

ARTICLE

# Berkeley's Gland Tour into Speculative Fiction Part 2: Margaret Cavendish and Berkeley's Attitudes Towards Women

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## Abstract

In Part 1, we explored how Berkeley drew from Homeric literature and used literary techniques such as satire to challenge his “freethinking” philosophical opponents in “The Pineal Gland” story published in *The Guardian* in 1713. Echoing the grand tours Berkeley undertook in subsequent years, Part 1 and 2 both present a “gland tour” of some motivations, influences and legacies of Berkeley's text. In particular, Part 2, explores a line of literary influence beginning with Margaret Cavendish and extending through Gabriel Daniel, Berkeley and Alexander Pope. In doing so, we present anticipations of features of Berkeley's story in the writings of Margaret Cavendish amid a discussion of Berkeley's complex attitudes towards women. The paper also argues that Berkeley's story represents an underappreciated yet significant milestone in the history of speculative fiction.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The secular and unorthodox Margaret Cavendish may not initially seem to have much in common with the dogmatic Bishop Berkeley. Previously, in Part 1 of this article, we showed how Berkeley's short story, “The Pineal Gland”, engages with Homer to articulate his philosophical critique of Descartes and “freethinking” philosophers.<sup>1</sup> While Berkeley himself famously embarked on two grand tours of Europe, the protagonist of his story takes a tour of sorts as well, as he travels extensively through the pineal glands of various people. While Berkeley in this story names authors such as Gabriel Daniel, Anthony Collins, Lucretius, Rochester and Dryden, no woman author is mentioned.

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Similarly, scholarship to date has not considered Cavendish as an influence upon Berkeley's philosophy or literature. Yet, there are many similarities between the two thinkers which merit serious attention. Both philosophers published a short prose story about the pineal gland, both wrote extensively about perception, published material about women's education, and were unusual with their proclivity for literary experimentation. Like Berkeley, Cavendish experimented with numerous literary genres and techniques. This article articulates a possible line of influence between Cavendish's science fiction and Berkeley's literary representation of the pineal gland as well as Alexander Pope's depiction of the spleen in *The Rape of the Lock*. The specific anticipations of Berkeley's and Pope's works in Cavendish's writings are discussed as well as exegetical issues that bear on the influence question.

## 2 | MARGARET CAVENDISH AND GABRIEL DANIEL

Contrary to many assumptions about Cavendish's reception, she was well-known insofar as she was the most circulated British female author in Restoration advertisements aimed at those eager to supplement their personal libraries (Coolahan & Empey, 2016, pp. 139–157). Similarly, after her death, her husband published a compilation of admiring letters and epigraphs written to and about Cavendish by numerous intellectuals (W. Cavendish, 1676).<sup>2</sup> Later Romantic authors such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt read her. As James Fitzmaurice argues “Cavendish was viewed sympathetically by the English Romantic poets” (Fitzmaurice, 2022, p. 182). Indeed, Brandie Siegfried argues that Wordsworth's poem, “Hart-leap Well” was influenced by Cavendish's poetry (Siegfried, 2018, p. 49). Notably, Jacqueline Broad and Maks Sipowitz point out that David Hume read Cavendish as he refers to her biography of her husband in volume V in his *History of England*,<sup>3</sup> contending that “it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Hume knew of her philosophy” (Broad & Sipowitz, 2022, pp. 96–97).

Besides Hume, evidence suggests that Cavendish may have been read by the French Jesuit Gabriel Daniel who wrote the satirical poem, *A Voyage to the World of Cartesius* (1694). This is significant since Berkeley asserts that “The Pineal Gland” builds from Daniel's story, which is about a man whose soul learns to leave its body and meets many famous philosophers during its disembodied travels. Earlier Cavendish had also written satirically about travelling spirits, most famously in her science fiction story *The Blazing World*. In this text the Empress and the Duchess of Newcastle embark on worldmaking as they create and test worlds built from the principles of various philosophers, including Descartes and Plato. Similarly, Daniel's narrator discusses how Descartes was planning on “the Construction/of a World” in outer space and aims “to make a Tryal in the Presence/of some of his Friends”. (Daniel, 1692, pp. 34 and 38) Besides observing the lands of Gassendus and Mercenne (conspicuous for their objections to Descartes' *Meditations*), the reader is also told that Plato “will resolve upon the/Undertaking that of his Republick, which we/shall see fix'd somewhere in those Vast and Desert/Spaces above the Heavens, where he will convoy/a Colony of Separate Souls, to constitute his/Government”. (Daniel, 1692, pp. 69–70) Hence, Daniel's depiction of philosophical worldmaking resembles the worldmaking efforts of Cavendish's characters.

