TRACING BLOCH'S "ANTICIPATORY ILLUMINATION" IN *NEW ATLANTIS* AND *THE BLAZING WORLD*

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Thesis Abstract

Nina Cemiloğlu, “Tracing Bloch's 'Anticipatory Illumination' in Bacon's *New Atlantis* and Cavendish's *The Blazing World*”

The aim of this study is to trace two aspects of Ernst Bloch's "anticipatory illumination" in Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626) and Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World* (1666). Bloch is a twentieth-century Marxist philosopher who is considered a key figure in utopian studies. This study will explore the question whether the utopian societies depicted in *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* can be regarded as anticipating Bloch's “realm of freedom”, and whether the two narratives contribute to what Bloch considers the most important purpose of education: *Bildung,* that is, helping people to become active thinkers, to assume an “upright gait” and to become subjects in the sense of historical agents.

Tez Özeti

Nina Cemiloğlu, “Bloch'un 'Öngörüsel Aydınlanma'sının, Bacon’ın *New Atlantis* ve Cavendish’in *Blazing World* eserlerinde izinin sürülmesi”

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Francis Bacon’ın *New Atlantis* (1626) ve Margaret Cavendish’in *Blazing World* (1666) eserlerinde, ütopya üzerine çalışmalarda önemli bir figür olarak kabul edilen yirminci yüzyıl Marksist filozoflarından Ernst Bloch'un "öngörüsel aydınlanma"sının iki yönünün izini sürmektir. Bu çalışmada, *New Atlantis* ve *Blazing World’*de tasvir edilen ütopik toplumların, Bloch'un tasavvurundaki "özgürlük diyarı” olarak görülüp görülemeyecekleri ve bu iki anlatının, Bloch’un eğitimin en önemli amacı olarak gördüğü Bildung’a (yani her insanın aktif düşünür haline gelmesi, "başı dik yürüme” tavrını benimsemesi ve tarihin akışında aktif bir oyuncu olması) katkısı olup olmadığı tartışılacaktır.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCH'S PHILOSOPHY OF UTOPIA

This dissertation posits an affinity on two counts between Bloch's thinking and the utopias of Bacon and Cavendish. Thus it is in order to start off with a discussion of Bloch's philosophical thinking on the subject of utopia.

In *Traces* (1929), a collection of stories, aphorisms and essays, Bloch remarked: "Children like it best at someone else's home. They notice soon enough what's wrong there too. If it were so nice at home, they wouldn't leave so eagerly. They sense early that, here as elsewhere, much could be different" (2). Today, there is a widespread feeling that things are not as they should be, but we live in a culture in which there is little confidence that things can be otherwise. In our society, the word “utopia” is hardly ever used anymore. If it is used, then usually as an adjective in phrases such as “That's merely utopian thinking", that is, in a depreciating manner, for “utopian” is taken to mean “unrealistic”, “impractical” or “hopelessly naive”. Thus, the concept of utopia has been reduced to a pipe dream or castle in the clouds - mere wishful thinking without any possibility for realization.

Utopia has not only been depreciated, it has also been severed from its original soil. In the past, the concept of utopia was bound up with the concept of society. Today, this bond no longer exists. Utopian desire has been shifted from the public to the private domain. It is no longer directed at the good society but at the good life or happiness as defined by capitalist ideology. The good life has become a synonym for material success, happiness, for consumerism and instant gratification. Thus, utopia has been limited to dreams about winning the lottery, buying a house and traveling the world. People no longer dream of making the

world a better place but of making *for themselves* a better place *in* the world. Happiness is no longer regarded as a social matter but as one's own private affair and responsibility. Utopian longing has become increasingly selfish, even narcissistic, as indicated by the growing number of people who seek to turn their bodies into aesthetic objects through ornament, diet, exercise and surgical intervention. In our society, utopian desire is occurring on an increasingly private level, a trend that is fully in the interest of the current power structure because, by keeping people preoccupied with the fulfillment of petty bourgeois dreams, utopia is effectively drained of its socially transformative energy.

Utopia has not only been depreciated and cut off from its bond with society, it has also been appropriated by capitalism and, as a result, undergone a demeaning banalization. Utopia has become a popular name for an astonishingly wide range of products and services. If one looks up the term “utopia” on the internet, one finds, among a few links about Thomas More's *Utopia,* a Utopia Hotel, a Utopia fashion line, a Utopia computer game, a Utopia guide for gay and lesbian nightlife in Asia and an ocean liner called Utopia that promises its customers "incomparable luxury" and "an unparalleled lifestyle". Needless to say, these products and services are only available to a small group of people – the rich and privileged who live in a kind of consumer utopia - whereas the majority of the world's population is excluded from their enjoyment and condemned to poverty and premature death. Capitalism is the most productive economic system in the history of humankind. However, by allocating wealth privately, it has caused immense economic and social problems, not to mention ecological problems. Capitalism not only keeps most people in the world in a constant state of material deprivation, it also keeps most human beings in a constant state of spiritual

deprivation, because even those of us who are very affluent suffer from the destructive consequences of capitalism in the form of alienation. Nevertheless, most people appear to have resigned themselves to things as they are and have given up the hope that things will ever be different. Today, hardly anybody believes that there is a viable alternative to capitalism. This is partly due to the events of 1989. The collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe was frequently referred to as the "end of utopia". What happened in 1989 was taken by many as ultimate proof that the dream of human freedom, equality and material security, whether inspired by left-wing or right-wing doctrines, was doomed to turn into its opposite - a nightmare of murder and oppression (the other horror of the twentieth century, National Socialism, had been interpreted in a similar manner). In 1989, both utopia and Marxism were declared dead, and, together with their goals and ambitions, dumped into the dustbin of history.

In the academic world, the concept of utopia was also regarded as inextricably bound up with totalitarianism. Throughout a large part of the second half of the twentieth century, utopia was regarded as either a totalitarian political project or a literary representation of a fictitious perfect society. This view of literary utopias is today known as the blueprint paradigm. It has produced readings of literary utopias focusing on the organizational features of the imaginary societies depicted in them and on their desirability. In the light of this approach, most literary utopias were found lacking and misguided in what were held to be concrete suggestions for the achievement of a perfect society. Readings along the blueprint paradigm not only found most literary utopias deficient and erroneous, they also found fault with what were considered to be the main goals of utopia, perfection and the implementation of rules guaranteeing this perfection.

Literary utopias were viewed as raising the specter of totalitarianism and as idealizing stasis, closure and death. The depreciation of utopia in the academic world was further exacerbated by the advent of postmodernism and its critique of "grand narratives", that is, discourses that make claims about truth and morality (utopias usually do make such claims).

In 1986, Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*, today regarded as the most important theoretical treatment of utopia, was translated into English. It was largely written during the 1940s, but remained unknown in the Anglo-American academic world. The concept of utopia developed by Bloch is so wide-ranging that it is better called a philosophy of utopia. Bloch's works have not only restored critical respect to the concept of utopia, they have also brought about a paradigm shift - a shift from representation or content to process. Today, literary utopias are no longer regarded as naturalistic representations of perfect societies but as texts which engage readers into a process of actively thinking about utopia and its relevance in the contemporary world. Thus, literary utopias are considered as engendering a dialogue with, rather than within, the text. The focus is on how utopian texts work rather than what they mean. In other words, what is considered important about a utopian text is not what is imagined but the process of imagining itself. Thus, literary utopias are not only regarded as providing readers with a glimpse of utopia but also as inspiring them to set out on the journey towards utopia. Not that it already exists. However, as Bloch has pointed out, "*in that* we travel there the island utopia arises out of the sea of the possible" ("Missing", 3).

The key concept in Bloch's philosophy of utopia is the "Not Yet". According to Bloch, human beings are determined by the "Not Yet" - "a lack of

something and also escape from this lack; [...] a driving towards what is missing" (*Principle,* 306). It is a critique of what exists and the wish and will to achieve what is missing; it is, in Bloch's words, an "active-utopian Not-Yet in process" (*Principle,* 309). According to Bloch, works of art and literature are manifestations of this utopian Not-Yet. He claims that every work of art contains a utopian function that produces a utopian surplus. This utopian surplus becomes visible as anticipatory illumination. Anticipatory illumination makes conscious a Not-Yet-Conscious and points towards a Not-Yet-Become. A work of art casts a picture of what is not yet - and of what will never be like that, because anticipatory illumination is not determination of the future, but meaning that points to the utopian horizon, making us consciously aware of it. According to Bloch, not only contemporary works of art but also works of art from the past contain anticipatory illumination. For him, the past is full of "undischarged future" (*Principle,* 200). Although works of art from the past contain much time-bound material, they nevertheless reveal to their readers "constantly new perspectives" (*Principle,* 155): "[T]he blossoms of art, science, philosophy, always denote something more than the false consciousness which each society, bound to its position, had of itself and used for its own embellishment. These blossoms can be removed from their first socio-historical soil" (*Principle,* 155). Thus, Bloch views works of art from the past as valuable parts of our cultural heritage that can be re-utilized for the present and future by discovering anticipatory illumination in them. As Jack Zipes has pointed out, Bloch's concept of anticipatory illumination

> demands that we become detective-critics in our appreciation and evaluation of [...] works [of art and literature]. It is up to us to determine what the anticipatory illumination of a work is, and in doing this we make a

> contribution to the cultural heritage. That is, the quality of our cultural heritage and its meaning are determined by our ability to estimate what is valuable and utopian in works of art from all periods ("Introduction", xxxvi).

In other words, Bloch's approach towards works of art and literature challenges us to read texts in a critical and searching manner and to reveal anticipatory illumination in them, that is, images, ideas and values which we regard as potentially contributing to the achievement of a better society in the future.

Bloch's concept of anticipatory illumination demands that we read texts in the light of the following question: What aspects of the text direct us towards a more humane society in the future? Anticipatory illumination is rooted in the conviction that reading books, watching plays, looking at paintings and listening to music are acts of hope which have ramifications for our lives and for society as a whole. According to Bloch, we approach works of art and literature in the hope to find something which is missing from our lives. He rejects the widespread tendency to approach works of art and literature in what he has called an "autarkical-contemplative" manner (that is, in a manner which is based on the assumption that knowledge can be divided into different fields which are unconnected to each other and that the past is finished and closed, i.e., without ramifications for the present and future, *Principle,* 280). Bloch further rejects the widespread assumption that works of art and literature are objects which can be passively consumed (*Principle,* 157). According to Bloch, culture cannot be consumed but has to be created. He views human beings as subjects of culture, that is, as contributing to their cultural heritage by interpreting works of art and literature. Anticipatory illumination inspires us to approach cultural products in a critical manner, that is, to compare the fictitious world presented to us by an artist

with the world we live in, and in a creative manner, that is, to continue and to go beyond the images, ideas and values contained in them. Bloch values works of art and literature for making us conscious of the inhumanity of capitalist class society and for painting a sketch of a better society - a society in which we can finally become fully human.

Bloch's philosophy of utopia is, to a large extent, inspired by Marxist ideas. Like Marx, Bloch rejected capitalism and its destructive consequences for human beings and nature. His concept of utopia is indebted to Marx's "realm of freedom". Marx has described the "realm of freedom" in terms of the absence of the characteristics of the capitalist class society (most importantly, misery, exploitation, fear and alienation) and as the "naturalization of man, humanization of nature" (*Principle,* 131). Bloch himself has described the "realm of freedom" as a state "in which neither man behaves towards the world, nor the world behaves towards man, as if towards a stranger" (*Principle,* 209) and as "the abolition of alienation in man and nature, between man and nature or the harmony of the unreified object with the manifested subject, of the unreified subject with the manifested object" (*Principle,* 240), that is , as the end of alienation – between human beings, and between human beings and nature. In other words, in the "realm of freedom", people will live in harmony with each other and with nature, and they will neither exploit each other nor nature. In fact, Bloch regards this issue, i.e., the relationship between human beings and the relationship between human beings and nature, as the most relevant issue imaginable and argues that it must be considered "the Archimedean point" (*Principle,* 286) in any philosophy worth the paper it is written on.

Bloch's concept of utopia is not only inspired by Marx's "realm of

freedom", but also by the Christian concept of neighborly love (*Nächstenliebe*), which demands that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves and even that we love our enemies. Thus, Christian *Nächstenliebe* includes caring for others (in fact, for *all* human beings) and non-violence. In a key episode of the New Testament, Jesus Christ is reported to have desisted from slapping a man who has slapped him on the right cheek; instead of slapping the man back, Jesus offers him his left cheek as well. Bloch has described *Nächstenliebe* as "service toward one another, through submission, becoming the other, filling oneself with love as the spirit of the convocation" (*Spirit,* 216), as "clemency, the ability to feel empathy with other human beings" (*Geist*, 358) and as "the epitome of human virtue and morality" (*Geist*, 358).[1] According to Bloch, *Nächstenliebe* is not only altruism of an "I" for an "other" but a mingling of the I, the other *and Jesus Christ.* Bloch believed that practicing the Christian ideal of neighborly love can radically transform society. This is indicated by his allusion to the following remark by a character in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*: "[I]n truth we are each responsible to all for all, it's only that men don't know this. If they knew it, the world would be a paradise at once" (*Spirit*, 290). Bloch valued *Nächstenliebe,* which he has described as love of all for all, as a radically democratic concept. Accordingly, he rejected the notion of God as an embodiment of authority, domination and hierarchy promoted by the official Western Church and, instead, embraced a view of God as maternal, friendly and loving; not as a patriarchal oppressive figure but as a "creative space of congregation and convocation" (*Geist*, 382). Bloch cherished the values advocated by Jesus, but rejected the

[1] Some passages from *Geist der Utopie* (*The Spirit of Utopia*) are my own translations.

standard interpretation of Christ as the Messiah, the savior of humankind. According to Bloch, Christ's sacrifice was not enough to achieve the salvation of humankind: His "innocent blood was hardly spilled into the world's hatred, [...] human beings were hardly ransomed from Satan by this payment" (*Spirit,* 215/16). According to Bloch, salvation is yet to come – not through the death of a superhuman individual but through *Nächstenliebe,* that is, through the love of all for all; not in the afterlife but in this world.

Though Bloch's philosophy of utopia is partly inspired by Christian values and resonates with religious and transcendent ideas, its agenda is wholly this-worldly. Bloch's philosophy of utopia can be called materialist. According to Bloch, everything consists of matter. However, he does not view matter as a dead lump like the mechanistic materialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Bloch's notion of matter is informed by Aristotle's theory of entelechies, which defines matter as being-in-possibility. It is also inspired by pantheistic-materialistic philosophers of the Middle Ages, such as Avicenna and Averroes, and by the Renaissance philosopher Giordano Bruno, in whose thought, as Bloch has put it, "*natura naturans* [nature as a creative principle] and *natura naturata* [created nature] coincide in permanent, eternal, generating, maternal matter" (*Principle,* 236). According to Bloch, matter is animated, creative, utopianly charged (*Selected,* 53)[2] and open to possibility (*Principle,* 200). Besides, he views matter as maternal, as indicated by the fact that he draws our attention to the etymological link between "matter" and "mater", the Latin word for "mother" (*Selected*, 56). He has further described matter as a "womb of fertility from which all world-forms inexhaustibly emerge" (*Principle,* 207). Unlike the mechanical

[2] All translations from *Ausgewählte Schriften* (*Selected Writings*) are my own.

materialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bloch does not view matter as “passive like wax" (*Selected,* 59) but as "self-moving and self-shaping" (*Selected,* 59), that is as active, creative and free. Unlike the mechanical materialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bloch does not associate matter only with “body” but also with “mind”. According to him, matter is not a dead lump but a living being endowed with sense perception and reason. In fact, Bloch rejects the binary opposites “body” and “mind” altogether. For him, matter and mind are not binary opposites but interconnected like threads in a web: “Spirit is not its opponent, in which matter evaporates, to be thought of as dead lump, but its own blossom; spirit does not fall out of matter, it does not transcend it” (*Selected,* 59).

Bloch's concept of nature can be called both materialist and vitalist, and in stark contrast to the view of nature proposed by the mechanic materialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose perception of nature is still determining our own view of nature: The way we perceive and treat nature today is to a large extent shaped by the view of nature as dead lump advanced by the mechanical materialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We perceive and treat nature as a lifeless thing, that is, as something we can use, an attitude which has produced the ecological crisis we are facing today. Bloch reminds us that nature is not a dead lump but a living being – not just any living being but actually our mother. Bloch's concept of nature implies that we should value and respect nature in the same manner in which we value and respect our human mothers and that we should aspire to a harmonious relationship with nature. As noted earlier, Bloch's “realm of freedom” envisions “the abolition of alienation in man and nature, between man and nature or the harmony of the unreified object

with the manifested subject, of the unreified subject with the manifested object" (*Principle,* 240). Bloch's notion of nature as animate, active, creative, maternal, autonomous, utopianly charged and open to possibility and his concept of the "realm of freedom" as harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, which he developed during the 1940s, display an astonishing yet praiseworthy ecological awareness – an awareness which is much-needed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Apart from harmony, Bloch's philosophy of utopia emphasizes process and possibility. According to Bloch, the world and human existence consist not of constant and static Being but of infinite Becoming - possibility becoming reality on an objective level, hope becoming realization on a subjective level: "Expectation, hope, intention towards yet unbecome possibility: this is not only a main characteristic of human consciousness but also a main characteristic of objective reality on the whole" (*Principle,* 9). For Bloch, the world is full of not-yet-realized possibilities: "What has already become reality is surrounded by an ocean of possibilities, out of which, again and again, a new piece of reality arises" (*Selected,* 59). However, in order to become realized, these possibilities must be perceived and transferred into reality by human beings. Bloch views human beings as agents who shape themselves and the world surrounding them. He fully subscribed to Marx's famous statement: "Philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it" (*Principle,* 246). However, as Bloch has deplored, most people in Western capitalist society perceive the world as static and unchangeable. They can neither imagine that the world could be different nor that they themselves can change the world for the better. They feel themselves "only passively thrown into What Is" (*Principle,* 3) and do not

realize that they can actually “throw themselves actively into What Is Becoming” (*Principle,* 3). According to Bloch, people lack utopian consciousness because capitalist ideology disguises the future as the past, presenting the future as something which has already been decided and thus as something which will under no circumstances be different from but in any case identical with the present and the past. However, according to Bloch, the future has not been decided yet; in fact, he has claimed that neither the future nor the present and the past are finished yet. Both the future and the present and the past are still being contested for. Neither the present nor the past consist of “closed [and] fixed, even perfected facts”, but of “processes: dynamic relationships in which the Become has not completely triumphed” (*Principle,* 196). Capitalist ideology emphasizes reality (what has already become) and depreciates possibility (what has not become yet). However, according to Bloch, possibility is not a chimera but as real as reality itself: “Reality without real possibility is not complete” (*Principle,* 223). What is more, both reality and possibility are in a continuous process of becoming, one turning into the other: “Everything real passes over into the Possible” (*Principle,* 196) and vice versa. In other words, “the unresolved utopian tension [is] constantly undermining everything shaped” (*Spirit*, 228).

