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REBELLIOUS ELIZA:  
THE INGENIOUS SCHEMER'S VEILED SUBVERSION OF PASSIONS  
AND EMOTIONS IN *THE FEMALE SPECTATOR*

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Eliza Haywood was an acclaimed eighteenth-century writer, actress, translator, publisher, bookseller, journalist and the editor of *The Female Spectator* (1744–1746). Being aware of the difficulties females had to endure at the time, she challenged them, exploring other alternatives in her newspaper. This article will explore the different literary techniques Eliza Haywood employs in her periodical to be able to offer her own common-sense and astute moral instruction to her readers, teaching them to turn the hardly appealing fates that their families had arranged for them into ones they could benefit from.

*Keywords:* Eliza Haywood, passions, emotions, rebellious, *The Female Spectator*, instruction.

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Little is known about Eliza Haywood's private life<sup>2</sup>, mainly because she made sure those who had been close to her would not reveal “the least circumstance relating to her” (Baker 1782, 216).<sup>3</sup> Patricia Meyer Spacks states that she “acted in numerous plays and wrote plays of her own. She wrote novels, political pamphlets, periodicals,

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<sup>2</sup> See Backscheider 2010, Schofield 1985, Saxton and Bocchicchio 2000, as well as King 2007 and 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Several contemporary authors, especially Alexander Pope, accused her of sexual promiscuity during her life, which probably contributed to her not wishing any information about her life to be revealed after her death. Haywood was certainly no ordinary woman, and that is why this article is included in this section of the *Eger Journal of English Studies* devoted to “Rebellious Marys.” In Spain, a “mari” (Spanish version of “Mary”), according to the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, is a “woman who is only engaged in domestic chores” (my translation); accordingly, Eliza Haywood is a “rebellious Mary” because she refused to be limited to that role. Instead, she pursued the career of a woman of letters and she was also an actress.

conduct books (addressed variously to servants, wives, and husbands), and poetry and made translations from French” (1999, x). The fact that some of her works reached a popularity comparable to those of the great contemporary writers was probably the reason for the slandering she suffered, perhaps provoked by jealousy.

Her first novel, *Love in Excess*, was published in 1719, and it quickly became “one of the great best-sellers of the eighteenth century” (Spacks 1999, x). From then on, she had a prolific and successful output.<sup>4</sup> A quarter of a century later, in 1744, she started publishing her periodical *The Female Spectator*, continued until 1746. Although since 1693 in England there had already been periodicals specifically addressed to women, such as the *Ladies’ Mercury*, published by John Dunton, one of the outstanding features of *The Female Spectator* was that it was a periodical for women which was written by a woman.<sup>5</sup> However, Sara Penn explains that “Haywood never acknowledged authorship of her *Spectator* during her lifetime” (2021, 1). Actually, “Haywood’s association with her *Spectator* was only made known in her obituary (in 1756, a decade after its publication), and [it] was widely accepted to have been her work throughout the eighteenth century” (Penn 2021, 3).<sup>6</sup>

In the same fashion as Joseph Addison and Richard Steele’s *The Tatler* (1709–1711) and *The Spectator* (1711–1712), each issue of *The Female Spectator* consisted of a single long essay, in which the author, pretending to be replying to one of the correspondents who supposedly had written to her periodical seeking advice, discussed matters related to the ways of overcoming the difficulties women encountered within the English patriarchal system of the time. What she offered them was a mixture of information, fiction, passion, emotions with didacticism,<sup>7</sup> which would provide a believable portrayal of women’s lives and, at the same time, would reveal ways of turning those

<sup>4</sup> For further information about her position and strategies in the print trade and literary marketplace, see Spedding 2006 and Luhning 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Horner (1973), Patricia Meyer Spacks (1999, xii), Lashea Stuart (2006, 11) and Kelly Plante (2018, 1) erroneously claim that it was the first periodical for women and edited by a woman. In fact, that merit is rather for Delarivier Manley and her *Female Tatler* (1709). See Anderson (1931, 354–60) and Milford (1932, 350).

<sup>6</sup> It was not until the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century that Haywood’s work garnered serious scholarly attention. See, for example, Koon 1978, Doane 1982, Spender 1992, Merrit 1997, and Collins 2002. The scholarly publications about Haywood were so prolific at that time that in 2004, Patrick Spedding published *A Bibliography of Eliza Haywood*.