The *Voyage* further depicts souls traveling to Paris and the outermost part of the universe, resembling the souls of the characters, the Duchess of Newcastle and the Empress who travel together to different worlds, including contemporary England. Like the Empress who questions immaterial spirits about philosophy, the narrator asks the souls of philosophers as well as his own soul about philosophical matters (Daniel, 1692, pp. 29–30) and both authors depict embraces between souls (Cavendish, 2016, p. 119 and 121 and Daniel, 1692, p. 35). Significantly, both writers imagine what happens to characters' bodies while their souls leave them unattended, claiming that another spirit or soul inhabits the abandoned body. The Empress, for instance, leaves a “Spirit to be Vice-Roy of her body in the absence of her Soul” (Cavendish, 2016, p. 127), while the narrator in the *Voyage* learns that a soul will be left to “exactly Personate [him]”, (Daniel, 1692, p. 49) so that nobody will be aware of his absence.<sup>4</sup>

Although Daniel does not explicitly name Cavendish, his opening could possibly evoke her work as he describes the “Discovery” of “this New World”, seemingly an echo of Cavendish's full title, *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing-World*. This opening passage further claims Daniel's world “was/barren of Mines of Gold and Silver”

(Daniel, 1692, p. 1), unlike the *Blazing World*, which was notably filled with copious amounts of gold and gems. Indeed, Daniel's English translator could also be suggesting Cavendish as an influence as he claims in the preface that he composed his translation to educate women, mirroring Cavendish's claim in the 1668 edition of *The Blazing World* that the story was specifically written to help women better understand philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

The evidence of Cavendish's possible influence upon Daniel goes beyond *The Blazing World*. In *Natures Pictures* (1656), for instance, Cavendish provides a short speculative fiction story titled "The Travelling Spirit" where a man seeks knowledge from a witch. Together their souls travel downward to the centre of the earth in search of philosophical knowledge. While Daniel and Berkeley's story describes 'snuff' as the substance that allows for traveling souls, the witch in Cavendish's story gives the man "a Dish of Opium, and prayed him to eat well thereof" (Cavendish, 1997, p. 206). Like "The Travelling Spirit", Daniel's narrator discusses in detail the contents and appearance of "Centre of the Earth". (Daniel, 1692, pp. 228–230) Furthermore, Daniel's protagonist separated his soul from his body by taking "Tobacco", which he obtained from a "merchant of Amsterdam", who had brought it from "an Island near China." (Daniel, 1692, p. 21) In other words, when Daniel describes this "extremely strong" snuff, he is referring to opium, the substance that allows traveling spirits in Cavendish's story (Daniel, 1692, p. 21)<sup>6</sup>

Daniel's depiction of opium, souls that travel beyond earth, philosophical worldmaking, spiritual embraces between souls, bodies inhabited by deputy souls and philosophical conversations between spirits is highly suggestive of a Cavendishian influence. His text was published after Cavendish's death. Hence, the timing and literary evidence indicate influence, particularly since Cavendish was the first person to write of these concepts together in prose fiction.

### 3 | MARGARET CAVENDISH'S POSSIBLE INFLUENCE UPON BERKELEY

Significantly, these similarities indicate that Cavendish is possibly an indirect source for Berkeley. Further supporting information can be gleaned by various threads in Berkeley's biography. Berkeley in 1709 had a position as librarian in Trinity College Dublin for a year of his fellowship there.<sup>7</sup> Trinity's catalogue contains a second edition of *The Blazing World* from 1668.<sup>8</sup> Equally, Stock's biography of Berkeley (1776) reports that Berkeley was a fan of romance reading, remarking on "[t]he airy visions of romances, to the reading of which he was much addicted".<sup>9</sup> Romance is a literary genre involving adventure, travel and the supernatural, and Cavendish's *The Blazing World* is an example of this mode. In 1667 Samuel Pepys describes Cavendish as being the epitome of the romance genre, noting that "The whole story of this Lady is a romance, and all she doth is romantic". (Pepys, 2000, p. 163) Hence, a philosopher such as Berkeley, who was purportedly addicted to romances and interested in speculative fiction, would have likely known about Cavendish's most famous romance story, *The Blazing World*, which was sitting in his library at Trinity.

In *The Blazing World* Cavendish inserts herself as a character whose soul travels with her friend into the body of her husband, the Duke of Newcastle: she "left her aerial Vehicle and entred into her Lord. The Empress's Soul perceiving this, did the like: And then the Duke had three Souls in one Body; and had there been some such Souls more, the Duke would have been like the Grand-Signior in his Seraglio, onely it would have been a Platonick Seraglio" (Cavendish, 2016, p. 133). Cavendish here imagines numerous souls travelling and entering into her husband's body. Like Cavendish, Berkeley (and Alexander Pope in *The Rape of the Lock*) also imagines a soul or spirit entering other people (though they do not use such erotic language to describe the encounter).

