Wind is made; for they say, that Wind is nothing but motion of the Air. The Bird-men answer’d, That they observed Wind to be more dense then Air, and therefore subject to the sense of Touch; but what properly Wind was, and the manner how it was made, they could not exactly tell; some said, it was caused by the Clouds falling on each other; and others, that it was produced of a hot and dry exhalation: which ascending, was driven down again by the coldness of the Air that is in the middle Region, and by reason of its leightness, could not go directly to the bottom, but was carried by the Air up and down: Some would have it a flowing Water of the Air; and others again, a flowing Air moved by the blaz of the Stars.

But the Empress, seeing they could not agree concerning the cause of Wind, asked, Whether they could tell how Snow was made? To which they answered, That according to their observation, Snow was made by a commixture of Water, and some certain extract of the Element of Fire that is under the Moon; a small portion of which extract, being mixed with Water, and beaten by Air or Wind, made a white Froth called Snow; which being after some while dissolved by the heat of the same spirit, turned to Water again. This observation amazed the Emperess very much; for she had hitherto believed, That Snow was made by cold motions, and not by such an agitation or beating of a fiery extract upon water: Nor could she be perswaded to believe it until the Fish- or Mear-men had delivered their observation upon the making of Ice, which, they said, was not produced, as some had hitherto conceived, by the motion of the Air, raking the Superficies of the Earth, but by some strong saline vapour arising out of the Seas, which condensed Water into Ice; and the more quantity there was of that vapour, the greater were the Mountains or Precipices of Ice; but the reason that it did not so much freeze in the Torrid Zone, or under the Ecliptick, as near or under the Poles, was, that this vapour in those places being drawn up by the Sun-beams into the middle Region of the Air, was onely condensed into Water, and fell down in showres of Rain; when as, under the Poles, the heat of the Sun being not so vehement, the same vapour had no force or power to rise so high, and therefore caused so much Ice, by ascending and acting onely upon the surface of water.

This Relation confirmed partly the observation of the Bird-men concerning the cause of Snow; but since they had made mention that that same extract, which by its commixture with Water made Snow, proceeded from the Element of Fire, that is under the Moon: The Emperess asked them, of what nature that Elementary Fire was; whether it was like ordinary Fire here upon Earth, or such a Fire as is within the bowels of the Earth, and as the famous Mountains *Vesuvius* and *Aetna* do burn withal; or whether it was such a sort of fire, as is found in flints, &c. They answered, That the Elementary Fire, which is underneath the Sun, was not so solid as any of those mentioned fires; because it had no solid fuel to feed on; but yet it was much like the flame of ordinary fire, onely somewhat more thin and fluid; for Flame, said they, is nothing else but the airy part of a fired Body.

Lastly, the Empress asked the Bird-men of the nature of Thunder and Lightning? and whether it was not caused by roves of Ice falling upon each other? To which they answered, That it was not made that way, but by an encounter of cold and heat; so that an exhalation being kindled in the Clouds, did dash forth Lightning, and that there were so many rentings of Clouds as there were Sounds and Cracking noises: But this opinion was contradicted by others, who affirmed that Thunder was a sudden and monstrous Blaz, stirred up in the Air, and did not always require a Cloud; but the Empress not knowing what they meant by Blaz (for even they themselves were not able to explain the seuse of this word) liked the former better; and, to avoid hereafter tedious disputes, and have the truth of the Phaenomena’s of Coelestial Bodies more exactly known, commanded the Bear-men, which were her Experimental Philosophers, to observe them through such Instruments as are called Telescopes, which they did according to her Majesties Command; but these Telescopes caused more differences and divisions amongst them, then ever they had before; for some said, they perceived that the Sun stood still, and the Earth did move about it; others were of opinion, that they both did move; and others said again, that the Earth stood still, and the Sun did move; some counted more Stars then others; some discovered new Stars never seen before; some fell into a great dispute with others concerning the bigness of the Stars; some said, The Moon was another World like their Terrestrial Globe, and the spots therein were Hills and Vallies; but others would have the spots to be the Terrestrial parts, and the smooth and glossie parts, the Sea: At last, the Empress commanded them to go with their Telescopes to the very end of the Pole that was joined to the World she came from, and try whether they could perceive any Stars in it: which they did; and, being returned to her Majesty, reported that they had seen three Blazing-Stars appear there, one after another in a short time, whereof two were bright, and one dim; but they could not agree neither in this observation: for some said, It was but one Star which appeared at three several times, in several places; and others would have them to be three several Stars; for they thought it impossible, that those three several appearances should have been but one Star, because every Star did rise at a certain time, and appear’d in a certain place, and did disappear in the same place: Next, It is altogether improbable, said they, That one Star should fly from place to place, especially at such a vast distance, without a visible motion; in so short a time, and appear in such different places, whereof two were quite opposite, and the third side-ways: Lastly, If it had been hut one Star, said they, it would always have kept the same splendor, which it did not; for, as above mentioned, two were bright, and one was dim. After they had thus argued, the Empress began to grow angry at their Telescopes, that they could give no better Intelligence; for, said she, now I do plainly perceive, that your Glasses are false Informers, and instead of discovering the Truth, delude your Senses; Wherefore I Command you to break them, and let the Bird-men trust onely to their natural eyes, and examine Coelestial Objects by the motions of their own Sense and Reason. The Bear-men replied, That it was not the fault of their Glasses, which caused such differences in their Opinions, but the sensitive motions in their Optick organs did not move alike, nor were their rational judgments always regular: To which the Empress answered, That if their Glasses were true Informers, they would rectifie their irregular Sense and Reason; But, said she, Nature has made your Sense and Reason more regular then Art has your Glasses; for they are meer deluders, and will never lead you to the knowledg of Truth; Wherefore I command you again to break them; for you may observe the progressive motions of Coelestial Bodies with your natural eyes better then through Artificial Glasses. The Bear-men being exceedingly troubled at her Majesties displeasure concerning their Telescopes, kneel’d down, and in the humblest manner petitioned, that they might not be broken; for, said they, we take more delight in Artificial delusions, then in Natural truths. Besides, we shall want Imployments for our Senses, and Subjects for Arguments; for, were there nothing but truth, and no falshood, there would be no occasion to dispute, and by this means we should want the aim and pleasure of our endeavours in confuting and contradicting each other; neither would one man be thought wiser then another, but all would either be alike knowing and wise, or all would be fools; wherefore we most humbly beseech your Imperial Majesty to spare our Glasses, which are our onely delight, and as dear to us as our lives. The Empress at last consented to their request, but upon condition, that their disputes and quarrels should remain within their Schools, and cause no factions or disturbances in State, or Government. The Bear-men, full of joy, returned their most humble thanks to the Empress; and to make her amends for the displeasure which their Telescopes had occasioned, told her Majesty, that they had several other artificial Optick-Glasses, which they were sure would give her Majesty a great deal more satisfaction. Amongst the rest, they brought forth several Microscopes, by the means of which they could enlarge the shapes of little bodies, and make a Lowse appear as big as an Elephant, and a Mite as big as a Whale. First of all they shewed the Emperess a gray Drone-flye, wherein they observed that the greatest part of her face, nay, of her head, consisted of two large bunches all cover’d over with a multitude of small Pearls or Hemispheres in a Trigonal order: Which Pearls were of two degrees, smaller and bigger; the smaller degree was lowermost, and looked towards the ground; the other was upward, and looked sideward, forward and backward: They were all so smooth and polished, that they were able to represent the image of any object, the number of them was in all 14000. After the view of this strange and miraculous Creature, and their several observations upon it, the Empress asked them, What they judged those little Hemispheres might be? They answered, That each of them was a perfect Eye, by reason they perceived that each was covered with a Transparent Cornea, containing a liquor within them, which resembled the watery or glassie humor of the Eye. To which the Emperess replied, That they might be glassie Pearls, and yet not Eyes; and that perhaps their Microscopes did not truly inform them. But they smilingly answered her Majesty, That she did not know the vertue of those Microscopes; for they never delude, but rectifie and inform the Senses; nay, the World, said they, would be but blind without them, as it has been in former ages before those Microscopes were invented.