<sup>7</sup> In this respect, Rakhi Ghosh states that “Thus Haywood emerges as a radical writer when she urges women to recognise the merits and advantages of cultivating an ideal education. Through her periodical, she inverts the position of power that traditionally belonged to men. With women usurping the role of spectators, Haywood accrued power to them, depriving men the advantage of making women the objects of their gaze. Her text thus issues a bold challenge to women to configure their own destiny” (2019, 95).

lives into something interesting and appealing, since Haywood also gave her readers inspiration to challenge social conventions. Earla Wilputte in *Passion and Language in Eighteenth-Century Literature* suggests that Haywood attempted to “develop a language for the passions that clearly conveys the deepest-felt emotions;” that is, her characters’ “innermost feelings” (2014, 4). Stephen Ahern in *Affect Theory and Literary Critical Practice: A Feel for the Text* affirms that at the time “still dominant was a vision of the passions as forces often outside one’s control” (2019, 4). Accordingly, the stories told by the *Female Spectator*’s correspondents usually deal with young ladies who have succumbed to passion and the consequences it entails. That was probably one of the reasons why *The Female Spectator* “was Haywood’s most popular work during her lifetime” (Plante 2018, 1).<sup>8</sup>

This article will explore the different literary techniques Haywood employs in *The Female Spectator* in order to offer, based on her own common-sense, astute moral instruction to her readers. It is an attempt to teach them that, if they are witty, her readers (ladies) will be able to rebel against the strict eighteenth-century society, and thus, they will manage to carve out unattractive destinies for themselves aimed solely at fulfilling their families’ expectations, by subversively veiling their passions and emotions.<sup>9</sup>

## 2 Haywood’s Literary Techniques in *The Female Spectator*

Haywood employs unusual literary techniques in her journal. She establishes her authorial persona (the Female Spectator) at the beginning, confessing that although her life “for some years, was a continued round of what I then called Pleasure, and my whole Time engrossed by a Hurry of promiscuous Diversions,” she thinks that her readers “may reap some Benefit from it” (Haywood 1771, 2). From her words, we may infer that she is not very proud of the licentious life she led and that she has changed, submitting to the demands of society. But Haywood was far from being submissive: she had just created a convenient writing persona. According to Jane Todd, “there was a need for a writing persona. [...] Eliza Haywood in *The Female Spectator* constructed a wise older woman reformed after a youth of ‘vanity and Folly’” (1989, 133).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Spedding (2006, 193-211) offers a thorough analysis of the print and sales history of *The Female Spectator* in the eighteenth century. Blouch, on her part, reveals that “issued in at least eight English editions over the next ten years, *The Female Spectator* was published as *La Nouvelle Spectatrice* in France in 1751, and reissued in English as late as 1771” (1998, 641). See also King 2017.

<sup>9</sup> See Lubey 2006 and Pahl 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Amy Thomas Campion points out that “both Spencer and Todd couple the term ‘reform’ with

Nevertheless, she soon admits her experience is not enough, and resolves to complement it with that of three female friends:<sup>11</sup> Mira, a happily married woman of great wit;<sup>12</sup> a wise widow of high rank, and the cheerful, sweet and virtuous unmarried daughter of a wealthy merchant, whom Eliza will call “Euphrosine” (Haywood 1771, 4). They will satisfy the reader’s curiosity as regards different matters, with the exception of war and politics.<sup>13</sup>

It is worth pointing out that Haywood, a female author, appropriates the critical gaze of the spectator,<sup>14</sup> making the persona she creates in her periodical exchange “her former position as an object—a coquette who seeks opportunities for ‘shewing’ herself—for that of subject when she becomes a spectator in her new role as writer and educator” (Merritt 1997, 133). However, as Juliette Merritt adds, “in employing curiosity for her own discursive ends, the Female Spectator makes no gender distinctions; the reader assumes that as a universal appetite, curiosity resides equally with men and women” (1997, 135).<sup>15</sup> Another device Haywood employs to maintain the curiosity and interest of the readers is the aforementioned use of “letters from correspondents who report their personal problems or complain about social ills” (Spacks 1999, xvi).

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‘Eliza Haywood’ in their tables of contents: Todd writes ‘Re-formers: Eliza Haywood and Charlotte Lennox’ and Spencer follows ‘Seduced Heroines’ by ‘Reformed Heroines’ (2010, 57). With “Spencer” she refers to Jane Spencer (1986).