Bloch's notions of possibility and process also inform his view of education, knowledge and thinking. For Bloch, the main purpose of education is *Bildung,* that is, helping human beings to become active thinkers, to assume an “upright gait” and to become subjects in the sense of historical agents. Bloch considers conventional education as a failure in all three points. According to him, conventional education does not help human beings to become active thinkers but actually prevents them from thinking. This occurs in two ways: First, by forcing

students to memorize innumerable "facts" which they are supposed to reproduce in innumerable tests (Bloch refers to this practice as "the tyranny of the textbook", *Pädagogica,* 8).[3] Secondly, by presenting reality as free of contradictions, thus depriving students of the opportunity to become incited to think by these contradictions *(Pädagogica,* 12). By contrast, Bloch's philosophy deliberately embraces contradictions, recognizing Being as constituted by contradictions. According to Bloch, conventional education produces nothing but "stupidity" (*Pädagogica,* 12) and "remains to the end the most conformist of operations, not a single one of its guiding images is yet one of tomorrow" (*Principle,* 929). Bloch has argued that conventional education not only prevents us from thinking, but also from assuming an "upright gait", thus turning us into "ethical cripples" (*Pädagogica,* 12) instead. Finally, according to Bloch, conventional education prevents men and women from becoming subjects in the sense of historical agents by presenting reality as if it were already finished, that is, as unchangeable. Bloch claims that conventional education is only concerned with "contemplative knowledge" – a knowledge that deals exclusively with the past and ignores the present and the future, and that, moreover, presents the past as finished and closed. According to Bloch, contemplative knowledge is only a "reified *factum* [something that has become] without consciousness of its *fieri* [something that will become in the future] and continuing process" (*Principle,* 7). It is antiquarian and therefore perceived by students as having no ramifications for the present and future, that is, as completely unrelated to their own lives. Instead of contemplative knowledge, Bloch advocates "active knowledge". He defines the process of gaining knowledge as an activity. He does not view students as passive

[3] All translations from *Pädagogica* are my own.

receptacles, which are to be filled with knowledge, but as thinkers who are potentially able to evaluate the ideas of others and to develop their own ideas.

Bloch defines “thinking” as a “critical, insistent, revealing activity” (*Principle,* 268) and as “venturing beyond” (*Principle,* 2). For him, thinking and acting are not binary opposites but interconnected. This is also evident from Bloch's definition of “hope” as “a cognitive act of a directing kind” *(Principle,* 11/12). His notion of the interconnectedness of human thought and human action implies that we can change the world by changing the way we think. Works of art and literature can play an important role in this process. They not only afford us with a glimpse of utopia but also make us perceive what our habitual and numbed perception does not perceive. Bloch values works of art and literature for providing us with an approximation of what it means to be fully human and for their potential to "rip apart habitual ways of perceiving and thinking, thus creating cracks and openings for the new" (*Selected,* 36).

CHAPTER 2:

BACON'S *NEW ATLANTIS* – AN ANTICIPATION OF BLOCH'S “REALM OF FREEDOM”?

Bacon's *New Atlantis* is a rewriting of Plato's account of the lost civilization of Atlantis, the legendary island which sank into the sea, in his dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias.* The imaginary society depicted by Bacon in *New Atlantis* is called “Bensalem”, which means “son of peace” in Hebrew. The Bensalemites live in peace and material security; their way of thinking and acting is rooted in the Christian concept of neighborly love, that is, they care for each other and for strangers as their fellow human beings. The material prosperity of Bensalem is the result of its inhabitants' advanced state of knowledge. Bacon's *New Atlantis* is usually referred to as a scientific utopia because a large part of it is devoted to the description of Salomon's House, a state-financed scientific research institute named after the Biblical King Solomon the Wise and the Bensalemite King Salomona, the island's ancient law-giver. Salomon's House served as a powerful inspiration and model for the British Royal Society, established in 1662, and for other modern research institutes all over the world. While *New Atlantis* was admired and considered worthy of emulation in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, twentieth-century critics have frequently criticized Bacon's works for advancing ideas which they regard as having given rise to the oppression of human beings by human beings and to the exploitation of nature by man in the modern world. In other words, Bacon's works have repeatedly been held responsible for the negative effects of capitalism on humankind and nature, that is, for oppression, social injustice and the ecological crisis we are facing today. Such critiques are certainly not unwarranted, but they should not lead us to

simply dismiss Bacon's fable. On the contrary, we should value *New Atlantis* for the large amount of anticipatory illumination contained in it, that is, images, values and ideas which, if we take them up, contribute to the establishment of a better society in the future – the kind of society which Bloch, drawing on Marx, has referred to as the "realm of freedom".

This chapter will explore the question whether *New Atlantis* can be regarded as anticipating Bloch's "realm of freedom". As noted earlier, the "realm of freedom" has been described by Bloch as a state "in which neither man behaves towards the world, nor the world behaves towards man, as if towards a stranger" (*Principle,* 209) and as "the abolition of alienation in man and nature, between man and nature or the harmony of the unreified object with the manifested subject, of the unreified subject with the manifested object" (*Principle,* 240), that is, as the end of alienation between human beings and between human beings and nature. Accordingly, the focus of this chapter will be on the relationship between human beings and between human beings and nature in Bensalem, the imaginary society depicted by Bacon in *New Atlantis.*

New Atlantis tells the story of a group of Spanish sailors who are lost in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Peru. Eventually, they are cast ashore on an unknown island – the island of Bensalem. They "entered into a good haven, being the port of a fair city" (*NA,* 3), where they "saw divers of the people, with bastons in their hands, as it were, forbidding us to land: yet without any cries of fierceness, but only as warning us off, by the signs that they made" (*NA,* 4). Apparently, the narrator does not perceive the Bensalemites' behavior as hostile, which implies that the islanders are not afraid of the strangers. This interpretation is supported by the narrator's description of the Bensalemites approaching the

strangers' ship: "[…] there made forth to us a small boat, with about eight persons in it, whereof one of them had in his hand a tipstaff of a yellow cane, tipped at both ends with blue, who made aboard our ship, without any show of distrust at all" (*NA,* 4). Although the Bensalemites are not afraid of the strangers, they do not permit them to set foot on the island. Nevertheless, they provide them with "that which belongeth to mercy" (*NA*, 4): "fresh water, or victual, or help for our sick, or that our ship needeth repair" (*NA*, 4). However, the sailors are eventually granted permission to land and brought to the "strangers' house", a guest house for foreigners who come to Bensalem. There, they are given fair and spacious rooms, wholesome and delicious food and medicine for their sick, who are lodged in separate rooms. The sailors, sick and healthy alike, are not supposed to leave the strangers' house for the next three days. All of this indicates that the Bensalemites do not initially prevent the sailors from setting foot on the island because they are on principle afraid of strangers or because they lack the means or willingness to take care of them but because they suspect that the sailors are carrying infectious diseases. After three days the sailors learn that they have been granted permission to stay on the island for six more weeks and, moreover, there is the possibility that their residence permit may be extended. The sailors are further informed that their stay, be it for six weeks or more, will be financed by the state of Bensalem. In addition to shelter and food, the sailors will be provided with *anything* they might consider necessary or desirable. On top of this, the sailors are assured that their stay will not be considered a financial burden by the state or any of its citizens: The governor of the strangers' house tells the sailors: "'[...] take you no care; the state will defray you all the time you stay" (*NA,* 9), "if you have any other request to make, hide it not; for you shall find we will not make your countenance to fall

by the answer you shall receive" (*NA,* 10), and finally: "'Neither shall you stay one day the less for that [the fact that they live in Bensalem at the expense of the state]'" (*NA,* 9/10). Apparently, Bensalem is not only rich enough to provide for its own citizens, but also to take care of strangers. In fact, Bensalem provides for its strangers in such an excellent manner that they have no desire to leave the island again. Only thirteen persons chose to return to Europe, but "what those few [...] may have reported abroad, [...] could be taken where they came but for a dream" (*NA,* 19).

The narrator refers to Bensalem as a "happy island" (*NA,* 14), where life is carefree and pleasant. The Bensalemites have everything they need. Besides, everything in Bensalem is of a better quality than in Europe – more brilliant, more colorful, more delicious and more fragrant. For example, the scroll of parchment delivered to the sailors is described by the narrator as "somewhat yellower than our parchment, and shining like the leaves of writing tables, but otherwise soft and flexible" (*NA,* 4). A Bensalemite is described as wearing "a gown with wide sleeves, of a kind of water chamolet, of an excellent azure color, far more glossy than ours" (*NA,* 5). The food the sailors are offered on the island is described as "right good viands, both for bread and meat; better than any collegiate diet that I have known in Europe. We had also drink of three sorts, all wholesome and good; wine of the grape; a drink of grain, such as is with us our ale, but more clear; and a kind of cider made of a fruit of that country; a wonderful pleasing and refreshing drink" (*NA,* 8). As Bronwen Price has pointed out, Bensalem has a "'more than' quality" (*Francis Bacon's* New Atlantis, 6), compared to which life in Europe appears deficient.

Much to the astonishment of the sailors, the Bensalemites are more than

willing to share their material wealth with them. Throughout the narrative, the narrator refers to the islanders' extraordinary “humanity”. The Bensalemites are described by the narrator as “full of humanity” (*NA*, 4) and as “a Christian people, full of piety and humanity” (*NA,* 8). Their behavior towards the narrator and his companions is described as “singular humanity” (*NA,* 6). The behavior of the governor of the strangers' house towards the sailors is referred to as “rare humanity” (*NA,* 13). Apparently, the Bensalemites' way of thinking and acting is rooted in Christian love (*Nächstenliebe*)*,* which, as noted earlier, has been described by Bloch as “service toward one another, through submission, becoming the other, filling oneself with love as the spirit of the convocation” (*Spirit,* 216) and as “clemency and the ability to feel empathy with other human beings” (*Geist*, 358). Throughout his works, Bloch emphasizes the importance of Christian love (*Nächstenliebe*) for the achievement of a more humane society. For Bloch, *Nächstenliebe* is a crucial part of being fully human. It involves caring for other human beings in the same manner one cares for oneself, one's family and friends. In fact, *Nächstenliebe* demands that we no longer perceive other human beings as “other” but as fellow human beings – sisters and brothers who deserve our love and care. Bloch values *Nächstenliebe* as an attitude which can thoroughly transform our society. Likewise, Bacon appears to have highly valued the Christian ideal of neighborly love, for it is the main feature of the society of Bensalem.

How do the sailors in *New Atlantis* respond to what they perceive as the Bensalemites' extraordinary humanity? First of all, they feel wonder and amazement. Apparently, the sailors have never encountered so much kindness and generosity in Europe. They are overwhelmed by the islanders' hospitality: “We

answered, after we had looked a while upon one another, admiring this gracious and parent-like usage, that we could not tell what to say, for we wanted words to express our thanks; and his noble, free offers left us nothing to ask" (*NA,* 10). Besides, the sailors can hardly believe that Bensalem is real: To them, the island appears as "a land of angels, which did appear to us daily and present us with comforts, which we thought not of, much less expected" (*NA,* 10). A society such as Bensalem is beyond the sailors' imagination. They can only liken it to Paradise or the Garden of Eden: "It seemed to us, that we had before us a picture of our salvation in heaven; for we that were a while since in the jaws of death, were now brought into a place where we found nothing but consolations" (*NA,* 10). Apart from feeling wonder and amazement, the sailors feel obliged to express their gratitude towards the Bensalemites – significantly, by offering money to them. After all, the sailors are the products of a society based on the profit principle. Erasmus complained in his *Adages:* "Nowadays, the rage for possession has got to such a pitch that there is nothing in the realm of nature, whether sacred or profane out of which profit cannot be squeezed" (quoted in *Civilization*, 379). Luther declared the widespread attitude among his contemporaries of "'pay up or give interest for I must have my profit!'" to be immoral (quoted in *Civilization*, 379). The sixteenth-century German merchant Michael Behaim ruefully stated: "One who has money advances, while one who has nothing gets little in addition. People observe that one has nothing; they do not ask who one is" (quoted in *Civilization*, 383). His contemporary Willibald Pirckheimer complained, with reference to Nuremberg: "Money is king among us." The reply from Vienna was: "It is the same everywhere" (quoted in *Civilization*, 414). When, in Christopher Marlowe's play *The Jew of Malta,* the Governor of the island asks the Turkish

“Bashaw”, “What wind drives you thus into Malta road?” the latter replies, “The wind that bloweth all the world besides,/ Desire of gold” (Act 3,Scene 5, ll. 1421-23). In short, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it seemed to many that self-interest was not only a dominant characteristic of the average European, it was also increasingly regarded as a part of human nature, as is indicated by works such as Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan.*

The sailors in Bacon's fable can be viewed as representatives or versions of Hobbesian man. In order to compensate one of the Bensalemites for his help and kindness, the sailors offer him “some reward in pistolets” (*NA*, 5) and “a piece of crimson velvet” (*NA*, 5). But, much to the astonishment of the sailors, he “took them not, nor would scarce look upon them” (*NA*, 5). When the sailors offer to compensate the Bensalemites for the expenses caused by their stay on the island with merchandise they have brought, the islanders accept the offer, but reciprocate it with an even more generous offer - in fact, with a gift: “As for any merchandise you have brought”, the governor of the strangers' house explains to the sailors, “ye shall be used well, and have your return, either in merchandise or in gold and silver; for to us it is all one” (*NA,* 10). When the sailors realize that none of the islanders will take their money or merchandise, they finally offer *themselves* to the Bensalemites, asking the governor of the strangers' house “to accept of us as his true servants, by as just a right as ever men on earth were bounden; laying and presenting both our persons and all we had at his feet” (*NA,* 10). But the governor of the strangers' house rejects the sailors' offer, explaining to them that “he was a priest and looked for a priest's reward; which was our brotherly love, and the good of our souls and bodies” (*NA,* 10). Again, it is obvious that the Bensalemites' actions are not informed by self-interest but by *Nächstenliebe.* The Bensalemites

treat each other and the sailors as brothers, that is, they, in Bloch's words, “recognize the humanity of the other” and are willing to “do for the lowliest and darkest of our brothers what we would do for Jesus” (*Geist*, 359).

The Bensalemites are not only described as veritably practicing the Christian ideal of *Nächstenliebe* but also as “civil”. Bacon's emphasis on the Bensalemites' civility not only indicates that he regarded civility as an important characteristic of utopia but also that Bensalem is a classless and non-capitalist society, that is, a socialist or communist society – in short, the kind of society of which the Marxist Bloch would have highly approved. Like Marx, Bloch was convinced that the “realm of freedom” could not be anything but a communist or socialist, that is, classless and non-capitalist, society. As Bacon's emphasis on the Bensalemites' civility indicates, Bensalem is such a society. The islanders' civility is mentioned in a number of passages: The sailors are led “through three fair streets; and all the way we went there were gathered some people on both sides, standing in a row; but in so civil a fashion, as if it had been, not to wonder at us, but to welcome us; and divers of them, as we passed by them, put their arms a little abroad, which is their gesture when they bid any welcome” (*NA,* 6/7). The Bensalemites are further described as displaying “such a freedom and desire to take strangers, as it were, into their bosom” (*NA,* 22). The rooms given to the sailors in the strangers' house are described as “furnished civilly” (*NA,* 7). While the sailors are under quarantine in the strangers' house, the narrator admonishes his companions to take the Bensalemites as their example and to “live soberly and civilly, and without giving any the least occasion of offense” (*NA,* 9). As John Hale has pointed out, civility came to be regarded in early modern Europe as a highly desirable ideal. This ideal had its roots in ancient Rome and referred to “the

virtues of the sophisticated urban life of antiquity" (*Civilization,* 358). However, "with the contemporary [Renaissance] distinction between 'citizens' with municipal rights and duties and mere city dwellers, the class bias of ancient society strongly influenced the meaning of civility, and promoted its limitation to an educated elite" (*Civilization*, 359). Thus, both in ancient Rome and early modern Europe, the ideal of civility was limited to a small group. By contrast, in Bensalem, the ideal of civility is extended to the entire population of the island. In Bensalem, there are no social classes, but everybody is a citizen – even the Jew Joabin. Like Marlowe's Barabas and Shakespeare's Shylock, Joabin is a merchant. But unlike Barabas and Shylock, who hate and despise Malta and Venice respectively, together with their inhabitants, Joabin "loves the nation of Bensalem extremely" (*NA*, 26), presumably because, in Bensalem, he is regarded and treated as a citizen and not, like Barabas and Shylock, as a social outcast. Thus, Bacon's emphasis on the Bensalemites' civility indicates that Bensalem is a classless society. It also indicates that Bensalem is a non-capitalist society. This is in stark contrast to the meaning of civility in the Europe of Bacon's day. According to Hale, in early modern Europe, there was a link between civility and commerce, that is, trade was regarded as an indication of civility in a culture. In the case of the inhabitants of the New World, Hale has argued, "[c]ommerce and the use of money was a test of the civility of the Amerindians because it was taken for granted as a sign of an advanced state of society in Europe" (*Civilization,* 364). Bensalem on the other hand is not a great trading nation. It is not engaged in overseas trade – at least not in the way seventeenth-century European nations were. By emphasizing the civility of the Bensalemites, *New Atlantis* suggests that commerce and civility are irreconcilable. One can even go as far as arguing that

Bacon's fable can be regarded as illustrating Bloch's claim that “there is no ethics except without property” (*Principle,* 972). For Bloch, the concept of ethics is bound up with Kant's categorical imperative and the guiding image of the *citoyen*, that is, with the dignity of the individual and an ethical code which is binding for everybody. However, according to Bloch, such a “moral collective only becomes meaningful in a classless collective” (*Principle,* 972). He has argued that, in capitalist class society, the word ethics is an anachronism, for “there cannot be any principle whatsoever of concrete-general moral legislation as long as class society, which is essentially ungeneral and antiethical, lasts” (*Principle,* 972). Bloch has maintained that the word ethics can only be filled with genuine meaning in a communist or socialist, that is, a classless and non-capitalist, society:

> [Only] after classes have disappeared, [...] a commonalty friendly to man will for the first time find space [...]. An arc will be described between I and We, will be described when the collective mode of production has finally rebelled against the private mode of appropriation and exchange; when the individual is no longer the individual capitalist or an obstructive quibble. When instead the collective has truly become total, i.e. when it embraces new individuals in a kind of community which has never before existed (*Principle,* 970).