After this, they took a Charcoal, and viewing it with one of their best Microscopes, discovered in it an infinite multitude of pores, some bigger, some less; so close and thick, that they left but very little space betwixt them to be filled with a solid body; and to give her Imperial Majesty a better assurance thereof, they counted in a line of them an inch long, no less then 2700 pores; from which Observation they drew this following Conclusion, to wit, That this multitude of pores was the cause of the blackness of the Coal; for, said they, a body that has so many pores, from each of which no light is reflected, must necessarily look black, since black is nothing else but a privation of light, or a want of reflection. But the Empress replied, That if all Colours were made by reflection of light, and that Black was as much a colour as any other colour; then certainly they contradicted themselves in saying that black was made by want of reflection. However, not to interrupt your Microscopical Inspections, said she, let us see how Vegetables appear through your Glasses; whereupon they took a Nettle, and by the vertue of the Microscope, discovered that underneath the points of the Nettle there were certain little bags or bladders, containing a poysonous liquor, and when the points had made way into the interior parts of the skin, they like Syringe-pipes served to conveigh that same liquor into them. To which Observation the Empress replied, That if there were such poyson in Nettles, then certainly in eating of them, they would hurt us inwardly, as much as they do outwardly? But they answered, That it belonged to Physicians more then to Experimental Philosophers, to give Reasons hereof; for they only made Microscopical inspections, and related the Figures of the Natural parts of Creatures acording to the representation of their glasses.

Lastly, They shewed the Empress a Flea, and a Lowse; which Creatures through the Microscope appear’d so terrible to her sight, that they had almost put her into a swoon; the description of all their parts would be very tedious to relate, and therefore I’le forbear it at this present. The Empress, after the view of those strangely-shaped Creatures, pitied much those that are molested with them, especially poor Beggars, which although rhey have nothing to live on themselves, are yet necessitated to maintain and feed of their own flesh and blood, a company of such terrible Creatures called Lice; who, instead of thanks, do reward them with pains, and torment them for giving them nourishment and food. But after the Empress had seen the shapes of these monstrous Creatures, she desir’d to know, Whether their Microscopes could hinder their biting, or at least shew some means how to avoid them? To which they answered, That such Arts were mechanical and below that noble study of Microscopical observations. Then the Empress asked them, Whether they had not such sorts of Glasses that could enlarge and magnifie the shapes of great Bodies as well as they had done of little ones? Whereupon they took one of their best and largest Microscopes, and endeavoured to view a Whale thorow it; but alas! the shape of the Whale was so big, that its Circumference went beyond the magnifying quality of the Glass; whether the error proceeded from the Glass, or from a wrong position of the Whale against the reflection of light, I cannot certainly tell. The Empress seeing the insufficiency of those Magnifying-Glasses, that they were not able to enlarge all sorts of Objects, asked the Bear-men, whether they could not make Glasses of a contrary nature to those they had shewed her, to wit, such as instead of enlarging or magnifying the shape or figure of an Object, could contract it beneath its natural proportion: Which, in obedience to her Majesties Commands, they did; and viewing through one of the best of them, a huge and mighty Whale appear’d no bigger then a Sprat; nay, through some no bigger then a Vinegar-Eele; and through their ordinary ones, an Elephant seemed no bigger then a Flea; a Camel no bigger then a Lowse; and an Ostrich no bigger then a Mite. To relate all their Optick observations through the several sorts of their Glasses, would be a tedious work, and tire even the most patient Reader, wherefore I’le pass them by; onely this was very remakable and worthy to be taken notice of, that notwithstanding their great skil, industry and ingenuity in Experimental Philosophy, they could yet by no means contrive such Glasses, by the help of which they could spy out a Vacuum, with all its dimensions, nor Immaterial substances, Non-beings, and Mixt-beings, or such as are between something and nothing; which they were very much troubled at, hoping that yet, in time, by long study and practice, they might perhaps attain to it.

…Again, the Empress asked them, whether there were any Non-beings within the Earth? To which they answered, That they never heard of any such thing; and that, if her Majesty would know the truth thereof, she must ask those Creatures that are called Immaterial Spirits, which had a great affinity with Non-beings, and perhaps could give her a satisfactory answer to this question. Then she desired to be informed, What opinion they had of the beginning of Forms? They told her Majesty, That they did not understand what she meant by this expression; For, said they, there is no beginning in Nature, no not of Particulars; by reason Nature is Eternal and Infinite, and her particulars are subject to infinite changes and transmutations by vertue of their own Corporeal, figurative self-motions; so that there’s nothing new in Nature, nor properly a beginning of any thing. The Empress seem’d well satisfied with all those answers, and enquired further, Whether there was no Art used by those Creatures that live within the Earth? Yes, answered they: for the several parts of the Earth do join and assist each other in composition or framing of such or such particulars; and many times, there are factions and divisions; which cause productions of mixt Species; as, for example, weeds, instead of sweet flowres and useful fruits; but Gardeners and Husbandmen use often to decide their quarrels, and cause them to agree; which though it shews a kindness to the differing parties, yet ’tis a great prejudice to the Worms, and other Animal-Creatures that live under ground; for it most commonly causes their dissolution and ruine, at best they are driven out of their habitations. What, said the Empress, are not Worms produced out of the Earth? Their production in general, answered they, is likethe production of all other Natural Creatures, proceeding from the corporeal figurative motions of Nature; but as for their particular productions, they are according to the nature of their Species; some are produced out of flowers, some out of roots, some out of fruits, some out of ordinary Earth. Then they are very ungrateful Children, replied the Empress, that they feed on their own Parents which gave them life. Their life, answered they, is their own, and not their Parents; for no part or creature of Nature can either give or take away life; but parts do onely assist and join with parts, either in the dissolution or production of other Parts and Creatures.

