

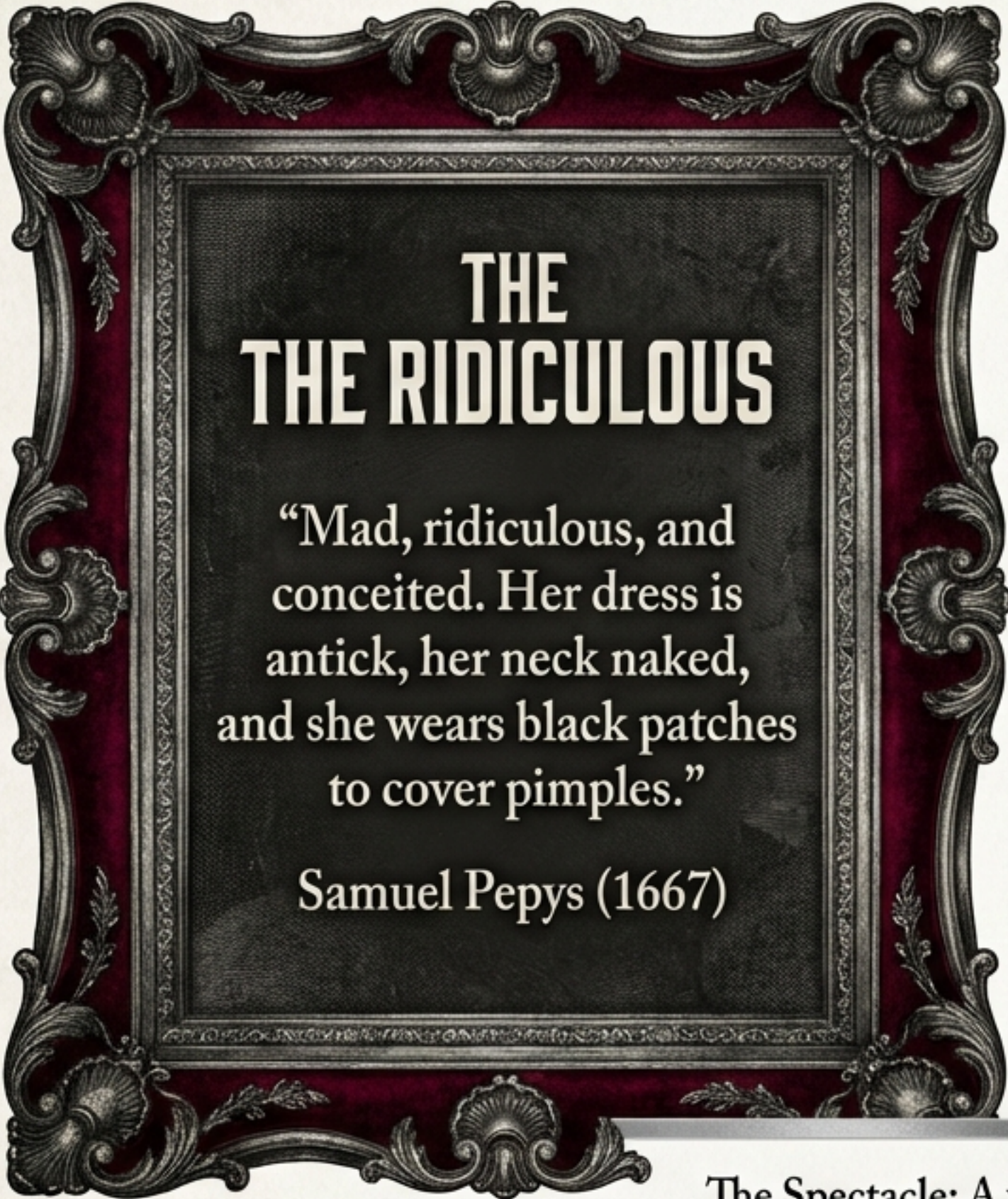
MARGARET THE FIRST

THE QUEER FANCIES & SCIENTIFIC AMBITIONS OF THE DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE



“Though I cannot be Henry the Fifth, or Charles the Second, yet I will endeavour to be Margaret the First.”