Importantly, Berkeley's good friend and literary hero, Pope cites Cavendish's book of poems in *The Dunciad*, a work aimed for popular consumption. He claims in this text that in a library "There, stamp'd with arms, Newcastle shines compleat" (Pope, 1729, l. p. 13). Pope's, 1729 edition provides further notes to this line stating that "The Duchess of Newcastle was one who busied her self in the ravishing delights of Poetry; leaving to posterity in print three ample Volumes of her studious endeavours. [...] *Langbaine* reckons up eight Folio's of her Grace's". (Pope, 1729, l. p. 13). While the tone is ironic, Cavendish here fares much better than many of the authors satirised in *The Dunciad*. Besides Pope, Cristina Malcolmson contends that Jonathan Swift, who was friends with Pope and Berkeley, does not overtly

name Cavendish in *Gulliver's Travels*, yet “the literary evidence [...] suggests influence.” (Malcolmson, 2013, p. 196)<sup>10</sup> However, David Womersley suggests direct influence in Swift's use of the phrase, “*Nec Vir fortis, nec Fœmina Casta*” in *Gulliver's Travels*: “Arthur Case notes that the sentence reverses a portion of the epitaph of Margaret Cavendish: ‘All the brothers were valiant, and all the sisters virtuous’ (...). Addison had quoted the epitaph in *The Spectator* 99, 23 June 1711, in illustration of the maxim that ‘The great Point of Honour in Men is Courage, and in Women Chastity’” (Swift, 2012, pp. 297–298 n19)

Berkeley first mentions friendship with Swift and Pope in early March of 1713, the year he published “The Pineal Gland”. Writing to Percival, he described a party where he socialised with Swift and first met Pope: “This gentleman is a Papist, but a man of excellent wit and learning, and one of those Mr. Steele mentions in his last paper as having writ some of the *Spectators*” (Berkeley, 2012, pp. 82–83). This short letter also includes Berkeley's gushing first description of Steele's hopes for the *Guardian*. The subsequent letter details a breakfast hosted by Swift, where (frequent collaborator of Steele) Joseph Addison is also in attendance. The impression created by the correspondences of 1713 is very much one of Berkeley establishing himself among this elite London literary circle.<sup>11</sup> Noting the diverse set of people Berkeley was mixing with and excursions to coffee houses (“in quality of a learner”), Jones describes this as “a promiscuously sociable period” in Berkeley's life that saw him develop unexpected friendships and explore surprising cultural material (Jones, 2021, p. 195).

Although Pope and Swift likely read Cavendish and Berkeley himself may have been indirectly influenced by her via Daniel's *Voyage*, Berkeley never mentions her. Nonetheless, it is worth exploring why Berkeley's language and ideas in “The Pineal Gland” intriguingly resemble Cavendish's short story about the pineal gland called “The Animal Parliament” first published in *Poems and Fancies* (1653). Notably, Daniel does not seem to draw from this specific story, so similarities between Cavendish and Berkeley cannot be explained indirectly via Daniel's *Voyage*. Indeed, it is significant that both Berkeley and Pope write a short story about the workings of the inside of physical bodies, a concept first described by Cavendish in “The Animal Parliament”, a story within her *Poems and Fancies*. Pope likely knew of this short story since he refers to this book in *The Dunciad*. Although the first edition of *The Dunciad* was first published in 1728, after the publication of Berkeley's “The Pineal Gland” (and Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*), Cavendish was notably the first to write a short prose story about this concept.

In Cavendish's tale, the “soul” is “king in a kernel of the brain, like to a chair of state” (Cavendish, 2018, p. 347). The ‘kernel’ where the soul sits can be understood as the pineal gland since Descartes argues that “the Soul holds her principall seat in that little kernell in the midst of the brain” (Descartes, 1650, p. 28). Like Berkeley, Cavendish critiques the possibility of the pineal gland elsewhere in her philosophical treatises even though she uses the concept in her short, fictional story.<sup>12</sup>

Cavendish's tale not only satirises the possibility of the pineal gland, but it is also a political allegory. While Pope imagines a Goddess ruling in the underworld of Belinda's spleen in *The Rape of the Lock*, Cavendish, who first wrote this story during the volatile civil war, imagines the ruler to be a King. Yet, throughout the story, the King remains relatively quiet, while a strong Parliament debates issues, listens to petitioners, enacts laws by voting and consent, in contrast to an absolutist political body (Cavendish, 2018, pp. 347–362).

Unlike Cavendish and Pope, and true to his immaterialist ethos, Berkeley's story focuses on his subjects' minds rather than their bodies (though, the silliness of the pineal gland as physical gateway to the mental realm is noted). In “The Pineal Gland”, Ulysses describes encountering a frantic democracy of freethinkers as he travels further into the imagination, “Descending thither I found a mob of the passions assembled in a riotous manner. Their tumultuary proceedings soon convinced me, that they affected a democracy. After much noise and wrangle, they at length all hearkened to Vanity”. (*Guardian*, p. 189) In their fictional stories about pineal glands, both Berkeley and Cavendish offer insights on the functioning of political bodies. Berkeley uses his to portray freethinking as a democracy of the passions—the only governing forces are passionate, and thus, they raise an army led by ‘Vanity’ and ‘Prejudice’ features as a kind of spectre that haunts the whole affair.