…The Conferences of the Chymists being finished, the Empress made an Assembly of her *Galenical* Physicians, her Herbalists and Anatomists; and first she enquired of her Herbalists the particular effects of several Herbs and Drugs, and whence they proceeded? To which they answered, that they could, for the most part, tell her Majesty the vertues and operations of them, but the particular causes of their effects were unknown; onely thus much they could say, that their operations and vertues were generally caused by their proper inherent, corporeal, figurative motions, which being infinitely various in Infinite Nature, did produce infinite several effects. And it is observed, said they, that Herbs and Drugs are as wise in their operations, as Men in their words and actions; nay, wiser; and their effects are more certain then Men in their opinions; for though they cannot discourse like Men, yet have they Sense and Reason, as well as Men; for the discursive faculty is but a particular effect of Sense and Reason in some particular Creatures, to wit, Men, and not a principle of Nature, and argues often more folly than wisdom. The Empress asked, Whether they could not by a composition and commixture of other Drugs make them work other effects then they did, used by themselves? They answered, That they could make them produce artificial effects, but not alter their inherent, proper and particular natures.

Then the Empress commanded her Anatomists to dissect such kinds of Creatures as are called Monsters. But they answered her Majesty, That it would be but an unprofitable and useless work, and hinder their better imployments; for when we dissect dead Animals, said they, it is for no other end, but to observe what defects or distempers they had, that we may cure the like in living ones, so that all our care and industry concerns onely the preservation of Mankind; but we hope your Majesty will not preserve Monsters, which are most commonly destroyed, except it be for novelty: Neither will the dissection of Monsters prevent the errors of Nature’s irregular actions; for by dissecting some, we cannot prevent the production of others; so that our pains and labour will be to no purpose, unless to satisfie the vain curiosities of inquisitive men. The Empress replied, That such dissections would be very beneficial to Experimental Philosophers. If Experimental Philosophers, answer’d they, do spend their time in such useless Inspections, they waste it in vain, and have nothing but their labour for their pains.

Lastly, her Majesty had some Conferences with the Galenick Physicians about several Diseases, and amongst the rest, desired to know the cause and nature of Apoplexies, and the spotted Plague. They answered, That a deadly Apoplexy was a dead palsie of the Brain; and the spotted Plague was a Gangrene of the Vital parts: and as the Gangrene of outward parts did strike inwardly; so the Gangrene of inward parts, did break forth outwardly: which is the cause, said they, that as soon as the spots appear, death follows; for then it is an infallible sign, that the body is throughout infected with a Gangrene, which is a spreading evil; but some Gangrenes do spread more suddenly than others, and of all sorts of Gangrenes, the Plaguy Gangrene is the most infectious; for other Gangrenes infect but the next adjoining parts of one particular body, and having killed that same Creature, go no further, but cease; when as, the Gangrene of the Plague, infects not onely the adjoining parts of one particular Creature, but also those that are distant; that is, one particular body infects another, and so breeds a Universal Contagion. But the Empress being very desirous to know in what manner the Plague was propagated, and became so contagious, asked, Whether it went actually out of one body into another? To which they answered, That it was a great dispute amongst the Learned of their Profession, Whether it came by a division and composition of parts; that is, by expiration and inspiration; or whether it was caused by imitation: Some Experimental Philosophers, said they, will make us believe, that by the help of their Microscopes, they have observed the Plague to be a body of little Flies like Atoms, which go out of one body into another, through the sensitive passages; but the most experienced and wisest of our society, have rejected this opinion as a ridiculous fancy, and do, for the most part, believe, that it is caused by an imitation of Parts; so that the motions of some parts which are sound, do imitate the motions of those that are infected and that by this means, the Plague becomes contagions, and spreading.

…After this, the Empress was resolved to hear the Magpie-Parrot-and Jackdaw-men, which were her professed Orators and Logicians; whereupon one of the Parrot-men rose with great formality, and endeavoured to make an Eloquent Speech before her Majesty; but before he had half ended, his arguments and divisions being so many, that they caused a great cofusion in his brain, he could not go forward, but was forced to retire backward, with great disgrace both to himself, and the whole Society; and although one of his brethren endeavoured to second him by another speech, yet was he as far to seek, as the former. At which the Empress appear’d not a little troubled, and told them, That they followed too much the Rules of Art, and confounded themselves with too nice formalities and distinctions; but since I know, said she, that you are a people who have naturally voluble tongues, and good memories; I desire you to consider more the subject you speak of, then your artificial periods, connexions and parts of speech, and leave the rest to your natural Eloquence; which they did, and so became very eminent Orators.

Lastly, her Imperial Majesty being desirous to know what progress her Logicians had made in the Art of disputing, Commanded them to argue upon several Themes or Subjects; which they did; and having made a very nice discourse of Logistical terms and propositions, entred into a dispute by way of Syllogistical Arguments, through all the Figures and Modes: One began with an Argument of the first Mode of the first Figure, thus:

Every Politician is wise:

Every Knave is a Politician,

Therefore every Knave is wise.

Another contradicted him with a Syllogism of the second Mode of the same Figure, thus:

No Politician is wise:

Every Knave is a Politician,

Therefore no Knave is wise.

The third made an Argument in the third Mode of the same Figure, after this manner:

Every Politician is wise:

Some Knaves are Politicians,

Therefore some Knaves are wise.

The Fourth concluded with a Syllogism in the fourth Mode of the same Figure, thus;

No Politican is wise:

Some Knaves are Politicians,

Therefore some Knaves are not wise.

After this they took another subject, and one propounded this Syllogism:

Every Philosopher is wise:

Every Beast is wise,

Therefore every Beast is a Philosopher.

But another said that this Argument was false, therefore he contradicted him with a Syllogism of the second Figure of the fourth Mode, thus:

Every Philosopher is wise:

Some Beasts are not wise,

Therefore some Beasts are not Philosophers.

Thus they argued, and intended to go on, but the Empress interrupted them: I have enough, said she, of your chopt Logick, and will hear no more of your Syllogisms; for it disorders my Reason, and puts my Brain on the rack; your formal argumentations are able to spoil all natural wit; and I’le have you to consider, that Art does not make Reason, but Reason makes Art; and therefore as much as Reason is above Art, so much is a natural rational discourse to be preferred before an artificial: for Art is, for the most part irregular, and disorders Men’s understandings more then it rectifies them, and leads them into a Labyrinth whence they’l never get out, and makes them dull and unfit for useful employments; especially your Art of Logick, which consists onely in contradicting each other, in making Sophismes, and obscuring Truth, instead of clearing it.