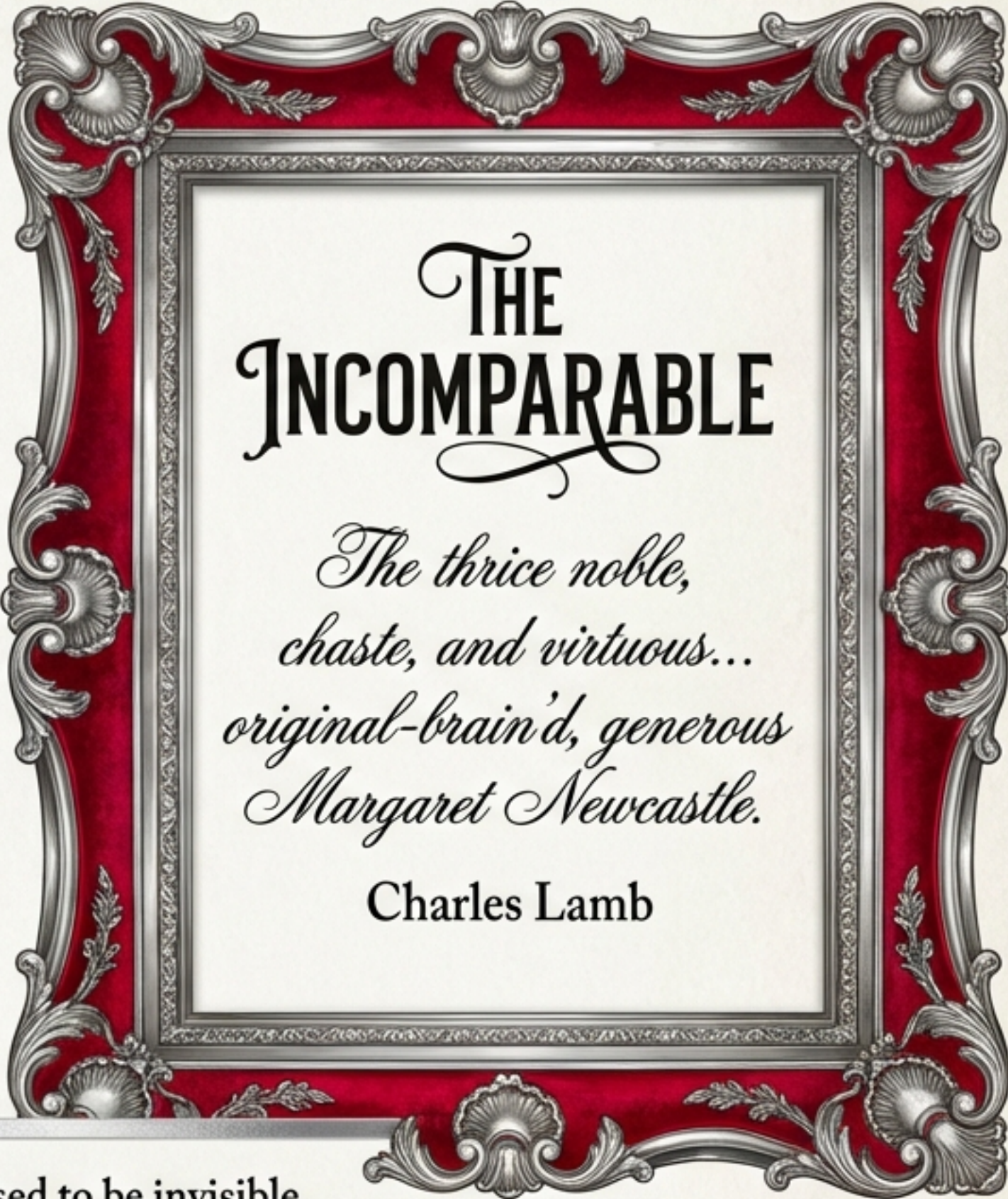
A Study of Biography,
'Fancy,' and Queer Theory.



THE THE RIDICULOUS

“Mad, ridiculous, and
conceited. Her dress is
antick, her neck naked,
and she wears black patches
to cover pimples.”