It is striking how close Bacon's Bensalem, a classless and non-capitalist society whose citizens' thoughts and actions are rooted in loving and caring for each other, comes to the kind of community envisioned by Bloch.

That the Bensalemites' behavior is not determined by self-interest but by *Nächstenliebe* is also evident from their notion of marriage. In Europe, marriage is but “a very bargain; wherein is sought alliance, or portion, or reputation, with some desire (almost indifferent) of issue; and not the faithful nuptial union of man and wife, that was first instituted. Neither is it possible that those that have cast away so basely so much of their strength [with prostitutes and mistresses], should

greatly esteem children (being of the same matter) as chaste men do" (*NA,* 27). By contrast, in Bensalem, there are no prostitutes and mistresses. Besides, the Bensalemites do not marry for money, social status or political power. Finally, they do not view children as a burden and women as objects to be used and exploited, but simply as human beings – men, women and children. Thus, in Bensalem, everybody is equal. Again, Bloch would have approved. Like Bacon, he viewed all human beings as equal. What is more, he held women in particularly high esteem, as indicated by the following quotation: "There are three things, says Mohammed, which constantly fill me with reverence: sweet fragrances, women, and my eyes' solace in prayer" (*Spirit,* 211). Bloch not only admired woman but also viewed her as an embodiment of utopia, referring to woman as "the hanging lamp, the symbol of the hearth as it will be on arrival" (*Spirit*, 211) and associating her with "the purest amazement, presentient and fulfilling" (*Spirit*, 211). Accordingly, he has condemned the oppression of woman in capitalist class society, in which "[w]oman lies at the bottom, she has long been trained to do so. She is always available, always serviceable, she is the weaker sex and tied to the home. Serving and the obligation to please are related in female life, since pleasing also makes for servitude" (*Principle,* 589). Although Bloch was a great admirer of the female sex, he was extremely critical of the women's movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which he considered as a failure because it betrayed its original goals and could not prevent itself from being co-opted by capitalism. As he has pointed out, the women's movement was originally directed at the "emancipation of humanity" (*Principle,* 594) and at "human totality and fullness" (*Principle,* 593); its basic question was "that concerning the limits of sex, and whether these limits existed at all" (*Principle,* 594). However,

these goals, inconsistent with “the soulless enterprise of capitalism” (*Principle,* 593), were eventually abandoned and remained unrealized. As Bloch has ruefully stated, the goals achieved by the women's movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as the liberation from the corset, the right to smoke, to study, to vote and to participate in the working world, did not go far enough and ultimately turned out to be counterproductive. According to Bloch, these achievements did not lead to the emancipation of woman but to its contrary – the subjection of woman to the kind of oppression and exploitation already suffered by the male worker: “It is irrelevant whether woman has the same value as man if both are employees of a firm which does not value them at all, but squeezes them dry” (*Principle,* 595). Bloch has argued that we can only overcome the sex barrier if we first overcome the class barrier (*Principle,* 595). In other words, for Bloch, “the question of women's rights is a function of the social question” (*Principle,* 592). Like man, woman will only be liberated in a socialist or communist, that is, in a classless and non-capitalist society. According to Bloch, woman's nature which is particularly rich in utopian content will be a valuable contribution to the achievement of this society. In capitalist class society, this content has been stunted and distorted; it will only become manifest in the “realm of freedom”. We do not know yet what exactly this content will be, but Bloch believes that it will be made up of qualities akin to kindness and compassion (*Principle,* 598), values generally associated with the female sex, which, if extended to the male sex too could make a valuable contribution to the achievement of a more humane society in the future.

As noted earlier, *New Atlantis* has commonly been referred to as a scientific utopia because a large part of it is devoted to the description of

Salomon's House, a state-financed scientific research institute named after the Biblical King Solomon and the Bensalemite King Salomona, who had laid down the basic laws of the island a long time ago. The purpose of Salomon's House is to reveal “the true nature of all things, whereby God might have the more glory in the workmanship of them, and men the more fruit in their use of them” (*NA,* 20). The fellows of Salomon's House seek to improve their knowledge of nature and to use it for the benefit of the people living in Bensalem. The Bensalemites' material well-being is based on science – perhaps like the wealth of today's scientifically and technologically advanced United States and Europe. But whereas in Bensalem everybody partakes of the island's prosperity, the wealth of today's United States and Europe is distributed extremely unequally. The spectacularly advanced state of science and technology in today's world has failed to lead up to the establishment of material security for each and every human being as envisioned by Bacon in *New Atlantis,* arguably because, in today's un-utopian globalized world, science is often used as an instrument of exploitation and oppression for the enrichment of a privileged minority at the expense of the majority of the world's population, and not, as in Bensalem, as a tool for the liberation of humankind. Bloch appears to have approved of the kind of science envisioned by Bacon in *New Atlantis,* a science which, as Bloch has put it, was aimed at “the establishment of a 'regnum hominis' [dominion of man]” through “the control of nature (in which privation and catastrophes come to an end)” (*Principle,* 657). However, as Bloch has argued, Bacon's dreams have only been fulfilled partially: The natural sciences have made spectacular strides, but nature is far from being controlled; likewise, the dream of a regnum hominis, that is, a society in which human beings will have become fully human, has remained unrealized. Besides,

as Bloch has maintained, modern science has taken on a peculiarly and disturbingly "unnatural" and "inhuman" bend because the notion of nature as *natura naturans*, that is, of nature as animate, creative and endowed with spirit, which informs Bacon's thought, has been disregarded by Bacon's successors. Today, we live in a world of scientific superlatives and technological marvels but we are still far away from realizing the kind of society envisioned by Bacon in *New Atlantis* because, as Bloch has argued, we have lost touch with nature: "'Solomon's House', so it seems, cannot do without Solomon after all, that is, without natural wisdom. It contains, like all wisdom, reference to its opposite number, nature; the 'regnum hominis' attained within it too, and not merely above it, would then have it easier" (*Principle,* 657). The passage quoted above not only indicates that Bloch approved of the kind of science envisioned by Bacon in *New Atlantis,* but also that he rejected the widespread assumption that human beings are superior to other creatures and that man has been appointed master over the rest of creation. In the passage quoted above, Bloch seems to suggest that we can only establish a regnum hominis if we abandon the assumption that human beings are entitled to dominate and exploit nature and its creatures. In other words, the "realm of freedom" can only be realized if we learn to think of non-human creatures as equal and as entitled to the same rights as human beings, namely the right to a life in freedom and dignity. Bacon on the other hand does not go so far as to suggest the equality of humans and non-humans.

Moreover, Bloch's works, unlike Bacon's, do not single out science as a particularly effective tool for the achievement of a better society in the future. It can be argued that Bloch does not accord science a prominent place in his philosophy of utopia, because, in his lifetime, science had already reached a very

high level of knowledge and productivity (and not to forget, destructiveness). Bloch appears to have held the opinion that, for human beings living in the twentieth century, the point is not to move science onto a yet more spectacular level but to make the insights and amenities of science available to all beings inhabiting our world.

But then, like Bacon, Bloch does view science as a tool which must be used for the benefit of humankind, most notably for its liberation. It can be argued that Bensalem is not only an anticipation of Bloch's "realm of freedom" but also of Marcuse's "pacification of existence" - the liberation of humankind from necessity. As Marcuse has argued,

> [t]he technological processes of mechanization and standardization might release individual energy into a yet uncharted realm of freedom beyond necessity. The very structure of human existence would be altered; the individual would be liberated from the work world's imposing upon him alien needs and alien possibilities. The individual would be free to exert autonomy over a life that would be his own (*One-Dimensional,* 5).

Bloch has made a similar point, arguing that "if a world were to emerge [...], a world, in which hunger and immediate wants were eliminated [...], there would [...] be freedom from earning instead of freedom to earn, and this would provide some space for such richly prospective doubt and the decisive incentive toward utopia that is the meaning of Brecht's short sentence, "Something's missing" ("Missing", 15). In *The Principle of Hope,* Bloch has argued that in ancient Greece only the rich citizens were free – because they did not have to work for a living. All the work was done for them by slaves (190). Of course, Bloch does not advocate a return to slavery. On the contrary, he rejects everything that subjects human beings to un-freedom, such as capitalism which he regards as having enslaved most of the world's population to the logic of capital, which is devoid of

human interest. Bloch's philosophy of utopia is directed at liberating humankind from this kind of enslavement. By what means? Bloch does not provide us with an answer to this question, an attitude which is characteristic of his works. Instead of providing us with answers, Bloch confronts us with questions we have to answer for ourselves, questions which usually do not lead to a single, unequivocal answer, but to yet more questions.

The claim that *New Atlantis* is underpinned by the vision of the liberation of humankind from necessity is further supported by the fact that in *The Wisdom of the Ancients* Bacon refers to the pillar to which Prometheus is bound as "the column of Necessity". According to Bacon, Prometheus stands for

> the wise and fore-thoughtful class of men, [who] do indeed by their caution decline and remove out of their way many evils and misfortunes; but with that good there is evil joined, that they stint themselves of many pleasures and of the various agreeableness of life, and cross their genius, and (what is far worse) torment and wear themselves away with cares and solicitude and inward fears. For being bound to the column of Necessity, they are troubled with innumerable thoughts (which because of their flightiness are represented by the eagle), thoughts which prick and gnaw and corrode the liver: and if at intervals, as in the night, they obtain some little relaxation and quiet of mind, yet new fears and anxieties return presently with the morning (*Wisdom,* 751/752).

Bensalem is a world in which Prometheus has been unbound from his pillar and rescued from the eagle mercilessly gnawing his liver day after day. Thanks to science, the people of Bensalem have been liberated from necessity and do not have to worry about the future. Unlike capitalist class societies, Bensalem is not characterized by alienation, exploitation, misery and fear; unlike the inhabitants of capitalist class societies, the Bensalemites' thinking and their actions are not rooted in self-interest but in *Nächstenliebe.* Accordingly, the Bensalemites do not perceive other human beings as “other” but as fellow human beings. Thus, where the relationship between human beings is concerned, Bensalem, the imaginary

society depicted by Bacon in *New Atlantis,* can be regarded as strongly anticipating Bloch's “realm of freedom”.

Can *New Atlantis* also be regarded as anticipating Bloch's “realm of freedom” with regard to the relationship between human beings and nature? In Bacon's fable, nature is to a large extent represented by the island of Bensalem. At the beginning of the narrative, the narrator describes Bensalem as situated in a “part of the South Sea [that] was utterly unknown”, lying “in the midst of the greatest wilderness of waters” and covered by “thick clouds” and “full of boscage” (*NA,* 3). Thus, at the very beginning of the narrative, attention is drawn to the mysterious and incomprehensible aspect of the island. But it is not clear at this point, whether Bensalem, i.e., nature, is presented as unknowable or as not known – yet. This ambiguity is also inherent in the Jew Joabin's reference to Bensalem as “the virgin of the world” (*NA,* 27). Is Bensalem presented as inviolate or as not violated yet? As impenetrable or not penetrated yet? According to Kate Aughterson, “Bensalem is not depicted as a virgin land passively awaiting a conquering male culture. Its chastity is not constructed as Ralegh's Guiana or Harriot's Virginia was: it does not represent an invitation to plunder, invade and possess” (*Francis Bacon*, 171). By contrast, Caitriona Ni Dhuill has argued that “Bacon's *New Atlantis* develops from the *tabula rasa* conception of nature a threefold vision of human action: penetration, interpretation, and use” (*Exploring*, 275). Indeed, the experiments conducted by the fellows of Salomon's House are described as “penetrating into Nature” (*NA,* 39). However, the interpretation and use of these experiments is described as being conducted “in mercy” (*NA,* 12). According to Dorinda Outram, nature in Bensalem is not only penetrated, interpreted and used but “subjected [...] to constraint and torture in order to

penetrate and unveil her secrets" (*Cambridge*, 811). This claim is not easily refuted because in Bensalem nature is indeed constrained and tortured: The fellows of Salomon's House have built

> parks, and inclosures of all sorts, of beasts and birds; which we use not only for view or rareness, but likewise for dissections and trials, that thereby may take light what may be wrought upon the body of man. Wherein we find many strange effects: as continuing life in them, though divers parts, which you account vital, be perished and taken forth; resuscitating of some that seem dead in appearance, and the like. We try also all poisons, and other medicines upon them, as well of chirurgery as physic. By art likewise we make them greater or smaller than their kind is, and contrariwise dwarf them and stay their growth; we make them more fruitful and bearing than their kind is, and contrariwise barren and not generative (*NA,* 33/34).

Probably, the passage quoted above will shock and repel some modern readers. However, instead of projecting these feelings onto the text and its author we should rather examine the way in which animals are treated in our own society. As is well-known, everyday everywhere in the world animals are tortured and die in experiments which not only serve the advancement of medical and pharmacological knowledge, as envisioned by Bacon in *New Atlantis,* but which also serve the development of banal and superfluous consumer products such as lip sticks and body lotions. Both Bacon's text and the present time ought to incite us to think about the ethical implications of our anthropomorphic view of the world.

As noted earlier, in *New Atlantis,* Bacon simultaneously presents nature as a good to be protected and as being constrained and tortured. A similar tension is inherent in Bacon's presentation of the mother in the Feast of the Family, which "is granted to any man who shall live to see thirty persons descended of his body, alive together, and all above three years old" (*NA,* 22), and which "is done at the cost of the state" (*NA,* 22). During the feast of the family, the mother is sitting in

“a traverse placed in a loft above on the right hand of the [father's] chair, with a privy door, and a carved window of glass, leaded with gold and blue; where she sitteth, but is not seen” (*NA,* 23). Thus, like Bensalem, the mother is presented not as an object but a subject of knowing (she sees; seeing can be regarded as equivalent to knowing); Bensalem is described as “know[ing] well most part of the habitable world, and [being] ourselves unknown” (*NA,* 11). This parallel indicates that, in Bacon's fable*,* nature is not only represented by Bensalem but also by the mother. Thus, in *New Atlantis,* Bacon presents nature as maternal. However, the feast of the family as a whole appears, as Charles Whitney has argued, to be a celebration of patriarchy (*Modernity,* 200): During the feast, only men are honored – the father and several of his sons. The father is presented with "the king's charter, containing gifts of revenue, and many privileges, exemptions, and points of honour" (*NA,* 24). The father honors one of his sons by choosing him to live with him under the same roof, by granting him the title "Son of the Vine" (*NA,* 22) and by presenting him with a “cluster of grapes, which is of gold, both the stalk and the grapes” (*NA,* 24). He honors another one of his sons by presenting him with “a jewel, made in the figure of an ear of wheat” (*NA,* 25). Two days before the feast, there is a family meeting, which is presided over by the father, some of his friends and the governor of the city. The purpose of this meeting is to appease and settle “discords or suits between any of the family”, to help members of the family who are “distressed or decayed” and to reprimand those members who have become “subject to vice or take ill courses” *(NA,* 23). At first sight, it might appear odd that in Bensalem, where everybody is materially provided for and where everybody's thoughts and actions are rooted in *Nächstenliebe*, some people should be “distressed or decayed”, engage in

"discords or suits" or become "subject to vice". However, after having given it some thought, the existence of conflict and strife in the utopian society envisioned by Bacon does not appear so odd after all. As Bloch has pointed out, even in the "realm of freedom" there will be contradictions, such as discord, conflict and strife. However, these contradictions will no longer be caused by the tiresome and enervating struggle for material survival but by problems naturally occurring between human beings. According to Bloch, the contradictions occurring in the "realm of freedom" are not to be rejected because they, after all, arise from purely human concerns, which, according to him, are the only concerns appropriate to human existence and reconcilable with the dignity of human beings. These contradictions should not be rejected but valued because our efforts to reconcile them will lead to a deeper and richer relationship between human beings (*Principle,* 921/922).

The fact that the Bensalemites are familiar with discord, distress and vice can also be read as an indication of the fact that utopia is not only a state in which everybody is materially provided for but also a state in which the peculiarly human desire for "demystification, some nameless, uniquely right fulfillment" (*Spirit,* 191) will have been fulfilled by "the most important utopian category" (*Principle,* 10) - the "Now and Here". According to Bloch, we cannot experience the "Now and Here" because it is lying in the darkness of the lived moment, where Being drives, but remains hidden and unknown (*Principle,* 11). For Bloch, the "Now and Here" is similar to but also different from what has come to be known as *carpe diem:*

> [T]he 'Stay awhile, you are so fair', spoken to the moment by Goethe's Faust, describes the utopia of Being-There par excellence. Everywhere the rest-giving moment, Being-There which stays to objectify itself, is still

> absent: in the creation of a paradisial land the Stay Awhile itself appears as land. In its presentiment the real Ithaca, the Ithaca congruent with our longing, the identity of the impulse of human intention with its content, is touched on. Such presence has nothing in common, not even at its edges, with the transience which lives from day to day or from moment to moment. Grasping of self, power over being, is not Carpe diem; otherwise Faust would have been finished as early as Auerbach's cellar. And it has also become clear that even the consummate and penetrating desire, the lust embodied in Don Giovanni – a figure so closely related to Faust – [...] still remain in the forecourt of the real moment (*Principle,* 1015).

To experience the “Now and Here”, that is, to live a “full life without postponement and distance” (*Principle,* 14), is certainly a highly desirable goal, but perhaps it simply cannot be achieved. At least, it has not been achieved in the imaginary society depicted by Bacon in *New Atlantis,* for human life in Bensalem is characterized by striving. What is it the Bensalemites are striving for? Bacon's fable does not provide us with an answer to this question. All we know is that each conversation between the narrator and the governor of the strangers' house, the Jew Joabin and the father of Salomon's House respectively is interrupted because each of them is called away to some important task or event, the nature of which is not revealed to us in the course of the narrative and thus remains in the dark.