But they replied to her Majesty, That the knowledg of Nature, that is, Natural Philosophy, would be imperfect without the Art of Logick; and that there was an improbable Truth which could no otherwise be found out then by the Art of disputing. Truly, said the Empress, I do believe that it is with Natural Philosophy, as it is with all other effects of Nature; for no particular knowledg can be perfect, by reason knowledg is dividable, as well as composable; nay, to speak properly, Nature herself cannot boast of any perfection, but God himself; because there are so many irregular motions in Nature, and ’tis but a folly to think that Art should be able to regulate them, since Art itself is, for the most part, irregular. But as for Improbable Truth I know not what your meaning is; for Truth is more then Improbability: nay, there is so much difference between Truth and Improbability, that I cannot conceive it possible how they can be joined together. In short, said she, I do no ways approve of your Profession; and though I will not dissolve your Society, yet I shall never take delight in hearing you any more; wherefore confine your disputations to your Schools, lest besides the Commonwealth of Learning, they disturb also Divinity and Policy, Religion and Laws, and by that means draw an utter ruine and destruction both upon Church and State.

After the Empress had thus finish’d the Discourses and Conferences with the mentioned Societies of her *Vertuoso’s*, she considered by herself the manner of their Religion, and finding it very defective, was troubled, that so wise and knowing a people should have no more knowledg of the Divine Truth; Wherefore she consulted with her own thoughts, whether it was possible to convert them all to her own Religion, and to that end she resolved to build Churches, and make also up a Congregation of Women, whereof she intended to be the head herself, and to instruct them in the several points of her Religion. This she had no sooner begun, but the Women, which generally had quick wits, subtile conceptions, clear understandings, and solid judgments, became, in a short time, very devout and zealous Sisters; for the Empress had an excellent gift of Preaching, and instructing them in the Articles of Faith; and by that means, she converted them not onely soon, but gained an extraordinary love of all her Subjects throughout that World. But at last, pondering with her self the inconstant nature of Mankind, and fearing that in time they would grow weary, and desert the divine Truth, following their own fancies, and living according to their own desires; she began to be troubled that her labours and pains should prove of so little effect, and therefore studied all manner of ways to prevent it. Amongst the rest, she call’d to mind a Relation which the Bird-men made her once, of a Mountain that did burn in flames of fire; and thereupon did immediately send for a wisest and subtilest of her Worm-men, commanding them to discover the cause of the Eruption of that same fire; which they did; and having dived to the very bottom of the Mountain, informed her Majesty, That there was a certain sort of Stone, whose nature was such, that being wetted, it would grow excessively hot, and break forth into a flaming-fire, until it became dry, and then it ceased from burning. The Empress was glad to hear this news, and forthwith desired the Worm men to bring her some of that Stone, but be sure to keep it secret: She sent also for the Bird-men, and asked them whether they could not get her a piece of the Sunstone? They answered, That it was impossible, unless they did spoil or lessen the light of the World: but, said they, if it please your Majesty, we can demolish one of the numerous Stars of the Sky, which the World will never miss.

The Empress was very well satisfied with this proposal, and having thus imployed these two sorts of men, in the mean while builded two Chappels one above another; the one she lined throughout with Diamonds, both Roof, Walls and Pillars; but the other she resolved to line with the Star-stone; the Firestone she placed upon the Diamond-lining, by reason Fire has no power on Diamonds; and when she would have that Chappel where the Fire-stone was, appear all in a flame, she had by the means of Artificial pipes, water conveighed into it, which by turning the Cock, did, as out of a Fountain, spring over all the room, and as long as the Fire-stone was wet, the Chappel seemed to be all in a flaming-fire.

The other Chappel, which was lined with the Starstone, did onely cast a splendorous and comfortable light; both the Chappels stood upon Pillars, just in the middle of a round Cloyster, which was dark as night; neither was there any other light within them, but what came from the Fire-and Star-stone; and being every where open, allowed to all that were within the compass of the Cloyster, a free prospect into them; besides, they were so artificially contrived, that they did both move in a Circle about their own Centres, without intermission, contrary ways. In the Chappel which was lined with the Fire-stone, the Empress preached Sermons of Terror to the wicked, and told them of the punishments for their sins, to wit, That after this life they should be tormented in an everlasting Fire. But in the other Chappel lined with the Starstone, she preached Sermons of Comfort to those that repented of their sins, and were troubled at their own wickedness: Neither did the heat of the flame in the least hinder her; for the Fire-stone did not cast so great a heat but the Empress was able to endure it, by reason the water which was poured on the Stone, by its own self-motion turned into a flaming-fire, occasioned by the natural motions of the Stone, which made the flame weaker then if it had been fed by some other kind of fuel; the other Chappel where the Star-Stone was, although it did cast a great light, yet was it without all heat, and the Empress appear’d like an Angel in it; and as that Chappel was an embleme of *Hell*, so this was an embleme of *Heaven*. And thus the Empress, by Art, and her own Ingenuity, did not onely convert the *Blazing-Worldm* to her own Religion, but kept them in a constant belief, without inforcement or blood-shed; for she knew well, that belief was a thing not to be forced or pressed upon the people, but to be instilled into their minds by gentle perswasions; and after this manner she encouraged them also in all other duties and employments: for Fear, though it makes people obey, yet does it not last so long, nor is it so sure a means to keep them to their duties, as Love.

Last of all, when she saw that both Church and State was now in a well-ordered and setled condition, her thoughts reflected upon the World she came from; and though she had a great desire to know the condition of the same, yet could she advise no manner of way how to gain any knowledg thereof; at last, after many serious considerations, she conceived that it was impossible to be done by any other means, then by the help of Immterial Spirits; wherefore she made a Convocation of the most learned, witty and ingenious of all the forementioned sorts of Men, and desired to know of them, whether there were any Immaterial Spirits in their World. First, she enquired of the Worm-men, whether they had perceived some within the Earth? They answered her Majesty, That they never knew of any such Creatures; for whatsoever did dwell within the Earth, said they, was imbodied and material. Then she asked the Fly-men, whether they had observed any in the Air? for you having numerous Eyes, said she, will be more able to perceive them, than any other Creatures. To which they answered her Majesty, That although Spirits, being immaterial, could not be perceived by the Worm-men in the Earth, yet they perceived that such Creatures did lodg in the Vehicles of the Air. Then the Empress asked, Whether they could speak to them, and whether they did understand each other? The Fly-men answered, That those Spi rits were always cloth’d in some sort or other of Material Garments; which Garments were their Bodies, made, for the most part, of Air; and when occasion served, they could put on any other sort of substances; but yet they could not put these substances into any form or shape, as they pleased. The Empress asked the Fly-men, whether it was possible that she could be acquainted, and have some conferences with them? They answered, They did verily believe she might. Hereupon the Empress commanded the Fly-men to ask some of the Spirits, Whether they would be pleased to give her a Visit? This they did; and after the Spirits had presented themselves to the Empress, (in what shapes or forms, I cannot exactly tell) after some few Complements that passed between them, the Empress told the Spirits that she questioned not, but they did know how she was a stranger in that World, and by what miraculous means she was arrived there; and since she had a great desire to know the condition of the World she came from, her request to the Spirits was, To give her some Information thereof, especially of those parts of the World where she was born, bred, and educated; as also of her particular friends and acquaintance: all which, the Spirits did according to her desire. At last, after a great many conferences and particular intelligences, which the Spirits gave the Empress, to her great satisfaction and content; she enquired after the most famous Students, Writers, and Experimental Philosophers in that World, which they gave her a full relation of: amongst the rest she enquired, Whether there were none that had found out yet the *Jews Cabbala?* Several have endeavoured it, answered the Spirits, but those that came nearest (although themselves denied it) were one Dr. *Dee*, and one *Edward Kelly*, the one representing *Moses*, and the other *Aaron*; for *Kelly* was to Dr. *Dee*, as *Aaron* to *Moses*; but yet they proved at last but meer Cheats; and were described by one of their own Country-men, a famous Poet, named *Ben*. *Johnson*, in a Play call’d, *The Alchymist*, where he expressed *Kelly* by Capt. *Face*, and *Dee* by Dr. *Subtle*, and their two Wives by *Doll Common*, and the Widow; by the *Spaniard* in the Play, he meant the *Spanish* Ambassador, and by Sir *Epicure Mammon*, a *Polish* Lord. The Empress remembred that she had seen the Play, and asked the Spirits, whom he meant by the name of *Ananias*? Some Zealous Brethren, answered they, in *Holland, Germany*, and several other places. Then she asked them, Who was meant by the *Druggist*? Truly, answered the Spirits, We have forgot, it being so long since it was made and acted. What, replied the Empress, Can Spirits forget? Yes, said the Spirits; for what is past, is onely kept in memory, if it be not recorded. I did believe, said the Empress, That Spirits had no need of Memory, or Remembrance, and could not be subject to Forgetfulness. How can we, answered they, give an account of things present, if we had no Memory, but especially of things past, unrecorded, if we had no Remembrance? Said the Empress, By present Knowledg and Understanding. The Spirits answered, That present Knowledg and Understanding was of actions or things present, not of past. But, said the Empress, you know what is to come, without Memory or Remembrance; and therefore you may know what is past without memory and remembrance. They answered, That their foreknowledg was onely a prudent and subtile Observation made by comparing of things or actions past, with those that are present; and that Remembrance was nothing else but a Repetition of things or actions past.