Besides playfully critiquing Descartes' notion of a pineal gland in prose fiction, an idea and technique first explored by Cavendish, Berkeley also notably uses language similar to hers in “The Travelling Spirit”.<sup>13</sup> In Cavendish's

short story, the spirits of the man and the witch descend into the centre of the earth where they discover “monstrous great and high Mountains of the Bones of Men and Beasts” and the “Storehouse of Nature”, which contains the shape and substance of all kinds of fruits and plants (Cavendish, 1997, p. 206). Rather than a ‘Storehouse of Nature’, Berkeley’s travelling spirit, Ulysses, discovers “the store-house of ideas”<sup>14</sup> as well as the “scattered [...] bones of men” in the imagination of the freethinker (*Guardian*, pp. 189 and 188). Indeed, there is some irony in Berkeley’s description of the vast graveyard of the freethinker’s imagination, since, if freethinking Cavendish is a source for this text, his condemnation of that imagination occurs in the midst of a (potentially unwitting) homage to it.

In Berkeley’s story, the freethinker’s “store-house of ideas” reveals “sleeping deities, corporeal spirits, and worlds formed by chance; with an endless variety of heathen notions, the most irregular and grotesque imaginable”. (*Guardian*, p. 189) Like Hobbes, Cavendish argued against the existence of immaterial spirits, an “Incorporeal being” such as “a supernatural Spirit” is a “No-thing” (Cavendish, 1664, p. 78).<sup>15</sup> In addition, she was an important influence in developing and advancing ‘heathen notions’ about Epicurean atoms,<sup>16</sup> which argued for the existence of multiple ‘worlds’ that are ‘formed by chance’. While Cavendish later disavowed her atomism, partly because she argued that “atoms” could not “move by chance, or at least without Sense and Reason, in the framing of the World”, her literature frequently explores the possibility of multiple worlds (Cavendish, “Observations upon Experimental Philosophy”, 2019a, p. 127).<sup>17</sup> Hence, Berkeley’s stereotype of the freethinker has a mind packed with Cavendishian notions.

Although the similarities between the speculative fictions of Cavendish and Berkeley are striking, claims of direct influence are difficult to make. It is worth exploring why, even if Berkeley was explicitly influenced by her, we might not expect to find evidence of it in the usual sources.

#### 4 | BERKELEY, FREETHINKERS AND CAVENDISH'S UNORTHODOXY

Often, Berkeley seemed concerned to contain the spread of views he worried might mislead the vulnerable. In correspondence with Samuel Johnson, an American educator and philosophical protégé of Berkeley’s, he discussed the possible wisdom of withholding information on freethinking lest Johnson be led astray by sources he might otherwise have not encountered:

There hath of late been published here a treatise against those who are called Free-thinkers, which I intended to have sent to you and some other friends in those parts, but on second thoughts suspect it might do mischief to have it known in that part of the world what pernicious opinions are boldly espoused at home.

(Berkeley, 2012, p. 345, p. 345)

Though Berkeley challenged freethinking very broadly, he often avoided naming thinkers whose views he found particularly offensive. In *Passive Obedience*, a footnote about Matthew Tindall avoids naming him, instead sticking to the subjects of his publications and the “absurdity and perniciousness” of his ideas. (*Passive Obedience*, p. 47)<sup>18</sup> *Passive Obedience* was written for the “youth” of Trinity College, so perhaps Berkeley’s protective tendency might apply equally to the *Guardian* publications, given the similar timing and the similarly popular (potentially less rigorous) audience. Given her extraordinary unorthodoxy and intended popular audience (particularly of women, who Berkeley would have regarded as vulnerable), perhaps we should not expect Berkeley to name Cavendish.<sup>19</sup>

If Berkeley read Cavendish, he would likely have been familiar with her unorthodox religious and metaphysical views. For example, in *Philosophical Letters* (1664), Cavendish argues that God does not interfere with the workings of Nature,

For why should it not be as probable, that God did give Matter a selfmoving power to her self, as to have made another Creature to govern her? For Nature is not a Babe, or Child, to need such a Spiritual

Nurse, to teach her to go, or to move; neither is she so young a Lady as to have need of a Governess, for surely she can govern her self; she needs not a Guardian.