At first sight, the feast of the family appears to be a celebration of patriarchy because it seems to accord all honor for raising a family to men. However, it can be argued that Bacon acknowledges women's contributions to raising a family at least inexplicitly. As noted earlier, one of the sons receives a golden cluster of grapes, another one a jewel in the form of an ear of wheat. Grapes are traditionally associated with the ancient Greek god Dionysos, wheat (or, to be more precise, cereals in general) are associated with the ancient Roman goddess Ceres. The former was worshiped as a god of fertility, the latter as a

goddess of both fertility and motherhood. *New Atlantis* not only conjures up images of nature as fecund and maternal, but also as bisexual by simultaneously alluding to a male and a female deity associated with fertility and motherhood. Similarly, in *The Wisdom of the Ancients,* nature is alternately presented as male and female (cp. "Pan", "Minerva"). Thus, in *New* Atlantis, nature is presented as bisexual or hermaphroditical. By presenting nature as hermaphroditical, the binary opposites "male" and "female" are deconstructed. This is also implied by a number of passages which appear to serve the purpose of calling into question conventional notions of gender: First, the father "cometh forth with all his generation or lineage, the males before him, and the females following him" (*NA,* 23). Then, the father and his children sit down, "in order of their years, without difference of sex" (*NA,* 23). Finally, the father "is served only by his own children, such as are male; who perform unto him all service of the table upon the knee, and the women only stand about him, leaning against the wall" (*NA,* 24). The passages quoted above can be read as alternately suggesting that women are inferior, equal or superior to men. Thus, it can be argued that Bacon's fable is not concerned with the question whether women are inferior, equal or superior to men but with shattering these categories altogether. The passages quoted above can also be regarded as illustrating the fact that the Bensalemites live according to the Christian concept of neighborly love (*Nächstenliebe*), which Bloch has characterized as "service toward one another, through submission" (*Spirit,* 216) and as willingness to "do for the lowliest and darkest of our brothers what we would do for Jesus" (*Geist*, 359). Thus, for the Bensalemites, who think and act according to the concept of *Nächstenliebe,* to serve others is not felt to be demeaning or humiliating but is simply a way to acknowledge and respect the

other as a fellow human being.

Whitney's claim that the feast of the family is a celebration of patriarchy has been refuted by Aughterson who suggests instead that, in the description of the feast of the family, “reproductive labour is explicitly acknowledged as central to the economic and political well-being of the state” (*Francis Bacon,* 166). However, it can be argued that the feast of the family is neither a celebration of patriarchy nor a celebration of reproductive labor, but a celebration of harmony - the harmony between human beings and the harmony between human beings and nature. As noted earlier, Bloch has described the “realm of freedom” as “the abolition of alienation in man and nature, between man and nature or the harmony of the unreified object with the manifested subject, of the unreified subject with the manifested object” (*Principle,* 240), that is as harmony between human beings and as harmony between human beings and nature. That the Bensalemites seek to live in harmony with their fellow human beings is indicated by the description of the family meeting preceding the feast of the family. As noted earlier, the family meeting serves to appease and settle “discords or suits between any of the family”, to help members of the family who are “distressed or decayed” and to reprimand those members who have become “subject to vice or take ill courses”. Thus, the overall purpose of the meeting is to establish harmony between the family members and between the individual citizen and the social collective of Bensalem. As noted earlier, the governor can enforce the family members' compliance to the father's advice. However, as the narrator remarks, “that seldom needeth; such reverence and obedience they give to the order of Nature” (*NA,* 23). It can be argued that “the order of Nature” is not patriarchy, as could be assumed, but harmony.

That the Bensalemites, who perform experiments on animals for the benefit of humankind, also seek to live in harmony with nature is indicated by the description of the emblem over the chair of the father, which is not made of gold or silver, jewels or pearls, as one might expect, but of ivy (*NA,* 23), that is, a plant. This emblem of ivy is furthermore "wrought with silver and silk of divers colours" (*NA,* 23). Silver and silk are also natural materials but they cannot be had without knowledge about nature. The narrator's description of this emblem as a web of ivy, silver and silk can be interpreted as symbolizing the relationship between nature and human beings in Bensalem – a relationship based on the notion of harmony. This is also indicated by the fact that the feast is concluded with "music and dances, and other recreations, after their manner, for the rest of the day" (*NA,* 25), a scene reminiscent of Shakespeare's comedies which usually conclude with music and dancing, that is, with a celebration of the restoration of harmony. However, it is important to note that Bacon's fable does not conclude with the narrator's description of the end of the feast of the family. One should also note that silver and silk can only be had by harming nature: Silver is won by digging into the bowels of the earth; the production of silk involves the cruel killing of thousands of silk worms in boiling water. On the one hand Bacon presents nature as animate, knowledgeable and creative, as deserving our respect (like a mother who deserves the respect of her children) and as in need of our protection (like children who need the protection of their parents); but on the other hand he presents nature as being constrained and tortured, thus disrupting and violating what appears to be a highly prized ideal in Bensalem – a harmonious relationship between humankind and nature (which, as noted earlier, is also an important characteristic of Bloch's "realm of freedom"). *New Atlantis* promotes

the ideal of harmony between human beings and nature but the Bensalemites do not always act according to this ideal: The fellows of Salomon's House confine and torture animals; the Feast of the Family, which can be interpreted as celebrating harmony (between human beings and between human beings and nature) includes materials which can only be had through human practices which are harmful to natural life. Thus, with regard to the relationship between human beings and nature, *New Atlantis* can only partially be regarded as anticipating Bloch's “realm of freedom”. However, *New Atlantis* contains anticipatory illumination in Bacon's presentation of nature as animate, knowledgeable, creative and maternal – a view of nature which will lead to the end of the exploitation and destruction of nature and to the beginning of a more balanced relationship between humankind and nature, which is based on the wish to protect and enjoy nature. Bacon's presentation of the sexes can also be regarded as anticipatory illumination, for, if we learn to transcend the binary opposites male/female we will be a lot closer to the achievement of a more humane society in the future - a society in which human beings are no longer perceived and treated as members of a particular sex, class, nation, race or religion but simply as human beings.

CHAPTER 3:

BLOCH'S NOTION OF *BILDUNG* IN BACON'S *NEW ATLANTIS*

The aim of this chapter is to explore the question whether Bacon's *New Atlantis* can be regarded as contributing to what Bloch considered the main purpose of education – *Bildung,* that is, to help us to become active thinkers, to assume an "upright gait" and to become subjects in the sense of historical agents.

As noted earlier, Bloch defines thinking as a "critical, insistent, revealing activity" and as "venturing beyond". The latter can be taken to refer, on the one hand, to readerly creativity in the sense of venturing beyond meanings produced by other readers and, on the other hand, to transcending habitual ways of thinking, most notably in the form of stereotypes and prejudices, and to develop new ways of thinking.

New Atlantis challenges its readers to engage in thinking as defined by Bloch in several ways. First of all, Bacon's fable forces its readers to approach what is presented to them as knowledge about Bensalem in a critical manner by alerting them to the fact that this knowledge is not to be relied upon. This problem is, to a large extent, rooted in the person of the narrator, who is not omniscient but a character in the text. Everything we learn about Bensalem is based on what the narrator tells us about it. The narrator's knowledge about Bensalem, in turn, is mainly based on his observations and his interpretation of what he has observed. In other words, the narrator's knowledge of Bensalem is based on his senses and his reason. This is evident from his habit of interspersing his description of the island and its inhabitants with the phrases "as it seemed" (*NA,* 5) and "as I take it" (*NA,* 6). The former refers to observation or the senses, the latter to interpretation or reason. Besides, the two phrases draw attention to the problems inherent in

human sense perception and reason. "[A]s it seemed" hints at the discrepancy between appearance and reality; "as I take it" at the subjective nature of interpretation. Thus, both phrases are resonant with Bacon's assessment of the human senses and human reason in *The New Organon*:

> The senses are defective in two ways: they may fail us altogether or they may deceive. First, there are many things which escape the senses even when they are healthy and quite unimpeded; either because of the rarity of the whole body or by the extremely small size of its parts, or by distance, or by its slowness or speed, or because the object is too familiar, or for other reasons. And even when the senses do grasp an object, their apprehensions of it are not always reliable. For the evidence and information given by the senses is always based on the analogy of man not of the universe; it is a very great error to assert that the senses are the measure of things (17/18).

Bacon's verdict on human reason is even more merciless:

> The *Idols* by which the mind is occupied are either artificial or innate. The artificial *idols* have entered men's minds either from the doctrines and sects of philosophers or from perverse rules of proof. The innate idols are inherent in the nature of the intellect itself, which is found to be much more prone to error than the senses. For however much men may flatter themselves and run into admiration and almost veneration of the human mind, it is quite certain that, just as an uneven mirror alters the rays of things from their proper shape and figure, so also the mind, when it is affected by things through the senses, does not faithfully preserve them, but inserts and mingles its own nature with the nature of things as it forms and devises its own notions (*NO,* 18/19).

In *New Atlantis,* Bacon also likens the human mind to a mirror (actually, it is Bensalem itself which is referred to as a "mirror", *NA,* 22, however, it can be argued that Bensalem represents among other things the human mind, cp. Whitney, 196). By referring to Bensalem as a mirror, Bacon's famous metaphor of the human mind as "an uneven mirror" in *The New Organon* is conjured up in the minds of readers familiar with Bacon's major philosophical work. Thus, it can be argued that Bacon designed *New Atlantis* as a test for readers who are familiar with his description of the "idols" in *The New Organon*. In other words, *New Atlantis* can be read in the light of *The New Organon.*

As noted earlier, Bloch's definition of thinking as venturing beyond can be interpreted as suggesting that readers should be creative in the sense of trying to come up with new interpretations of a text, thus venturing beyond the meanings assigned to it by previous readers. *New Atlantis* offers its readers ample opportunity to be creative, demanding them to resolve its various contradictions and to fill its numerous gaps with their own ideas as to what utopia would be like. Readers of *New Atlantis* are not only demanded to fill its gaps but also to provide Bacon's fable with a proper ending. It has commonly been assumed that *New Atlantis* has remained unfinished because Bacon did not have time to finish his utopia before his sudden death in 1626. However, it has recently been suggested that *New Atlantis* has not accidentally remained unfinished, but intentionally left so. According to some critics, the fact that Bacon's fable lacks a proper ending can be viewed as effectively serving the main purpose of the text - to challenge readers to become active thinkers – not only in a critical but also in a creative manner, i.e., challenging them to provide the text with their own version of a proper ending. On the whole, *New Atlantis* resembles an unfinished puzzle, that is, a puzzle that has not been completed *yet.*

Bloch's definition of thinking as venturing beyond also suggests the possibility of transcending habitual ways of thinking – in particular, those that are harmful to individuals and society as a whole, such as prejudices and stereotypes. In *New Atlantis,* this possibility is embodied by the figure of the Jew Joabin, whose name, as Whitney has pointed out, is an anagram for the Pillars of Hercules (the two headlands at the Strait of Gibraltar), Jachin and Boaz (*Modernity,* 33). Bacon's allusion to the Pillars of Hercules in *New Atlantis* is not to be taken as a reflection of its author's imperialist ambition but of his desire to inspire his readers

to venture beyond those pillars, i.e., their habitual ways of thinking – most notably, to overcome their prejudices and stereotypical notions about the 'other', the supposedly different or alien, notions which have decided life and death in every era and region of our non-utopian world. In seventeenth-century Europe, both Jews and Turks were perceived as figures of alterity. Contrary to the expectations of the average reader, *New Atlantis* does not present the Jew Joabin as evil incarnate but as “a wise man and learned, and of great policy, and excellently seen in the laws and customs of that nation” (*NA,* 26). As noted earlier, Joabin is not presented as a social outcast, but as a citizen of Bensalem, equal to its Christian citizens. Thus, in the figure of Joabin, two binary opposites are uneasily fused: the humanity of the Bensalemites and the supposedly evil nature of the Jews. A similar effect is created with regard to the figure of the Turk. Actually, there are no Turks in Bensalem, neither in the form of inhabitants nor in the form of an exterior threat. However, the figure of the Turk is conjured up in the reader's mind by the narrator's description of a Bensalemite wearing a “hat, being in the form of a turban, daintily made, and not so huge as the Turkish turbans” (*NA*, 5). In the figure of this Bensalemite who is dressed like a Turk, again, two binary opposites are uneasily fused: the humanity of the Bensalemites and the alleged cruelty of the Turks. Thus, in *New Atlantis,* the facile equations of Christians with goodness, Jews with evil and Turks with cruelty are given a good shaking until they finally explode. What remains is not only a heap of rubble, but also an open, new space.

New Atlantis can be regarded as such an open, new space – a space for new ways of thinking. Both the sailors and the readers of Bacon's fable are thrown into a world completely alien to them. As noted earlier, Bensalem is referred to as

a land “utterly unknown” (*NA,* 4). This refers not only to the geographical location of Bensalem, but also to its ethics, which is incomprehensible to outsiders. When the sailors set foot on the island for the first time, they are like newborn babies. The world they are thrown into is utterly alien to them and they have to learn from scratch how to move and behave in it. As the narrator puts it in a speech addressed to his companions: “'We are men cast on land, as Jonas was out of the whale's belly, when we were as buried in the deep; and now we are on land, we are but between death and life, for we are beyond both the old world and the new [...]'” (*NA,* 8). The phrase “between death and life” is not an indication of the narrator's fear for his and his companions' lives (as would be plausible if the narrator had used the phrase “between life and death”), but a metaphor suggesting that the sailors have been given a new life. In Europe, they had lived like Jonas in the whale's belly – in the dark and almost dead. When they are cast on the shore of Bensalem, they are born a second time – into a more humane society that inspires them to become more human themselves. This is evident from Joabin's description of Bensalem as “a mirror [...] worthy to hold men's eyes” (*NA,* 22). The word “mirror” can be taken as both meaning “picture” and “looking glass”. Bensalem is a picture, which represents the exemplary humanity of the Bensalemites and the society they live in. Besides, it is a looking glass, which reflects back to the sailors an unflattering image of themselves and their society, because after their encounter with the Bensalemites their own inhumanity and the inhumanity of European society becomes apparent to them. At the beginning of the narrative, the Bensalemites ask the sailors whether they are Christians (*NA,* 5). The sailors answer this question in the affirmative. However, after having spent a few days on the island, they become painfully aware of the discrepancy between the way they

think and act and between the major tenet of the Christian faith, *Nächstenliebe,* which, as noted earlier, is the guiding principle of the Bensalemites' way of thinking and acting. The sailors also realize that the good society is not only based on material prosperity and social justice but also on its citizens' way of thinking and acting. In early modern Europe (as in today's world), most people's actions were/are rooted in self-interest; usually, we tend to desire better lives for ourselves and our families (Bloch has rejected this way of thinking as "the way of the Babbitt" with reference to Sinclair Lewis's protagonist in *Babbitt*, *Selected,* 63); the Bensalemites, by contrast, also desire the well-being of their fellow human beings (as noted earlier, when the sailors offer themselves as servants to the governor of the Strangers' House, he rejects this offer, explaining to them that he does not desire anything but "[their] brotherly love, and the good of [their] souls and bodies", *NA,* 10). The governor of the Strangers' House acts in accordance with Bloch's notion of *Nächstenliebe* as love of all for all – as the individual's desire for the well being of the social collective. Through their encounter with the Bensalemites, the sailors (and the readers of Bacon's fable) learn how to desire in a different way, not selfishly but altruistically. This is evident from the following speech by the narrator addressed to his companions: "'[...] let us look up to God, and every man reform his own ways. Besides we are come here among a Christian people, full of piety and humanity. Let us not bring that confusion of face upon ourselves, as to show our vices or unworthiness before them. [...] let us so behave ourselves, as we may be at peace with God'" (*NA,* 9).

Thus, the sailors experience a process which has been described by Bloch as a pushing forward of the upper threshold of human consciousness which separates the Already Conscious from the Not-Yet-Conscious (*Principle*, 114). In

other words, the sailors become conscious of a formerly Not-Yet-Conscious: their own inhumanity and the inhumanity of early modern capitalist European society. Besides, they become conscious of the possibility to learn how to desire – in an unselfish way, which is not harmful but beneficial to other human beings and society as a whole. These insights not only change the sailors' consciousness but are also potentially capable of changing the world, for, as Bloch has argued, every Not-Yet-Conscious corresponds to a Not-Yet-Become in the world.

Bloch's definition of thinking as a “critical, insistent, revealing activity” and as “venturing beyond” is bound up with his view of human beings as ethical subjects, that is, with his conviction that people must learn to assume an “upright gait” and to become subjects in the sense of historical agents. His notion of the “upright gait” refers not only to moral integrity but also to the refusal to resign oneself to What Has Already Become (*Principle*, 220).

Like Bloch, Bacon viewed thinking and acting not as binary opposites but as interconnected; he perceived the ability to think in an active manner, to assume an “upright gait” and to become a subject in the sense of historical agent as interdependent: In *The New Organon,* he has argued that, in seventeenth-century English educational institutions, “the readings and exercises are so designed that it would hardly occur to anyone to think or consider anything out of the ordinary” (75) and that “men's studies in such places are confined and imprisoned in the writings of certain authors; anyone who disagrees with them is instantly attacked as a troublemaker and revolutionary” (76). As indicated by the passage quoted above, Bacon regarded active thinking as politically subversive, i.e., as undermining the status quo. Bloch held a similar view, arguing that “[t]he subject, the class, the epoch that sense their limit have already transcended it”

(*Selected,* 63). While Bacon deplored that the educational institutions of his day only aimed at producing servile and obsequious courtiers, Bloch complained that conventional education in twentieth-century Germany and the United States were directed at producing “recruits” - usable and submissive employees. According to him, in conventional educational institutions, the will of the student “is pleasantly diverted or broken strictly until it passes into smiling and nodding. The mind is drilled so that it never breaks out of the pre-arranged questioning and answering of the life that awaits the employee. Usually only servants are intended in bourgeois society and not of course what would be so natural for the oppressed: avengers” (*Principle,* 928).