Then the Empress asked the Spirits, Whether there was a threefold *Cabbala*? They answered, *Dee* and *Kelly* made but a two-fold *Cabbala*, to wit, of the Old and New Testament, but others might not onely make two or three, but threescore *Cabbala’s*, if they pleased. The Empress asked, Whether it was a Traditional, or meerly a Scriptural, or whether it was a Literal, Philosophical, or Moral *Cabbala*? Some, answered they, did believe it meerly Traditional, others Scriptural, some Literal, and some Metaphorical: but the truth is, said they, ’twas partly one, and partly the other; as partly a Traditional, partly a Scriptural, partly Literal, partly Metaphorical. The Empress asked further, Whether the *Cabbala* was a work onely of Natural Reason, or of Divine Inspiration? Many, said the Spirits, that write *Cabbala’s* pretend to Divine Inspirations; but whether it be so, or not, it does not belong to us to judg; onely this we must needs confess, that it is a work which requires a good wit, and a strong Faith, but not Natural Reason; for though Natural Reason is most perswasive, yet Faith is the chief that is required in *Cabbalists*. But, said the Empress, Is there not Divine Reason, as well as there is Natural? No, answered they: for there is but a Divine Faith, and as for Reason it is onely Natural; but you Mortals are so puzled about this Divine Faith, and Natural Reason, that you do not know well how to distinguish them, but confound them both, which is the cause you have so many divine Philosophers who make a Gallimafry both of Reason and Faith. Then she asked, Whether pure Natural Philosophers were Cabbalists? They answered, No; but onely your Mystical or Divine Philosophers, such as study beyond Sense and Reason. She enquired further, Whether there was any Cabbala in God, or whether God was full of Idea’s? They answered, There could be nothing in God, nor could God be full of any thing, either forms or figures, but of himself; for God is the Perfection of all things, and an Unexpressible Being, beyond the conception of any Creature, either Natural or Supernatural. Then I pray inform me, said the Empress, Whether the Jews Cabbala or any other, consist in Numbers? The Spirits answered, No: for Numbers are odd, and different, and would make a disagreement in the Cabbala. But, said she again, Is it a sin then not to know or understand the Cabbala? God is so merciful, answered they, and so just, that he will never damn the ignorant, and save onely those that pretend to know him and his secret Counsels by their Cabbala’s; but he loves those that adore and worship him with fear and reverence, and with a pure heart. She asked further, which of these two Cabbala’s was most approved, the Natural, or Theological? The Theological, answered they, is mystical, and belongs onely to Faith; but the Natural belongs to Reason. Then she asked them, Whether Divine Faith was made out of Reason? No answered they, for Faith proceeds onely from a Divine saving Grace, which is a peculiar Gift of God. How comes it then, replied she, that Men, even those that are of several opinions, have Faith more or less? A Natural Belief, answered they, is not a Divine Faith. But, proceeded the Empress, How are you sure that God cannot be known? The several Opinions you Mortals have of God, answered they, are sufficient witnesses thereof. Well then, replied the Empress, leaving this inquisitive knowledg of God, I pray inform me, whether you Spirits give motion to Natural Bodies? No, answered they; but, on the contrary, Natural material bodies give Spirits motion; for we Spirits, being incorporeal, have no motion but from our Corporeal Vehicles, so that we move by the help of our Bodies, and not the Bodies by our help; for pure Spirits are immovable. If this be so, replied the Empress, How comes it then that you can move so suddenly at a vast distance? They answered, That some sorts of matter were more pure, rare, and consequently more light and agil then others; and this was the reason of their quick and sudden motions. Then the Empress asked them, Whether they could speak without a body, or bodily organs? No, said they; nor could we have any bodily sense, but onely knowledg. She asked, Whether they could have Knowledg without Body? Not a Natural, answered they, but a Superna tural Knowledg, which is a far better Knowledg then a Natural. Then she asked them, Whether they had a General or Universal Knowledg? They answered, Single or particular created Spirits, have not; for not any Creature, but God Himself, can have an absolute and perfect knowledg of all things. The Empress asked them further, Whether Spirits had inward and outward parts? No, answered they; for parts onely belong to bodies, not to Spirits. Again, she asked them, Whether their Vehicles were living Bodies? They are Self-moving Bodies, answered they, and therefore they must needs be living; for nothing can move it self, without it hath life. Then, said she, it must necessarily follow, that this living, Self-moving Body gives motion to the Spirit, and not the Spirit motion to the Body, as its Vehicle. You say very true, answered they, and we told you this before. Then the Empress asked them, Of what forms of Matter those Vehicles were? They said they were of several different forms; some gross and dense, and others more pure, rare, and subtil. If you be not Material, said the Empress, how can you be Generators of all Creatures? We are no more, answered they, the Generators of material Creatures, then they are the Generators of us Spirits. Then she asked, Whether they did leave their Vehicles? No, answered they; for we being incorporeal, cannot leave or quit them: but our Vehicles do change into several forms and figures, according as occasion requires. Then the Empress desired the Spirits to tell her, Whether Man was a little World? They answered, That if a Fly or Worm was a little World, then Man was so too. She asked again, Whether our Fore-fathers had been as wise, as Men were at present, and had understood sense and reason, as well as they did now? They answered. That in former Ages they had been as wise as they are in this present, nay, wiser; for, said they, many in this age do think their Fore-fathers have been Fools, by which they prove themselves to be such. The Empress asked further, Whether there was any Plastick power in Nature? Truly, said the Spirits, Plastick power is a hard word, & signifies no more then the power of the corporeal, figurative motions of Nature. After this, the Empress desired the Spirits to inform her where the Paradise was, Whether it was in the midst of the World as a Centre of pleasure? or, Whether it was the whole World; or a peculiar World by it self, as a World of Life, and not of Matter; or whether it was mixt, as a world of living animal Creatures? They answered, That Paradise was not in the world she came from, but in that world she lived in at present; and that it was the very same place where she kept her Court, and where her Palace stood, in the midst of the Imperial City. The Empress asked further, Whether in the beginning and Creation of the World, all Beasts could speak? They answered, That no Beasts could speak, but onely those sorts of Creatures which were Fish-men, Bear-men, Worm-men, and the like, which could speak in the first Age, as well as they do now. She asked again, Whether they were none of those Spirits that frighted *Adam* out of the Paradise, at least caused him not to return thither again? They answered they were not. Then she desired to be informed, whither *Adam* fled when he was driven out of the Paradise? Out of this World, said they, you are now Empress of, into the World you