Samuel Pepys (1667)



THE INCOMPARABLE

*The thrice noble,
chaste, and virtuous...
original-brain'd, generous
Margaret Newcastle.*

Charles Lamb

The Spectacle: A woman who refused to be invisible,
creating a 'Romance' of her own life to counter the criticism.

THE LUCAS AMBITION

Family: Rising gentry, acquisitive,
and relentlessly ambitious.

Father: Thomas Lucas, an exile who
killed a rival in a duel.

Mother: Elizabeth, a woman of “*majestic
grandeur*” and shrewd business sense.

Margaret's Conflict: Inherited “*extreme
ambition*” but afflicted with crippling
“*bashfulness*”.



She possessed the drive of a public statesman
but was confined to the domestic sphere.

THE SPECTACLE AT ARUNDEL HOUSE (1667)



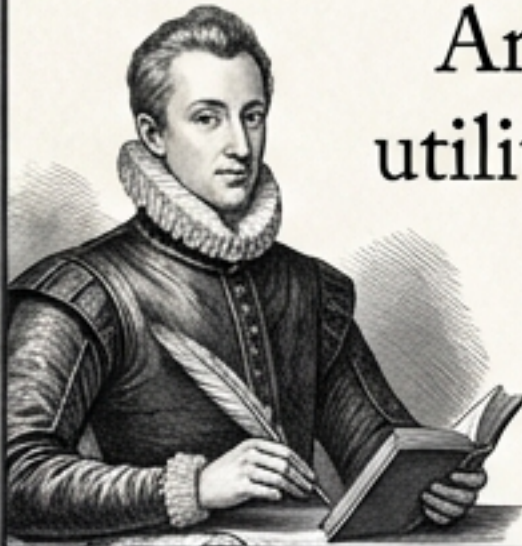
PEPYS CHECK:

*"I did not like
her at all. Her
dress was antick,
and her words
were not
worth hearing."*

DEFINING FANCY

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

The Defense of Poesy.



Art must have
utility. It teaches
virtue and
morality.

MARGARET CAVENDISH

The Blazing World.

*Fancy needs no
justification.*

*It is for "pleasure
and delight."*

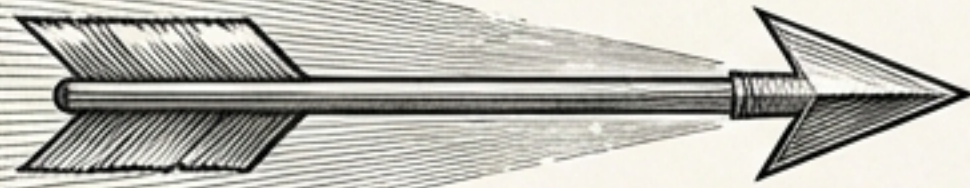
*It is a world of
one's own.*



"Fancy creates of its own accord whatsoever it pleases, and delights in its own work."

FANCY VS. QUEER FUTURITY

QUEER FUTURITY (Muñoz)



Hope for future political change.
A structuring mode of desiring.

CAVENDISH'S FANCY

*A potentiality accessed
in the **PRESENT**.*

*Escape from the
'quagmire' of reality.*

*An internal survival
mechanism.*

Ref: José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*.