Both Bloch and Bacon deplore the fact that conventional education turns human beings into servants, discouraging them to become their own masters. Bloch's views on education are inspired by Enlightenment ideas, particularly by Kant's famous motto “Aude sapere!” (“Dare to know/ use your own reason!”, *Pädagogica,* 12) and by his equally famous definition of Enlightenment as man's "emancipation from his self-inflicted immaturity/ tutelage" (*Pädagogica,* 55). Similarly, Bacon views becoming one's own master as an important goal of education and as dependent on developing the ability to use one's reason: “[N]o one who wishes to judge or reflect upon these our thoughts, [...] should expect to do this [unless] he has grown up and become his own master” (*NO,* 30/31). The notion of becoming one's own master, that is, of man's emancipation from his self-imposed tutelage or immaturity, is also an important theme in *New Atlantis:* The Bensalemites do not allow the sailors to “go above a karan (that is with them a mile and a half) from the walls of the city, without special leave” (*NA*, 10). The sailors accept this constraint willingly, explaining to the Bensalemites: “For the

commandment laid upon us [not to go without special leave further from the walls of the city than a mile and a half], we would not fail to obey it, though it was impossible but our hearts should be inflamed to tread further upon this happy and holy ground" (*NA*, 10). Obviously, the passage quoted above is an allusion to the Biblical story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and to the myth of Prometheus (the latter is invoked by the adjective "inflamed"). As is well-known, both Adam and Eve and Prometheus violated the rules imposed upon them by divine authority and transgressed the boundaries which God/the gods had set them. As noted earlier, *New Atlantis* has remained unfinished. Therefore, we cannot help but wonder what would happen if the sailors challenged the authority of the Bensalemites and transgressed the boundary set by them. However, during the course of the narrative, neither the sailors nor the Bensalemites themselves are depicted as questioning authority and transgressing boundaries. On the contrary, the Bensalemites live according to the laws established by King Salomona in the distant past (*NA,* 18/19), like the subjects of the Biblical King Solomon the Wise, and pay their respects to great inventors of the past by erecting a hall full of their statues (*NA,* 39/40). This cannot but irritate readers familiar with *The New Organon.* After all, there, Bacon deplores the fact that "philosophy and the intellectual sciences are, like statues, admired and venerated but not improved" (7). Similarly, there he argues that one "can hardly admire an author and at the same time go beyond him" (9). Bacon's conviction that knowledge can only be gained by challenging authority and transgressing boundaries is further evident from his interpretation of the myth of Prometheus in *The Wisdom of the Ancients:* Bacon not only extols Prometheus for having stolen fire from the gods and given it to men, he also approves of the latter's ingratitude towards their benefactor,

arguing that “the preferring of complaints against nature and the arts is a thing well pleasing to the gods, and draws down new alms and bounties from the divine goodness; and that the accusation of Prometheus, our maker and master though he be, yea sharp and vehement accusation, is a thing more sober and profitable than this overflow of congratulation and thanksgiving” (749). Like Bacon, Bloch esteemed the figure of Prometheus highly and enthusiastically referred to him as

> the true demiurge of man, the all-willer, all-dreamer, the rebel of light who brought fire to men, who is indeed himself fire. Prometheus is the blazing element, the considerer of the future, he is raging resignation on the rock and that immortal hope to which a Hercules comes. He is the victim whose liver, the organ of prophecy, is gnawed to pieces by the vulture or eagle of Zeus, this age-old heraldic emblem of oppression. He above all others is the imprisoned god in man (*Principle,* 978/979).

In order to challenge authority and to transgress boundaries, one must first become conscious of them. According to Bloch, this act of becoming conscious in itself already constitutes a challenge to authority and transgression of boundaries, for “[h]ow could the barrier in front of the dimensions of the Not-Yet be perceived if the contented, even more, if the discontented had not already transcended it?” (*Selected*, 63) and “[h]ow could what is imperfect be perceived as such unless it is not measured against the ideas of what is perfect that anticipates the transcendence of what is imperfect?” (*Selected*, 63).

As noted earlier, both Bloch and Bacon agree that providing human beings with food and shelter is a highly desirable goal. However, they also agree that this is not the whole goal-content of utopia. Bacon's sailors cannot believe that Bensalem is real; the island's material wealth and its inhabitants' kindness and generosity are beyond their imagination:

> “We answered, after we had looked awhile upon one another, admiring this gracious and parent-like usage, that we could not tell what to say, for we wanted words to express our thanks; and his noble free offers left us nothing

> to ask. It seemed to us that we had before us a picture of our salvation in heaven; for we that were awhile since in the jaws of death, were now brought into a place where we found nothing but consolations" (*NA,* 10).

However, it can be argued that the happiness and exhilaration felt by the sailors prevent them from questioning the authority of the Bensalemites and from transgressing the boundary set by their hosts. In other words, the sailors' sense of wonder at the island's material wealth and their inhabitants' kindness and generosity prevents the sailors from active thinking, from assuming an "upright gait" and from becoming subjects in the sense of historical agents. Thus, the passage quoted above can be viewed as aiming to alert readers to the dangers of living in an affluent and peaceful society. Well-fed people who feel secure indulge more easily in mental idleness and put up more easily with being constrained and patronized by state authorities. In other words, the whole episode can be read as suggesting that utopia is not solely based on material security and peace but also on the ability of its citizens to think in an active manner, to assume an "upright gait" and to become subjects in the sense of historical agents so that utopia is not slowly, without anyone noticing it, turned into dystopia.

CHAPTER 4:
CAVENDISH'S *THE BLAZING WORLD* – AN ANTICIPATION OF BLOCH'S "REALM OF FREEDOM"?

Cavendish's *The Blazing World* combines elements of romance, imaginary voyage, literary utopia and scientific treatise. Like Bacon, Cavendish was a prolific writer who produced both literary works and works on natural philosophy. However, for a seventeenth-century woman, her literary output and range of interests were highly unusual. Cavendish not only wrote books on an unprecedented scale in a wide variety of genres (she wrote novellas, plays, poems, a biography of her husband and natural philosophical treatises) but also published her works, which, what is even more unusual, she did ostentatiously under her own name. Besides, she sent her works to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and to members of the English aristocracy. Cavendish openly criticized the experimental philosophers of the Royal Society and the ideas of prominent philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and Henry More. However, her critique and her own works on natural philosophy were either ignored or ridiculed by most of her contemporaries, some of which called her "Mad Madge" behind her back. In "A Room of One's Own", Virginia Woolf refers to Cavendish's works as "torrents of rhyme and prose, poetry and philosophy which stand congealed in quartos and folios that nobody ever reads" (61). Indeed, for almost three centuries, Cavendish's works were hardly read. Even today, they are only known to a small number of specialists, mostly feminist critics, who, moreover, have frequently dismissed them as old-fashioned, unorganized and contradictory. Besides, many of them have criticized Cavendish's works as too personal.

The Blazing World has frequently been interpreted as a thinly-disguised

account of Cavendish's own life - the life of a young woman of middle class origins who married into the English aristocracy, was deprived of her possessions and social status and forced into exile during the English Civil War, remained childless and spent her time writing novellas, poems, plays and treatises on natural philosophy. Thus, *The Blazing World* has been demeaned and banalized. It cannot be denied that there are many similarities between Cavendish and the main protagonist of *The Blazing World*, the Empress (and her alter ego, the Duchess) and that Cavendish's utopia is perhaps more concerned with these characters and their activities than with the society of the Blazing World at large. However, *The Blazing World* is not an autobiographical fantasy of wish fulfillment. On the contrary, it can be argued that *The Blazing World* is primarily concerned with the relationship between human beings and with the relationship between human beings and nature and thus lends itself to a reading in the light of Bloch's philosophy of utopia. The answer to the question "Can *The Blazing World* be regarded as anticipating Bloch's 'realm of freedom'?" will be "yes". Accordingly, the focus of this chapter will be on the relationship between human beings and on the relationship between human beings and nature in *The Blazing World*.

The Blazing World tells the story of an anonymous young lady who is abducted by a merchant who has fallen in love with her. Because he is a stranger, and beneath her in birth and wealth, he cannot become acquainted with her, let alone marry her. Therefore he attacks her and forces her aboard his ship, intending to carry her, together with his crew, to his home country. But there is a storm and the ship is driven off to the North Pole, where the merchant and his men freeze to death. Only the lady survives. When she leaves the ship, she discovers that there is another world joined to the North Pole, which is called the Blazing World.

The beginning of *The Blazing World* contains in a nutshell some of the most important themes pervading the narrative: violence and force as opposed to friendship and love. Bloch's works display a similar emphasis on friendship and love as opposed to violence and force. As noted earlier, Bloch's notion of love is inspired by the Christian concept of neighborly love (*Nächstenliebe*), which demands that we do not perceive and treat others like strangers or enemies but as fellow human beings deserving our love and care.

The merchant is described as having fallen “extremely in love” with the lady, a condition that is later on referred to as a “desire”, “growing more and more vehement upon him”. Finally, his violent feelings turn into violent actions and “he resolved [...] to steal her away” (*BW,* 253). Thus, the merchant's feelings towards the lady are not rooted in love as defined by Cavendish and Bloch but in his desire for possession and domination. However, as noted earlier, the merchant is prevented from having his will with the lady by a violent storm which drives the ship towards the North Pole, where he and his men freeze to death. Significantly, the narrator interprets the storm as sent by "Heaven" in order to punish the merchant and his men for their “theft”, that is, for having abducted the lady (*BW,* 253). The word “theft” is significant: Commonly, only something that is the property of somebody else can be stolen. The merchant treats the lady as an object or a commodity, whether he intends to marry or to rape her. Thus, like Bloch's works, *The Blazing World* contains a critique of the tendency of capitalism to turn everything into a commodity – even human beings, ideas and values (*Pädagogica,* 27). It is also important to note that what happens to the lady is not presented as an individual misfortune, but as a social problem. This is indicated by the fact that the main characters do not have names. They are not presented as individuals but

as representatives of their respective social classes. Accordingly, the lady is not to be viewed as a particularly unlucky individual woman, but as embodying the lot of the majority of women in a patriarchal capitalist society. Similarly, the merchant is not to be viewed as a particularly ruthless individual man, but as embodying the dominant attitude of the society of which he is a product. Thus, the beginning of *The Blazing World* can be read as exemplary of the way human beings behave towards each other in a society based on capitalism. It is certainly no accident that the man who abducts the female protagonist of Cavendish's utopia is a merchant. Likewise, it is no accident that his ship is driven to the North Pole and that he and his men freeze to death as a punishment for having imposed violence and force on the lady: the men's frozen bodies can be considered as an apt metaphor for human beings who are incapable of love and friendship.

When the young lady leaves her prison, the ship, she discovers that there is another world joined to the North Pole of her own world. At its outer edge, this other world, which is called the Blazing World, is "covered all with snow" (*BW,* 254) and inhabited by "strange creatures, in shape like bears, only they went upright as men" (*BW,* 254). At first, the lady is afraid of the bear-men approaching the boat. But they "showed her all civility and kindness imaginable" (*BW,* 255), so that the lady soon overcomes her fear. The bear-men bring the lady to one of their caves and leave her

> to the custody of the females, who entertained her with all kindness and respect and gave her such victuals as they were 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, only walking in an upright shape, who received their neighbors the bear-men with great civility and courtship (*BW,* 255).

The lady seems to have arrived in utopia - a place where strangers are welcomed

and people of different physical appearance live together in harmony and peace. What happens next, however, is deeply disturbing: The bear- and fox-men, "having discoursed some while together, agreed at last to make her a present to the emperor of their world" (*BW,* 255). Thus, the bear- and fox-men treat the lady in exactly the same manner the merchant did, that is, as an object or commodity. It is evident that the Blazing World is flawed with a patriarchal-capitalist bias, just like the world the lady comes from. When the bear- and fox-men present her to the Emperor, again something very disturbing happens: Seeing her, the Emperor "conceived her to be some goddess, and offered to worship her" (*BW,* 260). When the lady explains to him that she is only a mortal, the Emperor, "rejoicing, made her his wife, and gave her an absolute power to rule and govern all that world as she pleased" (*BW,* 260). The behavior of the Emperor towards the lady is another indication of the patriarchal-capitalist bias pervading the Blazing World. By treating the lady as a deity, the Emperor too turns her into an object or commodity. By making her his wife without first asking for her consent, he imposes non-physical violence and force upon her. By marrying the lady without getting to know her first, the Emperor misses the opportunity to become her friend. The Emperor and his wife do not become friends after they get married either. Apparently, the Emperor is only interested in the lady's beauty, not in her character. To the Emperor, the lady is only an object that satisfies his sensual appetite. Like the merchant, the Emperor only desires the lady but does not love her. Both men's "love" is actually a physical desire, not a genuine concern for another human being. As noted earlier, the merchant forces the lady on board of his ship and abducts her; it is not clear whether he intends to marry or to rape her.

The attitude of the merchant and the Emperor towards the lady is not

only irreconcilable with Cavendish's notion of love but also with Bloch's. Bloch not only cherishes the concept of Christian love (*Nächstenliebe*) but also the erotic love between man and woman. He has argued that the sexual act does not purely serve the function of guaranteeing the survival of our species but transcends our animal instincts and must be treasured as a unique gift bestowed upon humankind. He has described love between the sexes as "no organic but rather a theological state, located on a different level than our creaturely drives" (*Geist,* 352) and as a "dissolving into and keeping watch within the other" (*Spirit,* 212). The lady does not experience this kind of love with her husband, the Emperor, but will do so with somebody else.

Although the Blazing World is described as happy and peaceful, the Empress feels that it is necessary to initiate a number of reforms: For example, when the Empress learns from the priests of the Blazing World that women are excluded from attending public church services and are supposed to pray at home, she sets up a special congregation for women, of which she becomes the head. She also converts the people of the Blazing World to her own religion, significantly,

> without enforcement 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 persuasions; and after this manner she encouraged them also in all other duties and employments, for fear, though it makes people obey, yet it does not last so long, not is it so sure a means to keep them to their duties, as love (*BW,* p. 290).

Probably, the Empress's attempt to convert the people of the Blazing World to her own religion will dismay most modern readers. However, the Empress revokes all her reforms towards the end of the narrative (the significance of which will be discussed later). The passage quoted above is taken into consideration here

because it illustrates the Empress's rejection of violence and force in favor of love and friendship, an attitude which is in accord with Bloch's conviction that we can only transform the world into a "realm of freedom" if we think and act according to the Christian concept of *Nächstenliebe,* which demands that we love our neighbors and our enemies. It also highlights the exclusion and segregation of women in patriarchal society.

As noted earlier, apart from the Empress, there is another important female character in *The Blazing World*, the Duchess of Newcastle. The appearance of a character bearing the same name as the text's author is very unsettling. (The significance of this will be discussed later.) The Empress and the Duchess are brought together as a result of the Empress's wish to write a Cabala. Because her handwriting is almost illegible even to herself, she decides to hire a scribe. At first, she thinks of turning to the immortal soul of an ancient philosopher, such as Aristotle or Plato, but it is brought to her attention that "they were so wedded to their own opinions that they would never have the patience to be scribes" (*BW,* 306). Then the Empress considers a number of modern philosophers, such as Descartes or Hobbes, but it is pointed out to her that they are "so self-conceited that they would scorn to be scribe to a woman" (*BW,* 306). Finally, the Empress turns to "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" (*BW,* 306). The Duchess accepts the post and arrives in the Blazing World in the form of her soul, that is, bodiless. The two women immediately like each other, in fact, "their meeting did produce such an intimate friendship between them that they became Platonic lovers, although they were both females" (*BW,* 308). As noted earlier, the

Duchess appears to be her friend's *alter ego* – an improved version of the Empress. Both women hold similar views, but often the Empress's view is corrected by the Duchess (who, nevertheless, is not infallible). That the two friends share a similar outlook on the world is evident from the following remark by the Duchess: When the Empress expresses her wish to write a moral Cabala, the Duchess dissuades her from this endeavor by pointing out to her that “[t]he only thing [...] in morality, is but to fear God, and to love his neighbor, and this needs no further interpretation” (*BW,* 183). The passage quoted above not only shows that both the Empress and the Duchess reject force in favor of love, it also echoes Bloch's notion of love which is inspired by the Christian concept of neighborly love.

Apart from love and friendship, *The Blazing World* foregrounds connectivity. The Empress and the Duchess are described not only as friends and platonic lovers, but also as “several parts of one united body” (*BW,* 183). As Lisa T. Sarasohn and Neil Ankers have argued, in *The Blazing World,* human beings are presented as parts of the same larger whole and thus connected to each other – in other words, as capable of being lovers and friends. This is in direct opposition to Hobbes's view of human beings as naturally selfish and cruel. According to Hobbes, human beings only accept to live in societies regulated by laws in order to escape the “state of nature” in which the natural inclination of human beings towards self-preservation and violence is unrestrained. Sarasohn and Ankers have suggested that *The Blazing World* can be read as aimed at refuting Hobbes's claims and developing an alternative to Hobbes's account of human nature and society. Although Bloch does not use the term connectivity in his works, it is implied in his definitions of love as “dissolving into and keeping watch within the

other" (*Spirit,* 212), as "becoming the other, filling oneself with love as the spirit of the convocation" (*Spirit,* 216) and as a mingling of the I, the other and Jesus Christ, which deconstruct the binary opposites "self" and "other".

In addition to love, friendship and connectivity, *The Blazing* World foregrounds empathy: The Empress has struck up a peculiar friendship with a group of immaterial spirits with whom she enjoys conversations about philosophical issues. When the spirits disappear in the middle of such a conversation, the Empress is very worried. She fears that they might have been punished for having answered one of her questions incorrectly and condemned to "sink down into the black and dark abyss of the earth" (*BW,* 305). She is only relieved of her worries after she has made sure that they are safe and sound. Initially, the Empress's concern for the well-being of a group of immaterial spirits might appear whimsical, but after one has given it some thought it appears to be a poignant critique of the blatant lack of mutual concern among material beings in the world outside the text and as an uncanny warning to the people of 20th-century Europe where, in the 1930s and 1940s millions of Jewish and other fellow citizens disappeared, with most people turning a blind eye. Bloch also cherished the notion of empathy, which he viewed as an important component of *Nächstenliebe* (as noted earlier, he has described neighborly love, among other things, as "the ability to feel empathy with others", *Geist,* 360). However, as will be shown later, Cavendish takes the notion of empathy further than Bloch: She not only applies it to human beings but to all of nature's creatures.