came from. If this be so, replied the Empress, then surely those Cabbalists are much out of their story, who believe the Paradise to be a world of Life onely, without Matter; for this world, though it be most pleasant and fruitful, yet it is not a world of meer Immaterial life, but a world of living, Material Creatures. Without question, they are, answered the Spirits; for not all *Cabbala’s* are true. Then the Empress asked, That since it is mentioned in the story of the Creation of the World, that *Eve* was tempted by the Serpent, Whether the Devil was within the Serpent, or Whether the Serpent tempted her without the Devil? They answered, That the Devil was within the Serpent. But how came it then, replied she, that the Serpent was cursed? They answered, because the Devil was in him; for are not those men in danger of damnation which have the Devil within them, who perswades them to believe and act wickedly? The Empress asked further, Whether Light and the Heavens were all one? They answered, That that Region which contains the Lucid natural Orbs, was by Mortals named Heaven; but the Beatifical Heaven, which is the Habitation of the Blessed Angels and Souls, was so far beyond it, that it could not be compared to any Natural Creature. Then the Empress asked them, Whether all Matter was fluid at first? They answered, That Matter was always as it is; and that some parts of Matter were rare, some dense, some fluid, some solid, &c. Neither was God bound to make all Matter fluid at first. She asked further, Whether Matter was immovable in it self? We have answered you before, said they, That there is no motion but in Matter; and were it not for the motion of Matter, we Spirits, could not move, nor give you any answer to your several questions. After this, the Empress asked the Spirits, Whether the Universe was made within the space of six days, or, Whether by those six days, were meant so many Decrees or Commands of God? They answered her, That the World was made by the All-powerful Decree and Command of God; but whether there were six Decrees or Commands, or fewer, or more, no Creature was able to tell. Then she inquired, Whether there was no mystery in Numbers? No other mystery, answered the Spirits, but reckoning or counting; for Numbers are onely marks of remembrance. But what do you think of the Number of Four, said she, which *Cabbalists* make such ado withal, and of the Number of Ten, when they say that Ten is all, and that all Numbers are virtually comprehended in Four? We think, answered they, that *Cabbalists* have nothing else to do but to trouble their heads with such useless Fancies; for naturally there is no such thing as prime or all in Numbers; nor is there any other mystery in Numbers, but what Man’s fancy makes; but what Men call Prime, or All, we do not know, because they do not agree in the number of their opinion. Then the Empress asked, Whether the number of six was a symbole of Matrimony, as being made up of Male and Femal, for two into three is six. If any number can be a symbole of Matrimony, answered the Spirits, it is not Six, but Two; if two may be allowed to be a Number: for the act of Matrimony is made up of two joined in one. She asked again, What they said to the number of Seven? whether it was not an Embleme of God, because *Cabbalists* say, That it is neither begotten, nor begets any other Number? There can be no Embleme of God, answered the Spirits; for if we do not know what God is, how can we make an Embleme of him? Nor is there any Number in God, for God is the perfection Himself; but Numbers are imperfect; and as for the begetting of numbers, it is done by Multiplication and Addition; but Substraction is as a kind of death to Numbers. If there be no mystery in Numbers, replied the Empress, then it is in vain to refer the Creation of the World to certain Numbers, as *Cabbalists* do. The onely mystery of Numbers, answered they, concerning the Creation of the World, is, that as Numbers do multiply, so does the World. The Empress asked, how far Numbers did multiply? The Spirits answered, to Infinite. Why, said she, Infinite cannot be reckoned, nor numbred, No more, answered they, can the parts of the Universe; for God’s Creation, being an Infinite action, as proceeding from an Infinite Power, could not rest upon a finite Number of Creatures, were it never so great. But leaving the mystery of Numbers, proceeded the Empress, Let me now desire you to inform me, Whether the Suns and Planets were generated by the Heavens, or AEthereal Matter? The Spirits answered, That the Stars and Planets were of the same matter which the Heavens, the AEther, and all other Natural Creatures did consist of; but whether they were generated by the Heavens or AEther, they could not tell: if they be, said they, they are not like their Parents; for the Sun, Stars, and Planets, are more splendorous then the AEther, as also more solid and constant in their motions: But put the case, the Stars and Planets were generated by the Heavens, and the AEthereal Matter; the question then would be, Out of what these are generated or produced? If these be created out of nothing, and not generated out of something, then it is probable the Sun, Stars and Planets are so too; nay, it is more probable of the Stars and Planets, then of the Heavens, or the fluid AEther, by reason the Stars and Planets seem to be further off from Mortality, then the particular parts of the AEther; for no doubt but the parts of the AEthereal Matter, alter into several forms, which we do not perceive of the Stars and Planets. The Empress asked further, Whether they could give her information of the three principles of Man, according to the doctrine of the Platonists; as first of the Intellect, Spirit, or Divine Light. 2. Of the Soul of Man her elf: and 3. Of the Image of the Soul, that is, her vital operation on the body? The Spirits answered, That they did not understand these three distinctions, but that they seem’d to corporeal sense and reason, as if they were three several bodies, or three several corporeal actions; however, said they, they are intricate conceptions of irregular Fancies. If you do not understand them, replied the Empress, how shall human Creatures do then? Many, both of your modern and ancient Philosophers, answered the Spirits, endeavour to go beyond Sense and Reason, which makes them commit absurdities; for no corporeal Creature can go beyond Sense and Reason; no not we Spirits, as long as we are in our corporeal Vehicles. Then the Empress asked them, Whether there were any Atheists in the World? The Spirits answered, That there were no more Atheists then what *Cabbalists* make. She asked them further, Whether Spi its were of a globous or round Figure? They answered, That Figure belonged to body, but they being immaterial, had no Figure. She asked again, Whether Spirits were not like Water or Fire? They answered, that Water and Fire was material, were it the purest and most refined that ever could be; nay, were it above the Heavens: But we are no more like Water or Fire, said they, then we are like Earth; but our Vehicles are of several forms, figures and degrees of substances. Then she desired to know, Whether their Vehicles were made of Air? Yes, answered the Spirits, some of our Vehicles are of thin Air. Then I suppose, replied the Empress, That those airy Vehicles, are your corporeal Summer-suits. She asked further, Whether the Spirits had not ascending and descending-motions, as well as other Creatures? They answered, That properly there was no ascension or descension in Infinite Nature, but onely in relation to particular parts; and as for us Spirits, said they, We can neither ascend