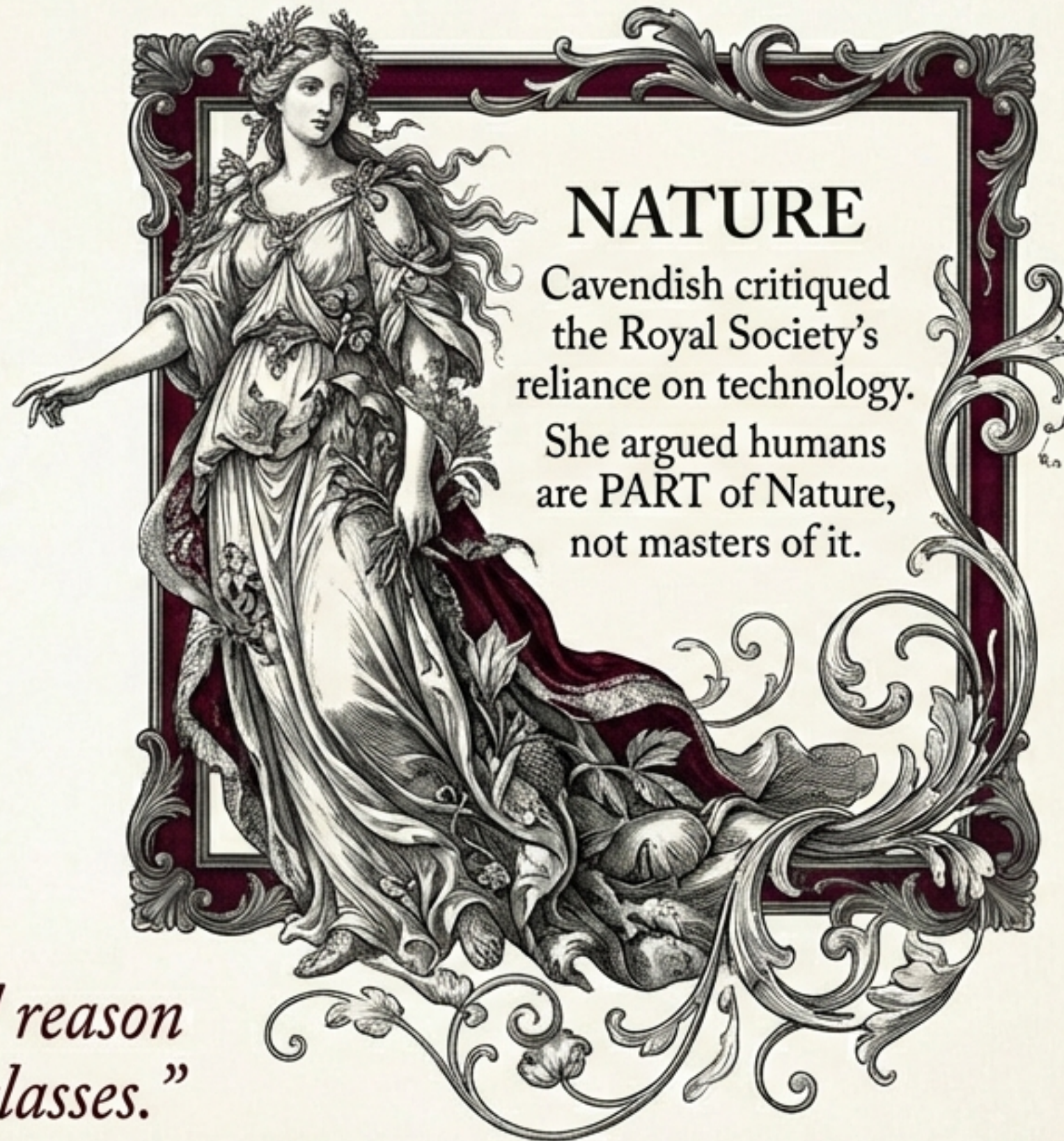