(Cavendish, 1664, p. 149)

Here Nature is described as a female who does not require any patriarchal authority to guide her.<sup>20</sup> Cavendish contends that Nature has been granted by God many metaphysical powers generally associated with a deity, including the capacity to “produce Infinite Creatures” since she is the “onely Framer and Maker, as also the Dissolver and Transformer of all Creatures”. (Cavendish, 1664, p. 288) Indeed, the opening of her collection of poems claims that “When Nature first the world’s foundation laid,/She called a council, how it might be made” (Cavendish, 2018, p. 75). In other words, Cavendish boldly and heretically asserts that female Nature, rather than a Christian God, has created the world. Lisa T. Sarasohn contends that Cavendish’s insistence on an unknowable, absent God suggests that “Cavendish’s theology is nature worship at best and atheism at worst.” (Sarasohn, 2010, p. 6)

Similarly, Peter West and Tom Stoneham have recently argued that Cavendish “develops a system of nature that simply cannot be rendered consistent with some of the central tenets of Anglican Christian orthodoxy”, and from the point of view of a contemporary readership, “Cavendish’s commitments would undoubtedly have put her in danger of being read as an unorthodox, and possibly deistic, thinker” (West & Stoneham, 2022, pp. 21–22). Further, they speculate that these views explain why her more strictly philosophical work received little engagement from her better-known contemporaries. The conjunction of Berkeley’s tendency not to name certain scandalous thinkers and Cavendish’s deeply unorthodox reputation might explain why Berkeley would not mention her. Berkeley’s notebooks are a rich source of his thinking about how to present himself as a philosopher. He understood the value of staying on the right side of his religious administration. Prefacing his presentation of his own philosophical system, he writes: “N.B. To use utmost Caution not to give the least Handle of offence to the Church or Church-men”. (*Notebooks*, N715) He even coaches himself to compliment scholasticism, lest his criticism of the history of abstractionist philosophy be read as at odds with the legacy of faithful Christian philosophy: “Even to speak somewhat favourably of the Schoolmen & shew that they who blame them for Jargon are not free from it themselves” (*Notebooks*, N716)

## 5 | BERKELEY’S ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN

Furthermore, as far as we are aware, Berkeley never cites any woman as an influence. And yet, we know he read women’s work and was at least sometimes influenced by it. Berkeley’s lifelong correspondent Percival wrote to him upon first reading the *Principles*. Amid the various personal reactions Percival offers, he mentions that his wife Catherine (*née* Parker) has struggled with reconciling immaterialism and the Biblical account of creation, according to which the creation of humans happens reasonably late in the scheme. Manuel Fasko writes about Berkeley’s responsiveness to women’s readership:

In the summer of 1710, [Catherine Percival] requests to know from Berkeley, “if there be nothing but spirits and ideas, what you make of that part of the six’ days creation which preceded man” (Letter 17, 43). Berkeley immediately reacts to this challenge in his next letter (cf. Letter 18, 44f.) and discusses this issue at length in his *Three Dialogues* (1713). It is, thus, an interesting question what influence Catherine Percival had on Berkeley’s philosophical development in general and on the *Three Dialogues* in particular.

(Fasko, 2021, p. 29, note 4).

The extent of her impact is hard to know, but at the very least when Berkeley re-articulates his position in *Three Dialogues*, Catherine’s query finds a novel and detailed treatment in his discussion of Mosaic creation (*Three Dialogues*, pp. 254–258).

Besides Percival, Berkeley also drew from Mary Astell without acknowledgement. According to Meaney, O'Dowd, & Whelan, "*The Ladies Library* was compiled by a young George Berkeley" in 1714, and "drew heavily (albeit without acknowledgment) on other contemporary printed texts on the education and formation of young girls and women. Among the authors plagiarised by Berkeley [was ...] Mary Astell" (Meaney et al., 2013, p. 15). Damaris Masham is also excerpted without acknowledgement in *The Ladies Library* (Jones, 2021, p. 189). While writings from male authors were also used, it is still noteworthy that he names no women in his oeuvre but was directly influenced by at least Percival, Astell and Masham.

A generation before Astell, Cavendish was also a passionate advocate for female education. If Berkeley was reading and plagiarising Astell, Cavendish's interest in women's education would certainly be worthy of Berkeley's attention as well. Cavendish had bravery and self-assurance in the face of then-respectable discourse that suggested women were barely rational (Allestree's use of the phrase "natural imbecility" is particularly memorable (Allestree, 1673, p. 33)). One of her prefaces for the 1655 edition of *Philosophical and Physical Opinions* is dedicated to the all-male universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Cavendish argues that she sends her treatise to them,

for the good encouragement of our sex, lest in time we should grow irrational as idiots,... through the carelesse neglects, and despisements of the masculine sex to the effeminate, thinking it impossible we should have either learning or understanding, wit or judgement, as if we had not rational souls as well as men, and we out of a custom of dejectednesse think so too, which makes us quit all industry towards profitable knowledge being employed onely in loose, and pettie employments, which takes away not onely our abilities towards arts, but higher capacities in speculations, so as we are become like worms that onely live in the dull earth of ignorance, winding our selves sometimes out, by the help of some refreshing rain of good educations which seldom is given us; for we are kept like birds in cages to hop up and down in our houses [...]: thus by an opinion, which I hope is but an erroneous one in men, we are shut out of all power, and Authority by reason we are never employed either in civil nor marshall affaires, our counsels are despised, and laught at, the best of our actions are troden down with scorn, by the over-weaning conceit men have of themselves and through a dispisement of us.