<sup>11</sup> See Girten 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Plante explains that “consistent with the cultural preoccupation, especially in literature by and for women, with the marriage market, Haywood dedicated *The Female Spectator* to [the Duchess of Leeds, Juliana] Colyear, citing her discretion in her marriage(s) as the reason she wished to place *The Female Spectator* under Colyear’s ‘protection’” (2018, 1). She also states that Haywood’s didactic approach can be detected already in that very dedication, since she describes Colyear as a woman “of an unblemished conduct, but also of an exalted virtue, whose example may enforce the precepts they contain, and is herself a shining pattern for others to copy after.” For Plante, this reveals Haywood’s wish that her “intended audience [...] might learn from the duchess’s example” (2018, 2).”

<sup>13</sup> Emily Joan Dowd affirms that “*The Female Spectator* is rich with the longing for a salon society, in which women are the participants and agents of intelligent, conversational rhetoric. The periodical itself certainly replicates this experience, including more contributions from, discussions of, and philosophical engagements with or for women and women’s welfare than any of its contemporaries. Mrs. Spectator and her many female contributors make no secret of their reverence for the French notion of female education and intellectual life, identical to that outlined in de Scudéry’s depiction of salon rhetoric” (2010, 18).

<sup>14</sup> Nancy Miller explains that “because the gaze is not simply an act of vision, but a site of crisscrossing meanings in which the effects of power relations are boldly (and baldly) deployed, it is not surprising that feminist theorists and writers should take it up as a central scene in their critique of patriarchal authority” (1988, 164). Other feminist analyses of the gaze in literature can be found in Straub 1988, Newman 1990, Swenson 2010, Mowry 2012, and Malone 2018.

<sup>15</sup> See also Merritt 2004.

Although any of the stories narrated by the correspondents of *The Female Spectator* would be suitable to study the structure that Haywood follows, in this article I have focused on four of them. The first case exemplified in Book I of the periodical is that of fourteen-year-old Martesia, who “destroyed at once all her own exalted Ideas of Honour and Reputation” (Haywood 1771, 12) by being unfaithful to her devoted husband—in a marriage prearranged by her parents—with the first young man who flirted with her, Clitander. Ahern states that in Haywood’s works, “seduction begins with a process of unconscious influence that bypasses the rational mind; the transmission of affect happens without warning or intent, as characters are drawn involuntarily to one another” (2019, 4). That is why, when her distressed husband enquired what he had done to offend her and lose her affection, she replied that “as she had accused him with nothing, he had no reason to think she was dissatisfied” (1771, 13). The more she craved for her lover’s company, the more distant she became with her husband, to the point of making the latter wish to divorce her without providing him with a real reason for her coldness: until getting pregnant, she had managed to hide her unfaithful passion from him. Then she realised that, although she would like to be separated from her husband, she would not endure “to be totally deprived of all reputation in the world” (1771, 15). She tried but failed to have an abortion. Then she hid her pregnancy by feigning indisposition and by wearing loose gowns. At the end, she gave birth to a daughter who died at birth. Finally, she received her punishment: in order to escape gossip and unrequited love—because her beloved Clitander had ended up marrying another girl—she left England, after having agreed with her husband that he would pay her an annual sum, as long as she resided as far away as possible.

As a moral, Eliza explains to her readers that she ended up in such a lamentable situation because she had not valued what she had: a loving husband, status and a good and easy life. She fell into temptation, thus losing everything for the sake of passion. She also blames parents because they often prearrange marriages for their young daughters to older gentlemen and then the former end up falling desperately in love with a younger suitor and succumbing to that new passion, regardless of the terrible consequences. The solution she suggests is instruction, which makes London ladies generally more aware of the dangers of succumbing to temptation than innocent country girls, who are prone to be misled: “the country-bred ladies [...] become an easier prey to the artifices of mankind, than those who have had an education more at large” (1771, 18). Therefore, the structure Haywood employs in her periodical essays is as follows: the narration of the story of the lady in question, the climax of her trespass, the consequences of that trespass (punishment), the moral and a piece of advice for ladies to avoid committing the same mistake.