A strange episode foregrounds not only empathy but individual freedom and autonomy: One day the Empress notices that her friend, the Duchess, looks very melancholy and sad, "at which the Empress was very much troubled and

asked her the reason of her melancholic humour" (*BW,* 308/309). The Duchess replies: "'[...] my ambition is that I would fain be as you are, that is, an empress of a world, and I shall never be at quiet until I be one'" (*BW,* 309). The Empress is deeply distressed by her friends' unhappiness and immediately tries to fulfill her wish, asking the spirits whether there are only three worlds (the Blazing World, her own home country and the home country of the Duchess) or whether there are more worlds, one of them perhaps suitable to be ruled by the Duchess. The spirits inform her that there are indeed more than three worlds, in fact, innumerable worlds, but none without a ruler. When the Empress suggests to conquer one of these worlds, preferably one with a weak ruler, the spirits try to dissuade her from this idea, arguing that violent conquerors usually enjoy their conquests only for a very short time before they themselves are overcome and often killed in the process. On the face of it, this episode does not throw a flattering light on either women. But when we take a closer look we notice that the exchange between the Empress, the Duchess and the spirits not only foregrounds the Empress's gift of empathy, but also another important topic of Cavendish's utopia: the topic of individual freedom or autonomy. It can be argued that the Duchess's desire to be like her friend, the Empress, is not grounded in her wish to have power over others but in her wish that others have no power over her, that is, in her wish for autonomy. The issue of human autonomy or freedom also occupies an important place in Bloch's philosophy of utopia. As noted earlier, Bloch's works are aimed at making us conscious of what is missing from our lives and of the inhumanity of the world we live in, that is, of the inhumanity of capitalism. By contrast, in the "realm of freedom", human beings will no longer be divided into masters and slaves but everybody will be free and equal.

The passage discussed above not only foregrounds the issue of human freedom or autonomy but also, again, the undesirability of violence and force. As the immaterial spirits explain to the Empress and her friend, the Duchess, the conquest of a material world inevitably leads to misery and death – for both the conquered and the conquerors. As noted earlier, like Cavendish, Bloch rejected violence and force in favor of friendship and love, which he has defined as the love of all for all and as non-violence.

After having dissuaded the Duchess from conquering a material world, the spirits suggest to her to create an immaterial world. The Duchess is delighted by this idea and immediately gets to work. At first, she tries to create a world modeled on the ideas of an eminent philosopher, such as Plato, Aristotle or Descartes. But every world created according to the ideas of eminent philosophers appears lopsided and distorted to her – in short, unnatural and undesirable. The world created by the Duchess along Hobbesian ideas turns out to be particularly nasty:

> But when all the parts of this imaginary world came to press and drive each other, they seemed like a company of wolves that worry sheep, or like so many dogs that hunt after hares, and when she found a reaction equal to those pressures, her mind was so squeezed together that her thoughts could neither move forward nor backward, which caused such an horrible pain in her head that although she had dissolved that world, yet could not without much difficulty settle her mind and free it from that pain which those pressures and reactions had caused it (*BW,* 313).

In the passage quoted above, Hobbes's views on human nature and society are presented as harmful to the physical and mental health of human beings. Finally, the Duchess decides to create a world modeled on her own ideas. This world is described as "so curious and full of variety, so well ordered and wisely governed, that it cannot possibly be expressed by words, nor the delight and pleasure which

the Duchess took in making this world of her own" *(BW,* 313). Although the reader is afforded only a short glimpse into the immaterial world created by the Duchess, it is clearly in stark contrast to the world created earlier by her along Hobbesian ideas. Whereas the latter is characterized by conflict and strife, the former is characterized by peace and harmony. As noted earlier, Hobbes' view of human nature and society have frequently been interpreted as reflecting and promoting the key "values" of capitalism: antagonism and competition. The world according to Hobbes is a world ruled by the ancient Roman motto "Homo homine lupus" (Everybody is a wolf to everybody else). The Duchess's rejection of Hobbes' ideas can be interpreted as a rejection of early modern capitalism and the attitudes and values fostered by it. Like Cavendish, Bloch has deplored the fact that capitalism turns human beings into selfish and aggressive predators. Moreover, like Cavendish, Bloch does not view human beings as natural predators (like wolves) but as social beings who are naturally inclined towards loving and helping each other (*Pädagogica,* 13).

Both of them view peace and harmony as highly desirable goals. That Bloch rejected violence in any form is most obvious from his refusal to fight in the First World War (he spent the war years in Switzerland). Harmony is one of the main characteristics of Bloch's "realm of freedom", which, as noted earlier, he has defined as "the abolition of alienation in man and nature, between man and nature or the harmony of the unreified object with the manifested subject, of the unreified subject with the manifested object" (*Principle,* 240).

Not only the Duchess, but also the Empress creates an immaterial world according to her own ideas: She "framed all kinds of creatures proper and useful for it, strengthened it with good laws and beautified it with arts and sciences"

(*BW,* 314). Thus, *The Blazing World* contains three utopias: the Blazing World and the two immaterial worlds created by the Duchess and the Empress respectively. But, as noted earlier, the Blazing World is seriously flawed: It has too many resemblances with the society it criticizes, seventeenth-century England. The utopias created by the Duchess and the Empress on the other hand provide the reader only with a brief glimpse of utopia. Thus, *The Blazing World* appears to bear testimony to Bloch's claim that what has become manifest in works of art and literature, the hopes and wishes expressed in them, "can never be resolved into the already Known and Become, and therefore has at bottom an inexhaustible latency" (*Principle,* 159). The Blazing World may be flawed, but this should not be viewed as a deplorable failure on the part of its author. Rather, as Bloch has pointed out, it should be viewed as an inevitable and moreover valuable by-product of artistic creation: "[A] realization has never yet been made absolute without a final part of its waking dream being left over, and therefore moved on further beyond the attained to its possible Being-even-better. A new peak appears behind the previously attained one: this plus ultra consequently does not let the realization weaken, but makes it sharper towards its purpose" (*Principle,* 189). In other words, whenever a utopia is realized, there remains a utopian residue in this realization, because realization means perfection and stasis and does not contain the activity of creative labor and is thus lacking what is so important during the act of creation: the activity of the subject: "[W]e remain always still outside before what we create, the painter does not enter the painting, the poet is not in the book, in the utopian land beyond the lettering" (*Spirit,* 196).

As noted earlier, the Blazing World is not a perfect society. But it is presented in a more positive light than the home countries of the Empress and the

Duchess, EFSI and seventeenth-century England respectively: During a tour of Europe, the Empress is repelled by the way the Europeans treat each other (their fellow citizens and strangers):

> [She] wondered that for all there were so many several nations, governments, laws, religions, opinions, etc., they should all yet so generally agree in being ambitious, proud, self-conceited, vain, prodigal, deceitful, envious, malicious, unjust, revengeful, irreligious, factious, etc. She did also admire that not any particular state, kingdom or commonwealth was contented with their own shares, but endeavoured to encroach upon their neighbours, and that their greatest glory was in plunder and slaughter, and yet their victories less than their expenses, and their losses more than their gains, but their being overcome, in a manner their utter ruin (*BW,* p. 315).

In the passage quoted above the Europeans are depicted as selfish, greedy and violent. Yet their inclination towards selfishness, greed and violence is not presented as natural but as a product of early modern capitalism, for, notwithstanding the differences between the various European countries mentioned in the passage quoted above, they all resemble each other in one respect – their economic systems are all based on capitalism. Thus, *The Blazing World* can be read as a critique of early modern capitalism and the attitudes fostered by it – a critique very similar to Bloch's critique of capitalism and its fatal consequences for the well being of humankind and nature.

Apart from the Blazing World itself and the two literary utopias created by the Empress and the Duchess respectively, there is a forth utopia, perhaps the central one of the narrative: a community of friends and platonic lovers consisting of the Empress, the Duchess and, later on, the latter's husband, the Duke of Newcastle (plus the reader, since, in the epilogue to *The Blazing World,* Cavendish invites her readers to join this community): After having visited many European countries and London, the Empress and the Duchess (who are traveling as souls) visit Wellbeck and enter the body of the Duke, where their three souls

have a very pleasant conversation – so pleasant that the Empress's soul falls in love with the Duke's soul. But no conflict ensues because the Duchess is convinced “that no adultery could be committed amongst Platonic lovers” (*BW,* 319). The scene outlined above depicts the mingling of three human souls (the Empress's, the Duchess's and the Duke's). This union of souls fills the Empress, the Duchess and the Duke with intense pleasure and happiness which is derived from their feeling of being connected to each other. The scene outlined above can be regarded as an illustration of the “Now and Here”, which Bloch has referred to as “the most important utopian category”, and as an illustration of Bloch's claim that the utopian impulse is by definition “unselfish and communal. It must transfer into commonality, moving outward from here to understand what is urgent, brightening. The egoistic I remains imprisoned within itself” (*Spirit,* 203/204).

Because the Blazing World is flawed with a serious patriarchal-capitalist bias (particularly with respect to women who are treated as objects or commodities), Cavendish's utopia can only partially be regarded as anticipating Bloch's “realm of freedom”. However, *The Blazing World* provides its readers with a glimpse of utopia in the description of the communion of souls taking place in the Duke's body. Moreover, anticipatory illumination can be detected in Cavendish's emphasis on friendship, love, empathy, connectivity and non-violence – values which, if we take them to heart, will undoubtedly contribute to the transformation of our society into a “realm of freedom”.

The next question to be examined is whether *The Blazing World* can be regarded as anticipating Bloch's “realm of freedom” with regard to the relationship between human beings and nature. Accordingly, the focus of this part will be on Cavendish's presentation of nature in *The Blazing World* and on the

way the people of the Blazing World treat nature.

In *The Blazing World,* nature is, to a large extent, represented by the Empress. At the beginning of the narrative, she is not an Empress, but an anonymous, helpless young woman. She only becomes an Empress after she has arrived in the Blazing World and gotten married to the Emperor. Her metamorphosis from a powerless anonymous young woman into a powerful Empress is symbolized by her imperial robe, which consists entirely of jewels and pearls:

> [O]n her head she wore a cap of pearl and a half-moon of diamonds just before it; on the top of her crown came spreading over a broad carbuncle cut in the form of a sun; her coat was of pearl mixed with blue diamonds and fringed with red ones; her buskins and sandals were of green diamonds. In her left hand she held a buckler to signify the defence of her dominions, which buckler was made of that sort of diamond as has several different colours, and being cut and made in the form of an arch, showed like a rainbow. In her right hand she carried a spear made of a white diamond, cut like the tail of a blazing star (*BW,* 260).

This dazzling image is not designed for ostentation but makes use of the symbolic value of gems. During the early modern period, gems found in nature and polished by art were associated with a number of different virtues and powers. The pearl has traditionally been associated with modesty and purity; the diamond with invincibility, fortitude and courage. The pearl has been considered the "queen-gem"; the diamond the "king-gem" among precious stones. The former has traditionally been associated with the moon; the latter with the sun, which, in turn, have commonly been taken to symbolize the female and the male sex respectively. The Empress's imperial robe contains both diamonds and pearls; her crown consists of a half-moon of diamonds, on top of which there is a carbuncle in the form of a sun. Thus, symbolically, her dress unites different binary opposites: strength/modesty, male/female and sun/moon. Carbuncles (red stones, such as

rubies and carnelians) also have their own symbolism. Red stones have traditionally been associated with life and with Christ's sacrifice. The ruby has traditionally been associated with fire, passion and love, but also with the ability to control amorous desire and to reconcile disputes – in other words, with the ability to achieve inner peace and to live in harmony with other human beings. The carnelian was believed to help people who have a weak voice and are timid of speech to become bold and eloquent speakers. All these connotations are contained in the person of the Empress: Christian love, erotic love and, as will be shown later, the process of acquiring a voice. Blue stones, such as the sapphire and the lapis lazuli, have traditionally been associated with friendship, wisdom, intuition, expanded consciousness and creativity. Green stones, such as the emerald and the jade, have traditionally been associated with mental agility, harmony and love of nature. *The Blazing World* is pervaded by all these themes – love, friendship, wisdom, creativity, harmony and love of nature.

The Empress's imperial robe not only reflects her personality and values, but also Cavendish's notion of nature as pure (pearl), powerful (diamond), animate (red stones), harmonious (blue stones) and intelligent or full of wisdom (green stones). As noted earlier, *The Blazing World* was published in 1666, four years after the founding of the Royal Society. Cavendish's view of nature is diametrically opposed to the view of most members of the Royal Society. Whereas Cavendish viewed nature as animate, creative and endowed with reason, many members of the Royal Society viewed nature as passive and inert. Whereas many members of the Royal Society hailed the microscope as having opened up new interior worlds, Cavendish regarded "micrography" as useless and even harmful. Unlike the members of the Royal Society, Cavendish did not believe that

the microscope provided the scientist with new, let alone reliable and useful information. According to Cavendish, micrography "is not able to discover the interior natural motions of any part or creature of nature" (*Observations,* 50). Besides, she detested the attitude towards nature that informed micrography. In her eyes, the experimental philosophers, in their practice of squeezing dead insects under a piece of glass and examining them from a distance (that is, through a lens and tube), were literally turning nature into a corpse. Similarly, the Empress feels repelled, when she looks at the request of her experimental philosophers at various dead insects through the lens of a microscope. She is not only dismayed by what she sees (a dead insect squeezed under a piece of glass), but also struck by its ambiguity: Whereas the bird-men interpret the innumerable hemispheres covering the head of a gray drone fly as eyes, the Empress proposes a different interpretation, suggesting that they "might be glassy pearls, and yet not eyes" (*BW,* 270). Mary Baine Campbell has argued that the phrase quoted above is resonant with descriptions of the Empress's imperial robe that not only contains diamonds and other jewels but also pearls, and has therefore suggested that "Cavendish is identifying with the eye *beneath* the microscope, and not the eye behind the gaze" (*Wonder,* 213). However, it can also be argued that the passage quoted above is an allusion to Ariel's song in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "Full fathom five thy father lies;/ Of his bones are coral made; / Those are pearls that were his eyes:/ Nothing of him that doth fade, / But doth suffer a sea-change/ Into something rich and strange" (Act I, Scene 2, ll. 398-403). Like the corpse of Ferdinand's father, the Empress in *The Blazing World* undergoes a transformation into "something rich and strange". We cannot be sure into what exactly she is being transformed because we only see her from the outside; we cannot penetrate

the hard glittering shell of her imperial robe of jewels and pearls. As noted earlier, Cavendish did not believe that scientists could penetrate the interior of living beings with the help of optical instruments and maintained that the microscope did not reveal interiority but only surfaces. According to her, nature is impenetrable and unknowable. As the Empress has put it in *The Blazing World,* "nature's works are so various and wonderful that no particular creature is able to trace her ways" (283). Thus Cavendish not only rejected most of her contemporaries' assumption that optical instruments provide scientists with insight into the interior of living beings, but also the experimental method and general attitude of most members of the Royal Society towards nature. She perceived the former as intrusive and aggressive, the latter as presumptuous and arrogant. Similarly, Bloch has criticized the confidence of most seventeenth- and eighteenth-century intellectuals in human reason: "The assumptions proud of intellect were [...] incurably inflated, with the illusion of their absolute power of making; intellect definitely does not dictate the laws of nature" (*Principle,* 147).

As noted earlier, according to Campbell, Cavendish identified with and sought to protect nature. The Empress's robe is a hard glittering shell - a kind of body armor protecting the Empress (who represents nature) from being invaded and gazed at: The gemstones are so hard that the robe cannot be penetrated and so glaring that onlookers have to avert their eyes so as not to be blinded. The Empress also has a chariot that is made up of diamonds and jewels. The representation of the Empress can be interpreted as refuting the practice of experimental philosophy, which has been criticized as invasive and aggressive by many feminist critics. In the Blazing World, the body of the Empress is protected from being invaded and gazed at by her robe and chariot. While she is traveling in

Europe, her body is left at home and thus also protected from being gazed at and invaded. During her travels the Empress is not only safe, but also free. The climax of the Empress's impenetrability and freedom is reached when the souls of the Empress, the Duchess and the Duke converse with each other inside the latter's body. The scene appears to be aimed at disproving the claim of the members of the Royal Society that the microscope can make visible the interior of bodies: What is going on inside the Duke's body (three souls conversing with each other, exchanging thoughts and feeling connected to each other) cannot be perceived from the outside, not even under the most powerful microscope.

Whereas the Empress's experimental philosophers appear to represent the views of the members of the Royal Society, Cavendish's own views of nature appear to be represented by the Empress's natural philosophers, the worm-men, and by the immaterial spirits, who explain to the Empress that "'nature is but one infinite, self-moving, living and self-knowing body, consisting of the three degrees of inanimate, sensitive and rational matter so intermixed 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 inanimate part, the body of infinite nature'" (*BW,* 301). Bloch's notion of nature is very similar to Cavendish's. Like Cavendish, Bloch rejects the view of nature promoted by the mechanical materialists of the late seventeenth century. Both Cavendish and Bloch share the view that nature is not passive and inert but animate, active, maternal and intelligent (*Selected,* 59).

The Empress's experimental philosophers are primarily concerned with what can be seen, preferably through a telescope or a microscope. By contrast, the Empress's natural philosophers draw the reader's attention to what cannot be seen

by the human eye with the help of optical instruments. When the immaterial spirits suddenly disappear during a conversation with the Empress, she is afraid they might have been made to “'sink down into the black and dark abyss of the earth.' The worm-men comforted the Empress, telling her that the earth was not so horrid a dwelling as she did imagine. 'For,' said they, 'not only all minerals and vegetables, but several sorts of animals can witness that the earth is a warm, fruitful, quiet, safe and happy habitation'” (*BW,* 305). Obviously, the Empress is scared by the prospect of being in complete darkness, that is, of not being able to see. The worm-men, however, present nature in a very positive manner and argue that not being able to see is nothing we should be afraid of. Anna Battigelli has claimed that *The Blazing World* calls into question “the value of optical instruments and of the eye as the exclusive bases for knowing the world” (*Exiles,* 106). In a similar way, Bloch has criticized modern science for its emphasis on the visible and its rejection of the invisible, which, according to him, have led to a deplorable focus on details, blurring the view of the whole:

> It is not only easier for this age to believe in the visible than the invisible, amazingly, but even within the visible, what is discrete, subdivided seems even more real than the whole. The trend now, long supported by technology, is to locate the more easily movable, easily variable elements in order to move the whole from there; in other words in order to effect a cure at the lowest possible point. That has an effect; it leads to that total dismantling of anything original, that recognizes only the mundane, the calculable (*Spirit,* 166).

