



Università  
Ca'Foscari  
Venezia

**PROJECT ACRONYM AND TITLE:** MC-EuCon – Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673) in the history of European ideas of consciousness

**FUNDING PROGRAMME:** Horizon Europe

**CALL:** Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships

**DESCRIPTORS:** History of philosophy, history of ideas, intellectual history, history of science, techniques and technologies, philosophy of mind, epistemology and logic, philosophy

**HOST DEPARTMENT:** Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage

**SCIENTIFIC RESPONSIBLE:** Pietro Daniel Omodeo

**FELLOW:** Oberto Marrama

**FINANCIAL DATA:**

Project total costs	Overall funding assigned to UNIVE
€ 188.590,08	€ 188.590,08

**ABSTRACT:**

The MSCA-PF MC-EuCon project investigates Margaret Cavendish's philosophy (1623-73), in order to provide the first detailed interpretation of her theory of consciousness. Questions about consciousness, its origin and presence in nature, which dominate present-day philosophy of mind, arose during the 17th century. Against Descartes's mind-body dualism and his attribution of mental life to humans alone, Cavendish argued for a wholly material, yet wholly thinking universe. By providing one of the earliest and most original responses to Descartes's theories, Cavendish plays a seminal role in the European history of the concept of consciousness, offering a rich opportunity for developing our understanding of how problems about consciousness evolved and were addressed in Europe in the early modern period. However, her original contribution has been so far neglected. Since no specific word for 'consciousness' was yet available in the philosophical vocabulary of her day, extrapolating her views on the topic has been problematic. To overcome this difficulty, the MC-EuCon project applies digital humanities tools to texts of Cavendish and her interlocutors, in order to reconstruct her vocabulary related to consciousness and clarify her theory. It then assesses the significance of her ideas for past and present-day debates in philosophy of mind. To date, the role of women in the history of philosophy has not been sufficiently recognized. The elimination or marginalization of women in the history of philosophy has presented students, researchers and the general public with a historically inaccurate view; this has helped existing gender inequalities in philosophy to persist. Studying and communicating Cavendish's contributions to the history of consciousness—one of the most significant concepts in present-day philosophy and psychology—is an important step towards changing public perceptions and correcting gender imbalances in philosophy, thus making the discipline more inclusive.

---

**Planned Start date**

**Planned End date**

**01<sup>st</sup> September 2023**

**31<sup>st</sup> August 2025**

---

**PARTNERSHIP:**

**1** Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

Venice (IT)

Coordinator