(Cavendish, "Philosophical and Physical Opinions", 2019b, p. 40)

Cavendish here argues to the "Most Famously learned" at Oxford and Cambridge that women are prevented from fulfilling their potential to themselves and society because of a lack of education (Cavendish, "Philosophical and Physical Opinions", 2019b, p. 40). In addition, throughout her fiction, Cavendish regularly discusses the education and reading habits of her female protagonists and even published a play called "The Female Academy".<sup>21</sup>

Berkeley's compilation of *The Ladies Library*, and particularly his plagiarism of Astell, indicates his serious interest in the vexed topic of women's education. Nancy Kendrick explains that "Berkeley's compilation is more than a mere assemblage of what Steele and Addison believed was an appropriate set of readings for women. It includes many works not mentioned in *The Spectator*". Furthermore, Kendrick argues that Astell's *Serious Proposal* was "an influence on his Bermuda project" where he intended to educate Native Americans and British colonists together (Kendrick, 2015, p. 252 and 247).<sup>22</sup> *The Ladies Library* was very popular and culturally significant, particularly since it was the most circulated lady's manual in America (Jones, 2021, p. 188). Indeed, the period in which Berkeley's essays were written was a crucial time for discussions of women's place in public affairs and the kind of education, if any, that best suited society's desired ends for them. Hence, when considering whether Cavendish might have influenced him, it is useful to consider *The Ladies Library* as a source of his views on women's intellectual capacities. Steele, who published "The Pineal Gland" stories in 1713, collaborated with Berkeley again a year later on *The Ladies Library*. Given the format of the text, which includes numerous unattributed passages by other authors, it is difficult to know which sections are by Berkeley's own hand. Indeed, gender representation in *The Ladies Library* is complex. The title page says 'Written by a Lady', where we now know it was compiled by Berkeley.<sup>23</sup> So, we have the strange situation of a book, partly composed of uncredited writings of several women, but still for the most part written by men (and at least arranged by a man), while the book's ostensible author is presented as one anonymous woman.

As should be unsurprising for a text composed of the thoughts of numerous disparate people, the recommendations of *The Ladies Library* are inconsistent. The book frequently reminds the reader of the natural and considerable rational capacities of women, but elsewhere, it is apparent that they are defective and should act accordingly. Meaney, O'Dowd and Whelan suggest that Berkeley was likely of a view close to Astell and (freethinker) John Toland in believing that women were ultimately "intellectually equal to men" (Meaney et al., 2013, p. 17). At the same time, his inclusion of the following lines, *among others*, suggest a different view:

A young lady should never speak, but for necessity, and even then with diffidence and deference. She should never talk of things above the common reach of her age and sex, however she may be informed of them by the advantages of her quality and education.

(Ladies Library, p. 35)

In contrast to Cavendish's emancipationist motivations for championing women's education, Berkeley's desire for (certain) women to be educated is less focused on the power and liberation of knowledge and understanding, and more concerned with producing the kind of women he wished to see society populated with—obedient, nurturing, and faithful. Perhaps his marriage was telling of his understanding of the role of women and education. A letter from "Blue Stockings Society" leader Elizabeth Montagu paints an interesting picture of that relationship from an outsider's perspective. That he was so admired by such a social reformer as Montagu is interesting, as is her assessment of Anne Berkeley's reasons for conducting her marriage as she did:

She had a perfect adoration of the Bishop, to whose humors she had a submission that offended some o the Ladies, who thought her intire obedience a bad precedent, Mrs Berkeley said such a Man as Dr Berkeley deserved uncommon attentions, & she though it wd be strange presumption to oppose the designs & inclinations of one so much superior to her, thus she dignified her choice, recommended her obedience & preserved unprejudiced the rights & privileges of other Ladies whose Husbands had not the like plea for their submission.

(Cantor, 1980, p. 3)

The foregoing remarks present a mixed perspective on Berkeley's outlook on women as thinkers. Berkeley may not have shared Cavendish's radical vision for women's education, but they both published to help educate women readers. Like *The Blazing World*, which was written to educate women in science and philosophy, "The Pineal Gland" can be seen as an effort to make Berkeley's critique of freethinkers available to a larger readership.<sup>24</sup> Both intermixed literature with natural philosophy. Cavendish intended for her first philosophical treatise, *Philosophical Fancies* to be 'joyned to [her] Booke of Poems' (*Philosophical Fancies*, 1653, sig. B6r) and famously added *The Blazing World* as an appendix to her treatise, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*. Although she first renounced atomism in her 1663 edition of *Philosophical and Physical Opinions*, she nonetheless provides readers of *Philosophical Letters* (1664) with poetry from her "Book of Poems" which "contain[...] the ground of my opinion of Atomes" (*Philosophical Letters*, p. 455). Carlos Santana sees Cavendish as an "exemplar for how to approach other works of philosophical literature, especially those currently neglected by philosophers" (Santana, 2015, p. 298). We suggest Berkeley belongs to this tradition of philosophical literature as well.