The manner in which the worm-men describe the earth is reminiscent of a womb: A baby in his/her mother's womb cannot see either, and yet, it is a warm, safe and happy place, just like the earth for the animals that live there. Because the earth constitutes a large part of nature and is often used in the same sense as nature, it is probable that Cavendish viewed nature as maternal. But for Cavendish, nature is

not simply a big womb, that is, it is not just "body" as opposed to "mind". In fact, *The Blazing World* draws attention to the inadequacy of this dualism. Body and mind cannot be separated from each other. Cavendish viewed nature as consisting of both body and mind, that is, matter and sense/reason. In *The Blazing World,* Cavendish describes nature as one continuous body that consists of matter. As she has pointed out in her *Observations,* matter has two degrees: animate (self-moving and active) and inanimate (dull and passive) (24). The animate part of matter also has two degrees: the sensitive and the rational (*Observations,* 30). These different degrees, however, are not separate entities, but pervade every single part of nature. As she puts it in *Observations,* nature "consists out of a commixture of animate and inanimate matter, which although they be of two degrees or parts, (call them what you will) yet they are not separated parts, but make one infinite body, like as life, soul and body, make but one man" (206/207). Cavendish argues that "since nature is but one body, it is entirely wise and knowing, ordering her self-moving parts with all facility and ease, without any disturbance, living in pleasure and delight, with infinite varieties and curiosities" (*Observations,* 48). She views nature as self-moving and self-knowing, that is, as free and knowledgeable. She further views nature as full of variety, yet orderly. Cavendish's thoughts on natural philosophy can be regarded as an attempt to contradict and provide an alternative to mechanical views of nature, such as Hobbes's. According to Hobbes, matter consists of separate, senseless and irrational atoms that are moved by external stimuli and that coexist in a perpetual state of conflict. He regards nature as primarily characterized by struggle. For him, nature is synonymous with anarchy. Hobbes's philosophy is informed by the belief that order can only be achieved if human beings can be forced to submit to

an authority invested with the power to establish and protect order.

As noted above, the worm-men describe the earth as "a warm, fruitful, quiet, safe and happy habitation'" (*BW,* 305), in other words, as a place to live in – a good place. Thus, nature in *The Blazing World* is presented as "eutopia". Throughout the text, the natural world is favorably compared to the world of human beings: For example, when the Empress asks the immaterial spirits "whether evil spirits were reckoned amongst the beasts of the field", they reply "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 satisfy their natural appetite. 'But certainly,' said they, 'you men are more cruel to one another than evil spirits are to you'" (*BW,* p. 302). Similarly, in *Sociable Letters,* Cavendish declares:

> [...] I wish Men were as Harmless as most Beasts are, then surely the World would be more Quiet and Happy than it is, for then there would not be such Pride, Vanity, Ambition, Covetousness, Faction, Treachery, and Treason, as is now; Indeed one might very well say in his Prayers to God, O Lord God, I do beseech thee of thy infinite Mercy, to make Man so, and order his Mind, Thoughts, Passions, and Appetites, like Beasts, that they may be Temperate, Sociable, Laborious, Patient, Prudent, Provident, Brotherly-loving and Neighbourly-kind, all which Beasts are, but most Men not (4/5).

In fact, *The Blazing World* deconstructs the binary opposites man/animal by presenting human beings and animals as equals: When the Empress asks the spirits "whether man was a little world", they reply "that if a fly or a worm was a little world, then man was so too" (*BW,* 295). According to Cavendish, man has not been appointed master over all other creatures: When the Empress asks the spirits whether the first man gave names to all the several sorts of fishes in the sea and fresh waters, they answer in the negative, "'for he was an earthly and not a

watery creature, and therefore could not know the several sorts of fishes'" (*BW,* 303). In *Observations,* Cavendish further argues that "no man, with all the force of logic, will ever be able to prove, that he is either the chief above all other creatures, or that he only knows and worships God, and no natural creature else; for it is without dispute, that other creatures, in their kinds, are as knowing and wise, as man in his kind" (*Observations,* 219). In *The Blazing World,* the Empress's Galenic physicians claim that nature is wiser than men, arguing 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 than 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' (*BW,* 284).

Thus Cavendish's view of animals was diametrically opposed to the general notion of animals in early modern Europe. As Keith Thomas has pointed out, many writers during the Renaissance sought to distance human beings from animals. People were taught to regard their bodily impulses as "animal" ones that had to be subdued. Everything else would be "beastly" or "brutish". Especially lust was associated with the animal condition. Words such as "brute", "bestial" and "beastly" had strong sexual connotations (*Man,* 38). Even pretending to be an animal during ritual or theatrical performance was considered inappropriate (*Man,* 39). Like many of his contemporaries, Descartes tried to demonstrate that human beings and animals were fundamentally different, arguing that animals were mere machines or automata, like clocks, capable of complex behavior, but incapable of speech and reasoning. Descartes also viewed the human body as a machine, but a machine containing a mind and therefore an immortal soul (*Man,* 33). During the Renaissance, many people believed that animals did not have souls. There was a

parallel debate about whether women possessed souls (*Man,* 43). *The Blazing World* can be read as trying to disprove the claims outlined above, by presenting human beings as parts of nature and as merely equal, not superior to the rest of creation. In *The Blazing World,* animals are not only presented as equal to human beings but as similar to them, for, many of the inhabitants of the Blazing World are partly human and partly animal, underlining Cavendish's claim that human beings and animals are not as different from each other as many writers in early modern Europe would have it. As noted earlier, Bloch also maintained that the world would be a better place if we learnt to view animals as equal to ourselves and if we acknowledged that animals are entitled to the same rights as human beings, namely to a life in freedom and dignity (cp. 25).

In *The Blazing World* nature is presented as impenetrable and free. However, it is also presented as in need of protection from exploitation and destruction: This is evident from the worm-men's complaint about the habit of gardeners to uproot and destroy weeds, which, according to them, is "'a great prejudice to the worms and other animal creatures that live underground, for it most commonly causes their dissolution and ruin; at best they are driven out of their habitations,'" (*BW,* 280). The Empress is very interested in this remark and shows her sympathy with the homeless worms. Nature is also shown to be exploited and destroyed in seventeenth-century England: When the souls of the Empress and Duchess approach Wellbeck, the Empress is surprised and delighted by the thick woods covering the land of the Duke. In the rest of England, the Empress had not noticed many trees – at least not on land: "'The truth is,' said she, 'there seems to be more wood on the seas (she meaning the ships) than on the land'" (*BW,* 318). Similarly, Bloch has deplored the fact that human beings tend to

transform their natural environment without any regard for nature, that is, in a thoughtless and selfish manner: “[T]he hideous streets and suburbs [...] stand out as scabs and sores on the landscape, or rather: the latter is totally destroyed. And health, clean air, light, the casual green of the trees along with it; it is almost odd to find all this still in the open countryside” (*Principle,* 791).

In *The Blazing World,* Cavendish draws attention to the exploitation and destruction of nature. In *Observations*, she moreover reminds the reader of the fact that the survival of humankind is dependent on nature as well as on civilization:

> But could experimental philosophers find out more beneficial arts than our forefathers have done, either for the better increase of vegetables and brute animals to nourish our bodies, or better and commodious contrivances in the art of architecture to build us houses, or for the advancing of trade and traffic to provide necessaries for us to live, or for the decrease of nice distinctions and sophistical disputes in churches, schools and courts of judicature, to make men live in unity, peace and neighbourly friendship; it would not only be worth their labour, but of as much praise as could be given to them (*Observations,* 51/52).

As the passage quoted above indicates, Cavendish appears to acknowledge that science could play an important role in the improvement of humankind's lot. However, she does not say where one must draw the line between the use of nature and the exploitation and destruction of nature. Nevertheless, *The Blazing World* provides its readers with a simple guideline, suggesting that we view nature as our birthplace and home, that is, as a mother who nurtures us. Therefore we should value and love nature, not treat nature like an enemy. The people of the Blazing World, however, appear to treat nature as exactly this - an enemy: They have invented ships that are carried forward by an

> engine 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" (*BW,* 256/257).

The violent imagery of the passage quoted above is deeply disturbing, especially when read alongside the following quotation from Cavendish's *Observations:* "[W]hen a man lies upon a stone, or leans on a tree, or handles and touches water, etc., although these parts be so closely joined to each other, yet their perceptions are quite different; for the man only knows what he feels, or sees, or hears, or smells, or tasteth, but knows not what sense or perception those parts have" (*Observations,* 142).

As noted earlier, *The Blazing World* presents nature as one continuous body endowed with reason. Accordingly, human beings are considered as parts of nature, not superior but equal to the rest of nature's creatures. Because nature is one continuous whole, all of its parts are connected to each other. Cavendish's belief that everything in the universe is connected to each other has a profound and far-reaching ethical implication: It implies that everything one does has an effect on the whole universe and its innumerable creatures. This, in turn, implies that everything one does to others one also does to one's self. As is evident, Cavendish's concept of connectivity dissolves the distinction between self and other. It can also serve to make readers more conscious of their actions and of the consequences of their actions, especially with regard to our natural environment. In a similar fashion, Bloch's thought appears to be informed by the desire to transcend the binary opposites "self" and "other", as indicated by his definition of the "realm of freedom" as "homeland of identity, in which neither man behaves towards the world, nor the world behaves towards man, as if towards a stranger" (*Principle,* 209) and by his definition of love as "dissolving into and keeping

watch within the other" (*Spirit,* 212).

Because the inhabitants of the Blazing World treat nature as an enemy, as their invention of mechanical motors for ships that batter the waves indicates, *The Blazing World* can only partially be regarded as anticipating Bloch's "realm of freedom" with regard to the relationship between human beings and nature. However, Cavendish's utopia contains a lot of anticipatory illumination where the relationship between human beings and nature is concerned. Like Bacon in *New Atlantis,* Cavendish presents nature in a positive manner which deserves our emulation – as animate, creative, maternal, autonomous and endowed with reason. However, what distinguishes *The Blazing World* from Bacon's fable is its emphasis on connectivity, which is similar to Bloch's notion of *Nächstenliebe* as "dissolving into and keeping watch within the other" (*Spirit,* 212). However, Cavendish's connectivity is more effective because it is not, as the concept of neighborly love (*Nächstenliebe*), rooted in the assumption that there is a distinction between myself and others, but based on the conviction that the individual I is connected to every other living creature in the universe, that is, not only to human but also to nonhuman beings. Therefore, Cavendish's concept of connectivity not only transforms the way we perceive and treat other human beings but also the way we perceive and treat the non-human world, that is, nature. To view nature as our mother who deserves our respect or to view nature as a child who needs our protection, as Bacon had suggested in *New Atlantis,* certainly contributes to a much-needed change of our attitude towards nature. However, to view ourselves as parts of nature, as Cavendish proposes in *The Blazing World,* changes this attitude perhaps in an even more radical and powerful way.

CHAPTER 5:

BLOCH'S NOTION OF *BILDUNG* IN CAVENDISH'S *THE BLAZING WORLD*

This chapter will explore the question whether *The Blazing World* can be regarded as contributing to what Bloch considers the main purpose of education – *Bildung,* that is, to help human beings to become active thinkers, to assume an "upright gait" and to help us to become subjects in the sense of historical agents.

As noted earlier, Bloch defines thinking as a "critical, insistent, revealing activity" and as "venturing beyond". *The Blazing World* challenges its readers to approach the text in a critical and searching manner by alerting them to the fact that what the text presents as "knowledge" is highly precarious. For example, when the Empress summons her scientists and asks them to present to her the results of their research activities, the bear-men

> reported that they had seen [through their telescopes] 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 and 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 appeared in a certain place and did disappear in the same place *(BW,* 268).

The bear-men observe the same sky but they see different things, which they interpret in different ways. Like Bacon, Cavendish exposes the notion of objective knowledge as a myth. Knowledge is dependent on human sense perception and on the human mind, neither of which are infallible. Similarly, Bloch has rejected the notion of objective knowledge. As Nietzsche has pointed out, the concept of objective knowledge "presuppose[s] an eye such as no living being can imagine, an eye required to have no direction, to abrogate its active and interpretative powers – precisely those powers that alone make of seeing, seeing *something.* All

seeing is essentially perspective, and so is all knowing" (*Genealogy,* 255). Bloch has made a similar point, arguing that we are all ideologically situated or shackled to an ideological subject position and that "[e]ven the scientist who works in isolation is inevitably the product of the society in which he was born and in which he was brought up. [...] he is limited by the ideological limits of this society [...] and necessarily influenced by its dominant ideas; even if he rejects and contradicts those, his own thought is inevitably based on them" (*Pädagogica,* 78).

In *The Blazing World,* Cavendish presents knowledge as the product of human subjectivity – most spectacularly by inserting herself into the text, thus creating an effect that is perhaps best described as Chinese-box-like: Initially, *The Blazing World* is in the mind of its author, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle. Because Cavendish has inserted herself into the text as a character, *The Blazing World* is also in this character's mind, and again, the Duchess is inside *The Blazing World* – and so on and so forth, *ad infinitum.* Besides, the Duchess creates another utopia, as does the Empress. *The Blazing World* can be regarded as a never-ending process of creation – the creation of worlds and of subjectivities. Thus, in Cavendish's utopia, knowledge is not only presented as the product of human subjectivities but also as continually in the process of becoming. Similarly, Bloch has argued that knowledge is not a coin which can be exchanged or the sum total of "facts" but a process (*Pädagogica,* 74) which has not been finished yet and which is driven forward by our will to transform the world into a better place (*Pädagogica,* 75). Like Bloch, Cavendish also appears to have believed that knowledge and social transformation (theory and practice) are interconnected. In the course of the narrative, the Empress in *The Blazing World*

not only founds and supports a number of scientific societies, she also initiates several social reforms and, even more importantly, becomes a writer. Besides, she encourages her readers either to adopt her way of thinking or to come up with their own ideas as to what a more humane society would be like and how it could be realized.

The appearance of the text's author in the text also draws attention to the interiority of living beings as of an unfathomable depth that cannot be penetrated because it is an infinite space (as a result of the never-ending process of the proliferation of worlds and subjectivities). This depth can neither be penetrated from the outside, that is, by other people, nor from the inside, that is, by oneself. As Bloch has put it, "we are located in our own blind spot, in the darkness of the lived moment, whose darkness is ultimately *our own darkness*, being-unfamiliar-to-ourselves, being-enfolded, being missing" (*Spirit,* 200). This is also illustrated, as noted earlier, by the union of souls inside the Duke's body, which cannot be perceived from the outside.

According to Bloch, objective knowledge is both impossible and undesirable. He believes that knowledge is always and inevitably subjective and argues that anybody who claims to pursue knowledge in a disinterested or neutral manner is a coward and a liar or "Münchhausen" - someone who "only tells a story", i.e., someone who does not take into account what he has experienced and lived through (*Spirit,* 180). Bloch demands that we embrace subjective knowledge, i.e., that we "apprehend [ourselves] as existent and [...] understand [ourselves] in existence" (*Spirit,* 180). According to Bloch, genuine knowledge requires "a confession of faith" (*Spirit,* 180), otherwise it is not knowledge but only "worthless" because "unconcerned" "academic plenitude" (*Spirit,* 180).

Bloch rejects the notion of disinterested or neutral knowledge and, instead, advocates partial knowledge which is informed by "love for the victims [and] hatred of the exploiters" (*Principle,* 272). For him, true knowledge is impossible without "good action [...] in socialist terms" (*Principle,* 272). According to Bloch, any attempt at understanding the world which is informed by the myth of objective or neutral knowledge is misguided – it only leads to untruth and mistakes the world for a corpse (*Pädagogica,* 95). Knowledge about human beings and about the world determines to a large extent how we perceive ourselves and the world we live in. In turn, how we perceive ourselves and the world determines how we act towards others and our environment. Thus, there is "good" or "socialist" knowledge contributing to the establishment of a more humane society in the future which must be promoted and even fought for (Bloch has referred to this kind of knowledge as "battle-worthy Yes", *Spirit,* 171) and there is "bad" or "harmful" knowledge ("knowledge" informed by the interests of capitalism and the ruling class) which must be exposed as biased and detrimental to the well being of the majority of humankind and nature. Bloch notes that Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and knowledge, is not only portrayed together with an owl but also together with a spear and shield (*Pädagogica,* 95). Similarly, the Empress in *The Blazing World* appears to be another Minerva. She is not only depicted as a champion of knowledge or truth (symbolized by the blue stones in her imperial robe and indicated by her role as patroness of scientific societies) but also as ready to fight for her own version of knowledge or truth (she is depicted as holding a "buckler" and a "spear", *BW,* 260).

As noted earlier, in *The Blazing World,* Cavendish presents knowledge as the product of human subjectivity and as being in a continuous process of

becoming. We have already seen that the concept of process also occupies a prominent place in Bloch's philosophy of utopia. According to Bloch, because both the world in general and human beings in particular are not finished yet, knowledge is also necessarily unfinished. In other words, knowledge is never finished, complete, perfect or absolute. Like Bloch, Cavendish rejected the notion of absolute knowledge, as indicated by the following remark by the immaterial spirits in *The Blazing World*: "Not any creature but God himself can have an absolute and perfect knowledge of all things" (*BW,* 295). According to Bloch, absolute or perfect knowledge is not only impossible because the world is still incomplete and unfinished, that is, in the process of becoming, but also because there is a gap between subject and object "beyond detrimental space, at a distance from it, precisely at the point where the darkness of immediacy together with its outskirts begins to stop. This curious gap always lies between subject and object of contemplation, precisely as dead space sui generis, from which the atmosphere of unmediated immediacy has not yet been sufficiently removed" (*Principle,* 296/297). The Empress's experimental scientists seek to bridge this gap with the help of optical instruments, such as the telescope and microscope. As noted earlier, Cavendish rejected optical instruments as deluding. Thus, she did not believe that the use of such instruments could bridge the gap between subject and object. If this gap can be bridged at all, Cavendish suggests in *The Blazing World* and *Observations,* it is not through artificial sense enhancers but through

> the knowledge of other creatures, [which] many times gives information to man: As for example, the Egyptians are informed how high the river Nile will rise by the crocodile's building her nest higher or lower; which shows, that those creatures foresee or foreknow more than men can do: Also, many birds foreknow the rising of a tempest, and shelter themselves before it comes; the like examples might be given of several other sorts of animals, whose knowledge proceeds either from some sensitive perceptions, or from

> rational observations, or from both (*Observations,* 218).