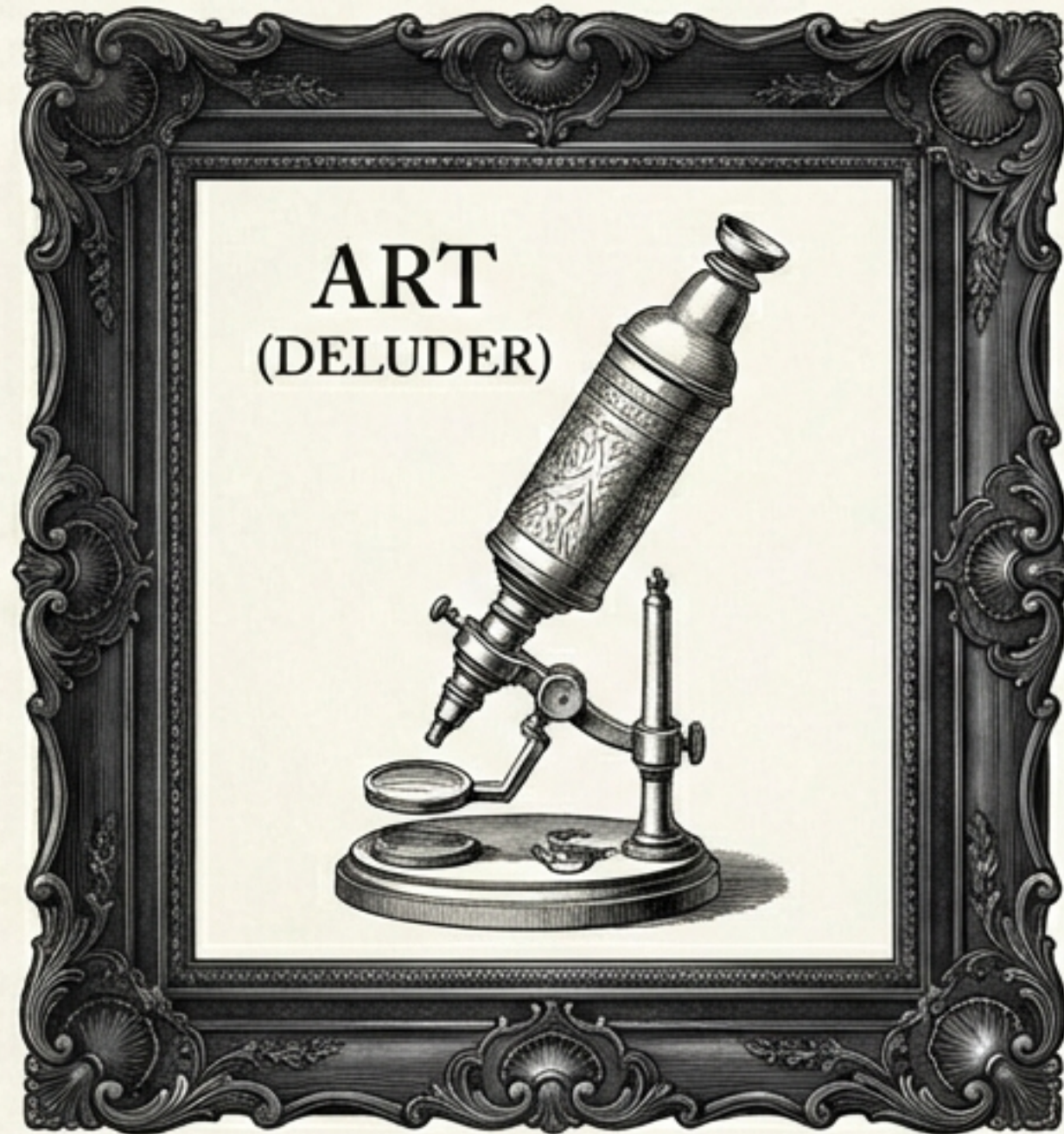