The second case appears in the second volume, which starts with Book 7, where a correspondent, Amintor, narrates his story with his—in his view—ungrateful beloved, Arpasia. He seems to have been infatuated with her from the moment he made her acquaintance, since he calls her “a young lady, who has everything in her worthy of universal adoration” (Haywood 1755, 6), and concludes her detailed description thus:

[...] her hair, her hands, her neck, her fine turned shape would singly charm the ravished gazer, but there is something in her air which the most extensive fancy cannot form any figure of, without having seen the divine original: if she but plays her fan, takes snuff, on the least motion of a hand or finger, a sparkling dignity flies from her, filling all the place. (1755, 7)

Close to her, he felt so nervous that he felt useless when he “had to lead her up a minuet” (1755, 7). Unfortunately for him, she noticed his inability to dance and never danced with him again. Amintor was not only overwhelmed by Arpasia’s beauty, but also impressed by her prudence and modesty. As he ends up admitting, in fact, he fell desperately in love with her when he had set eyes on her for the first time ever. However, he dared not reveal his feelings to his beloved, no matter how much his friends tried to encourage him on the grounds that he was a deserving man. Finally, he plucked up courage and opened his heart to her. But his passion was received with coldness, and

[...] the cold civility, the unmoved reserve with which she heard me, struck like a bolt of ice through all my soul, and gave a mortal damp to all the fires of hope:—I grew pale,—I trembled,—I was ready to fall down in a swoon at her feet; and fearing I should be guilty of something unbecoming my sex, took such a hasty and confused leave, that had the least spark of compassion harboured in her breast, it must have prevailed in her to have called me back:—but, alas! She suffered me to depart, without seeming even to observe my disorder.—Unequaled cruelty! (1755, 9)

One can clearly observe the contrast between the young man’s reaction of pain and shame after his disappointment, and the lady’s indifference after her rejection, since she did not really like that suitor, probably and partly due to his shortcomings in dancing and to his having been stalking her—something he does not seem to be aware of. Instead, he proceeds to describe his anguish and how he suffered that night, which he “passed in agonies too terrible for repetition” (1755, 9). The following morning, he sent the lady a “pity-moving” letter but, to his dismay, all he received from her was a courteous reply:

I am very much obliged for the high opinion you have of my merit; but as it seems to have given birth to an inclination, which I am certain will never be in my power to encourage,

must beg you will desist your visits, till you have ceased to think in the manner you now profess to do. (1755, 10)

One of his friends, pitying Amintor's suffering caused by, in his own words, "fate and the ingratitude of my charmer" (1755, 9), spoke to her father on his behalf. The reply, after consultation with Arpasia, was "that he had founded his daughter's inclinations, and found they were not in my favour; so desired I would not give myself any farther trouble" (1755, 9).

Still, he did not give up, and started seeking her desperately, forcing her to stop going to the places she used to frequent in order to avoid him—and accusing her of ingratitude for behaving thus. Obsessed with her, he kept "haunting her" (1755, 12), to no avail. Then he resolved to have his misfortunes published in *The Female Spectator*, and he asks the editors to:

[...] Exert then all your eloquence to move the heart of my obdurate fair, to give her a lively sense of her ingratitude, and convince her how ill so foul a vice becomes so beauteous a form: she is a constant reader of your essays, a great admirer of them, has often said the world would be happy could it once be brought to follow the maxims you lay down;—who knows, therefore, but she may be wrought upon herself, when so favourite an advocate vouchsafes to plead? (1755, 12)

In this letter to *The Female Spectator* we find a different perspective, that of an unrequited male lover offering the narration of the story of his vicissitudes while courting his beloved lady. Nevertheless, from the correspondent's perspective, his beloved lady was the one who did not behave according to what was expected from her, and the climax of her trespass was refusing to requite the love her suitor had confessed to profess to her. Then the consequence of that trespass (punishment) was to have her unrequited lover's "unhappy story" published in *The Female Spectator*, in a last and desperate attempt, on his part, to make his beloved realise how unfair she had been to him.