nor descend without corporeal Vehicles; nor can our Vehicles ascend or descend, but according to their several shapes and figures, for there can be no motion without body. The Empress asked them further, Whether there was not a World of Spirits, as well as there is of Material Creatures? No, answered they; for the word *World* implies a quantity or multitude of corporeal Creatures, but we being Immaterial, can make no World of Spirits. Then she desired to be informed when Spirits were made? We do not know, answered they, how and when we were made, nor are we much inquisitive after it; nay, if we did, it would be no benefit, neither for us, nor for you Mortals to know it. The Empress replied, That *Cabbalists* and Divine Philosophers said, Mens rational Souls were Immaterial, and stood as much in need of corporeal Vehicles, as Spirits did. If this be so, answered the Spirits, then you are Hermaphrodites of Nature; but your *Cabbalists* are mistaken, for they take the purest and subtilest parts of Matter, for Imma terial Spirits. Then the Empress asked, When the Souls of Mortals went out of their Bodies, whether they went to Heaven or Hell; or whether they re mained in airy Vehicles? God’s Justice and Mercy, answered they, is perfect, and not imperfect; but if you Mortals will have Vehicles for your Souls, and a place that is between Heaven and Hell, it must be Purgatory, which is a place of Purification, for which acti n Fire is more proper then Air; and so the Vehicles of those Souls that are in Purgatory, cannot be airy, but fiery; and after this rate there can be but four places for human Souls to be in, *viz*. Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and this World; but as for Vehicles, they are but fan cies, not real truths. Then the Empress asked them, Where Heaven and Hell was? Your Saviour Christ, answered the Spirits, has informed you, that there is Heaven and Hell, but he did not tell you what, nor where they are; wherefore it is too great a presumption for you Mortals to inquire after it. If you do but strive to get into Heaven, it is enough, though you do not know where or what it is; for it is beyond your know ledg and understanding. I am satisfied, replied the Empress; and asked further, Whether there were any Figures or Characters in the Soul? They answered, Where there was no Body, there could be no Figure. Then she asked them, Whether Spirits could be naked? and whether they were of a dark, or a light colour? As for our Nakedness, it is a very odd question, an swered the Spirits; and we do not know what you mean by a Naked Spirit; for you judg of us as of cor poreal Creatures; and as for Colour, said they, it is according to our Vehicles; for Colour belongs to Body, and as there is no Body that is colourless, so there is no Colour that is bodiless. Then the Em press desired to be informed, Whether all Souls were made at the first Creation of the World? We know no more, answered the Spirits, of the origin of humane Souls, then we know of our Selves. She asked fur ther, Whether humane bodies were not burthensome to humane Souls? They answered, That Bodies made Souls active, as giving them motion; and if action was troublesome to Souls, then Bodies were so too. She asked again, Whether Souls did chuse Bo dies? They answered, That *Platonicks* believed, the Souls of Lovers lived in the Bodies of their Beloved; but surely, said they, if there be a multitude of Souls in a World of Matter, they cannot miss Bodies; for as soon as a Soul is parted from one Body, it enters into another; and Souls having no motion of themselves, must of necessity be clothed or imbodied with the next parts of Matter. If this be so, replied the Em ress, then I pray inform me, Whether all matter be soulified? The Spirits answered, They could not exactly tell that; but if it was true, that Matter had no other motion but what came from a spiritual power, and that all matter was moving, then no soul could quit a Body, but she must of necessity enter into another soulified Body, and then there would be two im material substances in one Body. The Empress asked, Whether it was not possible that there could be two Souls in one Body? As for Immaterial Souls, an swered the Spirits, it is impossible; for there cannot be two Immaterials in one Inanimate Body, by reason they want parts, and place, being bodiless; but there maybe numerous materials Souls in one composed Body, by reason every material part has a material natural Soul; for Nature is but one Infinite self-moving, living and self-knowing body, consisting of the three degrees of inanimate, sensitive and rational Matter, so intermixt together, that no part of Nature, were it an Atom, can be without any of these three Degrees; the sensitive is the Life, the rational the Soul, and the ina nimate part, the Body of Infinite Nature. The Empress was very well satisfied with this answer, and asked further, Whether souls did not give life to bodies? No, answered they; but Spirits and Divine Souls have a life of their own, which is not to be divided, being purer then a natural life; for Spirits are incorporeal, and consequently indivisible. But when the Soul is in its Vehicle, said the Empress, then me thinks she is like the Sun, and the Vehicle like the Moon. No, answered they; but the Vehicle is like the Sun, and the Soul like the Moon; for the Soul hath motion from the Body, as the Moon has light from the sun. Then the Empress asked the Spirits, Whether it was an evil Spirit that tempted Eve, and brought all the mischiefs upon Mankind: or, Whether it was the Serpent? They answered, That Spirits could not commit actual evils. The Empress said, they might do it by perswasions. They answered, That Perswasions were actions; But the Empress not being contented with this answer, asked, Whether there was not a supernatural Evil? The Spirits answered, That there was a Supernatural Good, which was God; but they knew of no Supernatural Evil that was equal to God. Then she desired to know, Whether Evil Spirits were reckoned amongst the Beasts of the Field? They answer’d, That many Beasts of the field were harmless Creatures, and very serviceable for Man’s use; and though some were accounted fierce and cruel, yet did they exercise their cruelty upon other Creatures, for the most part, to no other end, but to get themselves food, and to satisfie their natural appetite; but cer tainly, said they, you Men are more cruel to one an other, then evil Spirits are to you; and as for their habitations in desolate places, we having no communion with them, can give you no certain account thereof. But what do you think, said the Empress, of good Spirits? may not they be compared to the Fowls of the Air? They answered, There were many cruel and ravenous Fowls as well in the Air, as there were fierce and cruel Beasts on Earth; so that the good are al ways mixt with the bad. She asked further, Whether the fiery Vehicles were a Heaven, or a Hell, or at least a Purgatory to the Souls? They answered, That if the Souls were immaterial, they could not burn, and then fire would do them no harm; and though Hell was believed to be an undecaying and unquenchable fire, yet Heaven was no fire. The Empress replied, That Heaven was a Light. Yes, said they, but not a fiery Light. Then she asked, Whether the different shapes and sorts of Vehicles, made the Souls and other Immaterial Spirits, miserable, or blessed? The Vehicles, answered they, make them neither better, nor worse; for though some Vehicles sometimes may have power over others, yet these by turns may get some power again over them, according to the several advantages and disadvantages of particular Natural parts.