The Blazing World itself is inhabited, among others, by creatures who are half human and half animal, a circumstance that is advantageous to them with regard to sense perception:

> Very good navigators they were, and though they had no knowledge of the lodestone or needle or pendulous watches yet (which was as serviceable to them) they had subtle observations and great practice, insomuch that they could not only 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 seamen. Besides, they were excellent augurers, which skill they counted more necessary and beneficial than the use of compasses, cards, watches and the like (*BW*, 256).

The Blazing World not only forces us to engage in thinking as a "critical, insistent, revealing activity" by drawing attention to the precariousness of human knowledge but also demands that we engage in thinking as "venturing beyond" by challenging us to transcend conventional binary opposites, such as light and dark or day and night. In the Blazing World, "'the nights [...] are as light as days, by reason of the numerous blazing stars which are very splendorous, only their light is whiter than the sun's light, and as the sun's light is hot, so their light is cool; not so cool as our twinkling starlight, nor is their sunlight as hot as ours, but more temperate'" (*BW,* 345). Likewise, the air "'is sweet and temperate and [there is] as much light in the sun's absence as in its presence, which makes that time we call night more pleasant there than the day'" (*BW,* 345/346). What is more, the inhabitants are unfamiliar with the words "night" and, presumably, "day". On top of that, the night is "more pleasant there than the day". *The Blazing World* not only deconstructs the binary opposites day/night or light/dark but also the binary opposites reason/imagination (fancy) by defining reason and fancy as "effects, or rather actions of the rational part of matter" (*BW,* 252). As noted in the previous

chapter, *The Blazing World* also deconstructs the binary opposites human/ animal and self/ other. According to Nicole Pohl, Cavendish sought in her writings to "explode the conventional binarisms [...] by which we compartmentalise and understand the world" (*Princely,* 63). Bloch too rejects conventional binary opposites, arguing that concepts such as soul, mind and body have become so securely established that they preclude people from questioning and transcending them (*Selected,* 37). According to him, nothing short of an explosion is able to rip apart our habitual ways of perceiving the world. In *The Principle of Hope,* Bloch has compared active thinking to an explosion, which destroys what already has become and creates a space for what has not become yet (140). In fact, he views active thinking as related to both explosion/destruction and to birth/creation (*Principle,* 140).

According to Bloch educational institutions should not only help people to become active thinkers, but also help them to assume an "upright gait", that is, moral integrity. Knowledge should not only be critical, thus revealing the machinations of capitalist ideology, but also have as its goal helping human beings to assume an "upright gait". Bloch has criticized modern science for its definition of knowledge as "pure mathematics and Newtonian science", ignoring and dismissing a host of issues which are of central importance to human life – such as morality and religion (*Spirit,* 174). *The Blazing World* reflects Bloch's concern with man's moral integrity in Cavendish's notion of "virtue" which can be regarded as corresponding to Bloch's notion of an "upright gait". Unlike most of her contemporaries, Cavendish did not narrowly define virtue as female modesty and chastity, but as the moral integrity of both men and women. In *The Blazing World,* this ideal is embodied by the Duke of Newcastle, who has become a

virtuous human being as a result of his upbringing and education, as the allegorical figure of Honesty says:

> '[...] the Duke [...] was and is my foster son, for I, Honesty, bred him from his childhood and made a perpetual friendship betwixt him and Gratitude, Charity and Generosity, and put him to school to Prudence, who taught him wisdom and informed him in the rules of Temperance, Patience, Justice and the like. Then I put him into the university of Honour, where he learned all honourable qualities, arts and sciences. Afterwards I sent him to travel through the world of actions, and made Observation his governor, and in those his travels he contracted a friendship with Experience, all which made him fit for heaven's blessings and Fortune's favours' (*BW,* 324).

As noted earlier, Bloch's notion of an "upright gait" not only refers to moral integrity but also to the will not to resign oneself to what has already become (*Principle,* 1618). Bloch deplores the fact that conventional education turns people both into "ethical cripples" *(Pädagogica,* 12) and into "recruits" *(Principle,* 929), i.e., into submissive subjects (*Untertanen*). According to him, teachers can help students to become subjects in the sense of historical agents by presenting reality as an ongoing process, history as man-made and society as changeable. Besides, teachers can help students to become subjects by encouraging them to read books and to write essays. In fact, Bloch views reading and writing as journeys to self-discovery and self-realization. He has described artistic labor as a "dawning, an inner brightening, trouble, darkness, creaking ice, an awakening, a hearing nearing itself, a condition and concept, ready, against the darkness of the lived moment, the nameless *a priori* brewing in us, near us, before us, in all of being-in-existence in itself, finally to kindle the sharp, identical light, to open the gate of looking in one's own direction" (*Spirit,* 192). *The Blazing World* can be read as the story of a woman who becomes a subject in the sense of historical agent as Bloch posited or, as Kate Lilley has argued, as a text concerned with the representation of "women as [...] subjects in discourse" ("Introduction",

xx). Similarly, Lee Cullen Khanna has suggested that Cavendish's utopia is concerned with the representation of "creativity as empowering female characters and readers" (*Worlds of Difference,* 24). The lady's marriage with the Emperor of the Blazing World is not only, as Nicole Pohl has argued, "the starting point for [her] quest for subjectivity" (*Princely,* 60), but also the starting point for her quest for becoming a subject in the sense of historical agent. At the beginning of the narrative, the female protagonist of *The Blazing World* is a helpless damsel in distress. However, in the course of the narrative, she becomes a powerful Empress who actively throws herself into action. She initiates reforms, leads a defensive military campaign, defends her husband in court and, even more importantly, participates in philosophical discussions and writes a literary utopia by dictating to the Duchess who acts as scribe. She becomes a subject in the sense of historical agent both by actively participating in the shaping of The Blazing World and by becoming a writer. The importance of writing is implied at an early stage in the narrative. As noted earlier, the entrance to the Blazing World is situated at the North Pole. The outer edge of the Blazing World is constituted of a vast plain of snow and ice (*BW,* 254) and thus resembles a blank sheet of paper. In the course of the narrative, the lady "writes" her story on the white "sheets" of the Blazing World by traveling from its outer edge to its center – to her self, gradually becoming a subject in the process. Readers are encouraged to undertake a similar journey (*BW,* Epilogue, 348).

The lady does not accidentally discover utopia and live there happily ever after, but has to create it. Thus, *The Blazing World* suggests that utopia is not a land one can discover but a world that one has to create. How can we create utopia? Not, as the text appears to suggest, through political reforms (towards the

end of the narrative, the Empress revokes all her reforms) but through the self-transformation of its citizens. This is implied by the following episode in which Cavendish suggests that each individual creates his/her own paradise: When the Empress asks the spirits

> 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 itself, a world of life and not of matter, or whether it was mixed, 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 (*BW,* 295/296).

In Cavendish's text, utopia is neither realized in the Blazing World at large nor in the relationship between the Empress and her husband, the Emperor. Thus, one must conclude that utopia is to be realized in the person of the speaker, that is, the Empress - and everyone else asking the same question, that is, Cavendish's readers.

Like Bacon's *New Atlantis,* Cavendish's *The Blazing World* contains anticipatory illumination in the sense that it challenges us to become active thinkers, to assume an “upright gait” and to become subjects in the sense of historical agents. *The Blazing World* in particular encourages its readers to actively participate in the shaping of their society and to engage in reading and writing as journeys towards self-discovery and self-realization. Besides, it encourages us to participate in the intellectual issues of our day, that is, to acquire a voice (similarly, it encourages us to take up the pen, expressing and thereby developing and sharpening our ideas). Cavendish's novella urges us to think about the shape of utopia and suggests a simple but effective way towards the establishment of a more humane society in the future. Rather than focusing on political reforms, *The Blazing World* seems to suggest that we should aspire to

transform our ways of thinking about human beings and nature. As noted earlier, in *The Blazing World,* Cavendish seeks to refute Hobbes's claims about human nature and the natural world. In doing so, Cavendish not only refutes values and ideas which she perceives as detrimental to the well being of humankind and nature but also offers an alternative view of human nature and the natural world. She also reveals the fact that the way we think about nature strongly influences the way we perceive human beings and their relationships with each other and with nature. In other words, *The Blazing World* exposes the fact that knowledge about nature, which is usually presented to us as objective and disinterested, is actually just the opposite – not objective and disinterested but subjective and underpinned by the interests of particular human beings.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSIONS

As I have endeavored to show, Bacon's *New Atlantis* and Cavendish's *The Blazing World* contain anticipatory illumination in the sense that they provide us if not with utopia but at least with a glimpse of utopia – the "realm of freedom" – and also in the sense that they challenge us to become active thinkers, morally responsible people and subjects in the sense of historical agents through *Bildung*. Both *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* encourage their readers to engage in thinking as a "critical, insistent, revealing activity" and as "venturing beyond" in the manner Bloch proposes. Both texts force their readers to approach what is presented to them as "knowledge" in a critical manner. Both reject the notion of objective and of absolute knowledge, instead presenting knowledge as the product of human subjectivity and as being caught up in a never-ending continual process of becoming. Thus, both *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* share a striking affinity with Bloch's view of knowledge. Besides, both texts stimulate their readers to venture beyond meanings created by previous readers and to become active participants in the creation of meaning. Bacon's fable challenges its readers to resolve its many tensions and contradictions, to fill in its innumerable gaps and to provide the text with a proper ending. Cavendish's novella challenges its readers to continue the literary utopias composed by the Empress and the Duchess and encourages them to create their own imaginary worlds. Both *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* make a lot of demands on their readers. Thus, neither Bacon's fable nor Cavendish's novella can be swallowed at a gulp; instead they force the reader to come back to them again and again and to brood over them. This can be a frustrating experience for readers who regard texts as dead bodies upon which

they perform an autopsy. A text is not a dead body but a living organism

> indefinitely regenerating its own tissue behind the cutting trace, the decision of each reading. There is always a surprise in store for the anatomy or physiology of any criticism that might think it had mastered the game, surveyed all the threads at once, deluding itself, too, in wanting to look at the text without touching it, without laying a hand on the 'object', without risking – which is the only chance of entering into the game, by getting a few fingers caught – the addition of some new thread (Derrida, quoted by Desroches in *Limits,* 186).

Reading *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* can further be frustrating for readers who regard texts as antagonists – knots of meanings that have to be entangled or cut through. No text can be rendered into a set of coherent meanings, because what is expressed via language is never unequivocal and limited, but ambiguous and open - not identical with its meaning which only becomes itself in the process of interpretation, leaving behind its Not-Yet: "Meaning is something that is drawn to and that is sent further to what it means and what is thus not fully present yet; it possesses fullness in that it is full in its drawing and main characteristic of Not-Yet" (Bloch, *Selected,* 43). In *The Spirit of Utopia,* Bloch even goes as far as to suggest that "what has just been said must be crossed out each time, so that nothing can solidify" (194). *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* are constructed along lines that prevent the solidification or arrest of meaning, so that the flow of meaning never comes to a halt.

However, Bloch's work emphasizes not only process but also content. Meaning might be endlessly and eternally deferred but this should not prevent us from trying to transform the world into a better place. Bloch values process, but not infinite process. According to him, "nothing is more repugnant to utopian conscience than utopia with unlimited travel; endless striving is vertigo, hell" (*Principle,* 314). Bloch simultaneously emphasizes process and posits a "goal-

content" - utopia or the "realm of freedom". Bloch's work is committed to the realization of utopia through Marxism. However, Bloch is not a dogmatist. He views Marxism only as "a condition for life in freedom, life in happiness, life in possible fulfillment, life with content" ("Missing", 15). What exactly this content is, we do not know yet because it is still in the making. Bacon's and Cavendish's texts, in the same spirit as Bloch's works, do not spell out this content. But one thing is clear - it must include ethical or moral values: "The goal has today become visible as socialist liberation; and what this freedom contains, a freedom not merely from but chiefly for, still remains happily open to defining moral work" (*Principle,* 931). In *The Spirit of Utopia,* Bloch complains bitterly about the absence of ethical or moral values in the society he lived in, as do Bacon and Cavendish in *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World*:

> [...] we mean little to each other, can pass unsuspectingly by one another. Or when we do know – when the possibility of helping, of becoming another draws near us [...] then the nasty way we have of warming our hearts with vanity appears, and the prospect still remains empty. Moreover, most people around us, particularly since they have been entangled in a money economy, are so lethargically filthy that none of them, once they are scalded and marked, comes near any more difficult inner stirrings. And the emancipated, intellectual ones decay with all their soul, however elegantly they may have put talk, sentimental experience, a moral sensibility in the place of action when the other acts, when the other needs help. They are far from feeling: I am at fault, not the others, and if they are dark, then I have not shone enough for them. Instead they split moral life off from itself, contemplate it lifelessly and easily like everything else, and so collectively inner character of its essence is misrecognized, squandered. It has fallen to the criminals to feel fear, remorse, guilt, the stirring of the germ of the spirit in us, and our hearts stay lethargic (*Spirit,* 165/166).

In the passage quoted above, Bloch deplores the fact that people do not care about each other and do not feel responsible for each other. By contrast, Bacon's Bensalemites do care for each other and feel responsible for each other, that is, they care for every human being they encounter without regard to sex, ethnicity or

religion. Similarly, the Empress cares for other human beings and feels responsible for them (she not only cares for the happiness of her friend, the Duchess, but also for the well-being of all, immaterial spirits and worms because the Empress perceives nature as one continuous body and everything as connected to everything else). Like Bloch, Bacon and Cavendish emphasize Christian love (*Nächstenliebe*). In *The Spirit of Utopia,* Bloch describes Christian love as "transform[ing] a human being into what he loves", as "dissolving into and keeping watch within the other" and as "charity toward oneself and toward the other, enduring the labor of the transformative, collective self-encounter" (212). *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* also emphasize Christian love. When the sailors in Bacon's fable offer themselves to the governor of the Strangers' House as a compensation for his kindness and help, he rejects the offer, explaining to them that "he was a priest and looked for a priest's reward; which was our brotherly love, and the good of our souls and bodies" (*NA*, 10). When the Empress, the protagonist in Cavendish's novella, considers writing a moral Cabala, her friend, the Duchess, dissuades her from this project, arguing that "[t]he only thing [...] in morality, is but to fear God, and to love his neighbour, and this needs no further interpretation" (*BW,* 183). Besides, both *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* reject self-interest and greed. The people of Bensalem repeatedly decline to accept the money and luxury items the sailors offer them as compensation for their hospitality and kindness. The Empress declares human striving for riches as harmful and undignified and advocates moderation instead.

Both Bacon and Cavendish have not only written literary utopias but, at the same time, taken a critical look at their own societies. Therefore we have to read at least some aspects of *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* as critical

commentaries on their times, just as Bloch's works must be regarded as critical (non-literary) commentaries on twentieth-century Western society. Whereas most critics agree that Plato's *Republic* and Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* are informed by communist ideas, the communistic bent (their rejection of capitalism and emphasis on *Nächstenliebe*) of Bacon's *New Atlantis* and Cavendish's *The Blazing World* have until now remained unnoticed, presumably because, in the case of *New Atlantis,* critical attention has usually been centered around the role played by science in Bacon's imaginary society, while in the case of *The Blazing World* the focus was either on Cavendish as an early modern woman writer or on the alleged deficiencies of her natural philosophy. Thus, the anticipatory Marxism in *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* has not been recognized. This dissertation on the other hand has built a case for it.

What is more, the similarities between Bacon's and Cavendish's views on nature have also remained unnoticed. Both Bacon and Cavendish present nature as animate, creative and intelligent (and thus as deserving our respect and appreciation) and advocate a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature (as does Bloch). As noted earlier, *New Atlantis* does contain a number of tensions and contradictions with regard to this latter point (the fellows of Salomon's House confine animals to parks and enclosures and perform experiments and dissections upon them for the benefit of humankind). Apparently, in Bacon's fable, the notion of Christian love is not fully extended to nature, although he displays an ecological sensitivity. By contrast, *The Blazing World* makes no distinction between humankind and nature. The latter is defined as "but one infinite, self-moving, living and self-knowing body" (*BW,* 301). Cavendish's natural philosophy emphasizes wholeness and connectivity. Everything is

connected to everything else. There is no distinction between “self” and “other”, for everything one does to an “other”, one simultaneously does to one's self. This view has far-reaching implications – not only for the relationship between human beings but also for the relationship between human beings and nature. If we can learn to think and act in accordance with Cavendish's notion of nature as one continuous body, that is, as a system in which everything is connected to everything else, i.e., if we realize that our actions have consequences for the rest of the universe and thus for ourselves, we might not only be able to achieve a more humane society but also prevent the destruction of our planet. In conclusion, it can be argued that both *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* anticipate Bloch's “realm of freedom”, that is, the end of alienation between human beings and between human beings and nature.

Moreover, both *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* contain anticipatory illumination in the sense that they contribute to what Bloch considers the main purpose of education – *Bildung,* that is, to help human beings to become active thinkers, to assume an “upright gait” and to become subjects in the sense of historical agents. Thus, both texts provide us with a glimpse of utopia (a sketch of a more humane society in the future) and contribute to the realization of utopia by challenging us to approach what is presented to us as “knowledge” in a critical manner, to venture beyond conventional ways of perceiving and thinking about the world and to become active participants in the shaping of the society we live in, thereby transforming it into Bloch's “realm of freedom” - a classless and non-capitalist society, in which the relationship between human beings and the relationship between human beings and nature is no longer determined by self-interest, but by *Nächstenliebe* and the awareness that everything is connected to

everything else. Although he does not explicitly mention the term in his own works, Bloch would have been highly appreciative of Cavendish's emphasis on connectivity in *The Blazing World.* Like the concept of neighborly love, the concept of connectivity has a long history. It can be found in the writings of the Stoics and also in the writings of thinkers associated with the 1970s movement of ecology. The idea of connectivity applies also to the arts. Thus, both *New Atlantis* and *The Blazing World* bear testimony to Bloch's claim that all works of art, including works of art from the past, contain anticipatory illumination:

> The following statement by Marx (to Ruge, 1843) holds good for the relation of this true ideology to the anticipatory element in the false, though here not merely false consciousness of the earlier ideology: 'Our motto must therefore be: reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but through analysis of mystical consciousness which is still unclear to itself. It will then become apparent that the world has long possessed the dream of a matter, of which it must only possess the consciousness in order to possess it in reality. It will become apparent that it is not a question of a great thought-dash between past and future, but of the *carrying through* of the thoughts of the past' (*Principle,* 155/156).

In this sense the works of Bacon and Cavendish, though of the past, still have the capacity to challenge utopian thinking today and into the future.

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