However, his letter did not produce the effect he expected. Far from any support to his cause, "pity will be all the consolation he will ever be able to procure" (1755, 12). *The Female Spectator* explains to her correspondent that he cannot expect someone who does not like him to love him:

She can no more love him, than he can forbear loving her:—the sentiments on each side are involuntary; and where the obligation is not of the will, there can be no ingratitude in refusing the reconpence [sic]: not, but it were to be wished, for the happiness of both, that Arpasia could meet so ardent and so sincere an affection as that of Amintor, with an equal warmth; but since it cannot be, and nature is refractory, he should endeavour rather to forget, and enable himself to live without her, than perpetuate his passion and anxieties by any idle hopes of living with her. (1755, 13)

She also states that it would be “more kind in us to advise him to quit the vain pursuit, than by pretending to plead in his favour flatter him with deceitful expectations which would only serve to add to his disquiet in the end” (1755, 14). Therefore, in this case, advice is provided for the male correspondent, not for the lady.

The Female Spectator adds, as the moral of this story, that it is very unfair of Amintor to deem Arpasia ungrateful, since “she has acted toward him with honour and discretion.” She concludes that “I not only acquit her of ingratitude, but pronounce Amintor the person obliged,” and warns him “to take care that in not acknowledging he is so, he does not draw upon himself that imputation he unjustly offers to fix on her” (1755, 15). A similar perspective would be offered just four years later, in 1759, by Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, where he would claim that “in the same manner to the selfish and original passions of human nature, the loss or gain of a very small interest of our own, appears to be of vastly more importance [...] than the greatest concern of another with whom we have no particular connexion” (2002, 156). Amintor was only concerned with his own feelings as an unrequited lover and, far from being sympathetic, he never considered the possibility that Arpasia might have felt persecuted and incommoded by him. And that is the reason why the periodical cannot satisfy his petition, since Haywood sought “to develop a language that ensures [...] a sympathetic comprehension of the excessive emotions that we all undergo” (Wilputte 2014, 6).

In Book 14, included in the third volume of the *Female Spectator*, we can read a letter signed by a Claribella and addressed to “the authors” of the periodical (Haywood 1748, 53), which concerns one of the correspondent’s acquaintances, to whom she refers as Aliena. That is, the correspondent narrates the story of Aliena, who, driven by her sullen emotions and her passionate love<sup>16</sup>—the climax of her trespass—for her former suitor on his mission, cross-dressed<sup>17</sup> as a sailor to go after a captain in the

<sup>16</sup> Ahern suggests that we should “understand the model of affective agency at work in early modern texts such as Haywood’s as one not of interiority but of subjectivity, in the true sense of the word: the state of being subject to forces outside one’s control” (2019, 4).

<sup>17</sup> Plante explains that “the book unites themes common to Haywood’s oeuvre, early and late—including disguise and jilted love—with themes common to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, including the military and expanding middle class, and the marriage market.” And she adds that it offers Haywood the chance to express her point of view “on a common literary trope in 18<sup>th</sup>-century popular culture—that of the woman warrior who disguises herself as a man in military uniform to pursue her soldier-or-sailor lover” (2018, 1). Finally, she offers further information about that trope, which introduces: “a woman dressing in a military uniform to pursue her military lover at sea, to varying degrees of success: sometimes she is punished for her foray into military/male culture when she and/or her lover dies; sometimes she is rewarded for her bravery, loyalty and military prowess through marriage and/or through a monetary reward (commission and/or dowry). All the time, though, the covering-up of her feminine characteristics with the ‘male’ uniform serves not to empower the woman for her full,

British Royal Navy, although she only managed to get as far as the city of Gravesend, off the Thames. In the end, *Aliena* does not marry the captain she was so passionately in love with, nor his friend and first lieutenant, who was a “man of honour” and ended up falling in love with the young lady—the consequences of her trespass (and her punishment). Instead, she goes back home and asks *Claribella* to defend her in a letter to the editor. However, her actions are going to be censured by the *Female Spectator* and set as an example of what a woman should not do. Haywood’s editorial critiques, far from being a conservative reaction, just help women face the sad truth: *Aliena*’s empowering behaviour is incompatible with the social norms women had to comply with on the English marriage market of the time. Accordingly, the moral of the story narrated in this letter is twofold: on the one hand, it calls attention to the dangers of cross-dressing and masquerading and, on the other, with regard to military gentlemen, it presents that “love and glory are things incompatible’ for young women on the marriage market” (Haywood quoted in Plante 2018, 1). This is a piece of advice that shows young ladies how they should not behave when courted and also instructs families of such passionate girls on how they should not behave if their daughters embark on a similar adventure, hurrying after a lover.