Finally, it is worth noting that only a small number of early modern philosophers wrote science fiction before Berkeley's "The Pineal Gland". While it was the seventeenth century that saw the rise of speculative fiction, particularly by philosophers such as Tommaso Campanella, Johannes Kepler, Francis Bacon, Daniel and Cavendish, Berkeley's 1713 story is also an important pioneer of this tradition.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the similarities of ideas, language and themes between Berkeley and Cavendish indicate that the heretical woman philosopher, Cavendish, at the very least anticipated the conservative Bishop Berkeley's literary efforts. Regardless of the nature of Cavendish's influence upon him, this essay points out that a set of ideas, themes and use of language were circulating during this period



when science fiction was increasingly becoming a popular mode of philosophical speculation. And Berkeley's speculative fiction is an intriguing and neglected part of this tradition. Similarly, Cavendish, Daniel and Berkeley can all be seen as using speculative fiction in a new way; to explore and travel into the interiority of individuals, contributing to the growing individualism that is characteristic of modernity.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> References to Berkeley's works are to *The Works of George Berkeley*, (ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, 1948-1957). In-text citations give short title and page number in the relevant volume. "The Pineal Gland" is in the collection of papers from the *Guardian* in Volume VII, pp. 186-192.
- <sup>2</sup> For an account of eighteenth-century thinkers and publications that discussed Cavendish, see Fitzmaurice (2022).
- <sup>3</sup> See Hume (1762, p. 369, and cited from Broad & Sipowitz, 2022, n34). Cavendish's biography is titled *The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince William Cavendish* (1667).
- <sup>4</sup> Daniel racialises this concept since the soul of a black man is left to impersonate the narrator in his absence. Perhaps Daniel employs this idea to critique the growing slave trade.
- <sup>5</sup> Cavendish explains in her 1668 preface titled "To all Noble and Worthy Ladies" that "this present *Description of a New World*, was made as an Appendix to my *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*; and, having some Sympathy and Coherence with each other, were joynd together as Two several Worlds, at their Two Poles. But, by reason most Ladies take no delight in Philosophical Arguments, I separated some from the mentioned Observations, and caused them to go out by themselves, that I might express my Respects, in presenting to Them such Fancies as my Contemplations did afford" (Cavendish, 1668, no pagination). Daniel's translator provides a comparable argument, claiming: "the Author seems still to have kept his Eye/on those two main ends, Pleasing and Instructing./Philosophy by this Method is/become a *la mode* amongst the Women of/greatest Quality in *France*, who pride themselves/more in being accounted Partisans/of a Sect, than Leaders in Dress and Fashion./And we may presume that the Power/and Force of Imitation will reach the/Minds of our *English Ladies*, when Learning/shall be set off with the Allurements/and Delight they meet with in reading a/Romance. To provoke them therefore I/have adventur'd upon this Translation". (T. Taylor, "To my Friend James Ludford of Ansely, Esq.", 1662, no pagination) A few years later, Fontanelle's 1686 *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* (and its 1688 translation by Aphra Behn) makes use of similar language and makes similar claims about motivations in educating women, suggesting a broader line of influence. Berkeley would likely have been familiar with Fontanelle from his work on mathematical infinity and his panegyric on Newton.
- <sup>6</sup> Benjamin Breen explains that opium was seen as "a foreign and an exotic drug during the span of time running from about 1600 to 1800" (Breen, 2019, p. 169). Similarly, Carl A. Trocki contends that "by 1800, the practice of smoking opium had come to be seen as something peculiarly Chinese" (Trocki, 1999, p. 35). Therefore using snuff from China to travel in outer space with Descartes would certainly evoke opium, particularly since "by the seventeenth century, opium had found its way into tobacco-smoking mixtures" (Trocki, 1999, p. 36).
- <sup>7</sup> See Jones (2021, p. 45).
- <sup>8</sup> No specific provenance information exists for the text. However, it is in the (earliest) "printed catalogue" from 1872 and the book has no physical indications of having been housed elsewhere.
- <sup>9</sup> Anne Berkeley contests this point in the marginalia of her annotated copy of Stock, but her protest is itself interesting since it shows that she saw the perception of Berkeley as a romance reader as something that needed to be challenged, which might equally suggest that Berkeley would not have admitted to Cavendish's influence even if it had been significant.