…After some time, when the Spirits had refreshed themselves in their own Vehicles, they sent one of their nimblest Spirits, to ask the Empress, Whether she would have a Scribe, or, whether she would write the *Cabbala* herself? The Empress received the proffer which they made her, with all civility; and told them, that she desired a Spiritual Scribe. The Spirits answer’d, That they could dictate, but not write, except they put on a hand or arm, or else the whole body of Man. The Empress replied, How can Spirits arm themselves with gantlets of Flesh? As well, an swered they, as Man can arm himself with a gantlet of steel. If it be so, said the Empress, then I will have a Scribe. Then the Spirits asked her, Whether she would have the Soul of a living or a dead Man? Why, said the Empress, can the Soul quit a living Body, and wander or travel abroad? Yes, answered they, for according to *Plato*’s Doctrine, there is a Conversation of Souls, and the Souls of Lovers live in the Bodies of their Beloved. Then I will have, answered she, the Soul of some ancient famous Writer, either of *Aristotle, Pythagoras, Plato, Epicurus,* or the like. The Spirits said, That those famous Men were very learned, subtile, and ingenious Writers; but they were so wedded to their own opinions, that they would ne ver have the patience to be Scribes. Then, said she, I’le have the Soul of one of the most famous modern Writers, as either of *Galileo, Gassendus, Des Cartes, Helmont, Hobbes, H . More, &c*. The Spirits an swered, That they were fine ingenious Writers, but yet so self-conceited, that they would scorn to be Scribes to a Woman. But, said they, there’s a Lady, the *Duchess of Newcastle;* which although she is not one of the most learned, eloquent, witty and ingenious, yet she is a plain and rational Writer; for the principle of her Writings, is Sense and Reason, and she will without question, be ready to do you all the service she can. That Lady then, said the Empress, will I chuse for my Scribe, neither will the Emperor have reason to be jealous, she being one of my own sex. In truth, said the Spirit, Husbands have reason to be jea lous of *Platonick* Lovers, for they are very dangerous, as being not onely very intimate and close, but subtil and insinuating. You say well, replied the Empress; where fore I pray send me the *Duchess of Newcastle*’s Soul; which the Spirit did; and after she came to wait on the Empress, at her first arrival the Empress imbraced and saluted her with a Spiritual kiss; then she asked her whether she could write? Yes, answered the *Duchess*’s Soul, but not so intelligibly that any Reader whatsoever may understand it, unless he be taught to know my Characters; for my Letters are rather like Characters, then well formed Letters. Said the Em press, you were recommended to me by an honest and ingenious Spirit. Surely, answered the Duchess, the Spirit is ignorant of my hand-writing. The truth is, said the Empress, he did not mention your hand-writing; but he informed me, that you writ Sense and Reason, and if you can but write so, that any of my Secretaries may learn your hand, they shall write it out fair and in telligible. The Duchess answered, That she questioned not but it might easily be learned in a short time. But, said she to the Empress, What is it that your Majesty would have written? She answered, The *Jews* Cabbala. Then your onely way for that is, said the Duchess, to have the Soul of some famous *Jew;* nay, if your Majesty please, I scruple not, but you may as easily have the Soul of *Moses,* as of any other. That cannot be, replied the Empress, for no Mortal knows where *Moses* is. But, said the Duchess, humane Souls are immortal; however, if this be too difficult to be obtained, you may have the Soul of one of the chief Rabbies or Sages of the Tribe of *Levi,* who will truly instruct you in that mystery; when as, otherwise, your Majesty will be apt to mistake, and a thousand to one, will commit gross errors. No, said the Empress, for I shall be instructed by Spirits. Alas! said the Duchess, Spirits are as ignorant as Mortals in many cases; for no created Spirits have a general or absolute knowledg, nor can they know the Thoughts of Men, much less the Mysteries of the great Creator, unless he be pleased to inspire into them the gift of Divine Knowledg. Then, I pray, said the Empress, let me have your counsel in this case. The Duchess answered, If your Majesty will be pleased to hearken to my advice, I would desire you to let that work alone; for it will be of no advantage either to you, or your people, un less you were of the *Jews* Religion; nay, if you were, the vulgar interpretation of the holy Scripture would be more instructive, and more easily believed, then your mystical way of interpreting it; for had it been better and more advantagious for the Salvation of the *Jews,* surely *Moses* would have saved after-Ages that labour by his own Explanation, he being not onely a wise, but a very honest, zealous and religious Man: Where fore the best way, said she, is to believe with the ge nerality the literal sense of the Scripture, and not to make interpretations every one according to his own fancy, but to leave that work for the Learned, or those that have nothing else to do; Neither do I think, said she, that God will damn those that are ignorant there in, or suffer them to be lost for want of a Mystical in terpretation of the Scripture. Then, said the Empress, I’le leave the Scripture, and make a Philosophi cal *Cabbala*. The Duchess told her, That, Sense and Reason would instruct her of Nature as much as could be known; and as for Numbers, they were infinite; but to add non-sense to infinite, would breed a confusion, especially in Humane Understanding. Then, replied the Empress, I’le make a Moral *Cabbala*. The onely thing, answered the Duchess, in Morality, is but, To fear God, and to love his Neighbour, and this needs no further interpretation. But then I’le make a Political *Cabbala,* said the Empress. The Duchess answered, That the chief and onely ground in Government, was but Reward and Punishment, and required no further *Cabbala;* But, said she, If your Majesty were resolved to make a *Cabbala,* I would advise you, rather to make a Poetical or Ro mancical *Cabbala,* wherein you may use Metaphors, Allegories, Similitudes, *&c .* and interpret them as you please. With that the Empress thank’d the Duchess, and embracing her Soul, told her she would take her Counsel: she made her also her Favourite, and kept her sometime in that World, and by this means the Duchess came to know and give this Relation of all that passed in that rich, populous, and happy World; and after some time the Empress gave her leave to return to her Husband and Kindred into her Native World, but upon condition, that her Soul should visit her now and then; which she did: and truly their meet ing did produce such an intimate friendship between them, that they became *Platonick* Lovers, although they were both Femals.

## 3.9.4 Reading and Review Questions

1. Why does Cavendish, in “The Hunting of the Hare,” delay Wat’s destruction? What delaying devices does she use, and to what effect?
2. How does Cavendish associate male dominance with art, and to what effect? How do you know? How does her view of art compare with Chaucer’s, Spenser’s, or Sydney’s?
3. What unique qualities does Cavendish give to her education, starting with her mother’s moral guidance, and why?
4. Why does Cavendish, in “A True Relation,” describe herself as a great emulator? How does she fulfill this description? How does she negate it?
5. How, if at all, does *The Blazing World* trail blaze, especially in terms of gender?