A different instance is also found in Book 14, where some *Elismonda* encloses to the *Female Spectator* the story of *Barsina*, a discrete young lady, who is led by *Ziphranes*, her libertine lover, into believing that he will be faithful to her. Thus, she accepts his marriage proposal, unaware of the fact that he has also asked her cousin to marry him. Suspicions arise in *Barsina* due to her beloved’s procrastination, until a letter confirms that he is marrying another person. Allegedly, he had accepted the latter’s proposal because he did not feel *Barsina* had too much affection for him. After reading such a letter, *Barsina* is devastated, but she soon turns her passion into a thirst for revenge, willing to inflict on her unfaithful lover a punishment proportionable to his crime. She pretends to come across him in a park by chance, and only reproaches him for not having taken leave of her. He is amazed at her lack of rancour and agrees to meet her for breakfast the following morning. At breakfast, they toast the happiness of the bride. However, after drinking up the content of their glasses, *Barsina* announces she has poisoned the wine and therefore, they will die together (this would be the climax of the story). *Ziphranes* goes home in haste and summons all the doctors and apothecaries in the area. He tries every purgative

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integrated ‘self’ but to proclaim to women and society that women are valuable—marriageable—when they make themselves useful by embracing the colonial and military goals of the patriarchal structure at large, supporting king and country while pursuing the ultimate goal for a woman: marriage. Haywood’s take on *Aliena* critiques this popular glorification” (Plante 2018, 4). See also Clark 2003, Hurl-Eamon 2014, and Plante 2020.

remedy they offer him until he thinks his life is out of danger. Meanwhile, he learns that Barsina is dead. He goes to the countryside to recuperate but, while he is standing outside one evening, he sees a woman who resembles her and, believing her to be a ghost, Ziphraanes ends up going mad—hence the false wooer’s punishment.

However, Barsina had not really poisoned the wine, nor died, but had instructed her household to carry out a coffin to be seen by witnesses—though the ghostly apparition was accidental. Once she felt her resentment against him had been gratified, she returned to town “with all her former serenity and good humour” (Haywood 1755, 108). Ziphraanes recovered his sanity but lost his wife’s affection, he was ridiculed by his acquaintances and remained uneasy. The correspondent of the *Female Spectator* approves Barsina’s revenge and sets it up as an example to be followed by other jilted ladies.

Even if this story does not portray, as the former ones, a woman who trespasses and is punished but rather one who is offended and takes revenge, the structure Haywood offers is still the same: the narrative, climax, and punishment. As regards the moral of this story, women should not allow men to mislead them into believing their false claims but, if they do, they must react and seek revenge. The advice Haywood offers her readers is that they should not weep after having lost in love but get even, because passive women will inevitably suffer, while active women, even if they may not achieve their goals, will at least escape the fate of a victim. In this respect, Rakhi Ghosh points out that Haywood rebels against patriarchal double standards:

Haywood’s open defiance of double standards practised by patriarchy is unusual for her time. She exhorts women to refrain from indulging in the crime of tolerating the infidelity of their husbands. Her insistence that women should free themselves from the prison of silence imposed by patriarchy is enormously iconoclastic indeed in the contemporary male-dominated world of printing and publishing. (2019, 95)

### 3 Conclusion

As Mary Anne Schofield states, Haywood knew how to “openly articulate her doctrine of quiet rebellion as she defines woman’s role of seeming compliance but actual revolt” (1985, 110). She urged women to learn to become “intellectual and moral creatures” (Ghosh 2019, 94) in order to secure their success and position in an eighteenth-century society that was hostile to those who did not comply with its norms. Thus, she warned them against hurrying into marrying someone thoughtlessly, since she regarded marriage as “a kind of precipice, which, when once leap’d, there is no Possibility of reclimbing” (Haywood 1999, 97).

In order to reach her didactic goals, Haywood employed the different literary techniques explored in this article: the use of four different personae—the third letter is actually addressed to “the authors”, whereas the other three are sent, specifically, to the Female Spectator—the form of a letter exchange between the Female Spectator and her readers, as well as a set structure for each of the stories sent by her fictitious correspondents, containing a story, a climax, a punishment. As for the moral message and a piece of advice to her readers, her rebellious common-sense teaches them to be witty, not to succumb to passion, to control their emotions, to make the most of their circumstances and, thus, to benefit themselves.

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