- <sup>10</sup> Although Malcomson concedes that Cavendish and Swift had many shared sources, there are still many indications of literary influence. For example, scholarship has pointed out that Swift's representation of microscopes in *Gulliver's Travels* builds from Observation 54 in Hooke's *Micrographia*. "However, Hooke does not mention beggars, whereas Cavendish does" in her discussion of microscopes in *The Blazing World*. "Swift in fact gives us the point of view of Cavendish's Empress: while Gulliver thrills at his potential scientific discoveries, perhaps a new species of louse, we cannot forget the human suffering involved", which is absent in Hooke's account (Malcomson, 2013, pp. 199–200).
- <sup>11</sup> Berkeley and Swift corresponded until at least 1734. Though their letters are lost, Luce (1945, p. 85) notes that a 1910 listing of Swift's "principal correspondents" included two different photographed signatures of Berkeley's (as Dean and then Bishop). Some of Berkeley's and Pope's correspondence survives, including a particularly effusive letter in praise of *The Rape of the Lock*, which Berkeley seems to have read on one of his Grand Tours (Berkeley, 2012, pp. 116–117).
- <sup>12</sup> "Neither can I apprehend, that the Mind's or Soul's seat should be in the Glandula or kernel of the Brain, and there sit like a Spider in a Cobweb, to whom the least motion of the Cobweb gives intelligence of a Flye, which he is ready to assault, and that the Brain should get intelligence by the animal spirits as his servants, which run to and fro like Ants to inform it" (Cavendish, 1664, p. 111).
- <sup>13</sup> "The Travelling Spirit" is part of *Natures Pictures*, which also includes two romances by Cavendish titled "The Contract" and "Assaulted and Pursued Chastity".
- <sup>14</sup> Though metaphorical use of the term "storehouse" was reasonably common in the period (see usage examples in Johnson (1755)), this is the only instance of it in Berkeley's writings.
- <sup>15</sup> Ironically, the immaterial spirits in *The Blazing World* "were always cloath'd in some sort or other of Material Garments; which Garments were their Bodies" (Cavendish, 2016, p. 103).
- <sup>16</sup> For more details of Cavendish's role in advancing Epicureanism to Britain see Walters, 2020, pp. 181–198.
- <sup>17</sup> Besides the multiple worlds present in *The Blazing World*, see for example, Cavendish's poems, "A World in an Earring" and "It is Hard to Believe That There May be Other Worlds in This World" (Cavendish, 2018, pp. 130–132).
- <sup>18</sup> Swift also wrote anti-freethinking work in response to Tindall; his unfinished *Remarks Upon a Book Intituled "The Rights of the Christian Church, &c."* was written in 1708. However, Swift's attitude towards "naming and shaming" is quite opposed to Berkeley's: "[W]hen books are written with ill intentions, to advance dangerous opinions, or destroy foundations; it may be then of real use to know from what quarter they come, and go a good way towards their confutation" (Swift, 1897, p. 81).
- <sup>19</sup> Freethinkers misleading the unwary is a major theme in Steele's *Guardian* essay, "Remarks on Collins' Discourse on Free-thinking". Indeed, the similarity of Steele's ideas to Berkeley's meant that it was initially wrongly identified as Berkeley's by his son (Steele, 1713/1826).
- <sup>20</sup> By contrast, in Berkeley's *De Motu* only agents have causal power and "natural motions" are understood in occasionalist terms (*De Motu*, §32–34 and §72).
- <sup>21</sup> Cavendish, for example, discusses in detail the education of her female protagonist in "The Contract" and the reading habits of Travellia in "Assaulted and Pursued Chastity"—both in *Natures Pictures* (1656).
- <sup>22</sup> Nancy Kendrick contends that "Astell's arguments for women's education in *Serious proposal to the ladies* were grounded in the conviction that humans had a responsibility to improve themselves as moral beings, that intellectual life was in the service of civic life, and that every person needed to prepare herself or himself for eternity. She encouraged women's intellectual and moral development for the benefit of women themselves and for the sake of the public good, but, unlike Addison and Steele, she did not think that the enhancement of the public good consisted in making women more interesting wives and more competent mothers. [...] Similar commitments grounded Berkeley's social philosophy as well, and his Bermuda project was, in spirit, akin to her plan for a female seminary." Yet notably, neither proposals "endorsed social rebellion as the means to effect political change" (Kendrick, 2015, p. 255).
- <sup>23</sup> As Kendrick explains, Steele claims in the preface that the compilation was made by a woman, yet "a contract discovered in 1980 between Steele and the printer names Berkeley as the compiler" (Kendrick, 2015, pp. 243–44).
- <sup>24</sup> Jones suggests a similar role for Berkeley's *Guardian* articles and popular writing more generally: "[A]s an essayist in *The Guardian*, in *An Essay towards Preventing the Ruine of Great Britain*, and in other occasional writings, Berkeley was engaged in an educational project of making the specialist knowledge acquired in universities and the Church available to and practically applicable for people who were not salaried members of those institutions. (...) Berkeley adopted a conservative position with respect to female education—that it should neither be equal to male education nor fundamentally change the social roles of the genders—characteristic of his attitude to social improvement more generally" (Jones, 2021, p. 148).
- <sup>25</sup> Francis Godwin and Cyrano de Bergerac also wrote speculative fiction during this period, but did not publish philosophical treatises, dialogues or essays, and so are generally not considered part of the philosophical canon.

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