



Selections from The Female Spectator (Women Writers in English 1350-1850)

Eliza Haywood

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Selections from The Female Spectator (Women Writers in English 1350-1850) Eliza Haywood After Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood was the most important English female novelist of the early eighteenth century. She also edited several serial newspapers, the most important of which, the *Female Spectator*, was the first modern periodical written by a woman and addressed to a female audience. This fully annotated collection of articles selected from the *Female Spectator* includes romantic and satiric fiction, moral essays, and social commentary, covering the broad range of concerns shared by eighteenth-century middle-class women. Perhaps most compelling to a twentieth-century audience is the evidence of what we might be tempted to call feminist awareness.

By no means revolutionary in her attitudes, Haywood nonetheless perceives the inequities of her periods social conditions for women. She offers pragmatic advice, such as how to avoid disastrous marriages, how to deal with wandering husbands, and what kind of education women should seek. The essays also report on a broad range of social actualities, from the craze for tea drinking and the dangers of gossip to the problem of compulsive gambling. They allude to such larger matters as politics, war, and diplomacy, and promote the importance of science and the urgency of developing informed relations with nature.



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