CASE STUDY I: THE BLAZING WORLD

Scientific Utopia & Intellectual Ambition.

- Premise: A Lady kidnapped for assault becomes an Empress.
- *The Reversal*: She is worshipped, not subjugated. She is granted '*Absolute Power*'.
- *The Fancy*: A homosocial space where the Empress and the Duchess become 'platonic lovers' and philosophize without men.

NATURE IS FEMALE

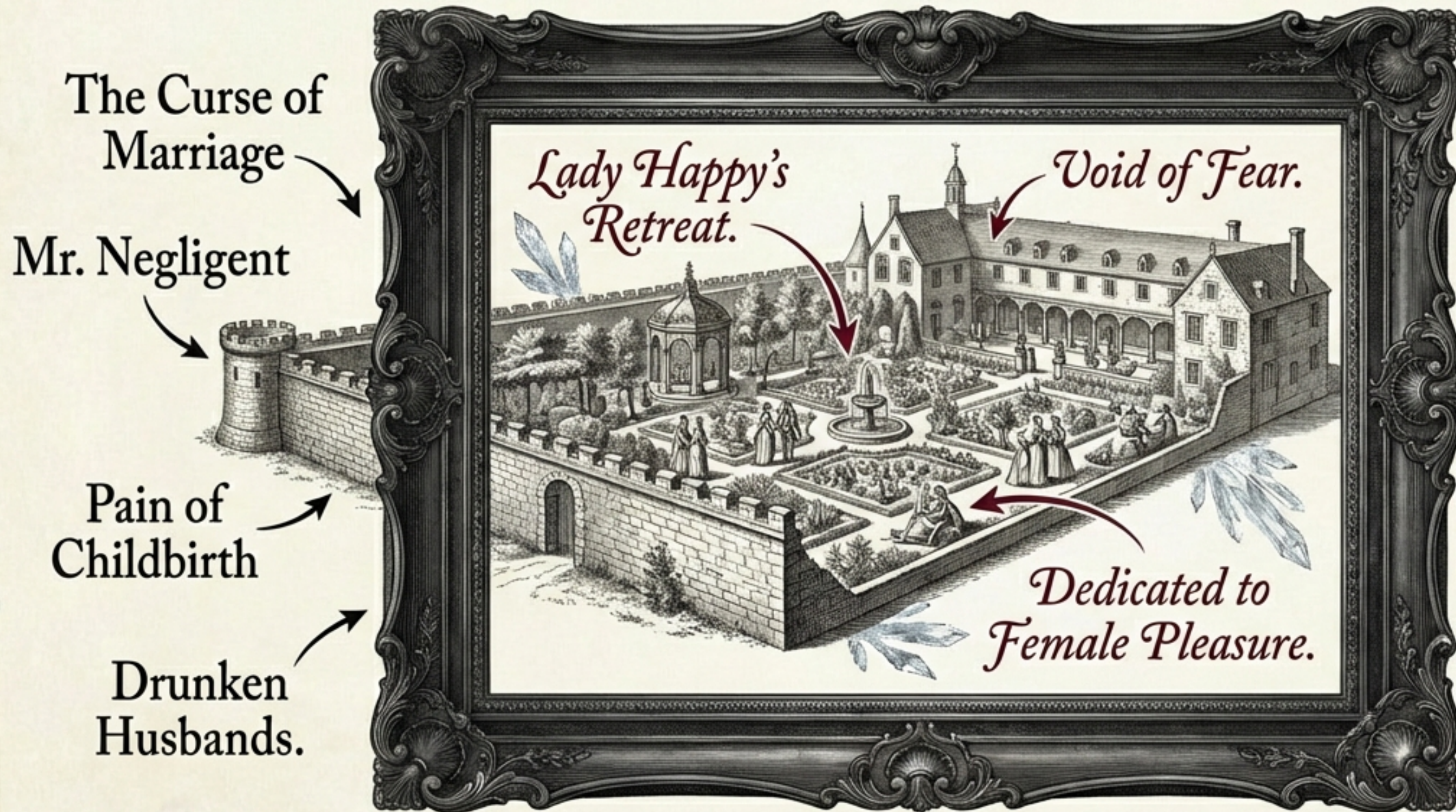


"Nature has made your sense and reason more regular than art has your glasses."

Reality Check:
While she ruled the Blazing World, in London she was barred from participating in the Royal Society.

CASE STUDY II: THE CONVENT OF PLEASURE

Social & Romantic Utopia.



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The Goal:
To create a space
rejecting virtues that
only serve men.

QUEER DESIRE & PERFORMANCE



The Romance: Lady Happy falls in love with the 'Princess' (a Prince in disguise).

The Logic: "**Nature is Nature.**" If the love is pleasurable, it must be natural.

The Transformation: Unlike Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, the audience does not see the actor. The gender fluidity is real within the Fancy.

THE LIMITS OF FANCY

The Crash: The Convent is dissolved. Lady Happy marries the Prince.

The Silence: In the final scene, Lady Happy—previously so vocal—has only four lines.

Fancy is a temporary reprieve. It cannot change structural oppression or reintegrate the queer individual into the real world.

A LEGACY OF “BEING”

*“I matter not the censures of this age,
but am rather proud of them...
it is better to be envied than pitied.”*

Her Fancies were a method of existing in a world that had no place for her.

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

1. Young, Donald. "Cavendish's Queer Fancies, Scientific and Romantic, in *The Blazing World* and *The Convent of Pleasure*." QuaesitUM, Vol. 9, 2022.
2. Grant, Douglas. "Margaret the First: A Biography of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, 1623-1673." University of Toronto Press, 1957.
3. Image Credits: Engravings by Abraham van Diepenbeke and Sir Peter Lely.