

## Call for Papers

The *International Margaret Cavendish Society* biannual conference will be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of December, 2024, at Universidad de Sevilla (Spain).

### FAME: “Absence and Death are much alike”

Fame is a report that travells far, and  
Many times lives long, and The older it  
groweth, The more it florishes, and is The  
more particularly a mans own...

*The Worlds Olio* (1655)

[W]ho knows but after my honourable  
burial, I might have a glorious  
resurrection in following ages, since time  
brings strange and unusual things to  
passe.

*The Physical and Philosophical Opinions*  
(1655)

Most Learned Society,

Early forms of human symbolic communication testify to pre-literate notions of fame, which Homer metaphorised in Mount Ossa, while Virgil, in the *Aeneid*, posited "no evil faster than [fame]." Plato and Aristotle took fame seriously as the pursuit of honour and glory, while the Stoics tended to view it as a by-product of living in harmony with nature and virtue. As a result, during the classical revival of the Renaissance, the concept of fame was often associated with notions of honour, virtue, and achievement. Petrarch's sonnets and Shakespeare's plays concretized the humanist tradition of seeking immortality through renowned literary works. We might even turn to the University of Seville's emblem, which features a coronary statue of Fame as "public messenger."

Across her career, Cavendish was obsessed with fame. While she was critical of the pursuit of fame for its own sake, and expressed reservations about the vanity, wealth, or false learning that might lead to "bastard fame," she nonetheless devoted her writing career to the pursuit of a "true fame" that might be earned through virtue, originality, wit, and wisdom. She also recognized, as an early female author and iconoclast, that fame was her only avenue to a more sympathetic future audience. Indeed, her work abounds in haunting expressions of her desire for longevity. As she frequently expounded, she sought to climb "Fames Tower" and "Live in Many Brains." Now, in 2024, the world is finally listening.

Cavendish offers a unique opportunity to discuss fame, its impact on individuals and societies, and its continuities with concepts of immortality. More broadly, she offers valuable insights into the human condition and the power of public perception. Of course, the trope of fame continues to resonate today, as we explore the human complexities of ambition, desire, vanity, and identity.

**We warmly invite papers from any discipline** that touch—explicitly or implicitly—on the topic of fame, as we meet in Seville to discuss Cavendish in 2024. We especially encourage papers from postgraduate students and scholars not adequately represented in the academy. The event will be held in person, although online options might be available (TBA). Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Cavendish and fame in literature (poetry, fiction, biography, literary history and literary theory).
- Cavendish and fame in philosophy.
- Cavendish and fame in herstory/women's studies.
- Cavendish and fame as it relates to queer theory.
- Cavendish and theology, especially notions of the afterlife.
- Cavendish, fame, and biography.
- Cavendish and fame in the fine arts.
- Cavendish and fame as it relates to the history of science/intellectual history.
- Cavendish and fame in early modern society, or her growing stature in contemporary pop culture.
- Cavendish and fame in communication.
- Cavendish, fame, and ethics.
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Please send an abstract of no more than 250 words and a brief (100-word) bio to the Conference Committee by July 15, 2024.

For any questions, or for more information, please contact the team at [IMCSCConf24@us.es](mailto:IMCSCConf24@us.es).

We look forward to hosting you in Seville!



International  
**Margaret Cavendish**  
Society



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